



Charles Sturt  
University

SAGE Cygnet Award Application  
**Cygnet 2 | Disability  
support & adjustments**

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion  
Division of People and Culture

Charles Sturt University - TEQSA Provider Identification:  
PRV12018 (Australian University). CRICOS Provider: 00005F.



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# Charles Sturt University: SAGE Cygnet #2

**Key Barrier:** Attraction, retention and/or progression of people with disability

**Barrier type:**

- Institution-wide Barrier
- Sub-group specific Barrier

**Barrier description:** Support and workplace adjustments for staff with disability and neurodiversity

# Contents

<b>Charles Sturt University: SAGE Cygnet #2</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Glossary .....	3
1. Key barrier .....	4
2. Evidence of barrier .....	4
2.1 Sub-barrier: 1: lower engagement rates for staff with disability .....	4
2.2 Sub-barrier 2: staff with disability experience inconsistent support and understanding .....	5
3. Progress (actions and outputs) .....	7
4. Outcomes .....	11
4.1 Sub-barrier 1: lower engagement rates for staff with disability .....	11
4.2 Sub-barrier 2: staff with disability experience inconsistent support and understanding .....	12
5. Impact .....	13
5.1 Centralising and clarifying the WPA Process .....	13
5.2 Building support and understanding through education, networks, and champions .....	15
5.3 Remaining challenges and barriers to access .....	16
5.4 Inclusion, belonging, and organisational culture .....	17
6. Further action .....	18

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
<b>ANEN</b>	Accessibility and Neurodiversity Employee Network
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>COP</b>	Community of practice
<b>CSU</b>	Charles Sturt University
<b>DPC</b>	Division of People and Culture
<b>DSSW</b>	Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing
<b>EDI</b>	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
<b>EDPC</b>	Executive Director, People and Culture
<b>HRIS</b>	Human resources information system
<b>HSW</b>	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
<b>NPS</b>	Net promoter score
<b>SWD</b>	Staff with disability
<b>WHS</b>	Work health and safety
<b>WPA</b>	Workplace adjustment
<b>YVS</b>	Your Voice Survey

## 1. Key barrier

### Attraction, retention and/or progression of people with disability

This Cygnet application highlights Charles Sturt University's work to improve support and workplace adjustments for staff with disability, chronic illness and neurodiversity.

**Sub-barrier 1:** lower engagement rates for staff with disability.

**Sub-barrier 2:** staff with disability experience discrimination and inconsistent support.

## 2. Evidence of barrier

During 2021–22, internal changes to organisational structure and staffing resulted in responsibilities for supporting employees with disability being distributed across multiple teams and divisions. In late 2022, the establishment of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team within the Division of People and Culture (DPC) centralised oversight of accessibility initiatives and workplace adjustments, while continuing to acknowledge the critical role of HR Business Partners and supervisors in facilitating flexible work arrangements and informal accommodations. Some overlap remained with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) team within the Division of Security, Safety and Wellbeing (DSSW), which leads work health and safety (WHS) prevention, wellbeing programs, and ergonomic assessments. This approach inadvertently led to inconsistent access to support and adjustments for employees with disability and limited the availability of centralised records for workplace adjustment (WPA) plans.

Data from Charles Sturt's 2023 Your Voice staff engagement survey (YVS) highlighted that staff with disability<sup>1</sup> (SWD) have lower engagement rates and revealed that more staff disclosed disability in the anonymous YVS (12.5%) than who have registered a disability in their employment details (3.4% (see Table 7). Currently, employment details are collected via a form completed when an employee commences with Charles Sturt, which includes voluntary questions about disability, First Nations status and cultural background.

### 2.1 Sub-barrier: 1: lower engagement rates for staff with disability

#### EVIDENCE:

In August 2023 new questions were added to the annual YVS to gain deeper insight into the experience of SWD. Results indicated that SWD provided less favourable responses on average across a range of questions, including a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of -16 compared to an overall university NPS of -5 (Table 1). The survey also revealed that SWD who reported they do not require workplace adjustments had more positive experiences than those with adjustments in place and those who indicated that they would benefit from adjustments (Table 1). Across all YVS categories (groupings of similar question responses), SWD scored lower than all staff, with the most pronounced difference among those who indicated that they would benefit from having adjustments put in place (Table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Sturt applies the definition of disability from the Disability Discrimination Act, which includes neurodiversity and chronic medical and mental health conditions; this definition is explained within the YVS.

**Table 1. 2023 YVS category results for staff with disability (SWD)**

YVS category results (% favourable)	All responses (n=1519, 71.1% of all staff)	SWD (n=209, 13.8% of all responses)	SWD who don't need adjustments (n=106, % of all responses)	SWD who have adjustments (n=62, 4.1% of all responses)	SWD who would benefit from adjustments (n=32, 2.1% of all responses)
NPS	-5	-16	-11	-3	-50
Engagement	76%	72%	74%	75%	55%
Wellbeing	61%	50%	53%	58%	26%
Progress	50%	44%	46%	49%	32%
Risk reporting	64%	58%	61%	62%	37%
Respect	69%	58%	64%	61%	32%
Health & safety	72%	60%	65%	64%	31%

## 2.2 Sub-barrier 2: staff with disability experience inconsistent support and understanding

### EVIDENCE:

To gain deeper insight into the 2023 YVS results, a follow-up survey was promoted to all staff in February 2024 for those who identified as having disability. A total of 39 staff responded to the survey. Findings revealed that SWD are selective about who they disclose their disability to, and those requiring adjustments have a combination of formal and informal arrangements in place (Table 2).

**Table 2. Summary responses to Workplace assessment and adjustment survey (Feb 2024)**

<b>Total responses</b>	<b>39</b>
SWD	26
Require workplace adjustments	18
May require adjustments in future	7
Care for someone with disability	9
<b>Shared information about their disability with the University</b>	<b>17</b>
Shared with EDI/HSW	8
Shared with supervisor	9
Have not shared	4
<b>Reason for not sharing information about their disability (multiple response)</b>	<b>4</b>
Process to disclose is unclear	3
Feel that sharing will impact career or career opportunities	1
Don't need adjustments	1
<b>Arrangements for workplace adjustments</b>	<b>29</b>
Requested adjustments through DPC	5
Requested adjustments through supervisor	7
Have informal arrangements	10
Haven't requested adjustments	7

While three respondents reported no barriers, others identified multiple barriers related to accessing adjustments or a lack understanding and awareness (Table 3). The most frequently cited barriers included concerns about the costs of implementing adjustments, limited knowledge about how to request adjustments or who to contact, and apprehension about making requests due to potential discrimination or being treated differently (Table 3). Additional barriers included a lack of awareness and understanding from supervisors and colleagues, as well as uncertainty about employees' rights to request adjustments, (Table 3).

