

# Approval of Shire of Wickepin Customer Service Charter

10 September 2008

Economic Regulation Authority



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## DECISION

The Economic Regulation Authority (**Authority**) has approved the Shire of Wickepin Customer Service Charter (charter) on 10 September 2008.

## REASONS

The Authority has reviewed the charter against the requirements of the Shire of Wickepin's licence and notes the following:

### Existence

Clause 19(a) of the Shire of Wickepin licence states that the licensee must produce a charter outlining the principles, terms and conditions upon which the licensee intends to provide water services to its customers. Clause 19(e) of the licence requires that Shire of Wickepin undertake a review of the charter at least once every 36 months.

The previous charter was approved by the Authority in May 2004.

The Shire of Wickepin originally submitted its charter to the Authority for approval on 2 August 2007. The Secretariat of the Authority provided feedback to the Shire of Wickepin regarding the charter which resulted in the Shire submitting a revised version of the charter on 2 April 2008. The Authority required further amendments to the revised version. The Authority agreed to extend the due date for submission of the charter to 15 August 2008. The Shire submitted the final version of its charter on 22 August 2008.

Although the Authority has approved the charter, the Authority finds that the time frame within which the Shire of Wickepin has submitted its charter has been unduly long. The Authority expects any further reviews to be undertaken within the required time frames.

### Accuracy

Clause 19(a) states that the Shire of Wickepin must set out in writing the principles, terms and conditions upon which it intends to provide water services to its customers.

The Authority finds that the principles, terms and conditions, as set out in the charter and summary document, are generally consistent with relevant legislation and licence requirements.

### Consultation

Clause 19(c)(ii) of the Shire of Wickepin's licence states that the customer charter "should address all of the service issues that are reasonably likely to be of concern to its customers".

In order to determine the service issues that are reasonably likely to be of concern to its customers, it is generally expected that a licensee would establish a process to determine all relevant service issues that should be addressed in its charter. An example of such a process is consulting with its customers and/or their representatives. The Authority's *Customer Service Charter Guidelines* recognise this as part of its criteria for assessing customer service charter reviews (clause 6.3).

The Shire of Wickepin has advised that it twice placed an advertisement in the local newsletter, *Watershed News*, which sought public comment on the charter. There were no responses received from the public or ratepayers

The Authority finds that, on the basis of the information provided, the Shire of Wickepin undertook a reasonable level of public consultation with regard to this review.

## Accessibility

Clause 19(c) of the Shire of Wickepin's licence requires that the charter be developed in 'plain English' and that it should address all of the service issues likely to be of concern to its customers.

### *'Plain English'*

The Authority finds that the accessibility of the charter is generally sound, however, it could be further improved through the simplification of some technical and legalistic language.

### *Issues likely to be of concern*

The Authority finds that the charter is generally consistent with the licence provision in covering all of the service issues likely to be of concern to the Shire of Wickepin's customers.

LYNDON ROWE  
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