

WESTCASA DEDICATED PHONE SUPPORT FAQs for VU STAFF AND STUDENTS

What number do I call to access the dedicated counselling support from WestCASA?

VU students and staff can phone (03) **9216 0411** to access support from an experienced sexual assault counsellor between midday Wednesday 23 March and midnight Sunday 3 April inclusive.

What will happen when I call?

If you call during business hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday), your call will be answered by the [WestCASA](#) receptionist, who will immediately pass on your call to a counsellor. If you call in the night or on the weekend, the line will divert directly to the on-call counsellor's mobile phone.

You can talk to the counsellor about anything that you are concerned about, whether it relates to a current issue, something that happened in the past, or something that happened to a friend or family member.

What if the phone is engaged or no one answers?

The phones will be staffed 24/7, but there may be times when an on-call counsellor is not able to answer immediately after hours. You will be called back within approximately 30 minutes in this case.

What if the counsellor is helping someone else when I call?

WestCASA will always have more than one counsellor on duty. If both are busy, you can leave your details to receive a call-back. If the phone number is engaged, your call will be diverted to the 24-hour [Sexual Assault Crisis Line](#), which is also staffed by experienced sexual assault counsellors.

Who is the service for?

The service is for any VU student or staff member who would like support, advice or counselling relating to an experience of sexual assault or sexual harassment. It could be on your own behalf, or it could be for a friend. It could be for something that happened recently, or it could be for something that happened a long time ago.

Is the counselling support inclusive of all genders and sexualities and culturally safe?

Yes. WestCASA counsellors already speak with people of all ages, genders, sexualities and cultures as part of their everyday work. They have counselled many VU students and staff in the past.

Are the phone calls anonymous?

You don't have to give the counsellor your details, but they will ask your first name and share their first name so that you can speak comfortably with each other. If you would like to follow up your conversation with ongoing support from WestCASA, they may ask you for other details at that point.

VU will not receive any information about you from WestCASA, other than that they will let us know how many people used the service.

What if I call after 3 April?

If you contact this number outside the period of dedicated support, you will still be connected to a WestCASA sexual assault counsellor. After hours, this number diverts to the state-wide [Sexual Assault Crisis Line](#), which is staffed 24/7 throughout the year.