



Attachments Excluded From Agenda

Meeting of Singleton Council

Tuesday 20 May 2025

"Vibrant – Progressive – Connected – Sustainable - Resilient"

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Infrastructure & Planning Report (Items Requiring Decision)

DI&P19/25 Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan

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A photograph of two male council workers in high-visibility yellow and blue uniforms, wide-brimmed hats, and orange gloves. They are crouching outdoors on grass next to a water meter. A red safety net is in the background. The text 'WATER + SEWER CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN 2025' is overlaid in white.

WATER + SEWER CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN 2025

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**SINGLETON
COUNCIL**

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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Wanaruah, Wonnarua People as the traditional owners and custodians of the land within the Singleton local government area. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future with a spiritual connection to these lands.



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1 INTRODUCTION

About this Plan

This document outlines Singleton Council's customer service responsibilities for Local Water Utilities in NSW.

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan (the Plan) defines Council's obligations, service standards, and commitment to delivering sustainable water and sewerage services. It sets clear expectations for customers regarding minimum service levels.

The plan aligns with Council's Customer Service Strategy and complies with the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) guidelines on service needs.

Council is dedicated to providing high-quality customer service across all operations. This plan reinforces our commitment to understanding customer needs and meeting expectations.

The Plan does not override Council's legal obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* or other statutory requirements.

1.1 Background

This document provides:

- An overview of services for drinking water, effluent discharge, and sewage collection and treatment. It also includes general information on trade waste services, though trade waste customers have individual contracts with Council for specific requirements.
- Details on customer service processes, including connections, metering, billing, maintenance (e.g., backflow devices), complaints, and dispute resolution.
- Key performance indicators and targets outlining Customer Service Standards, covering drinking water quality, water pressure, supply interruptions, sewer overflows and odours, response times, and repair completion times.

This document informs customers about Council's service commitments and performance as reported by NSW Government and national regulators. It is available to all customers, not just property owners, using Council's services.

The Customer Service Standards are a guideline, not a contract. They outline expected service levels and response times but do not establish binding obligations or exact service guarantees.

1.2 Interpretations

1.2.1 Employees and Contractors

Obligations under the Plan apply to Council, including its officers, employees, and contractors.

Any rights granted to Council under the plan may also be exercised by its officers, employees, and contractors as permitted by Council.



1.2.2 The Customer

A person is considered a customer under the Plan if they:

- Own and occupy a property connected to Council's water or sewer systems.
- Own a connected property but do not occupy it (e.g., a landlord or owner of an unoccupied property).
- Occupy a connected property and are responsible for water or sewer usage charges and are liable to pay water usage or sewer volumetric charges as set out in [Section 27 Annual Charges for Water and Sewerage Services](#) (e.g., a tenant or caravan park resident).
- Own a property where Council's water or sewer services are available for connection (e.g., vacant land).

Owners and occupiers of unserviced properties or those outside Council's water and sewer service areas are not considered customers under this plan.

1.2.3 Policies

Any reference to Council's Policies or Standards refers to the latest versions published on Council's website, including any updates or replacements on the same or similar topics.

2 CONTACTING US

For general enquiries or information about Council's products and services, customers can contact Council via:

- Phone: 02 6578 7290 (24/7)
- Email: council@singleton.nsw.gov.au
- Website: <https://www.singleton.nsw.gov.au> (online report an issue or feedback form)
- Community Portal
- Mail: PO Box 314, Singleton 2330 (Attn: Water and Sewer Business Unit)
- In Person: Corner of Queen and Civic Avenue, Singleton (8:30 AM – 4:30 PM)

For technical advice, issues, or fault reporting, contact:

- Water and Sewer Business Unit – council@singleton.nsw.gov.au
- Customer Service Centre – 02 6578 7290

For building and development enquiries near water or sewer assets, contact:

- Water and Sewer Development Engineer – council@singleton.nsw.gov.au
- Customer Service Centre – 02 6578 7290

2.1 Emergency Contact Numbers

For emergency attendance please call Council on 02 6578 7290 (24 hours, 7 days a week).



3 ABOUT COUNCIL'S WATER AND SEWER BUSINESS

Council is responsible for providing water and sewerage services across the Singleton Local Government Area (LGA). Its extensive network spans rural, residential, commercial, industrial, and bushland areas. These services are managed by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.

3.1 Council's Water and Sewer Assets

Council owns and maintains an extensive underground network of water and sewer mains, supplying most urban towns and villages. This infrastructure delivers water and collects and treats sewage for many homes and businesses.

Council's water and sewer network includes:

- 1 Sewage Treatment Plant;
- 1 Water Treatment Plant;
- 36 kilometres Water Trunk and Reticulation Mains (Raw);
- 95 kilometres Water Transfer Main;
- 185 kilometres Water Reticulation Mains;
- 129 kilometres Sewer Reticulation Mains;
- 30 kilometres Sewer Rising (Pressure) Mains;
- 15 Sewer Pump Stations;
- 8 Potable Water Pump Stations;
- 3 Raw Water Pump Stations;
- 13 Potable Water Reservoirs;
- 1 Raw Water Reservoir;
- 175 Active Pressure Sewer Systems;
- 4 Permanent Sewer Backup Generators;
- 1 Mobile Emergency Generator; and
- 54 Remote Telemetry Systems.

3.1.1 Water Supply Service Summary

Council provides high-quality water services to around 20,000 people, supplying over 6,300 households and 750 commercial or industrial properties.

Potable water is delivered to Singleton town, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Jerrys Plains, and Broke. Additionally, approximately 750 ML per year is supplied in bulk to major customers, including Singleton Abattoir, the Army Camp, potable water traders, and three coal mining complexes. Branxton and its surrounding areas are not serviced by Council.

Raw water is sourced from Glennies Creek Dam and treated at Obanvale Water Treatment Plant before distribution. Water supplied to Jerrys Plains is sourced from the Hunter River and treated by



AGL Macquarie on behalf of Council before reticulation by Council. Council holds high-security local water utility licences, ensuring priority access to water, even during droughts.

3.1.2 Sewerage Service Summary

Council provides sewerage treatment services to approximately 16,900 customers within Singleton's urban area, including Singleton town, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Huntview, and Darlington. The Maison Dieu area and parts of Redbournberry are connected to a pressure sewer system for industrial and residential customers. Branxton and its surrounding areas are not serviced by Council.

Council operates a sewage treatment plant at Whittingham, which provides tertiary treatment of effluent. The plant operates under an environment protection licence (EPL) issued by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and treated effluent is discharged into Doughboy Hollow near the Hunter River.

4 REGULATORY AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL WATER UTILITIES

The *Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities*, published by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) (then the Department of Planning and Environment), provides guidance for achieving local water utility objectives and managing risks.

DCCEEW's key regulatory and assurance objectives are to:

- Ensure safe and secure water and sewerage services.
- Protect public health and the environment.
- Promote Integrated Water Cycle Management for sustainability and liveability.
- Encourage resilient infrastructure and innovation.
- Engage with communities to align services with their needs.
- Safeguard the interests of current and future customers.

To meet these objectives, local water utilities are expected to:

- Conduct strategic, evidence-based planning that considers climate risks.
- Identify and manage risks effectively.
- Operate and maintain systems safely, with strong emergency management.
- Invest in fit-for-purpose infrastructure.
- Monitor and improve performance.
- Ensure fair and efficient pricing for customers.
- Maintain financial sustainability.

These objectives guide Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit in delivering effective water and sewer services for the Singleton LGA, now and into the future.



WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

5 WATER SUPPLY

Council provides a reliable drinking water supply that meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 through its network of reservoirs, pump stations, and mains, serving two treated water supply schemes.

For details on connection entitlements and service areas, refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#). A [map](#) of the water supply network is available on Council's website.

5.1 Potable (Drinking Water Supply)

5.1.1 Singleton Water Supply Scheme

Council supplies potable drinking water to customers in designated urban and semi-rural areas of the Singleton LGA, including Singleton Town, Singleton Heights, Hunterview, The Retreat, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Broke, Singleton Military Area, and Whittingham to the Abattoir.

Council also manages bulk water supply to:

- Singleton Military Area and the Abattoir (treated water).
- Bulga Coal, Mount Thorley/Warkworth, and Integra Coal (treated and untreated water).
- Mushroom Composters (under a joint venture agreement).

The Singleton Water Supply Scheme delivers reticulated treated water from the Obanvale Water Treatment Plant on Bridgman Road, Obanvale.

5.1.2 Jerrys Plains Water Supply Scheme

Jerrys Plains receives treated potable water with the same quality and pressure standards as the Singleton Water Supply Scheme, but without fire hydrants in the network.

Water for Jerrys Plains is treated by AGL Macquarie on behalf of Council and distributed by Council to the village.

5.2 Non-Potable Water Supply

5.2.1 Mount Thorley Joint Venture

Council manages the supply of untreated bulk water to Bulga Coal, Mount Thorley/Warkworth, and Mushroom Composters under the service terms outlined in a joint venture agreement.

5.2.2 Non-Potable (Raw) Water Scheme

Council provides untreated, non-potable water for irrigation and stock use to properties between Glennies Creek Dam and Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, including Judan Road. This supply is connected to Council's Glennies Creek Trunk Water Main before the water treatment plant.



5.3 Non-Council Service Areas

5.3.1 Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID)

The Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID) pipeline is a community-funded and privately operated irrigation supply serving members in Broke Fordwich, Bulga, and Milbrodale.

Established under the Private Irrigation Districts Act 1973 (now the *Water Management Act 2000*), the PID is not operated by Council.

For more information and contact details, visit www.bfpid.com.au.

5.3.2 Branxton Service Area - Hunter Water

Hunter Water supplies water and sewer services to Branxton and North Rothbury. Council does not service these areas.

For more information, visit www.hunterwater.com.au.

5.3.3 Huntlee Water

Huntlee Water supplies water and sewer services to the Huntlee Area. Council does not service this area.

For more information, visit www.huntlee.com.au.

5.3.4 Non Reticulated Service Areas

Areas that are outside Council, Hunter Water and Huntlee's water supply areas are typically serviced through on-site water sources, including rain water tanks.

Customers are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of their own supply.

Further information is available from NSW Health, [Rainwater tanks](#).

5.4 Fire Hydrants

Council's water mains are typically located in public roads, reserves, pathways, or water supply reserves.

Property owners must install private hydrants if their development is beyond the reach of a street hydrant and has a fire compartment over 500 m².

New urban residential lots must have full fire hydrant coverage per Australian Standard AS 2419, except for battle-axe lots that meet NSW Fire Brigades Policy Number 8.

If AS 2419 fire hydrant coverage is not practical, a private fire service or an approved tank storage alternative must be provided, subject to approval from:

- Council's Development and Environment Group
- NSW Fire Brigades
- NSW Rural Fire Service



All fire service plans must be certified by a qualified hydraulic consultant and approved by the relevant fire authority before submission to Council.

5.5 Standpipes - Water Tanker Bulk Filling Stations

Council has two fixed bulk water filling stations (standpipes) across the LGA, allowing direct water extraction into tankers. These key-operated units provide fast bulk water access and regulate volumes through data input.

There are two permanent standpipes located at:

- Works Depot – 39 Maison Dieu Road, Gowrie
- Water and Sewer Depot – Waterworks Lane

The [POL/10066 Water Carters Policy](#) outlines the responsibilities for accessing these facilities. The application form and policy are available on Council's website.

For information on the application process, fees, and charges, contact Council's Customer Service Centre at 02 6578 7290.

5.6 Connection Types

5.6.1 Standard Connection

A standard water connection provides the service level outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and this Plan.

To apply for a new connection, upgrade, downsizing, relocation or disconnection, submit the required form, available on Council's website.

Council provides standard metering services at a fixed cost per the annual fees and charges. Non-standard connections or specialised work will require a custom quote.

5.6.2 Non-Standard Connection

A standard connection provides the service level outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and this Plan.

If a standard connection is unavailable, you may apply for a non-standard connection, such as the Above Obanvale irrigation and stock supply.

Approved non-standard connections provide access to Council's water services but at a different service level than standard connections.

For enquiries about non-standard connections, contact Council's Water and Sewer Team via the General Enquiry contact details.

5.6.3 Rural Connection

Properties on the rural water supply receive a non-standard connection with the same water quality as town supply. However, it does not meet firefighting requirements, water pressure may vary, and continuous supply is not guaranteed.



5.6.4 Fire Service Connection

A fire service connection supplies water for fire safety measures such as sprinklers, drenchers, and hydrants, including combined services.

Using water from a fire service for any purpose other than firefighting or equipment testing is prohibited and considered water theft.

For details on ownership, installation, and maintenance, refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

For enquiries, visit Council's website (Fire Services section) or contact the Water and Sewer Business Unit via the General Enquiry contact details.

5.6.5 Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control Installations

Backflow is the reverse flow of water into Council's service lines, pipes, or mains, which can compromise water quality. To prevent this, all connections to Council's water supply, including fire service connections, must have backflow prevention devices.

A backflow prevention device stops water from flowing back into Council's system, ensuring the safety and quality of treated water.

Council's Backflow Prevention Program Aims To:

- Ensure all residential properties have an approved potable cold water meter with a non-return valve.
- Maintain an ongoing water meter replacement program.
- Provide accessible backflow prevention information and policies.
- Assess backflow risks as part of development applications.
- Register and conduct annual testing of testable devices.

Customer Responsibilities:

- High and medium hazard properties (as per AS/NZS 3500.1 Section 4) must install appropriate backflow prevention devices.
- Installation must be done by an accredited backflow prevention plumber, who must submit an installation record to Council.
- Additional controls may be required for residential properties with potential cross-contamination risks, such as those using potable water to fill rainwater tanks.

For full installation requirements and conditions, refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) or contact Council's Liquid Trade Waste Officer via the General Enquiry contact details.

6 WATER CONSERVATION

Council encourages water efficiency and have introduced Water Saving Measures in March 2018 to reduce residential water use.

Customer Responsibility & Billing:

- Customers are responsible for their water consumption and receive timely billing to help manage costs.



- Water accounts are issued three times a year, shortly after meter readings, allowing early detection of unexpected water loss.

Water Conservation Initiatives:

- Rainwater Tank Rebates
- Dual Flush Toilet Rebates

For more details, visit Council's website.

6.1 Permanent Water Wise Rules

Water Wise Rules

To promote water conservation, Council has implemented Water Wise Rules to reduce drinking water demand and minimise waste. These common-sense outdoor water-saving measures apply to all residents, businesses, and government users of Council's water supply.

Key Rules:

- Hand-held hoses must have a trigger nozzle.
- Sprinklers, irrigation systems, or hoses can only be used before 10 am or after 4 pm to reduce evaporation.
- Hosing of driveways, paths, and paved areas is not allowed—use a broom or blower instead.

Permitted Uses:

- Preventing or managing accidents, health hazards, or environmental issues.
- Fire protection and system testing.
- New lawns and gardens may be watered for up to 14 days after installation.
- Water can be used anytime for cooling people or animals.

Exemptions & Restrictions:

- Exemptions apply for health, safety, and emergency reasons, and for businesses such as commercial nurseries, landscapers, sporting grounds, and firefighting.
- Water restrictions (if imposed) will override these Water Wise Rules.

For more details, visit Council's website.

6.2 Water Restrictions

Council may interrupt, limit, or restrict water supply, when necessary, as determined by the Mayor and General Manager. Restrictions may apply to:

- Usage purposes
- Permitted usage times
- Usage methods
- Allowed water quantities



Water restrictions are enforced during droughts or emergencies when water supply becomes critically low. These restrictions are widely advertised across multiple platforms to ensure all customers are informed.

Compliance & Penalties

- Residents must comply with restrictions from the specified start date.
- Non-compliance may result in penalty notices, as per legislation and Council resolutions.
- For details on water restriction triggers and restriction categories, refer to Council's [Drought and Emergency Response Management Plan](#) on Council's website.

7 SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Council operates a single sewer system and one sewage treatment plant within the LGA. It is licensed by the EPA and must comply with strict environmental and health protection standards.

7.1 Standard Service Area

Council provides sewer services to Singleton, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview, and Darlington. Maison Dieu and parts of Redbournberry are connected to a pressure sewer system for industrial and residential use.

For details regarding services areas refer to [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#). A sewerage service network [map](#) is available on Council's website.

7.2 Non-Standard Service Areas

7.2.1 Huntlee Water

Huntlee Water supplies water and sewer services to the Huntlee Area. Council does not provide these services.

For more details, visit www.huntlee.com.au.

7.2.2 Hunter Water

Hunter Water supplies water and sewer services to Branxton and North Rothbury. Council does not provide these services.

For more details, visit www.hunterwater.com.au.

7.2.3 Non Reticulated Service Areas

Areas that are outside Council, Hunter Water and Huntlee's sewer supply areas are typically serviced through on-site sewer systems (OSSM), including septic tanks.

Customers are responsible for maintenance and operation of their OSSM.

For more details, visit <https://www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/Development/Land-Environment-and-Heritage/On-site-Sewage-Management>.



7.3 Liquid Trade Waste Services

To discharge trade waste into Council's sewer system, you must obtain written consent and, if required, enter into a separate agreement in accordance with Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

Council will not grant consent if accepting the trade waste would breach any laws, including the Act or Council's Environmental Protection Licence(s).

7.3.1 What is Liquid Trade Waste?

Trade waste is liquid waste from commercial or industrial activities, excluding domestic sewage from toilets, hand basins, and showers.

Common trade waste sources:

- Food businesses generate cooking oil, grease, and food solids, which can block sewers and cause overflows, harming public health and the environment. To prevent this, grease traps are required for businesses discharging greasy waste.
- Industrial and commercial premises may produce toxic or harmful substances like heavy metals, organic compounds, solvents, oils, and grease. Sewer treatment plants are not designed to handle these substances, which can pose risks to workers and the environment.

Regulations and Compliance:

- All businesses discharging trade waste must comply with [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).
- A current Trade Waste Approval is required for businesses connected to the sewer system, as per Council's EPA Environmental Protection Licence.
- In some cases, Council may set different approval conditions in consultation with DCCEEW.

Waste Tracking and Monitoring:

- Council tracks waste disposal from grease traps and industrial holding tanks.
- Approval conditions specify how often grease traps must be cleaned.

For more information or to discuss trade waste requirements, contact Council's Trade Waste Officer.

8 OTHER SERVICES

Council offers various water and sewer-related services, including:

- Water management support – advice for high-volume users and commercial activities
- [Drinking water quality information](#)
- Locating water and sewer infrastructure – including Before You Dig (BYD)
- Plumbing information
- Water meter services – testing, special readings, and loss investigations
- Rebates – rainwater tank and dual flush toilet rebates



- Connection assistance – guidance for connecting to services
- Water data – river flow, rainfall, storage, and consumption information
- Infrastructure planning – water/sewer main plans, extensions, adjustments, and viability assessments
- Development services – processing applications for subdivisions and new developments
- Certification and compliance – water pressure certificates, sewer drainage diagrams, design checks, and final plan preparation

For response timeframes, refer to Customer Service Standards (Appendix A) on Council's website.

9 GENERAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council has the right to:

- Enter a customer's property to read, replace, or maintain the water meter.
- Enter in emergencies or if there's suspected breach of legislation.
- Require staff and meter readers to carry and show identification if asked.

Customers are responsible for:

- Maintaining internal plumbing, including preventing tree root intrusion and checking for water leaks.
- Ensuring the water meter is accessible to staff or meter readers.
- Covering the cost of a sewer blockage caused by blocked inspection holes, defective fittings, or improper items in the sewer.
- Notifying Council of any hazards, such as dangerous dogs or obstacles, that may block meter access.
- Informing Council if they rely on uninterrupted or high volumes of water for life support equipment.
- Ensuring stormwater drainage is not connected to or does not enter the sewer system through the overflow relief gully.

Customers must also allow authorised Council staff access to their property to:

- Install, read, test, maintain, or alter meters.
- Replace meters and other equipment.
- Connect, restrict, or restore water supply.
- Inspect, repair, maintain, or remove infrastructure or equipment.
- Disconnect unauthorised connections to the system.

10 FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE

10.1 Planned Maintenance Works

Council occasionally conducts planned maintenance and emergency repairs on the water and sewer systems. We understand this may cause disruptions and, for planned work, we aim to:



Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule planned work requiring water or sewer shutdowns at times that minimise disruption. • Notify affected property occupiers at least 24 hours in advance. • Provide notice via letterbox drops, social media, Council's website, and variable message boards (where possible). • Aim to complete prolonged residential outages between 8:30 am and 3:00 pm. • Offer alternative water supplies, such as tankers, temporary connections, or bottled water, for outages expected to exceed 8 hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule planned work to minimise disruption to customers. • Provide 7 days' notice (or by agreement) before starting work. • Notify via letterbox drops, social media, Council's website, and variable message boards (where possible). • Aim to carry out work between 6 pm and 6 am, or on weekends, for prolonged outages in commercial and industrial areas. • Provide alternative water supplies, such as water tankers, temporary connections, or bottled water, for outages lasting more than 8 hours.
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers Critical Water Supply Customers (Refer also Section 15.5 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and other Critical Water Supply Customers to arrange a convenient time for planned interruptions to minimise impact.. • Provide notice via doorknocking, letterbox drops, or direct contact. • Give 7 days' notice (or as agreed) before starting planned work. • Offer alternative water supplies, such as tankers, temporary connections, or bottled water, for outages lasting more than 8 hours.

10.2 Unplanned Interruptions

In the event of an unplanned interruption, such as during an emergency, Council will work quickly to restore services and minimise inconvenience. However, this may mean that we need to prioritise completing the repair over providing individual notification to customers (e.g. by doorknocking); this is particularly relevant after-hours.

For updates, contact Council's Customer Service Centre, which will provide estimated restoration times where available. Information will also be shared via social media and the Council website, especially if the interruption affects a large area.



Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be provided via doorknocking/letterbox drops, social media, Council's website, and/or variable message boards, where reasonable and possible. • If the interruption is under four hours, only customers significantly affected will be notified by doorknocking. • Alternative water supplies, such as temporary connections or emergency bottled water, will be provided for outages expected to last longer than eight hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be provided via doorknocking, letterbox drops, social media, Council's website, or variable message boards, where reasonable and possible. • For interruptions under four hours, only those significantly affected will be notified by doorknocking. • Alternative water supplies, such as temporary connections or emergency bottled water, will be provided for outages lasting longer than eight hours.
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers Critical Water Supply Customers (Refer also Section 15.5 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise notifications via doorknocking or direct contact, and take prompt action to restore supply. • Provide alternative water supplies, such as temporary connections or emergency bottled water, for outages lasting longer than eight hours.

10.3 Emergency Repair Works

For emergency repairs and service faults, Council will, where possible:

- Respond to faults within the quoted timeframes.
- Maintain a list of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and provide immediate notifications and regular updates.
- Contact affected properties directly or use social media, the website, and other channels to inform customers.
- Minimise water interruptions.
- Provide alternative water supplies, such as temporary connections or emergency bottled water, for outages lasting longer than 8 hours.
- Supply water from hydrants in urban areas for firefighting, when possible.

In emergencies, Council will try to contact customers if entry to their property is needed for water supply or sewer system inspections or maintenance. If direct contact isn't possible, updates will be provided via social media and the Council website.



10.4 Force Majeure

Council's ability to provide water and sewer services may be impacted by events beyond its control, such as severe weather, natural disasters (e.g. fire, flood, lightning, or earthquake).

10.5 Critical Water Supply Customers

In the event of planned or unplanned supply interruptions, Council will prioritise notification and restore supply for all Critical Water Supply Customers. A register of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers will be maintained for planning and during unplanned interruptions. Council will also consider the impact on Critical Water Supply Customers, though it may not always be possible to schedule works to meet all their needs.

Criticality Grading	Definition	Customer Type
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which a water supply disruption poses a serious risk to human or animal welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-patient hospitals and surgical facilities• Dialysis facilities / patients
Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which a water supply disruption would significantly affect facility operations but not pose a threat to life or safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctors and dentists• Medical facilities and out-patient hospitals• Assisted living facilities• Educational institutions (schools, universities)• Daycare and Preschool facilities• High water users (>35 megalitres / year)• Medical / food production facilities• Large scale animal housing or processing facilities

10.6 Special Health Needs

Customers who rely on water for special medical needs must inform Council. Council keeps a register of properties using life support machines, like dialysis machines, to ensure a continuous water supply during emergencies or planned shutdowns.

