

Approval of Aqwest – Bunbury Water Board Customer Service Charter & Customer Service Charter Summary

9 July 2010

Economic Regulation Authority



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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DECISION

1. The Economic Regulation Authority (**Authority**) approves Aqwest – Bunbury Water Board’s (**Aqwest**) Customer Service Charter (**charter**) for potable water supply services and the summary version of the charter (**summary charter**).

REASONS

2. The Authority has reviewed the charter and summary charter against the requirements of Aqwest’s Operating Licence 2 (**licence**) and notes the following:

Existence

3. Schedule 3, clause 2.1 of the licence states that the licensee must have in place a charter that accords with the Authority’s Customer Service Charter Guidelines (**review guidelines**).
4. Schedule 3, clause 2.6 of the licence requires that Aqwest undertake a review of the charter at least once in every three year period. Similarly, clause 5.1 of the review guidelines requires the licensee to undertake a review process, at regular intervals and within the required timeframe.
5. The previous charter was approved by the Authority in May 2007.
6. The charter was due for review by 31 May 2010. Aqwest submitted the first draft of its charter and summary charter to the Authority for approval on 21 April 2010. The Secretariat of the Authority provided feedback to Aqwest regarding the draft charter and summary charter. The Shire submitted the final version of its charter and summary charter on 1 July 2010.
7. The Authority finds that the review has been undertaken within the required timeframe.

Accuracy

8. Under Schedule 3, clause 2.1 of the licence, the charter must accord with the Authority’s review guidelines. Clause 5.2 of the review guidelines requires that the charter comply with all relevant legislative, code or regulatory requirements and be in line with the standard form contract and/or the licence requirements.
9. The Authority finds that the principles, terms and conditions, as set out in the charter and summary charter, are generally consistent with relevant legislation and licence requirements.

Consultation

10. Clause 5.3 of the review guidelines requires that the licensee engage with customers and/or their representatives in the review process.
11. Aqwest has advised that it established a project team to review the charter and summary charter. The project team consisted of both Board and staff members and held regular meetings as part of the review process.
12. The project team reviewed Aqwest's existing charters, previous customer satisfaction surveys, performance indicators and the Authority's review guidelines. The project team also reviewed existing charters from other water service providers.
13. All Board Members and staff were furthermore formally invited to provide feedback to the project team.
14. Customer feedback was sought through a number of advertisements in Aqwest's Quarterly Newsletter *On Tap*, the Bunbury Herald, and the Bunbury Mail. No public submissions were received.
15. The Authority finds that, on the basis of the information provided, Aqwest undertook a sound level of public consultation with regard to this review.

Accessibility

16. Schedule 3, clause 2.2 of the licence states that the charter should be developed in 'plain English' and that it should address all of the service issues likely to be of concern to customers.

'Plain English'

17. The Authority finds that the accessibility of the charter and summary charter is generally sound.

Issues likely to be of concern

18. The Authority finds that the charter and summary charter are generally consistent with the licence provision in covering all of the service issues likely to be of concern to Aqwest's customers.

STEVE EDWELL
MEMBER