Charles Sturt University

Accessibility Action Plan

2020-2023

Charles Sturt University, Equity and
Diversity Committee

Revised 2021

Division of Security, Safety, and Wellbeing.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations People of Australia who have from time immemorial, cared for and sustained the continent we all now enjoy, and celebrate the survival of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, which are of the oldest living cultures in the world.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and connection that First Nations people continue to share with the land, the people of the land, and their culture, and acknowledge the respectful and inclusive relationships that stem from these connections. We respect the unified community responsibility that continues to exist in First Nations communities, which spans across generations, and centres on caring, supporting, and celebrating one another, to ensure each individual can participate and belong in the community.

We acknowledge the resilience of all First Nations people, as the original inhabitants and owners of the land, and acknowledge the relationships that have been maintained throughout history. We pay our respect to all First Nations Elders both past and present, in particular, we acknowledge the Wiradjuri (or Wiradyuri), Ngunawal, Gundungarra, and Birpai (or Biripi) peoples of Australia, who are the traditional owners and custodians of the lands where Charles Sturt campuses are located.

Charles Sturt Mission, Ethos and Values

Our mission is to build skills and knowledge in our regions. We offer choice and flexibility to students and work hand in hand with our industries and communities in our teaching, research and engagement.

Growing from our historical roots, we share our knowledge and expertise as a significant regional export industry and we bring strength and learning from this back to our regions.

We are a market-oriented university and express our intent through our goals to be the dominant provider of higher education within our regions and a sector leader in flexible learning.

We believe wisdom transforms communities. With tenacity, we help to shape resilient, sustainable regions for the future. Acknowledging the culture and insight of Indigenous Australians, our ethos is clearly described by the Wiradjuri phrase, *yindyamarra winhanganha*, meaning the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in. This phrase represents who we are at Charles Sturt. It comes from traditional Indigenous Australian knowledge, but it also speaks to the mission of a university – to develop and spread wisdom to make the world a better place.

As a values driven organisation, we bring our values to life and make them part of our daily lives. Underpinning our ethos, our four values are shown below. These values aim to guide our behaviour and way of working to help us achieve our ethos of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in.

Insightful	Inclusive	Impactful	Inspiring
Understanding people and the world	Stronger together	Outcome driven	Leading for the future

Introduction

The Charles Sturt Accessibility Action Plan 2020-2023 (the Action Plan) outlines a university wide strategy to prevent and address disability discrimination for current and prospective students and staff. This plan reflects the University's ethos and values and its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and Disability Standards for Education 2005.

The Action Plan is endorsed by the Vice Chancellor's Leadership Team and the Charles Sturt Equity and Diversity Committee. It is a public facing document designed to clearly articulate the values, actions and responsibilities we have committed to ensuring accessibility and inclusion for students and staff throughout the life of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan was developed with input from students and staff with disability, and key stakeholders. This plan reflects a review of the Charles Sturt University Disability Action Plan 2016-2019 and available data about our students and staff with disabilities.

Strategic Context

The Action Plan is situated within the University's broader strategic framework, in particular the University Strategy 2022. The key components of the strategy are:

Our People	Our Students	Our Communities
Our people are core to everything we do. We will deliver performance through our people to foster a shared commitment to delivering on our mission and vision.	Our students demand an education that is flexible, connected and will get them the job they aspire to. We will have high-quality courses, micro subjects and partnerships that lead the way in academic innovation.	We are a university of the land and people of our regions. Our role is critical in leading the development and skills for the betterment of our regions. Our campuses and research must deliver impact and benefit.

Policy framework

The Action Plan should be implemented in partnership with:

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Workplace Learning for Students with a Disability Policy (Planning Guidelines)
- Disability and Work or Study Adjustment Policy
- Workplace Adjustment Procedure
- Employment Plan – People with a Disability

Legislative Framework and Standards

The Action Plan is designed in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA), and the associated Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE) and will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission for the length of the Plan.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person, in many areas of public life, including employment, and education, because of their disability.

The following legislation and standards are important to the Action Plan and are applicable to students, staff, contractors and visitors:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- NSW Disability Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- The Disability Standards for Education 2005 and the Review of the Education Standards 2012
- The National Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020
- The Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)

Definitions

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) defines disability in relation to a person:

(a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or

(b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or

(c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or

(d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or

(e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or

(f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or

(g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

(h) presently exists; or

(i) previously existed but no longer exists; or

(j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or

(k) is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

Discrimination

The DDA states that discrimination on the basis of disability occurs when a person with disability is:

(a) treated less favourably than a person without disability (direct discrimination); or

(b) made to comply with a general requirement or condition which the person is unable to comply with because of their disability, and which leads to the person being disadvantaged (indirect discrimination); or

(c) is refused or denied access to education, or excluded from participating, or subject to any other detriment in relation to their education.

Carer or assistant

The DDA defines a carer or assistant, in relation to a person with a disability, is one of the following who provides assistance or services to the person because of the disability:

(a) a carer;

(b) an assistant;

(c) an interpreter;

(d) a reader.

The DDA applies in relation to having a carer or assistant in the same way as it applies in relation to having a disability.

For the purpose of this Action Plan, the referencing of a 'person with disability' is inclusive of those with caring responsibility for a person with disability.

Focus areas

Implementation of the Action Plan is an opportunity for Charles Sturt to acknowledge and reflect on the challenges experienced by people with disability in the work and study environment and work towards a student body and workforce that better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Desired outcomes

Charles Sturt aims to be more inclusive, accessible and measurable in how we approach and implement the Accessibility Action Plan:

Inclusive

- Demonstrate clear leadership accountability and responsibility to drive change.
- Develop visible and active disability champions across the organisation.
- Ensure and enhance inclusive practices in communication, working, teaching and learning environments.
- Support all Charles Sturt students and staff to be an inclusive community which helps support people with disabilities to live satisfying everyday lives.
- Ensure and enhance inclusive practices throughout the student and employment life cycle.
- Ensure and enhance inclusive practices throughout community dealings and engagement.

Accessible

- Provide exemplary student, employee or community engagement experiences for people with disability (personalisation).
- Identify key issues and barriers in accessing higher education and mainstream employment at Charles Sturt.
- Ensure that all new buildings and renovations are compliant with all Australian disability access standards
- Ensure that the Institution is compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA guidelines

Measurable

- Increase the representation of students and staff with disability across the entire organisation.
- Establish annual snapshot data for staff and students affected by barriers.
- Establish an evidence base and use longitudinal data to measure and track performance.
- Set measurable targets.
- Your Voice surveys consistently indicate safety, voice, visibility and inclusion for people with disability across all levels of the organisation.
- Increase manager competency and confidence to manage and work effectively with staff and students with disabilities.

Approach

Charles Sturt is committed to a phased approach to achieving the desired outcomes through seven **key focus areas**:

1. All community	Our ethos, *Yindyamarra Winhanganha*.
2. Student experience	Supporting academic success, employability, sustainability, student communities and wellbeing.
3. Employment Practices	Demonstrating inclusive employment policies and practices to strengthen opportunities for people with disability.
4. Learning and Teaching	Learning materials and teaching practices are inclusive, accessible and embracing of our diverse cohort of pathway, undergraduate and post-graduate students.
5. Research and Engagement	Undertake responsible and ethical research activities and demonstrate and promote inclusivity in all engagement undertaken in our communities.
6. Environment	Improving our physical and digital environment to provide an inclusive student, staff and visitor experience.
7. Leadership and Governance	Championing an inclusive environment representative of our mission, ethos and values, and using metrics and data to monitor progress and achievements, and inform decision making.

Monitoring and Review of the Plan

The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Charles Sturt Equity and Diversity Committee.

Designated output owners will report against achievement of the Action Plan, with a report coordinated by the Division of People and Culture provided to the Charles Sturt Equity and Diversity Committee.

Achievement of the Action Plan objectives will be measured using a variety of data sources including, but not limited to:

- Your Voice staff survey satisfaction rates;
- Student Voice survey satisfaction rates;
- feedback reports;
- staff onboarding and exit survey reports;
- staff attrition rates;
- student completion rates; and
- diversity metrics.

Charles Sturt Accessibility Action Plan 2020-2023

1. All community -– our ethos, *Yindyamarra winhanganha*			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
1.1 Awareness and inclusion	1.1.1 Promote the existence and implementation of the Action Plan to the Charles Sturt community to demonstrate our commitment to being an inclusive organisation who welcomes a diverse student and staff population.	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	
	1.1.2 Use inclusive language and images in media, communication and marketing.	Chief Operating Officer	Director, Public Relations and Communication Executive Director, Students Executive Director, Strategic Marketing and Analysis
	1.1.3 Raise awareness of the information, specialist advice and support services for students and staff and how to access them before joining, on commencement and throughout their study/employment.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing, and Executive Director, People and Culture
1.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing	1.2.1 Develop a strategy to address the increasing prevalence of mental health issues (students and staff) as part of a broader wellbeing framework.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing

1.3 Events	1.3.1 Charles Sturt events incorporate accessibility and inclusion into their planning and implementation stages. 1.3.2 Develop and circulate an accessible event checklist for use across all areas of the University.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Students
1.4 Universal design principles and procurement processes.	1.4.1 Develop a purchasing guideline that promotes the inclusion of Universal Design principles in the procurement of all products and services and encourages the participation of suppliers that adhere to principles of Universal Design.	Chief Operating Officer	Chief Financial Officer
	1.4.2 Train Academic staff in the development of accessible subject and course materials.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
1.5 University community	1.5.1 Leverage networks and structures within the University to foster accessibility for staff, students, alumni and community, including consultative committees, Student Senate, University Council and external engagement opportunities.	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	Executive Director, People and Culture, Executive Director, Security, Safety and Wellbeing, Chief of Staff, Director, Advancement, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Executive Director, Student Success, and University Secretary.

2. Student Experience - Supporting academic success, employability, sustainability, student communities and wellbeing.	

Action Area	Activities	Responsibility	Division/Office Responsible
2.1. Future students	2.1.1. Students are made aware of supports available when considering Charles Sturt. 2.1.2. Charles Sturt marketing campaigns incorporate accessibility and inclusion into their planning and initiatives.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Students, Executive Director, Strategic Marketing and Analysis, and Chief Development Officer *[International Student recruitment and Marketing]*
	2.1.3. Develop clear inherent requirement statements for courses as required and make them available to prospective students and the University community, so that students can make informed study and career path choices.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	
	2.1.4. Establish online, accessible enrolment processes that are inclusive.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Students
2.2. Commencing students	2.2.1. Students are made aware of the support available from the Disability and Access Team, including what constitutes a Disability and specify support services available for mental health.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing
2.3. Continuing students	2.3.1. Investigate opportunities to improve communication and engagement about support services available for students with disability to reach those who may acquire a disability during their studies.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing
	2.3.2. Develop employability opportunities for students with disability.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Executive Director, Student Success

Action Area	Activities	Responsibility	Division/Office Responsible
2.4. Graduates and alumni	2.4.1. Ensure that the promotion of Charles Sturt alumni is undertaken with diversity in mind and features success stories of students with disabilities. 2.4.2. Give alumni from diverse backgrounds a voice and opportunities to participate in research, marketing, mentoring and communication activities. 2.4.3. Ensure that a large majority of alumni events and activities are accessible for people with disability	Director, Advancement	
2.5. Student experience	2.5.1. Evaluations of the student experience, attrition and success will include disability as a core demographic	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Executive Director, Student Success

3. Employment Practices - Demonstrating inclusive employment policies and practices to strengthen opportunities for people with disability.			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
3.1. Recruitment	3.1.1. Monitor recruitment processes to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive of persons with disability. 3.1.2. Jobs advertised and related position descriptions are welcoming for people with disability. 3.1.3. Recruitment panels are appropriately trained and prepared to support the candidate experience. 3.1.4. Incorporate a commitment to be an employer of choice for people with disability in the recruitment strategy	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, People and Culture

3.2. Induction and employment	3.2.1. Include disability inclusion information in induction programs. 3.2.2. Monitor staff completions of mandatory disability awareness training for all staff 3.2.3. All staff are made aware of support available in recruitment process and in their letter of offer to provide the opportunity to disclose any disabilities. 3.2.4. All staff are made aware of the availability of workplace adjustments, should they choose to disclose a disability.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, People and Culture
3.3. Reasonable Workplace Adjustments	3.3.1. Implement the Reasonable Adjustment Procedure for staff, ensuring that managers and supervisors have access to training, information and support to guide the process.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing, Executive Director, People and Culture
3.4. Career Development	3.4.1. People with disability are supported in their career development	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	Executive Director, People and Culture
3.5. Recognition of Excellence	3.5.1. Encourage award nominations aligned to the RED Reward and Recognition program and Charles Sturt Excellence Awards.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, People and Culture
	3.5.2. Excellence and innovation in course design and inclusive teaching practices are recognised and encouraged through targeted awards for inclusive curricula and responding to individual needs of students with disabilities.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	
	3.5.3. Ceremonies and events that recognise student success are accessible and inclusive for all students	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Students

