



Northern Areas Council

Customer Charter – CWMS (sewerage) services

Northern Areas Council is the Sewerage Services supplier of all major townships within the Northern Areas Council boundaries. These services are supplied via a Community Waste Water Treatment System (CWMS).

All effluent collected via the CWMS is treated to a quality suitable for recycling and is re-used on local reserves.

The aim of our Charter is to provide our CWMS (sewerage) customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us and their rights and responsibilities.

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

Sewerage services provided

We provide customers in Jamestown, Laura, Moyletown and Gladstone with *the following services*

CWMS (SEWERAGE) REMOVAL (QUALITY)

We will:

- remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your sewerage service
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your sewerage service at least 4 business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance
- provide an emergency telephone number on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service

You:

- will report any spills, leaks or incursions to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website

- will not discharge restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure
- contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure

Our prices

PRICE LIST

We will:

- publish our Price List, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your CWMS (sewerage) service, each year once adopted by Northern Areas Council on our website at www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at all our Council offices.
- publish our Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how our fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by 31 August on our website at www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au We will also make this available at all our Council offices.
- in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website 14 days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at all our Council offices.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGE

The Local Government Act 1999 allows us to recover a “vacant not connected charge” from you where our CWMS (sewerage) infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our “vacant not connected charge” where a CWMS connection is located on a property.

SEWERAGE CONCESSIONS

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

Connections

CONNECTIONS – WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

We will:

- inform you within 7 days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure and required fees to be paid
- supply technical, approval and inspection services to ensure that the new connections to the CWMS Sewerage services are constructed by the new customer in an approved way

You will:

- provide us with the following information about your supply address
 - location details of septic tank and connection point
- pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au or by visiting any of our Council offices.

We will provide you with a copy of our Connection Policy upon request.

Billing and payments

We will:

- issue you with a bill at least quarterly (unless your annual charge has already been paid in full), unless otherwise agreed with you.
- include your CWMS (sewerage) charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued annually, with quarterly payment option available
- provide you with a detailed bill and give you at least 12 business days to pay your bill
- offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, by direct credit, BPAY, Post Billpay or by Centrepay .

You will:

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

PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

We will:

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

You will:

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

Further details on our Hardship Policy are available on our website at www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au or by visiting any of our Council offices. We will provide you with a copy of our Hardship Policy upon request.

REVIEWING YOUR BILL/BILLING DISPUTES

We will:

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

You will:

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

Overcharging

We will:

- inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged as a result of an act or omission by us and credit the overcharged amount to your next account
- pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a CWMS (sewerage) service from us

Undercharging

We will:

- in relation to unmetered services, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the error being advised to you in writing
- list the undercharged amount as a separate item in a special bill or in your next bill with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount
- not charge you interest on the undercharged amount

DEBT RECOVERY

We will:

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

You will:

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

Entry to your property

We will:

- provide you with at least 24 hours if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your CWMS (sewerage) service

You will:

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

Disconnections

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

- you request the disconnection
- there is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge)
- you are found to be using the services illegally or have refused entry to person authorised to read your meter or undertake maintenance or repairs in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments

Where you request a disconnection (and it is not prohibited), we will use our best endeavours to issue you with a final account in accordance with your request. We will inform you if you are still required to pay our “vacant not connected charge” when you request the disconnection.

Termination of contract for sewerage services

We will:

- confer on you the right to terminate your contract with us for the supply of CWMS (sewerage) services
- inform you of any relevant fees or charges payable as a result of your termination

You will:

- provide at least 3 business days’ notice of your intention to terminate your contract with us for the supply of sewerage services
- pay any relevant fees or charges

Complaints and dispute resolution

We will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 10 business days

- refer you to our CWMS Coordinator if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to the Chief Executive Officer
- advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to our nominated independent dispute resolution body and provide you with the details of that organisation

Further details on our Enquiry, Complaint & Dispute Resolution Procedures are available on our website at www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au or by visiting one of our Council offices. We will provide you with a copy of our procedures upon request.

Contacting Us

If you need to know more about us or the content of this Charter, please contact us on the details below

General Enquiries 8664 1139

Faults & Emergencies 0488 999 808

Website www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au

Email admin@nacouncil.sa.gov.au

Principal Office 94 Ayr Street (PO Box 120), Jamestown SA 5491

Business hours – 9.00am to 5.00pm

Interpreter Service

Non-English speakers can access phone interpreting services through TIS National by calling 131 450.