

CUSTOMER CHARTER – COMMUNITY WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CWMS) SERVICES	
Statutory Policy	
TRIM Reference	AR19/23894[v2]
First Issued	27 July 2015
Last Reviewed	14 November 2023
Next Review	November 2027

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The aim of our Charter is to provide our Community Wastewater Management System customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us and their rights and responsibilities.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Customer Charter is to provide clear guidelines with respect to Council's and Customers rights and responsibilities.

2.2 Scope

This policy applies to the sewerage services Council provides to the community via the Community Wastewater Management System.

2.3 Strategic Reference

5 Governance and Financial Sustainability

- 5.5 We meet or exceed legislative and accreditation requirements for all relevant programs.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Sewerage Removal (Quality)

We will:

- a) remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- b) use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your sewerage service.
- c) 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.
- d) provide an emergency telephone number on our website www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service.

You:

- e) will report any spills, leaks or incursions to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au
- f) will not discharge restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure.

- g) may be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. Will we 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.

3.2 Price List

We will:

- a) publish our Price List, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your CWMS Service, within the Council's Fees and Charges Register, which is updated annually inline with the adoption of Council's Budget.
- b) publish our Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how our fees and services are complaint with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, following the adoption of Council's budget.
- c) in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website and make these available at the Civic Centre Council Offices, 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta during normal business hours.

3.3 Service Availability Charge

The Local Government Act 1999 allows us to recover a 'service availability charge' from you where our CWMS infrastructure runs adjacent to your property.

3.4 Sewerage Concessions

Sewerage concessions are administrated by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current 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

3.5 Connections

3.5.1 Existing Connections - Where your property is currently connected to our Infrastructure

We will:

- a) approve your connection (by your contractor) to our CWMS service within 14 days of you providing us with a completed 'Application for an On-site Wastewater Works Approval' Form including all relevant information.

You will:

- b) complete the 'Application for an On-site Wastewater Works Approval Form' and providing all of the relevant information outlined within the Application Form (i.e. Onsite Wastewater System Code April 2013) as amended. To assist you the 'Application Form' which outlines the information required are available on Council's Website www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au, click on Enquiries, then Environmental Health, then click Septic Onsite Wastewater Application.
- c) pay any connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Fees & Charges Register.

3.5.2 Connections - where your property is not currently connected to our Infrastructure.

We will:

- a) Inform you within 14 days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure.
- b) approve your connection (by your contractor) to our CWMS service within 14 days of you providing us with a completed 'Application for an On-site Wastewater Works Approval' Form, including all relevant information.

You will:

- c) complete the 'Application for an On-site Wastewater Works Approval Form' and providing all of the relevant information outlined within the Application Form (i.e. Onsite Wastewater System Code April 2013) as amended. To assist you the 'Application Form' which outlines the information required are available on Council's Website www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au, click on Enquiries, then Environmental Health, then click Septic Onsite Wastewater Application.
- d) pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List.

3.5.3 Billing and Payments

We will:

- a) issue you with a bill at least quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you.
- b) include your sewerage charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you.
- c) provide you with a detailed bill and give you at least 30 days to pay your bill.
- d) offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, by direct debit, Centrepay, by telephone, at Australia Post via Post Bill Pay or telephone Post Bill Pay, BPay, BPay view, or on Internet via Council's Website www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au

You will:

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

3.6 **Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship**

We will:

- a) provide you with the ability to pay your bills by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement.
- b) 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).
- c) inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our Hardship Program, if requested.

You will:

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

Further details on our Hardship Policy are available on our Website at www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta during normal business hours. We will provide you with a copy of our Hardship Policy upon request for a fee as determined by Council.

3.7 Reviewing Your Bill/Billing Disputes

We will:

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

You will:

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

3.7.1 Overcharging

We will:

- a) 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.
- b) pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a sewerage service from us.

3.7.2 Undercharging

We will:

- a) 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.
- b) list the undercharged amount as a separate item in a special bill or in your next bill with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount.
- c) not charge you interest on the undercharged amount.

3.8 Debt Recovery

We will:

- a) 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).
- b) not undertake debt collection activity where we have installed a flow restriction device.

You will:

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

3.8.1 Entry to your property

We will:

- a) provide you with at least 24 hours if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspection, repairing or testing your sewerage service.

You will:

- b) ensure staff access to our infrastructure (including but not limited to the meter) located at your supply address.

3.8.2 Disconnections

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

- a) you request the disconnection.
- b) 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).
- c) 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.

3.8.3 Termination of contract for sewerage services

We will:

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

You will:

- c) provide at least 3 business days' notice of your intention to terminate your contract with us for the supply of sewerage services.
- d) pay any relevant fees or charges.

3.9 Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Complaints and Disputes will be processed against the provisions outlined within Council's Complaints Policy. The Complaints Policy can be located on Council's Website, www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au. A hardcopy is also able to be viewed at the Civic Centre, 4

Mackay Street, Port Augusta during normal business hours, and a copy can be purchased for a fee as determined by Council - refer to the Council's Fees and Charges Register.

3.10 Contacting Us:

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

- a) General Enquiries - 86419100
- b) Faults & Emergencies - 86419100
- c) Website - www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au
- d) Email - admin@portaugusta.sa.gov.au
- e) Office - 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
- f) Business Hours - Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

4. RESPONSIBILITY & REVIEW

4.1 Responsible Officer

Director Infrastructure

4.2 Availability

This policy will be available on Council's website

4.3 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of a General Election for Local Government, or as required to meet other obligations.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Legislation

Water Industry Act 2012

5.2 Other References

Application: On-Site Wastewater Works Approval Form - www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au
Enquiries, Environmental Health, Septic Onsite Wastewater Application.
Complaints Policy
Customer First Service Charter
Requests for Service Policy
Water Industry Code - Minor and Intermediate Retailers