

A low-angle photograph of a tall, cylindrical water tower with a metal lattice structure. The tower has a spiral staircase on its exterior and a platform near the top. The sky is blue with some clouds. In the foreground, there is a brown fence and a tree trunk on the right.

2022 - 2027

Water & Sewerage Customer Service Standards

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Water & Sewerage Customer Service Standards

1. INTRODUCTION

Under Section 15, Chapter 2 Infrastructure and service, Part 4 Service provider obligations, Division 3 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, service providers are required to compile customer service standards to ensure customers are protected by standards relating to the supply.

The purpose of this document is to specify levels of service in relation to Maranoa Regional Council's (MRC) potable and non-potable water schemes and sewerage services.

As a service provider, MRC customer service standards must state:

- A target for the level of service to be provided for the customer service standard key performance indicators; and
- The process for service connections, billing, metering, accounting, customer consultation, complaints and dispute resolution.

These standards were approved by Council Resolution GM/04.2017/06 and take effect from 24 April, 2017. A regular review of these service standards is to occur at least every five years.

2. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

The Queensland Government's Office of Water Supply Regulator has directed Council to set targets for mandatory key performance indicators. To establish these targets Council has placed each water scheme into one of two categories: Towns and Townships. The purpose of the categories is to group similar sized schemes and schemes with similar purpose together. The below table outlines which category each scheme is in:

Water Scheme Categories

Scheme	Category	Connections	Potable/Non-potable
Amby	Township	51	Potable
Injune	Town	312	Potable
Jackson	Township	15	Potable
Mitchell	Town	630	Potable
Muckadilla	Township	14	Potable
Mungallala	Township	39	Potable
Roma	Town	3,605	Potable
Surat	Town	274	Potable & Non-potable
Wallumbilla	Town	194	Potable
Yuleba	Town	130	Potable

2.1. Town Supplies

The following table shows the key performance indicators and target service standards which are applicable to the Town schemes.

Key performance indicators and targets - Town schemes

Key Performance Indicator	Target
Incidence of unplanned interruptions (number per 1,000 properties)	≤ 300
Average response time for water incidents (bursts and major leaks)	≤ 120 minutes
Water quality complaints (per 1,000 properties)	≤ 10
Total water main breaks and leaks (number per 100km water main)	≤ 80
Total water and sewerage complaints (number per 1,000 properties)	≤ 20

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2.2. Township Supplies

The following table shows the performance indicators and the target service standards which are applicable to the Township schemes.

Key performance indicators and targets - Township schemes

Key Performance Indicator	Target
Incidence of unplanned interruptions (number per 1,000 properties)	≤ 300
Average response time for water incidents (bursts and major leaks)	≤ 240 minutes
Water quality complaints (per 1,000 properties)	≤ 20
Total water main breaks and leaks (number per 100km water main)	≤ 150
Total water and sewerage complaints (number per 1,000 properties)	≤ 20

2.3. Sewerage Services

The following table shows the performance indicators and the target service standards which are applicable to the Council's sewerage systems. Those towns included are **Amby, Injune, Mitchell, Mungallala, Roma and Surat**.

Key performance indicators and targets - Sewerage systems

Key Performance Indicator	Target
Average response time for sewerage incidents (including main breaks and chokes)	≤ 120 minutes
Total sewerage main breaks and chokes (number per 100km sewerage main)	≤ 40

3. MINIMUM WATER PRESSURE

This is the minimum pressure that customers can expect to receive at the connection. The below table outlines the minimum water pressure/flow expectations:

Minimum water pressure

Priority Infrastructure Area Services	Greater than 20 metres 95% of the time, except for during firefighting.
Regional Domestic Services	Required to have tank on-site of minimum size 20kL, with an additional 45kL within 50m of dwellings for firefighting purposes. These services are not guaranteed of pressure or flow as they are trickle fed from the mains. A minimum flow of 2,160 L/d (1.5L/min) is targeted.

If you notice a significant change in the usual water supply pressure not caused by household pipes and fittings, we encourage you to contact Council immediately.

4. PLANNED WORKS

Council aims to provide continuous and reliable delivery of water supply to all our customers, however, at times we may need to interrupt your water supply service to undertake maintenance and repair work. In these instances, we aim to provide you with at least 48 hours' notice prior to the event.

