



## CWMS Wastewater Service Charter

<b>Responsible Department(s):</b>	<b>Strategic Assets</b>
<b>Relevant Legislation:</b>	<b>Water Industry Act 2012</b> <b>Essential Services Commission Act 2002</b>
<b>Adoption Authority:</b>	<b>Strategic Planning and Development Policy Committee</b>
<b>Date of Adoption:</b>	<b>10 November 2015</b>
<b>Effective From:</b>	<b>1 January 2016</b>
<b>Minute Reference for Adoption:</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Next Review:</b>	<b>December 2022 or early if required</b>

### ***CWMS Wastewater Service Charter***

Adelaide Hills Council is a Local Government Authority providing community services to a population of approximately 40,000 residents. The Council covers 800 square kilometres including character townships, agrarian landscapes, diverse built features and some of Australia's most valuable native bushland.

The aim of Council's CWMS Wastewater Service Charters is to provide our sewerage customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us and their rights and responsibilities.

The *Water Retail Code-Minor & Intermediate Retailers*, developed by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA), contains a detailed description of your rights and Council's responsibilities in providing you with sewerage services and can be found at ([www.escosa.sa.gov.au](http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au)).

## ***Sewerage services provided***

Adelaide Hills Council provides customers in Birdwood, Kersbrook, Mount Torrens, Charleston, Verdun, Woodside and Stirling with Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) services.

### **SEWERAGE REMOVAL (QUALITY)**

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 sewerage service
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your sewerage service at least four business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance
- provide an emergency telephone number on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service
- pump out your septic tank of sludge at a regular period to continue its effective operation

You:

- will report any spills, leaks or incursions relating to Council's infrastructure to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- will not discharge stormwater or restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure
- may be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak caused to Councils infrastructure. Will we advise you of the reasons for cost recovery in these circumstances and any amounts payable will be subject to Councils payment assistance and financial hardship provisions.
- will be liable for any costs associated with the maintenance of the connection on your property
- will contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure
- will uncover your septic tank access cover when requested by Council or its contractor and allow site access for desludging of your tank

## ***Our prices***

### **FEES AND CHARGES**

We will:

- publish all our fees and CWMS charges associated with the supply of your sewerage service, each year once adopted by the Adelaide Hills Council and by no later than 30th October on our website at [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au). We will also make this available at our Service Centres at 45 Albert Street, Gumeracha, 28 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside and 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling.
- 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, within two months of our charges changing on our website at [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au). We will also make this available at our Service Centres.
- In the case that any fees and charges set out in the Fees and Charges Register change, publish these on our website within 14 days after adoption by Council, and make these available at our Service Centres.

### **SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGE**

The *Local Government Act 1999* allows us to recover a “service availability charge” from you where our sewerage infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our “service availability charge (vacant property levy)” where a connection point is located on your land

### **SEWERAGE CONCESSIONS**

Sewerage concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current sewerage concessions, assistance or advice visit [www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions](http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions), phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email [concessions@dcsi.sa.gov.au](mailto:concessions@dcsi.sa.gov.au).

## **Connections**

### **EXISTING CONNECTIONS - WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will:

- maintain your connection to our sewerage service subject to payment of the CWMS ‘occupied property’ levy on the annual rates notices and compliance with your responsibilities pursuant with requirements of the *Water Industry Act 2012*.

### **CONNECTIONS - WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will:

- inform you within 30 days for single allotments whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure. Applications for multiple allotments will be considered on a case by case basis.

You will:

- provide us with a completed “Wastewater Application Form available from [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au)
- pay the relevant connection fees as set out in our Fees and Charges Register

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at <http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/Community/health-wellbeing/waste-water/waste-water-system-failures-repairs> or by visiting one of our Service Centres at 45 Albert Street, Gumeracha, 28 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside and 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling.

## **Billing and payments**

We will:

- include the CWMS levy on the annual first quarterly rates notice and when relevant provide quarterly notices of any balance due
- for any other charges additional to the levy provide you with a detailed account and give you at least 12 business days to pay your account
- offer you the ability to pay your account in person, by mail, by direct debit (quarterly and annual payments only), Centrepay (by application only), Australia Post, BPAY, telephone and over the internet

You will:

- pay our bill by the payment due date unless Council has agreed on a flexible payment arrangement
- pay any fee Council incurs if any of your payment methods are dishonoured

#### **PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**

We will:

- provide you with the ability to pay your account by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement
- offer you the ability to make payments towards future accounts, grant payment extensions and agree to have your account redirected to another person (where that person agrees)
- inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our Hardship Program if requested

You will:

- inform us if you are having difficulty paying your account prior to the due date

Further details on our Hardship Policy are available on our website at [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au) or by visiting one of our Service Centres. Council will provide you with a copy of our 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 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 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 account
- pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a sewerage service from us pursuant to Clause 5.8.1 (b) of the Water Retail Code
- Where overcharging is identified – a refund is assessed where applicable subject to success in contacting the relevant resident

#### ***Undercharging***

We will:

- in relation to unmetered services, limit the amount Council recovers from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the error being advised to you in writing

- list the undercharged amount as a separate item in your next rates notice 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(s) 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 Policy)

You will:

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

#### ***Entry to your property***

We will:

- In non-emergency situations Council will provide you with at least 24 hours' notice if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your sewerage service
- In emergency situations Council will provide you with as much notice as possible for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your sewerage service

You will:

- ensure safe access to our infrastructure and your sewerage service located at your supply address

#### ***Disconnections***

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

- there is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste or stormwater 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
- you request the disconnection in connection with a development application. Procedure to disconnect is on a case by case basis in negotiation with the property owner.

#### ***Complaints and dispute resolution***

We will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 7 business days
- refer you to the Manager Strategic Assets if you are not satisfied with Council's initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to the Director Infrastructure and Operations.
- advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to our nominated independent dispute resolution body and provide you with the details of that organisation

Further details on our Complaint Handling Procedure are available on our website at [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au) or by visiting one of our Service Centres at 45 Albert Street, Gumeracha, 28 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside and 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling. Council will provide you with a copy of our procedures upon request.

### ***Contacting Us***

If you need to know more about us or the content of this Charter, please contact Adelaide Hills Council on:

General Enquiries: 8408 0400

Faults & Emergencies: 8408 0400

Website: [www.ahc.sa.gov.au](http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au) Email: [mail@ahc.sa.gov.au](mailto:mail@ahc.sa.gov.au)

#### Service Centres:

Gumeracha: 45 Albert Street, Gumeracha.

Woodside: 28 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside

Stirling: 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling.

Mailing: PO Box 44 Woodside SA 5244

#### Business hours:

Gumeracha: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11am to 2pm and Tuesday and Thursday 2pm to 5pm

Woodside: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am to 5pm and Thursday 9am to 8pm

Stirling: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm