Coorong District Council

Customer Service Charter

Community Wastewater
Management System (CWMS)
and Non-Drinking Water Supply

February 2019

Customer Charter

The aim of our Charter is to provide our Community Water Management System (CWMS) and non-drinking water customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us and their rights and responsibilities.

This Charter outlines the rights and responsibilities of both Council and the customer and is consistent with the Essential Service Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) Water Retail Code for Intermediate Retailers, the Water Industry Act 2012 and associated regulations.

The Water Retail Code-Minor & Intermediate Retailers, developed by Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA), contains a detailed description of your rights and our responsibilities in providing you with CWMS and non drinking water services and can be found at (www.escosa.sa.gov.au).

This Charter and other related legislation is available on Council's website at: www.coorong.sa.gov.au

Retail Services Provided

We provide to customers the following services:

CWMS Service:

- Tailem Bend;
- Tintinara;
- Meningie; and
- Wellington East.

Non Drinking Water Service:

- Wellington East; and
- Peake.

Obtaining a Copy of the Charter

A copy of this Charter is available for inspection at Council's Customer Service Centres upon request. New customers will be sent a copy of the Charter following their application to connect. Upon request a copy of the Charter will be sent out free of charge, but any subsequent copies may incur a small fee. Copies may also be downloaded from Coorong Council's website at www.coorong.sa.gov.au

Changes to the Charter

The Customer Service Charter may only be changed with the approval of the Essential Services Commission. Customers will be informed of any substantive changes on or with the next bill sent, that the Charter has changed and that details of the change are available on Council's website or upon request.

Retail Services Provided

CWMS Removal

We will:

- Remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- Use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your CWMS service.
- Provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your CWMS service at least four (4) business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance.
- Provide an emergency telephone number (1300 785 277) on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your CWMS service.

You will:

- Report any blockages, bursts or leaks to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number (1300 785 277) displayed on our website.
- Not discharge restricted wastewater into our CWMS infrastructure.
- May be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. We will advise you of the reasons for cost recovery in these circumstances and any amounts payable will be subject to the payment assistance and financial hardship provisions of your contract with us.

Non-Drinking Water

We will:

- Provide you with recycled/reuse water that is safe and in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- Use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your water service.
- Provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your water service at least four (4) business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance.
- Provide an emergency telephone number (1300 785 277) on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your water service.
- In the case of an unplanned interruption or emergency, provide you with information about any impact to your water service as soon as possible.

You will:

- Report any leaks, bursts or quality issues to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number (1300 785 277) displayed on our website.
- Provide safe access to the water meter so that we can ascertain your water consumption for billing purposes.
- Be responsible for arranging and covering the costs of any additional onsite water

infrastructure necessary to maintain your required flow rate, which must be installed by an appropriately licensed plumber.

Our Prices – Fees and Charges

We will:

- Publish our Fees and Charges, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your retail service, each year by July on our website at http://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/. We will also make this available at our Customer Service Offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara.
- Publish our Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how our fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by July on our website at http://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/. We will also make this available at our Customer Service Offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara.
- In the case that any costs set out in the Fees and Charges change, publish these on our website at least fourteen (14) days prior to these fees and changes taking effect and make these available at our offices.
- Calculate your bill on a pro-rata basis if a tariff rate or charge changes during a billing cycle so that the old tariff rate or charge applies up to and including the date of change and the new tariff rate or charge applies from the date of the change to the end of the billing cycle.

CWMS and Non-Drinking Water Concessions

CWMS and Non Drinking Water concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current water and sewerage concessions, assistance or advice visit www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions, phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email concessions@dcsi.sa.gov.au.

Connections

Existing Connections – Where your property is currently connected to our infrastructure

We will:

- Connect you to our CWMS and non-drinking water service within fourteen (14) calendar days of you providing us with information required, and paying the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Fees and Charges.

You will:

- Provide us with the following information about your supply address
- Provide Council with your plumbers Certificate of Completion (COC) for the recycled and rainwater plumbing systems.

Connections – Where your property is not currently connected to our infrastructure

We will:

- inform you within fourteen (14) calendar days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure.
- connect you to our CWMS and non-drinking water service within fourteen (14) calendar days of you providing us with information required, and paying the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Fees and Charges.

You will:

- Provide us with the following information about your supply address.
- Pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Fees and Charges.
- Arrange for a licenced plumber to provide you with a wastewater connection point and/or residential non-drinking water infrastructure and meet all costs associated with the works.

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at www.coorong.sa.gov.au or by visiting our offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara.

Billing and Payments

We will:

- Include your CWMS and (non-drinking) water supply service charges on your Rates Notice (separately identified), issued quarterly.
- Ensure your non-potable water supply bill is based on an actual meter reading at least once within a twelve (12) month period.
- Provide you with a detailed bill and give you at least twenty eight (28) days to pay your bill.
- Offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, by direct debit, by B-Pay or by credit card over the phone.

You will:

- Pay your bill by the payment due date unless we have agreed on a flexible payment arrangement.
- Pay any fee we incur if any of your payment methods are dishonoured.

Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

We will:

- Provide you with the ability to pay your bills by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement.
- Provide information on government assistance that may be available to you.
- Arrange an alternative payment scheme in line with your ability to pay.

- Inform you about and assess your eligibility for our Hardship Program if requested.

You will:

- Inform us if you are having difficulty paying your bills prior to the due date.

Further information on our Hardship Policy is available on our website at www.coorong.sa.gov.au or by contacting our Customer Service offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara. We will provide you with a copy of our Debt Recovery & Financial Hardship Policy upon request.

Reviewing Your Bill & Billing Disputes

We will:

- Not commence our debt collection processes where a bill (or part of a bill) is in dispute.
- Review your bill and inform you of the outcome of our review within thirty (30) business days of your request.
- Inform you about our independent external dispute resolution body where you remain dissatisfied following our review.

