

Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2024-2025

Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing



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At Charles Sturt University, we believe that a thriving and successful university is grounded in the Wiradjuri phrase 'yindyamarra winhanganha' - the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in.

We welcome students, staff and visitors with disabilities to our community. Our goal is simple: to make everyone feel welcome and supported.

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2024-2025 outlines our approach to prevent and tackle discrimination based on disability for both current and future students and staff.

This plan reflects what we stand for at Charles Sturt. We recognise that people bring their own unique mix of experiences and characteristics to our community. It reflects our core values and dedication to fostering a community where everyone feels valued, respected and supported.

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2024–2025 is centred around five key focus areas:

- · Policy and planning
- · Learning and teaching
- Employment
- Inclusive campuses
- · Student experience

Our commitments are outlined in this plan, and I encourage everyone, staff and students, to embrace inclusivity in every aspect of university life. This is crucial to nurturing a more equitable and supportive environment for learning and work.

Professor Renée Leon PSM Vice-Chancellor and President Charles Sturt University



Foreword from Executive Sponsor

In my capacity as Staff Champion for Accessibility and Neurodiversity, it is with pride I introduce our Accessibility and Inclusion Plan for 2024-2025. This document is not just a plan but a declaration of our commitment to creating a university where every individual is valued, understood and supported.

At Charles Sturt, we are driven by a mission to foster an environment where every student and staff member, irrespective of their background or circumstances, can access, participate in and contribute to all aspects of university life. This plan is an embodiment of that mission, laying out strategic initiatives that span policy reform, curriculum design, campus accessibility, digital inclusion and fostering a culture that values diversity and promotes equality.

Key is our commitment to embedding inclusive practices across teaching, learning and employment, ensuring our campuses are welcoming environments where staff and students feel respected and supported. Through targeted actions and measurable outcomes, we aim to address barriers that hinder full participation, enhance our digital platforms for greater accessibility and cultivate a culture where differences are not just accepted but celebrated.

This plan is a call to action for every member of our university community to contribute to a more inclusive and accessible future. It challenges us to think differently, act compassionately and work diligently to create a university that truly reflects the diversity and richness of the society we serve.

Together, we can achieve a transformative impact that resonates not just within our university but across the broader higher education sector and our communities. Let us be leaders in inclusion, advocates for accessibility and champions for change.

Carlo lacono

Executive Sponsor Staff Champion, Accessibility and Neurodiversity

Our mission, ethos and values

Our mission is to cultivate expertise and understanding within our local areas. We provide students with a range of options and adaptability while closely collaborating with our industries and communities to enhance education, research and community involvement.

Our ethos is that wisdom has the power to bring positive change to communities. Through determination, we contribute to the development of robust, enduring regions for the future. The Wiradjuri expression 'yindyamarra winhanganha' encapsulates the idea of respectfully knowing how to live in a world that's worth living in. This phrase serves as the embodiment of our values at Charles Sturt, our guiding principles. It originates from the traditional wisdom of First Nations, and it also aligns with the university's purpose: to foster and disseminate knowledge in order to enhance the world for the better.

Our values include upholding our principles by establishing an inclusive community atmosphere and an educational setting that is accessible, fosters pioneering research, drives societal progress, and contributes to the betterment of our local areas. These values are the foundation of our dedication to cultivating a varied workforce and an environment that embraces inclusivity.



- Rigorous
- Creative
- · Leading, imaginative and solid



Insightful Understanding people and the world

- Respectful
- Perceptive
- Knowledgeable, wise and open-minded



- Accessible
- Versatile
- Easy, warm Inclusive and welcoming Stronger together



<u>Impactful</u>

- Consistent
- Constructive
- Student first, practical and useful



Introduction

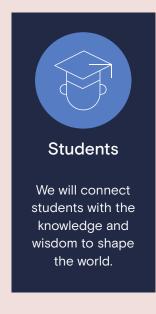
The Charles Sturt Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2024-2025 outlines a university-wide strategy to prevent and address disability discrimination for current and prospective students and staff. This plan reflects the university's ethos and values, and its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

This plan replaces our 2020-2023 Accessibility Action Plan and forms one of several interrelated plans and projects that collectively assist in implementing access and inclusion to all those connected with the university, including:

- University Strategy 2030
- Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025
- Education Strategy (including the <u>Education Strategy Vision 2030</u>)
- International Strategy
- Draft Staff Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2023-2025
- · Campus Master Plan
- First Nations Strategy 2023-2025
- Student Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2024-2025

