



Water Utilities Group

# Water Utilities Group

## Customer Service Charter

### INTRODUCTION

Dear Customer

I am pleased to introduce Water Utilities Group's Customer Service Charter. This Charter has been developed to identify our customer service commitments to you, and inform you of your rights and responsibilities as a rewater retail customer. In addition, the Customer Charter sets out Water Utilities Group's rights and obligations in the provision of retail services.

Throughout this Charter, we have clearly outlined our dedication to you through our 24 hour service and supply of recycled water 24 hours, 7 days a week, whilst acknowledging the sustainability requirements within the community.

I recommend you read this Charter and please feel free to view our rewater brochure located on our website for more information.

**Mark Watson**

**Managing Director**





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## Who is Water Utilities Group?

Water Utilities Australia Pty Ltd ACN 129 876 213 trading as Water Utilities Group is an independent private company, licensed under the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) to provide sustainable recycled water (rewater) services.

## Rewater Services

Water Utilities Group is responsible for the distinctive coloured lilac (purple) pipe system leading to your rewater meter and supply to customers. The lilac pipe system is independent of the drinking water (mains water) pipe system.

Water Utilities Group will be your customer service provider for rewater and will provide you with quarterly bills detailing your usage. You will continue to receive a bill from SA Water which includes a sewage access charge and the “Save the Murray” levy as well as fees for access to and usage of potable water.

## What is this Charter?

This Charter takes effect from 1 July 2013 for all existing Water Utilities Group customers and in the case of new customers, on application for connection to our services or on transfer of a property to you. The aim of this Customer Service Charter is to provide to you as a retail customer a clear understanding of the standard of service expected from Water Utilities Group. This includes your rights and obligations when dealing with us. The Charter also sets out Water Utilities Group’s rights and obligations. This Charter should be read in conjunction with the Standard Customer Contract.

You may enter into a separate Non Standard Customer agreement with us however, such agreement will not reduce your rights or increase your obligations under the Charter unless the terms of the contract directly contradict and there is a mechanism for returning some corresponding benefit to you.

This Customer Service Charter also outlines the rights and responsibilities for property owners and tenants alike and details the methods of communication between the Customer and Water Utilities Group.

The Customer Charter may only be changed after receiving approval from the Essential Services Commission.

## The Water Industry Act 2012, Water Retail Code & Associated Regulations

This Customer Charter is in accordance with the Water Industry Act, The Water Retail Code and associated Regulations. The Water Industry Act 2012, Water Retail Code and associated regulations and guidelines can be accessed by visiting [www.escosa.sa.gov.au](http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au).



## Water Utilities Group Standard Contract

Most Water Utilities Group customers are covered by our Standard Customer Contract, effective from 1 July 2013, or on application for connection to our services or on a transfer of a property to you. The contract is a legally binding document for the supply of rewater services to customers connected to the rewater network.

Water Utilities Group standard contract can be accessed by:

- visiting [www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](http://www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au) website; or
- contacting Water Utilities Group by phone on 08-8210 2300; or
- email [info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](mailto:info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au); or
- writing to Water Utilities Group PO Box 265 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000.

## Water Utilities Group Privacy Obligations

We recognise that your privacy is of great importance to you, and we are committed to ensuring your personal information is protected. We collect personal information for the purpose of providing recycled water. We may from time to time disclose your personal information to our contractors for these purposes and other third parties including SA Water and the Minister for Water and the River Murray and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation.

Where you require a tenant to pay some or all of the charges for rewater under the water retail code we are required to provide tenants with the billing information on request.

## Shared Rights and Responsibilities

Our service levels are guaranteed to the connection point adjacent to your property boundary. The recycled water supply connection point is usually identified by a meter or stop tap that controls the flow of water to your property. The connection point (also known as the IP or Inspection Point) will also be just inside or outside your property boundary. You may find out the exact location of your connection points by calling 08-8210 2300.

Water Utilities Group is responsible for maintaining the recycled water service up to and including the property meter and for the operations up to the connection point. All plumbing and pipe work from the property connection points to your residence is the property owner's responsibility and is referred to as a private extension.

Where a Customer lives in a Strata Titled or multi residential development, the private extension will serve many residences and these Customers should be aware that Water Utilities Group does not guarantee continuity of supply, water quality or service interruptions within the private extension. Any concerns that you may have regarding a private extension supplying more than one property should be addressed by the Strata Title Corporation or owner of your multi resident development.



## How to Contact Water Utilities Group

Customers can contact Water Utilities Group by:

- writing to Water Utilities Group, PO Box 265 Rundle Mall SA 5000; or
- emailing [info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](mailto:info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au); or
- phone 08-8210 2300 24 hours/day/week, fax 08-8210 2399.

