

customer charter



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our customer charter

We provide world-class water and wastewater services to thousands of households, businesses and farms in towns and communities throughout Western Australia. We also maintain drainage services for both residential and commercial properties.

Our organisation has played a leading role in developing the vast and diverse State of Western Australia through the provision of the most cost effective and environmentally responsible business solutions for our customers. We are continually improving our customer service, planning and technology to honour our commitment to balancing environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Our Customer Charter has been developed in consultation with our Customer Advisory Council and underpins our commitment to our customers. Reviewed every three years, it outlines the service standards we provide and demonstrates our continuing effort to improve our services to you.

The aim of our Charter is to provide our residential customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service that you can expect from us, and your rights and responsibilities.

Elements of the Charter are varied for farmland customers, commercial customers and services provided by agreement in accordance with our Operating Licence.

We are committed to delivering the levels of service outlined in this Charter, and have implemented a Service Commitment Scheme to provide a formal means of assistance to you where any commitment has not been met. Details of the seven key areas covered by the Scheme are contained within this Charter.

We understand it's sometimes difficult to pay accounts on time. That is why we have a range of flexible options that can be tailored to meet your needs.

For further information on how we can assist, you can view a copy of our Financial Hardship policy online at www.watercorporation.com.au or call us on 13 13 85 (TTY users call 1800 063 508) to request a copy. Brochures in other languages are available on request.

All of our information is available in alternative formats on request.

issuing the customer charter

Our Customer Charter is reviewed every three years as a condition of our Operating Licence. A summary version is sent to all customers as an insert with their Annual Service Charges account in July of the review year. The full version of the Customer Charter is available on our website or a copy can be obtained by calling our General Enquiries number 13 13 85.

our operating licence

Our Operating Licence is approved by the Economic Regulation Authority. We are required to meet all the conditions specified within the Licence. The service levels set out in this Charter reflect the minimum standards required of us.

service commitment scheme

Customers are our highest priority and we strive to be recognised for excellence in customer service. Therefore we make a commitment in the following seven key areas of service.

dirty water

Stained and / or Soiled Laundry

We strive to provide water of a consistent aesthetic appearance, although we recognise that in some instances noticeable variations may occur, without risk to your health.

Our Commitment

Where, as a consequence of our systems or actions, you have suffered stained and / or soiled laundry:

- We will assist in the reinstatement or replacement of any items of laundry affected.
- If these items of laundry are irretrievably damaged and replacement is not viable, we will negotiate an appropriate settlement on a case by case basis.

pressure and flow

We will provide, at the outlet of your meter, water at a flow rate of 20 litres per minute and pressure within a standard range. There will be occasions where this is not entirely possible or where variations are unavoidable.

Our Commitment

If you are experiencing poor (low or excessive) pressure or flow, we will be on site within two business days of you advising us, or at an agreed time.

- We will conduct a water pressure or flow test free of charge and take the steps necessary to rectify the problem.
- If as a result of our systems or actions you have suffered loss, or damage to property or equipment, we will assist in the reinstatement or replacement of that loss or damage incurred.
- If the property or equipment is irretrievably damaged and replacement is not viable, we will negotiate an appropriate settlement on a case by case basis.

interruption to supply

Planned and / or Unplanned Maintenance

We make every effort to minimise interruption to your water supply, but on occasions we need to carry out planned or unplanned (e.g. burst pipes) maintenance on our services.

When this occurs we strive to limit the interruption to no more than one hour, as required by our operating license.

Our Commitment

- If your standard supply of "drinking" water is interrupted for more than six hours of our becoming aware, we will arrange an alternate temporary supply of "essential" drinking water upon request.
- If in any 12 month period you have registered more than three separate confirmed interruptions to a property's "drinking" water supply of more than one hour, we will apply a 100,000 litre special allowance against your current year water use account.

installation of services

Standard Property Connections

Once the Conditions for Connection (including fees and charges) are satisfied, we will install or activate the water service within 10 business days, or on an agreed day.

Our Commitment

If as a direct result of delays caused by us you have incurred undue expense:

- We will negotiate an appropriate settlement on a case by case basis.

flooding and wastewater overflow

We aim to minimise the occurrence and impact to customers' properties from water flooding resulting from bursts or leaks in our mains, or from wastewater overflows resulting from our systems or from any activities performed by us.

Our Commitment

If flooding from our water mains or a wastewater overflow occurs, we will attend promptly and reinstate the service, minimising discharge and damage.

- We will repair, replace or "make good" any disruption, damage or loss to property, to a standard as close as possible to the original condition.
- In the event you have incurred undue expense or such property is irretrievably damaged and replacement is not viable, we will negotiate an appropriate settlement on a case by case basis.
- If we are unable to agree on the "make good" provisions, we shall at our own expense, arrange an independent professional assessor to assist and determine reasonable reinstatement compensation.

enquiries and complaints

See Communication under page 6.

water meter tests

Registration Accuracy

If you believe your meter is not registering correctly, we provide customers with a meter testing service, for a prepaid fee.

Our Commitment

We will conduct a meter registration test within 10 business days of receiving your request, or at a mutually agreed day or time. Where the meter is found to be operating outside prescribed tolerances (fast or slow) we will:

- Refund your prepaid fee or credit it to your water use account.
- Adjust your water use account.
- Replace the meter at our cost.

billing and payment assistance

The following information explains our billing practices and your account responsibilities.

billing

Charges

We issue accounts for Annual Service charges every July to all properties where water, wastewater, and / or drainage services are available. Accounts are sent to the owner of the property at the last notified postal address.

We read meters and issue accounts for water use every six months in the metropolitan area and every four months in country areas.

Liability for Charges

The property owner is liable for all service and water use charges.

Any arrangement between the owner and tenant in relation to the payment of charges is a private matter between those parties. If the property is sold, any outstanding charges should be deducted from the proceeds of the sale. In the event that these charges are not cleared, the debt will transfer to the new owner.

Restriction of water supply

If we restrict the supply of water to you, we will provide a flow sufficient for health and hygiene purposes.

Restriction of the water supply will not occur unless:

- At least 30 days has lapsed since the due date of the original account.
- You have been given at least two working days notice in writing of our intention to restrict the water supply.

We will restore the water supply following:

- Payment of amounts owed including the restoration fee or
- Agreement to a suitable instalment plan

We will endeavour to restore your water supply within one working day of you meeting the above conditions. This may not apply in remote country locations where longer delays may be experienced.

Issuing Accounts

We will send your account to the postal address you nominate.

If you do not nominate a postal address, the account will be sent to the property to which the charges relate or your last known postal address.

Tenants

As a service to owners, we will issue accounts to either the property agent or tenant on the owner's request. However, where the account is sent to anyone other than the owner, and it remains unpaid after the due date, recovery action will be taken against the owner.

pensioner and senior concessions

If you hold a Pensioner Concession Card, State Concession Card or a WA Seniors Card (with or without a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) you could be entitled to a rebate or concession.

To find out whether you are eligible or to **apply for a concession**, visit our website at www.watercorporation.com.au or call 1300 659 951.

paying your account

There are a number of ways you can pay your account. These include direct debit, mail, BPAY, in person, internet, telephone and Centrepay.

You must pay us the amount shown on your account by the date specified. If an account is not paid by the due date, you may be charged interest on the overdue amounts.

payment difficulties

Our Customer Service Representatives and Case Managers will handle your enquiry in confidence, and with fairness and compassion.

For further information on how we can assist, you can view a copy of our Financial Hardship policy online at www.watercorporation.com.au or call us on 13 13 85 (TTY users call 1800 063 508) to request a copy. Brochures in other languages are available on request.

customer advisory council

Our Customer Advisory Council is a strong example of community engagement in action.

The Council comprises of up to 12 community representatives from metropolitan and country regions. Council members provide us with advice on issues affecting our customers, including policy, strategic initiatives, operations and service levels.