**Table 3. Survey responses to “Have you experienced any barriers to accessing the adjustments or understanding you require to thrive in your role at Charles Sturt?” (multiple responses enabled).**

Option	Number of responses
Concern that the costs involved will have repercussions for my team/area	10
Concern that the costs involved will have repercussions for me/my employment	9
Didn't know how to start the process	9
Didn't know support or adjustments were available	9
Didn't know who to ask/which area to contact	9
Fear of discrimination, missing out on opportunities or being treated differently	8
Feeling unsupported by my supervisor	6
The people in my team lack awareness/understanding of my condition and requirements	6
Didn't know about the Disability Discrimination Act and my right to ask for and expect adjustments	5
Other	4
None	3

Survey results indicated that apprehension about disclosure was prevalent. 67% of respondents (22 out of 33) said that they felt that having a disability and/or chronic health condition or requiring/requesting workplace or ergonomic adjustments or equipment would prevent them from gaining opportunities or advancements at Charles Sturt.

The survey found that SWD seek trust and comfort regarding discussions about their disability, medical condition(s), or workplace adjustment needs (Table 4). Of the 21 responses to the question on preferred contact points for discussing these needs, just over half (11 respondents) indicated a preference for speaking with their supervisor or manager, while one third indicated a preference for working with the EDI team. Of the three individuals who chose "another team/person," two indicated a preference for both their supervisor and the EDI team, and one reported not feeling safe to discuss their needs with anyone at the university (Table 4).

**Table 4. Survey responses regarding employee preferences for contact points when discussing disability, medical conditions, or workplace adjustment needs.**

I would prefer to discuss my disability, medical condition(s), or workplace adjustment requirements with:	Number of responses
My supervisor or manager	11
A representative from the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team within the Division of People and Culture	7
Another Division of People and Culture representative (e.g. Business Partner or Employee Services)	0
I'd prefer to discuss this with another team/person	3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>21</b>

### 3. Progress (actions and outputs)

The SMART actions outlined in Table 5 were implemented throughout 2024 and 2025 to reduce the identified barriers for SWD.

**Table 5. SMART actions implemented during 2023-2025.**

SMART actions	Initiatives implemented
<p><b>1. Address process issues by creating a single online form for all ergonomic assessment and workplace adjustment requests and supporting resources by mid-2024</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Co-creation workshop held with stakeholders from across the University (SWD from academic and professional teams; HSW team and DPC teams - EDI, Talent Acquisition, Business Partners). Mapped key elements, gaps and opportunities in existing processes into a new, centralised process that prioritised the safety and autonomy of SWD while providing information to support and guide supervisors.</li> <li>b. Workshop outcomes included a streamlined request process with a consistent single point of entry, online form for staff and supervisors to request workplace adjustments and ergonomic assessments and equipment (Figure 1a). Requests via the form are reviewed by EDI and HSW teams to triage and appoint the best point of contact based on needs of the staff member (e.g. ergonomic assessment, workplace adjustment, wellbeing).</li> <li>c. Templated emails and supporting resources, such as frequently asked questions and an explanatory video, were created and implemented to promote consistency and timely responses to enquiries about adjustments (Figure 1 b-c).</li> <li>d. Creation of a dedicated workplace adjustments webpage that explains legislative requirements and Charles Sturt's WPA process, including separate pathways for staff whose contact preferences are their manager/supervisor or the DPC EDI team. The webpage also houses external resources and referral options to support staff who may be apprehensive about disclosure or who have concerns about cost-implications of requesting adjustments (Figure 1 d-e). A small pool of centralised funding was secured to further reduce the financial barriers reported by staff needing adjustments.</li> <li>e. To support staff and supervisors who are unsure about the types of adjustments that may be needed, resources about external support avenues (e.g. Federal Government Job Access program) are provided to help determine suitable adjustments for eligible staff (Figure 1f).</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Increase awareness and capacity building, through regular education initiatives and embedding knowledge within existing practices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Since implementing the improvements in Action 1, quarterly 30-minute drop-in sessions covering: legislative requirements related to workplace adjustments, how to request adjustments and ergonomic assessments, and available supports have been delivered for staff and supervisors (Figure 2a).</li> <li>b. Established the Accessibility and Neurodiversity Employee Network (ANEN) to understand the experiences of SWD and/or neurodiversity, and identify and reduce workplace barriers (Figure 2b).</li> <li>c. Appointed two Accessibility and Neurodiversity Champions (one academic and one professional), who are senior leaders tasked with actively collaborating across the university to challenge bias, reduce barriers, and embed inclusive practices that ensure equitable access to opportunities and foster a thriving, diverse workforce. Champions also work with the ANEN (Figure 2b).</li> <li>d. Implemented a process to welcome new employees via email, and where the staff member had identified they have disability, provide resources and links to the WPA webpage and ANEN details.</li> </ul>

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|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>e. Developed a 60-minute workshop on <i>Neurodivergence in the Workplace</i>, which has been delivered monthly since launching in April 2025. The workshop was developed by neurodivergent staff, including ANEN members, and piloted with DPC teams (Figure 2c).</li><li>f. EDI team hosted sessions on inclusive recruitment for the Talent Acquisition team and other staff, to build their understanding of appropriate accommodations and recruitment processes for candidates with disability (Figure 2a).</li><li>g. Celebrated and acknowledged accessibility and neurodiversity days of significance through communications and awareness raising activities based on lived experience storytelling. Examples include International Day of People with Disability, and Neurodiversity Celebration Week (Figure 2d).</li><li>h. Ensured that existing processes that include questions about workplace ergonomics or disability (e.g. YVS and annual workspace safety self-assessments, include links directing staff to HSW or EDI team for support with adjustments) (Figure 2e).</li><li>i. Piloted an inclusion-focused community of practice (COP) across areas of the university, where a staff member from those areas meet monthly to share ideas and resources, and seek guidance from the EDI team. The COP currently involves four Divisions and has resulted in increased promotion of training and resources, such as the development of an inclusive meetings checklist that explicitly incorporates the needs of staff with disability through a universal design approach (Figure 2f).</li></ul> |
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Figure 1. New resources and improvements to address process issues and reduce barriers for SWS as outlined in Action 1.

(a) Staff and supervisor adjustment request forms

Workplace assessment or adjustment request (for managers and supervisors)

Charles Sturt University is committed to accommodating reasonable adjustments for staff with disability, health conditions or neurodivergence that is impacting on their ability to fully participate in the workplace. Staff caring for someone with disability, health conditions or neurodivergence can also access reasonable adjustments.

Use this form to tell us what a staff member might need help with. Your request will be reviewed by a member of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team and the most appropriate person will follow up with you within 3-5 business days.

**ⓘ** This form is for managers to make a request directly. Staff who wish to make a request must [complete the staff form](#).

**About you**

Your name  
Public User

What is the best way to contact you?  
 Teams  
 Email  
 Mobile phone (complete below)

Mobile phone  
Please complete if this is your preferred contact method

Staff member's details

(b) Workplace adjustment FAQs

Charles Sturt University

## Workplace adjustments

### Frequently asked questions

It can feel uncomfortable and scary to share personal details about disability, medical conditions and caring responsibilities at work. The following questions and answers have been designed to guide you through the workplace adjustment process, provide information about what you need to share and with who, as well as who you can turn to for support.

**What is a workplace adjustment plan?**  
A workplace adjustment plan is a written agreement between a staff member and the University that supports accommodations needed for the employee to have equal access to employment opportunities. Both equal employment opportunity and disability discrimination are covered by Federal and state legislation in Australia.

**Is a workplace adjustment suitable for me?**  
Workplace adjustments help make the workplace more accessible for neurodivergent people, people with disabilities, medical conditions or chronic illness, and for [carers](#). Australian legislation defines disability as any physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological or learning disability and includes physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired.

*"Employees are under no obligation to disclose a disability unless it is likely to affect their ability to fulfil the inherent requirements of their position" – Workplace Adjustment Procedure*

(c) Workplace adjustments explanatory video

## What are workplace adjustments?

Changes introduced into the workplace that take account of a person's disability, medical condition, neurodivergence or caring responsibilities.

Allow employees to:

- Use their skills effectively to meet the [inherent requirements](#) of their role
- Access the same benefits, terms or conditions of employment other employees
- Help level the playing field by reducing barriers
- Allow employees to do their best work

Charles Sturt University is an Australian University. TEGSA Provider Identification: PRV12018. Charles Sturt University CRICOS Provider Number: 60009F. Source: Workplace Adjustment Process

(d) Workplace adjustments webpage

## Workplace adjustments

This page provides information on workplace adjustments for Charles Sturt employees and their supervisors.

### What are workplace adjustments?

Workplace adjustments are changes introduced into the workplace that take account of a person's disability so that they can use their skills effectively to meet the inherent requirements of their role. They can help level the playing field for employees with a disability or condition so they can access the same benefits, terms and conditions of employment as their colleagues.

Workplace adjustments do not apply to compensable work-related injury or illness. Refer to resources at [Division of Safety, Security and Wellbeing](#) for information about workplace injuries.

**Workplace adjustments may include:**

- Assistance to ensure there is no barrier in selection processes
- Changes to job design, schedules or work practices in ways that don't compromise performance or change the inherent requirements of the role
- Flexible work arrangements
- Modifications to equipment or the supply of specialised, furniture or work-related aids
- Providing training or other assistance
- Alterations to premises or work areas

**Workplace adjustments do not include:**

- Changing the [inherent requirements](#) of the role
- Maintaining a role that would otherwise be altered or abolished

(e) Supervisor and EDI-team pathways for staff to request adjustments

## Requesting a Workplace Adjustment Plan

As a first step, the employee should decide who they would like to work with to develop their Plan. Options include:

- Their supervisor or manager
- The DPC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team

The table below outlines the steps for requesting a Workplace Adjustment Plan depending on who the employee would prefer to work with.

Working with your supervisor	Working with the DPC EDI team
<p><b>Step 1: Prepare for the conversation</b></p> <p>We recommend employees and supervisors use Job Access's conversation guide to help prepare for the conversation - <a href="#">Making Workplace Adjustments Easy, Effective and Equitable</a></p> <p>The guide includes checklists and prompts to promote supportive conversations and facilitate open, empathetic, and actionable discussion. It also covers disclosure and privacy and has examples and case studies. You can also contact the DPC EDI team for guidance (<a href="mailto:edi@csu.edu.au">edi@csu.edu.au</a>).</p> <p><b>Step 2: Confidential discussion</b></p> <p>The employee and their supervisor should arrange a time for a confidential discussion to discuss the workplace adjustment request.</p> <p>The supervisor doesn't need to know all the details about employee's disability or condition, the conversation should instead focus on understanding the barriers the employee is experiencing and what they need to do their job safely and effectively.</p> <p>Supervisors are encouraged to clarify the adjustments the employee is seeking and follow-up with a written summary and expected timeframe for their decision.</p>	

(f) External referral and funding options staff requiring adjustments

## Funding workplace adjustments

In many cases, there is no direct cost or only a modest cost involved in implementing workplace adjustments. Where possible, funding for adjustments should be sought through external funding sources such as the [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\)](#).

The EAF gives financial help to eligible people with disability and mental health conditions and their employers to buy work related modifications, equipment, Auslan services and workplace assistance and support services. The EAF may also be able to provide a free workplace assessment for eligible employees to help work out what modifications or equipment will best meet their needs and help them do their job.

Eligibility requirements are detailed in the [EAF Guidelines](#) but include:

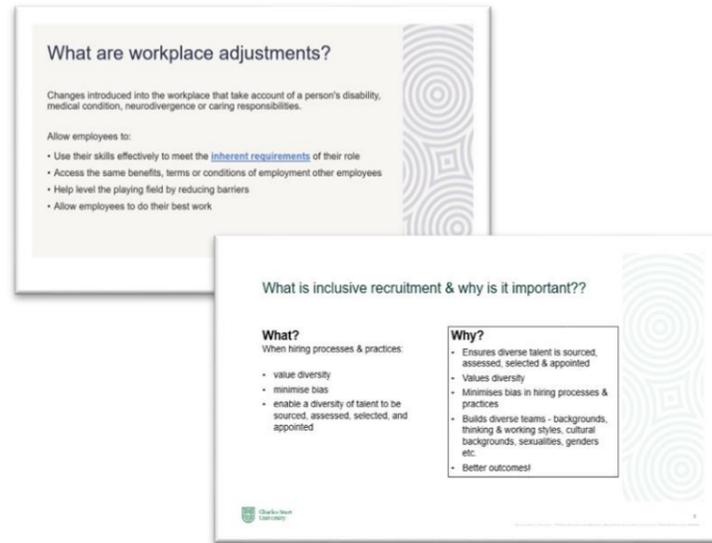
- being an Australian Resident (or Temporary Protection Visa or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa holder)
- employed in a job that is expected to continue for at least 13 weeks
- working at least 8 hours a week
- have an ongoing disability that has lasted, or will last at least two years and disability must limit, restrict or impair your ability to work.

