



# Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service

Draft

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## Amendments to the Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service

Version No.	Date effective	Nature of amendment
2	1 July 2023	Amended schedules 1 and 2 to give effect to updated service standards and targets, as well as updated guaranteed service level schemes, for fourteen water businesses as approved by the Commission on 21 June 2023 as part of water price review 2023.
3	TBC	Inserted new Part G creating an obligation on water businesses to report non-compliance with these standards to the commission; amended the family violence obligation in clause 11 as approved by the commission on TBC.

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# Part A – Introduction

This industry standard is made under section 4F of the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) and in accordance with the Water Industry Regulatory Order, made pursuant to section 4D of the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic).

## Citation

This industry standard, originally cited as Essential Services Commission 2022, Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service, 27 September, which came into effect on 1 March 2023, may now be cited as the Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service. This paper comprises **version 3** of the Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service incorporating amendments made as at **TBC 2024**.

## Purpose

The purpose of this industry standard is to specify the standards and conditions of service and supply that water businesses (and their agents) must comply with in providing certain regulated services to customers. This industry standard applies in respect of water businesses' basic retail water services (including drinking water, reticulated non-potable water and recycled water services (unless specifically exempted by this industry standard or by a decision of the Commission)) and sewerage services.

The Commission's Water Industry Standard – Trade Waste Customer Service places additional obligations on water businesses and Melbourne Water specific to the management of trade waste services.

This industry standard does not apply to water businesses in respect of diversion services (including groundwater), retail water services related to irrigation and stock and domestic, and irrigation drainage services which are covered by the Commission's rural water customer service industry standard. This industry standard does not apply to bulk water, sewerage or recycled water services provided to a water business.

Each water business is required to:

- (a) meet the customer-related standards, procedures and practices set out in this industry standard; and
- (b) develop, issue and comply with a customer charter which meets the procedural and substantive requirements of this industry standard and sets out the water business's approved service standards.

## **Amendments to this industry standard**

This industry standard may be amended by the Commission on its own initiative or in response to a proposal by a water business or other stakeholders.

The Commission will not amend this industry standard until water businesses and other stakeholders have had a reasonable opportunity to make representations and those representations have been considered, in accordance with the Commission's Charter of Consultation and Regulatory Practice.

## **Commencement**

This industry standard regulates water businesses from 1 March 2023.

## **Separate written agreements**

A separate written agreement for the provision of a service made before 1 November 2004 need not comply with this industry standard.

A separate written agreement made after 1 November 2004 need not comply with this industry standard if the agreement does not extend beyond 30 June 2005.

A separate written agreement made after 1 November 2004 to apply beyond 1 July 2005 for the provision of a service cannot reduce the rights of a customer provided or implied in this industry standard unless the water business can demonstrate to the Commission that satisfying the industry standard requirements is not practical and the water business expressly identifies any material departures from this industry standard to the customer in writing.

A recycled water contract need not comply with this industry standard if it does not provide for domestic reticulated recycled water or if the Commission expressly decides otherwise

## **Trade Waste**

A water business must comply with the requirements in the Water Industry Standard – Trade Waste Customer Service in relation to the provision of information to trade waste customers.



# Part B - Service and Supply

## 1. Connection and service provision

### 1.1 Obligation to provide service

Subject to the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) if a customer's property is connected to a system, the water business must provide the relevant service in accordance with this industry standard.

### 1.2 Obligation to connect

Subject to the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic), where a person requests connection to a service that is available, a water business must connect or (if approval is all that is needed) approve connection to the person's property within 10 business days, or such later date as agreed, if:

- (i) the customer has paid or agreed to pay all applicable connection fees; and
- (ii) the customer has complied with all reasonable terms and conditions of connection imposed by the water business.

### 1.3 Limits on recycled water services

- (a) A water business may refuse to provide a recycled water service if the customer has not:
  - (i) entered into a recycled water agreement in a form acceptable to the water business; or
  - (ii) otherwise received the consent of the water business.
- (b) A water business may discontinue a recycled water service if the customer breaches the applicable permitted use rules.
- (c) A water business must advise customers of the standards and requirements necessary for entering a recycled water agreement or obtaining its consent.

## 2. Charges

### 2.1 Variation

- (a) A water business must publicise any variation in charges for services before they take effect and notify customers directly on or with the first bill after the decision to vary the

charges has been made. A water business should use the methods it considers most effective to publicise any variation which may include, but are not limited to:

- (i) prominent website updates;
  - (ii) radio interviews;
  - (iii) social media; and
  - (iv) SMS.
- (b) A water business may calculate a pro rata charge to effect a variation in charges where the variation date falls within a billing period.

## **2.2 Schedule of charges**

A water business must publish its schedule of approved fees and charges on its website and provide a copy to a customer upon request.

## **3. Permitted use**

A water business must regularly inform relevant customers of the water business' required limits on the permitted use of recycled water, non- potable water and its sewerage service which at least reflect:

- (i) health regulation and environmental regulation; and
- (ii) clause 1.3 in respect of recycled water.

## **4. Sustainable use of water**

A water business must provide information to customers about the sustainable use of Victoria's water resources and how customers may conserve water.

## **5. Meter readings**

A water business must use reasonable endeavours to ensure that all customers whose properties have a meter which measures volumetric use for billing purposes have an actual meter reading every billing cycle, or otherwise at least once every 12 months.

### **5.1 Customer self-reads**

- (a) A water business must accept a customer self-read, in a method that is approved by the water business, after the customer has received a bill based on an estimated read.
- (b) A water business must not charge a customer for a self-read.

- (c) A water business must inform customers in writing:
  - (i) that a self-read is an option, if the customer has received a bill based on an estimated read;
  - (ii) that the customer may request an adjusted bill, if the customer has received a bill based on an estimated read;
  - (iii) of any changes to the customer's payment obligations if the customer requests an adjusted bill; and
  - (iv) of the business' approved methods of the customer self-read.
- (d) Where a customer requests an adjusted bill, the water business must, promptly and at no extra charge, provide the customer with an adjusted bill based on the customer self-read.

## **5.2 Special meter readings**

- (a) A water business may charge a customer an additional fee for a special meter reading outside of the normal billing cycle.
- (b) A water business must not charge a fee to a customer for a special meter reading:
  - (i) if that is a self-read under clause 5.1;
  - (ii) if the property has a digital meter; or
  - (iii) if the customer is receiving assistance under a water business' customer support policy (pursuant to the policy in clause 10.2).
- (c) Upon request by the customer a water business must determine a customer's outstanding charges outside of the normal billing cycle.
- (d) The water business may calculate the outstanding charges by:
  - (i) accepting a self-read under clause 5.1;
  - (ii) arranging for a special meter reading at a reasonable charge payable by the customer; or
  - (iii) where permitted by the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and this industry standard providing an estimated bill at no cost to the customer.

### **5.3 Data and digital water metering**

If a water business uses/accepts digital metering, it must develop and publish a policy clearly explaining how data collected from digital water meters is managed and used.

## **6. Billing**

### **6.1 Billing cycle**

- (a) A water business' billing cycle must be at least quarterly unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
- (b) A water business may have a billing cycle that is more frequent than clause 6.1(a), if agreed with the customer.
- (c) A water business may bill commercial customers or other customers with higher-than-average water or recycled water usage, or higher-than-average trade waste or sewage disposal more frequently than quarterly.

### **6.2 Issue of bills**

- (a) A water business must send (directly, or through an E-bill) a bill to:
  - (i) a customer at the physical or electronic address specified by the customer; or
  - (ii) a customer's agent or representative at the physical or electronic address as specified by the customer.
- (b) If no address has been specified, a water business may send the bill to the physical address of the property in respect of which the charges have been incurred, or to the customer's last known physical or electronic address.

### **6.3 Content of bills**

A bill must include:

- (a) the date of issue;
- (b) the customer's billing address and account number;
- (c) the address of the property to which the charges in the bill relate;
- (d) the date on which the meter was read, or if the reading is an estimation, a clear statement that the reading is an estimation;
- (e) the customer's water usage;

- (f) the amount the customer is required to pay;
- (g) an explanation of charges (in accordance with clause 6.4);
- (h) the date by which the customer is required to pay;
- (i) the ways in which the customer can pay the bill;
- (j) information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying;
- (k) details of the water business' enquiry facility, including a 24 hour emergency telephone service number;
- (l) referral to interpreter services offered by the water business;
- (m) any outstanding credit or debit from previous bills;
- (n) the total of any payments made by the customer since the last bill was issued;
- (o) information on concessions available and any concession to which the customer may be entitled;
- (p) the average daily rate of water or recycled water use at the property for the current billing period; and
- (q) if a water business intends to charge interest on outstanding amounts, a clear statement of the rate of interest and from what future date it is to be applied.

