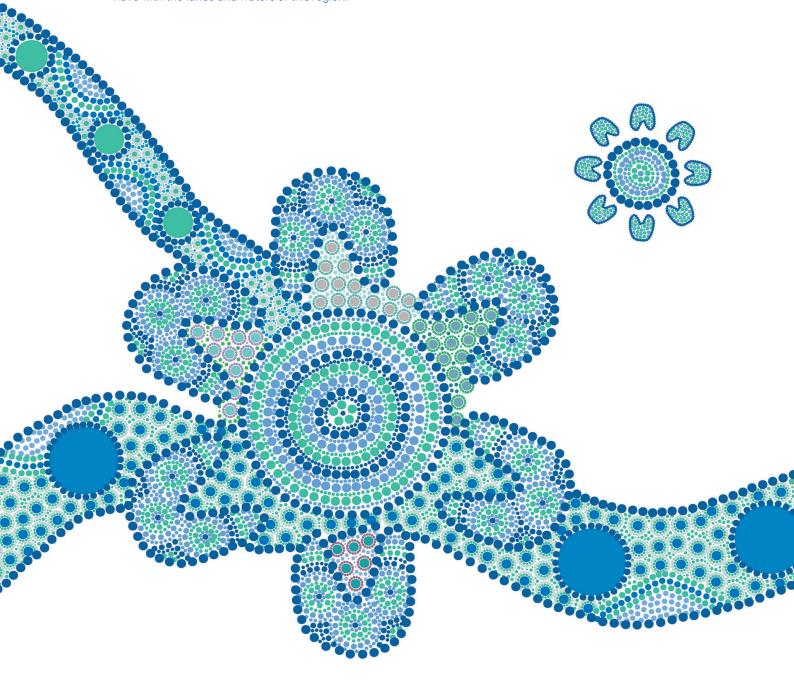




Acknowledgement of Country

Riverina Water County Council 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.

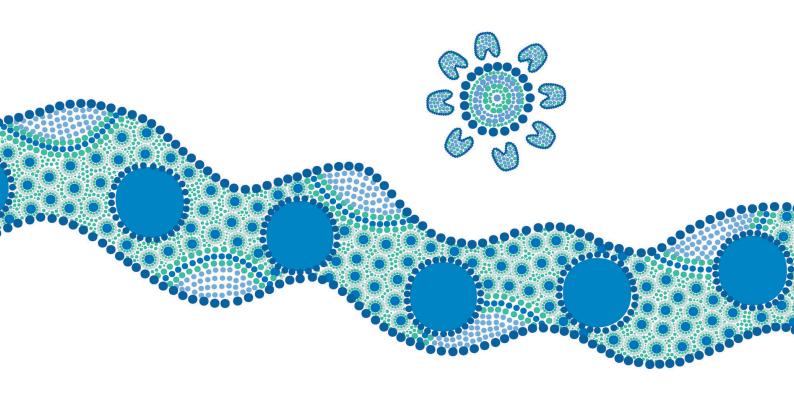


Our corporate documents feature elements from the artwork *Living Water* by Wiradyuri artist Owen Lyons. The artwork was commissioned by Riverina Water for its Reconciliation Action Plan. Learn more: rwcc.nsw.gov.au/reconciliation

All other images: Riverina Water County Council

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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 a 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. Since then, we have:

- Adopted our first Reconciliation Action Plan
- > Redeveloped our website
- > Offered improved services online
- Began development of our Disability Inclusion Action
 Plan
- Supported our community with almost \$1.7M in grants for grassroots projects
- Provided donations and sponsorships to community groups and events
- Participated in events and initiatives, such the as Fusion Multicultural Street Festival
- > Provided temporary water at community events
- Installed permanent bubbler and drink bottle filling stations throughout the supply area

- Adapted our processes and policies to meet the changing needs of our customers, such as rebates for undetected leaks
- Asked for your feedback through annual surveys and implemented your experiences into our services

We are now taking the next step on our journey of fostering proactive communication, engagement and partnerships with our customers and community.



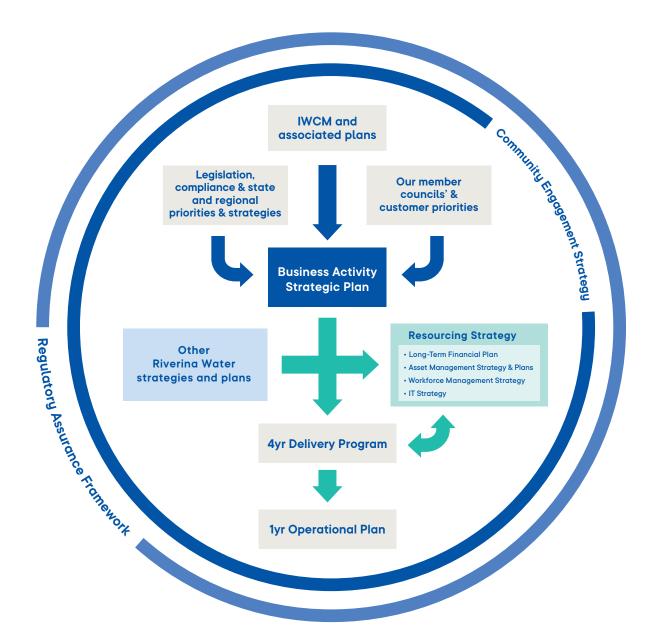


Councillor Tim Koschel, JP, GAICD Chairperson



Andrew Crakanthorp, GAICD Chief Executive Officer

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



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 34,000 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.



