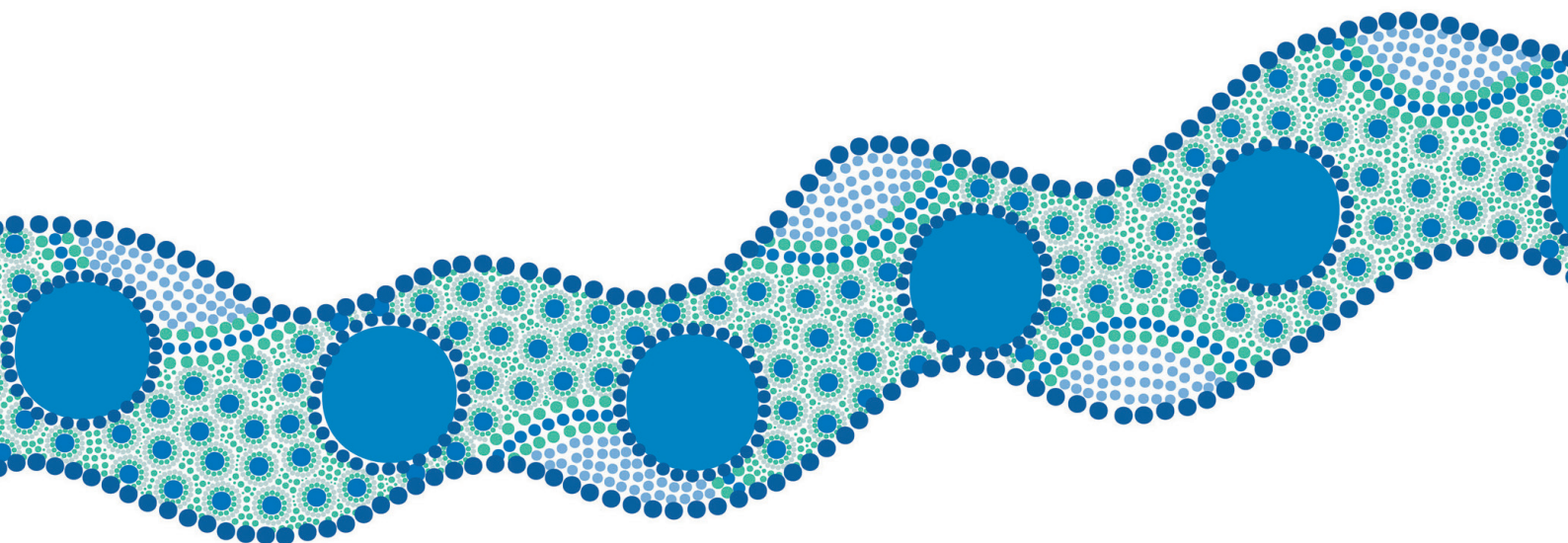


Riverina Water Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025 – 2029

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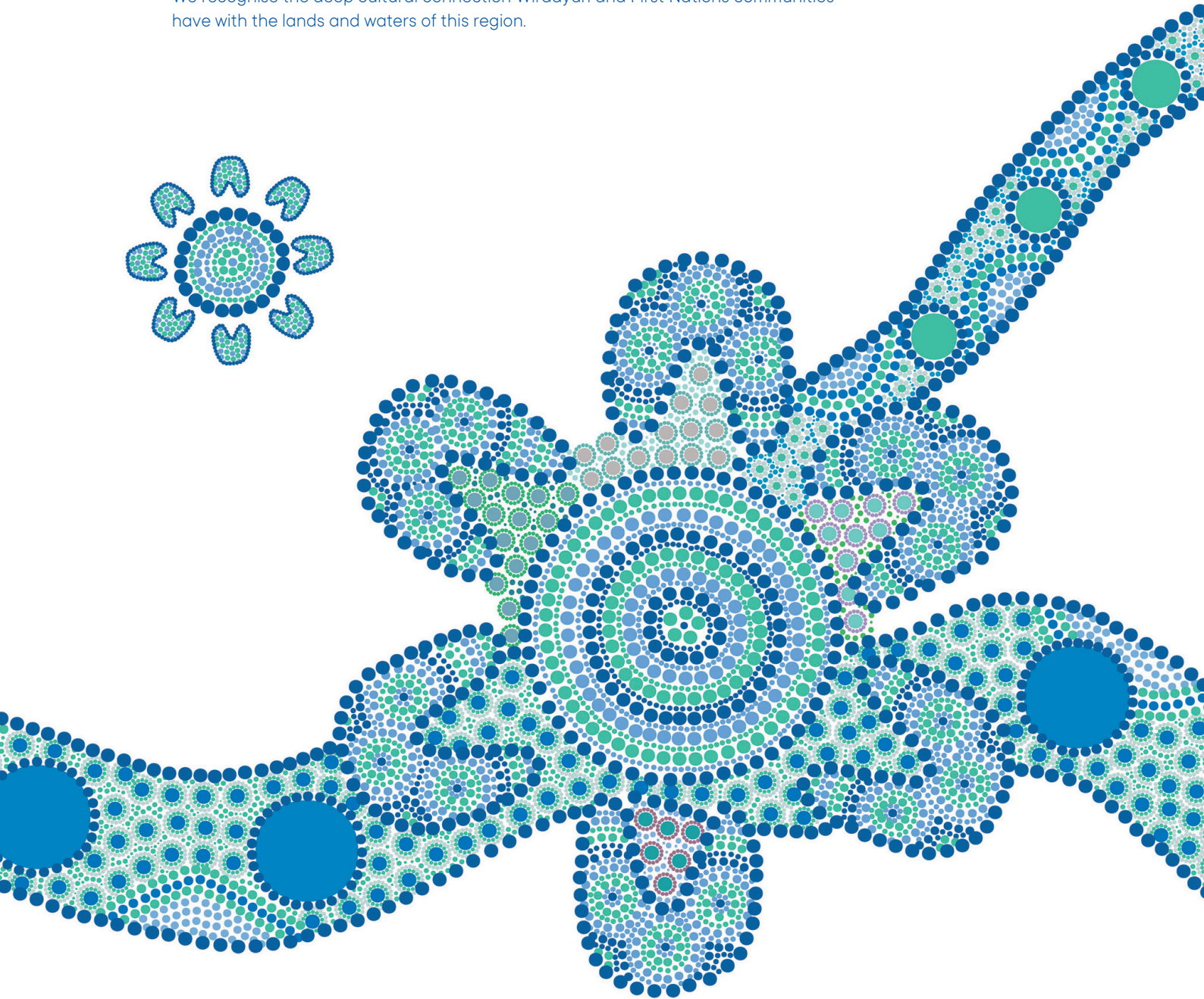
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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Riverina Water acknowledges the Traditional and continuing Custodians of the land we supply water on, the Wiradyuri people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future, as well giving our respect to all First Nations Peoples living in this community.

We recognise the deep cultural connection Wiradyuri and First Nations communities have with the lands and waters of this region.



Our corporate documents feature elements from the artwork *Living Water* by Wiradyuri artist Owen Lyons. The artwork was commissioned by Riverina Water for its Reconciliation Action Plan. Learn more: rwcc.nsw.gov.au/reconciliation

All other images: Riverina Water County Council

A message from our CEO

At Riverina Water, we believe inclusion strengthens not only our organisation but also the communities we serve. matters deeply to us.

This plan is about more than access. It is about shifting perceptions, creating opportunities, and ensuring that people with disability can participate. While we are not legislatively required to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, we have chosen to do so because it fully and equitably in all aspects of life. With our presence and capacity across our supply area, we have both the ability and the responsibility to help remove barriers and improve access to services, facilities, and local jobs.

The Plan aligns with two of our four values, being Respect and Connection, which provides particular relevance to the actions in this Plan.

On a personal level, I feel strongly that every person deserves to feel valued, respected, and supported to live their life to the fullest. When we listen, when we learn, and when we act with empathy, we create an environment where everyone can thrive. That is what this Plan is about.