4. **Learning and Teaching** - Learning materials and teaching practices are inclusive, accessible and embracing of our diverse cohort of pathway, undergraduate and post-graduate students.			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
4.1. Training	4.1.1. Ensure all Learning and Teaching staff are aware of their obligations and establish professional development to embed principles of Universal Design. 4.1.2. Training is available to staff on Disability Awareness, Curriculum Design and Delivery to support compliance with the Disability Standards for Education (DSE). 4.1.3. Provide communication, support, and advice to staff regarding the development and implementation of Study Access Plans for students with disability or mental health plans.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing, Executive Director, People and Culture, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
4.2. Support	4.2.1. Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching Practices at Charles Sturt are developed. 4.2.2. Teaching staff are supported to develop inclusive, accessible course materials, assessment items and teaching practices.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	
4.3. Exams	4.3.1. Review the process for communicating and supporting academic staff to implement exam adjustments. Provide additional guidance where required at a local level for 'in-class' or non-centrally supported examinations.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing

5. **Research and Engagement** - Responsible and ethical research activities and respectful and inclusive engagement in all that we do.			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
5.1. Research participation	5.1.1. Students and staff with disability are appropriately supported in an accessible and inclusive research environment where access to resources and supports is appropriately communicated. 5.1.2. Students with disability are provided with equitable opportunities to pursue research interests and activities.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	
5.2. Connections with Community and Industry	5.2.1. Staff and students are proactive in establishing collaborative connections within community and industry to apply results of disability-related research, or further research agendas.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	

6. **Environment** - Improving our physical and digital environment to provide an inclusive student, staff and visitor experience.			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
6.1. Adjustments	6.1.1. Adjustments which facilitate more equitable participation in the learning environment or workplace are implemented in a consistent and timely manner.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing, Chief Financial Officer
6.2. Appropriate Support	6.6.1. All support services for students and staff aim to be culturally appropriate, accessible and inclusive of people with disability regardless of their location or mode of access. 6.6.2. The rights of students and staff to privacy and confidentiality are upheld.	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	

6.3. Carers for people with Disability	6.3.1. Information about support for carers is shared through standard communication channels. 6.3.2. Staff training programs on disability include information pertaining to the factors that may impact on the lives of people who care for someone with a disability and the support and adjustments that may be required.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing, Executive Director, People and Culture
6.4. Feedback and Complaints	6.4.1. Clear processes for providing feedback and lodging complaints are communicated. 6.4.2. People with disability are provided with opportunities to provide feedback and insights on workplace experiences.	University Secretary	University Ombudsman, Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing Executive Director, People and Culture
6.5. Physical Environment	6.5.1. Implement a programme of progressive accessibility improvements for Charles Sturt campuses and buildings. 6.5.2. Information about accessibility is readily available when making room bookings. 6.5.3. Continue to improve the process of communicating temporary impediments to accessibility across all University locations. 6.5.4. Ensure accessible parking options are available and appropriately marked. 6.5.5. Ensure regular maintenance and inspection of campus paths to ensure accessibility. 6.5.6. Ensure that all new buildings and renovations are compliant with all Australian disability access standards.	Chief Operating Officer	Chief Financial Officer

6.6. Digital Environment	6.6.1. Progressive improvements to the University's technological environment to support students and staff with disability is implemented.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Information Technology
	6.6.2. Make accessibility information readily available on the Charles Sturt website, maps and mobile applications.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Information Technology, Chief Financial Officer
	6.6.3. Ensure that the Institution is Compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA guidelines. DIT 6.6.4. Access is an integral consideration in the digital infrastructure and software acquisition process.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Information Technology
	6.6.5. Staff members are provided with opportunities to develop skills in creating accessible materials.	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching
	6.6.6. PDFs, videos and digital media content developed by the University are accessible (e.g. captions on videos and images, transcript or an accessible PDF version of an image or table).	Chief Operating Officer	Director, Public Relations and Communications

7. Leadership and Governance - Championing an inclusive environment representative of our mission, ethos and values and using metrics and data to monitor progress and achievements, and inform decision making.			
Action Area	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Division/Office Responsible**
7.1. Promotion	7.1.1. Leaders of the organisation ensure staff are aware of their requirements to meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and Disability Standards for Education 2005.	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	
7.2. Inclusive Processes	7.2.1. Leaders model inclusive practices and demonstrate living our values and creating an inclusive institution of choice for students and staff with disability.	Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team	

7.3. Metrics and Data	7.3.1. Collate and utilise metrics and data to monitor and report, demonstrate results, and drive progress against the Action Plan. 7.3.2. Maintain databases for staff and students with disability in order to monitor and manage individual needs.	Chief Operating Officer	Executive Director, Security, Safety, and Wellbeing