Rivering Water services more than 6000 non-residential retail customers and two bulk supply customers;





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

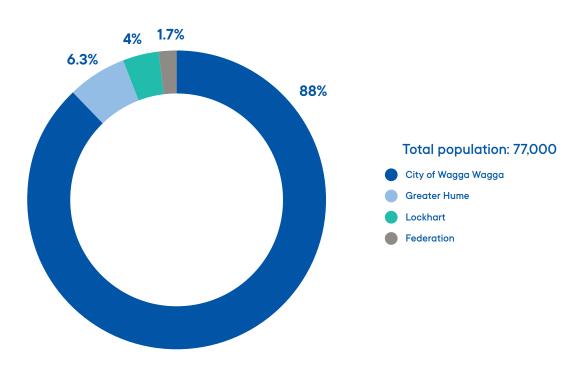
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- **Federation Council**
- **Greater Hume Council**
- **Lockhart Shire Council**



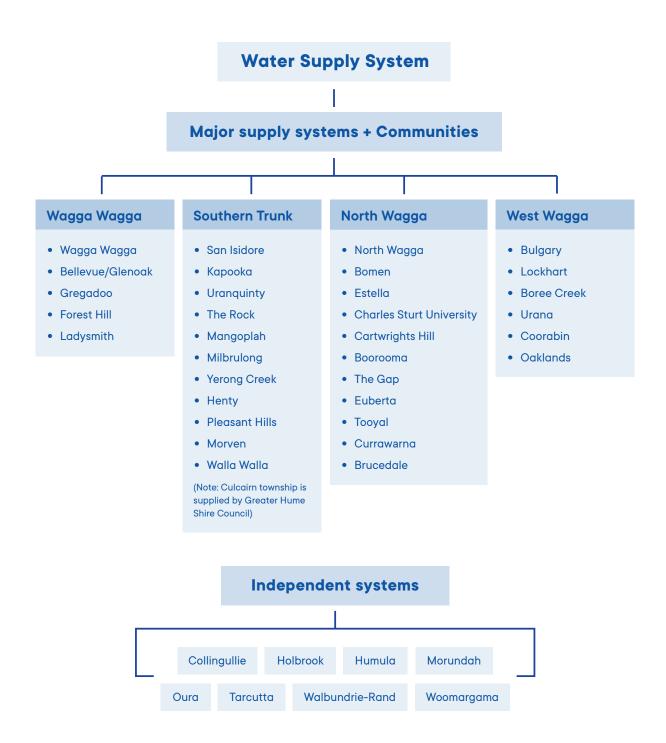
Our customers are diverse and range from households, to farmers, business, industry and other institutions such as hospitals, aged care facilities and education institutions such as Charles Sturt University.



Serviced population by Local Government Area



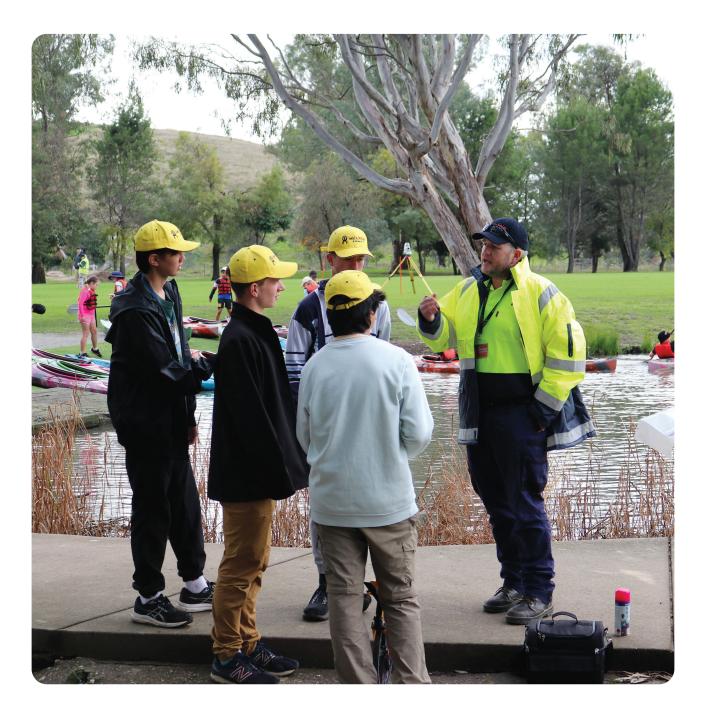
Communities provided with reticulated services



Stakeholder groups and how we connect

Whether we're engaging on a significant project or keeping you informed, we are committed to genuine two-way conversation.

