

SHIRE OF KOORDA

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

FOR

WASTEWATER SERVICES

FOR THE

SHIRE OF KOORDA TOWNSITE

SEWERAGE SCHEME

Adopted 28 October 1998

Revised September 2011 by Mr J Goldacre
Principal Environmental Health Officer/Building Surveyor

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Koorda invested in a reticulated sewer in the late seventies and it has proven to be a great asset. The sewer scheme consists of 4.4 km of sewerage reticulation, a single pumping station with single oxidation pond and irrigation pond (empty). The volume of waste water treated is approximately 21, 792 kilolitres* per annum. The Shire is well equipped and staffed for the effective management and maintenance of the scheme. This Charter ensures the Shire will meet public and regulatory requirements for the operation of the scheme.

1.1 The Role of this Charter

This charter sets out the broad philosophy of the Shire of Koorda in supplying sewerage services to the Koorda Townsite in accordance with the Licence issued to the Shire by the Economic Regulation Authority under the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995*. This Charter is subject to relevant provisions in the Water Acts¹, the *Health Act 1911* and the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The Shire of Koorda may amend this charter by agreement with the Authority.

This Charter will be terminated if the Shire of Koorda's licence is terminated.

The charter informs you, the customers of the Shire, of your rights in accordance with the provisions of the licence, including service interruptions, levels of service, complaint procedures.

If you would like a copy of the operating licence, please contact the Shire on (08) 9684 1219 or the Economic Regulation Authority on (08) 9213 1900.

1.2 Our Commitment to Service

The Shire of Koorda will provide its sewerage services in a manner which is fair, courteous and timely – with a focus on consultation with our customers, respecting your rights and meeting your reasonable expectations.

1.3 Services We Provide

The Shire of Koorda will use its best endeavours to provide a service to collect, treat and dispose of domestic sewerage discharged from each customer's property to the Shire's sewerage system. In addition, the Shire shall provide other services on terms agreed upon between the customer and the Shire.

¹ Water Boards Act (1904), Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act (1909), Water Agencies (Powers) Act (1984) and Water Services Licensing Act 1995.

* (data estimated using the Perth Residential Water Use Study 2008/2009 based on 200 premises using 227 kiloliters of which 48% would be collected by the sewer scheme).

1.4 How to Contact Us

Location: Shire Offices – Allenby Street, Koorda
Postal Address: P O Box 20, Koorda WA 6475
Office Hours: 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday
Telephone Number: (08) 9684 1219
Facsimile Number: (08) 9684 1379
Contact Officers: Chief Executive Officer – General Operations
Environmental Health Officer – General Operations
Senior Administration Finance Officer – Rating Enquiries

1.5 Emergency Assistance

Telephone calls to the emergency number shall be answered promptly and advise of action to be taken and timing given within one hour of your call.

The Shire maintains a 24-hour emergency contact service for emergency events, such as an overflow from a sewer. On the majority of occasions the telephone contact number will result in contact being made directly with a person authorised to attend to the problem. The AFTER HOURS emergency service contact telephone numbers are –

First	Manager of Works	9684 1404	Mobile 0427 841 275
Second	Chief Executive Officer	9684 1360	Mobile 0429 941 219

2.0 YOUR BASIC RIGHTS

2.1 Your Rights to Wastewater Services

Subject to the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995* and *Health Act 1911*, the Shire shall provide a service for the removal, treatment and disposal of wastewater under the terms set out in this Charter and the Operating Licence. In certain circumstances, the Shire may supply water for other than drinking purposes to irrigate the oval in accordance with the conditions imposed by the Department of Health WA.

The Shire shall treat and dispose of wastewater in an environmentally responsible manner. All wastewater treatment plants shall operate in accordance with the licence conditions set by, and/or agreements with, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Water.

Occasionally, some odours escape from the treatment plant, and these may affect nearby residents. The Shire shall respond to complaints of odours by investigating the report and advising the customer of the outcome within one day.

2.2 Your Rights to Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Services

Industrial and commercial wastewater may be acceptable for discharge into the Shire's wastewater system, subject to compliance with the Shire's requirements. An agreement with a customer for industrial and wastewater services to be provided by the Shire shall be documented in the industrial waste permit issued by the Shire.

2.3 Your Rights in Relation to Sewage Spills

If a sewer overflow occurs on your property due to failure of the Shire's infrastructure, representatives of the Shire shall be on site as soon as possible, but within three hours of being notified. Action shall be taken to restore the service, clean up the affected area and minimize any damage or inconvenience.

2.4 Your Rights to Consultation and Information

The Shire of Koorda is committed to involving its customers on issues relating to its programs and services. Community involvement in the Shire of Koorda's service planning and decision making processes will be sought through forums such as focus groups, customer surveys, and displays at local functions. The Shire of Koorda will use local media bulletins to advise customers of any system change that may result in significant variation in its service levels.

