

Post-Audit Implementation Plan

Aqwest – Water Licence - Operational Audit 2023

Recommendation Reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement (Rating / Licence obligation reference number & licence obligation / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Action proposed to be taken by the licensee	Responsible person(s)	Target completion date
1/2023	<p>A2</p> <p>License Obligation No 75</p> <p>Water Services Regulations 2013, Regulation 63</p> <p>Licence Obligation Detail</p> <p>If the licensee opens or breaks up the surface of a road, the licensee must complete the relevant work and reinstate and make good the road and must take all reasonable measures to prevent that part of the road from being hazardous.</p> <p>Details of issues</p> <p>There were two instances involving breaking the surface of the road in which a Final Inspection Certificate was not evident. Therefore, it could not be determined if the road had been returned to its final state.</p>	<p>Aqwest should implement an internal monitoring process (e.g., the use of final inspection certificate tracking sheet) to timely identify completion of projects involving breaking the surface of the road so that a corresponding Final Inspection Certificate is issued without delay.</p>	<p>New procedure to be developed specifically for road reinstatement. Will include formal close out and acceptance of reinstatement by the local authority. Review of procedure will include consultation with local government authorities.</p>	<p>General Manager Water Services</p>	<p>30/9/2024</p>
2/2023	<p>A2</p> <p>License Obligation No 137B</p> <p>Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018 Clause 36(2)</p>	<p>Aqwest should comply with the license obligation and prevent issuing restriction notice of less than 7 days before the day on which the water supply</p>	<p>Aqwest standard notice period will be extended and additional training on this requirement will be provided.</p>	<p>General Manager Financial Services</p>	<p>30/06/2024</p>

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	<p>Licence Obligation Detail</p> <p>The licensee must not give a customer a restriction notice less than 7 days before the day on which the water supply restriction is proposed to start.</p> <p>Details of issues</p> <p>In reviewing 9 sample accounts, we did detect (1) instance of breaching the condition of 7 days' notice period.</p> <p>AC41140294 - Restriction Notice was issued on 28/04/2022 while restriction would take place sometime in the week commencing 02/05/2022. Customer was given 4 days' notice, and the restrictor was installed 6 days after the notice.</p>	<p>restriction is proposed to start.</p> <p>To ensure that this is consistently applied, Aqwest should implement a second review by another officer to sign-off on the restriction notice prior to sending to customers.</p>			
3/2023	<p>A2</p> <p>License Obligation No 149A</p> <p>Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018 Clause 47</p> <p>Licence Obligation Detail</p> <p>When the licensee considers that a customer's complaint has been resolved the licensee must advise the customer accordingly, inform the customer that the customer has a right to apply to the water services</p>	<p>Whilst Aqwest has an existing template that embeds the statement about the customers right to appeal to the Ombudsman, we recommend that Aqwest consistently utilise this template when responding to customers upon the</p>	<p>Procedure to be reviewed and training provided to ensure consistency of responses across multiple departments.</p>	<p>General Manager Business Services</p>	<p>30/11/2024</p>

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	<p>ombudsman for a review of the complaint, and provide a Freecall telephone number for the water services ombudsman.</p> <p>Details of issues</p> <p>Our review of 5 complaints identified 2 breaches that did not comply Clause 47 as the responses did not include the customers right to appeal to the Ombudsman for review if needed.</p> <p>Although in these cases, the customers were either verbally or through email communicated if they were satisfied with the response, it fails to address or inform the customer about their right to appeal to the Ombudsman for a review of the complaint if needed.</p>	<p>resolution of complaints.</p> <p>To ensure that Aqwest staff consistently use the template when responding to customers, it should implement an internal review or sign-off procedure where the response is reviewed by another officer prior to sending to customer.</p>			
4/2023	<p>A2</p> <p>License Obligation No 153</p> <p>Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018 Clause 49(1)</p> <p>Licence Obligation Detail</p> <p>The licensee must make the prescribed information publicly available.</p> <p>Details of issues</p> <p>Through reviewing Aqwest website and discussions with relevant personnel, we determined that the following prescribed information in</p>	<p>Aqwest should update the website to clearly specify the statement 'it may restrict supply if the customer does not accept an offer of a payment plan within seven (7) days.</p>	<p>Aqwest will not take further because this clause will be removed from the Water Services Code from 1 July 2024. Should there be any changes to the proposed Code, Aqwest will adjust the proposed action accordingly.</p>	<p>General Manager Business Services</p>	<p>NA</p>

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	<p>49(1)(h) are not publicly available:</p> <p>Section 49(1) states, inter alia that, A licensee need to make information about the following information to be publicly available—</p> <p>(h) that if the customer is offered a payment plan or other arrangement giving the customer more time to pay the bill or to pay arrears, the licensee's power as mentioned in paragraph</p> <p>(g) can only be exercised if – the customer has not accepted the offer within the period of 7 days after the day on which it was made: or having entered such a plan or other arrangement, the customer does not comply with it.</p> <p>The condition in 49(1)(h) is only enlivened when the customer fails to pay the required debt to the corporation and the customer is provided more time to pay the bills or to pay arrears.</p> <p>If the customer does not accept the offer of arrangement within 7 days or does not comply with the arrangement executed, Aqwest can exercise the power as mentioned in paragraph 49(1)(g).</p> <p>Aqwest's approach is to negotiate an outcome that is mutually acceptable which factors in the customer's specific circumstances when engaging with the customers who are having payment difficulty.</p> <p>This interaction with the customer is agreed and finalised in the initial</p>				

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	<p>conversation/communication. Aqwest's does not offer a payment plan without the customer's agreement and then advise them that they must accept the offer within 7 days.</p> <p>Accordingly, Aqwest website does not have information, which states it may restrict supply if the customer does not accept an offer of a payment plan within 7 days.</p> <p>Aqwest's approach is customer-centric, we consider the Code in this regard to be prescriptive and requires the requisite information to be provided publicly.</p> <p>The licensee was not compliant with this obligation throughout the reporting period.</p>				