Employees can contact or request funding for adjustments independently via the EAF but need to provide evidence of their employment as part of their application. This can be provided by a supervisor or by contacting the EDI team ([edi@csu.edu.au](mailto:edi@csu.edu.au)).

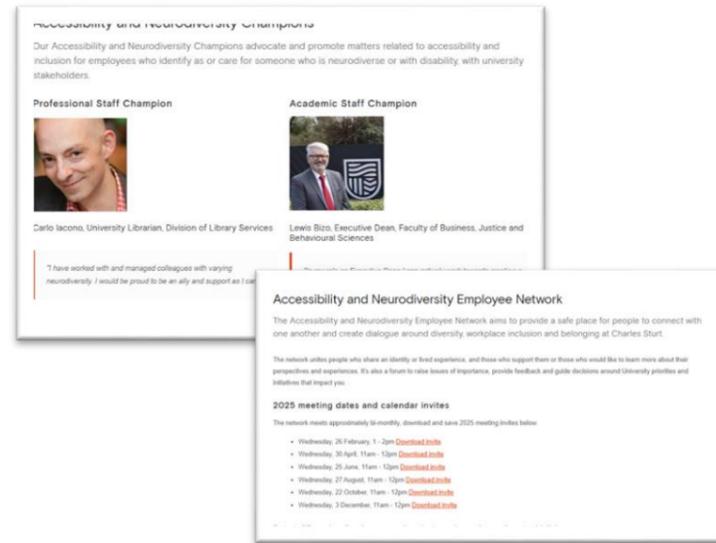
Further details about funding arrangements for workplace adjustments are provided in the [Workplace Adjustment Procedure](#).

Figure 2. Actions implemented to increase awareness and build capacity through education and embedding knowledge within existing practices.

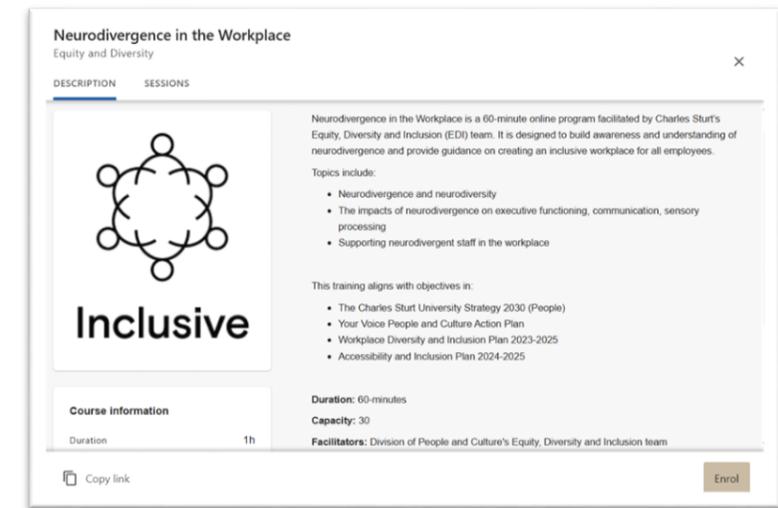
(a) Workplace adjustment & inclusive recruitment information sessions



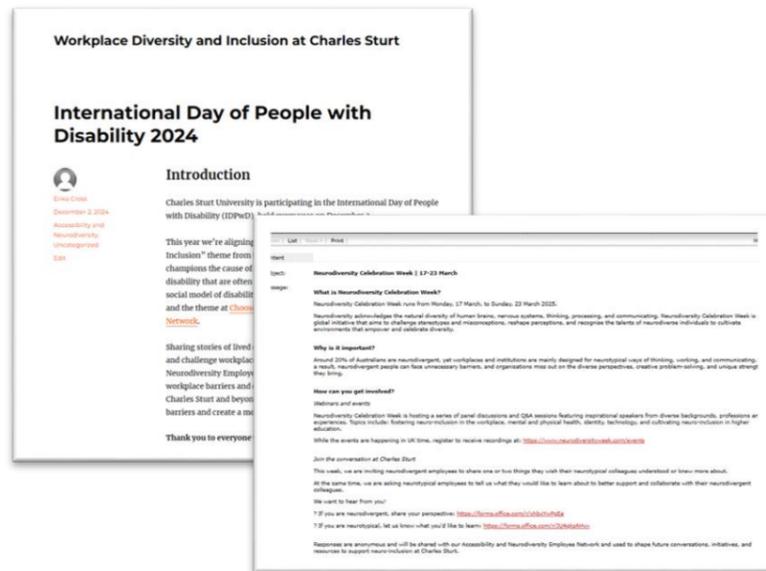
(b) Accessibility and Neurodiversity Champions & Employee Network



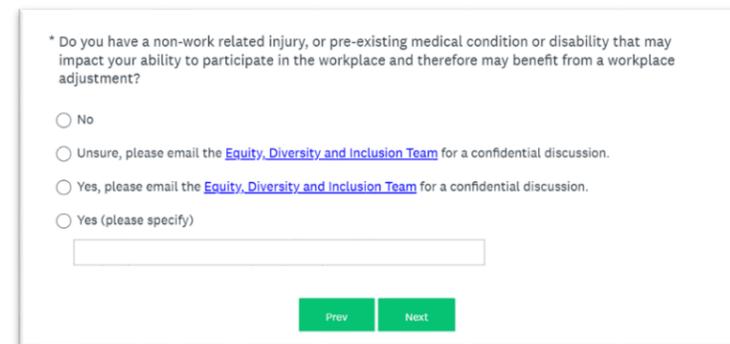
(c) Neurodivergence in the Workplace training



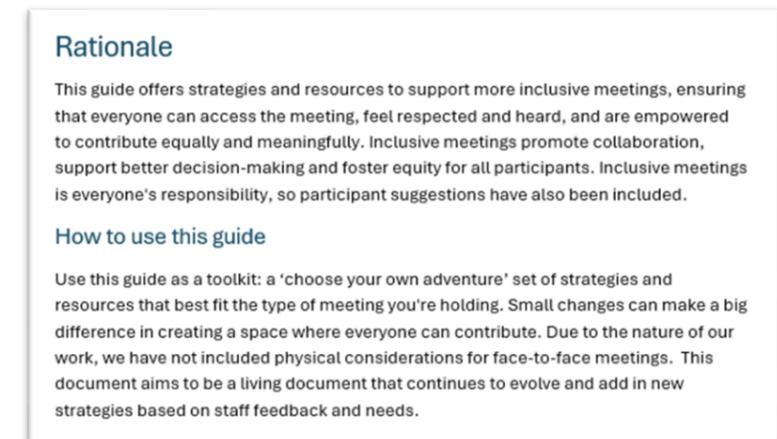
(d) Dates of significance awareness campaigns



(e) Annual workplace safety assessment question about adjustments



(f) Inclusive meetings checklist (from COP)



## 4. Outcomes

### 4.1 Sub-barrier 1: lower engagement rates for staff with disability

Table 5 highlights a general improvement in 2025 YVS results for staff with disabilities (SWD), with measures such as NPS, wellbeing, progress, risk reporting, respect and equity, and health and safety measures all showing improvements compared to 2023. However, differences remain between the experiences of staff who have, or need adjustments, and those who do not. It's important to note that the 2025 YVS was conducted shortly after announcements regarding a university-wide restructure and potential job losses. This timing likely influenced results, as many measures declined in 2025 following across-the-board improvements in 2024.

