Charles Sturt Ally Network

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Overview

The Charles Sturt Ally Network (Ally Network) is an informal visible network of staff and students who are identified Allies to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and related communities (LGBTIQA+). The Ally Network acknowledges and supports sexual, sex and gender diversity at Charles Sturt University.

The Ally Network endorses the University's equity, diversity, and inclusion policies and actively contributes to a university-wide culture of safety and wellbeing. It promotes a higher education environment that is inclusive, safe and respectful for all persons representing Charles Sturt's core values – Insightful, Inclusive, Impactful and Inspiring.

The Ally Network reflects the ethos of the University – *yindyamarra winhanganha* – 'the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in'. The Ally Network acknowledge that we are a university of the land and people of our regions, and we aim to develop holistic, far-sighted people who help their communities grow and flourish. By approaching sex, sexuality and gender diversity through an intersectional lens, the Network promotes diverse ways of knowing and living in the world.

2. Guiding Principles:

a. The Ally Network acknowledges the Wiradjuri, Ngunawal, Gundungarra and Biripi peoples of Australia, who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which Charles Sturt campuses are located and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. The Network recognises the diversity of First Nations people, their experiences, their cultures, languages and practices, and the richness of their contributions to the places where we function;

b. Members of the Ally Network create a visible network of support and advocacy for LGBTIQA+ students and staff across the University;

c. Ally Network members build a culture of affirmation and inclusion by raising awareness of the positive contribution and the issues faced by staff and students who are LGBTIQA+;

d. Policies, programs and services at Charles Sturt meet a standard consistent with best practice in addressing the needs of the LGBTIQA+ community;

e. Student and staff initiatives are grounded in the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, and recognise the basic rights of having a safe, inclusive and affirming environment while attending or working at Charles Sturt;

f. Student and staff initiatives consider the specific nature of the Charles Sturt context, including the regional location of campuses, themes and trends including data and research informed by LGBTIQA+ perspectives, and resources available to develop and deliver relevant programs and services on campuses and online; and

g. Acknowledgement and understanding that documented policies and procedures related to equity and diversity are living documents and must be revisited and revised, with appropriate consultation, to adapt to a changing environment.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Charles Sturt University Ally Network are to:

a. Promote a safe, inclusive and affirming environment for students and staff who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual or members of related communities (LGBTIQA+);

b. Increase awareness of issues faced by regional LGBTIQA+ students and staff, including First Nations LGBTIQA+ individuals and communities, and provide a visible network committed to addressing these;

c. Promote and celebrate LGBTIQA+ dates of significance;

d. Partner and consult with LGBTIQA+ students and staff to give them a voice;

e. Speak out on behalf of LGBTIQA+ students and staff and advocate alongside them;

f. Provide information and input for policy development and implementation through participating in consultative processes, raising issues for consideration and inviting all members to contribute to Ally Network submissions;

g. Provide networking opportunities for LGBTIQA+ students and staff

h. Provide input to the Charles Sturt Equity and Diversity Committee;

i. Seek access to senior forums, senior leaders and strategic opportunities to share the message;

j. Influence the planning and development of initiatives and training aimed at celebrating the diversity of the LGBTIQA+ communities; and

k. Promote being an Ally and growing our Network by promoting and attending events, contributing ideas, and participating in working groups to progress the objectives listed above.

4. Membership.

The Charles Sturt Ally Network is an open, coordinated group of trained Allies, made up of any interested students and staff who have completed (or are enrolled in) both *LGBTIQA+ Awareness* and *Empowering Allies* training, regardless of their employment or enrolment type at Charles Sturt.

Membership of the Ally Network is open to Charles Sturt students of all study modes (part-time, full-time, distance or on-campus

Membership of the Ally Network is open to Charles Sturt staff of any employment type (casual, fixed-term, permanent, part-time or full-time) and any level.

A full list of ally members will be listed publicly on the University website.

5. Functions and Responsibilities

5.1. Allies

An Ally is an agent of change who challenges and addresses discriminatory practices. This includes, but is not limited to, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, bi-erasure, intersexphobia, acephobia, heteronormativity, heterosexism, and cis-normativity; and recognises the intersectionality of discrimination.

Allies are not experts about matters of sexuality and gender identity. They are individuals who strongly support making Charles Sturt University an environment where all members

can safely study and work free of harassment or discrimination. Allies work to incorporate LGBTIQA+ informed education and research into the networks activities.

An Ally must complete both the *LGBTIQA+ Awareness* and *Empowering Allies* training module. This training should be completed prior to their appointment to the Network, or they should be enrolled in the next available session.