Council will stay in regular contact with registered customers and provide emergency contact details. We also share this information with Renal Units for patients' awareness.

Some customers with special health needs may qualify for a water charge rebate. More information is available in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).



11 ACCESS AND ENTRY TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

If Council needs to enter your property to access water or sewer infrastructure (such as meters, pressure sewer units, manholes, or mains), we will:

- Make every effort to contact the property owner/occupier before entering for urgent repairs.
- Ensure all Council staff or contractors show identification upon arrival.
- Inform the owner/occupier about the work, necessary staff, equipment, and the expected timeframe.
- Complete the work with minimal disruption to the property and occupier.
- Leave a "calling card" if the owner/occupier is not present.
- Discuss any reinstatement works before starting.
- Aim to restore the property to its original condition as soon as possible.

In all cases, Council will:

- Follow safety best practices during work.
- Present ourselves neatly and professionally.
- Conduct ourselves with respect, avoiding any offensive behaviour or language.

Reliability of Service

In a large system like Council's, unexpected issues, such as water leaks or sewer blockages, can occur. As these problems are usually unplanned, we rely on the community to inform us.

Council is only responsible for maintaining and repairing its own infrastructure.

For any issues, contact us at 02 6578 7290, available 24/7.

12 BURSTS, BLOCKAGES AND SPILLS

12.1 Sewer Blockages

A sewer blockage, also known as a sewer choke, occurs when something inside the pipe prevents it from working properly. Common causes include:

- Tree roots infiltrating the pipes
- Improper items flushed down the toilet, such as wet wipes, nappies, rags, or toys

Property owners are responsible for clearing blockages and repairing cracks in their sewer plumbing, up to the connection point of the sewer main. If the connection is outside the property boundary, the owner's responsibility ends at the property line.

In case of a blockage, the property owner must first contact a licensed plumber to identify the cause. If the blockage is within the owner's responsibility, they must cover the cost of clearing it and any necessary repairs.

If the plumber determines the blockage is within the Council's responsibility, the plumber or owner should contact the Council immediately for assistance. The Council will coordinate with the plumber



or owner to address the issue. If the blockage is indeed in the Council's area, they will reimburse reasonable charges from the plumber.

12.1.1 Common Causes of Blockages

Sewer blockages caused by 'flushable' wipes are a growing issue for Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. Despite being marketed as flushable, these wipes do not break down like toilet paper. They can clog pipes, leading to sewage overflows in homes or waterways.

Consumer advocacy group CHOICE tested 12 brands of 'flushable' wipes using an agitation device that simulates sewer conditions. The test compared:

- 4-ply toilet paper, which broke down within minutes.
- 'Flushable' wipes, which remained fully intact even after six hours.

For sewer systems to function properly, anything flushed must disintegrate immediately—otherwise, it can cause blockages in pipes, usually within the property where it was flushed.

So, if it's not pee, paper, or poo...don't flush it!

Just because something can be flushed, doesn't mean it should be. To help ensure your pressure sewer system works properly and to avoid blockages and damage to the pump unit, the following must **NOT** be placed into the pressure sewer or any other household sewer system:



The following must **NOT** be disposed of in any sewer system:



- Pesticides and herbicides, including any waste from their preparation.
- Natural or Synthetic materials such as resins, plastic monomers, adhesives, and rubber emulsions.
- Radioactive substances or chemicals controlled under the *Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Act 1985*.
- Substances likely to produce toxic or harmful vapours that can be hazardous to health.
- Substances that pose a risk to sewer workers or the environment.
- Materials that could damage pipes, pumps, or treatment facilities.
- Trade waste, unless approved by the Council.
- Any substance prohibited under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* unless specifically authorised by the Council.

Proper disposal of these substances helps protect the sewer system, the environment, and public health.

12.1.2 Water Damage and Sewer Overflows

Water mains can occasionally burst due to pressure, ground movement, tree roots, water pressure changes, heavy traffic vibrations, or general wear and tear. Sewer blockages may result from a buildup of fats, oils, debris, or tree roots, potentially causing overflows on private property or from a manhole.

Council is committed to assisting customers in resolving flooding issues. If flooding from water or sewer systems occurs, contact Council immediately. The Water and Sewer Business Unit will respond as quickly as possible, both during and after business hours.

Council understands the distress and inconvenience caused by such incidents. While Council provides support and advice, liability will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If water damage or sewer overflows occur:

- Contact your insurer.
- Tenants should notify their insurer about personal belongings and inform the property owner or manager of any damage.

12.1.3 Claim for Damages

If you experience loss, damage, or injury due to Council's activities, you may be eligible for compensation. To submit a claim, complete the Request for Compensation Form, available on Council's website or by contacting us. Your claim must outline the issue, and the compensation sought.

Once received, Council will:

- Acknowledge your claim.
- Provide the contact details of the officer handling your case.

Council will investigate the incident and notify you of the outcome, including any approved compensation and the reasons for the decision.

If you have insurance, consider contacting your provider to check if your loss or damage is covered.



12.1.4 Preventing Sewage Flooding in the Home

An overflow relief gully (yard gully) is a plumbing fixture designed to release sewage outside the home if a drain or sewer becomes blocked. It has a loose-fitting grate that pops open during a blockage, preventing sewage from backing up into the house.

To ensure it functions properly:

- Do not cover the gully with garden beds, landscaping, or pot plants.
- Check regularly for blockages from silt, corrosion, or permanent fixtures like concrete.

Property owners must ensure their home has a properly working gully. If you need one installed or modified, contact a licensed plumber—costs are the owner's responsibility.

12.2 Water Breaks Responsibilities

Council is responsible for repairing water main breaks and leaks, including all water lines upstream of the meter in road reserves.

Property owners are responsible for leaks and breaks downstream of the meter. If a pipe bursts or leaks, the owner must hire and pay for a licensed plumber. In some cases, assistance may be available for undetected leaks not associated with fittings.

13 IMPACT ON A CUSTOMER'S PROPERTY

13.1 Reinstatement of Surfaces

Water and sewer mains are typically located under the street, footpath, or along the rear/side boundary of a property. Occasionally, landscaping or driveway work is required to repair or replace mains and infrastructure.

Council will take reasonable care during these works and will try to avoid cutting driveways when possible. If cutting is unavoidable, Council will restore the driveway once the work is complete.

For grassed verges or nature strips, turf may be replaced with grass seed and topsoil to encourage growth.

14 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Council upholds high standards for its water supply and sewer services, aligned with its corporate vision and commitment to customers, including environmental responsibilities.

The industry uses several terms to measure service performance, such as Levels of Service, Service Standards, and Customer Service Targets. Council has adopted clear Customer Service Standards that reflect its core activities and ensure customers are informed about the services they receive and the expected timeframes.

As part of its service philosophy, Council will:

- Provide continuous water and sewer services, except during emergency repairs or planned maintenance.



- Supply high-quality drinking water, free from harmful organisms, colour, taste, or odour, in line with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (except for Glennies Creek and Mount Thorley raw water supply schemes). This also includes the *Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957 (NSW)*
- Minimise sewer system overflows and promptly clean and disinfect affected areas.
- Summarise customer complaints as required and report annually under the National Performance Reporting framework and report publically on an annual basis.

Service delivery involves not only response times but also maintaining a high-quality level of service. Appendix A – Customer Service Standards, Priorities, Timeframes, and Levels of Service outlines the standards, targets, and benchmarks to measure Council's success, and the level of service customers can expect.

Quality of Service

Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit aims to:

- Manage assets to provide reliable water and sewer services.
- Supply drinking water that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- Operate the sewerage system responsibly, in compliance with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

Council also conducts regular water quality monitoring of both water and treated effluent and publishes the results on the [Pollution Monitoring and Reporting](#) page of its website.

14.1 Performance Monitoring

Council participates in NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) annual performance monitoring program for Local Water Utilities.

See [Local Water Utility Performance Monitoring Report](#) for Council's full performance monitoring report and data.

15 WATER QUALITY

Council regularly tests drinking water quality to ensure it meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines set by NSW Health.

15.1 Discoloured Dirty Water

'Dirty' water refers to a change in water colour, typically brown or yellow. This occurs when a sudden increase in water flow stirs up sediment, which becomes suspended and causes discolouration. The materials responsible, such as iron or manganese, are usually present in very low levels and are generally harmless, though the water may appear unpleasant.

Residents further from the nearest reservoir or at the end of a street may experience discolouration more often, as water travels further, allowing heavier particles to settle. Homes that are unoccupied for a while may also see discolouration when water is first turned on. Additionally, dirty water can result from planned or unplanned scouring or from galvanised pipes in older homes.



15.1.1 From Scouring

Dirty water often occurs during mains flushing, known as scouring. Scouring involves sending a high-pressure flow of water through the mains to clean out sediment. This can cause temporary discolouration in the water, but it will clear quickly after running a tap for a few minutes.

If you experience discoloured water after a scheduled flush, run an outside tap for 1 to 5 minutes until the water clears. Avoid doing laundry until the water is clear.

Council will notify residents before any planned scouring.

15.1.2 From Galvanised Pipes

Corrosion in older homes with galvanised pipes can cause water to appear orange or brown. Discolouration is more common in houses with galvanised pipes, which are no longer used in modern construction. Copper or polyethylene pipes are now standard.

If you experience regular discolouration and have galvanised pipes, consider replacing them. Contact a licensed plumber for advice. Any repairs to galvanised pipes are the customer's responsibility.

15.1.3 Milky White Coloured Water

Milky or white water is caused by tiny air bubbles trapped in the pipes, often after repairing a water main. This water is harmless and will clear up on its own if left in a container. It will not stain your laundry.

15.1.4 Dirty Water and Laundry

Discolouration caused by materials like iron or manganese may leave rust-coloured stains on light clothing and linen. If you notice discoloured water, avoid washing clothes or linens to prevent staining.

If washing is unavoidable, follow these tips:

- Run some water into the machine to check the colour before washing clothes.
- Check the water colour before the rinse cycle to prevent stains.

If your clothes are stained, keep them wet and avoid letting them dry, as stains set when dry. Use a nappy stain remover or soak and wash the items as directed to remove the stains once the water clears.

Some washing powders can increase the pH level of the water, causing stains. Detergents with high phosphorus levels can also contribute to this. A quality liquid detergent may help remove stains.

If dirty water causes damage to your property, including clothing, furniture, or fittings, Council will assess repair or replacement requests on a case-by-case basis. Details for claims and conditions are available in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

15.1.5 What Should I do if I Notice Dirty Water?

If you notice discoloured water in your home, especially after a water interruption or nearby works, follow these steps:



1. Turn on the outside tap nearest to your water meter and let it run for up to five minutes until it clears.
2. Then, go to the tap furthest from your water meter (usually the backyard garden tap) and run it for a few minutes until it clears.
3. After flushing both taps for five minutes, the water should be clear.

If the water remains discoloured, contact Council to report the issue. Council will arrange for local water main flushing. During flushing, you may experience dirty water, but it will clear soon after.

With 300 kilometres of water mains, 11 pump stations, and 14 reservoirs, we rely on residents to report severe or ongoing discolouration so we can take action.

15.1.6 Tips While Your Water is Dirty

- Avoid using the dishwasher or washing machine until the water clears.
- Ensure the water is completely clear before using hot water, as dirty water can damage hot water systems.
- Running a tap for 5 minutes uses about 75 litres of water, costing less than 20 cents.
- Collect the water used to flush the pipes in a bucket and use it for your lawn or garden.

15.2 Earthy or Musty Odour and Taste - Geosmin and MIB

Seasonal increases in algae or bacteria in the dam can sometimes cause an earthy or musty taste and smell in drinking water. This is due to naturally occurring compounds called Geosmin and Methylisoborneol (MIB).

These compounds can be detected at very low concentrations by taste and smell. While changes in temperature can cause algae and bacteria levels to rise in Glennies Creek Dam, resulting in higher Geosmin and MIB levels, the water is still safe to drink.

Routine treatment processes do not remove Geosmin and MIB, but the water remains compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. During times of higher levels, Council monitors the water quality to ensure there are no health risks and may use additional treatments like Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) to reduce these compounds, though it won't remove them completely.

Geosmin is purely an aesthetic concern. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to improve the taste and odour of the water.

15.2.1 Geosmin and MIB and the Treatment Process

Council uses various treatment processes to remove algae, particulates, and dissolved compounds from the water sourced from Glennies Creek Dam.

To reduce Geosmin and MIB levels below detectable taste and odour thresholds, activated carbon is used as a pre-treatment and removed during filtration. Activated carbon is highly porous, absorbing taste and odour compounds.

However, the amount of activated carbon needed to fully remove Geosmin and MIB in some cases may exceed the water treatment plant's design capacity. If detectable levels occur, water quality testing is increased, and all treatment options are explored.



Is the water safe to drink?

Yes, the potable town water supplied by Council is safe to drink. Our treatment processes remove harmful toxins, algae, and other particulates. All potable water complies with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, and regular monitoring confirms there are no health risks. Geosmin is only an aesthetic issue.

Why can I still taste and smell it? Is it being removed?

Geosmin has a strong, unpleasant taste and odour, but it is harmless. Some people may detect it at very low levels (0.00001 mg/L), which is much lower than the taste threshold for chlorine (0.1–0.4 mg/L). While it is not harmful, it can be noticeable.

When will it be fixed?

The warmer-than-usual winter and ongoing favourable conditions for algae growth make it difficult to predict when Geosmin and MIB levels will decline. As algae levels decrease, Geosmin typically reduces as well. Council is investigating all treatment options to address the issue.

Is there anything I can do to reduce the taste?

Reports suggest that storing water in the fridge or adding lemon or fruit (such as orange, mint, cucumber, or watermelon) can help mask the taste and odour.

15.3 Boil Water Alert

In rare cases, Council may issue a "boil water alert" if the water supply is deemed unsafe for drinking. This could happen due to contamination, treatment process failure (including exceedance of critical control points), or poor raw water quality.

Under Section 22 of the *Public Health Act 2010*, the Chief Health Officer has the power to issue advice, for the benefit of the public, concerning the safety of drinking water and any possible risks to health. This advice may include a boil water alert. Council will issue the advice to the public in a form and manner directed by the Chief Health Officer.

Council may issue a boil water alert of its own discretion. However, before issuing a boil water alert, Council will consult with Public Health Unit (PHU) wherever possible.

Once a boil water alert has been issued, Council will notify customers urgently and will use a combination of the contact and communication methods.

Council will consider providing alternate sources of water to affected customers, including bottled water, dependent on the scale and anticipated length of time the boil water alert is anticipated to last.

Council will consult with the PHU before lifting a boil water alert. In lifting a boil water alert, Council will endeavour to communicate the information in the same way the alert was issued.

Information on considerations in determining the need for a boil water alert and communication methods can be found in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#), available on Council's website.



WORKS AND MAINTENANCE

16 OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Council provides and maintains your water meter, repairing or replacing it at no cost if a fault is detected or as part of the replacement program. However, if the meter is damaged or tampered with, the property owner will be charged for repair or replacement costs.

Council is responsible for maintaining the water main, fittings, water service up to and including the meter, and approved internal meters on private property. This covers the service line, pipes from the water main to the meter, and the meter itself.

The property owner is responsible for all pipes, taps, fittings, and backflow prevention devices on the property that come from the meter, including the boundary garden tap on the meter frame.

16.1 Water Meters

Council is responsible for maintaining the water main, fittings, and service lines up to and including the water meter, as well as approved internal meters on private property.

Property owners are responsible for all pipes, taps, fittings, and backflow prevention devices beyond the meter, including the boundary garden tap on the meter frame.

Council provides and maintains the water meter, repairing or replacing it at no cost if a fault is detected or as part of the replacement program. However, if the meter is damaged or tampered with, repair or replacement costs will be charged to the property owner.

16.2 Fire Services

Council owns and maintains the fire service connection up to and including the isolating valve at the water main, which includes the water main, tee, and isolating valve.

The property owner is responsible for maintaining the fire service, including pipelines and fittings beyond the isolating valve.