Strategic context

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan is situated within the university's broader strategic framework, in particular the University Strategy 2030. The key components of the strategy are:









Policy framework

The Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan should be executed collaboratively in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Workplace Learning for Students with Disability Policy (Planning Guidelines)
- Disability and Work or Study Adjustment Policy
- · Workplace Adjustment Procedure
- Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedure
- Facilities policies/procedures

Legislative framework and standards

The Accessibility and Inclusion 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 Accessibility and Inclusion 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
- National Employment Standards
- 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

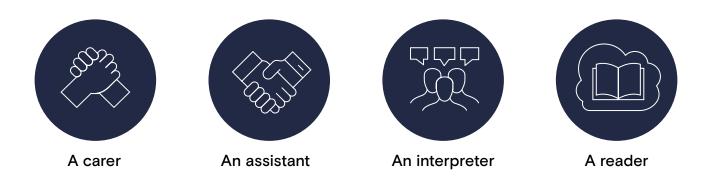
The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* states that discrimination on the basis of disability occurs when a person with disability is:

- 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.

The Act specifically mentions that not making reasonable adjustments can be considered direct discrimination.

Carer and assistant

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* defines a carer or assistant, in relation to a person with disability, is one of the following who provides assistance or services to the person because of the disability:



The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* 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.

The Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan was developed with input from students and staff with disability, and key stakeholders.

Consultation

Each of the interconnected plans aiding the university in attaining the goals outlined in the Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan, as presented in the table on page 18, underwent consultation with staff and/or students during its development phases. Upon completion of a draft of the plan, additional input was sought from staff network groups, with current students also being provided access to the plan for feedback purposes.

What does success look like?

Charles Sturt is committed to achieving the outcomes in this plan, to enhance and create a more accessible and inclusive work and study environment. By using our guiding principles to plan and implement our actions, we can achieve our desired outcomes so our staff and students can thrive.

Guiding principles

These principles seek to create an equitable, accessible and inclusive work and study environment at Charles Sturt. They serve as a commitment to recognising and embracing the diverse university community, fostering individual autonomy and ensuring that our students and staff have the resources and support needed to achieve their academic and professional goals.

Individual autonomy

This plan embraces the principle of individual autonomy and acknowledges that each person's needs and preferences vary. We respect and empower students and staff to make choices that best suit their unique circumstances and how they work and think. This includes personalised adjustment options, flexible scheduling and a range of support services to ensure that everyone can actively engage in university life. This plan also recognises the important role of intersectionality and that various personal characteristics can create multiple, overlapping barriers and biases for people.

Removing barriers for full participation

Creating an accessible and inclusive work and study environment means identifying, understanding and removing the barriers that impact participation for our students and staff. This includes physical barriers that can impact access to our facilities and services, attitudinal barriers that can impact how disability is viewed and perceived across the organisation, communication barriers that can prevent people from accessing the information they need, and systemic barriers that can exclude or discriminate against people with disabilities.

Embracing diversity and respecting difference

Recognising the inherent value of diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, we actively seek diversity and promote an inclusive culture. We aim to create a welcoming and safe environment that allows students and staff from diverse backgrounds to thrive. This includes taking strengths-based approaches to disability and using strengths-based, affirming language when referring to disability or neurodivergence. Everyone at Charles Sturt will practise inclusivity through providing dignity and respect to all, encouraging the sharing of ideas and perspectives, and valuing differences.

Accessibility

Our commitment to accessibility extends to all aspects of university life, including physical accessibility and digital accessibility. We ensure that online learning materials, websites and digital platforms are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. Additionally, we provide adjustments, inclusive/assistive technologies and services to assist students and staff in their educational and professional endeavours.

Equal opportunity

We are dedicated to ensuring that everyone within our university community has an equal opportunity to succeed. This plan encompasses measures to address disparities and provide additional support to individuals who may face educational, economic or social disadvantages. This includes scholarships, mentorship programs and outreach efforts to promote equal access to education and career opportunities.