Despite these challenging circumstances, five out of the seven categories monitored for SWD improved in 2025, compared to only two categories for all staff. These results suggest that actions aimed at increasing awareness and building capacity to support SWD across the university (Actions 2. a-i), have had a positive and measurable impact.

Table 6. YVS results for staff with disability (SWD) 2023-25

YVS category results (NPS score or % favourable)	All staff	SWD	SWD who don't need adjustments	SWD who have adjustments	SWD who would benefit from adjustments
<b>2023</b>					
Number of responses (% of all responses)	1519	209 (13.8%)	106 (7.0%)	62 (4.1%)	32 (2.1%)
NPS	-5	-16	-11	-3	-50
Engagement	76%	72%	74%	75%	55%
Wellbeing	61%	50%	53%	58%	26%
Progress	50%	44%	46%	49%	32%
Risk reporting	64%	58%	61%	62%	37%
Respect & equity	69%	58%	64%	61%	32%
Health & safety	72%	60%	65%	64%	31%
<b>2024</b>					
Number of responses	1765	260 (14.7%)	136 (7.7%)	80 (4.5%)	37 (2.1%)
NPS	-2	-5	4	-6	-32
Engagement	76%	75%	77%	78%	59%
Wellbeing	63%	57%	63%	59%	32%
Progress	55%	54%	57%	55%	41%
Risk reporting	63%	61%	68%	64%	32%
Respect & equity	70%	65%	74%	59%	46%
Health & safety	77%	73%	78%	76%	47%
<b>2025</b>					
Number of responses	1655	225 (13.6%)	109 (6.6%)	71 (4.3%)	42 (2.5%)
NPS	-15	-14	0	-14	-43
Engagement	73%	72%	78%	72%	59%
Wellbeing	61%	57%	70%	53%	33%
Progress	43%	41%	49%	43%	21%
Risk reporting	61%	59%	68%	61%	36%
Respect & equity	71%	67%	76%	69%	44%
Health & safety	80%	78%	83%	79%	63%

Note: green font indicates increase from 2023 baseline

#### 4.2 Sub-barrier 2: staff with disability experience inconsistent support and understanding

While the proportion of staff who would benefit from workplace adjustments remained relatively stable between 2023 and 2025 (2.1% to 2.5%), the EDI team provided support to 40 staff through advice, creation or review of WPA Plans. Additionally, the number of staff disclosing disability via the anonymous YVS continues to exceed the figures recorded in official DPC staff records (Table 7), highlighting a pattern of under reporting of disabilities and adjustment requirements in employee data.

Encouragingly, there has been an increase in staff reporting disability, both anonymously via the YVS (1.1% increase) and officially via DPC's Human Resources Information System (HRIS) (0.2% increase). This trend suggests that efforts to raise awareness and understanding of disability have helped SWD to feel more supported to disclose. Alternatively, this may reflect an increase in the number of staff newly identifying as having disability.

**Table 7. Numbers of staff with disability reported in HRIS and YVS 2023 and 2025**

	Data source & snapshot date	Number of staff	SWD n (% all staff)	SWD adjustments requiring n (% all staff)
2023	HRIS (Mar 2023)	2013	69 (3.4%)	16 (0.8%)
	YVS (Aug 2023)	1670 (survey responses)	209 (12.5%)	94 (5.6%)
2025	HRIS (Sept 2025)	2518	92 (3.7%)	25 (1%)
	YVS (Aug 2025)	1655 (survey responses)	225 (13.6%)	113 (6.8%)

**Table 8. Demographic summary of SWD in HRIS, September 2025**

EO category	Women*		Men		Total staff	
	Number	as % of SWD	Number	as % of SWD	Number	as % of SWD
SWD	65	70.6%	27	29.3%	92	100
SWD requiring adjustment	21	32.3%	4	6.2%	25	38.5%
First Nations & disability	8	8.7%	4	4.3%	12	18.5%
Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) & disability	7	7.6%	6	6.5%	4	6.2%

\*No non-binary or staff with other gender identities have registered a disability with DPC therefore this table focuses on women and men only.

A demographic analysis of disability data in the HRIS shows the intersection of disability with other identities, likely leading to overlapping workplace barriers (Table 8). While Charles Sturt has 67% women employees, women are disproportionately represented amongst SWD at 70.6%, and 84% of those require adjustments. Charles Sturt has 3.7% First Nations staffing, yet five times that percentage of SWD are also First Nations. Conversely, CALD staff make up 12.4% of overall staff, but only represent half that percentage of SWD.

Disability data in the HRIS is currently collected from new staff as part of the onboarding process, where they can voluntarily provide this along with other demographic information. Staff are advised that they may update this information at any time, yet most do not know how to do this. Since August 2023, the EDI team have supported 40 staff with WPAs of which 85% (34) are women, 12.5% (5) are men and 2.5% (1) are non-binary or another gender identity (Table 9). These staff requested support for adjustments due to having to a range of conditions, with physical and/or musculoskeletal conditions, other medical conditions, and neurodivergence being the most common (Table 9). Notably however,

close to half (42.5%) of the staff supported by the EDI team have multiple conditions which can compound the workplace barriers experienced by them.

**Table 9. Overview of staff who have been supported by the EDI team in relation to workplace adjustments.**

Staff support by EDI for WPAs	Number
<b>Total staff</b>	40
<b>Category</b>	
Physical/musculoskeletal condition(s)	16 (40%)
Other medical condition(s)	15 (37.5%)
Neurodivergence	13 (32.5%)
Psychosocial	6 (15%)
Sensory	2 (5%)
Neurological conditions (s)	1 (2.5%)
Caring responsibilities	7 (17.5%)
Multiple conditions (*includes those above)	17 (42.5%)
<b>Intersectional demographic details</b>	
Women	34 (85%)
Men	5 (12.5%)
Non-binary or another gender identity	1 (2.5%)
First Nations	4 (10%)
CALD	4 (10%)

Of the staff who the EDI team have supported with adjustments, only 27.5% (11 people), have sought to have adjustments formalised and documented in a WPA Plan, others have had adjustments implemented informally (either with support from their supervisor/team or through the implementation of universally accessible approaches that have been implemented in their teams). Furthermore, some staff who have been in touch with the team have opted out of the process at different stages.