## WUA Service Commitment

Water Utilities Group values all of its Customers and is committed to providing sustainable, high quality recycled water services. Our commitment is reinforced through:

- the education and adoption of water efficiency measures,
- strong asset management, and
- continual maintenance of assets.

We will use our best endeavours to supply you with a reliable supply of safe rewater that meets or exceeds all relevant public health, environmental and other regulatory requirements, where available. If there is a burst or a leak that affects your supply of rewater, we'll use our best endeavours to fix it and restore your supply as soon as possible.

## Our responsibility

We will provide a 24 hour emergency phone service for you to report interruptions to your services or obtain information about an interruption in your area. Call 08 8210 2300.

We will always try to inform you if we are doing planned works that will interrupt your services.

## Your responsibility

If you experience a significant change in your water flow, quality or pressure you should contact us on 08 8210 2300.

## Interruptions to Supply of Water and Sewerage Services

We will use our best endeavours to minimise interruptions to the supply of rewater services, but on occasions we may need to carry out maintenance, repairs, new works, or interrupt supply for emergency or health and safety reasons. When this occurs we will do our best to restore your service as soon as practicable.

Please let us know if you are calling from a hospital, aged care centre, school or childcare centre to report a fault or service difficulty.

## Entry onto your property

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



## Recycled Water

It is commonly acknowledged that approximately 50% of the potable water provided to a typical residential allotment with dwelling is used externally for purposes that don't require high quality water such as watering of gardens and washing of cars. Water Utilities Group is committed to reducing the wastage of high quality drinking water by providing 'fit for purpose' recycled water to each residential lot. This recycled water can also be safely used for flushing toilets to further reduce household potable water usage by up to 20%.

The savings in potable water usage can be achieved through recycling 100% of the wastewater produced within a development and/or through recycling of stormwater harvested either locally or imported from adjacent areas.

Depending on project location, Water Utilities Group may provide customers with recycled water for specified purposes such as:

- Toilet Flushing;
- Watering of gardens; and
- Car washing.

## Recycled Water Supply Pressure

Recycled water will be supplied at approximately 10m of lower head or 100 kPa lower pressure than the potable (drinking) water supply.

## Recycled Water Quality

Approvals for the use of recycled water in all states are strictly controlled and incorporate many layers of control measures to prevent impacts on the environment and the health of the community being supplied. This includes continuously monitoring the quality to ensure that a safe product is delivered. The State Department of Health sets thorough guidelines for testing the quality of water. Water utilities group ensures there is independent verification of water quality test results.

## Recycled Water Connection Certification

Water Utilities Group takes the responsibility of providing a safe supply of recycled water very seriously. It has implemented an external process to certify the complete separation of the two water supply systems installed into a dwelling i.e. the potable or drinking water supply and the recycled water supply to ensure that recycled water cannot be connected into the household potable or drinking water supply. A licensed plumber is engaged to conduct a Connection Audit on each new house that is connected to both the potable water supply and the recycled water supply. At the satisfactory completion of the audit, a certified signed form is submitted to Water Utilities Group and the recycled water supply commenced.

If a cross connection is identified, the recycled water system is isolated and the householder immediately advised to have their builder or plumbers rectify the problem.



A further quality assurance procedure has been implemented whereby Water Utilities Group will undertake a Five (5) Yearly Connection Audit of all households connected to its recycled water system. It will also provide a checklist for householders to undertake their own Yearly Self Connection Audit.

## Areas of Responsibility

Water Utilities Group owns and is therefore responsible for the:

- Recycled water mains pipe work, and
- Recycled water meters.

## Meters

We will install a water meter on your property to measure the quantity of water we supply to you. The rewater meter will remain the property of Water Utilities Group.

## Our responsibility

We will use our best endeavours to read customer meters once a quarter and may read industrial and commercial customer meters more frequently. We are required to read your meter at least once a year

## Your responsibility

Protect your meter from accident and damage as you may be charged for replacement of damaged or lost meters and fittings.

- Keep your meter clear from obstruction so we can safely access and read your meter.
- All pipework from the meters outlet into your property is your responsibility.
- Advise us as soon as possible if your meter is damaged or leaking.

Water Utilities Group will maintain and replace any equipment up to and including the inspection point (IP) to the meter at the property boundary. Replacement will occur when it is required as a result of normal wear and tear. If the meter or equipment is damaged as a result of accident or negligence the repair costs will be the responsibility of the offender.

Any work completed by Water Utilities Group on the land owner's property, where damage to property occurs, will be repaired to the previous state or better.

Pipe work and fittings from the recycled water meter to house (or irrigation system in the case of recycled water) are the property owner's responsibility.

It is the owner's responsibility to prevent damage to the water meter, whilst maintaining access to the meter.



