

# Shire of Ravensthorpe



## Water Service Charter for Non-Potable Water Supply and Sewerage Services

April 2013

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 The Role of this Charter .....	3
1.2 Our Commitment to Service .....	3
1.3 Service We Provide.....	3
1.4 How to Contact Us .....	3
1.5 Emergency Assistance .....	3
<b>2. Your Basic Rights.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Your Rights to Waste Water Services .....	4
2.2 Your Rights to Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Services.....	4
2.3 Your Rights in Relation to Sewerage Spills.....	4
2.4 Your Rights to consultation and Information.....	4
2.5 Your Rights to Assistance, Redress and Compensation.....	5
2.6 Connecting to our Services .....	5
2.7 Charges and Accounts.....	5
2.8 Disconnection .....	6
2.9 Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes.....	6
<b>3. Our Powers.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Entry to your Property .....	7
3.2 Rectifying Defective Work .....	7
3.3 Service Interruptions.....	8
3.4 Maintenance .....	8
3.5 Discharge of Unauthorised Substances.....	9
3.6 Limitations or Withdrawal of Services .....	9
3.7 Liability.....	9

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 The Role of this Charter**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe - Wastewater Scheme Customer Service charter sets out the broad philosophy of Council in supplying wastewater sewerage services to the District of Ravensthorpe in accordance with the licence issued to Council by the Economic Regulatory Authority under the Water Services Licensing Act 1995.

The charter informs you, the customer (of the Shire of Ravensthorpe) of your rights in accordance with the provisions of the license, including service interruptions, levels of service and the complaints procedure.

### **1.2 Our Commitment to Service**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe services will be provided in a fair, courteous and, timely manner - focusing on providing an efficient and effective wastewater scheme that meets customers' reasonable expectations.

### **1.3 Service We Provide**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe will use its best endeavours to provide a reliable waste water sewerage service to the town of Ravensthorpe.

The area of operation of the Shire of Ravensthorpe scheme is as indicated on the office of Water Regulation {Plan No OWR-OA-O4/2(B)}, as issued by the Economic Regulatory Authority. The Plan is available for inspection at the Office of Economic Regulation Authority, Level 4, Albert Facey House, 469 – 489 Wellington Street, Perth and at the Shire of Ravensthorpe administration office at 65 Morgans Street, Ravensthorpe.

### **1.4 How to Contact Us**

Requests for additional information regarding the service or to report faults with the sewer system can be directed to the Manager: Engineering Services at the Shire of Ravensthorpe, between 8:30 am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays);

<b>Address:</b>	65 Morgans Street, Ravensthorpe
<b>Telephone:</b>	(08)9839 0000
<b>Fax:</b>	(08)9838 1282
<b>Postal:</b>	PO Box 43, Ravensthorpe, WA 6346
<b>Email:</b>	Shire@ravensthorpe.wa.gov.au
<b>Manager of Works &amp; Services:</b>	0439918713

## 1.5 Emergency Assistance

The Shire of Ravensthorpe maintains a 24 hour contact service for emergency events.

The emergency customer telephone numbers are as follows:

Darryn Watkins	Manager Engineering Services	0439918713
Ken Atkinson	Shire Ranger	0427264377
Pascoe Durtanovich	Chief Executive Officer	0427381098

Telephone calls to any of these emergency numbers will be answered promptly and advice of action to be taken and timing given within one hour of your call.

## 2.0 Your Basic Rights

### 2.1 Your rights to Wastewater Services

\*Subject to the Water Acts, the Shire of Ravensthorpe shall, under the customer service charter, provide a service for the removal, treatment and disposal of wastewater. In certain circumstances, the Shire of Ravensthorpe may supply water for other than drinking purposes (e.g. treated effluent) in a manner agreed with the customer.

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

\* Water Acts

Water Board Act 1904, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909, Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984, Water Services Licensing Act 1995, Health Act 1911 and Local Government Act 1995.

### 2.2 Your Rights to Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Service

Industrial and commercial wastewater will be accepted for discharge into the wastewater system subject to compliance with the Shire of Ravensthorpe's requirements.

A documented agreement with a customer for the receipt to certain industrial wastewater maybe required by the Shire of Ravensthorpe in the form of an industrial waste permit issued by the council.