The responsibilities of the Charles Sturt Ally Network members are to:

a. Increase respect and inclusion of LGBTIQA+ students and staff and role model non-discriminatory practices and language;

b. Provide a safe and confidential environment for people to make enquiries regarding issues related to matters of sexual diversity and gender identity;

c. Act as a point of contact and provide a safe place for students and staff to seek support;

d. Provide information when required, and refer appropriately;

e. Allies will display visible signs of Ally membership, including, but not limited to, displaying a poster, email signature, and other physical merchandise provided;

f. Attend Charles Sturt University Ally Network meetings and events as regularly as possible;

g. Have a strategy with clearly defined action plans, timelines and/or deliverables, and report against this Strategy on an annual basis to the Equity & Diversity Committee;

h. Act with an intersectional approach within the LGBTIQA+ community, and actively promote the visibility of Trans/Gender Diverse people, LGBTIQA+ women, Indigenous LGBTIQA+, LGBTIQA+ person of faith, LGBTIQA+ CALD, LGBTIQA+ of mature age, LGBTIQA+ living with disability and Intersex people; and

i. Exhibit the highest standards of ethical behaviour while following Charles Sturt University's equity, diversity, and inclusion policies, which apply to Charles Sturt Ally Network members in addition to the responsibilities outlined in this section.

5.2. Co-Conveners

Co-conveners are members of the Charles Sturt Ally Network who have leadership responsibilities for the Network.

Six Co-conveners will form the leadership of the Charles Sturt Ally Network, including no less than:

a. Two students;

b. One academic staff member;

c. One professional staff member;

d. A representative from the Division of People and Culture/Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion practitioner; and,

e. A secretariat

One co-convener will be designated the Chair of the Ally Network. The Chair can be from any of the above categories.

Where practical, nominees should reflect a diverse range of lived experience - including, but not limited to: gender, First Nations, culturally diverse, person with a disability, and other intersectional identities.

Nomination process:

a. Each year, at the Annual General Meeting, members of the Charles Sturt Ally Network may self-nominate to be a co-convener;

b. Co-conveners may self-nominate to be the Chair;

c. An informal poll will be conducted if there are more nominations than positions or more than one nomination for Chair;

d. Any poll must be conducted by an individual who has not nominated for a co-convener position;

e. Any poll will only be taken from Ally Network Members in attendance at the meeting.

Co-conveners of the Charles Sturt Ally Network will:

i. Understand the strategic implications and be an advocate for, and driver of, equity, diversity, and inclusion, within Charles Sturt;

ii. Make linkages between the goals of the Ally Network and other events and initiatives occurring at Charles Sturt;

iii. Have a broad understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and its importance to Charles Sturt; and

iv. Communicate information and promote equity, diversity and inclusion, within Charles Sturt and its community and act as an advocate for issues and recommendations arising from the Charles Sturt Ally Network.

The primary responsibilities of the co-conveners will be to:

a. Lead the Charles Sturt Ally Network by convening meetings, setting agendas, coordinating and tracking progress of Ally Network activities;

b. Lead the Charles Sturt Ally Network participation in LGBTIQA+ days of significance, through ensuring Ally Network participation in working parties and attendance by Ally Network members at key events;

c. Provide advocacy on all levels relating to issues and concerns of staff and students raised by members of the Charles Sturt University Ally Network;

d. Provide a vision and strategic direction for Ally Network initiatives in alignment with Charles Sturt strategic priorities, policy and the view of Network members;

e. Monitor outcomes and provide advice on areas relating to LGBTIQA+ issues and initiatives;

f. Provide information to the Charles Sturt Equity and Diversity Committee through a quarterly report;

g. Respond to requests for advice advocacy and action from the Charles Sturt University Ally Network. Co-conveners will determine whether the request falls within their remit or needs to be appropriately referred to designated equity and diversity staff positions;

h. Determine eligibility for membership of the Network by staff or students who have undertaken previous external Ally Training within the three years prior to seeking to join the Charles Sturt Ally Network; and

