



30 January 2026
Media Statement

Wastewater Service Charges

Wastewater charges in Mount Barker are separate from general rates and are regulated under the Water Industry Act 2012 with oversight from the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA). GMB Water applies a flat annual service charge rather than a property-value based charge like SA Water and Alano. This approach is aligned with National Water Initiative principles and reflects that wastewater use is more closely related to occupancy and demand than property value. Independent reviews of Council's tariff structure found the flat-fee model to be fair, transparent, deliverable, and compliant, particularly in the absence of water meters required for volumetric charging.

For 2025/26, wastewater service charges are flat fees of \$740 per annum for CWMS customers and \$835 per annum for sewer customers. Revenue from these charges is dedicated solely to operating, maintaining and expanding wastewater infrastructure for approximately 15,000 serviced properties across the district.

In 2025, Mount Barker District Council strengthened governance by establishing GMB Water as a Section 42 subsidiary to manage wastewater, recycled and bore water services. This provides specialist expertise, stronger regulatory compliance and clearer financial separation while retaining full Council ownership.

While funding from the State Government cannot automatically reduce charges, investment in major wastewater infrastructure such as the Laratinga Water Recovery Plant and trunk sewer upgrades would reduce borrowing and help limit future price increases over time.

Overall, Mount Barker's wastewater charges reflect a city transitioning from town to major regional centre. GMB Water's focus is on keeping increases responsible, services reliable and investment targeted, so that growth is supported without compromising affordability for the community now and into the future.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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