We'll consider the following methods when we connect with you or are designing a consultation. We'll select or add methods that work best for the project and our stakeholders.



Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

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Engagement methods

	Community Engagement	Digital	Traditional Media	Mail	Marketing
Direct Customers	Surveys, drop-in sessions, workshops	Website portal, social media Q&A, email newsletter	Media releases on service updates	Quarterly newsletters, direct mail	Digital/ social ads, merchandise
Indirect Customers	Community meetings, feedback sessions	Social media, website educational content	Media interviews on water issues	Letterbox drops	Promotions, sponsorship
Community Groups	Stakeholder workshops, 1:1 meetings	Email updates, website resources	Media features on local partnerships	Newsletters, addressed letters	Sponsorship, event branding
Ratepayer & Resident Associations	Stakeholder meetings, workshops	Website reports, social media updates	Media releases on local projects	Addressed letters, newsletters	Print advertising
Business & Industry	Business roundtables, stakeholder engagement	Website industry updates, LinkedIn	Media opportunities for infrastructure projects	Direct mail to business owners	Sponsorship, digital ads
Constituent Councils	1:1 meetings, strategic workshops	Website council portal, email reports	Media releases on joint initiatives	Addressed letters to councils	Co-branded campaigns
Wiradyuri & First Nations People	On-Country meetings, cultural advisory groups	Website section on cultural water stories	Media features on Indigenous water management	Targeted engagement mail	Co-designed branding collateral
CALD Communities	Community meetings, multilingual surveys	Translated digital content, social media campaigns		Translated newsletters	Cultural sponsorships, multilingual ads
People of All Abilities	Accessible community workshops	Website with accessibility features, captioned social videos	Inclusive media campaigns	Plain English letters	Inclusive promotional materials
Villages & Rural Communities	Drop-in sessions, local workshops	Website rural updates, social media Q&A	Local radio and regional media	Letterbox drops, addressed letters	Regional event sponsorship
Government Stakeholders	Strategic meetings, formal consultations	Website policy updates, government newsletters	Media releases on policy initiatives	Official correspondence	Targeted industry marketing

Strategic approach

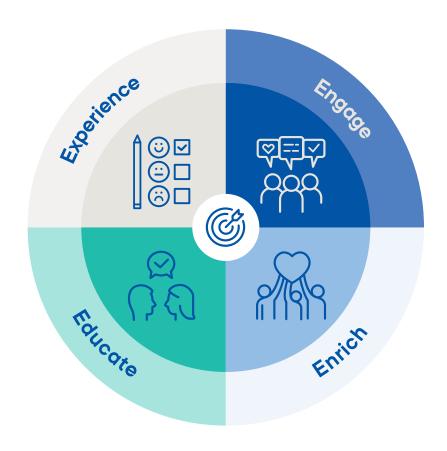
Strategic outcome

We provide exceptional customer service and demonstrate social responsibility to our community.

Our Community Engagement Strategy is built on four focus areas:

- > 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 leve	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	 › Fact sheets › Websites › Open houses › Publishing social media › Newsletters › Email distribution 	› Public comment› Focus groups› Surveys› Public meetings	› Workshops› Deliberate polling	 Citizen advisory committees Consensus- building Participatory decision-making 	› Citizen juries› Ballots› Delegated decisions



Build stronger relationships with our diverse community.

We engage openly, listen actively, and collaborate meaningfully with our diverse community to foster trust, mutual understanding and long-lasting connections.



Targeted outcomes

- Respectfully engage with our First Nations
 Community and their heritage
- Increase the awareness, understanding, and perceived value of the role Riverina Water plays in the community
- > Build stronger relationships to enable informed and inclusive decision making



Actively support and contribute to our community.

We champion initiatives that enrich our community and demonstrate our commitment to making a positive impact.



Targeted outcomes

 Invest in our community and support the enhancement of the social, cultural and environmental life of our community



We help our customers and community to understand.

We help our customers and community to understand where their water comes from and manage their water usage.



Targeted outcomes

- Provide accessible and relevant educational information and opportunities to our customers and the community
- > Continue to drive responsible water usage

Focus area: Experience

Understand and respond to our customer needs and expectations.

We actively seek feedback, anticipate customer needs and deliver responsive services that enhance satisfaction and build trust.



Targeted outcomes

- > Enhance customer experience through digital and technology uplift
- Develop an enhanced understanding of customers and their expectations through data, insights, and analytics to help inform our service offering
- > Support the financial wellbeing of our customers

Reporting

This strategy aligns with the long-term goals of our Business Activity Strategic Plan, the four-year objectives of the Delivery Program and year-on-year actions in the Operational Plans.

We provide reports to the Board and community on our progress and performance every six months and in the Annual Report, along with interim reports on key initiatives such as donations, financial rebates and more.

Each year, Riverina Water undertakes a customer survey to assess its services, what's important to our community and more. This is used assess progress and understand new opportunities.

As we develop and adopt the new Operational Plan each year, we will review existing actions and assess the with the strategic objectives set out in this strategy.

