

Goondiwindi
**REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

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Customer Service Standards
Water & Sewerage

DOCUMENT DETAIL

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INTRODUCTION

This customer service standard has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 115 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act), and outlines the level of service that customers of Goondiwindi Regional Council (Council) can expect.

This Customer Service Standard identifies the targets that Council strives to achieve in the delivery of our water and sewerage services. These targets are aligned to Council's performance reporting requirements under the Act.

The Customer Service Standard also describes the processes that either you, the customer, or Council will use for service connections, billing, metering, accounting, customer consultation, complaints and dispute resolution.

The Customer Service Standard will be accepted following an opportunity for community consultation, and will then be updated every 5 years in accordance with the Act requirements.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Treated Water

Our Targets (Queensland Government Reference)	Goondiwindi Town Water Supply	Inglewood Town Water Supply	Talwood Water Supply	Texas Town Water Supply	Yelarbon Town Water Supply
How many water main breaks per 100km of mains are considered acceptable? (QG 4.5)	A total of 40 breaks per year (Less than 40/100km)	A total of 10 breaks per year (Less than 50/100km)	A total of 5 breaks per year (Less than 225/100km)	A total of 10 breaks per year (Less than 60/100km)	A total of 5 breaks per year (Less than 100/100km)
How many times do we expect water service interruptions per 1000 customers per year? (QG 4.7)	A total of 200 interruptions per year (Less than 75)	A total of 20 interruptions per year (Less than 40)	A total of 20 interruptions per year (Less than 300)	A total of 75 interruptions per year (Less than 175)	A total of 10 interruptions per year (Less than 25)
How long (minutes) will we take, on average, to respond to water mains breaks and incidents? (QG.4.8)	20	20	90	20	60
What is our target for the number of water quality complaints (per 1000 customers)? (QG 4.10)	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5

Untreated Water

Our Targets (Queensland Government Reference)	Bungunya Water Scheme	Toobeah Bore Water Supply	Toobeah Raw Water Supply
How many water main breaks per 100km of mains are considered acceptable? (QG 4.5)	A total of 5 breaks per year (Less than 250/100km)	A total of 5 breaks per year (Less than 350/100km)	A total of 5 breaks per year (Less than 350/100km)
How many times do we expect water service interruptions per 1000 customers per year? (QG 4.7)	A total of 5 interruptions per year (Less than 200)	A total of 5 interruptions per year (Less than 250)	A total of 5 interruptions per year (Less than 250)
How long (minutes) will we take, on average, to respond to water mains breaks and incidents? (QG.4.8)	90	60	60
What is our target for the number of water quality complaints (per 1000 customers)? (QG 4.10)	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5

Sewerage Services

Our Targets (Queensland Government Reference)	Goondiwindi Sewerage Scheme	Inglewood Sewerage Scheme	Talwood Sewerage Scheme	Texas Sewerage Scheme	Yelarbon Sewerage Scheme
How many sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100km of mains are considered acceptable? (QG 4.6)	A total of 20 breaks or chokes per year (Less than 50/100km)	A total of 5 breaks or chokes per year (Less than 50/100km)	A total of 5 breaks or chokes per year (Less than 175/100km)	A total of 10 breaks or chokes per year (Less than 60/100km)	A total of 5 breaks or chokes per year (Less than 100/100km)
How long (minutes) will we take, on average, to respond to sewerage incidents (including mains breaks and chokes)? (QG 4.9)	20	20	90	20	60

Combined Water and Sewerage Schemes

What is our target for the total number of water quality and sewerage complaints (per 1000 customers)? (QG 4.11)	Less than 60	Less than 60	Less than 60	Less than 60	Less than 60
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*For definitions refer to <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water>

MINIMUM WATER PRESSURE

Table 4-1 outlines the minimum water pressure/flow expectations customers can expect to receive at the connection.

If customers notice a significant change in the usual water supply pressure which is not caused by household pipes and fittings, contact Council immediately.

