



MOUNT BARKER  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Mount Barker Region Wastewater Utility Charter

## Community Information

### Why is Council considering establishing a wastewater service subsidiary?

Council owns and operates the largest local government run wastewater service in SA. To meet the demands of significant growth in the Mount Barker district, Council is also investing substantially in a program of major wastewater and recycled water capital infrastructure expansion projects over the next 10 years, worth more than \$238m.

Council has taken a considered approach to determine the best governance model for its wastewater service, including seeking advice from external and independent experts.

A wastewater service subsidiary is considered to be the best model by Council because:

- A subsidiary enables a skills-based board to be responsible for wastewater services, delivering performance objectives set by Council.
- A board would solely concentrate on the wastewater service, providing a greater level of technical expertise and timeliness than is possible under the current system where the wastewater service competes for attention and strategic oversight with many other Council and community priorities.
- Operating a rapidly-expanding wastewater service requires high levels of technical understanding and regulatory compliance. A skills-based board would bring a higher level of industry knowledge to enhance the management of the wastewater service.
- Council would retain ownership of the wastewater service, and ultimate control.

### What is the Mount Barker Region Wastewater Utility Charter?

The draft Mount Barker Region Wastewater Utility Charter sets out how the wastewater subsidiary would be structured and run including:

- The composition of the board and board member selection process.
- The board's reporting requirements to Council.
- The board's functions, duties and powers.
- How the board's performance will be reviewed and reported to Council.

To read the charter, visit:

[www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/wastewater](http://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/wastewater)

### What control will Council retain over its wastewater service?

Council will retain full ownership and ultimate control of its wastewater service.

There are specific requirements under the Local Government Act that will ensure the accountability of the wastewater service and subsidiary to Council. These include:

- Council determines the content of the charter for the wastewater subsidiary. Ministerial approval of the charter is required.
- Council determines to what extent it seeks to provide authority to the board of the wastewater subsidiary.
- Council determines who is appointed to the board.
- Council determines what reporting (to Council) obligations the board would have.
- The wastewater subsidiary is subject to the direction and control of the Council.
- The establishment of a subsidiary does not derogate from the power of the Council to act in a matter.
- The wastewater service effectively remains in council ownership, via the wastewater subsidiary.

### What impact will there be for wastewater service customers and ratepayers?

Transition costs for the subsidiary including board fees have been factored into the most recent adopted Long Term Financial Plan.

Only wastewater service customers pay for the service, so ratepayers not receiving the service will remain unaffected.

### When will the change take effect?

Following Council's communication period with the community, the draft charter must be approved by the Minister for Local Government.

Council has established a transition plan for the changeover to a subsidiary model and will work through this over coming months. It is anticipated that the new subsidiary will commence from 1 January 2025, subject to Ministerial approval.

### Where can I find out more?

For more information, or to read the draft Mount Barker Region Wastewater Utility Charter, visit:  
[www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/wastewater](http://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/wastewater)