Equal Employment Opportunity

Purpose

Riverina Water seeks to provide an environment where everyone feels welcome, are treated fairly and with respect, and are free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, vilification, bullying or victimisation. Our aim is to ensure that when employment decisions are made, they are based on merit and capabilities that an individual may possess. Riverina Water also recognises its positive duty under *the Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Commonwealth) to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination, sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, hostile work environments on the ground of sex, and related victimisation.

Policy Statement

Riverina Water is committed to ensuring the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), fair treatment and non-discrimination and will promote EEO and fulfil its obligations as outlined in relevant legislation, including its obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 in respect of Target Groups (See Definitions). .

- Employment decisions are based on merit, capability and performance.
- Workplace practices, policies and procedures are fair, equitable and consistently applied.
- The work environment is free from discrimination or harassment and bullying and values diversity and inclusion.
- An EEO Management plan will be kept and reviewed periodically at least every four (4) years.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, Board members, members of committees, agents and contractors of Riverina Water, collectively referred to in this policy as '*workplace participants*', and extends to all work-related locations and functions. It applies to conduct in digital environments (email, messaging platforms and social media) where there is a connection with work.

EEO laws apply to all areas of employment as well as the provision of services.

Definitions

In relation to this Policy:

Riverina Water	This means 'Riverina Water County Council'.

Bullying	Repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person or group that creates a risk to health and safety. Detail on how bullying-typ conduct, including single serious incidents, is assessed is set out in the Respect at Work Procedure.
Discrimination	Treating a person or group less favourably because of a background or personal characteristic protected by law (for example race, sex, age, disability, religion, carer or family responsibilities, or association with a person who has such an attribute). May be **direct** (an outright less-favourable act), **indirect** (a requirement that disadvantages a particular group), or **systemic** (a pattern arising from both). Managers should consider reasonable adjustments (e.g. for disability, pregnancy or religious observance) when setting requirements, to reduce indirect discrimination risk.
Harassment	Unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, offends or humiliates a person, whether or not repeated or intended.
Hostile work environment on the ground of sex	A work environment that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating because of a person's sex — a distinct category of unlawful conduct under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), separate from sexual harassment.
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature where there is a reasonable possibility that the person being harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the behaviour, whether or not intended.
Target Groups	As identified under the Local Government Act 1993 (ss 344–345): women, members of racial minorities, and persons with disabilities. Riverina Water's EEO Management Plan sets out specific initiatives, workforce data and reporting for these groups; this Policy sets the rules, the Management Plan sets the program.
Vexatious Complaint	A complaint made in bad faith, with no reasonable prospect of a misconduct finding, intended to annoy, harass or retaliate.
Victimisation	Retaliation against a person because they have made, or are believed to intend to make, a complaint or assisted in an investigation. Unlawful.

Vilification	A public act inciting hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule of a person or group on grounds prohibited by law (including race and, in NSW, certain other grounds). A serious breach that will not be tolerated.
Workplace Bullying	Workplace bullying is a repeated, unreasonable behaviour, that is directed towards a person or a group of people and creates a risk to their health and safety.
Workplace Participants/ People Leader	Workers including employees, agents, board members, committee members, contractors, at the workplace under the management and control of Riverina Water. People leaders are direct supervisors, managers and executives.

Principles

1. Discrimination, vilification, harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. They can occur even without intent, and a single serious incident may still breach the Code of Conduct or WHS duties even where it does not meet a legal threshold of 'repeated' conduct. Definitions and examples of each are set out above and in the Respect at Work Procedure; workplace participants should refer to that Procedure for practical guidance on recognising and reporting these behaviours. Riverina Water is committed to preventing sexual harassment and hostile work environments, not only responding to complaints after they arise.
2. **Expectations and responsibilities**

Workplace Participants

All workplace participants must: understand and comply with this Policy; treat others with fairness, courtesy, dignity and respect; not engage in, assist or encourage unlawful conduct; report unlawful conduct they experience or witness; and maintain confidentiality if involved in a complaint. Workplace participants may be personally and legally liable for unlawful conduct.

3. **Resolving Issues under this Policy**

Workplace participants who experience or witness conduct contrary to this Policy should report it to their People Leader or the People & Culture Team. Complaints may be resolved informally or formally, in accordance with Riverina Water's Grievance Procedure, Respect at Work Procedure, Complaints Management Policy. Complaints may also be made as protected disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosures Policy. Outcomes depend on the findings, nature and circumstances of the matter and may include training, mediation, corrective action or, where serious misconduct is found, disciplinary action including

termination. Parties will, as far as reasonably possible, be informed of the outcome of a complaint that directly affects them, while confidentiality is maintained. A workplace participant may seek assistance from an external body (for example the Industrial Relations Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission or Anti-Discrimination NSW) at any stage. Support is available at any time through the Employee Assistance Program.

A complaint that is not substantiated will not of itself result in disciplinary action. However, a complaint found to have been made knowingly that is false, maliciously or in bad faith may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, or termination of or non-renewal of a contract or engagement.

Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Non-Compliance

People & Culture will provide training on this Policy and related obligations and will report annually on EEO outcomes through Riverina Water's EEO Management Plan and Annual Report. Any suspected or known non-compliance with this Policy will be reported to the CEO.

Policy number	**1.21**
Responsible area	CEO/People & Culture
Approved by	Riverina Water Board Res
Approval date	CEO 23.09.26 and 22 October Board Meeting
Legislation or related strategy	Riverina Water County Council Enterprise Award 2025 (and its replacement) *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)* *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)* *Australian Human Rights Commission Act (1986) (Cth)* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (inc ss344-345 EEO Management Plan)* *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)* *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

	Crimes Inciting Racial Hatred) Act 2025 (NSW) *Respect @ Work reforms and positive duty guidance (Australian Human Rights Commission)*
Documents associated with this policy	*Code of Conduct Policy* *Complaints Management Policy* *Grievance Procedure* *Respect at Work Procedure* *Recruitment Policy and Procedure* *Higher Duties and Secondment Procedure* Equal Opportunity Management Plan Internal Reporting (Protected Disclosures) Policy *RWCC Employee Information and Communicati Device Acceptable Usage Agreement.*
Policy history	Vers 6 - 20 October 2022 (Res 22/195) Vers 5 – 22 Feb 2017 (Res 17/18) Vers 4 – 24 June 2015 (Res 15/86) Vers 3 – 27 June 2012 (Res 12/71) Vers 2 – 7 Dec 2007 (Res 07/108) Vers 1 – 19 Oct 2005 (Res 05/86) Original 27 Aug 1997 (Res 97/57)
Review schedule	4 years

Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative or other changes, therefore this document is uncontrolled when printed.

END OF POLICY STATEMENT