



Wastewater Service and Residential Non Drinking Water Supply Customer Charter

Mount Barker District Council currently operates the largest South Australian Council wastewater scheme utilising proven management process and procedures. Council is also a licenced Water Industry Entity.

The aim of the Customer Charter is to provide Council's residential non drinking water and/or wastewater customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from Council 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 Council's responsibilities in providing you with residential non drinking water and/or wastewater retail services and can be found at www.escosa.sa.gov.au.

RETAIL SERVICES PROVIDED

Council provides customers in:

- Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Nairne, Brukunga, Echunga, Meadows, and Macclesfield with a wastewater service; and
- Meadows with a domestic residential non drinking water supply (bore water or recycled water).

Note: Bore water to some properties in existing township, recycled water to Mawson Green and Saxon Hyde sub-divisions.

Residential Non Drinking Water Quality (Quality)

(Meadows only)

Council will:

- provide you with residential non drinking water that is safe for the intended use and in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements
- advise you whether the residential non drinking water supply is bore water or recycled water
- use best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your residential non drinking water supply
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your residential non drinking water supply at least 10 business days prior to undertaking any planned works or maintenance
- provide an emergency telephone number on Council's website and your bill for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to your residential non drinking water supply
- in the case of an unplanned interruption or emergency, provide you with information about any impact to your residential non drinking water supply as soon as possible

You will:

- not use recycled water for drinking, cooking or other kitchen use (such as rinsing vegetables), personal washing such as baths, showers, cleaning teeth, bidets and hand basins, household cleaning, filling swimming pools or spas, recreational activities involving water, washing clothes or in washing machines
- not use bore water for drinking, food preparation, watering edible plants, filling swimming pools
- report any leaks, bursts or quality issues to Council as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on Council's website and your bill
- provide safe access to the recycled water meter so that Council can ascertain your consumption for billing purposes
- be responsible for arranging and covering the costs of any additional onsite residential non drinking water infrastructure necessary to maintain your required flow rate, which must be installed by an appropriately licensed plumber
- only use residential non drinking water at the designated supply address

Wastewater Removal (Quality)

Council will:

- remove wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements
- use best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your wastewater service
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your wastewater service at least 10 business days prior to undertaking any planned works or maintenance
- provide an emergency telephone number on Council's website and your bill for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your wastewater service

You:

- will report any blockages, bursts or leaks to Council as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on Council's website and your bill
- will not discharge restricted wastewater into Council's wastewater infrastructure
- may be liable to pay Council for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. Council will advise you of the reasons for cost recovery in these circumstances and any amounts payable will be subject to the payment assistance and financial hardship provisions as per Council's Hardship Policy.
- will contact Council to discuss requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into Council's wastewater infrastructure

FEES AND CHARGES

Price List

Council will:

- publish Fees and Charges, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your retail service, each year by 30 July on Council's website at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au. This will also be made available at Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker.

- publish Council's Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how the fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by 30 July on Council's website at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au. This will also be made available at Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker.
- in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Fees and Charges change, publish these on Council's website 30 days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at Council's office
- calculate your bill on a pro-rata basis if a tariff rate or charge changes during a billing cycle so that the old tariff rate or charge applies up to and including the date of change and the new tariff rate or charge applies from the date of the change to the end of the billing cycle

Service Availability Charge

The Local Government Act 1999 allows Council to recover a "service availability charge" from you where Council's residential non drinking water/wastewater infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. Council will require you to pay the "service availability charge" whether you are connected to the infrastructure or not.

Wastewater Concessions

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

CONNECTIONS

Existing Residential Non Drinking Water Connections - Where Your Property Is Currently Connected To Council's Infrastructure

Council will:

- if you are a resident of Mawson Green or Saxon Hyde subdivisions in Meadows, and paying the annual service charge, connect you to Council's recycled water service within 14 calendar days of you providing Council with information required by Council
- Approve the connection to Council's wastewater service within 14 calendar days

You will:

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

Existing Wastewater Connections - Where Your Property Is Currently Connected To Council's Infrastructure

Council will:

- if you are paying the annual service charge, connect you to Council's wastewater service within 14 calendar days of you providing Council with information required by Council
- Approve the connection to Council's wastewater service within 14 calendar days

You will:

- provide Council with information about your supply address

Connections – Where Your Property Is Not Currently Connected To Council's Infrastructure

Council will:

- inform you within 14 calendar days whether or not you can be connected to Council's infrastructure
- if able to be connected, authorise you to connect to Council's residential non drinking water/wastewater service within 14 calendar days of you providing Council with information required by Council

You will:

- provide Council with the supply address
- pay Council's relevant infrastructure fee and the annual service charge as set out in Council's Fees and Charges
- Arrange for a licenced plumber to provide you with a wastewater connection point and/or residential non drinking water infrastructure and meet all costs associated with the works

Further details on connecting new properties to Council's infrastructure is available on Council's website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au or by visiting Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker.

AUDITS

Residential Non Drinking Water (Recycled Water Only)

Council will:

- Undertake an audit of your property at least every five (5) years as required by the Office of the Technical Regulator to ensure independence of the rain water and any alternative water systems and the recycled water system.
- Provide you with at least 10 business days notice when a periodic inspection or audit is planned.
- Provide detailed information regarding Auditing Procedures which is available on Council's website at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au. This will also be made available at Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker.
- For any direct cross connections found, the non-drinking water supply will be disconnected and locked off immediately during the cross connection audit. This is required to prevent continued contamination of drinking water sources. In these circumstances, Council will take all reasonable steps to notify the property owners and the occupants as soon as is practicable to do so.
- Where a cross connection is found, Council will provide the property owner notice in writing of the outcome of the audit together with a copy of the completed audit report for the property.
- For minor issues with non-compliance (not involving a cross connection) Council will require these defects to be rectified within 30 days of the property owner being notified in writing.

