

Industrial Relations Lead

Classification	Band 5
Team	Corporate & Assurance
Reporting to	GM People & Capability
Location	Coliban Water Main Office
Effective Date	1 October 2025

Working at Coliban Water

Underpinning healthy people is healthy water!

Every day almost 180,000 customers in North Central Victoria trust us to deliver the water and sewage services that underpin the health and prosperity of their communities – now and tomorrow. We deliver these services to residents, farmers, businesses, and industry in 49 communities in an area spanning more than 16,500 square kilometres.

Led by our vision **healthy water, healthy people**, putting our customers and communities first is part of our DNA.

Day-to-day this means we maintain and upgrade the water and sewage pipes, pump stations and treatment plants we all rely on. And it's why we've set a bold strategy to build on that trust, enhance our natural environment, strengthen water security and resilience, and help shape the future of our region for the better.

While we're proud to lead the way, we know our success will come from deep understanding and collaboration. We engage regularly with and learn from our customers, communities, Traditional Owners, strategic partners, and others – because as locals, too, we know the best outcomes are realised when we all work together.

What we stand for

We're focussed on a culture of Earn the customer, Own the risk, and Act. This underpins our ability to deliver high quality services to our region.

Earn the customer	We exist to serve our customers. We 'wow' them with an outstanding experience.
Own the risk	We take responsibility and are accountable to our customers and communities.
Act	We are brave in our decision making and take action. We make good judgements based on evidence and we follow through.

Working with us, you'll be joining a vibrant, dynamic, and supportive team that:

- Respects, supports, and collaborates with the First Peoples of the land on which we live and work.
- Champions an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity.
- Is committed to flexible work and balance.
- Is a leader in the area of social justice, which sees us challenging the way we work to improve gender equality and support those impacted by family violence.

At Coliban Water we balance a small team rhythm with the reach and resources of one of the largest Victorian regional urban water corporations.

With big plans on the drawing board over the next five years, it's a great place to take the next step in your career.

Position overview

As part of the broader Corporate & Assurance group, the purpose of the People & Capability (P&C) team is to enable the organisation's most important asset, its people, to thrive. We do this by providing the systems, processes, and support to attract the right people, build their skills and capabilities and retain them as part of the Coliban Water team. This in turn enables the organisation to deliver high quality services to our region and achieve the best outcomes for our customers and community.

The Industrial Relations Lead, provides expert guidance and leadership in human resources management with a strong emphasis on industrial relations (IR). This role partners with senior leaders and managers to drive strategic people outcomes, ensuring compliance with employment legislation, effective management of workplace issues, and successful delivery of organisational change initiatives. The Industrial Relations Lead is responsible for building trusted relationships across the organisation, fostering a positive and productive workplace culture, and managing complex people matters including investigations, conflict resolution, and mediation.

Position dimensions

Capital and expenditure budget	In accordance with the Organisation budget
Authorities/delegations	In accordance with the Instrument of Delegations
Number of reports	Nil
Internal working relationships	Executive Leadership Team, People Leaders, People & Capability Team, All Employees
External working relationships	Union representatives, legal advisors, Fair Work Commission, Water Corporations and local partner agencies/organisations, government (DEECA) and regulatory bodies.
Other	Victoria Public Sector Commission, participation in Statewide Water Industry group.

Key result areas

Industrial Relations

- Lead and advise on industrial relations strategies, interpretation and application of the enterprise agreement, and changes to industrial relations legislation
- Partner with leaders to manage union relationships, consultations, and bargaining processes.
- Monitor the IR landscape to ensure the organisation remains compliant with relevant workplace legislation, policies, and procedures.
- Provide expert advice on disciplinary matters, grievances, and performance management

Workplace Investigations & Conflict Management

- Conduct and oversee impartial, high-quality workplace investigations into misconduct, grievances, and disputes.
- Provide mediation and conflict resolution services to support positive workplace outcomes.
- Deliver training and coaching to managers on conflict management and effective people leadership.

Organisational Change & Transformation

- Partner with leaders to design and implement organisational change processes, including restructures, redeployment, and redundancy programs.
- Support workforce planning and capability development initiatives.
- Facilitate consultation and communication processes to ensure employee engagement and compliance during change initiatives.

Support the business partnering function to provide HR services

- **HR Program and Project Management:** Collaborate with business leaders and the Strategy team to deliver the P&C components of the organisation's strategic goals and objectives. Drive the implementation of P&C programs across the client business unit.
- **HR Analytics and Reporting:** Utilise HR data to identify trends, draw insights, and make data-driven decisions to forecast future needs and improve HR processes and analytics.
- **Workplace Culture & Employee Engagement:** Develop and implement initiatives to foster a positive and inclusive work culture, promoting employee engagement, morale, and satisfaction.
- **Learning & Development:** Identify training needs, primarily within the IR context, and collaborate with the P&C team to design and implement relevant learning and development programs that enhance managers and employee skills and capabilities
- **Talent Acquisition:** Assist the Talent Acquisition team and hiring managers with the onboarding of new employees ensuring a smooth and effective transition to enable them to become productive and engaged member of the Coliban team
- **Performance Management:** Partner with managers to establish and communicate performance expectations, ensure the timely completion of performance appraisals, and provide coaching on performance improvement/management and career development

Performance level

Action and accountability	This role is required to provide expert advice and recommendations. Advice is provided through drawing on legislation, policy, procedure, process and professional standards. This position is specialised in its field and Management provides guidance and support only when needed.
Judgement and problem solving	This role makes decisions through considering a variety of alternatives. Considerations may include established people impacts, management systems, standards, legislation and commercial parameters. Problem resolution is a feature of this role and will require conceptualisation, development of ideas, detailed analysis and development of action plans. There is not always a clear answer to resolve problems, and the role is required to use knowledge and experience to apply sound judgement. Strategic thinking with the ability to balance commercial and people considerations is required
Specialist knowledge and skills	• Expert knowledge in industrial relations laws and enterprise agreements • Strong skills in managing workplace investigations and providing defensible outcomes • Experience leading organisational change processes, including consultation and stakeholder management • Strong skills in mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution
Interpersonal skills	This role requires the ability to influence and convince others in the achievement of objectives and at times this will include managing matters where there are conflicting interests and opinions. It requires a high-level communication, influencing, and relationship-building skills. It will have the ability to manage sensitive matters with integrity, confidentiality, and sound judgment.
Leadership level	• Lead self: Core skills demonstrating initiative, collaboration and communication. • Lead element: Leads the development and growth of a key business capability, core platform, or core technical area.
Qualifications and experience	• Tertiary degree in Business/Commerce or similar together with: • Several years in a role focussed on industrial relations, preferable in a Govt/regulated setting • Experience across generalist human resources • Further qualification or relevant certifications (e.g. Change Management, Industrial Relations desirable.

Shared goals

Health safety and wellbeing	Prioritise your own and others' health, safety and wellbeing by complying with the relevant Occupational Health & Safety legislation and Coliban Water's safety policies and procedures, including reporting hazards and incidents, and ensuring a discrimination-free work environment.
Environmental stewardship	Demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental stewardship by adhering to high standards, sustainability principles, and complying with relevant regulations.
Victorian public sector values	You'll uphold the values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership, and human rights, to strengthen the organisation's effectiveness in the public sector.

Assessments and further requirements

- A valid and current Australian workers' rights.
- You will be required to complete all core-training requirements in the expected timeframes.
- You may be required to perform additional or supplementary duties from time-to-time consistent with your skills, training, qualifications, and experience.
- From time-to-time work outside of your regular business hours may be required, or you might be required to work at remote locations requiring overnight stay.
- You may also be requested to undertake pre or post-employment testing, such as psychometric testing, medical assessments, drug testing, police checks, security clearances, and other assessments.

Success profile

In addition to the qualifications and experience specified above, you will be required to meet the following criteria:

- Tertiary qualification in Human Resources, Law, Industrial Relations, or a related discipline.
- Strong knowledge and demonstrated application of relevant employment and industrial relations legislation.
- Significant experience in a senior HR or IR role, preferably in a complex or unionised environment.
- The ability to translate business needs into effective HR and IR strategies
- Change management expertise and the ability to implement and drive the P&C components of organisation wide projects and initiatives
- Accreditation or training in workplace investigations, mediation, or conflict resolution (strongly desirable).