However, overall this data suggests that actions to improve the WPA process (Actions 1.a-e.) and increase awareness and capacity (Actions 2.a-i.) have contributed to more staff feeling safe to identify as having disability and to access appropriate supports at work, including formalising them in a plan if required or having access to adjustments in other ways (e.g. via universally accessible practices and approaches, e.g. inclusive meeting practices). Notwithstanding this, discrepancies in data between the HRIS and other data sources suggests that the processes used to collect and maintain disability data could be improved at Charles Sturt (Further action 6.1)

## 5. Impact

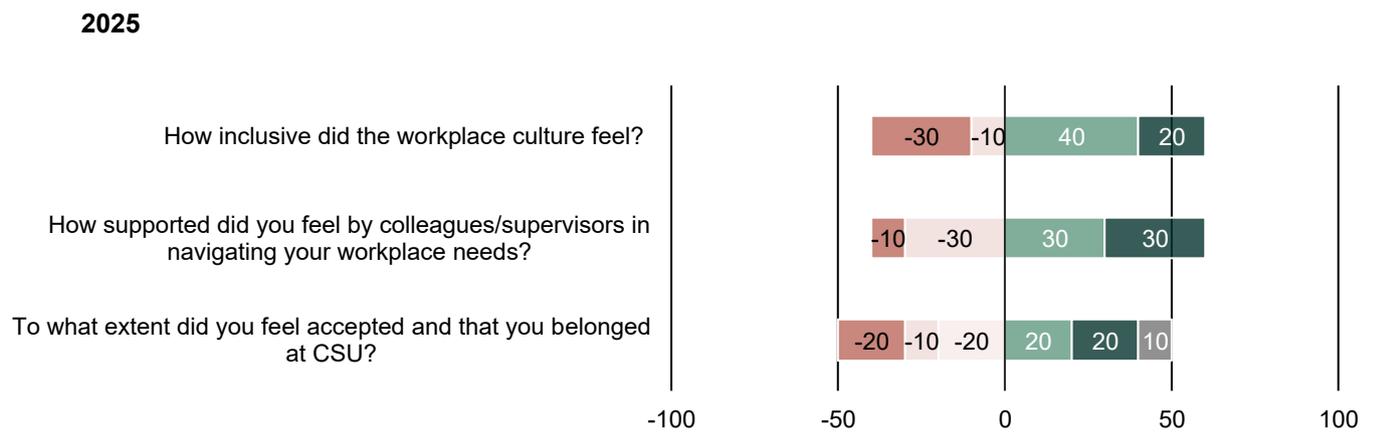
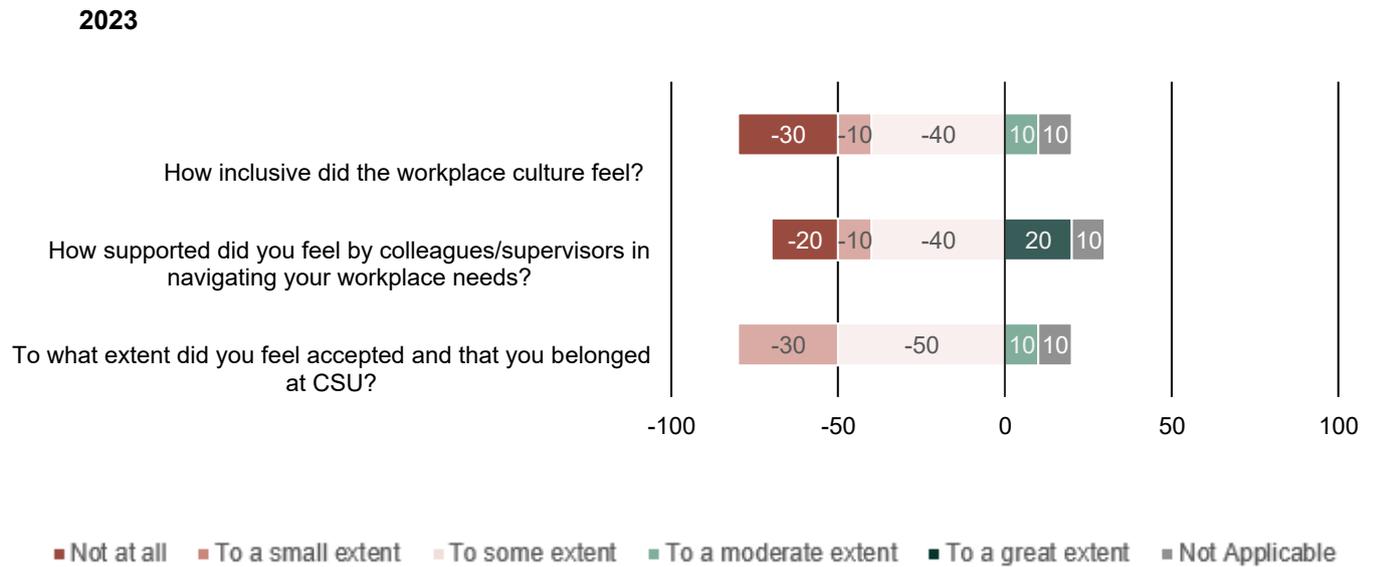
To assess the impact of WPA improvement efforts, staff were invited to complete an anonymous survey featuring qualitative and quantitative questions about their experiences, awareness of disability and accessibility at Charles Sturt, and views on new supports. The survey was promoted through internal newsletters and the ANEN.

Ten staff responded to the 2025 survey, half identified as neurodivergent and half as having a disability and/or medical condition. The majority (7) currently require WPAs, two indicated they may seek WPAs in the future, and one did not indicate their adjustment needs.