To be recognised as a Fire Service, the owner must submit an annual Backflow Prevention Device Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Report in line with Council's [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

16.3 Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control Devices

Property owners are responsible for installing, maintaining, and certifying backflow prevention devices in compliance with AS/NZS 3500.1.

Only backflow-certified plumbers can test these devices, and regular testing is the owner's responsibility. These devices are essential for protecting the water supply system.

Owners must ensure their property meets the Backflow and Cross-Connection Control requirements of this plan and that all installed devices comply with Council's [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).



16.4 Sewer Services and Components

16.4.1 Sewer Maintenance Shaft

Council is responsible for maintaining and repairing maintenance holes for access. However, property owners must keep maintenance shafts accessible, with at least one metre of clearance.

It is illegal to build over or cover maintenance shafts with soil, grass, or other materials. If a driveway or paving is built within one metre of a Council-maintained shaft, the owner must cover any demolition or reinstatement costs required for maintenance or repairs.

16.4.2 Sewer Main Outside Property Boundary

If the sewer main is outside the property boundary, maintenance responsibilities are:

- Property Owner: Responsible for maintaining and repairing sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point, including the boundary (inspection) shaft.
- Council: Responsible for maintaining and repairing:
 - The sewer main
 - The property connection drains up to the boundary shaft opening or 1 metre inside the property boundary (whichever is less)
 - 1 metre inside the property boundary if no boundary shaft exists.

16.4.3 Sewer Main Inside Property Boundary

If the sewer main is inside the property boundary, maintenance responsibilities are:

- Property Owner: Responsible for maintaining and repairing sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point, including the boundary (inspection) shaft.
- Council: Responsible for maintaining and repairing:
 - The sewer main and maintenance hole
 - The property connection drains up to the boundary shaft opening or 1 metre from the sewer main (whichever is less)
 - 1 metre from the sewer main if no boundary shaft exists.

16.4.4 Deep Sewer Mains with Vertical Risers

Deep sewer mains may have sealed vertical risers, which are narrow pipes extending from the sewer main to at least 1.5m below the surface. Property connections branch through a junction to the riser, and some systems include boundary traps and vent lines.

If the deep sewer main is outside the property boundary:

- Property Owner: Responsible for maintaining and repairing sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point, including the boundary (inspection) shaft, boundary traps, 55 vents, and vent lines.
- Council: Responsible for maintaining and repairing:
 - The sewer main and maintenance hole



- The property connection drains up to the boundary trap opening or 1m inside the property boundary, whichever is lesser
- 1m from the vertical riser if there is no boundary trap

If the deep sewer main is inside the property boundary:

- Property Owner: Responsible for maintaining and repairing sewer pipes up to the boundary connection point, including the boundary shaft, boundary traps, 55 vents, and vent lines.
- Council: Responsible for maintaining and repairing:
 - The sewer main and maintenance hole
 - The property connection drains up to the boundary trap opening or 1m from the vertical riser, whichever is lesser
 - 1m from the vertical riser if there is no boundary trap

16.4.5 Maintenance of the Boundary Shaft

The sewer boundary shaft is part of the private sewer system and must be installed by a licensed plumber hired by the property owner or developer. The property owner is responsible for its maintenance.

Key Responsibilities

- Locating and Inspecting Blockages:
 - Before contacting Council or a plumber, the property owner or occupant must locate and inspect the boundary shaft, which is near the property boundary closest to the sewer main.
- Boundary Shaft Maintenance:
 - If originally installed, the Plumbing Code requires the boundary shaft to remain at surface level.
 - If buried, the property owner must arrange for it to be raised, at their expense, if required by Council.
 - If no boundary shaft exists, the property owner must hire a licensed plumber to install one in compliance with:
 - Building Code of Australia
 - Plumbing Code of Australia (NSW amendments included)
 - Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500.2 – Plumbing and Drainage
- Council's Role:
 - Council requires clear, safe access to the boundary shaft for sewer inspections and maintenance.
 - Council does not locate boundary shafts or connections but can provide sewer drainage diagrams free of charge upon request.

16.4.6 Maintenance of Overflow Relief Gully (ORG)

The Overflow Relief Gully (ORG), also known as a Yard Gully, is a critical fixture that prevents sewage from backing up into your home.

Installation Requirements

The Overflow Relief Gully (ORG) must be:



- Installed according to the Building Code of Australia, Plumbing Code of Australia, and Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500.2 – Plumbing and Drainage.
- Positioned to maintain at least 150mm height difference between all internal fixtures (e.g., floor wastes) and the ORG spill level.
- Fitted with a loose, unobstructed grating lid to allow free overflow.
- Designed to prevent surface or stormwater from entering.

For multi-lot or strata dwellings, Council requires one designated ORG per individual dwelling.

16.4.7 Maintenance of Boundary Traps and Vent Lines in Deep Sewer Main Connections

Sewer boundary traps, vents, and vent lines are installed by a licensed plumber during the construction of sanitary drainage lines and are part of the property's private sewer system.

The property owner is responsible for maintaining all sewer boundary traps, vents, and vent lines.

16.5 Pressure Sewer Systems

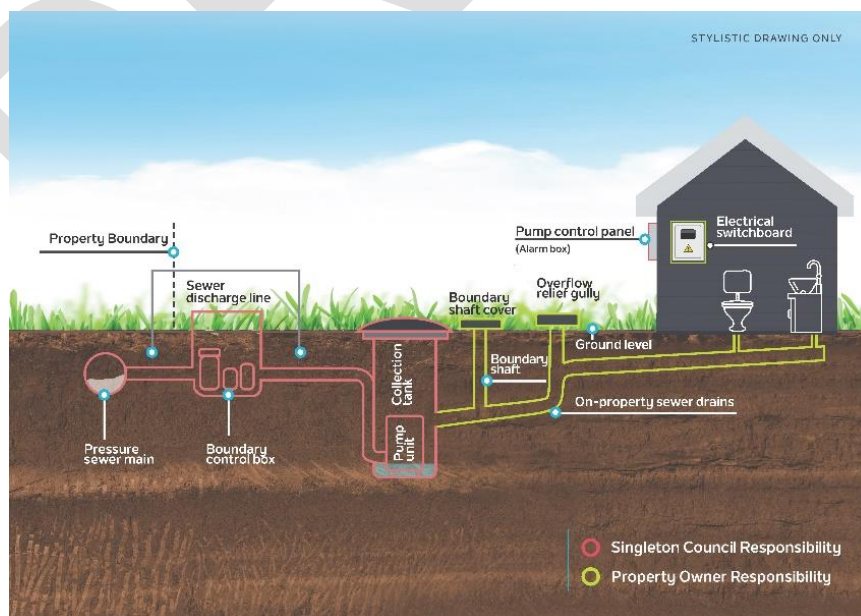
Council operates pressure sewer systems in areas where gravity sewers are not feasible, including the Maison Dieu area and parts of Redbournberry, which serves both industrial and residential customers. These systems use a grinder pumping unit installed on the property to collect and transport sewage.

Responsibilities:

- Council: Owns (under the provisions in the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*) and maintains the grinder pump unit and all infrastructure from the unit to the sewer main.
- Property Owner: Responsible for the property's internal sewerage system, house drainage, and electricity supply to the pump (which runs from the property's switchboard).

These systems are essential in areas where conventional sewer systems are unsuitable or too costly.

Figure: Responsibilities for Pressure Sewer Systems



Council operates pressure sewer systems in various locations across Singleton.

Property Owner Responsibilities

- Maintain the power supply, independent circuit breaker, and power cable to the pump control panel.
- Cover electricity costs for pump operation.
- Pay for any repairs or replacements of Council assets if damaged due to their actions or negligence.
- Do not attempt to repair or interfere with Council-owned assets.
- Report any system failures or faults to Council and provide 24-hour access as required.

Council Responsibilities

- Maintain and repair the pump unit and works on Council's side of the system.
- For repairs, contact Council at 02 6578 7290 (available 24/7).

For full details, refer to the [Guide for Homeowners](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#), available on Council's website or by request.