i. Create a sustainability plan (over and above a leadership structure) that will ensure the longevity and continuity of the Network
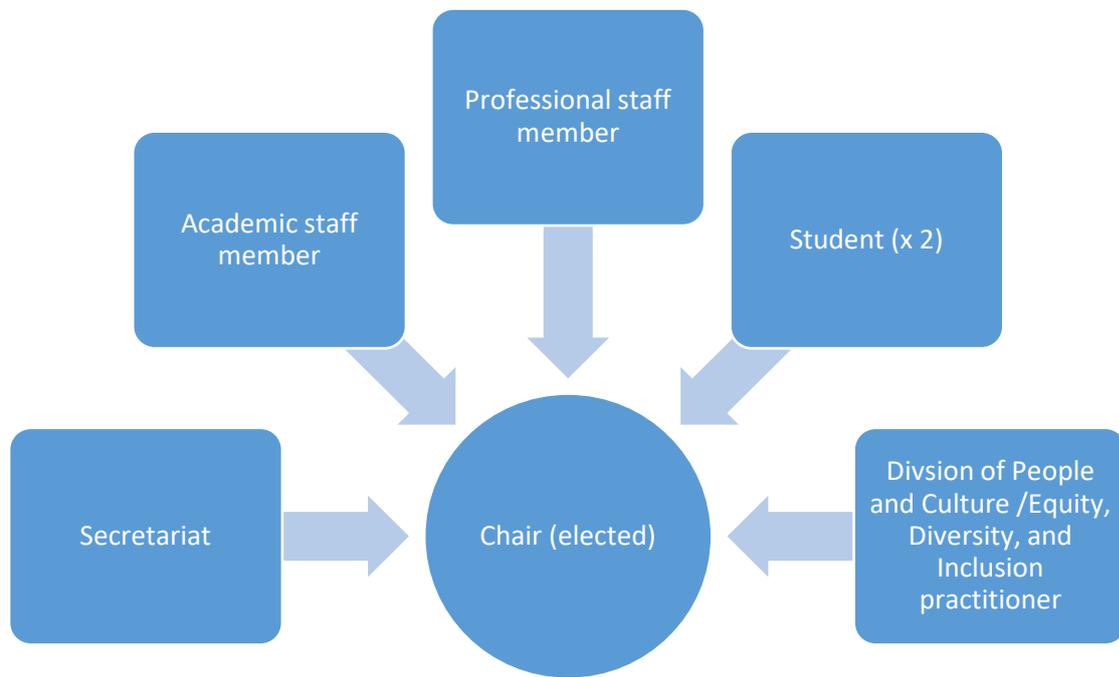

5.3 Campus Leads

Campus Leads are members of the Ally Network who have leadership and facilitation responsibilities for the Network at each of Charles Sturt campuses – Bathurst, Albury, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Orange, Port Macquarie, Canberra, and Goulburn.

Nomination process:

a. At the Annual General Meeting, members of the Charles Sturt Ally Network may self-nominate to be a Campus Lead;

b. An informal poll will be conducted if there are more nominations than positions or more than one nomination for Campus Lead;

c. Any poll must be conducted by an individual who has not nominated for a Campus Lead position; and

d. Any poll will only be taken from those in attendance to the meeting.

Campus Leads will act as contact points for the Charles Sturt Ally Network and facilitate events and activities at that campus.
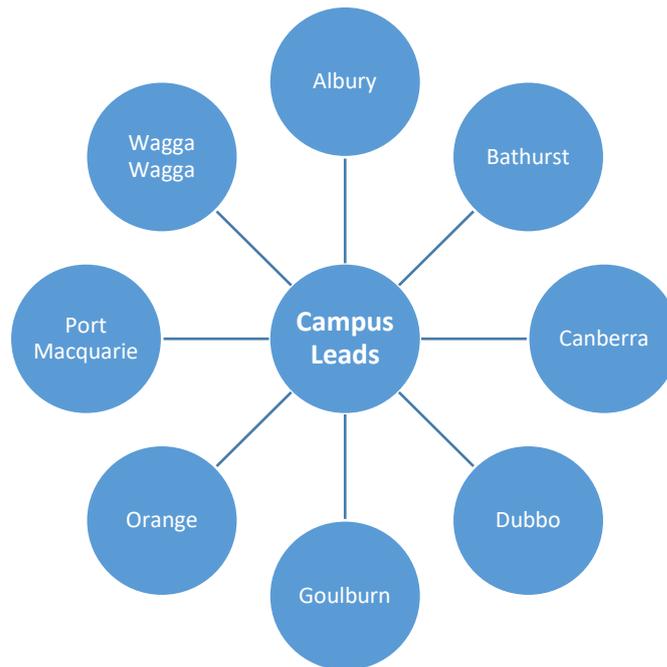
5.4 Champions

LGBTIQA+ Champions assist Charles Sturt to optimise the support provided to LGBTIQA+ people by ensuring that physical, socio-cultural, intellectual/academic, spiritual and environmental aspects of the student and staff experience are reflective of the needs of the LGBTIQA+ community.

Co-conveners of the Charles Sturt Ally Network will invite 10 selected people to become Champions of the Charles Sturt Ally Network. Champions will ideally have a level of seniority within their areas.
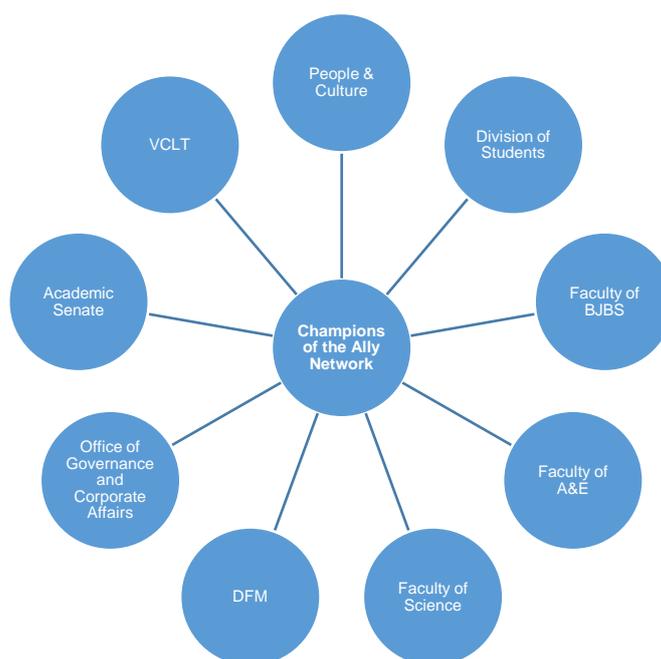
Champions of the Charles Sturt Ally Network will:

a. Actively contribute to an organisational environment which reflects the ethos and values of Charles Sturt University, is inclusive and celebrates its diverse student and staff population;

b. Demonstrate a commitment to creating an inclusive environment focused on making Charles Sturt an employer/educator of choice and University of choice for students and staff;

c. Increase organisational knowledge, competency and capacity to respond to the identified needs of the LGBTIQA+ community by ensuring that issues raised by the Ally Network and those relevant to the LGBTIQA+ community feature in decision-making forums;

d. Ensure LGBTIQA+ issues are considered in policy development, service delivery, course content, student and staff communications, student administration, human resources and recruitment, and identifying practices that negatively impact the LGBTIQA+ community;

e. Ensure that services and programs are LGBTIQA+ inclusive, culturally safe and accessible;

f. Increase the visibility and raise the profile of LGBTIQA+ people within the organisation;

g. Improve the capacity of the organisation to identify, respond to and address the mental health and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQA+ students and staff; and

h. Communicate regularly to the Ally Network regarding the current status of the University, issues that need to be raised, and statistics relevant to the Network

The primary responsibilities of the Charles Sturt Ally Network Champions will be to:

a. Keep abreast of research and best practice approaches in implementing longer-term, sustainable and cyclical positive cultural change in regards to LGBTIQA+ inclusivity for students, staff, stakeholders and our local communities;

b. Raise awareness of the intersectional social and cultural determinants of poor mental health including the links between homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, bi-erasure, intersexphobia, acephobia, heteronormativity, heterosexism, and cis-normativity and poor mental health and encourage the consideration of social as well as psychological interventions to minimise risk factors for staff and students;

c. Provide LGBTIQA+ cultural advice to staff and senior decision-makers to influence outcomes; and

d. Act as a media spokesperson, as required.

6. Meetings.

The Charles Sturt Ally Network will meet a minimum of four times a year. Quorum will be half the Ally co-convenors (plus the Chair), plus one.

A separate Annual General Meeting will be held each year. The Annual General Meeting will be run by a person who is not a member of the Network.

Co-conveners will set the agendas for committee meetings and the Chair will lead all regular

sessions of the Charles Sturt Ally Network.

The notice and agenda of a meeting will include relevant supporting papers.

Co-conveners of the Charles Sturt Ally Network may invite other people to attend as they see fit, including community partners, and consult with other people or seek any information it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.

Conflicts of interest

Co-conveners will be invited to disclose conflicts of interest at the commencement of each meeting. Ongoing conflicts of interest need not be disclosed at each meeting once acknowledged. Where members or invitees are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, they will be excused from discussions on the issue where a conflict exists.

7. Secretariat duties

A designated member of the Ally Network will act as the secretariat for the Charles Sturt Ally Network and will assist the Chair to develop and distribute agendas, papers, minutes and calendar.

8. Agenda/Minutes

Items for the agenda are to be provided to the secretariat no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

Agendas shall be prepared, approved by the Chair and circulated to members of the Network no later than one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

Minutes shall be prepared, approved by the Chair and circulated to members of the Network within two weeks of a meeting.

Ally Network Flow Chart