Table 4-1: Minimum water pressure

Town Water Supply	Greater than 20 metres or 20 litres per minute 95% of the time, except for during fire fighting.
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PLANNED AND UNPLANNED WORKS

Council aims to provide continuous and reliable delivery of water supply to all customers, however at times, Council may need to interrupt water supply services to undertake maintenance and repair work. In these instances, Council will provide the customer with a letter box drop at least 48 hours notice prior to the interruption. Council also offers an SMS service to alert to registered users within the affected area 24 hours prior to planned works.

Council's water supply system may also be interrupted by acts outside of its control. For unplanned events, Council may not be able to provide notice in advance, but will aim to send an SMS alert to registered users as soon as the issue has arisen. Council aims to restore connection as quickly and effectively as possible.

SEWER BLOCKAGES AND OVERFLOWS

Sewer blockages

If you notice a significant change in the usual functioning of the sewerage service not caused by household pipes and fittings, we encourage you to contact Council immediately. Council will investigate and remove the blockage free of charge should it be in Council's infrastructure. Any blockage outside Council's infrastructure the customer should engage a private plumber.

Sewer overflow

If an overflow should occur, please contact Council immediately. Council will act as quickly as possible to minimise any damage or inconvenience.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE CONNECTIONS

New Service

To apply for water supply, customers are required to submit a Water Meter Connection Application along with payment of the relevant fee. Application forms are available on Council's website or from Council's Customer Service Centres.

The information you will need to know is if a reticulation main is available to your property and if the reticulation main is capable of delivering water the minimum standard. You will also need to know what size water connection you need for your property. Consulting with your licensed Plumber or Hydraulic Consultants is recommended.

Restore an existing or disconnected water service

To restore an existing or disconnected water service, customers are required to submit a Water Meter Connection Application along with payment of the relevant fee. Application forms are available on Council's website or from Council's Customer Service Centres.

Connection fees

Standard water service connection fees are outlined in Council's Cost Recovery Fees and Commercial Charges register available on Council's website.

Council will supply, on application, the following sizes – 20mm, 25mm, 32mm, 40mm, 50mm, 80mm & 100mm.

For connections larger than a 50mm, customers will need to obtain a quotation from Council's Manager of Water & Sewerage.

If the application is for a fire service, an additional water service and meter may be required.

It is requested that you allow a minimum of five (5) working days for the installation to be completed by Council following the lodgement and payment of the application.

Sewer Connections or Disconnections

To apply to connect or disconnect to Council's sewerage service, you are required to complete a Plumbing and Drainage Application form, along with payment of the relevant fee. Application forms are available on Council's website or from Council's Customer Service Centres.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the service is required before making an application and payment.

BILLING

Fees and charges

Fees and charges are reviewed annually as part of Council's budget deliberations and published on Council's website.

Issue and content of Water Notices

Water Rates Notices are issued twice yearly. These charges are separate to half yearly land rates notice. The notice will contain the following information:

- Date of issue;
- Customer's name, billing address and assessment number;
- Property address;
- Billing period to which the charges relate;
- Meter number(s), previous and current readings, total usage for period;
- Due date; and
- Total amount due for payment.

Customers should expect between four to eight weeks between the date the meter is read and the date the bill is issued.

Payment methods

Payment of Water Rates Notices can be made by any of the following methods:

- Bpay;
- At any Post Office;
- By phoning Post Billpay on 1300 766 037;
- By Cheque made payable to Goondiwindi Regional Council and post to:
Goondiwindi Regional Council
LMB 7
INGLEWOOD QLD 4387
- In person at any of our Customer Service Centres by cash, EFTPOS, Cheque or credit card; and
- Direct debit from your bank account (by prior arrangement through Council).

Dispute

If a customer wishes to dispute their bill they can write to or email Council outlining their reasons or contact Council on 0746 717 400. Council will investigate accordingly.

WATER METERING

Your water meter

All customers must have a meter at the property connection; Council supplies and installs a meter with every connection. Meters are generally located on the footpath or just inside the property boundary. Below is a diagram showing the general layout and ownership of a water meter.



Figure 1: Water meter placement

Meter accessibility

Council requests that water meters are made accessible at all times by:

- Keeping a clear space of at least 30cm around and 120cm above your water meter;
- Keep your meter clear of dirt and mulch;
- Prune overgrown plants; and
- If you have a dog, please display a sign and keep the dog secure away from the meter area.

How to read your meter

The black and white numbers on the left show the reading in kilolitres. – **These are the numbers used for billing purposes.** The white and red numbers on the right show litres used.

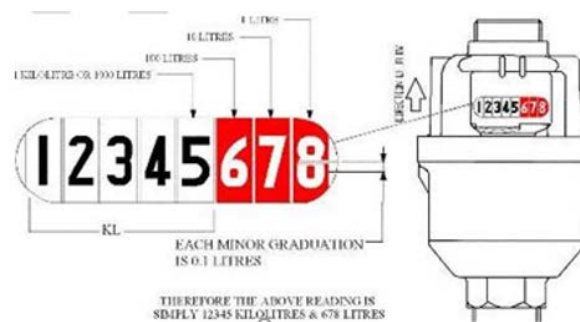


Figure 2: Water meter Diagram

Monitoring water use

It is important to know your individual water consumption as it is the property owner's responsibility for all charges for water passing through the water meter and for any maintenance and repair that is required on your side of the water meter. There are a number of factors that may cause water bills to increase. Slight changes within your household consumption or a concealed water leak can impact on your bill.

There is a various range of information available to customers on Council's website or at Council's Customer Service Centres to help with customers to be water wise and explain how to read your water meter.

If you think you may have a concealed leak on the property, follow this simple test below:

- Turn off all taps and appliances that use water, and observe your meter for 1 hour. If the meter reading changes, when all water taps are turned off inside the property it may indicate you have a leak.

Leaks can occur in household water pipes, fittings and appliances. Leaks are not always visible so the best method is to read your water meter regularly. A licensed plumber should be called if you suspect the leak is in one of your pipes, as you will be charged for the water that your property uses while the leak remains unrepaired. For information regarding Council's policy on Concealed Water Leaks please refer to [GRC 0071 Concealed Water Leaks Policy](#) on the Councils website.

Water meter accuracy

The meters used by Council are calibrated prior to installation, and are high quality. In many cases, the meter does not have an incorrect reading, but if you believe the meter is reading incorrectly, you can request a water meter flow test.

A water meter flow test consists of Council installing a calibration meter alongside the customers meter to check the readings are consistent with each other.

An application form is available on Councils website or from Council's Customer Service Centres and an application fee is required; if the water meter is found to be faulty then the application fee will be reimbursed. Please refer to Council's Fees and Charges as well as the Council's Water Meter policy for more information.

ACCOUNTING

Payment Date

Customers receive Water Rates Notices in the mail with the due date clearly indicated. The due date is also advertised in the media and electronic notice boards.

Non-payment of Water Notice

Council will issue a reminder notice, in respect of assessments that have an overdue Water Notice. Council will action the notice according to the rates and charges collection policy. A copy of this policy can be found on Council's website.

Interest on overdue Water Notices

If your Water Notice is overdue, interest will be charged as per revenue statement. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your rate notice, contact Council to discuss payment options.

CUSTOMER CONSULTATION

Customer service standards

As part of the process of establishing Council's customer service standards, a draft version of this document will be displayed on the Council's website, and comments are invited, which are considered prior to implementation of the standard.

For other matters of importance, Council will either send mail-out surveys with rates notices, or hold public meetings. Results of public consultations are tabled in Council, and made available for inspection.

COMPLAINTS

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing by a person who is directly affected by an administrative action of Council or its staff, including a failure to take action.

