



Customer Charter – Water and Sewerage Services

Adopted	11 June 2015
Recommendation Number	34 / 0615
Review Date:	June 2017

The Southern Mallee District Council is the Sewerage Services supplier of all major townships within the Southern Mallee District Council boundaries. These services are supplied via a Community Waste Water Management Scheme (CWMS).

All effluent collected via the CWMS is treated to a quality suitable for recycling and is supplied to local Golf Clubs via a collection of pressure mains and lagoons.

1 Aim

The aim of this Charter is to provide our water and/or CWMS (sewerage) customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from the Southern Mallee District Council 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

2 Retail Services Provided

We provide customers in the Southern Mallee area with the following services:-

2.1 CWMS (Sewerage) Removal Quality

We will:

- remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements
- 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
- pump out your septic tank of sludge at a regular period to continue its effective operation

You will:

- report any spills, leaks or incursions to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- not discharge restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure
- contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure
- uncover septic tank access cover when requested by our contractor and allow site access to allow de-sludging of septic tank

2.2 Recycled / Reuse Water Quality

We will:

- provide you with recycled/reuse water that is fit for purpose and in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements
- use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your water service
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your water 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 water service
- in the case of an unplanned interruption or emergency, provide you with information about any impact to your water service as soon as possible

You will:

- report any leaks, bursts or quality issues to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- provide safe access to the water meter so that we can ascertain your water consumption for billing purposes
- to the best of your endeavour make the required on-site water storages available to receive water
- manage all your irrigation assets on council land in a suitable manner

3 Our Prices

3.1 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 once adopted by the Southern Mallee District Council on our website at www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304
- 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 31 August on our website at www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304

3 Our Prices

3.1 Price List

We will:

- in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website 14 days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 530
- calculate your account 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

3.2 Service Availability Charge

The Local Government Act 1999 allows us to recover a “vacant not connected charge” from you where our CWMS (sewerage) infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our “vacant not connected charge” where a CWMS connection is located on a property.

3.3 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 Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au

4 Connections

4.1 Connections – Where Your Property Is Not Currently Connected To Our Infrastructure

We will:

- inform you within 7 days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure and required fees to be paid
- supply technical, approval and inspection services to ensure that the new connections to the Water/CWMS sewerage service are constructed by the new customer in an approved way

4 Connections

4.1 Connections – Where Your Property Is Not Currently Connected To Our Infrastructure

You will:

- provide us with an application for an on-site Wastewater works approval with all the relevant information provided
- pay the relevant application and inspections fees as set out in our Price List.
- Further detail on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304

5 Billing and Payments

We will:

- Issue you with a bill at least quarterly (unless your annual charge has already been paid in full), unless otherwise agreed with you.
- Include your CWMS (sewerage) charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you
- provide you with a detailed account and give you at least 12 business days to pay your account
- offer you the ability to pay your account in person, by mail or by Bpay

You will:

- pay our account 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

5.1 Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

We will:

- provide you with the ability to pay your account by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement
- offer you the ability to make payments towards future accounts, grant payment extensions and agree to have your account redirected to another person (where that person agrees)
- inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our Hardship Program if requested

5.1 Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

You will:

- inform us if you are having difficulty paying your account prior to the due date
- Further details on our Hardship Policy are available on our website at www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304. We will provide you with a copy of our Hardship Policy upon request.

5.2 Reviewing Your Bill/Billing Disputes

We will:

- not commence our debt collection processes where an account (or part of an account) is in dispute
- review your account 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 account that is not in dispute while your account is being reviewed or any future accounts that become due

6 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 account
- pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a retail service from us

7 Undercharging

We will:

- in relation to a retail service which is metered, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the meter reading date on the last account sent to you
- in relation to unmetered services, 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

7 Undercharging

We will:

- list the undercharged amount as a separate item in a special account or in your next account 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

8 Debt Recovery

We will:

- only commence debt collection/recovery action where you have failed to pay your account(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)
- not undertake debt collection activity where we have installed a flow restriction

You will:

- contact us if you are having difficulty paying your account prior to the due date

9 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 (including but not limited to the meter) located at your supply address

10 Water Flow Restrictions for Non-Payment

We will only restrict the flow of water to your property if:

- you have not paid your account or accounts by the due date and you have not contacted us to arrange an alternative payment arrangement
- you do not adhere to our previously agreed payment arrangement and you have not contacted us to discuss any further payment options
- you do not adhere to the terms of our agreement under our Hardship Policy

10 Water Flow Restrictions for Non-Payment

We will only restrict the flow of water to your property if:

- you refuse our employees or contractors entry to your property, including but not limited to, where you deny our meter readers access to your property for three consecutive billing cycles and you do not contact us to arrange reasonable alternative access arrangements
- you are using water services illegally

10.1 Before restricting your water supply

We will:

- use our best endeavours to contact you in person, by telephone, by mail and/or email
- provide you with information about our flexible payment arrangements, Government-funded concessions and assess your eligibility for participation in our Hardship Program
- issue you with a reminder notice
- issue you a restriction notice informing you that we intend to restrict your supply in 5 business days if you do not contact us

You will:

- contact us as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for your possible restriction and how the issue can be resolved

11 Disconnections

We will only disconnect your retail service if:

- you request the disconnection
- 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 our meter or undertake maintenance or repairs in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments

Where you request a disconnection, 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.

12 Reinstatement of Water Supply

We will:

- use our best endeavours to reinstate your supply within a time agreed with you subject to the reasons for disconnection or restriction being rectified and you paying our reinstatement fee
- waive the reinstatement fee if you are eligible for and agree to participate in our Hardship Program

You will:

- contact us to discuss how the issue that lead to the flow restriction or disconnection can be rectified
- pay our reinstatement fee unless it is waived

13 Termination of Contract for Retail Services

We will

- confer on you the right to terminate your contract with us for the supply of a retail services
- inform you of any relevant fees or charges payable as a result of your termination

You will:

- provide the required notice of your intention to terminate your contract with us for the supply of a retail service
- pay any relevant fees or charges

14 Complaints and Dispute Resolution

We will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 10 business days
- refer you to our Manager Environment & Planning if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to Chief Executive Officer
- provide you with a copy of our procedures upon request.

Further details on our Complaints Handling Procedures are available on our website at www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304

15 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 8577 8002

Faults & Emergencies

- Manager Environment & Planning 0427 889 418 or
- Manager Infrastructure and Engineering Services 0428 891 116

Other Contacts

Website www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au

Email council@southernmallee.sa.gov.au

Office Day Street Pinnaroo SA 5304 (PO Box 49 Pinnaroo SA 5304)

Business hours - 9.00am to 5.00 pm

16 Further Information

Members of the public may inspect this Policy on Council's website www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au and at the principal office of the Southern Mallee District Council at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304.

A copy of this Policy may be obtained from the Council free of charge, or otherwise may be downloaded for free from the Council's website.

Any queries in relation to this Policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer contactable at the principal office on 8577 8002.

17 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed within two years or as required by Council.

The Council may at any time alter this policy, or substitute a new policy.