

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

FOR

WASTEWATER SERVICES

SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

REVISED November 2009

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *The Role of this Charter*

This Charter sets out the broad philosophy of the Shire in supplying sewerage services to the town of Dumbleyung in accordance with the Licence issued by the Economic Regulation Authority under the Water Services Licensing Act 1995.

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, complaints procedures. If you would like a free copy of the Customer Service Charter or the Operating Licence please contact the Shire of Dumbleyung on 9863 4012 or the Economic Regulation Authority on (08) 9213 1900.

1.2 *Our Commitment to Service*

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

1.3 *Services we Provide*

The Shire 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 sewer system. In addition, the Shire shall provide other services on terms agreed upon between the customer and the Shire.

The areas of operation of the Shire's Sewerage Scheme are provided in the Dumbleyung town site and are shown in Appendix 6.

1.4 *How to Contact Us*

Postal Address: PO Box 99, DUMBLEYUNG, WA, 6350
Street Address: Cnr Harvey & Dawson Street, DUMBLEYUNG
Office Hours: 8.00am – 4.00pm
Telephone: (08) 9863 4012
Facsimile: (08) 9863 4146
E-mail: ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au
Contact Officers: Chief Executive Officer – General Operations
Manager of Works – General Operations
Finance Officer – Rating Enquiries

1.5 *Emergency Assistance*

The Shire maintains a 24 hour emergency contact service for emergency events, such as an overflow from the sewer. The emergency customer service telephone number is the Shire Offices on (08) 9863 4012.

The AFTER HOURS emergency service telephone contact number is:

Chief Executive Officer

Mobile: 0429 634 012

2.0 YOUR BASIC RIGHTS

2.1 Your Rights to Wastewater Services

Subject to the applicable water legislation, the Shire shall provide a service for the removal, treatment and disposal of wastewater under the terms set out in this Charter and the Licence. In certain circumstances, the Shire may supply water for other than drinking purposes (e.g. treated effluent in a manner agreed with the customer).

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 Environmental and Conservation and the Department of Water.

Occasionally some odours occur in treatment plants, 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 24 hours.

2.2 Your Rights to Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Services

Industrial and Commercial wastewater may be accepted for discharge into the Shire's wastewater systems subject to compliance with the Shire's requirements. An agreement with a customer for Industrial and Commercial wastewater services that are provided by the Shire shall be documented in an Industrial or Commercial waste permit issued by the Shire.

2.3 Your Rights in Relation to Sewerage Spills

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

2.4 Your Rights to Consultation and Information

The Shire is committed to involving its customers in issues relating to its programs and services. Community involvement in the Shire'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 will use local media bulletins to advise customers of any system change that may result in significant variation in its service levels.

The Shire 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 Administration Office.

The Shire's representatives will provide personal identification when engaging 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 or disruption to you, such as a sewer overflow, the Shire shall deal with the matter in a fair and reasonable manner, whether or not a complaint is received. The Shire shall rectify property damage and

consider reasonable compensation subject to the Water Services Licensing Act 1995 and the Health Act 1911.

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 occurs 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. Similarly an error in undercharging may require the customer to pay the extra amount.

The Shire can make special financial arrangements to assist a customer experiencing hardship in payment of their accounts. Information of this option is available from the Shire's Administration Office.

Statements of account for outstanding charges are issued on a regular basis and the Shire shall supply additional statements of account on request. A fee may apply 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 at the address on the Shire's rate base. It is the property owner's responsibility to notify the Shire of any change of address.

The Shire may charge interest on overdue accounts and a customer's cheque not honoured will incur additional costs.

2.7 *Connecting to our Services*

Applications for wastewater service connections are to be made to the Shire Administration Office, accompanied by the related building plans. Single applications for approval shall be processed within 24 hours of receipt, while multiple applications shall be processed within 72 hours.

Where a Shire wastewater reticulation main is available to your land and has the capacity to service, the Shire shall, on application approve connection to the wastewater system, under the terms and conditions set out in this Charter, the Licence and applicable water legislation. Where a junction to an available sewer does not exist, a junction will be provided by the Shire in consultation with the licensed plumber installing the property sewer. No fee applies where a service availability charge has been applied to a property, except for those subject to redevelopment.

If the Shire's wastewater system is available to a property that produces or has capacity to produce wastewater, it is a requirement for that property to connect to the system.

2.8 DISCONNECTION

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

- the Shire is first notified of the intention,
- 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 Waters Act and Licence to levy a service availability charge to the owner of land (including vacant land) where wastewater services are available for connection. The Charter is void if there were no services available and no charges levied.

