

# MUCHEA WATER CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER



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# 1 Purpose

The purpose of this charter is to provide the Customer (“**you**”) with a clear understanding of the services Muchea Water (“**we**”) offer, your rights and responsibilities as a Customer and Muchea Water’s commitment in providing services to you.

This Customer service charter:

- explains the service we provide
- defines our responsibilities for service provision and maintenance
- explains resident’s rights
- describes billing practices
- outlines procedures for reporting faults and complaints
- explains our approach if Financial Hardship occurs.

We are committed to providing a high level of service in providing potable water services to our Customers. Our service standards as outlined in this charter are an integral part of our business.

We highly value effective interaction and communication with our Customers. We shall endeavour to ensure satisfaction for our Customers and welcome feedback that will help us improve our services, communication and information.

## 2 Muchea Water’s Commitment to Providing a Reliable Service

We aim to provide high standards of drinking water service to our Customers. We aim to ensure that supply services are provided on a reliable basis and minimise the impact of planned interruptions and unplanned interruptions to water services.

### 2.1 The service we provide

If a Customer’s property is connected to our system, we aim to ensure that the water supplied:

- is safe for you and your family to drink, exceeding the minimum requirement as required by the ADWG
- meets Customers’ reasonable needs for general urban use as potable water
- meets minimum flow rates of 20 litres/minute
- meets a standard pressure range for country urban areas of 13–100 metres hydraulic head
- is monitored for quality in accordance with the guidelines of the Small Community Model Assessable Sampling Grid.

We will supply information on our website relating to:

- water quality monitoring results
- information on understanding the water quality requirements of household appliances.

In the unlikely event of the water quality temporarily decreasing, we will endeavour to inform Customers on our website within two hours, or at an agreed time, of the situation and provide advice on alternative arrangements until the problem has been rectified.

This information will also be available on our 24 hour information line by dialling 08 9551 1620.

## **2.2 Getting water to your home**

Muchea Water will design, build and run the potable water supply scheme for residential Customers and industrial/commercial developments in the Muchea region.

All pipe work upstream of the meter and the isolation valve remain the property of Muchea Water.

We will provide you with an above-ground isolation tap and meter on your property.

The water meter(s) will be:

- supplied and owned by Muchea Water
- installed in accordance with Muchea Water's metering guidelines
- maintained by Muchea Water at no extra cost to you unless you have damaged the meter, made the meter inaccessible, or the meter has not been installed in accordance with the conditions set by Muchea Water.

We will charge you for any damage caused by interference with the meter, isolation valve and associated pipe work, whether deliberate, accidental or as a result of vandalism.

## **2.3 Ensuring adequate supply**

We will provide potable water to you for 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year except in the case of an interruption due to planned maintenance or an emergency.

Our commitment is to provide water at a flow rate of at least 20 litres per minute at a pressure of minimum 13 metres of hydraulic head. There may be occasions where this is not entirely possible or where variations are unavoidable.

The size of each connection will be 20 millimetres unless varied by mutual agreement.

## **2.4 Ensuring water quality**

The water quality will be safe to drink and meet the standards of ADWG.

Muchea Water will test the treated water at the treatment plant and within the distribution system in accordance with the Small Community Model Assessable Sampling Protocol.

Testing will be reported and shown on Muchea Water's website.

## **2.5 Monitoring water usage**

Muchea Water is required to accurately record the water use of the Customer. If the meter is faulty, we can estimate the usage from the past usage.

If Muchea Water deems that a deliberate attempt has been made to limit the shown usage recorded on the meter, including bypassing the meter and other forms of theft, Muchea Water will report the theft to the Western Australian Police and pursue prosecution.

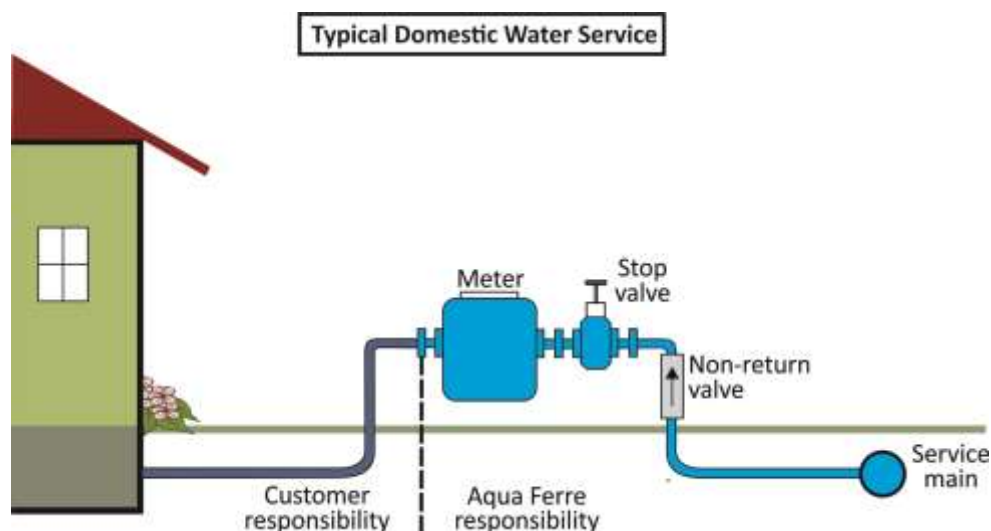
## 2.6 Emergencies

Muchea Water will respond to urgent situations that could impact Customers.

Upon receiving a notice of unplanned interruptions or emergency situations, Muchea Water will advise Customers about the nature of the condition and timing of the action to be undertaken.

## 3 Your Role and Responsibilities

The water supply infrastructure downstream of the meter and isolation valve is owned and shall be maintained by you, as indicated in the figure below.



You should:

- meet all terms and conditions of supply of water
- ensure you are aware of the water quality requirements of the household appliances you choose to use
- allow ready access to the meter and isolation valve on your property
- prevent damage to the meter and isolation valve
- not carry out any repair or modification to Muchea Water's assets
- supply and maintain the water supply infrastructure downstream of Muchea Water's meter and isolation valve (you are obligated to install and maintain this infrastructure in accordance with the Building Code of Australia)
- pay water charge invoices within 14 days of receipt.

## 4 Installation of Services

To apply for a service connection, please visit our website or call 08 9551 1620.

Muchea Water will install or activate a water service within ten Business Days or on an agreed day, once the conditions for connection (including fees and charges) are satisfied.

## **5 Interruptions**

### **5.1 Planned interruptions to water supply**

From time to time, Muchea Water will need to maintain the system and carry out planned repairs and maintenance. To complete this work, Muchea Water will need to implement system interruptions.

Customers will be given at least two Business Days notice of such planned interruption and it will be reported on Muchea Water's website.

### **5.2 Unplanned interruptions to water supply**

Unplanned interruptions which arise from events such as a ruptured main, power failure or material disaster may arise from time to time.

Affected Customers will be notified during an emergency of the status of the work being undertaken. Repairs will be carried out as soon as practically possible.

We may need to interrupt, suspend or restrict our water service without notice due to accidents, emergencies, health and safety risks or other unavoidable causes.

## **6 Billing**

Muchea Water will bill each Customer for an annual allotment of 425 kilolitres of water per year on a take or pay basis. Usage in excess of 425 kilolitres per year will be billed on an incremental basis.

The yearly water service charges from 1 July to 30 June each year may be found on our website.

Water service charges will be reviewed annually.

### **6.1 Additional connections**

You can have more than one connection provided by Muchea Water but any extra connection will be charged at the rate given on our website.

## **7 Payment**

Accounts will be sent to the owner of the property or their nominated agent at the last notified postal or email address approximately every three months.

You can pay your account in the following ways:

- by direct debit or deposit
- by phone or internet banking
- by mail
- by Centrepay (for eligible Centrelink customers).

Further details of the payment methods can be found on our website.

The amount shown on the Water Bill should be paid by the due date given on the Water Bill. If the payment is late, you may be liable for interest charges on overdue amounts charged at 1% per month on the overdue amount.

The owner of the property is liable for all water service and usage charges even if the property is rented/leased to a Tenant.

All outstanding charges should be deducted from sale proceeds if the home is sold. If not, the new owner will be responsible for outstanding debts.

## **7.1 Assistance for Customers experiencing Financial Hardship**

If you are experiencing Financial Hardship and cannot pay your Water Bill before the due date, you should contact us immediately. We will work with you to arrive at a solution that meets your needs and obligations.

For further information on our Financial Hardship Policy, please visit our website.

## **7.2 Reviewing Water Bills**

We will review your Water Bill upon request and respond to your enquiry within 15 Business Days.

If we find you have been overcharged, we will notify you of the amount over charged and enquire whether you would like to have the amount refunded or credited to your account.

Our Review of Billing Procedure is available on our website.

## **7.3 Non-payment of Water Bills**

We will send a reminder to you if payment is not received within 14 days after the initial invoice.

If you do not pay your Water Bill within one month of the original Water Bill date, we are entitled to restrict the flow of water through the meter to a level sufficient only to supply water for health and hygiene purposes.

You will receive two Business Days notice of our intention to restrict water flow to your property. Water flow will be restored when payment of all outstanding debts has been received or an arrangement to pay the debt has been agreed upon.

Supply may be restricted if you do not comply with an arrangement to pay outstanding debts.

## **8 How to Contact Us**

We are committed to delivering accessible and responsive customer service. We take our customer service obligations seriously so we encourage you to please advise us if we are not meeting your expectations.

Please refer to our website for any enquiries or suggestions; otherwise, during business hours (9.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday) contact:

**Phone:** 08 9551 1620  
**TIS:** 131 450 (Translating and Interpreting Service)  
**TTY:** 133 677 (National Relay Service)  
**Email:** admin@mucheawater.com.au  
**Fax:** 08 9282 5484

In the case of emergency such as:

- a ruptured main
- interrupted water supply
- discoloured water
- contamination event,

please contact us on 08 9551 1620 at any time 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

## 9 Customer Complaints

Muchea Water welcomes your feedback. You may contact Muchea Water via the Contact section of our website.