16.6 Discharge of Stormwater into the Sewer System

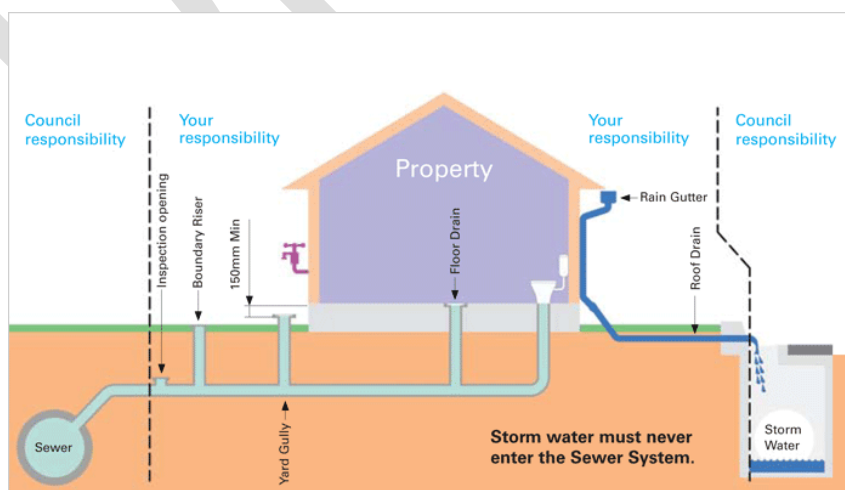
Property owners must ensure that stormwater is not directed into the sewer, as this can cause sewer overflows, public health risks, and environmental harm.

Common illegal stormwater connections include:

- Roof downpipes connected to the sewer system (including those added after the original construction, such as carports or patios).
- Garden drains or agi pipes from behind retaining walls.
- Concrete, paving, or turfing near the yard gully.
- Poor property drainage causing yard gully flooding during heavy rain.

Council regularly inspects areas affected by wet weather inflows or sewer overflows

Figure: Two separate underground systems – stormwater must never enter the sewer system



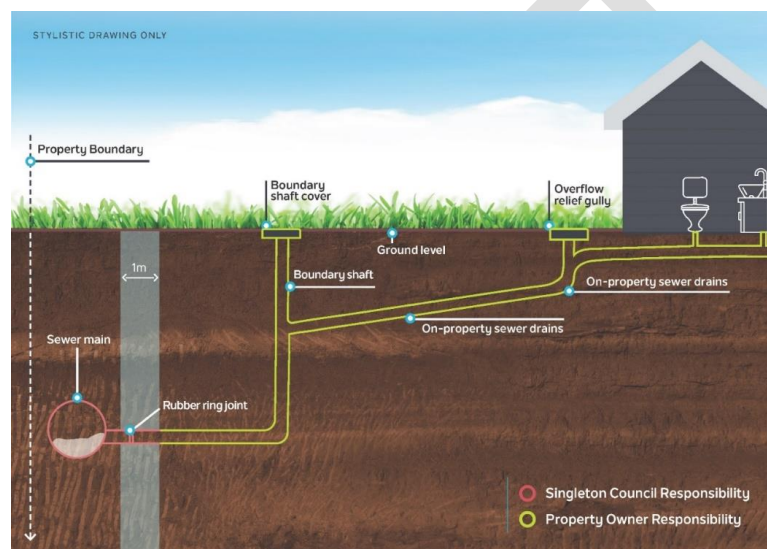
The yard gully is an external fitting designed to safely release sewer overflows. It typically consists of a round grated drain, 100mm to 150mm in diameter, with grates made from metal or plastic in black, white, or silver.

In case of a sewer blockage or high stormwater inflows, the yard gully should "pop off" to release pressure and direct sewer away from the home, preventing it from entering through toilets, drains, or showers.

Plumbing regulations require the yard gully to be installed at least 150mm below the lowest internal drain (e.g., shower, toilet, or floor drains) and at least 75mm above surrounding ground level to prevent stormwater from entering the sewer system.

The following diagram outlines the responsibility for sewerage infrastructure within properties

Figure: Responsibilities for sewerage infrastructure within a property



Property owners must ensure their home has a properly installed and operational yard gully (overflow relief gully). It must not be:

- Covered by objects like pot plants
- Obstructed by landscaping or garden beds
- Locked, corroded, filled with silt, or concreted in, preventing it from "popping off"

16.7 Removal of Trees

If a tree on your property is obstructing or damaging Council's infrastructure, or is likely to do so, we may require its removal at your cost.

We will send you a written notice asking you to remove the tree within a reasonable timeframe. Alternatively, with Council's consent and at your cost, you may address the cause of the damage without removing the tree.

If you fail to comply with the notice by the specified date (unless there's a delay in obtaining consent from Council or refusal to allow removal), we may remove the tree and charge you for the costs.

Vegetation clearing in NSW is regulated under the following legislation:



- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- *Local Land Services Act 2013*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-rural Areas) 2017*

Before starting any vegetation management, you must first check whether the proposed clearing is already permitted. You may have an existing Development Approval (DA) that allows vegetation removal, provided it complies with your conditions of consent. For more information visit Council's website [Trees and Vegetation](#).

16.8 Defective Work

If Council identifies a defect or unauthorised work in your water or sewerage system that affects or poses risks to the operation of Council's systems, we will request that the issue is fixed within a reasonable time.

A defect may include private sewerage or stormwater pipes allowing rainwater, groundwater, or surface runoff to enter and impact Council's sewer system. If necessary, Council may fix the issue, and you may be charged for the reasonable costs incurred.

16.9 System Failures

If you notice any issue with Council's water supply or sewerage system, please inform us. This includes interruptions to your water supply, bursts or leaks in Council's water system, disruptions to sewerage drainage, or overflow or leakage from Council's systems. We will address the problem as soon as practicable.

16.10 Building Work

Before starting any excavation, building, landscaping, or construction work on your property, ensure you identify the location of Council assets and obtain a building plan assessment from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. Generally, you will need approval if the work is near or over Council's water or sewer assets.

If you carry out unapproved work that interferes with Council's water, sewer, or stormwater systems, Council will require you to remove or fix it at your expense. If you fail to comply within the given timeframe, Council will do the work and charge you for the costs.

Properties with an existing water service must be metered during the period of excavation, building, landscaping, or construction work. The meter must remain accessible during any work. You can get a sanitary drainage plan from Council to locate their assets. For more information, visit Council's website or contact us.

16.10.1 Before You Dig

Council is listed as an asset provider on the Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) National Referral Service, which helps prevent damage to underground pipes and cables providing essential services.

When you contact BYDA, you will receive a listing of members with underground assets near your proposed excavation, including water and sewer pipes and fixtures with their positions and depths. If critical assets are detected, you will be asked to contact Council during business hours for more details.

For more information or to submit a free enquiry, visit www.byda.com.au.



This service is free, but as the information is indicative, Council is not responsible for accidental damage to water or sewer infrastructure. Those who damage underground networks may be held financially liable by the asset owner.

16.11 Connections to Services

You must apply for and receive Council's written consent before connecting to the water supply or sewerage system.

Once approved and fees are paid:

- Water supply connections will be completed by Council staff or an approved contractor (see [Water connections](#) for details).
- Sewer connections must be made by a licensed plumber, in compliance with plumbing and drainage regulations (see [Sewer connections](#) for details).
- Pressure sewer connections will be done by Council staff or an approved contractor (see [Pressure sewer connections](#) for more information).

16.12 Redevelopment of Properties

When a property is redeveloped, the water supply or sewer connections may need to be relocated or upgraded.

Property owners can submit a Building Plan Assessment – Water and Sewer for advice on any required changes to the water and sewer infrastructure. (see [Building Plan Assessment – Water & Sewer](#) for details).

16.13 Unauthorised Connections or Use

You must not:

- Take, use, or divert water supplied by Council without permission.
- Use a dedicated fire service for anything other than firefighting or testing.
- Interfere with or block a meter or metering system.
- Discharge any substance into Council's system without approval.

Failure to comply may result in charges for the estimated water usage. See [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) for more details on water usage estimation.

You must obtain Council's consent before performing any activity that could damage or interfere with Council's water or sewer systems.

16.14 Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets

Customers must ensure they obtain approval from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit before starting construction near or over Council's sewer assets, including works exempt from the *Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (NSW).

Council prefers that no structures are built over or near sewer assets. Special conditions may apply for building, excavation, or other activities near water assets or easements. Each case will be assessed based on the [POL/26015 - Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains Policy](#).