The Shire shall reconnect its services at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A reconnection fee shall apply.

2.9 *Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes*

The Shire values your enquiries and suggestions on ways it can improve its services. If you have an enquiry you can telephone on 9863 4012 during business hours. You will receive prompt and courteous assistance.

Telephone calls to the emergency numbers or counter enquiries shall be answered and responded to promptly and advice of action to be taken given within one hour of your call.

The Shire has a process of dealing with complaints relating to the Dumbleyung Sewerage Scheme. When you lodge a complaint in writing or verbally, the Shire shall address the issue in a timely and efficient manner, including a response in person within 2 business days and a written reply within 10 days.

If you are not satisfied with the response or action taken with regard to the complaint, you may seek referral to the Chief Executive Officer, who shall investigate the complaint, assess the appropriateness and confirm or amend the proposed solution or action.

The Shire must resolve complaints within 15 business days. 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. The Department of Water's contact details are as follows:

Customer Services Officer
The Department of Water
Water Services Branch
P O Box K822
Perth WA 6842

The Atrium
168 St Georges Terrace
Perth Western Australia

Phone Number: (08) 6364 7600
Fax Number: (08) 6364 7601

Website Address: www.water.wa.gov.au
Email Address: WISBcomplaints@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 Dumbleyung 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.

3.0 OUR POWERS

3.1 *Entry to Your Property*

The circumstances, in which Shire representatives may enter your property to carry out investigations and/or work on the Shire's wastewater system, are set out in applicable legislation and the Health Act 1911. 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 the wastewater pipes and fittings which may impair the effective operation of the Shire's system, it may serve a notice requiring you to remedy 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 Acts 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, breakdowns,
- it is necessary to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of works,
- for connection of new works or services; or
- an event occurs beyond the Shire's control, including acts by others, sabotage, 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 works programs. Unless interruptions are limited to a few minutes, notifications shall be given to domestic customers, at least 24 hours prior, and for commercial and industrial customers, at least 7 days prior to the event.

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. You are required to ensure that the Shire's pipelines and structures are reasonably accessible, not interfered with, covered, built close to or over and not damaged.

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

The Shire 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 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 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 stormwater (including roof runoff) and other unauthorised substances are not discharged into the Shire's sewers, unless authorised by in writing. Certain waste products are not suitable for disposal in the wastewater system because of their nature and ability to pollute. These are:

- cooking oil and grease
- paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvents, acids, alkalis, laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons, polishes or cleaning products
- products like disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, tampons, cotton buds, syringes, toilet deodorant packs and razors

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 service.

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

The Shire shall reinstate its supply of services at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A fee applies for the 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; and

- As a result of the failure to meet standards prescribed by its Operating Licence or Regulations (if any).

The Shire's liability is limited as follows:

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.

4.0 APPENDICES

- A. System Defect Report
- B. Application for Wastewater Service
- C. Disconnection of Wastewater Service
- D. Fees and Charges
- E. Risk and SWOT Analysis
- F. Figure 1 - Operating Area Site Plan

APPENDIX A

Clause 2.9
Shire of Dumbleyung

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 B

Clause 2.7
Shire of Dumbleyung

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 C

Clause 2.8
Shire of Dumbleyung

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 D

SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

Fees and Charges (Sewerage Rates)

As per Council's published list of fees and charges (and amended from year to year).

The rates are derived from those published by the Water Corporation of Western Australia and adopted by the Shire of Dumbleyung Shire Council. The current sewerage rates for properties located within the Dumbleyung town site serviced by the sewer for the 2008-2009 financial year are as follows:

"RATEABLE PROPERTIES SERVED BY THE SEWER

Minimum rates

Residential properties	\$266.80	per annum
Commercial properties	\$587.90	per annum
Vacant properties	\$175.60	per annum"

Source: Water Corporation of Western Australia, 2008.

APPENDIX E

SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

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 ours storage capacity at Imhoff tank
- (d) Ability to flush the main sewer lines with water via mobile water tankers
- (e) Personnel machinery and equipment available locally to repair damage
- (f) Stable environment not within the earthquake zone
- (g) Infrastructure essentially underground so limits fire damage
- (h) 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 revenue

Summary

The infrastructure originally installed in the late 1960's has performed well and the population of the townsite has stabilised which provides the confidence to assume the Shire of Dumbleyung Sewerage Scheme should be able to be operated in an efficient, reliable and cost effective manner for the foreseeable future.