#### **6.4 Explanation of charges**

All charges must be separately itemised, including:

- (a) any service charge to the property;
- (b) the usage charge in connection with the provision of services provided;
- (c) any interest payable on outstanding amounts; and
- (d) any rates and other charges.

#### **6.5 E-bill**

- (a) A water business may send an E-bill to a customer in any digital format.
- (b) An E-bill must include:
  - (i) a clear and accessible link to the full bill or instructions about how to access the full bill;

- (ii) the amount payable and the due date;
  - (iii) the methods by which the bill can be paid;
  - (iv) the customer's water usage for the current billing period;
  - (v) information about assistance that is available if a customer is experiencing difficulties paying and how to access this assistance; and
  - (vi) information about a water business' customer support policy.
- (c) A water business may include any additional information on the E-bill it considers necessary.

## **6.6 Presentation of customer water usage**

A water business must present a graphical illustration of the customer's water and recycled water usage on the bill, including:

- (a) current water usage;
- (b) the customer's water usage for each billing period over the past 12 months; and
- (c) a comparison of the customer's usage with the customer's usage for the same period of the previous year.

## **6.7 Adjustment of bills**

- (a) A water business may recover from a customer an amount undercharged if:
  - (i) except in the case of illegal use, the amount is limited to the amount undercharged in the four months prior to the water business notifying the customer that undercharging has occurred;
  - (ii) the amount to be recovered is listed as a separate item and is explained on or with the customer's bill; and
  - (iii) it allows the customer to pay the amount to be recovered in instalments over four months or through a water business' flexible payment plan in accordance with clause 7.2.
- (b) A water business must not charge interest on undercharged amounts.
- (c) A water business may identify an amount undercharged as a result of a customer's illegal use of water or recycled water by estimating, in accordance with the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), the usage for which the customer has not paid. In respect of this amount, a water business may exercise other rights available to it, including rights under clause 15.

- (d) If a water business overcharges a customer, it must inform the customer within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error; and refund or credit the amount overcharged in accordance with the customer's instructions.

## **7. Payments**

### **7.1 Payment methods**

- (a) A water business must accept payment from customers:
  - (i) in person at a network of agencies or payment outlets;
  - (ii) by mail;
  - (iii) by digital means;
  - (iv) through a facility (if any) provided by a provider of income support (for example Centrelink);
  - (v) by direct debit arrangement in accordance with any agreement between the water business, the customer and the customer's bank; and
  - (vi) in advance.
- (b) A water business must not require customers to agree to direct debit as a condition of service.

### **7.2 Flexible payment plans**

- (a) A water business must make flexible payment plans available to customers in accordance with the customer's capacity to pay. A flexible payment plan must:
  - (i) state how the amount of the payments has been calculated;
  - (ii) state the period over which the customer will pay the agreed amounts;
  - (iii) specify an amount to be paid in each period; and
  - (iv) be able to be modified, at the request of a customer, to accommodate change in their circumstances, in accordance with the business' customer support policies.
- (b) On establishing a flexible payment plan or a revised plan, the water business must give the customer a schedule of payments in writing, showing:
  - (i) the total number of payments to be made;
  - (ii) the period over which the payments are to be made;
  - (iii) the date by which each payment must be made; and

- (iv) the amount of each payment.
- (c) A water business is not required to offer a customer a flexible payment plan if the customer has, in the previous 12 months, had 2 flexible payment plans cancelled due to non-payment unless the customer provides a fair and reasonable assurance (based on the circumstances) to the water business that the customer will comply with the plan.



# Part C - Customer Assistance and Support

## 8. Proactive customer engagement

A water business must have policies and procedures that enable it to identify, contact and engage when residential customers, who may be experiencing payment difficulties, need information or assistance.

- (a) The information provided may include, but need not be limited to, the following:
  - (i) Interruptions and assistance that is available during interruptions;
  - (ii) customer obligations in line with clause 13.8;
  - (iii) concession entitlements;
  - (iv) sustainable use of water in line with clause 4; and
  - (v) accessibility requirements for communication in line with clause 13.6.
- (b) The assistance provided may include, but need not be limited to, the following:
  - (i) payment difficulties assistance in line with clause 10.1;
  - (ii) customer support program in line with clause 10.2;
  - (iii) family violence assistance in line with clause 11; and
  - (iv) billing history in line with clause 13.4.

## 9. Customer's chosen representative or support person

A water business must have policies and procedures in place to communicate with a customer's chosen support person or other representative.

These policies should be published in a clear and accessible manner, and customers should be notified of their right to choose a representative or support person where appropriate.

## 10. Payment assistance

### 10.1 Payment assistance

- (a) A water business must assist customers experiencing payment difficulties in accordance with this clause.

- (b) A water business must adopt an approach that is appropriate to that customer's circumstances on a case-by-case basis in accordance with a customer's capacity to pay.
- (c) A water business must offer a customer experiencing payment difficulties the following:
  - (i) flexible payment plans in line with clause 7.2;
  - (ii) no additional debt recovery costs, including no interest on overdue amounts while payments are made to the water business according to a flexible payment plan;
  - (iii) the option to extend the due date for some or all of an amount owed;
  - (iv) redirection of a bill to another person for payment if the person agrees in writing;
  - (v) more frequent billing or payment options;
  - (vi) information on how to reduce water usage, improve water efficiency and referral to relevant government water efficiency programs;
  - (vii) where appropriate and available, referral of customers to:
    - I. government funded assistance programs (including the Utility Relief Grant Scheme); and/or
    - II. an independent financial counsellor at no cost to the customer;
  - (viii) application assistance for a customer that may be eligible for a Utility Relief Grant, including by:
    - I. completing the online application form over the phone and lodging the form online on behalf of the residential customer, unless the customer requests otherwise; or
    - II. if the water business is unable to complete and lodge a Utility Relief Grant application form over the phone, the water business completing the application form to the extent possible and sending to the residential customer with instructions on how to complete the remainder of the form and lodge that form.
- (d) A water business may offer a residential customer experiencing payment difficulties the following, without limitation:
  - (i) waiver of late fees or any other fees;

- (ii) waiver of any interest accrued;
  - (iii) suspension of the accrual of interest;
  - (iv) conducting regular meter readings and frequently reporting to customers on consumption;
  - (v) suspension of collection of arrears to allow for a usage only payment plan for a period negotiated with the customer;
  - (vi) a payment matching arrangement; and/or
  - (vii) waiver of debt.
- (e) A water business may offer a small business customer experiencing payment difficulties the following, without limitation:
- (i) waiver of late fees or any other fees;
  - (ii) waiver of interest accrued;
  - (iii) suspension of the accrual of interest;
  - (iv) information of any circumstances in which it will waive or suspend interest payments on outstanding accounts; and/or
  - (v) waiver of debt.

## **10.2 Customer Support policy**

- (a) A water business must have a customer support policy and apply it to residential customers and to small business customers who are identified either by themselves, the water business, an independent accredited financial counsellor or a qualified accountant as experiencing payment difficulties.
- (b) Subject to clause 10.2 (c), a water business must:
- (i) publish its customer support policy on its website and must make it available to a customer upon request; and
  - (ii) keep a copy of its customer support policy at its offices for inspection upon request
  - (iii) provide its customer support policy in a different language upon a reasonable request to do so; and
  - (iv) assess each customer on a case-by-case basis.

- (c) The customer support policy must:
- (i) include policies and procedures for:
    - I. early identification of a customer's payment difficulty; and
    - II. determining the internal responsibilities for the management, development, communication and monitoring of the customer support policy;
  - (ii) provide for staff training about the water business' policies and procedures:
    - I. staff training must be designed to ensure customers experiencing payment difficulty are treated with sensitivity and respect by water business staff;
  - (iii) state when it will exempt customers experiencing payment difficulties from supply restriction, legal action, and additional debt recovery costs, including:
    - I. by waiving any interest accrued prior to the customer being identified as experiencing payment difficulties; and
    - II. exempting the debt from the accrual of interest on overdue amounts whilst a customer is receiving assistance under this policy;
  - (iv) state any circumstances in which it will waive or suspend interest payments on outstanding amounts;
  - (v) state any circumstances in which it will suspend the sale of debt;
  - (vi) offer a range of payment options in accordance with clause 7;
  - (vii) offer information and assistance in accordance with clause 10.1;
  - (viii) offer information about the water business's dispute resolution policy, and the customer's right to lodge a complaint with EWOV and any other relevant external dispute resolution forum if their hardship claim is not resolved to their satisfaction by the water business;
  - (ix) detail the circumstances in which the policy will cease to apply to customers; and
  - (x) provide for a review mechanism of the policy and its associated procedures.

## 11. Family Violence

### 11.1 Family violence<sup>1</sup> assistance

- (a) A water business must:
- (i) provide all relevant staff with appropriate and ongoing training to:
    - I. identify customers affected by family violence;
    - II. deal appropriately with customers affected by family violence; and
    - III. apply the water business' family violence policy and related policies and procedures to customers affected by family violence;
  - (ii) support staff affected by family violence, including by providing access to appropriate training, leave, external referrals and counselling;
  - (iii) promote customer safety by securely handling information about those who are affected by family violence, including in a manner that maintains confidentiality;
  - (iv) specify and implement an approach to debt management and recovery where a customer is affected by family violence, including but not limited to:
    - I. the recovery of debt from customers with joint accounts; and
    - II. the circumstances in which debt will be suspended or waived;
  - (v) recognise family violence as a potential cause of payment difficulties and as an eligibility criterion for access to the water business' customer support policy under clause 10.2 and address what payment support will apply to customers affected by family violence;
  - (vi) provide a process that avoids customers having to repeat disclosure of their family violence, and provides for continuity of service;
  - (vii) provide a means for referring customers who may be affected by family violence to specialist family violence services; and
  - (viii) publish and maintain on its website information about the assistance and

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<sup>1</sup> Family violence" has the meaning given in section 5 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic).

referrals available to customers affected by family violence and how customers may access such assistance.

### **11.2 Family violence policy**

- (a) A water business must have and maintain a family violence policy that outlines how the water business will discharge the obligations in Clause 11.1(a) (i) to (vii).
- (b) A water business must:
  - (i) publish its family violence policy on its website and must make it available to a customer upon request;
  - (ii) keep a copy of its family violence policy at its offices for inspection upon request;
  - (iii) provide its family violence policy in a different language upon a reasonable request to do so; and
  - (iv) assess each customer on a case-by-case basis.
- (c) A water business must periodically review the family violence policy and its associated procedures.

## **12. Special needs**

- (a) A water business must keep an up to date register of customers who require water for:
  - (i) the operation of a life-support machine; or
  - (ii) other special needs that may be affected by planned and unplanned outages which must be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the water business.
- (b) A water business must contact customers registered under this clause:
  - (i) as soon as possible in the event of an unplanned interruption to a service; and
  - (ii) at least four business days before a planned interruption unless a longer period of notice is requested by a customer in which case that longer notice must be given if it is reasonably necessary and able to be accommodated by the water business.
- (c) In all cases a water business must endeavour to minimise inconvenience to these customers.

## **13. Information**

### **13.1 Enquiries**

A water business must provide the following information to customers through an enquiry facility:

- (a) account information;
- (b) bill payment options;
- (c) concession entitlements;
- (d) programs available to customers who are having payment difficulties, including the water business' customer support policy;
- (e) information about the water business's complaint handling procedures; and
- (f) information about EWOV.

### **13.2 Fees for information or advice**

Unless stated otherwise in this industry standard, a water business must not charge a fee for the provision of information or advice required under this industry standard to customers or others affected by its operations.

### **13.3 Water reuse**

A water business must provide information to customers upon request about lawful and practical possibilities for the reuse of water.

### **13.4 Billing history**

Upon request by a customer, a water business must provide the customer's account and usage history for the preceding three years within 10 business days, or other period by agreement. A water business may refuse to provide a customer with their account and usage history where the provision of such information is contrary to the information handling procedures set out in the water business' family violence policy and the refusal is not in breach of law.

A water business may impose a reasonable charge for providing a customer's account and usage history held beyond three years in accordance with the relevant Public Record Office Standard General Disposal Schedule for the Records of Water Authorities.

### **13.5 Regulatory information**

A water business must provide to customers upon request any regulatory instruments other than primary legislation under which it operates, including a copy of this industry standard.

### **13.6 Communication assistance**

- (a) A water business must use reasonable endeavours to determine a customer's preferred method of communication and use it where reasonable.
- (b) A water business must use reasonable endeavours to meet the discrete communications needs of its customers as required on a case-by-case basis.
- (c) A water business must provide, or provide access to, an interpreter service and a TTY service for speech and hearing-impaired customers and customers that do not speak English.

### **13.7 Written communication**

Any written communication by a water business to a customer must be:

- (a) expressed in plain language;
- (b) legible; and
- (c) presented clearly and appropriately having regard to its nature.

### **13.8 Customer obligations**

A water business must use reasonable endeavours to keep each customer informed of the customer's material obligations under *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) including:

- (a) to pay charges incurred after vacating a property unless a water business has been given at least 48 hours' notice of the customer vacating the property;
- (b) to ensure that each water meter is accessible by the water business;
- (c) to maintain the property owner's infrastructure upon notice by the water business;
- (d) to remove trees upon request by the water business;
- (e) to seek the consent of the water business for any building or construction work which might interfere with a service or system;
- (f) to not alter any works connected to the water business' works without the water business's consent;



- (g) to observe restrictions imposed by the water business in accordance with the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic); and
- (h) to maintain combined sanitary drains in accordance with the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) or any independent agreement with other land owners.

### **13.9 Privacy**

A water business must outline in its customer charter, the obligations and particulars of the water business' privacy practices in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

## **14. Complaints And Disputes**

### **14.1 Complaints and disputes policy**

A water business must have and comply with policies and procedures for the handling of complaints from customers and others affected by the water business' operations.

Without limiting this general obligation, a water business's complaints and disputes policy must provide:

- (a) that if a written reply is requested the water business will take no more than 10 business days to respond to an enquiry or complaint; and
- (b) that a reply to a customer's enquiry or complaint must deal with the substance of the enquiry or complaint or tell the customer when they will receive such a reply if the enquiry or complaint is complex; and
- (c) for the reasons for a decision to be given to the complainant, including details of the legislative or policy basis for the reasons if appropriate; and
- (d) a complaint escalation process that gives a customer:
  - (i) the opportunity to raise the complaint up to the level of a senior manager within the water business' management structure; and
  - (ii) contact details of, and information about referral to EWOV and any other relevant external dispute resolution forum in the event that the customer has raised the complaint to a higher level and is not satisfied with the water business' response;
- (e) that the water business is restricted in its ability to recover an amount of money which is in dispute, until the dispute has been resolved; and
- (f) that a complainant is informed of the matters in paragraphs (a) to (e) above.

## **14.2 Resolution of disputes**

A water business must use reasonable endeavours to resolve in good faith any dispute directly with its customers and others affected by its operations.

For the purposes of clause 14.1(e), a water business may consider a dispute about non-payment resolved if:

- (a) it has informed the complainant of its decision on the complaint or any internal review of the complaint; and
- (b) 10 business days have passed since the complainant was informed; and
- (c) the complainant has not:
  - (i) sought a further review under this clause; or
  - (ii) lodged a claim with EWOV or another external dispute resolution forum.

A water business must not consider a dispute resolved until any claim lodged with EWOV or another external dispute resolution forum has been finalised.

# Part D - Actions for non-payment

## 15. Collection

### 15.1 Appropriate communication

All communication relating to collection must be delivered in language and style that is sensitive and appropriate, with a focus on the support available and encouraging customers to contact the water business.

### 15.2 Reminder notices

- (a) A water business must send a customer a reminder notice of an unpaid bill, no earlier than two business days after the due date if the bill is not paid by the due date.
- (b) A water business may commence the process set out at clause 15.4 if no response is received by the customer within seven business days of the reminder notice being sent.
- (c) A reminder notice must include:
  - (i) the overdue amount;
  - (ii) the date of issue;
  - (iii) an explanation in plain language of the notice and of why it is being issued;
  - (iv) the date by which payment must be made, which must not be earlier than six business days from the issue date of the reminder notice;
  - (v) a statement that payment of the overdue bill is required to be made by the due date that is specified under clause 15.2 (c) (iv);
  - (vi) payment options;
  - (vii) information about payment difficulty assistance available;
  - (viii) a warning of the further action that the water business may take, including (if relevant) referral of any outstanding amount to an external debt collection company for collection; and
  - (ix) details of how to contact the water business.
- (d) A water business may include any additional information in the notice it considers necessary.

### **15.3 Final notices**

- (a) If the reminder notice remains unpaid, a water business must send a customer a final notice within 15 business days of the issue date of a reminder notice.
- (b) The final notice must include:
  - (i) the overdue amount;
  - (ii) the date of issue;
  - (iii) an explanation in plain language of the notice and of why it is being issued;
  - (iv) the date by which payment of the final notice must be made to avoid further action, which must not be earlier than six business days after the issue of the final notice;
  - (v) a statement that payment of the overdue bill is required to be made by the date that is specified under clause 15.3(b)(iv);
  - (vi) a statement that, legal action or restriction may be taken, and the customer may incur additional costs in relation to those actions;
  - (vii) clear and unambiguous advice about what the customer needs to do to avoid legal action or being restricted from their water supply;
  - (viii) information about any assistance that is available to the customer, including information about EWOV (including EWOV's telephone number), concessions, government assistance programs and the water business's customer support policy;
  - (ix) the date from which interest (if any) may be applied on outstanding amounts, and the percentage interest rate that may be applied;
  - (x) a statement that the water business might be able to recover outstanding amounts at the time of any sale of the customer's property (if the customer is also the property owner);
  - (xi) details of how to contact the water business; and
  - (xii) information about the applicable fees to remove a restrictor.

### **15.4 Communication requirements**

- (a) A water business must use reasonable endeavours to contact a customer and to offer payment assistance before it seeks to restrict water supply or take legal action to collect the debt.

- (b) The reasonable endeavours must be carried out within a period of 90 calendar days commencing on the due date of the bill that has led to it seeking restriction or taking legal action.
- (c) The reasonable endeavours must include (but are not limited to):
  - (i) one attempt of personal contact using one of the following methods:
    - I. phone call inside business hours;
    - II. phone call outside business hours; or
    - III. site visit to the service address; and
  - (ii) unless any attempt results in a complete conversation, at least three additional attempts to contact the customer, using two or more additional methods, including but not limited to the following types:
    - I. phone call inside business hours;
    - II. phone call outside business hours;
    - III. site visit to the service address;
    - IV. regular mail;
    - V. registered mail;
    - VI. email;
    - VII. SMS; and
  - (iii) sending a final notice.
- (d) At least one of the attempts in clauses 15.4 (c)(i) and (ii) must be made after the final notice is sent.
- (e) A water business must maintain records that are sufficient to evidence:
  - (i) the time and date of attempted contacts;
  - (ii) the type of contact attempted;
  - (iii) which customer service staff attempted contacts; and
  - (iv) whether attempt at contacts were successful and if so a short summary of discussions with customer including verification that information on payment assistance was provided by the business and the nature of commitments given by either party.

### **15.5 Interest on unrecovered amounts**

- (a) Subject to this industry standard, a water business may charge interest on the unpaid amount if:
  - (i) a water business fixes and gives notice (of at least 10 business days) of the due date of payment (Due Date);
  - (ii) the notification referred to in paragraph (i) indicated that interest will accrue from the Due Date; and
  - (iii) any part of the amount payable by the customer is not paid by the Due Date.
- (b) A water business must not charge a residential customer interest on unrecovered amounts while that customer:
  - (i) is the holder of an eligible concession card;
  - (ii) is on a payment plan; or
  - (iii) is receiving assistance under a water business's customer support policy.
- (c) If any event in clause 15.5(b) no longer applies to a residential customer, a water business may charge that residential customer interest on unrecovered amounts on and from the date that the event in clause 15.5(b) ceased to apply to that customer. Interest applied in accordance with this clause cannot be applied retrospectively.

### **15.6 Maximum rate of interest that may be charged**

- (a) For the purposes of section 281(1) of the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and section 4F(2)(f) of the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) the maximum rate of interest that may be charged on unrecovered amounts is an annual rate set by the Commission each May based on the 10 year Australian Commonwealth Government Bond Rate plus a margin to be determined by the Commission.
- (b) The interest starts accruing on the day the amount is due and ends on the date all unrecovered amounts of the charge are paid in full, both days inclusive.

### **15.7 Charges over property**

For the purposes of section 274(4A) of the *Water Act 1989* and section 4F(2)(f)(iii) of the *Water Industry Act 1994*:

- (a) if a customer owns a property and receives services from a water business to that property, an amount unpaid to the water business is a charge on the property; and

- (b) subject to *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic), where a customer is liable to pay a regional water business an amount in relation to a property owned by the customer, that amount is a charge on that property.

## **15.8 Dishonoured payment**

- (a) A water business may recover from a customer costs incurred by the water business due to:
  - (i) a customer's cheque being dishonoured; or
  - (ii) a customer having insufficient funds available when paying by direct debit.
- (b) A water business must not charge a residential customer the costs incurred by the water business under 15.8(a), if that customer:
  - (i) is the holder of an eligible concession card; or
  - (ii) is receiving assistance under a water business' customer support policy.

## **16. Actions for non-payment**

### **16.1 Restriction and legal action to be a measure of last resort**

The restriction of a customer's water supply for non-payment and legal action for non-payment must be measures of last resort.

### **16.2 Limits on restriction and legal action**

A water business must not commence legal action or take steps to restrict a customer's service due to non-payment if:

- (a) 15 business days have not elapsed since the water business has sent its most recent Final Notice to which the debt relates;
- (b) the customer is receiving any form of assistance for payment difficulties under this industry standard;
- (c) the amount owed by the customer is less than \$300;
- (d) the customer is eligible for and has lodged an application for an eligible concession card and the application is outstanding;
- (e) the customer has made an application under the Utility Relief Grant Scheme and the application is outstanding;

- (f) the customer is a tenant and:
  - (i) the amount unpaid is owed by the landlord; or
  - (ii) the tenant has a claim against the landlord in respect of a water bill pending at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal; or
- (g) the amount in dispute is subject to an unresolved complaint procedure in accordance with a water business's complaints policy.

This clause does not restrict a water business's rights under *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) to pursue a debt owed to it by a person who is no longer a customer.

### **16.3 Additional limits on restriction**

A water business must not take steps to restrict a customer's service due to non-payment if:

- (a) it is a Friday, public holiday, weekend, day before a public holiday, or after 3.00 pm; or
- (b) the customer is registered as a special needs customer under clause 12; or
- (c) the water business believes or has reason to believe that the restriction will cause a health hazard having taken into consideration any customer concerns; or
- (d) it is a day of total fire ban declared by the Country Fire Authority of the Authority has rated the fire danger in the area in which the property is located as 'Severe', 'Extreme' or 'Code Red'.

A restriction under clause 16 may reduce the supply of water, recycled water or non-potable water to no less than 2 litres per minute at the tap nearest the meter.

### **16.4 Life support and other special circumstances**

- (a) A water business must not restrict the water supply to the property of a customer if the water business knows that the customer, or a person ordinarily resident at the customer's residence, is on any form of life support.
- (b) A water business must have policies and procedures in place to enable it to take proactive steps to identify those customers in accordance with clause 16.4.

### **16.5 Restriction and legal action**

A water business may only take legal action or restrict a customer's water or recycled water services for non-payment where the following conditions are met:

- (a) the water business has completed the communication requirements outlined at 15.4;



- (b) the customer has been notified of the proposed restriction or legal action in accordance with clauses 15.2 and 15.3 and the associated costs, including the cost of removing a restrictor; and
- (c) the customer has:
  - (i) been offered a flexible payment plan under clause 7.2 and the customer has refused or has failed to respond; or
  - (ii) agreed to a flexible payment plan and has failed to comply with the arrangement.

## **16.6 Removal of restrictions**

A water business must restore a service restricted under this clause 16 within 24 hours of becoming aware of the reason for restriction no longer persisting.

# Part E - Quality and Reliability of Supply and Services

## 17. Quality of Services

### 17.1 Product quality

A water business must comply with applicable health and environmental regulation requirements. It must also comply with any commitments made under its service standards (see clause 18.2)

### 17.2 Water supply (pressure or flow rate)

A water business must ensure that a customer's water supply and recycled water supply is at least equal to the water business' specified minimum supply pressure or flow rate, except to the extent that:

- (a) a property owner's infrastructure falls short of the required condition;
- (b) a service is provided via a private extension;
- (c) there is a drought or an emergency;
- (d) there is a water shortage due to peak summer demand;
- (e) there is an unplanned or planned interruption;
- (f) recycled water is reduced due to a shortage;
- (g) recycled water is reduced in accordance with a water business's permitted use rules;
- (h) supply is restricted or disconnected in accordance with this industry standard; or
- (i) the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) provides.

The pressure or flow rate must be measured at the meter or the tap nearest the meter assembly.

A water business must include its minimum pressure or flow rate in its service standards in accordance with clause 18.2.

### 17.3 Water supply testing

A water business must test pressure or flow rate and water quality for compliance with clauses 17.1 and 17.2 upon request by the customer.

A water business:

- (a) must advise the customer prior to the test that a reasonable charge may be imposed if the test demonstrates compliance with clauses 17.1 or 17.2;
- (b) must pay the cost of a test if the test demonstrates that the water business is not complying with clauses 17.1 or 17.2; and
- (c) may impose a reasonable charge on the customer in the event the test demonstrates compliance with clauses 17.1 and 17.2.