### 5.1 Centralising and clarifying the WPA Process

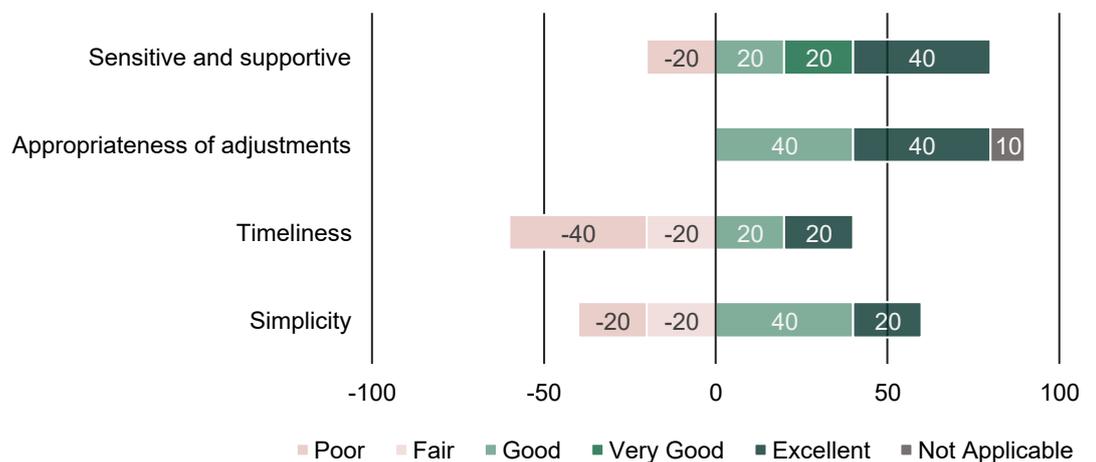
Responses to the 2025 survey indicate that the implemented actions have made the WPA process more visible and accessible. SWD's feeling towards acceptance and belonging, support from colleagues and supervisors, and workplace inclusivity at Charles Sturt show an improvement from the 2023 survey to the 2025 survey (Figure 3). The largest gains were seen in feelings of acceptance and belonging (50% in 2025, increase from 20% in 2023), and perceptions of an inclusive workplace culture (60% in 2025, up from 20% in 2023), however, feelings of being supported by colleagues and supervisors also improved (Figure 3). These results suggest that initiatives implemented since 2023 have indeed made a positive contribution to feelings of inclusion, belonging, and support for SWD.

**Figure 3. SWD perceptions of acceptance, support, and inclusion at CSU in 2023 and 2025 (data collected in 2025, n=10).**



SWD who had engaged with the new process (n=5) reported that the support they received from the EDI and DSSW teams was sensitive, simple and appropriate to their needs, yet timeliness was rated lower (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. 2025 survey responses from SWD who have engaged in the revised WPA process regarding support, timeliness and the appropriateness of implemented adjustments.**

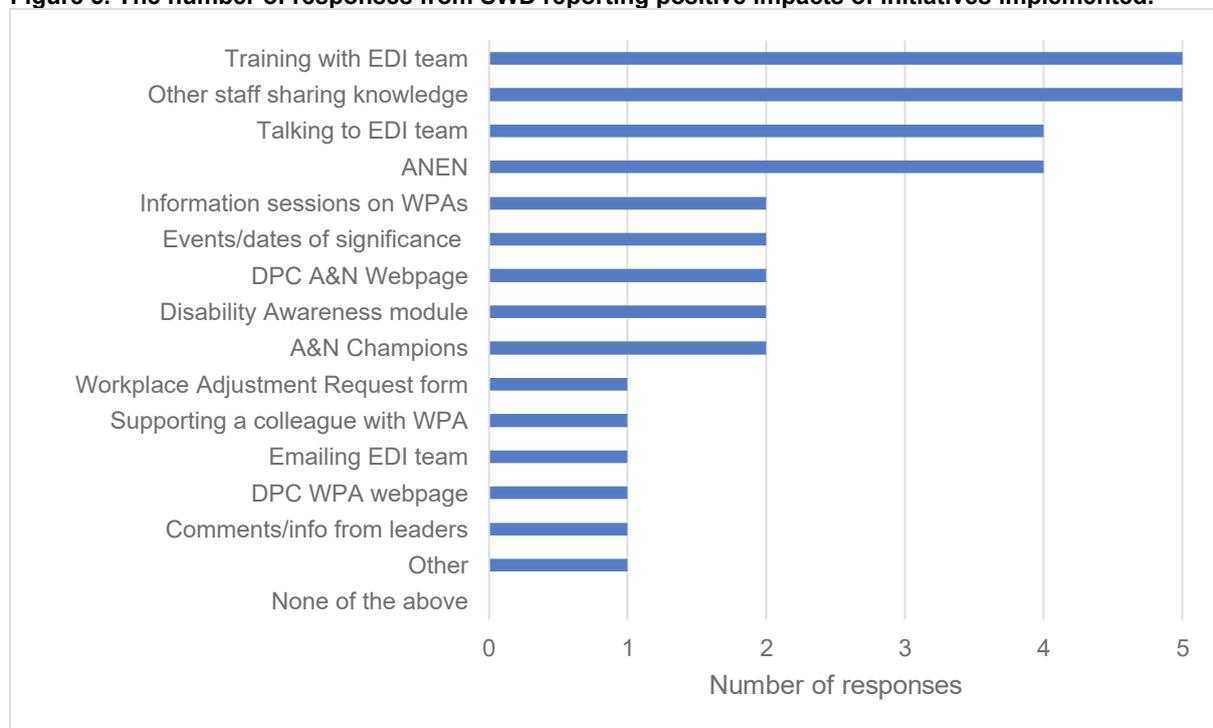


Free-text comments highlighted the positive impact of tailored adjustments and responsive supervisors, but that experiences of SWD navigating the WPA process remain mixed, with complexity and delays standing out as persistent challenges. While some described the new process as an improvement, others found it administratively cumbersome, noting “*now lots of forms in process*” and describing it as “*intimidating, and far too complicated*”. These reflections suggest that, although the centralised process and enhanced resources have reduced some barriers, further simplification and timely support are needed to ensure equitable outcomes for SWD (Further action 6.3).

### 5.2 Building support and understanding through education, networks, and champions

The survey asked SWD which SMART initiatives (Table 5) had made a positive impact on understanding of disability at Charles Sturt. Of the 10 staff responding, half reported positive impacts from training and sharing stories or knowledge, while 40% rated engaging with the ANEN and EDI team as having a positive impact (Figure 5). Initiatives that were more general, such as information sessions and disability e-learning and web pages had less positive impact, with each of these selected by two people, while electronic processes and interactions with leaders and peers were rated lower, receiving only one selection for each. This suggests that tailored, person-led initiatives involving staff with lived experience or expertise have the most positive impact on increasing understanding of disability.

**Figure 5. The number of responses from SWD reporting positive impacts of initiatives implemented.**



The 2025 survey demonstrated a shift towards more nuanced preferences for contact and disclosure points compared to 2023. In 2025, of the 10 respondents, two said they would only discuss their needs with the EDI team, four preferred both their supervisor and the EDI team, one selected “just their supervisor,” and one preferred an external specialist. In contrast, the 2023 survey found that just over half of respondents preferred to speak with their supervisor or manager, while one third preferred the EDI team (Table 4). These results suggest that, despite the increased visibility of the EDI team and information about the WPA process, trust, psychological safety, and flexible disclosure options remain important for SWD (Further actions 6.2 and 6.3).

