



# Customer Charter - Sewerage Services

The Wattle Range Council provides sewerage services through its Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS).

The aim of our Charter is to provide our CWMS customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us 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 CWMS services and can be found at ([www.escosa.sa.gov.au](http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au)).

## Sewerage services provided

We provide customers in the townships of Penola, Southend, Kalangadoo and Beachport with a sewerage service through our 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
- provide regular de-sludging of septic tanks connected into our CWMS (i.e. once every four (4) years) to ensure the continued effective operation of tanks.

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

- may be liable to pay us for a full/proportion of the cost reasonable 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
- uncover the septic tank access cover when requested by Council's contractor and allow site access to enable de-sludging of your septic tank.

## Our prices

### PRICE LIST

We will:

- publish our CWMS charges, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the supply of your sewerage service, each year by 30 July on our website at [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au)
- make this information available at our Main Council Office, Civic Centre, George Street, Millicent
- 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 30 July on our website at [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au) We will also make this available at our Main Council Office at Civic Centre, George Street, Millicent
- in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au) five (5) days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at our office.

### 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" where Council's sewerage infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. This charge is part of Council's rates and will be itemised on your rates notice as "CWMS Unoccupied Unit".

### SEWERAGE CONCESSIONS

The SA Government provides eligible persons with a concession on sewerage charges. Concessions are administered by the Department of Human Services. To

check your eligibility for a sewerage concession or to obtain assistance or advice visit <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/care-and-support/concessions/household-concessions/water-and-sewerage-rate-concession> or phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email [concessions@sa.gov.au](mailto:concessions@sa.gov.au).

## Connections

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

We will:

- inform you within 21 days whether you can be connected to our infrastructure
- allow the connection of new properties to our infrastructure or create new connections for new allotments in accordance with Council's Development – Provision of Infrastructure Policy.

You will:

- complete and lodge an Application for an On-Site Wastewater Works Approval prior to commencing any works to connect to Council's infrastructure
- pay the relevant connection application fee and the relevant Augmentation Fee (if applicable) as set out in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule
- engage a licensed plumber to connect you to our sewerage service once we have approved the connection works
- provide us with the address of the property that you will be connecting to our sewerage infrastructure.

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au) or by visiting our Main Council Office at George Street, Millicent.

### TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS FOR CWMS SERVICES

We will:

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

You will:

- provide notice of your intention to terminate your contract with us for the supply of CWMS services
- pay any relevant fees or charges.

## Billing and payments

We will:

- include your sewerage charges on your rates notice (separately identified), issued quarterly unless you have paid the entire financial year's charges or unless otherwise agreed with you

- provide you with a detailed bill (rates notice) and give you at least 12 business days to pay your bill
- offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, by BPAY or over the phone with your credit card.

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, or if the payment is not received by the due date.

### 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.

You will:

- inform us if you are having difficulty paying your bills prior to the due date
- advise us within 14 days if your billing address changes.

Further details of our Hardship Policy are available on our website at [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au) or by visiting our Main Council Office at George Street, Millicent. We will provide you with a copy of our Hardship 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 your options 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

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

## Undercharging

We will:

- in relation to sewerage 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
- 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
- not charge you interest on the undercharged amount.

## 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 septic tank or CWMS sewerage service unless it is an emergency situation
- notify you in writing when de-sludging of your septic tank will be carried out .

You will:

- ensure safe access to our sewerage infrastructure located at your supply address
- provide safe and clear access to your septic tank for Council's contractors and/or Council officers.

## Disconnections

We will consider a customer request for disconnection in accordance with the applicable regulatory instruments and only disconnect your sewerage service if:

- you request the disconnection and there are no public health, environmental or safety risks
- 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 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.

## Existing connections

Where your property is currently connected to our CWMS infrastructure:

We will:

- maintain the property's connection to the CWMS.

You will:

- provide us with your ownership contact details on purchasing the property.

## Complaints and dispute resolution

We will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within five (5) business days
- refer you to our Deputy CEO if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate your matter to our CEO
- where you remain dissatisfied following our review, inform you about your options to escalate your complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA [www.ewosa.com.au](http://www.ewosa.com.au).

Further details on our Customer Experience Policy and Compliments and Complaint Handling Procedure are available on our website at [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au) or by visiting our Main Council Office at George Street, Millicent. We will provide you with a copy of our policy upon request.

## 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: 87330 900

Faults & Emergencies: 87330 0900

Website: [www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au](http://www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au)

Email: [council@wattlerange.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@wattlerange.sa.gov.au)

Council Offices, Civic Centre, George Street, Millicent (PO Box 27, Millicent 5280)

Business hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm