



CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

1 November 2005



HOW WE SUPPLY IRRIGATION WATER

This Customer Service Charter sets out the services and standards of the Gascoyne Water Co-operative Ltd (GWC), GWC supplies irrigation and non-potable water and related services to our member customers in accordance with the Operating Licence issued by the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) under the Water Services Licensing Act 1995.

Our customers are shareholding members of GWC who have access to the Carnarvon Irrigation Distribution System.

Irrigation water is delivered to the farms and other landholders from Brickhouse Pump Station through a network of pipes located on the North and South banks of the Gascoyne River.

Growers who have access to river front prolongations are also licensed to take water from private bores located within these prolongations. Licensing of these wells and bores is the business of the Department of Environment. The Cooperative is only responsible for the delivery of water through the piped scheme system.

The Carnarvon Irrigation Area (CIA) is relatively unique among Australian schemes because of the duality of sources for growers in the area served.

The Cooperative buys bulk water from the Water Corporation borefield and, under most circumstances, at a pressure suitable for direct delivery to our customers. During times of very high demand, water is diverted to Brickhouse tanks and there pressure is increased through the booster pumps to meet the increased demand.

The water distribution scheme does not have the capacity to supply all properties with their normal irrigation supply at once (that is at the same time). A system of water supply by demand management will need to be used to meet the supply required by the individual irrigation farmers while maximising the efficiency of the distribution system and minimising boosting (which incurs extra costs to the co-operative and its members).

Proper operation of the scheme is necessary to ensure water is supplied without excessive reduction in pressure in the reticulation system and to minimise the costly operation of the booster pumps .

This means we need our customers to talk to us about how much water they require and when, so that we can spread the demand over the 24 hours of each day.

HOW WE SUPPLY NON-IRRIGATION WATER

Customers who take water for purposes other than irrigation of crops will be customers of a wholly owned subsidiary of GWC – Coral Coast Water Pty Ltd and fall under one of two categories: Commercial Customers; and Stock and Garden Customers.

Customers in the first of the two above categories (commercial) include properties where a commercial operation is carried out and the water needs (or part thereof) is supplied from the piped irrigation scheme.

Commercial water use is defined as water used to produce income as opposed to general garden use and stock purposes (such as horses etc). Coral Coast reserves the right to reclassify the service if it becomes evident that commercial business is being conducted and/or produce sold.

They will be charged at the Commercial Rate for Service Charges as determined by the Board of Gascoyne Water Co-operative for the size of service installed. The Annual Service Charge for a 50mm Commercial Service will be set at the equivalent of the Irrigation Annual Asset Contribution and will be reviewed annually.

Customers in the second category who take water from the scheme for stock and garden purposes will be charged at the Stock and Garden Rate for Annual Service Charge as determined by the Board of GWC. The Annual Service Charge for a 25mm Stock and Garden Service will be reviewed annually.

There will be no fixed price component to the volumetric charges as there is no defined allocation (but a maximum consumption for each meter size may be applied) for these customers and the Volumetric price for both service categories will be set by GWC from time to time and will be passed through to the customers of Coral Coast Water. This price will vary in accordance with the Financial Plan of GWC and will be reviewed annually.

THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE TO YOU

1. OPENING AND CLOSING THE IRRIGATION SEASON

- 1.1. As of January 1, 2004, the Irrigation Year will commence on the first day of January of each year and close on the last day of December of each year.
- 1.2. The Irrigation Year will also reflect the Billing Year for Commercial and Stock and Garden customers.

2. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 2.1. We will endeavour to supply irrigation water that is safe for the irrigation of crops. However, because we purchase bulk water from the Water Corporation, we cannot guarantee that actions by others, beyond our control, will not compromise the quality of the water delivered on farm.
- 2.2. We will work with the Water Corporation, who, under the Bulk Water Supply Agreement, are required to use their best endeavours to deliver water in accordance with the standards for raw water (that is, water quality standards (Major Components) **prior** to chlorination treatment for microbiological and bacteriological contamination) used for town water supplies.
- 2.3. Supply of irrigation water for purposes other than irrigation of horticultural crops (Commercial and Stock and Garden) may be on application. If supply is to be made, it would be provided under the terms of a Special Agreement between GWC and the applicant. This agreement would require the recognition by the customer that the water is not provided for human consumption and is regarded as 'non-potable' water.
- 2.4. Any customer intending to use water supplied from the piped irrigation scheme for domestic purposes, does so at their own risk. **Under no circumstances is any water, supplied from the piped irrigation scheme, considered fit for human consumption purposes.**
- 2.5. We will use our best endeavours to supply our customers with their irrigation water in line with the demand management program.
- 2.6. Commercial and Stock and Garden Water is not subject to the Demand Management Guidelines.
- 2.7. We will always endeavour to supply the water required at the time requested, but may need to schedule the water at a later time if other customers' requirements have fully utilised the capacity of the system or in order to maximise the efficient use of water.
- 2.8. We will provide information back to our customers at the time of ordering, advising them when their order is scheduled for delivery.
- 2.9. We agree that should there be a need to vary a previously advised delivery time, GWC will contact the land holder to explain the reason for the variation and advise the rescheduled delivery time.

- 2.10. We will allow at our discretion the transfer of water entitlements between properties within the district subject to the completion of the *Transfer of Water Entitlement Form* by both parties, payment of any fees and charges including any arrears from their properties, and the capacity of the system to supply the transferred water. Both parties must be members of the GWAMCO and GWC (referred to as "The Co-operatives") Cooperatives. Transfer can be temporary or permanent, but land must not be allowed to be left 'dry', that is with no permanent water allocation at all.
- 2.11. Transfers do not apply to Commercial or Stock and Garden services.
- 2.12. We will allow growers with more than one entitlement to pool this water so that all or part of this water can be delivered to any Supply Point owned by the grower. By completing the pooling administration process, the grower will not have to transfer water each year.
- 2.13. Due to the need to undertake maintenance of pipes, including repairs to leaks and bursts, availability may at times be limited. We will limit interruptions to supply for scheduled shut downs of the supply to normal business hours and affected customers will be advised at least 48 hours in advance. In the case of leaks and bursts, no advanced warning of an interruption to supply may be possible.
- 2.14. Clearing of blocked meters, damaged services etc, will normally be carried out during normal business hours. Non urgent repairs effected outside normal business hours, at the request of a customer, may incur a charge to cover the additional costs to the Cooperative.
- 2.15. In the Piped Irrigation Scheme, we will endeavour to supply a consistent pressure of between 15 - 25 Metres Head, measured at **Brickhouse Pump Station**. Operation at this pressure will ensure a supply of up to 28 Megalitres per day (MLD) into the distribution system which is the equivalent of 10.2 Gigalitres per year. We cannot guarantee the level of pressure in the Piped Irrigation Scheme because we cannot control who is irrigating at any one time. We will have to rely, at least initially, on the cooperation of all members to maintain a 24 hour spread of water usage (under the Demand Management Guidelines) so that the maximum working pressure is maintained at all times.

3. ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. We will ensure that cost effective pipe maintenance is carried out to enable efficient and effective distribution of water to customers' supply points.
- 3.2. We will respect the assets and operations of our customers' properties and "leave as found" all infrastructure on private land.
- 3.3. We will provide written notice of entry at least 14 days in advance when it is necessary to enter onto private land for planned major construction works. However, because of the nature of irrigation operations, and the frequent need to enter onto our customers' properties, we are not always able to advise of entry onto their land for routine operations and maintenance. We will endeavour to contact you in person at least 48 hours prior to entry. Should you not be present we will leave a calling card to advise of our visit.
- 3.4. We will endeavour to prevent disruptions to supply, however, where they are unavoidable we will use our best endeavours to limit them to a maximum of three days.
- 3.5. If a planned disruption to supply is required we will endeavour to advise all customers affected in writing at least 48 hours before the disruption occurs outlining the reason for the disruption and expected duration.
- 3.6. In the event of an emergency shutdown of supply we will endeavour to contact affected customers within six hours and advise them of the reason for the shut down and its expected duration.
- 3.7. We will endeavour to repair or replace within 24 hours, any water meter found to be faulty.
- 3.8. We do not supply drinking water (as per the Water Corporation's Town Water Supply Reticulation) to any property (See Service Delivery 2.3 above) and consequently we cannot give the same guarantees that are expected of suppliers of drinking water for domestic purposes.
- 3.9. Where a meter is found to be recording incorrectly we will estimate water consumption based on previous months and/or same period for previous year.
- 3.10. We will thoroughly investigate all instances where supply points or measuring devices (meters) appear to have been tampered with and may withhold supply while the cause is investigated. Where, in our opinion, water theft has occurred we will estimate the quantity not properly measured and charge the property owner accordingly.
- 3.11. We will uphold the Australian Standards and legislated requirements for Back Flow Prevention. Any customer found to be in breach of the requirements may have supply discontinued unless and until the customer's plumbing is fully compliant. Repeated instances of non compliance may result in the lengthy or even permanent disconnection of water services to the affected property.
- 3.12. We will continue a program of investment in new technology to ensure the water distribution system is capable of meeting customer needs at lower real costs while improving efficiency and reducing water losses.

CONTACT NUMBERS

During normal business hours (9:00 am to 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm Monday-Friday)

- Administration
 - Account enquiries (08) 9941 4488
 - Allocation enquiries (08) 9941 4488
 - Faults and Complaints (08) 9941 4488
 - Facsimile: (08) 9941 4499
 - Email: RaeSanderson@gascoynewater.com.au

- Operations Staff
 - Colin Burnett (Ops Supervisor) 0429 414 488
 - Henry Copes (Ops Assistant) 0427 414 488
- After Hours
 - Faults and Complaints (08) 9941 4488
(phone is redirected to Operations staff on standby. Please use only for genuine faults and service problems as field staff cannot answer account or policy enquiries).

- Chief Executive Officer
 - Edward Garrett (08) 994 14488
 - Mobile: 0428 414 488
 - Email: EdGarrett@gascoynewater.com.au

- GWC Mailing Address:
 - 451 Robinson Street
 - Boundary Rd entrance
 - PO Box 5
 - CARNARVON
 - WA 6701

4. CUSTOMER BILLING – Irrigation Purposes

- 4.1. We will raise an invoice for the Annual Asset Contribution, payable to GWAMCO on the first day of January of each year
- 4.2. We will raise an invoice for the fixed charge components of your allocation, payable to GWC and GWAMCO on January 1 each year
- 4.3. We will read your meter(s) on the last business day of each calendar month to calculate your monthly consumption.
- 4.4. We will issue accurate consumption accounts on a monthly basis within five business days of the end of the month.
- 4.5. Accounts issued will contain all the necessary information to enable our customers to identify the property and service being charged, as well as details to enable account payment.
- 4.6. We will issue to Irrigation, Commercial and Stock and Garden Customers, each month, a Water Statement showing monthly and year to date consumptions from Basin A bores and Scheme services connected to your property.
- 4.7. We may charge interest on overdue accounts and may refuse supply to **any** customer where fixed charges and/or consumption charges remain unpaid more than **30 days** beyond the due date. Penalties may be imposed as a result of disconnection action.

5. CUSTOMER CONTACT

- 5.1. We will treat our customers with respect and courtesy.
- 5.2. We will keep our customers fully informed, of all matters which may affect them, through direct mail, newsletters, notices in newspapers circulating in the district and advice through local radio stations. In particular, we will publish details of fixed and volumetric charges applicable for the next Irrigation Year and other relevant information in November of each year in a newsletter which will be mailed to each customer.
- 5.3. Our staff will be available during business hours for general enquiries and concerns of all customers (See Contacts Page 6).
- 5.4. At least two other newsletters will be produced each year.
- 5.5. We will respond to reports of faults within the irrigation system within two working days unless the fault is deemed urgent by the Chief Executive Officer or Operations Supervisor.
- 5.6. Urgent faults will be responded to within two hours. Initial response(s) may be by telephone or personal visit by a GWC employee or contractor.
- 5.7. We will establish and resource an efficient and effective process for receiving, recording and resolving written customer complaints.



