

Approval of Busselton Water Board Customer Service Charter

10 September 2008

Economic Regulation Authority



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DECISION

The Economic Regulation Authority (**Authority**) has approved the Busselton Water Board Customer Service Charter (charter) on 10 September 2008.

REASONS

The Authority has reviewed the charter against the requirements of the Busselton Water Board's licence and notes the following:

Existence

Clause 3.3 of the Busselton Water Board 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. Schedule 3, clause 6 of the licence requires that Busselton Water Board undertake a review of the charter at least once every two years.

Under Schedule 3, clause 5 of the licence, Busselton Water Board is required to send a current copy, or a summary document approved by the Authority, to all customers at least once every two years. For this reason, Busselton Water Board has submitted both a comprehensive version of the charter and a second, summary version, for approval.

The previous charter was approved by the Authority in June 2005.

The Busselton Water Board originally submitted its charter to the Authority for approval on 27 May 2007. The Secretariat of the Authority provided feedback to Busselton Water Board regarding the charter which resulted in Busselton Water Board submitting a revised, final version of the charter and summary document on 3 September 2008.

The Authority finds that the Busselton Water Board has submitted its charter for approval within an acceptable timeframe.

Accuracy

Schedule 3, clause 1 states that the Busselton Water Board 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

Schedule 3, clause 2(b) of the Busselton Water Board'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 Busselton Water Board has advised that the following consultation was undertaken to review the charter:

- input from Board members and staff of Busselton Water Board;
- input from Busselton Water Board's 2008 Customer Survey; and
- advertisement in the local newsletter which sought public comment on the charter over a period of two weeks.

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

Accessibility

Schedule 3, clause 2 of the Busselton Water Board'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.

The Authority finds that the summary document is written in a 'plain English' manner.

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 Busselton Water Board's customers.

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