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Our water supply system may also be interrupted by acts outside of our control. For unplanned events, we are unable to provide you any notice, but do strive to inform you through a media release on Facebook. If your service is affected, we aim to restore your connection as quickly and effectively as possible.

5. SEWER BLOCKAGES AND OVERFLOWS

5.1. Sewer blockages

If you notice a significant change in the usual functioning of the sewerage service not caused by household pipes and fittings, we encourage you to contact Council immediately. We will investigate and remove the blockage free of charge should it be in Council's infrastructure. Any blockage outside Council's infrastructure will be cleared after approval has been sought from the owner of the property. The owner can also choose to source a private plumber.

Should the customer choose to engage a private plumber instead of contacting council first the customer assumes responsibility for any fee(s) levied by the private plumber regardless of where the blockage occurred. They may however seek compensation from Council, should the blockage be in the Council asset. Council may approve reimbursement at their discretion.

5.2. Sewer overflow

If an overflow should occur please contact Council immediately. We will act as quickly as possible to minimise the damage and inconvenience.

6. WATER AND SEWER SERVICE CONNECTIONS

6.1. New service

If you wish to apply for a water supply or sewer service connection, you will need to submit an application form available from one of Council's Customer Service Centres. Service connections will only be approved if:

- A reticulation main is available to your property; and
- The connection location is within either the Priority Infrastructure Area, or the Regional Domestic Water Service Area; and
- The reticulation main is capable of delivering water at the minimum standard.

Installation of a new service connection will usually take place within 20 working days after Council receives your application and fee for service.

6.2. Restore an existing or disconnected service

If you wish to restore an existing or disconnected service, customers are required to submit an application form available from one of Council's Customer Service Centres along with the prescribed payment.

6.3. Connection fees

Standard water and sewerage service connection fees are outlined in the fees and charges register which can be found on Council's website. Any water service over 20mm must be quoted. Any sewer service connection deeper than 1.5m must be quoted.

6.4. Sewer Connections or Disconnections

To apply to connect or disconnect to Council's sewerage service, you are required to complete a Plumbing and Drainage Application form, along with payment of the relevant fee. Application forms are available on Council's website or from Council's Customer Service Centres.

7. BILLING

7.1. Fees and charges

Fees and charges are set annually by Council resolution.

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Council has a two-part water tariff across all water supply schemes to offer a common pricing strategy to all communities across the region. The two-part charging methodology consists of an access charge and volumetric consumption charges. With the exception of Surat which has a raw and potable water network. The raw network is unmetered and is charged an access fee. The potable network is charged in two parts, an access charge and volumetric consumption charges. Sewerage charges will be levied on each property assessment in the defined waste water network areas.

Details about the fees and charges can be found on Council's website in the Revenue Statement.

7.2. Issue and content of Water Notice

Water Notices are issued twice yearly. The notice will contain the following information:

- The date of issue;
- The customer's name, billing address and assessment number;
- The address of the property and the billing period to which the charges relate;
- The meter number(s), previous and current readings, total usage for period;
- Due date and discount amount;
- Total amount due for payment.

Customers should expect between four to eight weeks between the date the meter is read and the date the bill is issued.

7.3. Issue and content of Rates Notice

Rates Notices are issued twice yearly. The notice will contain the following information:

- The date of issue;
- The customer's name, billing address and assessment number;
- The address of the property and the billing period to which the charges relate;
- Sewerage charges will appear separately to all other rate charges;
- Due date and discount amount;
- Total amount due for payment.

7.4. Payment methods

Payment of your Water and Rates Notice can be made by any of the following methods:

- Bpay;
- At any Post Office;
- By phoning Post Billpay on 13 18 16;
- By cheque made payable to Maranoa Regional Council, and post to:
PO Box 42
Mitchell QLD 4465
- In person at any of our Customer Service Centres by cash, EFTPOS, cheque or credit card;
- Direct debit from your bank account (by prior arrangement through Council).

7.5. Discount

Payments received by the Council or its appointed agents prior to close of business on the due date specified on the Water and Rates Notice will attract a discount as specified on the billing notice.

Payment of all rates and charges must be made in full by the due date to receive discounts.

7.6. Concessions

Maranoa Regional Council offers its customers a number of concessions (e.g. pensioners, dialysis patients). Please contact Council on 1300 007 662 to confirm eligibility.