### 5.3 Remaining challenges and barriers to access

2025 survey data shows encouraging progress in raising awareness and clarifying support processes for SWD with a smaller proportion of SWD reporting uncertainty about available support (10% compared to 43% in 2023) or who to contact (23% compared to 48% in 2023) (Table 10). However, respondents still reported barriers, especially around ‘fear of discrimination, missing out on opportunities or being treated differently’ (90% compared to 38% in 2023), cost concerns (60% compared to 43% and 48% in 2023), and lack of support from supervisors or colleagues (50% compared to 29% in 2023) (Table 10). These gaps will be addressed through further actions (Further actions 6.2 and 6.4).

**Table 10. 2025 and 2023 survey responses to “Have you experienced any barriers to accessing the adjustments or understanding you require to thrive in your role at Charles Sturt?” (multiple responses enabled).**

Option	2023 (n=21)		2025 (n=10)	
	Number of responses	% of respondents	Number of responses	% of respondents
Concern that the costs involved will have repercussions for my team/area	10	48%	6	60%
Concern that the costs involved will have repercussions for me/my employment	9	43%	6	60%
Didn't know how to start the process	9	43%	5	50%
Didn't know support or adjustments were available	9	43%	1	10%
Didn't know who to ask/which area to contact	9	48%	2	23%
Fear of discrimination, missing out on opportunities or being treated differently	8	38%	9	90%
Feeling unsupported by my supervisor/colleagues	6	29%	5	50%
The people in my team lack awareness/understanding of my condition and requirements	6	29%	6	60%
Other	4	19%	1	10%
None	3	14%	0	0%

Qualitative feedback in 2025 highlighted a gap between policy expectations and lived experience, with some SWD feeling hesitant to request adjustments due to stigma or complexity (Further action 6.4).

#### **5.4 Inclusion, belonging, and organisational culture**

Awareness campaigns, inclusive design, and storytelling initiatives in 2024–2025 have led to stronger feelings of acceptance, belonging, and support among staff with disability (SWD) at Charles Sturt, with many noting improvements since 2023. One respondent shared, *“My supervisor and Manager were very responsive and supportive of a change in my working conditions to support my recovery,”* while another praised their *“extremely supportive team leader with whom I can be honest and know that I won't be judged or unfairly treated.”*

2025 survey respondents described training offered by the EDI team as *“very helpful,”* with calls for continued support and compulsory education to deepen understanding across all staff. They also emphasised the value of lived experience, suggesting *“more staff who are willing to share their personal stories”* to bring authenticity and context to policies. While some still feel limited by rigid work structures or stigma *“I honestly don't feel like I can expect a promotion when I have performance-limiting conditions”*, feedback reflects a clear desire to *“keep going with current drive for improvement”* and embed accessibility meaningfully into workplace culture.

## 6. Further action

Charles Sturt University identified in 2023 that SWD had lower engagement scores and experienced inconsistent support and understanding. To address these gaps, we addressed process issues by implementing an online form, developing supporting resources for all WPA requests, and increased awareness and capacity building through education initiatives. These actions resulted in improved engagement scores for SWD (Table 6), increased reporting of disability both in anonymous surveys and employment records (Table 7) and increases in SWD's perceptions of belonging and acceptance (Figure 3). However, persistent barriers remain, particularly around disclosure, complexity in WPA processes, and perceptions about potential negative career impacts if adjustments are sought (Figures 4 and 6). Feedback from SWD highlights the need for continued simplification and resourcing of WPA processes, consistent and empathetic support, ongoing training, visible leadership, and intersectional approaches (Figures 4-6).

Additional SMART actions (Table 10) will focus on improving collection of disability data, further simplification and streamlining of WPA processes, tailored communication for diversity groups overrepresented in SWD data, and continued initiatives to increase awareness and build capacity

**Table 10. Future Actions to improve WPA outcomes for Staff with Disability at Charles Sturt.**

Action name or reference	Rationale/ evidence	Actions & outputs (description)	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired outcomes, targets or success indicators
<b>6.1 Improve collection and maintenance of DPC data on staff with disability</b>	DPC records show lower number of SWD and those requiring adjustments than numbers reported in YVS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection process with more explanation, privacy collection statement that uses more friendly language</li> <li>• Establish process for EDI team to update disability records of staff supported with WPA</li> <li>• Enable staff to be able to update DPC system with own disability data at anytime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 2025 start consultation</li> <li>• December 2025 system updated</li> <li>• 2026 (post-restructure) encourage staff to update their data regularly</li> </ul>	DPC teams: EDI, Systems, Talent Acquisition, Employee Services	Executive Director, People and Culture	More accurate records of SWD and those requiring adjustments
<b>6.2 Tailored communication and information for diversity groups, such as gender, CALD and First Nations</b>	Higher proportion of SWD and another diversity characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to reach staff in key diversity groups and provide appropriate information about support available, e.g. attend relevant Employee Networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 2025 commence planning</li> <li>• Implement January 2026 onwards</li> </ul>	EDI team	Executive Director, People and Culture	SWD are aware of and accessing the support available
<b>6.3 Further simplify and streamline WPA processes</b>	Feedback from SWD (survey) about complexity, delays, and fear of disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify bottlenecks/pain points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dec 2025 commence planning</li> </ul>	EDI team	Executive Director, People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced administrative burden and time to implement adjustments</li> </ul>

Action name or reference	Rationale/evidence	Actions & outputs (description)	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired outcomes, targets or success indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update WPA process and policy to remove identified bottlenecks/pain points</li> <li>Monitor enquiry to implementation timeframes</li> <li>Maintain flexible options for disclosure and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Feb 2026 onwards</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved satisfaction from SWD &amp; supervisors</li> </ul>
<b>6.4 Continue to increase awareness and build capacity</b>	<p>SWD desire for practical, lived-experience-based awareness &amp; education</p> <p>Positive feedback about ANEN</p> <p>Fear of disclosure for SWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue sharing lived experience in training and awareness raising</li> <li>Continuous improvements to training and education</li> <li>Advocate for universally accessible and inclusive design/approaches</li> <li>Grow ANEN and peer-to-peer support for SWD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dec 2025 commence planning</li> <li>Implement Feb 2026 onwards</li> </ul>	EDI team	Executive Director, People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced fear/stigma, increased support and improved belonging for SWD</li> <li>Increased confidence in supporting SWD</li> <li>Increased universal inclusivity &amp; accessible practices university-wide</li> </ul>