



# Customer Charter



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# Introduction

SA Water is South Australia's leading provider of water and sewerage services for more than 1.7 million people. For more than 160 years we have been working together with South Australians to ensure a reliable supply of safe, clean water and a dependable sewerage system. We are committed to ensuring our services represent excellent value.

SA Water is a statutory corporation reporting to an independent Board, and is included in the portfolio of the Minister for Environment and Water. The Minister is accountable to the South Australian public for the delivery of efficient and effective water and sewerage services.

This charter provides our customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us, and their rights and responsibilities as a customer. It summarises the terms under which we provide water supply and domestic sewerage services to you. Please read this charter in conjunction with the [Standard Customer Contract](#).

In providing services to you, we aim to comply with all relevant regulatory requirements including the *Water Retail Code*, *Water Industry Act 2012*, *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*, *Safe Drinking Water Act 2011*, *Public Corporations Act 1993* and associated regulations and requirements.

## Customers covered by this Charter

This Charter takes effect from 1 July 2013 for all existing SA Water customers and for new customers, on application for connection to our services. It includes residential, non-residential, dual reticulation recycled water and country lands customers.

## Other agreements with us

If you have a separate agreement with us (for example, a non-standard 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 2013 or on application for connection to our services. The contract is a legally binding document for the supply of standard drinking and non-drinking water and domestic sewerage 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 [sawater.com.au](http://sawater.com.au) or call us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283) to have a copy posted to you.

## Our service standards

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) guides, endorses and monitors our service standards – a minimum level of service you can expect from us. Our service standards can be found on ESCOSA's website or provided to you on request.

# Our services

## Water services

We aim to supply you with a reliable supply of safe drinking water that meets or exceeds all relevant public health, environmental and other regulatory requirements, where available.

If there's a leak or main break that affects your supply of water, we'll aim to fix it and restore your supply as soon as possible in line with our service standards.

## Our responsibility

- We will provide a 24 hour emergency phone service for you to report interruptions to your services or get information about an interruption in your area. Call 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).
- We will always inform you if we're doing planned works that will interrupt your services.
- Where our systems indicate that there has been an abnormal increase in water use (when compared to the same period in previous years), we will provide you with notification in writing. This notification will be provided as soon as reasonably practicable to allow you to identify possible reasons for the increase.

## Your responsibility

- All pipework from the meter outlet riser into your property is your responsibility to maintain and repair.
- If you experience a significant change in your water flow, quality or pressure you should contact us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).

## Sewerage services

We aim to provide a reliable service to remove used water from your property and treat it to a high quality, to protect public health and the environment. We also aim to minimise interruption to sewerage services and avoid sewer overflows on your property in line with our service standards.

In the case of an overflow occurring due to our system failure, we will do our best to minimise the damage and inconvenience to you and ensure the affected area is efficiently and adequately cleaned up. The extent of our financial liability is limited to where the overflow is caused by negligence on our part.

### **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 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).
- We will always inform you about planned works that will interrupt your services.
- We will endeavour to ensure damage or inconvenience is minimised and in the event of a sewage spill, there is prompt and adequate clean up.

### **Your responsibility**

- All pipework from the inspection point into your property is your responsibility to maintain and repair.
- If there's a sewer blockage in your property's pipe work, you are responsible for repairs.
- If the blockage is in our infrastructure we will clear the blockage. If you have contributed to the blockage you may be liable to pay for the portion of the blockage you are responsible for.

### **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 sewers 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](#).

### **Connections to our water supply and sewerage services**

Applications for a water or sewer service are assessed in line with our Connections Policy on the basis of a range of things including the characteristics of the service available to your property, the property's proximity to a water or sewer main, capacity of the system and, for new connections, any constraints on installation. This determines whether the connection is a 'standard' or 'non-standard' connection. Applications are accepted on payment of the relevant fee and fulfilment of any conditions. On acceptance we will aim to connect you in line with our service standards.

### **Temporary interruptions to supply of water and sewerage services**

We will use our best endeavours to minimise temporary interruptions to the supply of water and sewerage services, but on occasions we may need to carry out maintenance, repairs, new works, or interrupt supply for incident or health and safety reasons. When this occurs we will aim to restore your service as soon as practicable in line with our service standards.

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.

### **Community Support team**

Our Community Support team provides support for our customers who experience extended service interruptions, or property/personal damage as a result of a fault, such as a main break.

If you are impacted by an incident, the team can provide case management support 24/7 for clean-up as well as insurance guidance.

### **Meters**

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

### **Our responsibility**

- We will use our best endeavours to read residential 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 damage as you may be charged for the 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 meter's outlet riser into your property is your responsibility to maintain and repair.
- Advise us as soon as possible if your meter is damaged or leaking.
- Do not use the stop tap as a way to control water to the property. If it malfunctions we don't accept responsibility for lost water. Use a licensed plumber to install an isolation valve in your internal pipework if you wish to control the water supply to your property.

## Testing your water meter

You can ask us to test your meter if you believe it is not accurately recording your water use. We will charge you a meter testing fee. If the meter is found to be accurate, that is within +/-5 per cent, the fee will stand. If it's outside the +/-5 per cent margin we'll reimburse you the fee and any overcharged amounts estimated by us. If the test shows your meter is under recording we may recover the appropriate charges from you.

You also have the right to have the water meter independently tested at your cost. Please call our Customer Care Centre on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283) to discuss your individual requirements.

## Entry onto your property

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

## What you pay

We will issue you with quarterly bills for water use, and charges for water and sewer availability. Under the Water Industry Act 2012 you are required to pay for the availability of water or sewerage services if they run past your property. If your property has access to water or sewerage services, you will be charged regardless of whether you choose to connect to the service.

If you are over charged, we will fix the mistake as soon as possible and credit your next bill if the amount is \$100 or less, or for greater amounts on your instruction. If you're undercharged, you must pay the money owing up to the last 12 months - even if it's our mistake. In this case we'll work with you to negotiate a plan for repayment. We will not charge interest on underpaid amounts. Equally, you cannot claim interest on overcharged amounts.

### Our responsibility

- If we have under or over charged you and we discover a mistake with your bill, we will contact you as soon as possible.
- To 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 start our debt recovery process.

- Let us know as soon as possible if you find a mistake with your bill.
- To request information regarding concessions, available rebates or water efficiency advice.
- Contact us as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying your bill.

### Estimated charges

Sometimes we have to estimate your water use if we cannot access your meter, your meter malfunctions or is damaged. If this happens we will base our estimated charge either on a meter reading provided by you, historical water use at your property or average use by a similar customer.

### Concessions, grants and rebates

If you hold an eligible concession card or are assessed as having a low income, you may be eligible to claim a remission on your SA Water bill. Visit the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion's website at [sa.gov.au/concessions](http://sa.gov.au/concessions) or call 1800 307 758 for more information.

If there are SA Government water related grants or rebates applicable to you, we will make this information available on our website.

### How to pay your bill

You can [pay your bill](#) through a range of channels including BPay, online with mySAWater, by phone, direct debit, in person at a Commonwealth Bank branch, Australia Post, by cheque or money order via post, or Centrepay for Centrelink customers.

### Financial hardship

We understand it is not always easy to meet all financial commitments. We will inform you about flexible payment methods if you are having difficulty paying your bills and may be able to assist you further if you are eligible for our Customer Assist program. More information about our Customer Assist program and [policy](#) can be found by calling us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283), requesting copies of the policy, or by visiting our [website](#).

### Our responsibility

- We will help to identify financial hardship customers.
- We will offer alternative payment options including instalment plans and Centrepay for residential customers.

### Your responsibility

- Please call us as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying your bill. The sooner you talk to us, the sooner we can help.

## Restriction of services

In certain circumstances we have the right to restrict your water 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 Customer Assist program.
- Have refused us entry to your property for meter reading or other duties related to the Water Industry Act 2012.
- Are using water services illegally. We will not restrict residential customers on our Customer Assist program if they are adhering to a payment plan.

## Disconnection of services

In some circumstances we may disconnect your water or sewerage services if you have:

- Requested that disconnection.
- Used our services illegally.
- Refused us entry to your property for meter reading or other duties related to the Water Industry Act 2012.

## Special needs residential customers

If you or someone you reside with has a medical condition where continuity of water supply is critical, you must provide us with confirmation from a registered medical practitioner or hospital. You must also advise us when the special needs customer no longer resides at the property.

### Our responsibility

We will:

- register the address as a special needs address.
- not disconnect or restrict the water at that address while a registered special needs customer lives at the property.
- provide the special needs customer with at least four business days' notice of any planned interruptions affecting that supply address and arrange alternate water supplies if the interruption is likely to be lengthy.
- ensure you have our faults contact number 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).

We may rely on advice given to us by a medical practitioner or hospital in the absence of advice from you that special needs are no longer required at your supply address.

## Enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution

We aim to resolve enquiries and complaints at the first point of contact or as quickly as possible in line with our service standards, our Customer Enquiries, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Process and to your satisfaction. We welcome your feedback - whether it's a complaint, compliment or a suggestion.