- 5.8. We will respond to customer complaints within two working days unless the fault is deemed urgent by the Chief Executive Officer, in which case the complaint will be responded to within one working day.
- 5.9. A dispute will be determined to exist if a complaint cannot be resolved through the normal administrative processes. The dispute will then be submitted to the Disputes Committee (a panel of not less than 5 and not more than 7 people, including any 2 directors and any 3 Members who are not directors).
- 5.10. If the dispute remains unresolved after a period 21 days, you may refer the matter to the Water Services Planning Branch (WSPB) on (08)9278 0300. The WSPB will seek a detailed explanation of the nature of the complaint, the solutions or actions offered by GWC and the reasons why these are not acceptable to you. WSPB will respond with its opinion on the matter and suggest a solution to the parties involved.
- 5.11. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may submit the matter to arbitration by an Arbitrator selected by you from a list provided by the WSPB. The Arbitrator's decision, including awarding of costs, shall be binding on both parties and will preclude further action on the matter. You may elect to bypass the arbitration process and take legal action to resolve the matter..
- 5.12. We will reply to all written correspondence within five working days. If the matter requires investigation we will advise in writing and will nominate a date for further contact.
- 5.13. We will make available for inspection in our office during normal business hours, plans of the irrigation system, and copies of legislation and by-laws relevant to the irrigation business.
- 5.14. We will carry out surveys seeking customer input or opinions on general or specific aspects of Gascoyne Water Cooperative's service delivery or proposed changes to the nature of the services delivered, every two years or at more frequent intervals if required by Government.
- 5.15. Members will also have the forum of Annual General Meetings of the Gascoyne Water Cooperative to raise any issues (in accordance with the Articles of Association) or make suggestions to improve the efficiency and performance of the Cooperative.

WHAT WE ASK IN RETURN

To help Gascoyne Water Cooperative provide the level of service outlined above, we ask that you help us in the following ways:

1. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 1.1. Treat our staff and contractors as you would have them treat you.
- 1.2. Advise us at our Carnarvon office on (08) 9941 4488 of any service difficulties or faults or advise the Operations Officer in the field.
- 1.3. Liaise with your local Operations Officer to help ensure efficient water distribution in your area.
- 1.4. Give us as much time as possible when ordering water. (The earlier you order the greater chance of getting the water at the time you want it) *Note: This will apply only if it becomes necessary to introduce water ordering.*
- 1.5. Keep us informed of your irrigation plans, crop types and watering requirements through regular liaison with your GWC office and responding to annual surveys. This will help us to establish benchmarking comparisons with other irrigation districts through the ANCID Benchmarking Report.
- 1.6. Take care when installing private pipes and electrical cables to allow for safe access to supply points and pipelines by our staff for operations and maintenance purposes. Mark all cable and pipe locations at road and scheme pipe crossings
- 1.7. Ensure that you have enough on-farm storage capacity for stock and garden purposes to withstand supply interruptions of up to 3 days.
- 1.8. Maximise your on-farm storage for irrigation purposes to provide you with a reserve of irrigation water during peak demand periods.
- 1.9. Notify GWC in November each year, of your water requirements for the following year (the percentage of your allocation that you estimate you will need for the season). This will allow us to plan for delivery of the allocations and to estimate water available for trade and emergency allocations.



2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 2.1. Maintain a clear area of at least 2 metres radius around and above your meter(s) (both Bore and Scheme) to allow field staff safe access for reading and maintenance purposes.
- 2.2. Keep us informed of any maintenance changes or improvements that you feel could improve the operation of the irrigation system.
- 2.3. Seek to use water as efficiently as possible so as to keep waste to a minimum. This will help reduce total water used and save you money.
- 2.4. Do not discharge polluting or hazardous wastes into the irrigation area or river course.
- 2.5. Ensure that your supply point complies with backflow prevention legislation at all times to protect the safety of fellow irrigators, their families and their crops.
- 2.6. Irrigators must notify GWC if they wish to carry out works in the near vicinity of any GWC assets e.g. pipes, meters, valves etc. GWC has a free service to Members to locate such assets and provide advice before works begin. Irrigators may be liable for any damage which occurs to assets during such works.

3. CUSTOMER BILLING

- 3.1. Pay, by the due date invoices for Annual Asset Contributions, Fixed Charges and Consumption Charges raised on your property for the services provided.
- 3.2. Let us know before the due date if you are having difficulty in paying any amounts charged. We may, in certain circumstances, be able to arrange a schedule of payments.
- 3.3. Notify us as soon as possible of any changes in address and/or ownership of property in the irrigation district. Failure to notify GWC of a change of address may cause delays in the delivery of your accounts and disconnection action may result from accounts more than 30 days overdue. Disconnection may incur a penalty payment which must be paid before reconnection.