### 2.3 Your rights in Relation to Sewage Spills

If sewage overflow occurs on your property due to failure of Council's scheme, representatives of the Council will attempt to be on site within two hours of

being notified. Action shall be taken to restore the service, clean up the affected area and minimise any damage or inconvenience.

## **2.4 Your Rights to Consultation and Information**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe is committed to listening to its customers on issues relating to its services. Community comment on Council's service is encouraged.

Community comment will be solicited via the Council's biannual Customer Satisfaction Survey and through the local media. Council will also provide direct advice to customers of any system change that may result in significant variation in its service levels.

## **2.5 Your rights to Assistance, Redress and Compensation**

If Shire activities have caused damage to your property or disruption to you, such as a sewer overflow, Council shall deal with the matter in a fair and business-like manner, whether or not a complaint is received. Where appropriate, the Shire of Ravensthorpe will rectify damage and, where reasonable, compensate you for loss subject to the Water Acts.

## **2.6 Connecting to Our Services**

Connections to the Shire of Ravensthorpe's wastewater scheme are only permitted with the approval of Council, and can only be undertaken by a "Licensed Plumber".

Applications for wastewater service connections must be made at the Shire of Ravensthorpe's office in Morgan Street, Ravensthorpe and be accompanied by the related site plans and copy of the "Compliance Certificate"

Council officers will undertake to process applications promptly to minimise delays.

Connection to the Shire of Ravensthorpe's wastewater system will be granted under the terms and conditions set out in this charter, the license and Water Acts.

## **2.7 Charges and Accounts**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe wastewater scheme's 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 the payment of the charges set by the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

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

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

The Shire of Ravensthorpe has the discretion to make refunds, adjustments and waive or defer payments in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995 or any other relevant Act.

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.

The Shire of Ravensthorpe will charge interest on overdue accounts as prescribed in the Local Government Act 1995. Also, if a customer's cheque is not honoured for any reason, the Shire of Ravensthorpe will pass on any costs incurred.

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

The Shire of Ravensthorpe shall provide additional statements of an account upon request. A fee may apply for this service.

## **2.8 Disconnection**

Only in the event of premises being demolished or removed, may they be disconnected and even then only by a "Licensed Plumber" and following the notification of intention to the Council.

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

The Shire of Ravensthorpe shall reconnect its service at your request subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A reconnection fee shall apply.

## **2.9 Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe values your enquiries and suggestions on ways it can improve its service. If you have an enquiry, you are encouraged to contact the Shire during office hours (as set out under clause 1.4). You will receive prompt, courteous and helpful replies and will be told who is handling your enquiry.

When you lodge a complaint (either in writing, or verbally), the Shire of Ravensthorpe shall address the issue in a timely and efficient manner.

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

If your complaint has not been resolved within 15 business days, the Shire will inform you of the option of referring your complaint to the Department of Water.

If you have a dispute with the Shire regarding a provided or requested water service, you may refer your dispute to the Department of Water at any time at the following address

The Department of Water can be contacted at:

Customer Services Officer  
The Department of Water  
Water Industry Support Branch  
PO Box K822  
Perth WA 6842

Email: [WISBcomplaints@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:WISBcomplaints@water.wa.gov.au)

Web Address: [www.water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au)

The Department of Water will respond with its opinion on the matter and suggest a solution to the parties involved.

The Shire will provide the Department of Water with details of complaints and the contact details of customers who have made the complaint where the Department of Water requests the information.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may submit the matter to arbitration by an Arbitrator selected by you, the customer, from a list prepared by the Department of Water. The Arbitrator's decision, including award of costs shall 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.

### ***3.0 Our Powers***

#### **3.1 Entry to Your Property**

The circumstances, in which the Shire of Ravensthorpe's representatives may enter your property to carry out investigations and/or work on Council's wastewater systems, are set out in the Water Acts. Any such entry shall normally occur during office hours, except in cases of an emergency.

For planned work within a property, the Shire of Ravensthorpe will attempt to advise the occupier in advance. In cases of emergency, the occupier, if present, shall be informed of the emergency and of the proposed action and the anticipated length of time for the service to be interrupted.

### **3.2 Rectifying Defective Work**

If the Shire of Ravensthorpe becomes aware of the presence of any defective or improper work forming part of the your wastewater pipes and fittings which may impair the effective operation of the sewer system and remain your responsibility, Council may serve a notice requiring you to remedy any such defect or improper work within a specified time. Further information on what works you are responsible for and what works the Shire is responsible for is provided below at section 3.2, entitled maintenance.