Desired outcomes

Inclusive and welcoming environment

- Increased physical accessibility: All facilities and buildings are designed or renovated to meet the highest accessibility standards, ensuring wheelchair ramps, elevators and accessible restrooms are available.
- Digital accessibility: All university websites, learning platforms and online resources are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA guidelines, making them accessible for individuals with disabilities.
- Diverse representation: Our students and staff reflect the diverse communities we serve. Diversity is reflected across all staff levels and roles, and across membership on university boards and committees. Visual representation in our marketing materials also needs to reflect this diversity.
- Welcoming and affirming environment: Fostering a positive, respectful and welcoming work and study environment, so people from all backgrounds feel included, respected and valued.
- Leadership and support: University leadership demonstrates
 a strong commitment to accessibility and inclusion by the
 implementation of the objectives of this plan and responding
 to the emerging accessibility and inclusion issues.

Accessible communities

- Supportive services: The university offers comprehensive and safe support services that facilitate appropriate study or work adjustments and inclusive technologies to meet the individual needs of students and staff with disabilities.
- Inclusive events and meetings: University events, meetings and activities are planned with accessibility in mind, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can fully participate and access the information they need. Charles Sturt provides exemplary and personalised experiences for students, staff and community members with disability.
- Inclusive procurement strategies: Charles Sturt embeds an accessibility lens with any procurement of systems and software.

Improved systems and processes

- Supportive and streamlined adjustments: The university establishes supportive, clear and efficient processes and systems for requesting and providing adjustments to students and staff with disabilities. Relevant, accessible and current information regarding workplace adjustments is available to all staff and supervisors.
- Data-driven decisions: Various data points will be used to monitor and assess the impact of accessibility initiatives, allowing for continuous improvement.
- Staff training: Staff will have training opportunities to better support students and colleagues with disabilities.

Governance, accountability and reporting

Charles Sturt has developed an implementation approach with transparent governance arrangements, which will set the foundation for sustainable long-term change and outcomes.

This plan will be overseen by both our People Committee and the Student Experience Committee, to provide direction, guidance and monitor our progress, and will report annually to the Executive Leadership Team and the University Council's Audit and Risk Committee via a written annual report.

Both committees will seek input from staff and students across a range of accessibility and inclusion matters and in relation to progress of the plan, via formal staff and student networks and broader staff engagement forums and initiatives.

The Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing will drive the implementation of the plan and liaise with key stakeholders accountable for delivering and enabling related strategies and plans.



Charles Sturt Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2024-2025

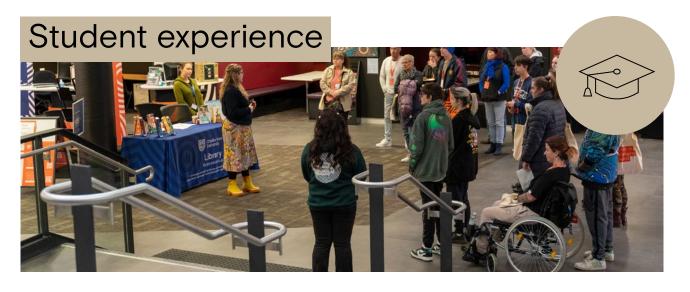
There are five key focus areas that frame our plan.











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Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Establish governance mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan.	Reporting against each action listed in this plan will occur on an annual basis and be overseen by the People Committee and Student Experience Committee.	All plans listed below	Annual progress reports submitted to people and student experience committees.	Primary: DSSW Contributors: All listed other areas holding responsibility in this column.	February 2025 and 2026

Learning and teaching



Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Continue to extend the recognition of excellence of inclusive practices for teaching and support for students with disabilities.	Excellence and innovation in course design and inclusive teaching practices recognised by a Charles Sturt teaching award.	Education Strategy Vision - Exceptional Educators	Awarded in 2024	Director Teaching Academy	Q2 2024
2. Design and develop curriculum using universal design principles.	Curriculum design principles embed UD and are delivered as part of the six-stage curriculum cycle.	Education Strategy Vision 2030	All courses designed aligned to UD principles.	Sub-Dean Curriculum Design	Ongoing
3. Use inclusive language and images in learning materials.	Developed guidelines for the use of inclusive language and images in learning and teaching materials.	Education Strategy Vision 2030	All courses contain inclusive language and images.	Sub-Dean Curriculum Design	Ongoing
4. Academic Quality and Standards website development.	Establish new website featuring inclusive language and meeting accessibility requirements.	Office of Academic Quality and Standards Operational Plan 2024	Website developed, meeting standards.	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	Q1 2024



