



An Overview of our

Rural Customer Charter

GWMWater

We are at your service – 24 hours a day – 7 days a week

Our Rural Customer Charter

Our Rural Customer Charter states our obligations under the *Water Act* 1989 and your rights as a customer receiving a regulated water supply.

It applies to GWMWater's domestic and stock, irrigation and diversion services (including groundwater), unless specifically exempted by this Rural Customer Charter or by a decision of the Essential Services Commission (ESC).

This is a summary of our Rural Customer Charter and is for GWMWater rural customers only. A full copy is available to customers upon request or through our website at www.gwmwater.org.au.

Our services

The total region serviced by GWMWater covers approximately 6.2 million hectares.

We provide water supply services to approximately 52,000 urban customers living in 74 towns throughout the region. Environmental services are provided to 24 of these towns.

Services provided to our 7,000 rural customers include domestic and stock supplies currently supplied by way of an annual dam fill for up to 22,000 dams (but to be replaced by the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline), rural pipeline supplies to some 820,500 hectares via the Northern Mallee and Cannie Ridge pipelines and irrigation supply to about 3,000 hectares.

Rural services also include groundwater management, river diversions and support of key regional catchment and environmental management strategies. We manage 12 bulk water supply reservoirs, including recreational access to these reservoirs.

Your rights include:

Water supply quality - GWMWater will endeavour to inform customers of any material changes in the quality of water supplied, which would be likely to affect the purposes for which the water is used by customers.

Delivery of water - GWMWater will ensure that its water supply services are provided in accordance with its approved service standards, except to the extent that:

- > the customer does not comply with any applicable requirements of service or supply;
- > the customer's infrastructure falls short of the required condition;
- > a supply service is provided via private infrastructure;
- > there is a drought or an emergency;
- > there is an unplanned or planned interruption;
- > supply is restricted or suspended in accordance with this charter;
- > amendments to approved service standards have been agreed with customers; or
- > water law provides otherwise.

Rectification - GWMWater will rectify any deficiency in satisfying delivery and reliability as soon as possible after it becomes aware of the deficiency, or within a time agreed with the customer.

Reliable services - Subject to its Statement of Obligations as agreed with the Victorian Government, GWMWater will develop and implement plans, systems and processes and manage its assets to ensure that supply services are provided on a reliable basis.

GWMWater will use reasonable endeavours to minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to pipeline supply services.

GWMWater will comply with standards specified in its approved service standards and any other standard that is approved by the ESC.

Information and response regarding planned interruptions - GWMWater will inform affected pipeline customers of the time and duration of any planned interruption to a water supply service at least five business days in advance.

Consultation – We will consult with our customers on issues that affect the quality of the services that we provide through a variety of forums, including our various customer advisory groups.

Privacy

GWMWater will not disclose information about a customer without their consent, unless we are required by law, or to reduce a serious or immediate threat to life or health. Full details of GWMWater's Privacy Policy is available by contacting 1300 659 961 or by visiting our website at www.gwmwater.org.au.

Improvement programs and maintenance

GWMWater will require access to properties to read meters, in the event of an emergency or to meet its obligations to protect the environment. A representative of GWMWater will not enter a customer's property without appropriate identification.

Complaints and disputes

Please call our Customer Contact Centre number 1300 659 961 if you have a complaint or enquiry. If our response does not satisfy you, you may have the complaint reviewed by a senior manager. If you feel the review is unsatisfactory, the senior manager will examine the complaint again. We will inform you of other avenues where you can take your complaint if you are still dissatisfied; including the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria), who can be contacted on 1800 500 509.

Customer accounts

GWMWater currently issue annual rural customer accounts, however we are working towards issuing accounts on a quarterly basis from 2008. Full details of how to pay your account are detailed on the bottom section of each account and include:

- (a) in person at GWMWater's office, 11 McLachlan Street, Horsham;
- (b) at a licensed Australia Post Office or agency;
- (c) by mail with cheque, credit card or money order addressed to PO Box 481, Horsham, Victoria, 3402;
- (d) by BPay;
- (e) by direct debit, in accordance with any agreement between GWMWater, the customer and the customer's bank; and
- (f) in advance.

It is important to let us know if you are having difficulty paying your account. We can then discuss alternative ways of payment, flexible payment plans and our hardship policy, or explore possible government assistance and concession options.

You may be eligible for a government-funded concession if you hold:

- (a) a Pensioner Concession Card
- (b) a Health Care Card
- (c) a Health Benefits Card
- (d) a Dependent Treatment Entitlement Card (for War Widows), or
- (e) a Personal Treatment Entitlement Card including the TPI category.

For further information about concession entitlements, or payment options, contact GWMWater on 1300 659 961.

Schedule of charges - GWMWater will publish its schedule of approved fees and charges on its website www.gwmwater.org.au. Requests to obtain a copy of the fees and charges schedule can be made by contacting GWMWater on 1300 659 961.

A full copy of GWMWater's Rural Customer Charter and approved service standards are available upon request by contact GWMWater on 1300 659 961 or by visiting our website www.gwmwater.org.au

How you can contact us:

Customer Contact Centre
(office hours only)
1300 659 961
Facsimile: (03) 5381 9881

Difficulties and Faults
(24 hrs a day, 7 days a week)
1800 188 586

Or you can visit us:

Corporate Office: 11 McLachlan Street
(PO Box 481), Horsham 3402
Email: info@gwmwater.org.au
Website: www.gwmwater.org.au

Additional services

For translating and interpreting service contact 131 450 and ask to be connected to 1300 659 961. Deaf, hearing impairment or speech/communication impairment may call the NRS (TTY service) by dialling 133 677 and quoting 1300 659 961.