



CUSTOMER CHARTER – CWMS SERVICES

The District Council of Loxton Waikerie (the Council) operates Community Waste Management Systems (CWMS) in the townships of Loxton, Waikerie, Kingston-On-Murray and Moorook.

In all other areas of the Council district, wastewater management is the responsibility of the landowner.

Under the *Water Industry Act 2012*, councils operating wastewater services must maintain a Customer Charter consistent with the *Water Retail Code - Minor & Intermediate Retailers*, developed by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA). This document can be accessed [here](#). The Code outlines your rights as a customer and our responsibilities as your sewerage service provider.

The purpose of this Charter is to clearly explain what you can expect from us, and what we require from customers.

Sewerage Removal (Quality)

The Council will:

- Remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- Use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your sewerage service.
- Provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your sewerage service at least 4 business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance.
- Provide an emergency contact number on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service.

The Customer will:

- Report any spills, leaks or incursions to us as soon as possible by calling Council on (08) 8584 8000.
- Not discharge restricted wastes, pollutants or unauthorised trade waste or wastewater into Council's sewerage infrastructure.
- Be liable to pay Council for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to them for a blockage, burst or leak caused by misuse. Council will advise customers of the reason for any cost recovery, and any amounts payable will be subject to the payment assistance and financial hardship provisions of their contract with us.
- Contact Council to discuss requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into the sewerage network.

Where a scheme is either not in place or where connection is not possible then the landowner will manage the removal of sewage and wastewater from the property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.

Fees and Charges

Council's CWMS service charge is set to recover the full cost of operating, maintaining and renewing the community wastewater management systems across the district. This includes day-to-day operation and maintenance, interest on any loans used to upgrade CWMS infrastructure, and provisions for future capital replacement of the system.

The Council will:

- Publish our Fees and charges, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the CWMS service, each year by July on our website at <https://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au/>. We will also make this available at our offices at 35 Bookpurnong Terrace, Loxton and Strangman Road, Waikerie.
- Customers will receive the annual CWMS service charge as a part of the council rates, and it will be shown on the annual rates notice issued each year.
- If a new service is activated during the financial year, then the first billing that the customer will receive is at the following July rates declaration.

CWMS Service Charge Property Units

Pursuant to Section 155(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999* and in accordance with Regulation 12(4)(b) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2013*, the Council imposes annual service charges for the CWMS. The fee is levied on all Property Owners (per property unit) whether connected or otherwise, developed land or vacant land.

Council requires the property owner to pay the CWMS Service Charge per allocated Property Unit(s) as defined in the LGA Code for Establishing and Applying Property Units as a factor for the Imposition of Annual Service Charges for Community Wastewater Management Systems (LGA 2006).

Concessions, Rebates and Exemptions

The Minister for Human Services, funds, operates and administers water and sewerage rate concessions on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Water. To check your eligibility for current sewerage concessions, assistance or advice visit [Water retailers | DHS](#), phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email concessions@sa.gov.au.

Connections

Where your property is currently connected to our infrastructure, the Council will:

- Maintain connection of your property to our CWMS service within the ambit of this Customer Service Charter

Where your property is not currently connected to our infrastructure, the Council will:

- Inform you within 14 days of enquiry whether you can be connected to our infrastructure and required fees to be paid
- supply technical, approval and inspection services to ensure that the new connections to the CWMS service are constructed by the new customer in an approved way
- Approve “Application For onsite wastewater works approval” form when they comply with our requirements

The Customer will:

- Submit a completed Application for Onsite Wastewater Works Approval form and an Application to Undertake Work on Council Land form.
- Ensure the property is located within a CWMS-serviced area and provide a suitable connection point.
- Provide Council with all required information about your supply address, including a Certificate of Compliance (CoC), connection location/depth, and any other relevant details within 28 days.
- Pay the applicable connection and establishment fees as outlined in Council’s Fees and Charges.