The Shire of Koorda will publish and make available at its premises, information on matters relating to its wastewater services, and on other aspects such as charging and complaints handling. Information regarding these matters can be obtained from the Shire of Koorda's business office.

The Shire of Koorda's representatives will provide identification, their name and position when engaged in business discussions with customers.

2.5 Your Rights to Assistance, Redress and Compensation

If the Shire's activities have caused damage to your property and/or disruption to you, such as a sewer overflow, the Shire shall deal with the matter in a fair and businesslike manner, whether or not a complaint is received. The Shire will rectify any damage and, as necessary and reasonable, refer any compensation claims immediately to the Shire's insurers for assessment and necessary action.

2.6 Charges and Accounts

Charges for services to customers shall comply with the relevant provisions and regulations of the *Health Act 1911* and the *Local Government Act 1995*.

If an error is made resulting in the customer paying more than the correct amount, the excess amount shall be held in credit for future charges, or refunded, at the discretion of the customer.

The Shire has the discretion to make refunds, adjustments and waive or defer payments.

The Shire can make special financial arrangements to assist customers experiencing hardship in the payment of their accounts. Information on these options is available from the Shire's office or by calling the telephone number shown on your account.

Statements of account for outstanding charges are issued on a regular basis. In addition, the Shire shall supply additional statements of account on request. A fee applies for this service.

Utility service availability and other charges are made against the owner of the land to which services are available or supplied and are the responsibility of the property owner. A property owner is responsible for payment of the charges set by the Shire as applicable to the property.

An account shall be regarded as having been delivered when it is transmitted to a property owner at the address notified to the Shire by the property owner, or the property owner's agent. It is the property owner's responsibility to notify the Shire of any change of address.

The Shire will charge interest on overdue accounts as prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1995* by forwarding an account for the interest to the property owner. Also, if a customer's cheque is not honoured for any reason, the Shire will pass on any costs incurred.

If an error is made in the charges which results in the customer paying less than the correct amount, the customer may be required to pay the correct amount upon request.

Refer to Appendix 4 *Fees and Charges* for more information.

2.7 Connecting to our Services

Applications for wastewater service connections should be made at the Shire Office. These applications must be accompanied by the related building plans.

Single applications for approval shall be processed on receipt at the Shire's Office. Multiple applications shall be processed within seven business days of receipt. An administration fee and installation inspection charge will be made for applications to connect. Where a Shire's wastewater reticulation main is accessible to your land and has the capacity for the required service, the Shire shall, on application by you, approve connection to the wastewater system, under the terms and conditions set out in this Charter, the Licence and the Water Acts.

Where a junction to an available sewer does not exist, the Shire will provide a junction, by arranging with a licensed plumber, for the connection of the property to the sewer. No fee is applied where a service availability charge

has been applied to a property, except for those properties subject to redevelopment.

If the Shire's wastewater system is accessible to a property, which produces or has capacity to produce wastewater, it is a requirement for the property owner to connect to the system, subject to the provisions of section 72 of the *Health Act 1911*.

The form to be filled out to apply for a wastewater service connection is contained in Appendix 2.

2.8 Disconnection

If the wastewater service is no longer required by you, a disconnection from the Shire's service may be approved provided that:

- The Shire is first notified of the intention, and
- A fee is paid to the Shire which shall arrange the disconnection, and
- The property has no further wastewater disposal requirement.

In most circumstances, disconnection of a wastewater service does not terminate this Charter. The Shire is required under the Water Acts and Licence to levy a service availability charge to the owner of land (including vacant land) where wastewater services are available for connection to a property. The Charter is void if there are no services available and no charges levied.

The Shire will reconnect its service upon your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A reconnection fee will apply.

The form to be filled out to request disconnection of a wastewater service is contained in Appendix 3.

2.9 Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes.

The Shire of Koorda values your enquiries and suggestions on ways that can improve the sewerage services. If you have an enquiry you can telephone the Shire on (08) 9684 1219 during business hours. You will receive prompt, courteous and helpful replies and will be told who is handling your enquiry.

General written correspondence will be replied to as soon as possible and normally within seven business days. Over the counter and telephone enquiries will be responded to within 24 hours. Telephone calls to the emergency number (see clause 1.4 on page 4 for these numbers) shall be answered promptly and you will be advised of the action to be taken and the timing of a response within one hour of your call.

When you lodge a complaint, (either in writing to PO Box 20 Koorda WA 6475, or verbally), the Shire will address the issue in a timely and efficient manner. A representative of the Shire shall respond in person within three

business days of a complaint being lodged. Where this response advises the need for further assessment you shall receive a written reply within seven business days. In the unlikely event that the lodged complaint has not been resolved within 15 business days the customer will be informed of the option to refer the complaint to the Department of Water.

