

Customer Charter

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Customer Charter



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Introduction

GMB Water, a licenced Water Industry Entity, operates the largest South Australian local government owned wastewater scheme utilising proven management process and procedures. We are committed to delivering sustainable wastewater services for the benefit of our economy, community and the environment.

GMB Water is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mount Barker District Council reporting to an independent Board.

The aim of our Charter is to provide our 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 non-drinking water and sewerage retail services and can be found at www.escosa.sa.gov.au.

Customers covered by this Charter

This Charter takes effect from 1 January 2025 for all existing GMB Water customers (former customer of the Mount Barker District Council Wastewater Service) and for new customers, on application for connection to our services. It includes residential and non-residential wastewater customers and non-drinking (bore and recycled) water customers.

Other agreements with us

If you have a separate agreement with us (for example, a non-residential non-drinking water or sewerage agreement), the terms of this Customer Charter will apply unless they directly contradict the terms outlined in the separate agreement.

Your Standard Customer Contract

Most customers are covered by our Standard Customer Contract, effective from 1 July 2025 or on application for connection to our services. The contract is a legally binding document for the supply of standard non-drinking water and domestic wastewater services to customers connected to our network.

The Contract also covers services with special characteristics - you'll receive further communication from us if this applies to you. To view the Standard Customer Contract visit gmbwater.au or call us on 08 8188 9300

Retail Services Provided

GMB Water provides:

- A sewerage service to customers in Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Nairne, Brookunga, Echunga, Meadows and Macclesfield with a wastewater service
- A domestic residential non-drinking water supply (bore water or recycled water) to some customers in Meadows
- A commercial non-drinking (recycled) water supply to non-residential customers across the Mount Barker district

Non-Drinking Water Services

We will:

greater water recovery for the future

- Provide you with non-drinking recycled / bore water that is safe 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 our best endeavours to minimize the frequency and duration of interruptions to limitations to your non-drinking water supply
- Provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your non-drinking water supply 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 non-drinking water service
- In the case of an unplanned interruption to emergency, provide you with information about any impact to your non-drinking water service 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, 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 or spas
- Report any leaks, bursts or quality issues to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- Provide safe access to the water meter so that we can ascertain your non-drinking water consumption for billing purposes
- Be responsible for arranging and covering the costs of any additional onside 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)**We will:**

- Remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements
- Use our best endeavours to minimize 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
- Endeavour to ensure damage or inconvenience is minimised and in the event of a sewage spill, there is prompt and adequate clean up.

You will:

- Report any blockages, bursts or leaks to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- Not discharge restricted wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure
- May be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. We 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 provisions of your contract with us

- Contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure

Trade Waste

Trade waste is any used water and substances from commercial, industrial, business trade or manufacturing activities that are discharged to our sewerage system for removal and treatment. We accept trade waste into our sewerage system wherever possible, but to discharge trade waste, you must have authorisation and comply with the authorisation conditions. Full details about trade waste including authorisation applications, and fees and charges, are available on our website.

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 retail service, each year by 30 July on our website, www.gmbwater.au. We will also make this available at our office at 1/100 Springs Road, Mount Barker, SA 5251
- 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 30 July on our website at www.gmbwater.au. We will also make this available at our office at 1/100 Springs Road, Mount Barker, SA 5251
- In the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website 30 days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at our 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 us to recover a "service availability charge" from you where our domestic non-drinking water and / or sewerage infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our "service availability charge" whether you are connected to the infrastructure or not.

Concessions

Water and sewerage concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current water and 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 our infrastructure

We will:

- If you are a resident of Mawson Green of Saxon Hyde subdivisions in Meadows, and pay the annual service charge, connect you to our recycled water service within 14 days of you providing us with the information we require and approve the connection to our recycled water service within 14 days
- If you are a resident of Mawson Green of Saxon Hyde subdivisions in Meadows, and are not paying the annual service charge, connect you to our recycled water service within 14 days of you providing us with the information we require and paying the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List

You will

- Provide us with information about your supply address
- If required, pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List
- Provide us with your plumbers Certificate of Completion (COC) for the recycled and rainwater plumbing systems

Existing wastewater connections – where your property is currently connected to our infrastructure

We will:

- If you are paying the annual service charge, connect you to our wastewater service within 14 days of you providing us with the information we require and approve the connection to our wastewater service within 14 days
- If you are not paying the annual service charge, connect you to our wastewater service within 14 days of you providing us with the information we require and paying the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List

You will:

- Provide us with information about your supply address
- If required, pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List

Connections – where your property is not currently connected to our infrastructure

We will:

- Inform you within 14 calendar days whether or not you can be connected to our infrastructure
- If able to be connected authorise you to connect to our residential non-drinking water and/or wastewater service within 14 days of you providing us with the information we require and paying the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List

You will:

- Provide us with the supply address
- Pay the relevant connection and account establishment fees as set out in our Price List
- 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 our infrastructure is available on our website www.gmbwater.au or by visiting our office at 1/100 Springs Road, Mount Barker, SA 5251.