Employment

Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Review and update university employment policies and procedures to support inclusion of staff with disability and staff who are carers.	Diversity and inclusion principles (including intersectional impacts) are embedded in university operations through inclusive policies and procedures. Benchmark, review and update policies and procedures to reduce and remove systemic barriers for staff with disability and staff who are carers.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Policies and procedures are clear and accessible, and reflect and incorporate feedback from employee networks, Diversity Champions and diverse staff.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team, Division of People and Culture Policy owners	Q4 2024
2. Maintain and develop employee networks.	Accessibility and Neurodiversity Employee Network (and Carers Network) are established, developed and maintained.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Employee networks established and meeting regularly. Information from networks informs new initiatives and policy renewal/development. Employee networks function as forums in which to raise issues of importance, to provide feedback and guide decisions around university priorities and initiatives that impact them. Staff with disability or who are carers are more engaged and have a stronger sense of belonging (Your Voice metrics). Staff know where to seek support, advice and knowledge to manage their own or others' diversity needs.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team, Division of People and Culture Diversity Champions	Ongoing



Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
3. Revised, aligned and best-practice workplace adjustment processes.	Establish supportive, clear and efficient processes and systems for requesting and providing workplace adjustments for staff with disabilities and carers. Workplace adjustment processes and policies are informed by best practice and employee networks (lived experience). Information regarding workplace adjustments and flexible work is accessible, up-to-date and available to all current and prospective staff.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Current and prospective staff feel supported and empowered to request adjustments and flexibility. Training, resources and awareness-raising communications build manager and staff confidence to implement workplace adjustments. Workplace adjustments requiring specialist equipment or worksite assessments are referred to appropriate external organisations (e.g. Job Access, Vision Australia) as relevant. Workplace adjustments are implemented in a consistent and timely way. A centralised database is established, maintained and used to monitor and review workplace adjustments.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team, Division of People and Culture Business Partner team, Division of People and Culture Health, Safety and Wellbeing team, Division Security, Safety and Wellbeing Diversity Champions	Q2 2024
4. Increased disability awareness and confidence to promote a more respectful, welcoming and affirming work environment for individuals with disabilities.	Benchmark, develop and refresh guides, toolkits, education and training for managers and staff on topics including accessible and inclusive meetings, events, language, communication and work environments for neurodivergent staff and staff with disabilities. University events, meetings and activities are consistently delivered with accessibility in mind. Internal and external communications use best practice approaches to support the needs of diverse audiences.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Completion and participation rates for mandatory and opt-in online training modules. Training participant feedback. Access/downloads of online resources. Managers and leaders role model inclusive practices, champion inclusion and proactively seek to increase the diversity of Charles Sturt's workforce. Staff with disabilities, and carers, feel more valued, respected and included and have better wellbeing and progress outcomes at work (Your Voice/Pulse metrics). More individuals with disability can actively participate and engage in university events and meetings. Inclusive language and practices are embedded into all internal and external communications across different platforms and media (e.g. print and online).	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team, Division of People and Culture Diversity Champions Managers All staff Executive Leadership Team Senior leaders	Q3 2024



Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
5. Provide coaching and support for managers to navigate complex matters that relate to staff with disability or caring responsibilities.	Managers can seek advice and coaching from the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team: EDI@csu.edu.au Information and resources available online.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Utilisation of online information and links. Feedback from managers. Number of managers liaising with EDI team. Collaboration between EDI Team and other DPC teams.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team, DPC Managers	Ongoing
3. Data capture and integrity.	Revise processes to better capture and report data on staff with disability, ensuring autonomy, trust and safety are integral to the processes. Monitoring of workforce diversity, with hiring/promotion decisions informed by diversity data and inclusive practices.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Staff feel confident to share their diversity details, knowing these will be used ethically to inform university reporting and decision-making. Up to date EO data is available to inform decision-making for initiatives that impact key diversity groups. Senior leaders understand the diversity profile of the workforce in their portfolio and communicate desire for more balanced diversity representation. Managers actively identify and address any imbalances and inequities in their areas, supported by senior leaders and EDI Team.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team Division of People and Culture Managers All staff Executive Leadership Team Senior leaders DPC Systems team	Q4 2024
7. Partnerships and nemberships.	Identify and explore relevant organisations to partner with to support staff with disability or caring responsibilities.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Resources and knowledge that supports best practice are available and used to reduce barriers at Charles Sturt.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team, DPC Managers Executive Leadership Team	
3. Programs and practices.	Review attraction, recruitment, onboarding, learning and development programs, and reward and recognition practices, to address bias and barriers and promote inclusion of staff with disability and staff with caring responsibilities.	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025	Charles Sturt (Your Voice/Pulse metrics). Inclusive language and practices embedded into recruitment process. Increase in use of EO statements in reward and recognition processes. Increase in staff with disability or caring responsibilities progressing in academic promotions.	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team Talent Acquisition team Organisational Development team Hiring managers Program owners DVC Academic DVC Research	Q2 2024