## Charges & Billing

### How will I be charged for rewater?

Water Utilities Group will manually check and physically read your rewater meter no later than the 20th day following the end of each calendar quarter. An invoice for rewater supplied to your residence will be sent to the owner of each property for payment by no later than 21 days after the date of the meter read. Payment can be made by cheque/money order, BPAY or credit card. It is the property owners' responsibility to pass on any costs to the occupier of the household.

### Paying your account

Water Utilities Group will issue accounts every three (3) months. This account will detail:

- A variable charge for recycled water consumption which may change over time, and
- A fixed supply charge, which may change over time.

### Our responsibility

If we have under or over charged you and we discover a mistake with your bill, we'll contact you as soon as possible.

We will make our fees and charges (including late payment fees) available on our website and on request.

### Your responsibility

Pay your bill by the due date. If your bill remains unpaid after a reminder notice has been issued we may charge late fees and have the right to commence our debt recovery process.

Let us know as soon as possible if you find a mistake with your bill.

Contact us as soon as possible if you're having difficulty paying your bill.

You can pay your bill through a range of channels including online by credit card at the Water Utilities Group website, or by cheque via post.

### Who has oversight of Water Utilities Group and what it can charge for rewater?

Under new legislation introduced in 2012, Water Utilities Group has applied for, and received a licence with the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) to provide retail water services in South Australia. The prices Water Utilities Group can charge for rewater will have to comply with pricing principles in accordance with ESCOSA regulations and the Water Industry Act 2012.

All fees and charges are detailed on our website at [www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](http://www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au).

If we have overcharged you, you may choose:

- to use the credit for future charges; or
- select to have the amount refunded.



If, by error, you are undercharged, you will be required to pay the shortfall.

### **Do I have the option to pay with a payment plan?**

If you have difficulty paying your account, please contact us to discuss paying your account via instalment payment plan. We want to make this process as comfortable as possible for you.

### **Our responsibility**

- We will consider any application and identify hardship customers
- We will offer alternative payment options including instalment plans for residential customers

### **Your responsibility**

Please call us as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying your bill.

### **Restriction of Services**

In certain circumstances we have the right to restrict your rewater services. Some of these circumstances include if you have not paid your bill(s), have not entered into a payment plan or complied with the terms of our hardship program, have refused us entry to your property for meter reading or other duties or are using services illegally.

We will not restrict residential customers on hardship programs if they are adhering to a payment plan.

### **Disconnection of Services**

In some circumstances we may disconnect your rewater or services if you have requested that disconnection, used our services illegally or refused us entry to your property for meter reading or other duties.

### **Special Needs Customers**

If you or another resident have a medical condition where continuity of rewater supply is critical, you must provide us with confirmation from a medical practitioner or hospital. You must also advise us when you are no longer a special needs customer or no longer reside at the property.

### **What happens when there is a change of ownership?**

If there is a change of ownership please contact us immediately by phone on 08-8210 2300 or email [info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](mailto:info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au) in order to conduct a final meter read.

### **Resolving Enquiries, Complaints & Disputes**

We aim to resolve enquiries and complaints at the first point of contact or as quickly as possible in accordance with our *Enquiries, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Process* and to your satisfaction. We welcome your enquiries, complaints, compliments, suggestions and feedback.



If you have an enquiry, dispute or complaint you can contact us on 08-8210 2300. You will receive a prompt courteous response and the name of the person who is handling your enquiry. Water Utilities Group is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also make an enquiry by writing to Water Utilities Group, PO Box 265 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000 or by emailing at [info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](mailto:info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au). Your enquiry will be responded to within 5 working days if received by mail or 1 working day if received by email.

If your complaint can't be resolved, we will advise you of our suggested course of action and time frame, and the name of the appropriate contact person for further queries.

If you are not satisfied with the solution offered or action taken by us, you have the right to have the complaint reviewed. If you are still unsatisfied, your complaint will be escalated in line with our *Enquiries, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Process*.

We will do our best to ensure your problem or enquiry is resolved to your satisfaction.

If you are not satisfied with the reply:

- you may have the complaint or dispute re-assessed by a senior manager; or
- you also have the right to seek external resolution by contacting the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA by Freecall on 1800 665 565, or by Freefax on 1800 665 165 or by email [contact@ewosa.com.au](mailto:contact@ewosa.com.au). You can also contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA by writing to them at GPO Box 2947, Adelaide SA 5001. For more information about the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA, please visit their website at [www.ewosa.com.au](http://www.ewosa.com.au).

## Access to this Customer Service Charter

Details of how access to this Customer Service Charter will be outlined on your quarterly invoice. All customers can request this Customer Service Charter by:

- visiting [www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](http://www.waterutilitiesgroup.com.au) website; or
- contacting Water Utilities Group by phone on 08-8210 2300, or
- email [info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au](mailto:info@waterutilitiesgroup.com.au), or
- writing to Water Utilities Group PO Box 265 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000.

There is no charge on request of this Customer Service Charter.