If you are not satisfied with our initial response to your complaint, you can contact our General Manager who will investigate further. If the matter still has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 15 days, you can refer the matter to the Ombudsman for further investigation. If you are still dissatisfied you can refer the matter to arbitration.

### 9.1 What happens when you complain to the Ombudsman?

#### Step 1: Contact us

When you have a complaint about your water service, contact Muchea Water and give us an opportunity to try and resolve your concerns. As a water utility, Muchea Water is required to deal with complaints from its customers within 15 Business Days.

If you approach the Ombudsman with a complaint without first giving us a chance to respond, the Ombudsman will ask you to take your complaint back to us.

#### Step 2: Lodge your complaint

If you have not been able to resolve your concerns through our complaints procedure, you can ask the Ombudsman to investigate the complaint on your behalf.

We will need to know why you are not satisfied with our actions, and what you would like to see happen to resolve the matter.

You can lodge your complaint with the Ombudsman in writing, by telephone or by email.

If you would prefer to make your complaint in person, staff at the Ombudsman office are available to meet with you to discuss your case.

The Ombudsman's contact details are:

**In person:** Level 2, Albert Facey House  
469 Wellington Street  
Perth WA 6000

**Postal Address:** PO Box Z5386  
St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6831

**Phone:** 08 9220 7588

**Freecall:** 1800 754 004\*

*\* Calls made from mobile phones will be charged at the applicable rate.*

**TIS:** 131 450 (Translating and Interpreting Service)



**TTY:** 133 677 (National Relay Service)  
**Email:** [energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au](mailto:energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)  
**Fax:** (08) 9220 7599  
**Freefax:** 1800 611 279  
**Website:** <http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater/index.html>

While it is not essential for you to lodge your complaint in writing, doing so will assist the staff of the Ombudsman to document and follow up your concerns and explain your complaint to others.

### **Step 3: Investigation**

When your complaint is received by the Ombudsman, further information will be sought on the nature of the problem, what has caused it, why you are unhappy with our response and what action you would like taken.

The staff of the Ombudsman may contact us for further information. This usually involves requesting a copy of your complaint and asking us to comment on your case. The Ombudsman may also need to ask further questions, review our files or hold meetings.

When investigating your complaint, the Ombudsman will try to mediate between you and us. In dealing with you the Ombudsman will provide prompt, courteous and, where possible, helpful responses to your enquiries. Staff will identify themselves to callers and follow up responses in a timely manner.

### **Step 4: Outcome**

If we have made a mistake, the Ombudsman can recommend that we reconsider or change our decision, apologise or compensate you. A common outcome is for the provision of further information and an explanation as to why a particular decision was taken.

### **Step 5: Further avenues**

If you are dissatisfied with how the Ombudsman has dealt with your case, you can take your complaint to the Minister for Water or refer your complaint to independent arbitration.

## **9.2 How long does an investigation take?**

Most complaints should be able to be resolved quickly, some within the day but others may take weeks. Where your complaint is complex or requires consultation with us, the response may take longer than usual. On such occasions you will be contacted and kept up to date on the progress of your complaint.

## **9.3 Mediation and arbitration**

Our mediation process relies on the joint cooperation between you and us to reach a mutually agreed solution.

Where the Ombudsman has decided that we are at fault, the Ombudsman will ask us to take steps to put the matter right. In some cases the law or our internal policies may not allow what you want. The Ombudsman cannot direct us to take a specific course of action. However, the Ombudsman can make recommendations to us, report findings to the Minister for Water, or release a public report.

Where it has not been possible for the Ombudsman to resolve a dispute by mediation we may, with your permission, refer your complaint to independent arbitration. The arbitration process can make a binding decision for both parties.

Independent arbitration is a formal process in accordance with the *Commercial Arbitration Act 2012*. You will have an opportunity to select the arbitrator from a list of qualified and experienced people prepared by the Ombudsman. A fee may be involved that varies depending on the nature of your case.

## 10 Glossary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>ADWG</b>	Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
<b>Aqua Ferre</b>	Aqua Ferre (Muchea) Pty Ltd ACN 630 936 319
<b>Business Day</b>	a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday in Western Australia.
<b>Customer</b>	an owner of the land in respect of which the water services are provided; or a Tenant of the land in respect of which the water services are provided who is authorised by an owner to receive a Water Bill.
<b>Financial Hardship</b>	an ongoing state of financial disadvantage in which the Customer's ability to meet the basic living needs of the Customer or a dependant of the Customer would be adversely affected if the Customer were to pay an unpaid Water Bill for a water service supplied in respect of the place used solely or primarily as the Customer's dwelling (Water Services Code of Conduct, Clause 19).
<b>kPa</b>	unit of pressure measurement
<b>Muchea Water</b>	the trading name of Aqua Ferre
<b>Ombudsman</b>	Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia
<b>Tenant</b>	an occupier of the land in respect to which the water services are provided.
<b>Water Bill</b>	a bill for a water service in respect of the place used solely or primarily as the Customer's dwelling.