



**PortAugusta**

CITY COUNCIL

**2. OPERATIONAL UNITS POLICY/PROCEDURES**

**2.2 CITY MANAGEMENT - PUBLIC RELATIONS**

POLICY NUMBER	2.2.13	Public Document?		Council or Administration		PAGES	4
		Yes		Administration			
SUBJECT							
<b>CUSTOMER CHARTER - COMMUNITY WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CWMS) SERVICES</b>							
COUNCIL MEETING	AR15/28673	ISSUE DATE	27/7/2015	REVIEW DATE		DELETED DATE	
EXTERNAL LEGISLATION: Water Industry Act 2012				INTERNAL REFERENCES: Application for an On-Site Wastewater Works Approval Form (not attached) Pricing Policy Statement (Council Website)			
RELATED POLICIES:  Complaints Policy - 1.1.17 Requests for Service Policy - 1.1.18 Customer First Service Charter 2.2.03				RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:  Chief Executive Officer			

**SECTION A**

**1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

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.

**2.0 PURPOSE**

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

**3.0 RESPONSIBILITY & REVIEW**

3.1 Manager - Environmental Services

3.2 To be reviewed within 12 months after a General Election, in line with any legislative changes or by resolution of Council.

## SECTION B

### 4.0 PROCEDURE

#### 4.1 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](http://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](http://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.

#### 4.2 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 compliant 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.

#### 4.3 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.

#### 4.4 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](http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions), phone the Concessions Hotline on 1 800 307 758 or email [concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au](mailto:concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au)

#### 4.5 **CONNECTIONS**

##### 4.5.1 **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](http://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.

##### 4.5.2 **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](http://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.

##### 4.5.3 **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](http://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.

#### 4.6 **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](http://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.

#### 4.7 **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 to 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.

##### 4.7.1 **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.

#### 4.7.2 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.

#### 4.8 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.

##### 4.8.1 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.

##### 4.8.2 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.

#### 4.8.3 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.

#### 4.9 COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Complaints and Disputes will be processed against the provisions outlined within Council's Complaints Policy 1.1.17. The Complaints Policy - 1.1.17 can be located on Council's Website, [www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au](http://www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au) under the headings 'The Council', 'Council Policies', 'Statutory Policy'. 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 Council's Fees and Charges Register.

#### 4.10 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](http://www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au)
- d) Email - [admin@portaugusta.sa.gov.au](mailto:admin@portaugusta.sa.gov.au)
- e) Office - 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
- f) Business Hours - Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

### 5.0 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The **Chief Executive Officer** is ultimately responsible for the level of Customer Service provided by the organisation, although responsibilities arising out of the implementation of Customer Service initiatives are delegated to all staff throughout the organisation.
- 5.2 All Directors and Managers are responsible for ensuring their respective teams know, understand, are properly trained and deliver the appropriate levels of customer service.

- 5.3 All staff are responsible for implementing the relevant customer service initiatives and pursuing the commitment and standards outlined in this policy.
- 5.4 The Manager, Environmental Health Services will arrange for the Pricing Policy Statement to be forwarded to ESCOSA on an annual basis as determined by them.
- 5.5 The Manager, Environmental Health Services will ensure the Pricing Policy Statement on Council Website is kept up to date to reflect any changes to fees and charges.

## 6.0 AUDITS

- 6.1 Staff Appraisals will be undertaken annually and customer service levels for individual staff will be assessed and training provided where appropriate.

## SECTION C

### 7.0 FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- 7.1 Application for an On-Site Wastewater Works Approval Form - On Council's Website [www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au](http://www.portaugusta.sa.gov.au), Enquiries, Environmental Health, Septic Onsite Wastewater Application.