Further information on connecting new properties to our infrastructure is available on our website at <https://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au/> or by contacting our office on (08) 8584 8000.

Billing and payments

The Council will:

- Include your CWMS charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued quarterly, unless otherwise agreed with you
- Offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by mail, by B-Pay or by credit card over the phone

The customer will:

- Pay our bill by the payment due date unless we have agreed on a flexible payment arrangement.
- Pay any fee we incur if any of our payment methods are dishonoured.

Payment Assistance and Financial Hardship

The Council will:

- Provide you with the ability to pay your bills by instalments or enter a flexible payment arrangement.
- Offer you the ability to make payments towards future bills, grant payment extensions and agree to have your bill redirected to another person (where that person agrees).
- Inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our Hardship Program if requested.

The customer will:

- Pay your bill by the payment due date unless we have agreed on a flexible payment arrangement.
- Inform us if you are having difficulty paying our bills prior to the due date.

Further information on our Hardship Policy for Residential Customers is available on our website at <https://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au/your-council/governance/policies>.

Reviewing your Bill/Billing Disputes

The Council will:

- Not commence our debt collection processes where a bill (or part of a bill) is in dispute.
- Review your bill and inform you of the outcome of our review within 30 business days of your request.
- Inform you about our independent external dispute resolution body where you remain dissatisfied following our review.

The customer will:

- Pay any portion of your bill that is not in dispute while your bill is being reviewed or any future bills that become overdue.

Overcharging

The Council will:

- Inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged because of an act or omission by us and credit the overcharged amount to your next bill.

- Pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days

Undercharging

The Council will:

- Limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the error being advised to you in writing
- List the undercharged amount as a separate item in your next bill with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount
- Not charge interest on undercharged amount

Debt recovery

The Council will:

- Only commence debt collection/recovery action where you have failed to pay your bill(s) by the due date and you have not contacted us to discuss a payment extension or other flexible payment arrangements (including eligibility for our Hardship Program).

The customer will:

- Contact us if you are having difficulty paying your bill prior to the due date.

Entry to your property

The Council will:

- Provide you with at least 24 hours notice if we need to enter your property for the purpose of inspecting your wastewater system and connection to our CWMS system. Note that notice is not required for emergency repairs.

The customer will:

- Ensure safe access to our infrastructure (including but not limited to the meter) located at your supply address. Our infrastructure may be located within easements on your property.

Disconnections

Subject to any applicable regulatory requirements that prohibit disconnection, we will only disconnect your sewerage if:

- You request the disconnection and there is no public health, environmental, or safety risks
- If you request disconnection and it's authorised by Council, you must arrange for a licensed plumber to disconnect your supply
- If we receive a development application for the demolition of your structure serviced by a CWMS, we may impose certain conditions to engage the services of a suitably qualified tradesperson to isolate your property at its point of connection to the CWMS. This is to protect the connection from inappropriate inflows. Any such activity will be required to be easily reversible should your property require re-connection at some time in the future
- There is a public health, environment, or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g., backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge) or
- You are found to be using the services illegally or have refused entry to authorised person(s) to undertake maintenance or repairs in accordance with relevant regulatory instruments

Where you request a disconnection (and it is not prohibited), we will use our best endeavours to issue you with a final account in accordance with your request. We will inform you if you are still required to pay our “service availability charge” when you request the disconnection.

Complaints and dispute resolution

If you have a complaint, you should contact Council by telephone on (08) 8584 8000; or by email to council@lwdc.sa.gov.au. Alternatively, you can visit our offices.

The Council will:

- Respond to your complaint or enquiry and advise of the likely timeframe required to investigate and resolve while regularly updating you on the progress where necessary
- Refer you to our Director Infrastructure Services if you are not satisfied with our initial response/resolution
- Advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to the State Ombudsman South Australia and provide you with the details of that organisation
- Advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to our nominated independent dispute resolution body and provide you with the details of that organisation

Further details on Council’s Complaints Policy are available on our website at <https://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au/your-council/governance/policies>.