



**Riverina Water
Customer & Community
Engagement Strategy
2023/2024 - 2025/2026**

*This image: Lockhart Shire Council
All other images: Riverina Water County Council*

Acknowledgement of Country

Riverina Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extends our respect to all First Nations Peoples in our supply area.



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Introduction

Water is the backbone of the southern Riverina. It helps our communities grow and thrive. It's an essential resource which underpins everything we do from drinking to cooking and cleaning through to recreation, heating, cooling and the running of business, industry and agriculture – which not only feeds the Riverina but Australia.

Our mission is to provide our community with safe and reliable drinking water at the lowest sustainable cost.

Our formation in 1997 is built on a long and proud history dating back more than 80 years. As single purpose county council we provide safe and reliable drinking water to more than 77,000 people across four local government areas.

We understand that our community and customers are our most important asset. Our first Community Engagement Strategy was adopted in 2019 and we are now taking the next step on our journey of fostering proactive communication, engagement and partnerships with our customers and community.

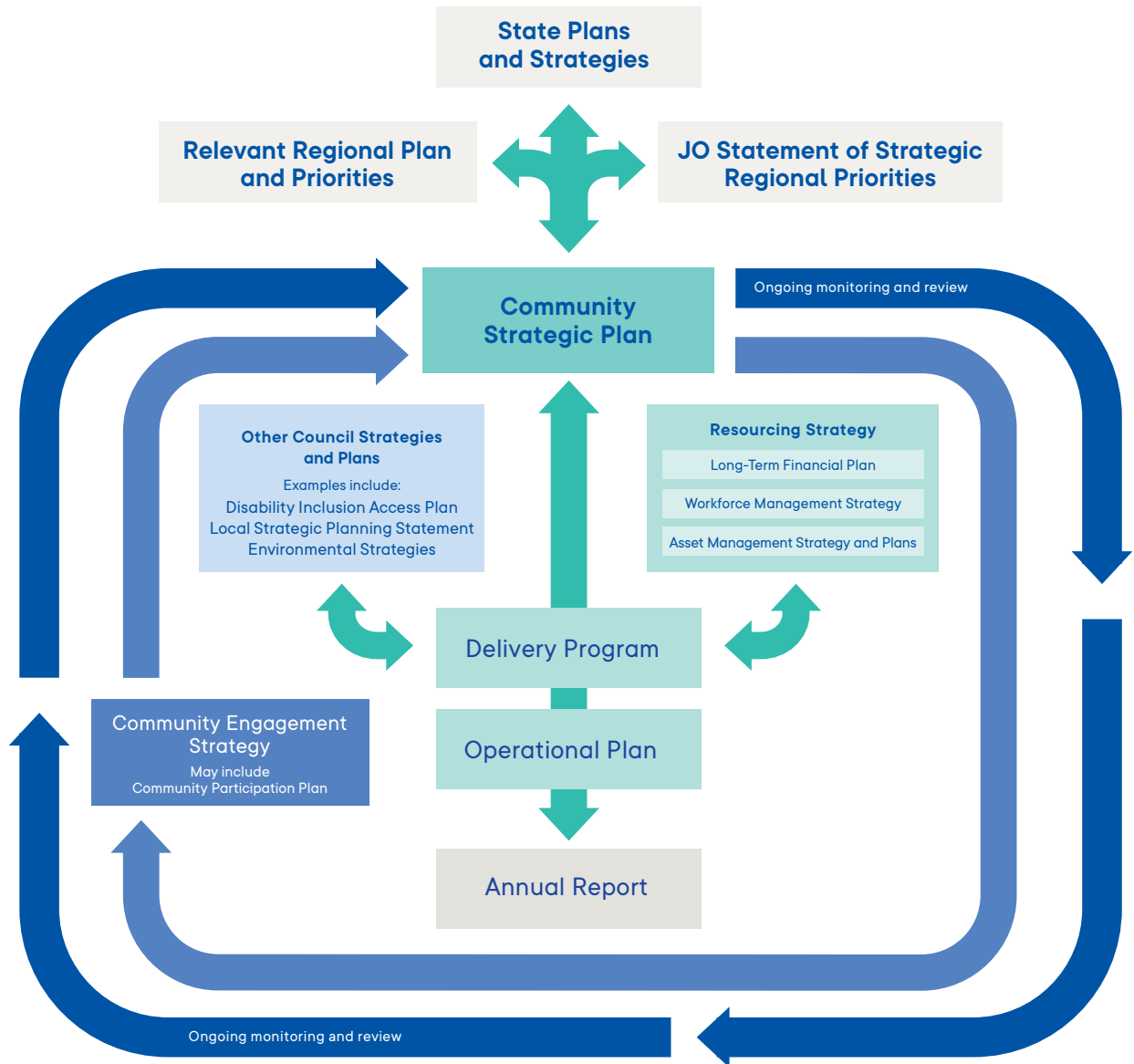


Andrew Crakanthorp
Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Tim Koschel
Chairperson

About this strategy



Riverina Water must comply with the NSW local government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

To meet these obligations, we have developed a Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) that outlines:

- › our strategic priorities for the next 10 years, and
- › the strategies we will adopt to achieve these priorities.