#### **17.4 Water supply rectification**

A water business must rectify any deficiency in satisfying clauses 17.1 to 17.3 as soon as possible, or within a time agreed with the customer.

### **18. Reliability Of Services**

#### **18.1 Obligation to provide reliable services**

Subject to its Statement of Obligations, a water business must develop and implement plans, programs and processes to manage and maintain its assets to provide reliable services.

#### **18.2 Service standards**

Service standards are specified service levels a typical customer can expect to receive from their water business.

A water business must specify targets for the following service standards:

##### **Water service standards**

- (a) Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive, as referred to in clause 17.2 (kPa or min/L)
- (b) Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period
- (c) Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)
- (d) Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)
- (e) Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)
- (f) Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)
- (g) Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)

## **Sewerage service standards**

- (h) Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period
- (i) Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)
- (j) Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)
- (k) Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)

Schedule 1 of this industry standard sets out each water business's service standards and associated targets.<sup>2</sup>

A water business should periodically review its service standard targets with its customers.

### **18.3 Unplanned interruptions**

A water business must have policies and procedures:

- (a) to minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to services (including restoration as soon as possible, and the provision of information); and
- (b) in relation to providing customers with access to emergency supplies of drinking water in the event of an unplanned interruption to water services.

### **18.4 Planned interruptions**

- (a) A water business must inform affected customers by their preferred method of communication and, if possible, by SMS, of the time and duration of any planned interruption to a service at least two business days in advance.
- (b) A water business must have policies and procedures in relation to providing customers with access to emergency supplies of drinking water in the event of a planned interruption to water services.

### **18.5 Bursts, leaks, blockages and spills**

A water business must have policies and procedures to deal with a burst, leak or blockage in its system, including to:

- (a) promptly attend the site upon notification;

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to these service standards, a water business may establish further customer service level targets as part of its customer outcome commitments under our PREMO water pricing framework. Our pricing framework and approach is available at <https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/water/how-we-regulate-water-sector/premo-water-pricing-framework>

- (b) take action to rectify the situation taking into account the potential or actual impact on:
  - (i) customers;
  - (ii) others affected by the failure;
  - (iii) property; and
  - (iv) the environment;
- (c) provide information about any unplanned interruption to a service through a 24-hour telephone facility which advises callers of the estimated duration of any interruption;
- (d) ensure that, in the event of a sewage spill on a customer's property, damage and inconvenience to customers and others affected is minimised; and
- (e) ensure that a sewage spill is promptly cleaned up and the affected area disinfected.

## **19. Reconnection**

A water business must promptly reconnect a customer's property which has been disconnected upon:

- (a) the reason for disconnection no longer persisting;
- (b) receipt of a written undertaking as to compliance by the customer in a form acceptable to the water business; or
- (c) payment by the customer of any reasonable charge imposed by the water business.

## **20. Guaranteed Service Levels**

- (a) A water business must implement a Commission-approved guaranteed service level scheme, where the business pays (or rebates) a pre-determined amount to affected customers when it breaches specified service level obligations.<sup>3</sup>
- (b) Any payment (or rebate) available to customers under the guaranteed service level scheme must be:

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<sup>3</sup> A guaranteed service level scheme provides incentives for water businesses to make efficient investment decisions, or internalise the costs of making investment decisions that leave some customers with poor service outcomes. It also provides a form of recognition that an individual customer has received relatively poor levels of service.

- (i) applied automatically in the event that customer entitlement to the rebate arises;  
and
  - (ii) applied as soon as practicable after a customer entitlement to the rebate arises.
- (c) A water business's guaranteed service level scheme must include the following:
- (i) not restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours (as defined by clause 15.4) to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying; and
  - (ii) if a water business does not meet this service level obligation, the water business must make a minimum payment of \$300 to the customer.
- (d) A water business is not required to make a payment where the failure to attain the service level obligation arises because of the action or inaction of the customer or a third party. For the avoidance of doubt, a third party does not include any person or firm acting on behalf of the water business.
- (e) Guaranteed service level schemes approved by the Commission are set out in Schedule 2 and are updated from time to time.

## **21. Works And Maintenance**

### **21.1 Worker identification**

- (a) A representative of a water business must not enter a customer's property without appropriate identification.
- (b) A representative of a water business entering a property except for the purpose of reading an accessible meter, must either:
  - (i) notify any occupant present of the representative's purpose for entry; or
  - (ii) if no occupant was present at the property, leave a notice stating the representative's identity, and the date, time and purpose of entry.

### **21.2 Keys held by water business**

If a water business holds keys to a customer's premises, the keys must be held in safe custody and returned to the customer upon notification of the customer's vacation of the relevant property or if access is no longer required.

# Part F - Customer Charters

## 22. Requirement For Charter

### 22.1 Purpose of charter

A water business must develop and issue a customer charter to inform customers about their material obligations under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), and of the obligations of the water business to its customers.

### 22.2 Multiple charters

A water business may have more than one charter with the approval of the Commission.

### 22.3 Consultation

A water business must consult with its customers before adopting or varying a customer charter.

### 22.4 Submission for assessment

Before adopting a charter or any variation to a charter, a water business must submit it to the Commission, with details of customer consultation undertaken, for the Commission to review it and assess compliance of the charter with this industry standard and the water business's approved service standards.

### 22.5 Required amendment

A water business must amend its charter at the request of the Commission to:

- (a) deal with matters raised by the Commission as a result of its assessment under clause 22.4; or
- (b) update the charter to reflect an amendment to this industry standard or the water business's approved service standards.

## 23. Content Of Charter

A water business must set out in its charter:

- (a) information about or explaining each of the standards and conditions in Part B to Part E of this industry standard (including, where relevant, the detail of the standards and conditions which are set out in the water business's service standards); and
- (b) all material rights and responsibilities of the water business and its customers in

relation to services performed by the water business.

In particular, and without limiting this general obligation, the charter must include:

- (c) where this industry standard requires a water business to have a policy or provide information, an indication of how the policy or information may be obtained;
- (d) an explanation of the water business' rights and obligations in respect of:
  - (i) connection and service provision in accordance with clause 1;
  - (ii) the number of days from the issue of a bill by which it must be paid;
  - (iii) actions it may take for non-payment in accordance with clause 15 and 16;
  - (iv) reconnection in accordance with clause 19;
  - (v) works and maintenance; and
  - (vi) privacy;
- (e) a description and explanation of the water business's practices and processes in respect of:
  - (i) the types of charges for provision of a service and any reconnection;
  - (ii) how the water business will deal with complaints and disputes under clause 14;
  - (iii) billing, payments and collection in accordance with clauses 6, 7 and 15;
  - (iv) quality standards, testing and rectification of services under clause 17;
  - (v) service standards and targets it intends to meet in relation to reliability of supply under clause 18; and
  - (vi) any approved guaranteed service level scheme;
- (f) information about how services may be affected and any penalties that may apply under applicable drought, emergency, or permanent water saving plans; and
- (g) information about how the water business will assist customers (including joint account holders) affected by family violence, including the handling of customer information, billing and debt management.



## **24. Publication of Charter**

### **24.1 Availability of charter**

A water business must publish its charter(s) on its website and must make a copy available to a customer upon request.

A water business must keep a copy of its charter(s) at its offices for inspection upon request.

### **24.2 Summary of charter**

A water business may summarise or otherwise communicate the contents of its charter if the summary document at least addresses:

- (a) the issuing of bills;
- (b) the types of charges;
- (c) the payment of accounts;
- (d) concessions and assistance available to customers;
- (e) service standards (example reliability);
- (f) the maintenance responsibilities of the water business;
- (g) guaranteed service levels (if applicable);
- (h) enquiry and complaint handling details, including contact details for EWOV;
- (i) privacy information in accordance with privacy legislation;
- (j) contact details of the water business; and
- (k) where a copy of the water business's charter may be obtained.

### **24.3 Provision of charter or summary**

- (a) A water business must provide a copy of the charter or a summary of the charter:
  - (i) to existing customers with the first bill after it has been approved by the Commission in accordance with clause 22.4;
  - (ii) to new customers within one month of becoming registered with the water business in respect of a property; and
  - (iii) in a form that is easy to understand for all customers and in line with the requirements outlined in clause 13.6.

- (b) A water business must publish, and provide upon request, its customer charter in languages other than English to the extent required under the guidelines issued by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.<sup>4</sup>

#### **24.4 Notification of variation**

If a water business materially changes its customer charter, it must inform each customer on or with the next bill sent to the customer that the charter has changed and that details of the change are available on its website or upon request.

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<sup>4</sup> Current guidelines are titled “Improving the Use of Translating and Interpreting Services: A Guide to Victorian Government Policy and Procedure”.

## **Part G – Reporting to the Essential Services Commission**

### **25. Obligation to report non-compliance to the Essential Services Commission**

- (a) A water business must have adequate procedures, policies and practices in place to identify non-compliance with these standards in a timely and efficient manner.
- (b) When a water business identifies potential or actual non-compliance with these standards that may have a material adverse impact, the water business must report that identification in writing to the Commission in a timely manner.

# Part H – Definitions

## 26. Definitions

**available** means that the property is a declared property in respect of that service under section 144 of the *Water Act 1989*.

**billing period** means any period for which a customer's bill is calculated.

**business day** means a day that is not:

- (a) a Saturday or Sunday; or
- (b) a public holiday appointed under the Public Holidays Act 1993 (Vic)

**Commission** means the Essential Services Commission established under the *Essential Services Commission Act 2001* (Vic).

**complaint** means a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, proposed action or failure to act by a water business, its employees or contractors, requiring a resolution (as per AS/NZS 10002:2022).

**customer** means a person who is:

- (a) an owner and occupier of a property connected to a water business's system;
- (b) an owner of a property which is connected to a water business' system but is not an occupier;
- (c) an occupier of a property that is connected to a water business's system and is liable for usage charges; or
- (d) an owner of a property that is not connected but to which a service is available from a water business and the water business imposes a service charge.

**digital format** means a digital communication method that is provided by a water business for the purpose of the sending of bills and other service related communications with the agreement of the customer.

**disconnect** means to physically prevent the flow of water, recycled water or sewerage.

**drinking water** has the same meaning as in the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*.

**E-bill** means a bill that meets the requirements of clause 6.5 of this industry standard.

**electronic address** means an email or internet address supplied by a customer to a water business for the purpose of the receipt of bills and other service related communications.

**eligible concession card** means a Commonwealth Government-issued Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Government-issued Health Care Card or a Department of Veterans' Affairs Repatriation Health Card (Gold Card).

**enquiry** means a written or verbal approach by a customer which can be satisfied by the

water business providing written or verbal information, advice, assistance, clarification, explanation or referral about a matter.

**enquiry facility** means a telephone call centre, a SMS or MMS service, an on-line information facility or an over-the-counter information service.

**environmental regulation** includes applicable requirements of the Environment Protection Authority Victoria and (insofar as they relate to planning and environment matters) of local councils.

**EWOV** means the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria).

**external dispute resolution forum** includes Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

**flexible payment plan** means a plan agreed between a water business and a customer in relation to amounts owing to the water business, which complies with the requirements of clause 7.2.

**financial year** means a year ending 30 June.

**health regulation** includes the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*, the *Food Act 1984*, the *Health (Fluoridation) Act 1973* and other applicable requirements of the Department of Health (or any successor).

**interruption** means in the case of a customer's water or recycled water supply, a total water supply due to any cause, but does not include those caused by bursts or leaks in the property service connection (mains to meter) unless the burst or leak requires the mains to be shut down for repair. For clarity, an interruption includes a loss of recycled water supply to a residential property where toilet flushes and laundry are not possible.

**Melbourne Water** means Melbourne Water Corporation (ABN 81 945 386 953) and its successor.

**meter assembly** means the apparatus consisting of a meter, stop valve, strainer and any additional valves, but does not include a backflow prevention device installed downstream of the outlet of the meter.

**metropolitan water business** means Greater Western Water, South East Water Corporation, Yarra Valley Water Corporation and their successors.

**non-potable water** means water that is the subject of a declaration made by the Minister under section 6 of the *Safe Water Drinking Act 2003*, known under that Act as 'regulated water'.

**occupier** means a person in occupation of a property to which a service is available, including:

- (a) a tenant or caravan park resident registered as such with the water business, for the period of such registration; or
- (b) the property owner.

**permitted use rules** means a water business's requirements under clause 12.3.

**planned interruption** means an interruption for which the water business has provided the

required notification to the customer of at least two business days in advance.

**property owner's infrastructure** includes the customer's pipes, backflow prevention devices and other equipment of the customer connected to a system.

**reasonable charge** means a fee or charge that is approved or specified by the Commission in accordance with clause 10 and 11 of the Water Industry Regulatory Order.

**regional water business** means a regional urban water authority constituted under the *Water Act 1989* or its successor.

**restriction** means the water business' installation of a device to limit the flow of water from the meter to a customer's property due to non-payment by a customer.

**sanitary drain** means a line of pipes including all fittings, conveying or intended to convey sewage or trade waste from a building or structure on a serviced property to the sewer main of a water corporation.

**self-read** means a reliable method of water meter reading selected and undertaken by a customer for their property that is approved by the water business.

**service** means a water supply service including a reticulated non-potable water supply service, a recycled water supply service or a sewerage service.

**small business customer** means a non-employing business (including sole proprietorships and partnerships without employees) or a business employing fewer than 20 people which has an active Australian Business Number.

**Statement of Obligations** means obligations for a water business issued by the Minister for Water under section 41 of the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic), in relation to the performance of water business's functions and the exercise of its powers.

**system** means a water business's physical infrastructure for providing a water supply service, a recycled water service or a trade waste or sewerage service.

**trade waste** has the meaning given to that term in the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic).

**TTY service** means a facility to enable a deaf or hearing impaired person to communicate by telephone through the use of a telephone typewriter.

**unplanned interruption** means an interruption where the customer has not received notification from the water business or where a planned interruption exceeds the duration estimated.

**usage only payment plan** means a payment plan where the customer only pays for usage charges over a period agreed by both the water business and the customer and that suspends or waives the other charges during and/or before that period.

**Utility Relief Grant Scheme** means the grant by that name administered by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (or any successor).

**water business** means a metropolitan water corporation or a regional water corporation.

**Water Industry Standard – Trade Waste Customer Service** refers to the Commission's

Water Industry Standard – Trade Waste Customer Service which places additional obligations on water businesses and Melbourne Water specific to the management of trade waste services.

# Schedule 1 - Service standards

For the purposes of clause 18, the following standards have been specified by the Commission with associated targets set by each of the following businesses.



## Barwon Water

### Water service standards – excluding flow rates

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	27	27	27	27	27
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	43	43	43	43	43
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	226	226	226	226	226
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	125	125	125	125	125
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	165	165	165	165	165

### Water service standards – flow rates

Diameter of the property water service pipe (mm)	20	25	32	40	50
Minimum water flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35	60	90	160

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## Sewerage service standards

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	53	53	53	53	53
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	150	150	150	150	150
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Central Highlands Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water flow rate a customer should receive (L/min)	10	10	10	10	10
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer should experience in any 12 month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	65	65	65	65	65
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	450	450	450	450	450
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	120	120	120	120	120
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	175	175	175	175	175

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## Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer should experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	120	120	120	120	120
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

**City West Water (name changed to Greater Western Water from 1 January 2022)**

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Water</b>					
Number of customers experiencing more than 5 unplanned water supply interruptions in the year (number)	0	0	0	0	0
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	32	32	32	32	32
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	252	252	252	252	252
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	125	125	125	125	125
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	133	133	133	133	133
<b>Sewerage</b>					
Customers receiving more than 3 sewer blockages in the year (number)	6	6	6	6	6
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	31	31	31	31	31
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	150	150	150	150	150
Spills contained within 5 hours (per cent)	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Numbers have been rounded

## Coliban Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure a customer should receive under normal conditions <sup>a</sup> (kPa)	200	200	200	200	200
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	4	4	4	4	4
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	32	32	32	32	32
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	80	80	75	75	70
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440
Average duration of unplanned water interruptions (minutes)	112	112	112	112	112
Average duration of planned water interruptions (minutes)	140	140	140	140	140

<sup>a</sup> Refer to Section 17.2, Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service for a list of conditions where minimum pressure requirements may not be met.

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3

Continued next page

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	80	80	80	80	80
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## East Gippsland Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (L/min)	20	20	20	20	20
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer should experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	71	71	71	71	71
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	75	75	75	75	75
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	145	145	145	145	145

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer should experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	80	80	80	80	80
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300



## Gippsland Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (kPa or L/min)	137.3 kPa	137.3 kPa	137.3 kPa	137.3 kPa	137.3 kPa
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer should experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	90	90	90	90	90
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	90	90	90	90	90
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	150	150	150	150	150

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer should experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	95	95	95	95	95
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Goulburn Valley Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (L/minute)	20	20	20	20	20
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	4	4	4	4	4
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	60	60	60	60	60
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	60	60	60	60	60
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	160	160	160	160	160
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	120	120	120	120	120
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	120	120	120	120	120

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	4	4	4	4	4
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	60	60	60	60	60
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	120	120	120	120	120
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## GMMWater

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (L/minute)	20	20	20	20	20
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer should experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	100	100	100	100	100
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	200	200	200	200	200

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer should experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	22	22	22	22	22
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	113	113	113	113	113
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Lower Murray Water

### Water service standards – excluding flow rates

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1-3) (minutes)	20	20	20	20	20
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	20	20	20	20	20
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	20	20	20	20	20
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	60	60	60	60	60
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	85	85	85	85	85

### Water service standards – flow rates

	Diameter of the property service pipe (mm)				
	20	25	32	40	50
Minimum flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35	60	90	160

### Sewerage service standards

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	20	20	20	20	20
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	70	70	70	70	70
Maximum time to contain spills (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

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## Service standards – Customer service and complaints

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
<b>Customer service</b>					
Average time for calls to be answered	30 seconds	30 seconds	30 seconds	30 seconds	30 seconds
Maximum time to process a property Information Statement (upon receipt of fully completed application and payment)	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days
<b>Complaints</b>					
Maximum time to respond to a complaint	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days	10 business days

## North East Water

Service standard	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Number of customers experiencing more than 5 unplanned water supply interruptions in the year (number)	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95

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Service standard	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Sewerage</b>								
Customers receiving more than 3 sewer blockages in the year (number)	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Spills contained within 5 hours (per cent)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Numbers have been rounded

## South East Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (L/minute)	20	20	20	20	20
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend priority 1 bursts and leaks (minutes)	36	36	36	36	36
Average time taken to attend priority 2 bursts and leaks (minutes)	92	92	92	92	92
Average time taken to attend priority 3 bursts and leaks (minutes)	317	317	317	317	317
Average time taken to restore customers' water supply – planned (minutes)	88	88	88	88	88
Average time taken to restore customers' water supply – unplanned (minutes)	179	179	179	179	179

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	2	2	2	2	2
Average time taken to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	47	47	47	47	47
Average time taken to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	137	137	137	137	137
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300



## South Gippsland Water

### Water service standards – excluding flow rates

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	5	5	5	5	5
Average time (minutes) taken to attend bursts and leaks (Priority 1)	30	30	30	30	30
Average time (minutes) taken to attend bursts and leaks (Priority 2)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time (minutes) taken to attend bursts and leaks (Priority 3)	500	500	500	500	500
Average duration (minutes) of unplanned water supply interruptions	110	110	110	110	110
Average duration (minutes) of planned water supply interruptions	240	240	240	240	240

### Water service standards – flow rates

	Diameter of the property service pipe (mm)				
	20	25	32	40	50
Minimum flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35	60	90	160

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time (minutes) to attend sewer spills and blockages	30	30	30	30	30
Average time (minutes) to rectify a sewer blockage	120	120	120	120	120
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Wannon Water

### Water service standards – excluding flow rates

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period (number)	5	5	5	5	5
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	22	22	22	22	22
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	24	24	24	24	24
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	51	51	51	51	51
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	138	138	138	138	138
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	149	149	149	149	149

### Water service standards – flow rates

	Water meter size				
	20mm meter	25 mm meter	32 mm meter	40 mm meter	50 mm meter
Minimum flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35	60	90	160

### Sewerage service standards

Service standard	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12- month period (number)	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	114	114	114	114	114
Maximum time taken to contain a sewage spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Western Water (transferred into City West Water from 1 July 2021)

Service standard	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Water</b>			
Number of customers experiencing more than 5 unplanned water supply interruptions in the year (number)	0	0	0
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	30	30	30
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	60	60	60
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	1440	1440	1440
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	126	126	126
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	240	240	240
<b>Sewerage</b>			
Customers receiving more than 3 sewer blockages in the year (number)	0	0	0
Average time to attend sewer spills (minutes)	30	30	30
Average time to attend blockages (minutes)	60	60	60
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	47	47	47
Spills contained within 5 hours (per cent)	100	100	100

Note: Numbers have been rounded

## Westernport Water

### Water service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Minimum water pressure or flow rate a customer should receive (kPa)	300 kPa	300 kPa	300 kPa	300 kPa	300 kPa
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer should experience in any 12-month period	4	4	4	4	4
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 1) (minutes)	30	30	30	30	30
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 2) (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time taken to attend bursts and leaks (priority 3) (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300
Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions (minutes)	85	85	85	85	85
Average duration of planned water supply interruptions (minutes)	157	157	157	157	157

### Sewerage service standards

Sewerage	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer should experience in any 12 month period	3	3	3	3	3
Average time to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	35	35	35	35	35
Average time to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	150	150	150	150	150
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	300	300	300	300	300

## Yarra Valley Water

### Water service standards – excluding flow rates

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of unplanned water supply interruptions a customer may experience in any 12-month period	2	2	2	2	2
Average time taken to attend priority 1 bursts and leaks (minutes)	24	24	24	24	24
Average time taken to attend priority 2 bursts and leaks (minutes)	36	36	36	36	36
Average time taken to attend priority 3 bursts and leaks (minutes)	286	286	286	286	286
Average time taken to restore customers' water supply – planned (minutes)	113	113	113	113	113
Average time taken to restore customers' water supply – unplanned (minutes)	101	101	101	101	101

### Water service standards – flow rates

	Diameter of the property water service pipe (mm)				
	20	25	32	40	50
Minimum water flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35	60	90	160

### Sewerage service standards

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Maximum number of sewer blockages a customer may experience in any 12-month period	2	2	2	2	2
Average time taken to attend sewer spills and blockages (minutes)	47	47	47	47	47

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	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Average time taken to rectify a sewer blockage (minutes)	139	139	139	139	139
Maximum time taken to contain a sewer spill (minutes)	240	240	240	240	240

## **Schedule 2- Approved guaranteed service level schemes**

For the purposes of clause 20, the service level obligations and corresponding payments for the following water businesses are commission-approved guaranteed service level schemes.

## Barwon Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
We will not restrict water supply or take legal action against a customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying a bill	404
No more than five unplanned water supply interruptions per customer per year	88
No more than three unplanned sewerage service interruptions to a customer's property per year	88
No more than two sewer spills on a customer's property per year	675
No incidence of sewage spills inside a residential customer's built premises, caused by Barwon Water or a failure in Barwon Water's system(s)	1,000



## Central Highlands Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Failure to provide clean drinking water with the presence of dirty water (more than 5 turbidity units) as the result of a Central Highlands Water fault not restored within 8 hours	200
Failure to rectify an unplanned interruption to a customer's water supply within 4 hours of becoming aware of the interruption	150
Exceeding 3 water supply interruptions to a customer in any 12-month period	150
Failure to repair leaking water service within 3 business days of becoming aware of the leak	200
In the event of a sewer spill within customer's house, which is caused by Central Highlands Water, the annual wastewater service fee will be refunded as a rebate	1,125
Failure to rectify sewer interruption within 3 hours of becoming aware of the interruption	150
Exceeding 1 sewer supply interruption in any 12-month period	150
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying	450

**City West Water (name changed to Greater Western Water from 1 January 2022)**

<b>Service level obligation</b>	<b>Payment (\$)</b>
No more than five unplanned water supply interruptions in a 12 month period.	200
No more than three sewerage service interruptions in a 12 month period.	100
Unplanned Water Supply Outage not restored within 5 Hours of notification.	100
Sewerage interruptions not restored within 5 hours of notification	75
Sewage spill in a house, caused by the business or a failure of the business' system(s), not contained within 1 hour of notification	3,000
Sewage spill not contained within 5 hours of notification	75
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours (as defined by the ESC) to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulty paying.	300
Failure to give at least 2 business days' notice of a planned water interruption	75
No planned interruptions during peak hours (5am to 9am and 5pm to 11pm)	50
Sewage spill in a house, caused by the business or a failure of the business' system(s)	1,000
No more than 3 unplanned water interruptions within any 12 month period	100

## Coliban Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Sewer intrusion into property (blown seal)	60 first event 120 subsequent events
Sewer intrusion into property (plus compensation for damages)	360 (less than 1 hour) 1,200 (1 hour or more)
Special meter read not completed within two business days	Reimbursement of special meter read fee
Greater than three sewer blockages in the past 12 months	120
Greater than four water outages in the past 12 months	60
Unplanned water supply outage longer than five hours	\$60 each or community GSL of \$6,000 if more than 100 connections
Planned water outage during peak times (6am-9am & 6pm-9pm weekdays and on weekends)	120
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying.	360
Failing to unrestrict water supply within 24 hours after reason for restriction removed	360
Ongoing aesthetic water quality issue	25% Water Access charge discount
Ongoing water pressure issues	25% Water Access charge discount
Negative impact on living amenity due to construction works	Tier 1: Fair and reasonable impact mitigation cost Tier 2: 25% Water Access Charge discount
Boil Water or Do Not Consume notice issued	6,000 community GSL
Significant sewer spill to environment	10,000 community GSL

## East Gippsland Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
In the event of a sewage spill within a customer's house, which is caused by us, there will be a \$1,000 cash payment to the home-occupier affected.	1,000
Will notify customers of planned interruptions to their water supply at least 48 hours in advance. If the organisation fails to do this, a rebate of \$65 will be applied to the bills of affected customers.	65
If a planned water supply interruption exceeds the period specified in the notice, affected customers will have a \$65 rebate applied to their bill.	65
We will not restrict a residential customer's water supply or take legal action against the customer before all reasonable endeavours have been made to contact them and provide information about help available if they are experiencing difficulties paying. If East Gippsland Water fails to do this, a rebate of \$300 will be applied to the customer's bill.	300
We are striving for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 and will provide a six-monthly update on progress against our targets to the community. There will be a written public apology if this update is not provided.	East Gippsland Water to provide a written public apology if any six monthly update is not provided.

