

CWMS CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER POLICY

Type	Governance
Category	Development & Regulation
Responsible Officer	Director Development & Regulation
First Issued / Adopted	24 June 2015
Review Period	2 Years
Last Reviewed	N/A
Minutes Reference	OM172/15
Next Review Date	December 2017
Applicable Legislation	Water Industry Act 2012
Related Documents	Financial Hardship (CWMS) Policy
Public Consultation Required	No
File Reference	605.84
Purpose	To provide Council's Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect and their rights and responsibilities.

1. PURPOSE

The Water Industry Act 2012 requires Councils to develop a customer charter that fulfils the requirements of the Water Retail Code.

The attached "Port Pirie Regional Council - CWMS Customer Service Charter" meets with this requirement.

2. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's internet site: www.pirie.sa.gov.au

- Port Pirie Council Administration Centre, 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie
- Crystal Brook Rural Office, Bowman Street, Crystal Brook.

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

COMMUNITY WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

The aim of our Charter is to provide Council's Community Wastewater Management (CWMS) customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect and their rights and responsibilities.

The *Water Retail Code-Minor & Intermediate Retailers*, developed by Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA), contains a detailed description of your rights and our responsibilities in providing you with water and/or sewerage retail services and can be found at (www.escosa.sa.gov.au)

Retail Services Provided

We provide customers in Crystal Brook and Napperby with CWMS services. The Council is responsible for the provision of the service from the point where your wastewater system connects to the CWMS. The indoor plumbing, the maintenance of the septic tank and pipe work leading up to the CWMS connection point is the responsibility of the property owner.

SEWERAGE REMOVAL (QUALITY)

We will:

- Remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- Remove the sludge from your septic tank once every four years.
- Use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your sewerage service.
- Provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your sewerage service at least 4 business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance.
- Provide an emergency telephone number on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service.

You:

- Will report any blockages, bursts or leaks to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website.
- Will not discharge restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure.
- May be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. We will advise you of the reasons for cost recovery in these circumstances and any amounts payable will be subject to the payment assistance and financial hardship provisions of your contract with us.
- Will contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure.

Our Prices

PRICE LIST

We will:

- Publish our Price List, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your retail service, each year by 31 August on our website at www.pirie.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at our office at 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie.
- Publish our Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how our fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by Port Pirie Regional Council on our website at www.pirie.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at our office at 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie.
- In the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website 60 days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at our office.
- Calculate your bill on a pro-rata basis if a tariff rate or charge changes during a billing cycle so that the old tariff rate or charge applies up to and including the date of change and the new tariff rate or charge applies from the date of the change to the end of the billing cycle.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGE

The Local Government Act 1999 allows us to recover a “service availability charge” from you where our sewerage infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our “service availability charge” on an annual basis, at a reduced rate for vacant land, as a separate inclusion on your rates notice.

WATER AND SEWERAGE CONCESSIONS

Water and sewerage concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current water and sewerage concessions, assistance or advice visit www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions, phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au.

Connections

CONNECTIONS – WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

We will:

- inform you within 10 working days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure, following the receipt and assessment of the relevant application form and payment of the appropriate application fees.

Connections (Cont'd)

CONNECTIONS – WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE (Cont'd)

You will:

- provide us with relevant information about your supply address.
- pay the relevant connection and application fees as set out in our Price List.
- Following written approval from the Council, engage the services of an appropriately qualified tradesperson to undertake the connection works, within two years of the date of the approval.
- Notify the Council of the date and time that the connections works are to be undertaken, so that the works can be inspected.

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available by visiting our office at 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie. We will provide you with a copy of our Connection Policy upon request.

Billing and Payments

We will:

- Issue you with a bill at least quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you.
- Include your sewerage charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you.
- Offer you the ability to pay your bills in accordance with provisions contained on your rate notice.

You will:

- Pay our bill by the payment due date unless we have agreed on a flexible payment arrangement.
- Pay any fee we incur if any of your payment methods are dishonoured

PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

We will:

- Provide you with the ability to pay your bills by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement.
- Offer you the ability to make payments towards future bills, grant payment extensions and agree to have your bill redirected to another person (where that person agrees).
- Inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our hardship program if requested.

Billing and Payments

PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP (Cont'd)

You will:

- inform us if you are having difficulty paying your bills prior to the due date.

Further details on our Financial Hardship (CWMS) Policy are available on our website at www.pirie.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie. We will provide you with a copy of our Financial Hardship (CWMS) Policy upon request.

REVIEWING YOUR BILL/BILLING DISPUTES

We will:

- Not commence our debt collection processes where a bill (or part of a bill) is in dispute.
- Review your bill and inform you of the outcome of our review within 30 business days of your request.
- Inform you about our independent external dispute resolution body where you remain dissatisfied following our review.

You will:

- Pay any portion of your bill that is not in dispute while your bill is being reviewed or any future bills that become due.

Overcharging

We will:

- Inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged as a result of an act or omission by us and credit the overcharged amount to your next bill.
- In the event of sale of a property, advise conveyancers of payments made in advance, to be taken into account on transfer and settlement of the property.

Undercharging

We will:

- Limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the error being advised to you in writing.
- Identify any amount due to be recovered from undercharging on a separate bill or as a separate item on an existing bill.
- Provide you with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount.
- Not charge you interest on the undercharged amount.

Undercharging (Cont'd)

DEBT RECOVERY

We will:

- only commence debt collection/recovery action where you have failed to pay your bill(s) by the due date and you have not contacted us to discuss a payment extension or other flexible payment arrangements (including eligibility for our hardship program).

You will:

- Contact us if you are having difficulty paying your bills prior to the due date.

Entry to Your Property

We will:

- Provide you with at least 24 hours notice if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your retail service.

You will:

- Ensure safe access to our infrastructure located at your supply address.

Disconnections

Subject to any applicable regulatory requirements that prohibit disconnection, we will only disconnect your retail service if:

- There is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge).
- You are found to be using the services illegally or have refused entry to a person authorised to read your meter or undertake maintenance or repairs in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments.

Where you request a disconnection (and it is not prohibited), we will use our best endeavours to issue you with a final account in accordance with your request. We will inform you if you are still required to pay our “service availability charge” when you request the disconnection.

In the event that we receive a Development Application for the demolition of your structure serviced by a CWMS, we may impose certain conditions to engage the services of a suitably qualified tradesperson, to isolate your property at its point of connection to the CWMS, from the CWMS so that the CWMS is protected from inappropriate inflows. Any such activity would be required to be easily reversible, should your property require re-connection at some time in the future.

Complaints and Dispute Resolution

We will:

- Respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 2 business days.
- Refer you to our Director Development & Regulation if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution.
- Advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to our nominated independent dispute resolution body and provide you with the details of that organisation.

Further details on our Complaints Policy are available on our website at www.pirie.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie.

Contacting Us

If you need to know more about us or the content of this Charter, please contact us on the details below:

General Enquiries:	(08) 8633 9720
Faults & Emergencies:	(08) 8633 9777
Website:	www.pirie.sa.gov.au
Email:	localgov@pirie.sa.gov.au
Office:	115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie (PO Box 45, Port Pirie, SA 5540)
Business Hours:	9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (closed public holidays)