As a council responsible for water supply, Riverina Water must also comply with the requirements of the NSW Government's Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines (2007).

The IP&R Framework is underpinned by strong community engagement. Engagement with residents as well as business, state agencies and non-government organisations is essential to creating plans that will truly represent the aspirations and needs of the local community.

A Community Engagement Strategy as a minimum must:

- › be based on the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights.
- › identify relevant stakeholder groups in the community.
- › outline the methods that the council will use to engage each of these groups.

Riverina Water utilises this strategy as an opportunity to look beyond the legislative requirements and define strategic objectives related to our customers and community as a whole.

Social justice principles

This strategy is based on the guiding principles of social justice:

Equity	Access	Participation	Rights
<p>There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need.</p> <p>The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.</p>	<p>Everyone should have fair access to services, resources, and opportunities to improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.</p>	<p>Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.</p>



Image: Jack of Hearts

Our customers and community

Our supply area and network

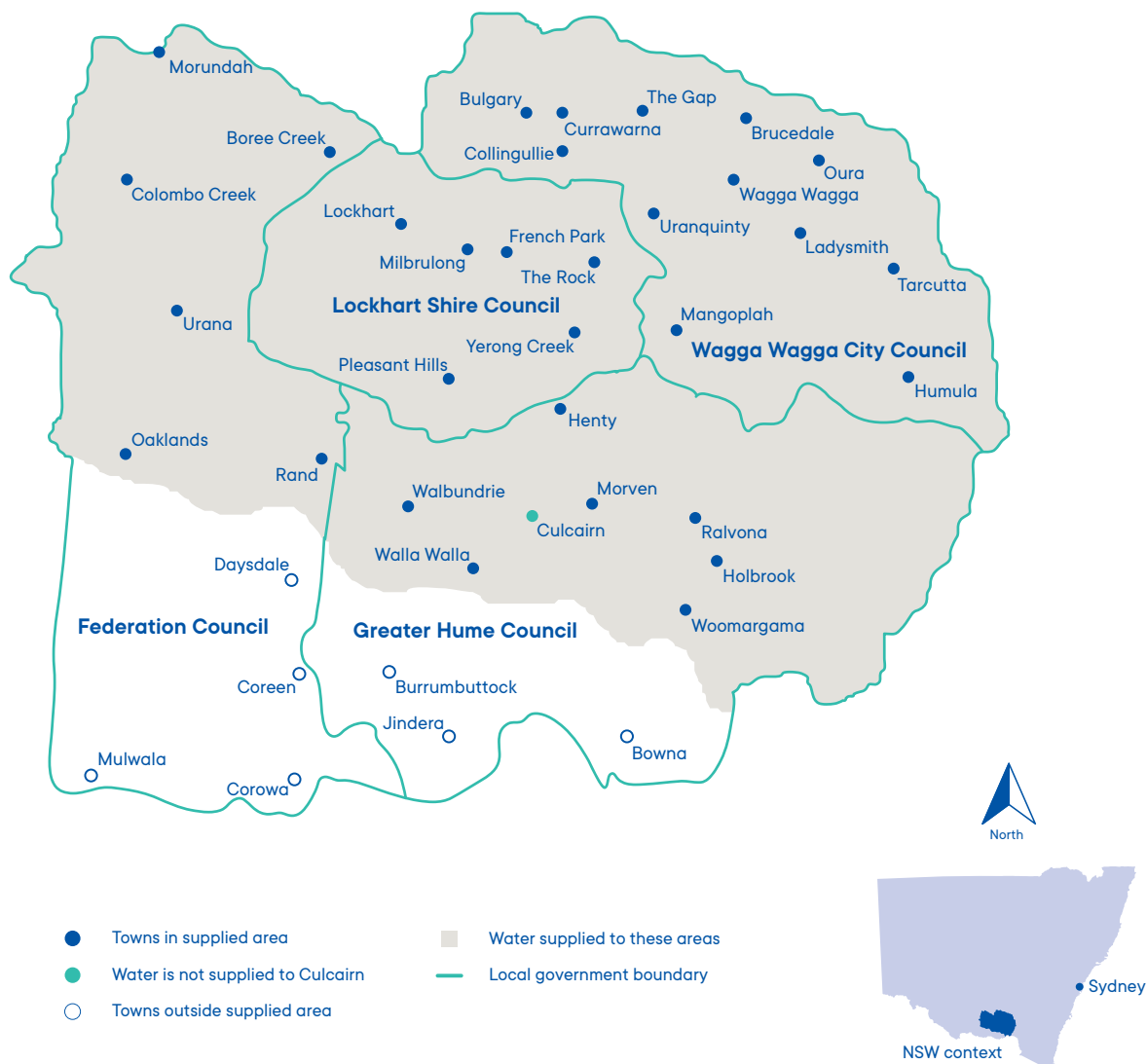
Our supply area stretches over more than 15,000 square kilometres of NSW's Riverina region; providing safe and reliable drinking water to the local government areas of Wagga Wagga, Lockhart and parts of Greater Hume and Federation Councils.

We draw water from the Murrumbidgee River, which runs through the heart of Wagga Wagga. We also source

water from 10 bores, which historically makes up 60 per cent of our source water supply.

Our water supply network includes:

- > 16 water treatment plants
- > More than 80 reservoirs
- > More than 1800 kilometres of water mains



Customer profile

More than 77,000 people rely on Riverina Water to provide safe drinking water every day.
 We have more than 33,000 properties connected directly to our water supply network.



We refer to the Community Strategic Plans of our constituent councils to better understand the many voices from within our supply area.



Riverina Water services more than 6000 non-residential retail customers and two bulk supply customers; the RAAF Airbase and the Kapooka Army Base.



Our strategy has been developed with regard for the social, economic, and environmental needs of the communities we serve in the southern Riverina:

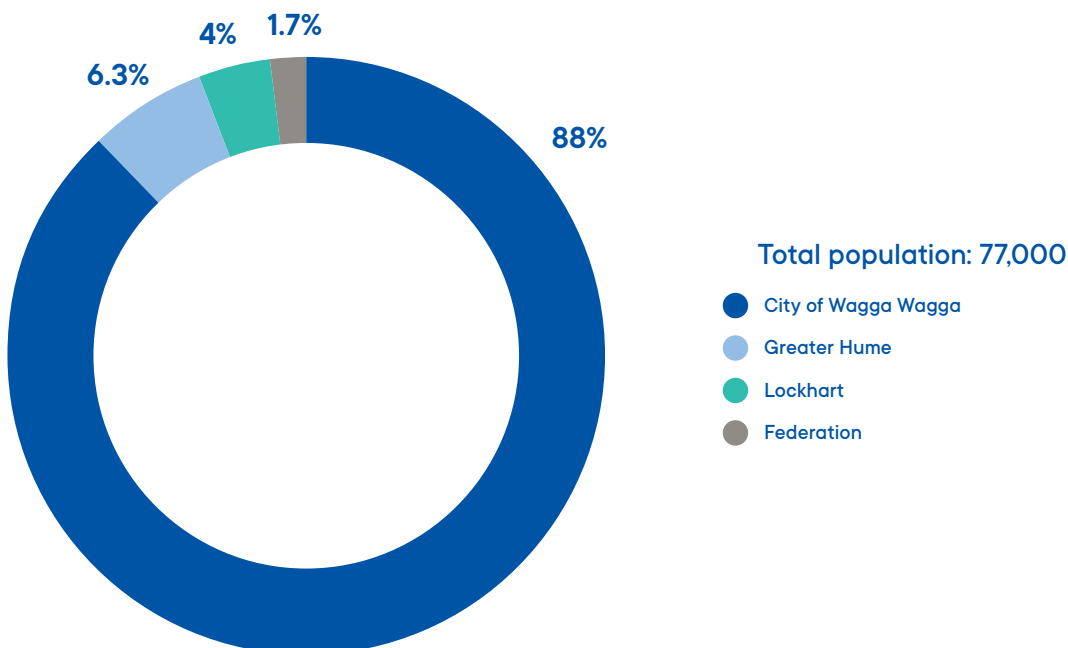
- > Wagga Wagga City Council
- > Federation Council
- > Greater Hume Council
- > Lockhart Shire Council



Our customers are diverse and range from households, to farmers, business, industry and other institutions such as hospitals, aged care facilities and education institutions such as Charles Sturt University.