## Gippsland Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
If we restrict the water supply of, or take legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying	\$300 per day to a maximum of \$900 until their service is restored.
If we are required to issue a 'boil water' alert, we will contribute \$10,000 to the affected community.	10,000
If a planned interruption goes longer than advised then each affected customer will be compensated by a \$50 credit to their next water bill.	50
If a customer is affected by a planned interruption and was not provided a minimum of five days notification, we will credit that customer \$50 on their next water bill.	50
If a sewerage spill is not contained in a house within one hour then affected customers will receive \$500.	500

## Goulburn Valley Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
If we don't respond to a sewer blockage within an hour from when we're notified, we'll provide a \$25 rebate to affected customers	25
If a customer's water supply isn't restored within five hours, we'll provide a rebate of \$20 to that customer	20
If we restrict the water supply of, or take legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying we'll pay that customer \$300	300
If we don't contain a sewer spill within five hours, we'll make a donation of \$2,000 to the community affected by the spill	2,000
If a boil water notice is issued, we'll contribute \$15,000 to the affected community <sup>a</sup>	15,000

<sup>a</sup> When caused by a fault in our system.

## GMMWater

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Notification to customer advising drinking water not suitable for drinking	100
More than 5 unplanned water interruptions in a year	80
More than 3 sewer blockages in a year	80
Unplanned water interruptions not restored within five hours of notification	50
Planned interruption longer than notification	50
Sewer interruption not restored within five hours of notification	50
Sewer spill within a house caused by failure of system not contained within one hour	1,000
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying.	300

## Lower Murray Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
More than 5 unplanned water supply interruptions in a year.	75
More than 3 sewer blockages in a year	75
Sewage spill within house caused by Lower Murray Water assets where customer's internal plumbing is functioning correctly.	1,500
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours (as defined by the Essential Services Commission) to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying	300



## North East Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Unplanned water interruptions within any 12 month period	50
Sewer spills in a house not contained within 1 hour	1,000
Restriction of water - inappropriately	300

## South East Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Water spill within the house caused by South East Water	1,500
Failure to provide a minimum of 2 business days' notice to a customer of any planned water supply interruption impacting their property	60
More than 5 unplanned disruptions to services (water, sewer and water quality) in any 12-month period	60
Sewer spill within the house	3,000
More than 2 unplanned sewerage service interruptions in any 12-month period	60
Unplanned water supply interruption longer than 5 hours	60
Unplanned sewerage service interruption not restored within 4 hours	60
Sewage spill not contained within 5 hours of notification	1,000
Restricting the water supply of, or taking legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours (as defined by the Essential Services Commission) to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying	500
<b>Water quality</b>	
A water quality advisory notice is issued:	
• Affecting less than 50 customers	5000 community rebate
• Affecting 50 or more customers	10,000 community rebate per impacted postcode

## South Gippsland Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
South Gippsland Water will rebate the customer an amount when it fails to restore sewer supply within 5 hours of notification to a customer's property.	100
South Gippsland Water will pay the customer an amount if it causes a sewage spill within a customer's house. It will also clean up the house and provide alternative accommodation as required.	1000
South Gippsland Water will facilitate a once-off grant process to a water supply community impacted by a major water quality event (boil water advice) <sup>a</sup>	10,000 community grant <sup>a</sup>
South Gippsland Water will rebate the customer an amount where it restricts the water supply of, or takes legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying.	300

<sup>a</sup> Community grant to be provided in accordance with the guaranteed service level key principles and administration processes agreed with customers.

## Wannon Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Subject to exclusions, if there are more than two unplanned interruptions to the service supplying water to the customer's property in any 12-month period, the customer will be entitled to a GSL rebate of \$100.	100
Subject to exclusions, if there is a sewerage spill in a customer's house the customer will be entitled to a GSL rebate of \$500.	500
Subject to exclusions, if there is a sewerage spill on a customer's property the customer will be entitled to a GSL rebate of \$100.	100
If Wannon Water restricts the water supply of, or takes legal action against, a residential customer prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying, the customer will be entitled to a GSL rebate of \$300.	300

### Western Water (transferred into City West Water from 1 July 2021)

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
Planned water supply interruption during peak hours (i.e. 5am- 9am; 5pm-11pm)	100
Planned water supply interruption longer than notification given	100
More than three sewer interruptions in 12 months	100
More than five water supply interruptions in 12 months	100
Sewerage spill inside the house, not stopped within one hour of notification	500
Restricting or commencing legal action prior to taking reasonable endeavours (as defined by the Essential Services Commission) to contact the customer about help available if they are experiencing difficulties paying	300

## Westernport Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
We will limit unplanned interruptions to no more than 4 in any 12-month period.	75
All water quality complaints will receive a response within three business days after notification (noting resolution may take longer).	100
We will not restrict the water supply of a residential customer, or take legal action, prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact the customer and provide information about help that is available if the customer is experiencing difficulties paying	Reimbursement of Annual Water Access Fee or \$350 for tenants.
We will contain sewage spills within a house resulting from the failure of our pipes within one hour of notification	Reimbursement of Annual Wastewater Access Fee or \$550 for tenants in addition to clean-up costs.
We will contain sewage spills onto property within five hours of notification	350

## Yarra Valley Water

Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
<b>Planned interruptions to water and sewer supply</b>	
We interrupt your water for more than five hours	50
The planned interruption is longer than we said it would be	50
We fail to give at least one week's notice of planned water interruptions	50
We interrupt your water between 5am and 9am and/or 5pm and 11pm	50
<b>Unplanned interruptions to water and sewer supply</b>	
Your water supply is lost for more than four hours	50
An additional \$50 if the loss of your water supply extends more than 12 hours	50
We fail to restore your sewerage service within four hours. This does not include sewer service interruptions caused by your pipework.	50
An additional \$50 if we fail to restore your sewerage service within 12 hours. This does not include sewer service interruptions caused by your pipework.	50
You experience more than two unplanned water or sewerage interruptions during any 12-month period – \$50 for the third and each subsequent unplanned interruption	50
If we do not provide an adequate water flow rate (unless there is a restriction in place), we will waive the Water Supply System Charge until we meet the minimum standard rate	Waiver of Water Supply System Charge
<b>Sewage spills caused by a fault in our sewerage system</b>	
We fail to contain a sewage spill within your house within one hour of it being reported to us	1,000
You experience a subsequent sewage spill in your house within 12 months which isn't contained within one hour of it being reported to us	2,000
We fail to contain a sewage spill on your property within four hours of it being reported to us	1,000
You experience a subsequent sewage spill on your property within 12 months which isn't contained within four hours of it being reported to us	2,000

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Service level obligation	Payment (\$)
<b>Water quality</b>	
You contact us about two or more separate water quality issues in a 12-month period – \$50 for the third and each subsequent issue	50
An advisory notice is issued (covers a precautionary boil water advisory, do not drink or do not use advisory):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 50 of Yarra Valley Water’s customers</li> </ul>	5000 community rebate per Local Government Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 or more of Yarra Valley Water’s customers</li> </ul>	10,000 community rebate per postcode affected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 or more customers covered by more than one retail water business</li> </ul>	10,000 community rebate per postcode impacted
<b>Response to customers</b>	
If we do not reply to your contact within four working days	50
<b>Debt recovery actions</b>	
We commence legal action or take steps to restrict your household’s water supply prior to taking reasonable endeavours to contact you and provide information about the help that is available for customers experiencing financial difficulty	300