



Guiding Principles

Richmond Valley Disability Network



Acknowledgment of Country

Richmond Valley Disability Network acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work. We honour the First Nations peoples culture and connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We would also like to recognise that inclusion and accessibility have always been at the heart of strong, connected communities.

1. Purpose

The Richmond Valley Disability Network (RVDN) brings together people with disability, their families and carers, disability service providers, community members, and local businesses. Through collaboration, advocacy, and the development of inclusive, action-oriented initiatives, the RVDN aims to empower people with disability and promote a more accessible and inclusive Richmond Valley. The Network works to raise awareness, address local disability-related issues, and foster a community where everyone can participate fully and equally.

2. Role

The Network is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive space that encourages active participation and collaboration.

The role of the RVDN includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing a collaborative forum for discussing key disability issues, sharing lived experiences, and identifying service gaps.
- Strengthening communication between services, individuals, and the broader community to improve access to information, referrals, and support.
- Building partnerships and coordinating inclusive events - such as International Day of People with Disability - that celebrate and empower people with disability.
- Co-designing and contributing to initiatives that enhance inclusion, wellbeing, and community participation for people with disability in Richmond Valley.
- Aligning with the Richmond Valley Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) to ensure all activities support broader goals of accessibility, equity, and participation.

3. Governance Model

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

There will be a rotating chair for meetings. Members can volunteer to chair upcoming meetings.

Richmond Valley Council will provide secretariat support.

4. Membership

Membership in the RVDN is open to a diverse range of individuals and organisations committed to advancing inclusion, accessibility, and support for people with disability.

Members may include:

- Community members, including people with disability, carers, and advocates
- Disability service providers
- Not-for-profit community organisations
- Government departments and agencies
- Local businesses with an interest in inclusive practices

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 applicants may be considered with carer support)
- Understand and communicate the issues and opportunities affecting people with disability, their families, and communities in the Richmond Valley

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of, or a willingness to learn about, disability inclusion and community participation principles
- Act with honesty and respect, avoiding conflicts of interest and refraining from the misuse of information or resources.

Membership may be revoked if a member does not act ethically or fails to uphold the values and best interests of people with disability. This includes behaviour that undermines inclusion, accessibility, or the respectful collaboration expected within the Network.

Responsibilities of Members

The effective functioning of RVDN is dependent on the active participation of its members, including a commitment to:

- Attend meetings,
- Send apologies prior to meetings if unable to attend,
- Actively contribute to discussions and initiatives,
- Participate in accordance with these Guiding Principles, and
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy.

5. Meetings

The network will meet at least four times per year. Members may at times be requested to undertake business out of session.

RVDN may establish working groups as considered necessary to discharge their role and functions. Any working group will report directly to the Network.

A notice of each meeting confirming the date, time, and venue will be forwarded to each member as soon as practicable prior to the meeting date.

Formal minutes will be taken, including a summary of discussion and actions, and circulated to RVDN members as soon as possible following each meeting.

6. Confidentiality

RVDN members are responsible for ensuring that confidential information provided to them as members is kept confidential.

7. Conflict of Interest

RVDN members must act with honesty and integrity, be open and transparent in dealings, and avoid conflicts of interest. Any actual or potential conflicts of interest must be reported if it is likely to have an impact on a discussion, feedback, recommendation or decision being made by the group.

8. Evaluation and Review

To ensure the RVDN is fulfilling its role, it will undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Guiding Principles and annual Action Plan.