Council members are encouraged to raise issues of concern and provide feedback from their local communities, and discussions are facilitated to give us a better understanding of customer perceptions.

Through this process, the Council, and therefore the communities they represent, are kept well informed on a wide range of our activities.

We will:

- Continue to seek community involvement from across the state in our planning and decision making processes through the use of Customer Advisory Council, focus groups, customer surveys and community forums.

access and inclusion

Research has shown that people with disabilities, low literacy levels, English as a second language and those living in rural or remote areas may experience difficulty accessing information, facilities and services.

Our challenge is to make sure our business is accessible and inclusive to all members of the community.

We will:

- Continually improve access to our facilities, information and services.
- Provide free access to a Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) for customers with English as a second language. If you need this service please call us on 13 13 85.
- Provide a Telephone Typewriter Service (TTY) for customers with hearing or speech impairment. Customers with TTY can phone 1800 063 508 for enquiries or 1800 652 897 to report a problem with their water service.
- Provide information in alternative formats on request. Customers with special needs can phone 13 13 85 to request accounts in an alternative format.
- Consult with the community to identify any problems or difficulties that may exist with access to our facilities, information and services.

You should:

- Let us know if you have any special needs, by calling 13 13 85.
- Let us know of any problems or difficulties you may have accessing our information, facilities and services by calling 13 13 85.
- Provide feedback, when invited to comment on access and inclusion.

A copy of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is available on our Website or call us on 13 13 85.

services we provide

water

We provide water to cities, towns and small communities over a vast area in a range of climatic conditions. The water supply system in many areas is complex, with many different surface and groundwater sources.

water quality

Supplying safe drinking water is our highest priority. We have an extensive drinking water quality monitoring program to confirm the safety of the water we provide.

We use many different water sources throughout the State and as each has its own water quality characteristics it is inevitable some differences in taste, odour and colour may be noticeable from one area to another or when supply sources are changed.

We will:

- Supply you with water that is safe for you and your family to drink.
- Provide you with information on water quality to assist in your selection of household appliances.
- Continuously monitor and assess the quality of drinking water supplied.
- Provide you with a response, within two hours or at an agreed time, to any reports of poor water quality.
- Provide information using media bulletins of any planned changes to our system likely to affect the quality of the water we supply to you.
- Advise you of any need to make alternative arrangements for drinking water, in the unlikely event that your water quality deteriorates.
- Make water quality sample results available under Publications on our website www.watercorporation.com.au

You should:

- Be aware that certain appliances may be unsuitable or not perform efficiently with some types of water. When purchasing a water using appliance, such as a dishwasher or hot water system, you should check with your retailer that it is suitable for the water quality in your area.
- Ensure all internal plumbing is maintained in good order and in compliance with plumbing standards.
- Contact us if you have any concerns or enquiries regarding water quality on 13 13 75.

pressure and flow

The water pressure and flow that we supply to your property is measured at the outlet of your meter.

We will:

- Provide you with water that is at a flow rate of at least 20 litres per minute.
- Provide you with water that is within a standard pressure range (other than those areas which are exempt in our Operating Licence).
- Perth metropolitan areas = minimum 15 to maximum 100 metres static pressure.
- Country urban areas = minimum 13 to maximum 100 metres static pressure.

You should:

Contact us on 13 13 75, if you notice a significant change in your water flow or pressure.

installation of services

We will:

- Install or activate the water standpipe within ten business days or on an agreed day, once the conditions of approval (including fees and charges) are satisfied.

wastewater

Everything you pour down the sink or put down the toilet goes through the wastewater system. This travels to a treatment plant where we process it prior to recycling it to the environment in a sustainable manner.

Wastewater Treatment Plants play a key role in protecting public health standards within our community.

We will:

- Remove the wastewater from your property and treat it to a high quality, to protect public health and the environment.
- Maintain and operate the wastewater service up to the property connection point.
- Routinely monitor the quality of our treated wastewater before it passes back to the environment.