Inclusive campuses

Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Improve the experience and accessibility of the built environment.	As the campus master planning process is completed on each campus, stakeholders (students and staff) with disability or health conditions are included in the data gathering process.	Campus Master Plan	Improved accessibility of campuses.	Facilities Management	Ongoing
2. Review wayfinding on each campus to improve accessibility for those with disability, including consideration of electronic forms of wayfinding.	Feasibility analysis conducted and recommendations offered.	Campus Master Plan	Completion of feasibility analysis.	Facilities Management	Q3 2025
3. Continue to improve library spaces for all users.	In collaboration with the campus master planning, continue to refine the physical library spaces on campuses in order to improve the student experience through increased functionality and greater accessibility of spaces.	Campus Master Plan	Improved accessibility and better student/stakeholder experience in library spaces.	Division of Library Services	Ongoing
4. Explore options to further consider assistance animal requirements on campus.	A more inclusive campus environment for staff and students with assistance animals.	Campus development and operations	An improved campus environment for students and staff with assistance animals, e.g. watering stations, outdoor facilities to accommodate animals. Review and make recommendations for capital investments in improving accommodation options for students who stay on residence with assistance animals.	DFM – including ResLife	Ongoing



Student experience

Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Embedded recognition and celebration of inclusion and disability at the university.	Excellence and innovation in offering an inclusive environment for all stakeholders.	Campus Master Plan Draft Student Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2024-2025	Evidence of recognition of celebrating students and staff with disability who study either online or on campus at the university, e.g. RUOK day, International Day of Disability.	Manager Accessibility and Inclusion Support Associate Director, Student Life Associate Director Student Communications	Q4 2025
2. Review the suite of equity scholarships for increased expansion of equity groups (e.g., those with disability).	Expansion of scholarships available to equity groups.	Draft Student Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2024-2025	Inclusion of scholarships for equity groups.	Associate Director, SX Service Centre Director Advancement Office	Q4 2025
3. Prioritise responses in addressing the access requirements of the Charles Sturt community.	Creating a safe environment where reporting is encouraged and supported.	Asset register and maintenance schedule	Completion of closed reports via the incident management reporting systems. Current asset register and maintenance schedule.	DFM DIT Accessibility and Inclusion Manager	Q4 2025
4. Develop capability and recognition of students with disability through co-design, seeking feedback on support and services delivered to students.	Creating a student co-design culture.	Draft Student Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2024-2025	Reporting on number of student co-design opportunities.	Accessibility and Inclusion Manager Associate Director, Student Life	Ongoing
5. Foster a culture of safety and wellbeing for students.	Students feel safe and supported in the university learning environment.	Draft Student Wellbeing and Framework Plan 2024-2025 First Nations Strategy 2023-2025	Reporting on actions identified in respective connected plans.	Accessibility and Inclusion Manager Associate Director Health Safety and Wellbeing	Ongoing



Action	Deliverable	Connected plans	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Timeline
6. Promote access to and normalise use of assistive technologies.	Ongoing access to learning materials using assistive technology.	Education Strategy Vision 2030	All courses via the LMS have assistive technologies to ensure equity of access to learning.	Dean, Learning and Teaching Innovation	Ongoing
7. Make data-driven decisions that positively impact the participation, retention and university experience of students with disability.	In-depth analysis of commonwealth reporting and internal Charles Sturt data.	Nil	Data analysis shared with all contributors to review to consider in implementation of enclosed objectives, and to inform future objectives in the forthcoming plan.	Manager Accessibility and Inclusion Service Office of Planning and Analytics	Q4 2024
8. Encourage diversity in student clubs	Communication plan targetting equity group to increase awareness of existing clubs. Messaging to students that if existing clubs are not meeting needs then students can start own clubs.	Operational Plan Student Life	Commencements of new clubs	Associate Director of Student Life	2025



Find out more

about.csu.edu.au/our-university/ethos/ accessibility-inclusion



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