



Notice

13 October 2016

Comment invited on Consultation Paper: 2016-17 Review of the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013

Public comment is sought on the [consultation paper](#) on the 2016-17 review of the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013 (Water Code)*.

The consultation paper presents the Economic Regulation Authority's (ERA) preliminary findings of its first review of the Water Code. Under the *Water Services Act 2012 (Act)*, the ERA must review the operation and effectiveness of the Water Code at least once every five years.

The Water Code regulates the conduct of water licensees in dealing with their customers, and sets service standards in areas such as billing, payment, connection, metering, financial hardship and complaints. It is an integral component of the protection framework for water customers and its review provides an opportunity for all water customers to have their say.

The consultation paper includes a number of proposals to add new provisions and amend or delete existing provisions of the Water Code. For example, the paper includes proposals to require licensees to send reminder and restriction notices to customers before supply is restricted, and for licensees to advise customers at least 48 hours in advance of a planned interruption. The paper also seeks comment on a number of questions. These include whether a guaranteed service level scheme should be introduced, under which licensees would have to make a service standard payment to customers if certain service standards were not met.

The paper also explains proposed changes to the definition of 'customer' to make it clear that tenants are not captured by the Water Code. This is because the definition of 'customer' under the Act does not include tenants and the Water Code cannot have a broader definition of 'customer' than the Act.

In drafting the consultation paper, the ERA sought the advice of the Water Code Consultative Committee. This committee is an independent statutory committee which advises the ERA on the Water Code. Its members include representatives of industry, consumer organisations and government.

Submissions are invited on the consultation paper, and any other aspect of the Water Code that may be relevant to the review.

Submissions are due by **Friday 4 November 2016**.

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