- Council will not reinstate the non-drinking water supply to a property found to have a cross connection, until the cross connection is rectified and the subsequent cross connection audit indicates that the property is compliant with the Recycled Water Regulations.

You will:

- Ensure that at your cost, all internal pipework and connections to the recycled water system at your supply address comply at all times with all provisions and directions under the Water Industry Act 2012 or any other law relating to standards of work, materials and plumbing.
- Ensure the independence of your rain water, any alternative water systems and recycled water system by not permitting any recycled water supplied to your property to flow into any part of a rain water or alternative water system.
- Be responsible for regular and ongoing self checks of plumbing on your property, including operational compliance of your recycled water service.
- Notify the Council if at any time you alter the internal pipework within the supply address.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

(A Bill is Either a Rates Notice or a Tax Invoice)

Council will:

- Include your residential non drinking water fixed charge and wastewater charge on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.
- For customers receiving recycled water:
 - Issue you with a recycled water variable charge at least half yearly unless otherwise agreed with you
 - ensure your bill is based on an actual meter reading at least once within a 12 month period
 - provide you with consumption or estimated consumption of recycled water services and meter readings, metering data or estimates of consumption
- provide you with a detailed information and give you at least 30 calendar days to pay your bill
- offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, or by BPay

You will:

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

Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

Council 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, Council's Hardship Program if requested with such requests being treated in a confidential manner.

You will:

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

Further details on Council's Hardship Policy are available on Council's website at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au or by visiting Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker. Council will provide you with a copy of Council's Hardship Policy upon request.

Reviewing Your Bill / Billing Disputes

Council will:

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

You will:

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

OVERCHARGING

Council will:

- inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged as a result of an act or omission by Council and credit the overcharged amount to your next bill
- pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a retail service from Council

UNDERCHARGING

Council will:

- in relation to a retail service which is metered, limit the amount Council recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the meter reading date on the last bill sent to you
- in relation to unmetered services, limit the amount Council 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

Council 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 Council to discuss a payment extension or other flexible payment arrangements (including eligibility for Council's Hardship Program)
- not undertake debt collection activity where Council has installed a flow restriction device

You will:

- contact Council if you are having difficulty paying your bills prior to the due date, which will be treated in a confidential manner

ENTRY TO YOUR PROPERTY

Council will:

- provide you with at least 24 hours notice if Council needs to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your retail service

You will:

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

RESIDENTIAL NON DRINKING WATER FLOW RESTRICTIONS FOR NON-PAYMENT

Council will only restrict the flow of residential non drinking water to your property if:

- you have not paid your bill or bills by the due date and you have not contacted Council to arrange an alternative payment arrangement
- you do not adhere to previously agreed payment arrangement and you have not contacted Council to discuss any further payment options
- you do not adhere to the terms of agreement under Council's Hardship Policy
- you refuse Council employees or contractors entry to your property, including but not limited to, where you deny Council's meter readers access to your property for three consecutive billing cycles and you do not contact Council to arrange reasonable alternative access arrangements
- you are using the residential non drinking water supply illegally

Before restricting your residential non drinking water supply, Council will:

- use best endeavours to contact you in person, by telephone, by mail and/or email
- provide you with information about Council's flexible payment arrangements and assess your eligibility for participation in Council's Hardship Program
- issue you with a reminder notice
- issue you a restriction notice informing you that Council intends to restrict your supply in 5 business days if you do not contact Council

You will:

- contact Council as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for your possible restriction and how the issue can be resolved

DISCONNECTIONS

Subject to any applicable regulatory requirements that prohibit disconnection, in some circumstances Council may disconnect your residential non-drinking water or wastewater service if:

- you have requested the disconnection
- there is a public health, environment or safety risk to Council's services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk)
- you are found to be using the services illegally

- you have refused entry to your property to persons authorised to read your meter or other duties in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments

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

REINSTATEMENT – RESIDENTIAL NON DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Council will:

- use best endeavours to reinstate your supply within a time agreed with you subject to the reasons for disconnection or restriction being rectified and you paying Council's reinstatement fee
- waive the reinstatement fee if you are eligible for and agree to participate in Council's Hardship Program

You will:

- contact Council to discuss how the issue that led to the flow restriction or disconnection can be rectified
- pay Council's reinstatement fee unless it is waived

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Council will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 10 business days
- refer you to Council's Head of Wastewater if you are not satisfied with Council's initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to Council's Internal Review Officer.

Advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to the Energy & Water Ombudsman South Australia and provide you with the details of that organisation. Further details on Council's Enquiry, Complaint and Dispute Resolution Procedures are available on Council's website at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au or by visiting Council's office at 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker. Council will provide you with a copy of Council's procedures upon request.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

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

- General Enquiries 08 8391 7200
- Faults & Emergencies 08 8391 7200
- Website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au
- Email **council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au**
- Office 6 Dutton Road, PO Box 54, Mount Barker SA 5251
- Business hours 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday