



26 November 2024

Professor Theo Farrell
Vice Chancellor
La Trobe University

Via: Theo@latrobe.edu.au

Dear Theo,

Ensuring Student Safety During Work Placements

I am writing to you on behalf of the La Trobe University Student Union (LTSU) regarding recent allegations made by a former parliamentary intern, a La Trobe University student, who has claimed that ex-Victorian Greens MP Sam Hibbins attempted to kiss her during her internship. These allegations are deeply concerning and highlight the critical need to review and strengthen the safety measures in place for students undertaking work placements and internships.

As you are aware, work-integrated learning opportunities, such as internships, are a vital part of many students' academic and professional development. The LTSU highlighted this and similar recommendations in our [2023 Placement Poverty report](#).

However, ensuring their safety and well-being in these settings must remain a top priority for La Trobe university. Considering these recent allegations, we would like to understand:

1. Current Measures: What specific measures does La Trobe University have in place to protect students undertaking work placements or internships from inappropriate behaviour, harassment, or misconduct?
2. Reporting and Support Mechanisms: What procedures are available for students to report such incidents, and how does the university ensure that their concerns are addressed promptly, sensitively, and effectively?
3. Improving Student Safety: Are there plans to review or enhance these measures considering this incident? What steps will the university take to ensure the safety and dignity of students in future placements?

The LTSU stands committed to advocating for the rights and safety of all students. We believe that every La Trobe University student should be able to engage in work placements without fear of misconduct or exploitation. By addressing these concerns and implementing robust safeguards, La Trobe can ensure that its students are better protected and supported.



We kindly request a response outlining the university's position on this matter and any planned actions to address these concerns. The LTSU would also be happy to collaborate on any initiatives aimed at improving student safety during internships and placements.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Thackray

Vice President Welfare