You should:

- Avoid flushing foreign objects other than toilet paper into the wastewater system through toilets, sinks, baths and showers as they block the wastewater system.
- Dispose of household waste correctly.

Listed below are ways of disposing of common substances:

Cooking oil / grease	Wrap in paper and place in bin
Chemicals e.g. paint	Give to a licensed hazardous wastes contractor or contact your local Government
Cleaning products, pesticides	Give to a licensed hazardous wastes contractor or contact your local Government
Food scraps	Place in bin or compost onsite
Newspaper / plastics	Recycle - contact your local Government
Engine oils	Take to local garage or oil recycling centre
Unused medicines	Return to pharmacy
Nappies, razors, cotton buds, syringes	Wrap in paper and place in bin

food waste disposal units

Food waste disposal units are a prohibited fixture in domestic, commercial and industrial waste situations. Food waste is principally organic in nature and may be successfully composted onsite and used as a soil enhancer. Alternatively, food waste should be placed in your municipal waste rubbish bin for processing by your local Government.

odours

Occasionally some odours do occur in our wastewater system and we aim to minimise odour originating from our system so that it does not unreasonably impact on premises neighbouring our facilities.

We will:

- Investigate and advise you of the outcome of any odour complaints within 24 hours or on the following business day.

You should:

- Contact us if you have an odour complaint on 1800 068 570. We take all complaints about odours from our Wastewater Treatment Plants seriously and will act promptly to overcome the problem.

drainage

The drainage system for urban development consists of roadside drains, piped drains and open channels. We have responsibility for providing, operating and maintaining the main drain component of this system for approximately 40% of the developed urban land in Perth. The collector drains connecting to our main drains and the drainage system within the remainder of the Metropolitan Area are managed by local government.

We also provide a rural drainage service, to help make land viable for agriculture, in six proclaimed Drainage Districts areas in the south of the State.

We will:

Provide a drainage system to protect property from flooding as a result of stormwater or groundwater and to manage environmental constraints, by working with others including:

- The Department of Water, in accordance with its drainage plans.
- Local governments by operating an integrated drainage system.
- Land planning agencies to ensure that drainage management is addressed prior to land being released for use.

There are some simple ways you can help to improve the quality of drain water.

You should:

- Keep rubbish (e.g. litter, paint thinner, motor oil, car cleaning products, pool chemicals) out of the drainage system.
- Use less fertiliser and/or low-phosphorous fertiliser on gardens and lawns.
- Gather up leaves, twigs and clippings for composting before they end up in the drainage system.

maintenance and management of our assets and services

responsibility for maintenance

We will:

- Maintain the water service up to and including the property meter.
- Maintain the wastewater service up to the property connection.

You should:

- Advise us immediately if damage occurs to any of our assets or services on your property by calling us on 13 13 75.
- Report deliberate damage or suspected criminal activity relating to our assets or services by calling us on 13 13 75.
- Be aware that if you are planning to build a new home or carry out renovations, we must approve building plans to ensure the protection of our water, wastewater and drainage assets. For work that does not require plans you can find the location of our service pipes by calling us on 13 13 95.
- Keep overflow relief gullies free of obstruction. Overflow relief gullies are located on the property plumbing, external to the house/building and prevent internal flooding in the event of a blockage.
- Maintain access to the property inspection shaft. The property inspection shaft is located where the internal plumbing connects to our sewer.
- Avoid planting inappropriate trees near your wastewater pipes, as they can cause root intrusion, breakage and blockages. For information on finding the right tree to plant please call us on 13 13 95.
- Keep access chambers (wastewater manholes) that may be located on your property, free of obstruction.
- Maintain all internal plumbing in good order and in compliance with plumbing standards.

planned interruption to water supply

We make every effort to minimise interruption to your water supply, but on occasions we need to carry out planned maintenance on our services.