I am proud to present Riverina Water's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan and look forward to the positive change it will bring for our customers, our staff, and our wider community.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Crakanthorp', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Crakanthorp
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Riverina Water provides quality drinking water to over 77,000 people across 15,000 square kilometres. To ensure our services and products are accessible and inclusive for all of our customers and staff, including people with disability, we have developed our inaugural Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).

The 2025 Customer Satisfaction Survey results highlight Riverina Water's strong performance in key areas valued by customers, particularly in customer service and water quality. Core service indicators such as overall trust (4.21¹) reflect consistently high satisfaction. Customer service was rated exceptionally well, with all indicators scoring above 4.5. These results include friendly and caring service (4.63), staff skill and knowledge (4.61), and meeting customer needs on first contact (4.60). The outcomes reflect the importance of responsive and inclusive customer service, especially as Riverina Water develops its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. High-quality customer service plays a crucial role in ensuring that all customers, including those with disability, can interact with and access services confidently, equitably, and with dignity.

This DIAP serves as a roadmap for Riverina Water to follow over the next four years with the aim of increasing disability access and inclusion across our organisation and services. Aligning with Riverina Water's strategic priorities, social justice principles and relevant state and national legislation, this DIAP will focus on four pillars, namely culture and behaviours, accessible spaces, employment and systems and processes.