Connection Audits

We are required to undertake an audit of your property, if we supply you with a residential non-drinking water supply, at least every five (5) years by the Office of the Technical Regulator to ensure independence of the rain water and any alternative water systems and the recycled water system.

We will:

- Provide you with at least 10 business days notice when a periodic inspection or audit is planned
- Provide detailed information regarding the Auditing Procedure which is available on our website at www.gmbwater.au
- 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 we will take all reasonable steps to notify the property owners and the occupants as soon as practical to do so
- Where a cross connection is found, we 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) we will require these defects to be rectified within 30 days of the property owner being notified in writing
- We 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 and 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 any recycled water service
- Notify us of at any time you alter the internal pipework within the supply address.

Billing and Payments

We will:

- Include your residential non-drinking water fixed charges and sewerage charges on your rates notice, separately identified, issued quarterly unless otherwise agreed with you
- For metered non-drinking water services issue you with a bill at least half yearly unless otherwise agreed with you
- For metered non-drinking water services ensure your bill is based on an actual meter reading at least once within a 12 month period
- For metered non-drinking water services provide you with consumption or estimated consumption of non-drinking water services and meter readings, metering data or estimates of consumption

- For metered non-drinking water services 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 bill in person, by mail, by direct debit, by BPay, or by Centrepay if you are eligible.

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 installments 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.gmbwater.au or by visiting our office at 1/100 Springs Road, Mount Barker, SA 5251. 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 outcomes 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 overcharges 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 us.

Undercharging

We will:

- In relation to a retail service which is metered, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the meter reading date on the last bill we sent you
- 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
- No 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 arrangement (including eligibility for you Hardship Program)
- Not undertake debt collection activity where we have installed a flow restriction device.

You will:

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

Entry to your property

We can enter on to your property to read a water meter, inspect any pipes or fittings connected to our infrastructure, and carry out other investigations or inspections and in the case of an emergency. Employees and contractors who enter your property must carry photographic identification.

We will:

- Provide you with at least 24 hours notice if we need to enter your property for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing infrastructure and/or services

You will:

- Ensure safe access to our infrastructure (including but not limited to the meter) located at or on your property.

Non-drinking Water flow restrictions for non-payment

We will only restrict the flow of non-drinking water to your property if:

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

Before restricting your water supply, we will:

- Use our best endeavors to contact you in person, by telephone, by mail and/or email

- Provide you with information about our flexible payment arrangement, Government-funded concessions and assessed your eligibility for participation in our Hardship Program
- Issue you with a reminder notice
- Issue you a restriction notice informing you that we intend to restrict your supply in 5 business days if you do not contact us.

You will:

- Contact us 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, we will only disconnect your non-drinking water or sewerage retail service if:

- You request the disconnection
- There is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (eg backflow risk or unauthorized industrial waste discharge)
- You are found to be using the services illegally or have refused entry to person authorized 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 "service availability charge" when you request the disconnection.

Reinstatement of residential non-drinking water supply

We 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 our reinstatement fee
- Waive the reinstatement fee if you are eligible for and agree to participate in our Hardship Program.

Your responsibility

- Contact us to discuss how the issue that led to the flow restriction or disconnection can be rectified
- Pay our reinstatement fee unless it is waived.

Termination of contract for retail services

We will:

- Confer on you the right to terminate your contract with us for the supply of retail 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 retail services
- Pay any relevant fees or charges.

Complaints and dispute resolution

We will:

greater water recovery for the future

- Respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 10 business days
- Refer you to our Manager Operations if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to our Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director
- 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 of our Enquiry, Complain & Dispute Resolution Procedure are available on our website at www.gmbwater.au or by visiting our office at 1/100 Springs Road, Mount Barker, SA 5251. We will provide you with a copy of our procedures upon request,

Contacts

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

Faults, service difficulties and emergencies - Water supply, water quality, leaking or faulty water meters, sewer blockage or overflow

24 hours/7 days on 08 8188 9300

Customer care, billing, general queries and payment difficulties

9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday on

08 8188 9300 or customerservice@gmbwater.au or at www.gmbwater.au

Connections – applications for connections, availability of service, land development

9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday on

08 8188 9300 or customerservice@gmbwater.au or at www.gmbwater.au

Feedback, compliments and complaints

9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday on

08 8188 9300 or customerservice@gmbwater.au or at www.gmbwater.au

Energy and Water Industry Ombudsman

Complaints regarding billing, credit, connection, supply, marketing and customer service

- Phone: free call 1800 665 565 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm)
- Email: contact@ewosa.com.au
- website: ewosa.com.au

Ombudsman SA

Investigates complaints regarding our processes and decisions to determine if they are fair, reasonable and lawful

- Phone: 8226 8699 (metro), 1800 182 150 toll free (country only)
- Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au
- Website: ombudsman.sa.gov.au

Essential Services Commission of South Australia

The economic regulator of the South Australian water industry.

- Phone 08 8463 4444 (metro), 1800 633 592 (mobiles and SA only)
- Website: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