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7.7. Dispute

If a customer wishes to dispute their bill they can write to or email Council outlining their reasons or contact Council on 1300 007 662. Council will investigate accordingly.

8. WATER METERING

8.1. Your water meter

Water metering is the process of measuring water use. All customers must have a meter at the property connection; as it is a requirement. Council supplies and installs a meter with every new connection. Meters are generally located on the footpath or just inside your property boundary. Below ground meters have a metal or plastic lid with above ground meters having no cover. If you are unable to locate your water meter please contact Council, visit a Customer Service Centre or submit an online enquiry via Council's website. A local officer will attend your property and locate your meter. The same ownership applies to below ground meters.

8.2. Meter accessibility

It only takes a few moments for us to read your water meter but this simple job is sometimes made difficult when we don't have easy access to the meter. Therefore we ask if you could:

- Keep a clear space of at least 30cm around and 120cm above your water meter;
- Keep your meter clear of dirt and mulch;
- Prune overgrown plants;
- If you have a dog, please display a sign and keep the dog secured away from the meter area.

8.3. How to read a water meter

There are a number of different water meters in use throughout Maranoa Regional Council; however, they are all very similar to read. The display panel on your water meter has a black section and a red section. The numbers in the black section represent kilolitres (1,000 litres); the numbers in the red section represent litres.

8.4. Monitoring water use

With households paying for water it is important to know your individual water consumption. The more water you save the more money you save on water and water heating costs.

Leaks can occur in household water pipes, fittings and appliances. They are not always visible, so the best method of detection is to read your water meter regularly. If your consumption increases dramatically for no obvious reason, there could be a hidden leak. Other methods of leak detection include:

- Check the toilet system by pouring some food colouring into the cistern. If the colouring appears in the toilet bowl before flushing, you have a leak.
- Turn off every tap in the house and check the reading on your water meter. Do not use water (including flushing the toilet) for at least 30 minutes or overnight then check the meter again. If it has moved you have a leak.

Often leaks are hard to find and can go undetected for a long time. Undetected leaks can waste thousands of litres per day. Some signs of a leak include;

- An unusual green patch of turf near the meter, on the footpath or in the yard
- Moisture around the meter or a wet patch on the footpath, in your yard or under the house
- Water laying in the roadway (outside of rainfall events)
- Sound of running water in a stormwater drain (outside of rainfall events).

For information regarding Council's policy on remission from excess water charges, please refer to the Water Meters Policy on Council's website.

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8.5. Water meter accuracy

If you believe your water meter is inaccurate you can request a water meter flow test. The meter will be tested in accordance with the Water Meters Policy.

A water meter test consists of Council installing a calibration meter on the customer's tap and ensuring that the reading from the two meters are consistent with each other.

If you would like to request an accuracy test, contact Council to submit your application and payment. Fees and charges can be found on Council's website. If the results indicate the meter is reading >5% the meter will be changed and your test fee will be refunded.

8.6. Damaged or leaking water meter

If your water meter is damaged, unable to be turned off or you suspect a leak, please contact Council on 1300 007 662 or complete and submit an online contact form. Once your problem has been logged with Council one of our plumbers will investigate the problem and undertake any required repairs.

Interference with, or deliberate damage to water meters is an offence. The property owner will be responsible for the cost of repair of water meters when meters are damaged by vehicles, lawn mowers etc.

9. ACCOUNTING

9.1. Payment date

Customers receive Water and Rates Notices in the mail with the due date clearly indicated. The due date is also advertised in the media and electronic notice boards.

9.2. Non-payment of Water and Rates Notice

Council will issue a reminder notice, in respect of assessments that have an overdue Water and/or Rates Notice. Council will action the notice according to the rates and charges collection policy. A copy of this policy can be found on Council's website.

9.3. Interest on overdue Water and Rates Notice

Interest on overdue notices shall be charged at a rate which will encourage the prompt payment of rates and charges. Interest will be charged at a nominated rate specified by Council and will apply to all rates and charges which remain unpaid 30 days after the end of the discount period. Please refer to Council's rates and charges collection policy for further information. A copy of this policy can be found on Council's website.

10. CUSTOMER CONSULTATION

10.1. Customer service standards

As part of the process of establishing our customer service standards, Council published a draft version of this document on our website allowing customers and other interested parties to readily view the proposed standards.

A feedback form was available on the website as well as all Customer Service Centres. Council welcomed comments, enquiries and suggestions about the proposed standards and considered all submissions.

Customers were notified about the proposed customer service standard submission period by means of media release on Council's website.

The Maranoa Customer Service Standards Water and Sewerage were adopted by Council in January 2017. If customers wish to give any feedback on the adopted standards, they are welcome to complete a general enquiry form available from the website or by contacting Council.

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11. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

11.1. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, by a person who is directly affected by an administrative action of Council or its staff, including a failure to take action.

Section 268(2) of the Local Government Act 2009 (the LG Act) defines an ‘**administrative action complaint**’ as a complaint that—

- a) is about an administrative action of a local government, including the following, for example—
 - i. a decision, or a failure to make a decision, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision;
 - ii. an act, or a failure to do an act;
 - iii. the formulation of a proposal or intention;
 - iv. the making of a recommendation; and
- b) is made by an affected person.

A request for service is NOT a complaint. A request for service is where you want Council to take action, for example, a leaking water pipe.

11.2. Complaints process

Council will try to resolve your complaint at the first point of contact, however, if this cannot be done, the complaint will be processed through our complaints management process outlined below:

Stage 1 Primary Investigation and Resolution

In this stage your complaint will be investigated. Once the investigation is completed you will receive the decision and reason/s for the decision.

Stage 2 Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 you may request an internal review. As part of this stage the Complaints Administrator will organize for an independent internal review to be conducted of the original investigation. Once this investigation is completed you will receive the decision and reason/s for the decision.

Stage 3 Review by External Agency

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 you can lodge your complaint with the Queensland Ombudsman or use other external complaints review processes through the courts.

Notwithstanding, it is the right of the individual to lodge a complaint with an external complaint entity such as the Queensland Ombudsman at any time.

11.3. How to lodge a complaint

There are a number of ways that you can lodge your complaint:

In person at any of our Customer Service Centres;

By telephone on 1300 007 662;

By complaint form available at our Customer Service Centres and on our website at www.maranoa.qld.gov.au;

In writing, by letter, facsimile or e-mail addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, PO Box 42, Mitchell QLD 4465 or facsimile 0746 246 990 or e-mail council@maranoa.qld.gov.au

11.4. Information you need to provide when lodging a complaint

You will need to provide the following details when you lodge a complaint:

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The nature of the complaint in as much detail as possible;

Detail of any loss or detriment you have suffered;

If the incident has been reported to any other agency or authority;

The remedy you are seeking;

Any supporting information and documentation, including names and contact details of anyone else who is able to support the complaint;

Your contact details.

11.5. Response time

The Complaints Administrator will acknowledge the receipt of your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it. After 10 working days, if you have not received a response please phone 1300 007 662.

11.6. Further information

If you wish to see further information please refer to the following documents found on Council's website:

- Complaints Management Policy
- Drinking Water Management Plan
- Town Planning Scheme
- Regional Domestic Water Services Policy
- Water Meters Policy

12. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

12.1. Process for mediation or dispute resolution

In the event that a customer cannot adequately find redress through the defined processes, the customer has the right to refer the matter to the Ombudsman and Council recognizes and respects that right.

Council will fully cooperate with the Ombudsman and will abide by any decision made in the matter.

13. CONTACTING COUNCIL

13.1. Council's contact details

Customers are encouraged to contact Council for assistance on matters such as service difficulties and faults, account enquiries and general and technical enquiries. Council also provides an after hour's phone service for emergencies such as broken water mains or sewerage overflows.

Phone (general and after hour emergencies)

If calling from Queensland phone: 1300 007 662

Postal address

Maranoa Regional Council

PO Box 42

Mitchell QLD 4465

Customer service centre address and business hours

Roma Customer Service Centre

Cnr Bungil and Quintin Streets, Roma

Monday to Friday 8:20am - 5pm

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Injune Customer Service Centre

32 Hutton Street, Injune

Monday to Friday 8:20am - 5pm

Mitchell Customer Service Centre

100 Cambridge Street, Mitchell

Monday to Friday 8:20am - 5pm

Surat Customer Service Centre

73 Burrows Street, Surat

Monday to Friday 8:20am - 5pm

Yuleba Customer Service Centre

20 Stephenson Street, Yuleba

Monday to Friday 8:20am - 5pm

14. REVIEW

Under section 120 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* Council is required to review its Customer Service Standard at least every five years.