We will:

- Provide you with notice 24 hours in advance if we need to interrupt your water supply for planned work.

unplanned interruption to services

We aim to minimise the occurrence and impact to customers' properties from water flooding resulting from bursts and leaks in our water mains and wastewater overflows resulting from our systems or activities performed.

We will:

- Provide a prompt response within two hours to undertake repairs and clean-up if there is water flooding or wastewater overflow on your property due to our system failure.
- Keep you informed during an emergency on the status of the work being undertaken.
- Respond to urgent water faults within two hours or at an agreed time.

We may need to interrupt, suspend or restrict our services due to accidents, emergencies or health or safety risks or other unavoidable causes.

entry to your property

We may need to enter your property to carry out inspections, routine maintenance and repair work on our system. This will be done during regular business hours except in an emergency.

We will:

- Provide advance notice of all planned work that may require entry to your property.
- Inform the occupier of the land or premises of work being undertaken. During an emergency, where the occupier is not present we will leave an information card.

identification of our staff

Should we need to enter your property, our employees or contractors will carry identification that will be shown to you (or to any person present at the time of access).

reinstatement of your property

We take great care to leave your property, gardens and lawns as they were after we have finished any services or maintenance work.

We will:

- Assist in the reinstatement or replacement of property or equipment lost or damaged as a result of our actions or failure of our systems.
- Reinstatement your property as close as possible to its original condition if damage does occur due to our activities.

managing incidents

Our incident management process is based on national guidelines that have been adopted by emergency services and utilities throughout Australia. We have a rigorous process for dealing with events outside normal operation and protecting our customer's interests.

In the event of a major incident we will:

- Mobilise all necessary resources to safeguard the communities' interests and return services to normal as soon as possible.
- Provide a Customer Liaison Coordinator to assist and support you to ensure a smooth transition and minimise the impact on you.

protecting critical infrastructure

We have a State-wide security programme that embraces national and international "All Hazards" security emergency standards.

We will:

- Comply with the National Guidelines for protecting critical infrastructure.
- Employ proven technology to monitor critical assets.

You should:

- Report deliberate damage or suspected criminal activity relating to our assets, to the police and by call our Faults, Emergencies and Security number 13 13 75.

meter tests

If you believe your meter is faulty, you may request that we test it for you. You will be required to pay a set fee before testing commences.

We will:

- Conduct a meter registration test if you consider that the meter is not accurately measuring water passing through it. The test will be conducted within ten business days of receiving your request and payment of the fee, or at an agreed day and time.

meter access

It only takes a few moments for us to read your water meter but this simple job is sometimes made difficult and unsafe when we don't have easy access to the meter.

You should:

- Provide a clear space of at least 30 cm around, 20 cm below and 120 cm above your water meter. Please clear sand and mulch and prune overgrown bushes.
- If you have a dog, display a sign and keep the dog secured away from the meter area.
- We respect your right to safeguard your property by locking entrance gates, however sometimes meters are in the backyard or down the side of a house - depending on where the water main is located. If no-one is home, we will leave a card asking you to call us and make suitable alternative arrangements.
- If we do not have access to your meter we may ask you to read the meter on our behalf or we may bill you on an estimate of your water use.
- When access to the meter becomes an ongoing issue we may request that it be relocated.

maintenance of your internal services

The pipe work from the property water meter and the wastewater connection point to your residence remains the responsibility of the owner.

You must employ a licensed plumber to carry out all repairs and modifications to pipes and fittings on your property, which are your responsibility.

water leaks

If you experience a leak in your internal plumbing, contact a licensed plumber to locate and repair the leak. In certain circumstances we may consider a special leak allowance to offset the wastage.

We will:

Consider granting an allowance if:

- The repair work was undertaken by a licensed plumber.
- We have received a leak allowance form completed by the licensed plumber who undertook the repairs.