Note – When a verbal complaint is lodged, it is not necessary to confirm it in writing. However, written confirmation of a verbal complaint made is welcomed by Council.

If you are not satisfied with a solution offered or action taken on a complaint you may seek referral to the Shire’s Chief Executive Officer, who shall investigate the complaint, assess the appropriateness of the Shire’s response and either confirm or amend the Shire’s proposed solution or action.

If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 15 days, you may refer the matter to the Department of Water at the following address:

Department of Water
The Atrium, 168 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 6364 7600
Facsimile: (08) 6364 7601
Website address: www.water.wa.gov.au
Email address: reception@water.wa.gov.au

The Department of Water will seek a detailed explanation of the nature of the complaint, the solutions or actions offered by the Shire of Koorda and the reasons why these are not acceptable to you. The Department of Water will respond with its opinion on the matter and suggest a solution to the parties involved.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may submit the matter to arbitration by an Arbitrator selected by you from a list provided by the Department of Water. The Arbitrator’s decision, including award of costs, will be binding on both parties and will preclude further action on the matter. You may elect to bypass the arbitration process and take legal action to resolve the matter.

The form to be filled out to submit a complaint, enquiry or suggestion to the Shire is contained in Appendix 1.

3.0 OUR POWERS

3.1 Entry to your Property

The circumstances under which Shire representatives may enter your property to carry out required investigations and/or work on the Shire’s sewerage wastewater system are set out in the Water Acts. Any such entry shall normally occur during business hours, except in cases of emergency.

For planned work within a property, the Shire shall advise the occupier in advance. In cases of emergency, the occupier, if present, shall be informed of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated length of time for the work.

3.2 Rectifying Defective Work

If the Shire becomes aware of the presence of any defective or improper work forming part of your wastewater pipes and fittings, which may impair the effective operation of the Shire's system, it may serve a notice requiring you to remedy any such defect or improper work within a specified time.

If the terms of the notice are not followed, the Shire may enter the customer's property to remedy the defective or improper work. This action, if taken, shall be in accordance with the relevant legislation and the full cost of any remedial work shall be charged to the customer.

3.3 Service Interruptions

The Shire's wastewater services are designed to be available 24 hours a day. However, the Shire may interrupt, postpone or limit its wastewater services to customers:

- If any part of works is damaged, for example, by bursting, blockages or breakdown of machinery or equipment; or
- If it is necessary to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of the sewerage works; or
- For connection of new works or service; or
- If an event occurs beyond the Shires control, including acts by others, such as sabotage, vandalism, flood, earthquake, power or water shortage, or industrial action.

Except in emergencies, the Shire shall give notice to you of its intention to interrupt, postpone or limit the supply of services for the purpose of regular maintenance or planned works program. Unless interruptions are limited to a few minutes, notification shall be given to domestic, commercial and industrial customers at least 48 hours prior to a suspension of the service.

3.4 Maintenance

The Shire's wastewater services are provided from the point where the pipes serving your property connect to the Shire's wastewater reticulation main.

Wastewater reticulation mains (sewers) and associated fittings remain the property of the Shire whether or not they are located within private property. The location of these structures can be obtained from the Shire Office. You are required to ensure that the Shire's pipelines and structures are reasonably accessible, are not interfered with, covered, built too close to, built over or damaged.

Prior to undertaking building or construction activity on the land connected or capable of being connected, it is a requirement to gain the Shire's approval. In the first instance, you should contact the Shire's office. Unauthorised property improvements that interfere with the Shire's assets, may be required to be removed at your cost.

The Shire is responsible for the maintenance of the sewer property connections where they are unable to be cleared or repaired from the inspection shaft – provided that the depth of the repair job is 2.5 metres or more and/or the fault in the property connection is outside the property concerned.

You are responsible for all plumbing, pipes and fixtures on or serving your property to the point where pipes connect to the Shire's sewer property connection. Where the sewer property connection is at a depth of less than 2.5 metres and it is situated within the property boundary, you are responsible for maintenance of that property sewer connection.

3.5 Discharge of Unauthorised Substances

It is your responsibility to ensure that storm water (including roof runoff) and other unauthorised substances are not discharged into the Shire's sewer. Certain waste products are not suitable for disposal in the Shire's wastewater system because of their nature and ability to pollute.

Specialised procedures for disposal are required for substances such as:

- Cooking oil and grease – these should be placed in a container or wrapped and placed in the rubbish bin;
- Paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvents, acids, alkalis, laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons, polishes or cleaning products – such substances should be deposited at the Household Hazardous Waste depot located near the Town of Toodyay, Toodyay Shire along Railway Road and known as the Toodyay Transfer Station' (this only applies to substances used for domestic purposes); and
- Products like disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, tampons, cotton buds, syringes, toilet deodorant packs and razors – these should be wrapped and placed in the rubbish bin.