If the terms of the notice are not followed, the Shire of Ravensthorpe may contract a “Licensed Plumber” to enter your property to remedy the defective or improper work. This action, if taken, shall be in accordance with the relevant Water Acts and the full cost of any remedial work shall be recovered from you the customer.

### **3.3 Service Interruptions**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe’s wastewater scheme is designed to be available 24 hours a day, however, it may be necessary for the Council to interrupt, postpone or limit its wastewater services to customers:

- if any part of works is damaged, blocked or broken down;
- if it is necessary to inspect, repair or replace any part of the works;
- for connection of new works or services; or
- if an event occurs beyond the Councils control, including floods.

Except in emergencies, the Council shall attempt to give notice to you of works to inspect, repair or replace any part, where the interruptions is likely to have an impact on customers, prior to the works being undertaken.

### **3.4 Maintenance**

The Shire of Ravensthorpe’s wastewater services commences at the point where the wastewater pipe from the septic tanks, serving your property connects to Council’s wastewater scheme, near the boundary.

The Shire of Ravensthorpe’s wastewater plumbing (sewers), including associated fittings, remain the property of Council whether or not located within private property.

The location of these connection points can be obtained from Council’s office. You are required to ensure that the Shire of Ravensthorpe connection points are not damaged, built over or close too, inaccessible, interfered with or obstructed and remain reasonably accessible.



Prior to undertaking building or construction activity on land connected or capable of being connected to the Shire of Ravensthorpe wastewater scheme, it is a requirement to gain the Council's approval. Unauthorised property improvements, which interfere with the Shire of Ravensthorpe wastewater scheme, maybe required to be rectified at the customer's cost.

The Shire of Ravensthorpe is responsible for the maintenance of 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 meters or more and/or the fault in the property connection is outside the property concerned.

The customer is responsible for all plumbing, pipes and fixtures on or serving their property to the point where pipes connect to the Shire of Ravensthorpe's wastewater scheme connection point. Where the sewer connection is at a depth of less than 2.5 meters and is situated within the property boundary, you are responsible for maintenance of that property sewer connection point.

### 3.5 Discharge of Unauthorised Substances

It is your responsibility to ensure that stormwater (including roof run-off) and other unauthorised substances are not discharged into the Shire of Ravensthorpe's wastewater scheme.

Certain liquid waste products are not suitable for disposal in the Shire of Ravensthorpe's wastewater scheme because of their nature and ability to adversely impact on the system and/or pollute.

Specialised procedures for disposal are required for substances such as:

- **Cooking oil and grease** - are not to be discharged into the wastewater system. Ideally they should be placed in a container or wrapped in the rubbish bin;
- **paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvents, acids, alkalis, laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons, polishes or cleaning products** - are not to be discharged into the wastewater system. Such substances should be deposited at a local Council collection point for these materials (this only applies to substances used for domestic purposes).; and
- **disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, tampons, cotton buds, syringes, toilet deodorant packs and razors or similar products** - are not to be discharged into the wastewater system. Ideally these should be wrapped and placed in the rubbish bin.

### 3.6 Limitation or Withdrawal of Services

The Shire of Ravensthorpe may discontinue its wastewater services if there is a public health, environmental and/or safety risk to the Shire of Ravensthorpe's services from a your service connection (e.g. back-flow risk or unauthorised to discontinue waste discharge).

If there is a health and safety risk the Council may find it necessary to discontinue service immediately.

### **3.7 Liability**

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

- as a result of a breach of this charter by the Council, it's servants or agents;
- as a result of a negligent act or omission by the Council, it's servants or agents;
- as a result of the failure by the Council, it's servants or agents, to meet standards prescribed by its Operating License or regulations (if any).

The Shire of Ravensthorpe's liability is limited as follows:

Section 35 of Water Services Licensing Act allows the Shire of Ravensthorpe to interrupt, suspend or restrict the provision of a water service if, in Council's opinion, it is necessary to do so because of an accident, emergency potential danger or other unavoidable cause.

The Shire of Ravensthorpe 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 Council which expressly states the Council is, to extent that the agreement states, liable in those circumstances.

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