You will:

- Pay any portion of your bill that is not in dispute while your bill is being reviewed or any future bills that become due.

Overcharging

We will:

- Inform you within ten (10) business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged as a result of an act or omission by us, and credit the overcharged amount to your next bill.
- Pay the overcharged amount directly to you within ten (10) business days if you have ceased to purchase a retail service from us.

Undercharging

We will:

- In relation to a retail service which is metered, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the twelve (12) months prior to the meter reading date on the last bill sent to you.
- In relation to unmetered services, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the twelve (12) months prior to the error being advised to you in writing.
- List the undercharged amount as a separate item in a special bill or in your next bill with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount.
- Not charge you interest on the undercharged amount.

Debt Recovery

We will:

- Only commence debt collection/recovery action where you have failed to pay your bill by the due date and you have not contacted us to discuss a payment extension or other flexible payment arrangements (including eligibility for our Hardship Program).

You will:

- Contact us if you are having difficulty paying your bill prior to the due date.

Entry to your Property

We will:

- Provide you with at least twenty four (24) hours notice if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your retail service.

N.B. No notice is required for emergency repairs

You will:

- Ensure safe access to our infrastructure (including but not limited to the meter) located at your supply address.

Water Flow Restrictions for Non-Payment

We will only restrict the flow of water to your property if:

- You have not paid your bill or bills by the due date and you have not contacted us to arrange an alternative payment arrangement.
- You do not adhere to our previously agreed payment arrangement and you have not contacted us to discuss any further payment options.
- You do not adhere to the terms of our agreement under our Debt Recovery & Financial Hardship Policy.
- You refuse our employees or contractors entry to your property, including but not limited to, where you deny our meter readers access to your property for three (3) consecutive billing cycles and you do not contact us to arrange reasonable alternative access arrangements.
- You are using water services illegally.
- Before restricting your water supply, we will:
    a) use our best endeavours to contact you in person, by telephone, by mail and/or email.
    b) provide you with information about our flexible payment arrangements, Government-funded concessions and assessed your eligibility for participation in our Hardship Program.
    c) issue you with a reminder notice.

d) issue you a restriction notice informing you that we intend to restrict your supply in five (5) business days if you do not contact us.

You will:

- Contact us as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for your possible restriction and how the issue can be resolved.

Disconnections

Subject to any applicable regulatory requirements that prohibit disconnection, we will only disconnect your retail service if:

- You request the disconnection.
- There is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge).
- You are found to be using the services illegally or have refused entry to person authorised to read your meter or undertake maintenance or repairs in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments.
- Where you request a disconnection (and it is not prohibited), we will use our best endeavours to issue you with a final account in accordance with your request. We will inform you if you are still required to pay our “service availability charge” when you request the disconnection.

Reinstatement of Water Supply

We will:

- Use our best endeavours to reinstate your supply within a time agreed with you, subject to the reasons for disconnection or restriction being rectified, and you paying the reinstatement fee.
- Waive the reinstatement fee if you are eligible for and agree to participate in our Hardship Program.

You will:

- Contact us to discuss how the issue that led to the flow restriction or disconnection can be rectified.
- Pay the reinstatement fee unless it is waived.

Termination of Contract for Retail Services

We will:

- Confer with you on the right to terminate your contract with us for the supply of a retail service(s).
- Inform you of any relevant fees or charges payable as a result of your termination.

You will:

- Provide at least three (3) business days notice of your intention to terminate your contract with us for the supply of a retail service.
- Pay any relevant fees or charges associated with the termination of the retail service(s).

Complaints and Dispute Resolution

If you have a complaint, you may contact the Customer Service team:

Coorong Civic Centre	Meningie Information Hub	Tintinara Customer Service Centre
95-101 Railway Terrace Tailem Bend Phone: 1300 785 277 Fax: 8572 3822 Email: council@coorong.sa.gov.	49 Princes Highway Meningie	37 Becker Terrace Tintinara

We will:

- Acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within three (3) business days.
- When a resolution cannot occur within fifteen (15) business days, a response will be delivered to you outlining timeframes set by the Council officer responsible for resolving your complaint.
- Refer you to one of our senior managers if you are not satisfied with our initial response.
- Advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to the Ombudsman SA (contact details below), should you not be happy with Council's response.

Further details on our Complaints and Compliments Policy are available on our website at www.coorong.sa.gov.au or by visiting our Customer Service Offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara. We will provide you with a copy of our Policy upon request.

Privacy

We recognise that your privacy is of great importance and we will keep your personal information confidential in accordance with applicable laws and our Privacy Policy.

A copy of our policy is available on our website www.coorong.sa.gov.au

You are welcome to contact us with enquiries regarding recycled water and/or CWMS effluent drainage and disposal (CWMS) either over the phone, by email or in person at our Customer Service Offices in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara.

However, enquiries relating to accounts will only be discussed with the relevant account holder, unless written authorisation has been given to another person to speak on their behalf.

Useful contacts

Ombudsman SA

Investigates complaints regarding processes and decisions to determine if they are fair, reasonable and lawful.

Phone: (08) 8226 8699 (metro) or 1800 182 150 (outside metro SA only)
Website: www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au

Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA)

The economic regulator of the South Australian water industry.

Phone: (08) 8463 4444 (metro) or 1800 633 592 (mobiles and SA only)
Website: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

Coorong District Council

Coorong Civic Centre

95-101 Railway Terrace
Tailem Bend
Phone: 1300 785 277
Fax: 8572 3822
Email: council@coorong.sa.gov.au

Meningie Information Hub

49 Princes Highway
Meningie

Tintinara Customer Service Centre

37 Becker Terrace
Tintinara