

	Customer Charter – Sewerage / CWMS Services <i>Policy No. ENVPR 05</i>	Version No:	2
		Responsible Officer/s:	Manager Environmental Health & Regulatory Services
		Classification:	Council
		Issued:	3 August 2015
		Next Review:	October 2028

1. Introduction

The District Council of Grant ('Council') is a regional local government body located in the Limestone Coast of South Australia. Council is a Member of the Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Scheme. The aim of this Charter is to provide our customers with a clear statement of the standard of service they may expect, including the relevant rights and responsibilities.

2. Policy

2.1. CWMS services provided

We provide Community Wastewater Management Schemes (CWMS) to residents of Allendale East, Donovans, Port MacDonnell, Cape Douglas, Pelican Point and Tarpeena.

Effluent Removal (Quality)

Council will:

- (a) Remove effluent and wastewater from a customer's property, in accordance with the relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- (b) Use its best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions (or limitations) to a customer's CWMS service.
- (c) Provide customers with at least four (4) business days notice in regard to planned interruptions to their CWMS service.
- (d) Provide customers with an explanation for all cost recoveries.
- (e) Provide an emergency telephone number ('emergency line'), as available on Council's website, for emergencies or interruptions to the supply of the CWMS service.
- (f) De-sludge septic tanks connected to the CWMS, once every four (4) years.

Customers must:

- (a) Report all spills, leaks or incursions to Council's emergency line, as soon as practicable.
- (b) Not discharge restricted wastewater into the CWMS infrastructure.
- (c) Pay Council a proportion of costs attributable to a blockage, burst or leak. (If applicable).
- (d) Contact Council in regard to disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste requirements into the CWMS infrastructure.

2.2. Our prices

Price List

Council will:

- (a) On or before 31 July each year, publish on Council's website, the Price List (Rates & Charges), setting out the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of a customer's CWMS service. A hard copy may be obtained at Council's office.

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- (b) On or before 31 August each year, publish on Council's website, the Pricing Policy Statement outlining how the fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles. A hard copy may be obtained at Council's main office.
- (c) At least thirty (30) days prior to making any changes to the above fees and charges, publish the upcoming changes on Council's website. A hard copy may be obtained at Council's main office.

Service Availability Charge

The *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) permits Council to recover a "Service Availability Charge" from customers where CWMS infrastructure runs adjacent to their property.

CWMS Vacant Service Charge

Where a property is vacant but a CWMS connection point has been supplied, landowners will be required to pay a "CWMS vacant service charge".

2.3. Connections

Existing Connections

Council will maintain property connections to CWMS, irrespective of a change in ownership.

Future Connections

Council will provide the opportunity for eligible customers to apply for connection to the CWMS service.

Customers must:

- (a) First lodge an On-site Wastewater Works Application, which can be found here: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- (b) Pay the relevant application/connection fee as set out in Council's Price List.

2.4. Billing and payments

Council will:

- (a) Itemise a CWMS service charge on a quarterly rates notice.
- (b) Accept payment in person, by mail or direct debit.

Customers must:

- (a) Pay their bill by the payment due date, unless otherwise agreed with Council.
- (b) Pay late fees or interest associated with late payments (if applicable).

Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

Council will:

- (a) Accept requests for flexible payment plans.
- (b) Accept payments towards future bills.
- (c) Accept a bill redirection to an agreeing third party.
- (d) Provide information, upon request, in regard to eligibility for Council's Hardship Program.

Council's Hardship Policy for Residential Customers – Minor and Intermediate Retailers Policy (FINPOL 17) is published on Council's website. A hard copy may be obtained at Council's main office.

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Billing and Disputes

Council will:

- (a) Review a bill dispute and provide an outcome within thirty (30) business days.
- (b) Not commence debt collection where a bill is reasonably in dispute.
- (c) Where a customer is dissatisfied with an outcome, inform them about Council's independent external dispute resolution body.

Customers must pay any portion of a bill that is not in dispute, during the time that a review is taking place (if applicable).

Debt Recovery

Council will commence debt recovery where a customer has failed to pay their bill(s) by the due date, appropriate notice has been given to the customer and they have failed to make alternative arrangements, within the notice period.

Customers must notify Council as soon as practicable, if they are having difficulty paying their rates.

Sewerage Concessions

Sewerage Concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. For more information, please see the relevant contact details below:

Website: www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions

Phone: 1800 307 758

Email: concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au.

2.5. Overcharging

Council will:

- (a) Inform and correct any invoice that has been wrongly issued, within ten (10) business days of identifying the error.
- (b) Reimburse any continuation of a CWMS service charge(s), within ten (10) business days, where the service was previously cancelled.

2.6. Undercharging

Council will:

- (a) In regard to unmetered services, notify customers in writing and only recover up to twelve (12) months of undercharging. (if applicable).
- (b) Itemise the undercharged amount in either a standalone bill or a future rates notice.
- (c) Not charge interest on any undercharged amount.

2.7. Entry to a Property

To the exclusion of an emergency, Council will provide at least twenty-four (24) hours' notice before entering a customer's property, for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing septic tanks or CWMS service.

Customers must, with the above notice, provide safe and reasonable access for Council representative(s).

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2.8. Disconnections

Subject to regulatory requirements, Council may disconnect a CWMS service if:

- (a) There is a public health, environmental or safety risk to the service from a connection point.
- (b) A customer is using the services illegally.
- (c) A customer refuses entry to a Council representative(s) to read a meter.
- (d) With prior notice given, a customer refuses entry to a Council representative(s).
- (e) There is a request for disconnection in conjunction with a Development Application.

2.9. Complaints and Other Enquiries

The Water Retail Code for Minor and Intermediate Retailers ('The Code') was developed by the Essential Services Commission of SA ('ESCOSA'). The Code contains all relevant rights and responsibilities, which can be found here: www.escosa.sa.gov.au.

Council will:

- (a) Acknowledge a customer complaint or enquiry within five (5) business day.
- (b) Refer the customer to the relevant manager, if they are not satisfied with the initial response or resolution.
- (c) Refer the customer to the CEO, if they are not satisfied with the manager's response or resolution.
- (d) Where a resolution cannot be agreed on, inform the customer of Council's independent external dispute resolution body.

Council's Complaint Handling Procedure (ADMPR 01) is published on Council's website. A hard copy may be obtained at Council's main office.

In addition, the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA is an independent body established to investigate and resolve disputes between customers and electricity, gas and water companies. For more information, please see the relevant contact details below:

Website: www.ewosa.com.au

Phone: 1800 665 565

2.10. Contacting Us

For further enquiries, please contact Council:

General Enquiries: 08 8721 0444

Faults & Emergencies: 08 8721 0444

Website: www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au

Email: info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au

Office: 324 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier SA 5290 (8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri)

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3. References / Other Documents

Local Government Act 1999 (SA)

Hardship Policy for Residential Customers – Minor and Intermediate Retailers Policy
(FINPOL 17)

Price List (Rates & Charges)

Pricing Policy Statement

Complaint Handling Procedure (ADMPR 01)

4. Review

This Charter shall be reviewed by the District Council of Grant at a minimum, once within every four (4) year Council term (or on significant change to legislation or other matters which could affect this policy).

Action	Date	Minute Reference
Adopted by Council	3 August 2015	15093.2
Minor formatting amendments	4 May 2020	Governance Officer
Amended	15 August 2022	22228.2
Reviewed	23 April 2025	25071