Serviced population by Local Government Area



Communities provided with reticulated services

Water supply system	Communities
Major supply systems	
Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga, Bellevue/Glenoak, Gregadoo, Forest Hill, and Ladysmith
Southern Trunk	San Isidore, Kapooka, Uranquinty, The Rock, Mangoplah, Milbrulong, Yerong Creek, Henty, Pleasant Hills, Morven and Walla Walla (Note: Culcairn township is supplied by Greater Hume Shire Council)
North Wagga	North Wagga, Bomen, Estella, Charles Sturt University, Cartwrights Hill, Boorooma, The Gap, Euberta, Tooyal, Currawarna and Brucedale
West Wagga	Bulgary, Lockhart, Boree Creek, Urana, Coorabin and Oaklands
Independent systems	
Collingullie	Collingullie
Holbrook	Holbrook
Humula	Humula
Morundah	Morundah
Oura	Oura
Tarcutta	Tarcutta
Walbundrie-Rand	Walbundrie-Rand
Woomargama	Woomargama

Community engagement target groups

- › Direct customers
- › Indirect customers
- › Community groups
- › Ratepayer and resident associations
- › Business and industry
- › Constituent councils
- › Wiradjuri and First Nations people
- › People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- › People of all abilities
- › Villages and rural communities
- › Government stakeholders

How we connect

Communication and engagement methods



Community Engagement

- › 1:1 meeting(s)
- › Community meeting(s)
- › Stakeholder workshop(s)
- › Drop-in session(s)
- › Survey/feedback form(s)



Digital

- › Riverina Website
- › Social media
- › Quarterly newsletter (email)



Traditional media

- › Media release
- › Media opportunity or interview



Mail

- › Quarterly newsletter (post)
- › Letterbox drop(s)
- › Addressed letter(s)



Marketing

- › Print advertising
- › Broadcast media advertising
- › Digital and social media advertising
- › Merchandise and branding collateral
- › Sponsorship
- › Promotion and other marketing opportunities



Strategic approach

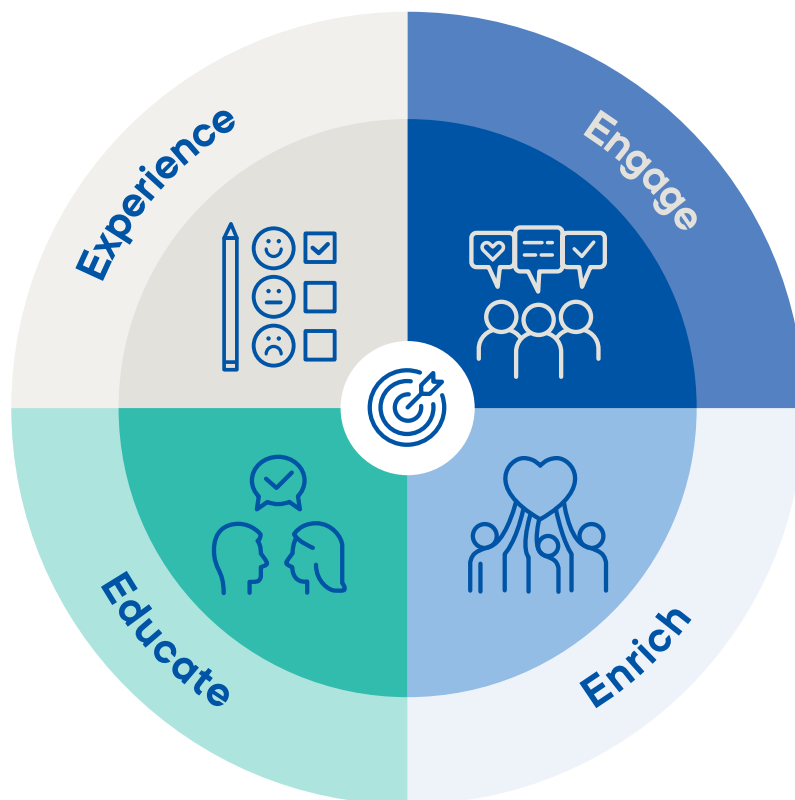
Strategic aim

We enable our community and customers to thrive by building strong relationships, increasing water literacy, and supporting them in meaningful ways.

Our Community Engagement Strategy is built on four strategic objectives:


- › Engage
- › Enrich
- › Educate
- › Experience

During the development of the Operational Plan each year we will set out detailed objectives and initiatives in line with our strategic objectives.



International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

IAP2 is a global best practice model for public participation in decision-making. Riverina Water refers to its framework when creating engagement opportunities or plans; in particular the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum:

Increasing level of public impact 					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Style	"Here's what's happening"	"Here are some options, what do you think?"	"Here's a problem, what ideas do you have?"	"Let's work together to solve this problem"	"You care about this issue and are leading an initiative, how can we support you?"
Example tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Fact sheets › Websites › Open houses › Publishing social media › Newsletters › Email distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Public comment › Focus groups › Surveys › Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Workshops › Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Citizen advisory committees › Consensus-building › Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Citizen juries › Ballots › Delegated decisions



Strategic objective: **Engage**

Our community and customers are involved in decision-making, and our engagement is planned, proactive and meaningful leading to trusted relationships.



Targeted outcomes

- › To increase customer understanding and perceived value of Riverina Water’s products and services
- › To increase awareness of Riverina Water and the role Riverina Water plays in the community
- › To generate positive associations with the Riverina Water brand and product service offering
- › To build stronger relationships to enable informed and inclusive decision making

Agreed actions

- › Invest in communications, marketing (including sponsorships), and brand awareness, and associated technologies
- › Respectfully engage with our First Nations Community
- › Continue to grow how we drive engagement with customers and our diverse community to have input on the services we provide



Strategic objective: **Enrich**

We enrich our community by providing meaningful support, providing opportunities to grow and demonstrating social responsibility.



Targeted outcomes

- › Investment is made in our community that supports the enhancement of the social, cultural, and environmental life of our community
- › Increase employee satisfaction and strengthen our network by participating in programs and initiatives that have impact broader than our local community

Agreed actions

- › Provide funding opportunities including but not limited to a grants program that supports community projects and initiatives
- › Seek opportunities to be involved in initiatives that extend broader than our local community
- › Invest in our community through the services we provide outside of ordinary operations
- › Continue to fund the supply of drinking water stations in public space
- › Continue to grow how we drive engagement with customers and our diverse community to have input on the services we provide



Strategic objective: **Educate**

Our communities and customers are educated on everything to do with Riverina Water.



Targeted outcomes

- › Our community has a greater understanding of the value of water and where it comes from
- › Our customers and community are able to find the relevant information that correctly informs them about Riverina Water and what we do
- › Our community recognises water as a valuable resource

Agreed actions

- › We provide our community with opportunities to interact with us in an accessible and convenient way
- › We provide clear, accessible and relevant educational information to our customers and the community
- › Help the community better manage its water usage through demand management initiatives



Strategic objective: **Experience**

Riverina Water is committed to working together as one team, to provide a great customer experience.



Targeted outcomes

- › Customer experience is improved via our service offerings
- › We gain a greater understanding of our customers and their needs
- › Continue to build and foster a culture of customer centricity

Agreed actions

- › Identify and implement key service enhancement, including digital products, that improve customer experiences across channels
- › Develop an enhanced understanding of our customers through data, insights and analytics

Reporting

Actions in this strategy are integrated in the yearly Operational Plan. We provide reports to the Board and community on our progress and performance every six months and in the Annual Report.

As we develop and adopt the new Operational Plan each year, we will review existing actions and assess the requirement for any new projects or initiatives that align with the strategic objectives set out in this strategy.



Directory

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Monday to Friday

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National Australia Bank Ltd

External auditors

NSW Audit Office

Internal auditors

National Audits Group

Emergency

Wagga Wagga

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

The Rock

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

Lockhart

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

Uranquinty

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

Urana/Oaklands

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

Culcairn/Holbrook/Walla Walla

(02) 6922 0608 (all hours)

Customer information – payment facilities



Telephone

Australia Post
Telephone Billpay



Billpay

Please call **13 18 16** to pay your bill using your credit card, or register to pay using your savings or cheque account from your bank, building society or credit union. Please have your water account ready as you will be required to key in payment details. **Your Billpay code and reference number is located beside the Australia Post symbol on the front of your account.** This service is available 7 days a week, 24 hours per day. **(For the cost of a local call).**



Credit cards

Ring the **13 18 16** number as listed above.



To pay by the internet

www.postbillpay.com.au

(Access to this option is also available via Council's Internet site listed above).



Bpay

Phone your participating Bank, Credit Union or Building Society to make this payment from your cheque, savings or credit card account. **Your Biller Code and Reference Number is located beside the BPAY symbol located on the front of your account.**



Mail

Send cheques to PO Box 456, Wagga Wagga with the "tear off payment slip". Keep the top portion of the account (with details of cheque etc.) for your record. No receipts will be issued unless the whole of the account is returned with the cheque.



In person

Bring your account with you to pay at Australia Post Shops or Post Offices anywhere throughout Australia. Riverina Water County Council office at 91 Hammond Avenue, Wagga Wagga.