If you are dissatisfied with any of our products or services, please contact us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283) and discuss your concern with our Customer Care Centre staff. Alternatively, you can speak to us in person at 250 Victoria Square, Adelaide, or write to us with the details of your complaint.

Written complaints can be sent to: SA Water, GPO Box 1751, ADELAIDE SA 5001, via email to [customer.resolution@sawater.com.au](mailto:customer.resolution@sawater.com.au) or at [sawater.com.au](http://sawater.com.au).

We have a dedicated team responsible for coordinating and investigating complaints that are unable to be resolved at the first point of contact.

If you have attempted to resolve your concerns through the above process and still remain dissatisfied you may request that your complaint be escalated to the Customer Advocacy and Resolution team. The Customer Advocacy and Resolution team will ensure that your complaint is brought to the attention of the relevant manager/s and request that the resolution be reviewed.

If your complaint cannot be resolved in line with our service standards, we will advise you of our suggested course of action and timeframe, as well as the name of the appropriate contact person for further queries.

If you are still not satisfied with the resolution offered or action taken by the Customer Advocacy and Resolution team, you have the right to seek external dispute resolution and escalate the dispute to an industry ombudsman — independent, free services available to residential and business customers.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman of South Australia can assist with billing, credit, connection, supply, marketing and customer service related complaints. Ombudsman SA can investigate complaints regarding our processes and decisions to determine if they are fair, reasonable and lawful.

Both Ombudsman's offices will only accept complaints that have first been brought to our attention.

## Information and privacy

We will keep your personal information confidential in accordance with the State Government's Information Privacy Principles.

We must provide relevant information to authorities in the event that you are under investigation for illegal use of our services or of any other crime. In the unlikely event that we are unable to provide you services, we are obliged to provide all customer details to the retailer appointed by ESCOSA to provide these services.

Under the Water Retail Code we are required to provide tenants with information about any water charges they are responsible for on request.

## Contacts

### Faults, service difficulties and emergencies

Water supply, water quality, leaking or faulty water meters, sewer blockage or overflow.

24 hours/7 days

**1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283)**

### Customer care, billing, general queries and payment difficulties

8.30am – 5pm, Monday - Friday

**1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283)**

[sawater.com.au/forms/general-enquiry](http://sawater.com.au/forms/general-enquiry)

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

8.30am – 5pm, Monday – Friday

**1300 650 951**

[cc@sawater.com.au](mailto:cc@sawater.com.au)

### Feedback, compliments and complaints

8.30am – 5pm, Monday - Friday

**1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283)**

[sawater.com.au/forms/general-enquiry](http://sawater.com.au/forms/general-enquiry)

### 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](mailto:contact@ewosa.com.au)
- Website: [ewosa.com.au](http://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](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au)
- Website: [ombudsman.sa.gov.au](http://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](http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au)



## Free interpreting service

Our website offers Google translate services or you can use our free interpreting service by calling 131 450 and ask them to connect you with SA Water.

### Arabic

هل تحتاجون مترجما ؟ استخدموا خدمة الترجمة المجانية بالاتصال بالرقم 131 450 واطلبوا منهم ان يوصلكم بـ SA Water .

### Chinese

您需要翻译吗? 您可以拨打我们的免费翻译服务热线 131 450, 请接线员帮您接通南澳自来水管公司 (SA Water) 。

### Greek

Χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα; Χρησιμοποιείστε τη δωρεά υπηρεσία μας διερμηνείας τηλεφωνώντας στο 131450 και ζητήστε τους να σας συνδέσουν με τη SA Water.

### Hindi

क्या आपको दुभाषण की जरूरत है? हमारी नि:शुल्क दुभाषया सेवा का उपयोग करे। 131 450 पर फोन करें और उनसे कहें कि आपकी फोन लाईन साऊथ ऑस्ट्रेलिया वाटर (SA Water) की फोन लाईन से मिला दें।

### Italian

Vi serve un interprete? Usate il nostro servizio interpreti gratuito chiamando il 131 450 e chiedete di collegarvi con SA Water.

### Persian

آیا به مترجم نیاز دارید؟ از خدمات رایگان ترجمه ما استفاده نموده و با شماره تلفن 313 450 تماس حاصل نمایید و از آنها درخواست نمایید تا شما را به SA Water وصل نمایند.

### Vietnamese

Quý vị có cần thông dịch viên không? Xin hãy dùng dịch vụ thông dịch miễn phí của chúng tôi bằng cách gọi số 131 450 và yêu cầu họ nối đường dây cho quý vị với công ty cấp nước SA Water.

## Large print version

If you would like a large print version of this Customer Charter, please call us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).

