



# Guiding Principles

## Richmond Valley Aboriginal Interagency Network



### Acknowledgment of Country

The Richmond Valley Aboriginal Interagency Network acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We honour their enduring connection to land, waters, culture, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise the strength, resilience, and wisdom of Aboriginal peoples. We acknowledge that strong, connected communities are built on respect, cultural safety, and self-determination.

### 1. Purpose

The Richmond Valley Aboriginal Interagency Network (RVAIN) brings together Aboriginal community members, Elders, service providers, government agencies, and local organisations. The Network works to strengthen partnerships, share knowledge, and advocate for culturally appropriate services and opportunities that reflect community priorities.

### 2. Role

The Network is committed to creating a culturally safe, inclusive, and respectful space that encourages active participation and collaboration.

The role of RVAIN includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing a culturally safe forum for discussing key issues, sharing lived experiences, and identifying service gaps affecting Aboriginal communities.
- Strengthening communication and trust between services, community members, and stakeholders to improve access to culturally appropriate support.
- Supporting and coordinating Aboriginal-led community events and initiatives that celebrate culture, identity, and resilience.
- Co-designing and contributing to programs and strategies that enhance wellbeing, cultural connection, and community participation.
- Aligning with Closing the Gap priorities to promote equity in health, education, employment, and community outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- Ensuring all activities reflect local Aboriginal community priorities.

### 3. Governance Model

Facilitated by Richmond Valley Council, the Network is community-led, with structure and outcomes determined by Aboriginal stakeholders in the Richmond Valley.

Meetings will have a rotating chair, with members invited to volunteer.

Richmond Valley Council will provide secretariat support.

### 4. Membership

Membership in RVAIN is open to individuals and organisations committed to supporting Aboriginal communities and advancing culturally safe, community-led outcomes.

Members may include:

- Aboriginal community members and Elders
- Aboriginal-controlled organisations and service providers
- Government departments and agencies
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Local businesses with a commitment to cultural respect and reconciliation

To be eligible, members must:

- Live, work, or have strong connections within the Richmond Valley Local Government Area
- Be 18 years of age or older (younger members may be considered with community or carer support)
- Understand or be willing to learn about the issues, strengths, and aspirations of Aboriginal communities in the Richmond Valley
- Act with honesty, cultural respect, and integrity

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Membership may be revoked if a member does not uphold the values of cultural safety, respect, and community collaboration.

### **Responsibilities of Members**

Members are expected to:

- Attend meetings
- Send apologies if unable to attend
- Actively contribute to discussions and initiatives
- Participate in accordance with these Guiding Principles
- Maintain confidentiality and cultural sensitivity

## **5. Meetings**

The Network will meet at least four times per year. Members may be asked to contribute to work outside of meetings.

- Working groups may be formed as needed and will report back to the Network.
- Meeting details will be shared in advance.
- Minutes will be recorded and circulated after each meeting.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Members must ensure that any confidential or culturally sensitive information shared within the Network is respected and not disclosed without permission.

## **7. Conflict of Interest**

Members must act with integrity and transparency. Any actual or potential conflicts of interest must be declared if they may influence discussions or decisions.

## **8. Evaluation and Review**

RVAIN will undertake an annual review of its performance against these Guiding Principles and its community-led Action Plan to ensure it continues to meet the needs and priorities of the Aboriginal community.