Leaking taps and leaks or bursts on appliances, fixtures or fittings will not be considered for an allowance. For more information or to apply for a special allowance, please call on 13 13 85.

communication

We strive to be recognised for excellence in customer service. We welcome your comments, enquiries and suggestions, and believe that good communication with our customers plays a key role in continually improving all aspects of our business. We understand that your time is important to you and we will therefore, endeavour to ensure that your urgent needs are dealt with promptly.

If you contact us in writing

We will:

- Respond to any general written enquiries within 10 business days.
- Respond to email enquiries within five business days.

You can write to us by

Mail: Water Corporation
Locked Bag 2
Osborne Park Delivery Centre
Osborne Park WA 6916

Fax: (08) 9423 7722

Email: cust_centre@watercorporation.com.au

If you contact us by phone

See page 7 for a complete list of contact numbers.

for account enquiries

We will:

- Answer 70% of calls to our Customer Enquiry numbers within 30 seconds.

For Emergency Assistance

We will:

- Maintain a 24 hour Faults, Emergencies and Security contact service for urgent events related to our services such as a wastewater overflows, burst water mains or security concerns relating to our assets.

Our Website

www.watercorporation.com.au

We will:

- Continually improve our web presence to ensure you have the most up to date information on our activities and issues that may be of interest to you.

our contact details:

Phone: 13 13 85

Mail: Water Corporation
Locked Bag 2
Osborne Park Delivery Centre
Osborne Park WA 6916

Fax: (08) 9423 7722

Email: cust_centre@watercorporation.com.au

complaints and resolution

We value your input into our continued effort to improve the services provided to you.

We will:

- Investigate and resolve all complaints about our products or services within 15 business days of you contacting us.
- If we fail to adequately resolve your complaint within 15 business days or within a mutually agreed time, we will provide you with advice and assistance to refer your complaint to the Consumer Assistance area of the Department of Water.
- If the matter is not resolved through this process, and is considered to be serious or urgent, the Department of Water may recommend the appointment of an independent arbitrator.

You can be assured that we will provide active assistance throughout this investigation.

Information regarding this service is available on our website under the heading, Customer Complaint Resolution.

department of water contact details:

At present, Water Industry Services, Consumer Assistance is provided by the Department of Water.

Mail: Customer Services Officer
The Department of Water
Water Industry Support Branch
PO Box K822
Perth WA 6842

Phone: (08) 6364 7600

Email: WISBcomplaints@water.wa.gov.au

communication contact phone numbers

ACCOUNT ENQUIRIES	13 13 85 Within WA		8.00am to 5.00pm WEEKDAYS
INTERPRETER SERVICE	13 13 85 1800 624 377 Interstate +61 8 9423 7777 International 1800 063 508 TTY (hearing impaired)		
PENSIONER & SENIOR APPLICATIONS	1300 659 951		8.00am to 5.00pm WEEKDAYS
INTERPRETER SERVICE	13 13 85		
FAULTS, EMERGENCIES & SECURITY	13 13 75 1800 652 897 TTY (hearing impaired)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Requests • No Water • Leaks / Burst Pipes • Blocked Sewers - <i>For internal blockages contact a licensed plumber</i> • Overflows • Water Quality Complaints • Dirty Water • Security Concerns 	24 HOURS
TECHNICAL ENQUIRIES	13 13 95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill Sewerage Program • Applications for Corporation Services • Building Approvals • Availability of Water / Sewerage Services • Arrange Plumbing Inspections • Industrial Waste Enquiries 	8.00am to 5.00pm WEEKDAYS
WATERWISE HELPLINE	13 10 39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watering Days • Water Saving Tips • Reporting Breaches of Water Restrictions • Waterwise Brochures for the home and garden 	24 HOURS
LAND DEVELOPMENT ENQUIRIES	9420 2099	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subdivision Applications • Strata Subdivision Developments • Land Planning / Development 	8.00am to 5.00pm WEEKDAYS
WASTEWATER ODOURS	1800 068 570	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report odours from our wastewater treatment plants 	24 HOURS
INTERPRETER SERVICE	13 13 85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To arrange an interpreter 	8.00am to 5.00pm WEEKDAYS