To ensure people with disability were involved in every stage of the process and that our DIAP was set up for success, Riverina Water partnered with disability inclusion consulting company Get Skilled Access (GSA) to undertake a discovery process. This process enabled consultants with lived experience of disability to identify what is working well across Riverina Water, opportunities for improvement and the relevant actions to be included in this DIAP.

In addition to collaborating with GSA, Riverina Water provided a focus group for staff within the organisation to share their experiences, stories and feedback regarding current disability inclusion achievements and barriers. The findings of this discussion have informed the development of the plan. Lived experience and story sharing have created the basis for this Plan, and we look forward to consulting with people with disability throughout the progress of the DIAP over the next four years.

¹2025 Customer Survey : Riverina Water

About disability

The definition of disability that we have adopted aligns with the definition supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities² which states that people with disability experience physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory differences that, when interacting with an inaccessible society, prevent full and equal participation.

- › In Australia, approximately 4.4 million people live with disability³
- › It is estimated that 80% of disability is non-visible⁴
- › 2.1 million working-age Australians live with disability, with an estimated unemployment rate of 10%²
- › Aligned with the national average, 1 in every 6 people living across Greater Hume⁵, Lockhart⁶, Federation⁷ and Wagga Wagga City Council⁸ areas have disability and/or require care and assistance with core activities
- › The number of First Nations people with disability is double that of the general population²

Models of disability

At Riverina Water, we support the social model of disability and aim to reflect it both in our Plan and in our work. The social model recognises that disability itself is not what is disabling to people, rather it is navigating an inaccessible society, whereby physical and attitudinal barriers exist. As a part of our commitment to improve disability access and inclusion across our organisation and services, this DIAP aims to remove barriers present at Riverina Water and enable full participation from people with disability.

Intersectionality

Throughout this process, we have gained a greater understanding of the impacts of barriers present within society on people with disability. In particular, the compounding effects and unique experiences of those who experience barriers as a result of multiple intersecting identities. Intersecting identities may

include but are not limited to race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and more. At Riverina Water, we're proud of the diversity that encompasses the community we serve and recognise that with that comes intersectionality. Through this plan and our work, we aim to acknowledge the impacts of intersectionality and the part we can play in removing barriers.

Inclusive language

For the purpose of this Plan, Riverina Water will be using person first language when referring to people with disability. Person first language acknowledges the person before their disability. An example of person first language is "Person with disability" rather than "disabled person". At Riverina Water, we recognise that the disability community is diverse, and different people will prefer different language types. Some disability groups prefer identity first language, which demonstrates the impact of disability on them. We respect all people's choice in how they wish to be referred.

²Disability | Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) (un.org)

³People with disability in Australia, Prevalence of disability - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

⁴What is a hidden disability? (hdsunflower.com)

⁵Greater Hume Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025

⁶Lockhart Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025

⁷Federation Council Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026

⁸Wagga Wagga City Council All Abilities Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026



Policy alignment

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is based on the social and human rights model of disability. It's the culmination of a decade of work and promotes equal opportunity and participation for people with disability.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 - 2031

Australia's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability underpins the Disability Strategy. The Strategy outlines seven outcomes for improvement that have been identified by people with disability and provides a framework to implement them.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Disability Discrimination Act promotes and upholds the rights of people with disability and makes it unlawful to discriminate against them in the areas of employment, housing, clubs and sports, education, access to premises, goods, facilities, services and land.

NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

The Disability Inclusion Act promotes social and economic independence and inclusion for people with disability, allowing choice and control. It also provides safeguards for people utilising supports and services and the responsibilities of the State regarding the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Workforce Strategic Plan 2025/2026 - 2028/2029

Riverina Water is focused on building a capable, inclusive, and future-ready workforce that can continue to deliver high-quality services to our customers and community. The Workforce Plan outlines our commitment to ensuring the right people are in the right roles at the right time, investing meaningfully in our people's development, and reinforcing diversity, equity, and inclusion across our organisation.

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Riverina Water aims to provide an environment where employees and others in the workplace are treated fairly and with respect, and are free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and bullying. We aim to ensure that when employment decisions are made, they are based on merit, not on irrelevant attributes or characteristics that an individual may possess.

Pillars of inclusion

Pillars of inclusion are used within DIAPs to help categorise actions, highlight areas of focus and identify those responsible for action implementation. The pillars included in this DIAP were chosen as they highlight the areas where barriers exist within Riverina Water as well as those stated in the United Nations Conventions on the Right of Persons with Disability.

The pillars within the Riverina Water Plan are as follows:

- › Culture and behaviours
- › Accessible spaces
- › Employment
- › Systems and processes

We are committed to ensuring our culture in both the community and at Riverina Water is inclusive, our community is accessible, employment pathways enable equal opportunity and systems and processes are universally designed for all. We look forward to using these pillars to help guide our work.



Methodology

The discovery process used to develop this DIAP followed a two-pronged approach. First, consultants with lived experience of disability from disability inclusion consulting firm Get Skilled Access (GSA) reviewed key documents and communications through a disability access and inclusion lens. Second, Riverina Water hosted a focus group with participants from across the organisation, including people with disability, to share experiences and identify both areas of success and opportunities for improvement. The insights gathered were then analysed, and a set of actions was developed. These actions, aligning under their relevant pillars, now form the foundation of this Plan and will guide our efforts over the next four years.

Riverina Water value the input of all those who contributed to the making of this DIAP, in particular, people with disability. We would like to thank those people involved and look forward to continued collaboration over the life of the Plan.

Review and monitoring

The governance and implementation of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be overseen by Riverina Water's Executive Team. The Executive Team will provide strategic guidance, monitor progress against the identified actions, and ensure accountability across the organisation. This leadership oversight will help embed disability inclusion into our organisational culture and ensure that initiatives are delivered effectively and sustainably.

The success of this DIAP will be based upon the following measurements of progress:

- › Actions implemented over the life of the Plan and their subsequent outcomes
- › Engagement with people with disability throughout the process, seeking feedback and advice where necessary
- › Alignment with relevant legislation and policies that guide our work

We will report on our progress and performance to the Board and community every six months as part of our Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and in our Annual Report.

What we have achieved so far

Since 2019, Riverina Water has delivered almost \$150,000 in grants, donations and sponsorships for projects and initiatives that improve accessibility or benefit people with disability in our supply area.

Highlights include:

- › More than \$17,000 in funding for Riding for the Disabled for improvement works in the arena
- › Long-standing relationship with Kurrajong Waratah, including annual donations and \$10,000-plus investment in Hildsid Farm
- › More than \$7,000 for sensory gardens
- › \$20,000 towards the Henty Respite project, Avondale Place
- › More than \$50,000 in various projects to improve accessibility in regional areas, including pathways, amenities and doorways

In the lead up to developing its DIAP, Riverina Water has hosted tour groups from disability employment service providers to tour our facilities and see the type of roles that keep water flowing for tens of thousands of people. These emerging relationships have led to work experience sessions for young people with disability to gain meaningful skills and experience.



DIAP actions



Key outcome area 1:

Culture and behaviours

Action	Measure	Timeline
1.1 Increase the signs and symbols of disability inclusion at Riverina Water through story sharing and the promotion of inclusive programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Each year, two positive stories featuring people with disability within the organisation or community are shared and celebrated on Riverina Water's website or social media pages. › Riverina Water's membership with WaterAble is promoted to employees and the community, along with the organisation's aspiration to participate in the WaterAble Leadership Program. 	2026/27
1.2 Develop a bank of authentic images reflecting lived experience of disability across staff and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A bank of authentic images has been developed. › Authentic imagery across Riverina Water communications is used throughout the life of the Plan. 	2027/28
1.3 Create a calendar of events that celebrate people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A calendar of events that includes significant dates that celebrate people with disability has been developed and socialised across Riverina Water. 	2025/26
1.4 Deliver training to Riverina Water employees to increase their capability regarding disability access and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Foundational disability capability and confidence training has been delivered 80% of Riverina Water employees throughout the life of the Plan. › The Executive Team has completed disability immersive training. 	Ongoing
1.5 Become a member of the Hidden Disability Sunflower Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Riverina Water is a Sunflower friendly business. › Member training, information and resources to employees has been shared across Riverina Water. › The sunflower symbol is visible within internal and customer facing spaces. 	2025/26



Key outcome area 2:

Accessible spaces

Action	Measure	Timeline
2.1 Deliver disability inclusive customer service training across Riverina Water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› 80% of Riverina Water customer-facing employees have completed inclusive customer service training.› Customer Service Satisfaction Survey scores reflect inclusive customer service.	2026/27
2.2 Increase the participation of people with disability across Riverina Water community engagement initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Riverina Water participates in events aligned with the disability community including celebrations of International Day of People with Disability.› An inclusion statement is present within grant guidelines to encourage people from underrepresented backgrounds to apply, including people with disability.› Feedback from people with disability regarding the accessibility of Riverina Water services is targeted within consultations.	Ongoing
2.3 Conduct an accessibility audit of the Riverina Water website to assess compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› A WCAG assessment with a list of recommendations has been completed by Riverina Water.› Riverina Water have worked through the list and notified the appropriate teams of the WCAG recommendations.	2025/26
2.4 Increase the quantity availability of accessible communications across Riverina Water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Accessibility is embedded in the design and delivery of external communications, including account notices and outage information.› An easy-to-follow Communications Guide has been developed enabling Riverina Water staff to develop accessible and inclusive information.› The Communications Guide has been socialised to highlight the importance of using appropriate font types and size, colour contrasting, language, embedding alternative text in images, and captioning on videos.	Ongoing
2.5 Improve the physical access experience for people with disability and access requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› A Universal Design Guideline has been developed to inform the planning, development, and redevelopment of Riverina Water sites.› The Guideline has been socialised across Riverina Water to support staff's confidence in its application.› Emphasis has been placed on ensuring customer facing spaces meet the standards of the Guideline.› Where possible, accessibility has been improved at water treatment plants, remote work sites and remote office spaces.	2028/29



Key outcome area 3:

Employment

Action	Measure	Timeline
3.1 Establish inclusive employment practices and pathways for potential candidates at Riverina Water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Internships, graduate, and traineeship opportunities have been reviewed to ensure accessibility and inclusion for people with disability. › All job opportunities at Riverina Water are promoted through accessible sites such as Jigsaw and Job Active. › An inclusion statement is provided on job ads, encouraging people with disability to apply. 	Ongoing
3.2 Review recruitment policies and practices to identify and remove barriers for people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A Disability Inclusive Onboarding Guide has been developed with tailored support resources. › Peers or mentors are available to support new hires with disability upon request from the new starter. › Stay Interviews are conducted with all employees with disability to understand retention barriers and improve support. › Relevant recruitment policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated to align with inclusive recruitment practices. › Inclusive recruitment training has been delivered to recruitment teams and hiring managers. › The onboarding process within the P&C system is reviewed to determine if it can support the collection of data regarding disclosure of disability and other diversity data. 	2026/27
3.3 Include questions within the staff survey to capture data on the experiences and inclusion of employees with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The staff survey includes specific questions on workplace culture, disability disclosure, and access to workplace adjustments. › Disability related data is collected in a manner that respects privacy, supports safe disclosure, and recognises a person's right to not disclose. The data is used to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of Riverina Water's DIAP. › Disability-related data is incorporated into strategic plans, annual reports, and key organisational documents to reinforce the importance of access and inclusion across Riverina Water. 	2026/27
3.4 Provide training to people managers on unconscious bias and disability inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › 100% of people managers have completed unconscious bias and disability inclusion training, with pre and post-training evaluations indicating increased confidence in supporting disability disclosure. 	2026/27



Key outcome area 4:

Systems and processes

Action	Measure	Timeline
4.1 Develop a Workplace Adjustment Policy.	› The Riverina Water Workplace Adjustment Policy has been adopted and implemented.	2026/27
4.2 Establish a Workplace Adjustment Procedure that addresses task related barriers for employees with disability or health conditions.	› 100% of adjustment requests are documented and reviewed within agreed timeframes, with annual staff feedback indicating increased satisfaction with the suitability and effectiveness of workplace adjustments.	Ongoing
4.3 Review and update Riverina Water policies and procedures to enhance accessibility and inclusion.	› Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to identify and unintentional barriers and update accordingly. › The Riverina Water workplace adjustment policy is referenced in all policies that impact the experience of staff.	Ongoing
4.4 Establish an Inclusive Language Guide to support consistent and inclusive communication practices.	› An inclusive Language Guide has been developed, published, and communicated to all staff. › The guide is updated every two years to align with evolving language standards.	2026/27
4.5 Ensure all customer communications, including account notices and planned works notifications, are accessible to customers with disability.	› Current accounts notices and customer facing information have been reviewed to increase access to customers.	2026/27

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Accessibility	Making a product, service, information or environment available to as many people as possible.	Get Skilled Access
Disability	Any limitation, restriction or impairment, which restricts everyday activities. “The interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full potential and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
Discrimination	Direct Discrimination - Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favorably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. Indirect Discrimination - Discrimination can be against the law if it is based on a person's: age, disability, or race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status, sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.	Australian Human Rights Commission
Diversity	Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another.	Global Diversity Practice
Inclusion	Inclusion is an organisational effort and practices in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed and equally treated.	Global Diversity Practice
Universal design	The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.	The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design
WCAG	The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of internationally recognised standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to make web content more accessible to people with disability. WCAG provides recommendations to improve accessibility for users with visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological disabilities	