Section 268 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (the LG Act) defines a '**process for administrative action complaint**' as a complaint that—

- (1) A local government must adopt a process for resolving administrative action complaints.
- (2) An **administrative action complaint** is a complaint that—
 - (a) is about an administrative action of a local government, including the following, for example—
 - (i) a decision, or a failure to make a decision, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision;
 - (ii) an act, or a failure to do an act;
 - (iii) the formulation of a proposal or intention;
 - (iv) the making of a recommendation; and
 - (b) is made by an affected person.

(3) An **affected person** is a person who is apparently directly affected by an administrative action of a local government.

(4) A regulation may provide for the process for resolving complaints about administrative actions of the local government by affected persons

A request for service is NOT a complaint. A request for service is where you want Council to take action, for example, a leaking water pipe.

Complaint process

Council will try to resolve a complaint at the first point of contact, however, if this cannot be done, the complaint will be processed through Council's complaints management process outlined below:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Stage 1 | <p>Primary Investigation and Resolution</p> <p>In this stage, your complaint will be investigated. Once the investigation is completed you will receive the decision and reason/s for the decision.</p> |
| Stage 2 | <p>Internal Review</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you may request an internal review. As part of this stage the Complaints Administrator will organize for an independent internal review to be conducted of the original investigation. Once this investigation is completed you will receive the decision and reason/s for the decision.</p> |
| Stage 3 | <p>Review by External Agency</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 you can lodge your complaint with the Queensland Ombudsman or use other external complaints review processes through the courts.</p> |

Notwithstanding, it is the right of the individual to lodge a complaint with an external complaint entity such as the Queensland Ombudsman at any time.

How to lodge a complaint

There are a number of ways that you can lodge your complaint:

- In person at any of Council's Customer Service Centres;
- By telephone on 07 4671 7400;
- In writing, by letter, or e-mail addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, LMB7, Goondiwindi QLD 4390 or e-mail: mail@grc.qld.gov.au.

Information you need to provide when lodging a complaint

You will need to provide the following details when you lodge a complaint:

- The nature of the complaint in as much detail as possible;
- Detail of any loss or detriment you have suffered;
- If the incident has been reported to any other agency or authority;
- The remedy you are seeking;
- Any supporting information and documentation, including names and contact details of anyone else who is able to support the complaint; and
- Your contact details.

Response time

All complaints are investigated and responded to. Council will:

- Register the complaint;
- Appoint an officer to investigate; and
- Commence investigation promptly and efficiently (immediately for issues such as water or sewerage mains breaks, within 5 hours for other water quality issues, and within 5 business days for non-urgent matters).

Further information

If you wish to see further information please refer to the following documents found on Council's website:

- Complaints Management Policy
- Complaints Management Procedure

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Process for mediation or dispute resolution

Council will try to prevent the situation reaching a point where dispute resolution is required. However, if the issue cannot be resolved, a report is drafted for consideration at an Ordinary Meeting of Council. Council will then inform you of the outcome.

As a Goondiwindi Regional Council customer, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to take your concerns to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

Council's contact details

Customers are encouraged to contact Council for assistance on matters such as service difficulties and faults, account enquiries and general and technical enquiries. Council also provides an after hours phone service for emergencies such as broken water mains or sewerage overflows.

You can contact Council by:

- In Person: Councils Customer Service Centres;
- Telephone enquiries: 07 46 71 7400;
- Email: mail@grc.qld.gov.au
- Council's website: <https://www.grc.qld.gov.au>

Alternatively, you can contact Council in writing to:

The Chief Executive Officer
Goondiwindi Regional Council
LMB 7
INGLEWOOD QLD 4387

Emergency After Hours Contact Numbers:

For Life Threatening Emergencies please call 000

- For SES (all areas) please call 132 500;
- Council Emergencies (outside business hours) in the Goondiwindi area please call 4671 4671;
- Council Emergencies (outside business hours) in the Inglewood and Texas areas please call 4652 1834.

REVIEW

Under section 120 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* Council is required to review its Customer Service Standard at least every five years.