



Redfern Legal Centre

CITY OF SYDNEY



Media Release

Monday 6 August 2018 | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Your Body, Your Choice*: new multi-language student resource about sexual assault**

Redfern Legal Centre's International Student Legal Service NSW has partnered with City of Sydney and Study NSW on a new education resource about sexual assault, available in 11 different languages. *Your Body, Your Choice* contains important information for students who have experienced sexual assault, and includes key messages specifically tailored to international students.

The factsheet was developed in consultation with Rape Crisis NSW, NSW Health Sexual Assault Service and NSW Police, and aims to address the fact that many international students who are victims of crime do not know where to go to seek help, or are afraid to access support.

"A culturally sensitive student resource on sexual assault was urgently needed," says Redfern Legal Centre's International Student solicitor, Sean Stimson. "*Your Body, Your Choice* is available in English, as well as 11 community languages, to meet the needs of Australia's diverse international student community."

Stimson runs Redfern Legal Centre's state-wide international student service, which routinely assists students with advice and referrals on sexual assault and other legal issues. Stimson explains that international students can experience unique vulnerabilities which create barriers to seeking help.

"We know from experience that international students are often extremely isolated, with limited social and family networks, and a lack of knowledge about the law and local support structures," Stimson said.

"Many international students are fearful of seeking legal support or going to the police about rape or sexual assault because they are concerned this may affect their visa status. Students may also worry their confidentiality will be breached, and that their education provider or parents overseas will be reported back to. The key message of *Your Body, Your Choice* is that sexual assault is a crime, and there are many avenues students can take to seek support safely and confidentially."

Your Body, Your Choice steps students through the law in relation to sexual assault, outlining broad definitions of sexual assault behaviours and providing key contacts for free counselling, legal and medical support services. The resource also highlights how students can access free interpreter services, if needed.

"The multi-language factsheet can be used in a variety of face-to-face settings where a student discloses a sexual assault incident, such as a crisis centre, counselling or support service. It also serves as a stand-alone tool for students seeking self-help information," Stimson explained.

Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, said the City of Sydney was proud to develop and support this critical program together with Redfern Legal Centre, Study NSW and relevant state government agencies.

“We have more than 35,000 international students in Sydney, with many students away from their family and friends for the first time. It is essential that we do everything we can to keep our international students safe,” Lord Mayor Clover Moore said.

“While police are responsible for responding to crime and safety issues, we work with them to help prevent these issues in the first place.

“*Your Body, Your Choice* helps students to understand their rights and know where to get help if they need it – in line with our ongoing work to ensure Sydney is safe for our residents, workers and visitors.”

Your Body Your Choice is available in print and online, and will be circulated among education providers and support organisations.

For additional information, and requests for hardcopies, contact RLC’s International Student Service NSW (www.rlc.org.au, info@rlc.org.au), City of Sydney (www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au) or Study NSW (a dedicated unit within the NSW Government Department of Industry, www.study.sydney/about).

Download at: <https://rlc.org.au/publication/your-body-your-choice-sexual-assault-factsheet>

Sean Stimson is available for interview. Contact: Finn O’Keefe, RLC Communications Manager: 02 9698 7277 | 0424 548 019 | finn@rlc.org.au