3.6 Limitation or Withdrawal of Services

The Shire may discontinue its wastewater services in the following circumstances:

- If you do not comply with the terms and conditions of this Charter;
- If there is a public health, environmental and/or safety risk to the Shire's service connection (e.g. risk of backflow or unauthorised industrial waste discharge); or
- If you do not pay, or make arrangements to pay, the overdue charges for the services.

If there is a health and safety risk the Shire may discontinue service immediately. In all other cases, the Shire shall provide 48 hours notice in writing of its intention to refuse, alter or restrict its services.

The Shire shall reinstate its supply of services at your request and on compliance with the terms and condition of this Charter. A fee will be applied for this service.

3.7 Liability

The Shire is liable for any loss or damage that you may suffer:

- As a result of a breach of this Charter by the Shire, its servants or agents;
- As the result of a negligent act or omission by the Shire, its servants or agents; or
- As a result of the failure to meet standards prescribed by its Operating Licence or regulations (if any).

The Shire's liability is limited.

Section 35 of the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995* allows the Shire to interrupt, suspend or restrict the provision of a water service if, in the Shire's opinion it is necessary to do so because of an accident, emergency, potential danger or other unavoidable cause. The Shire is not liable for any loss or damage that arises from any such interruption, suspension or restriction unless the customer has an agreement with the Shire, which expressly states that the Shire is, to the extent that the agreement states, liable in those circumstances.

The Shire's liability under breach of Charter is limited to the rights of compensation and redress set out in this Charter. The Shire's liability for failure to meet prescribed standards is limited to the amount prescribed as a penalty in its Operating Licence or regulations.

APPENDICES

1. System Defect Report
2. Application for Wastewater Service
3. Disconnection of Wastewater Service
4. Fees and Charges
5. Risk and SWOT Analysis

6. Public consultation submissions

APPENDIX 1

Clause 2.9

Shire of Koorda

Sewerage System Defect Report No. _____

Date & Time of Report	
Name of Person Making Report	
Location of Fault	
Description of Fault	
Repair Work Carried Out	
Repairs Carried Out By	
Date & Time Completed	
Other Work Required	
Date & Time Register Completed	
Sighted By	

APPENDIX 2

Clause 2.7

Shire of Koorda

Application for Wastewater Service

Applicant: _____

Postal Address: _____

Property Address: _____

Date Lodged: _____

NB: Site plan of all buildings and proposed buildings must accompany this application

Date Approved: _____

Approved By: _____

APPENDIX 3

Clause 2.8

Shire of Koorda

Disconnection of Wastewater Service

Applicant: _____

Postal Address: _____

Property Address: _____
(for disconnection) _____

NB: Disconnection fee to be paid prior to disconnection being authorised and following inspection of property by Shire officers.

Fee: _____

Paid: _____

Authorising Officer: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 4

Shire of Koorda

Fees and Charges

As per Council's published list of fees and charges (and amended from year to year) available at the Shire office front desk.

APPENDIX 5

Shire of Koorda

RISK AND SWOT ANALYSIS

Risks

- (a) Plant malfunction
- (b) Power failure
- (c) Water failure of supply
- (d) Environmental
 - earthquake
 - fire
 - lightning

Strengths

- (a) Stable workforce
- (b) Well maintained infrastructure
- (c) System will gravitate from properties with an estimated 6 hours storage capacity at Imhoff tank
- (d) Ability to flush the main sewer lines with water via mobile water tankers
- (e) Personal machinery and equipment available locally to repair damage
- (f) Infrastructure essentially underground so limits fire damage
- (g) Lighting strikes seldom in the near vicinity

Weaknesses

- (a) Limited revenue base from which to obtain funds
- (b) Small workforce (but considered adequate)
- (c) Have no control over power or water services
- (d) Unable to control environmental damage other than provide fire protection

Opportunity

- (a) Stable well trained workforce
- (b) Ability to manage finances to enable programmed replacement of infrastructure
- (c) Ability to reuse effluent water for oval/garden reticulation

Threats

- (a) Population decline may reduce loading on the system to such a stage as to reduce performance
- (b) Population decline would limit ability to reuse effluent water for oval/garden reticulation

Summary

The infrastructure originally installed in the late 1970's has performed well and the population of the townsite has stabilised which provides the confidence to assume the Shire of Koorda Sewerage Scheme should be able to be operated in an efficient, reliable and cost effective manner for the foreseeable future.

APPENDIX 6

Public consultation results December 2007

On the 3 December 2007 an article was placed in the local paper asking for public comment on the Customer Service Charter for waste water services for the Shire of Koorda townsite sewerage scheme. There was no public comment received.

Public consultation results June 2011

On the 13 June 2011 an article was placed in the local paper over three weeks running asking for public comment on the Customer Service Charter for waste water services for the Shire of Koorda townsite sewerage scheme. There was no public comment received.