For details on how to apply, refer to [Building and Development - Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets](#).

17 DAMAGE AND ILLEGAL WORKS

Council is not responsible for:

- Damage caused by customers.
- Illegally connected services.

Council may recover costs for any repairs required due to customer-caused damage.



METERING

The property water meter records water usage. We may enter your property without notice to read, test, inspect, maintain, or replace the meter.

18 WATER METERS

18.1 Meter Access

Ensure the meter is accessible for reading and maintenance. Keep the meter and connected pipes clear of concrete, plants, trees, bushes, or other obstructions.

If access is unsafe or unreasonable, Council may estimate your usage. After three or more occasions, we may:

- Request you relocate the meter at your cost
- Ask you to provide the meter reading
- Arrange access at a convenient time, possibly with an additional fee
- Make other arrangements with you

If you plan to relocate your meter, contact Council for advice.

18.2 Meter Installation

The location of the water meter is determined by Council, typically placed 1-2 metres from the front property boundary. However, for units, rural, or commercial properties, this may vary.

Only Council or approved contractors can install water meters connected to Council's supply. No one is permitted to connect to the water supply without Council's approval.

For more information on connecting to Council's water supply, refer to [Connecting to Council's Water Supply](#).

18.3 Inaccessible Water Meters

Council requires access to water meters for reading or replacement. The meter must always be accessible, and any barriers like fences, walls, or garden beds must be positioned to allow access.

Water Meter in Concrete:

If the meter is surrounded by solid concrete, it may prevent removal or replacement without damaging pipes. Concrete must be broken up to access 10-15cm of vertical pipe, and a plumber may need to turn off the water service.

Water Meter Buried or Insufficient Clearance:

If the meter is buried or there isn't enough clearance, remove surrounding vegetation or earth to ensure 10-15cm of vertical pipe is visible and unobstructed.



Water Meter Obscured by Overgrown Gardens:

If the meter is hidden by overgrown plants, the garden must be cleared to provide sufficient space for meter reading or replacement.

Water Meter Behind Locked Gate:

Ensure the water meter is not behind a locked gate. If access is denied, Council may use averaging for water bills. See [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) for details.

Water Meter and Dogs:

Due to safety requirements Council cannot access meters if a dog has access to the area. If a dog is present, it must be secured elsewhere. If the dog cannot be secured, averaging for the water bill may be applied. Refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) for more details.

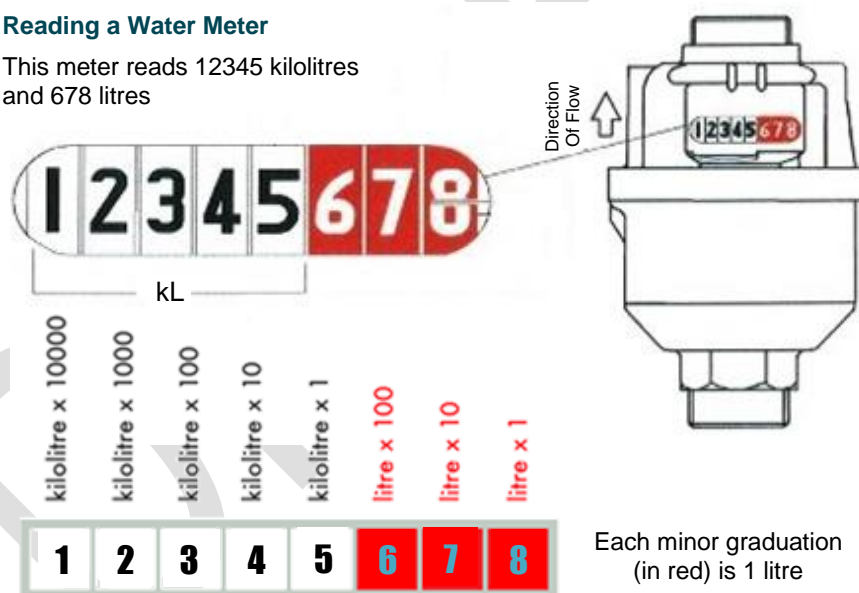
18.4 Meter Reading

Council or its contracted meter readers will read your water meter three times a year. You will be billed for any water consumed since the last reading. The meter will have black and red dials showing the amount of water used, with six to nine dials depending on the meter's size and type.

Figure: How to read the property water meter

Reading a Water Meter

This meter reads 12345 kilolitres and 678 litres



The black dials on the meter show kilolitres of water used, while the red dials show litres. Council records only the black dials when reading your meter.

18.5 Special Meter Reads

Property owners or their representatives (e.g., conveyancers, solicitors) can request a special water meter reading for:

- Property sales requiring a water charge adjustment at settlement.
- Tenancy agreements where tenants pay or contribute to water charges.



To request a reading, contact Council. Readings are typically completed within 10 working days, and a fee applies. Special water meter reads are also available with 603 Certificate applications for an additional fee.

A Special Water Meter Read letter is provided as part of the process. Council aims to complete readings within a week of the request.

18.6 Sub-Metering of Multi Occupancy Developments

Historically, multi-unit developments managed water consumption in two ways:

- A parent (master) meter recorded total consumption, with child (sub) meters billing individual strata owners and the body corporate as applicable.
- The parent (master) meter recorded total consumption, with the body corporate responsible for the entire bill.

To help residents monitor and control their water use, Council requires separate metering for each unit in new developments. All new strata or multi-occupancy units must have an external water meter at the property boundary to track individual usage.

Developers must ensure compliance with Council's [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) during planning. Connection requirements will be outlined in Development Application and Compliance Certificate conditions issued by Council.

Existing child or sub-meters must be secure and accessible for Council and meter readers.

18.7 Meter Replacement Program

Over time, water meter accuracy may decline due to wear, often recording less consumption than actual use. To ensure accurate readings, Council runs an ongoing water meter replacement program, replacing meters older than 10 years at no cost to property owners—unless damage is due to wilful destruction.

Council minimises disruptions during replacements and contacts high-consumption properties beforehand. The final meter reading is recorded before installing the new meter, and details are included in the next water bill.

18.8 Meter Replacement

Council will replace a water meter free of charge if it:

- Is defective
- Cannot be reasonably maintained
- Is part of a water meter replacement program

We will attempt to notify you at the time of replacement. For non-residential customers, we will arrange a suitable time for the replacement.

18.9 Meter Accuracy Testing

Customers concerned about their water meter's accuracy can request a test by applying and paying the required fee. Before applying, it is recommended that customers first check the meter



themselves—guidance on this can be found in Section 18.10 [Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks](#).

A water meter is considered accurate if it records within $\pm 4\%$ of the actual water usage.

Testing Process:

- A second meter is installed alongside the existing one and monitored for three weeks.
- If the original meter is inaccurate:
 - Council will repair or replace it.
 - The testing fee will be refunded.
 - The latest bill will be adjusted based on average daily usage from the past year or an agreed method.
- If the meter is within $\pm 4\%$ accuracy:
 - It is deemed correct.
 - The testing fee is retained.
 - The water bill remains unchanged.

This 4% tolerance is set by *Part 6, Division 3, Clause 158(5) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021 (NSW)*.

For applications, contact Council's via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).

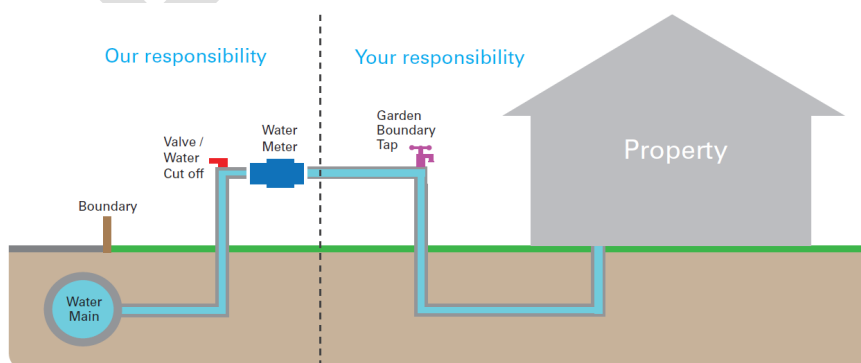
18.10 Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks

Customers are responsible for all water recorded by their meter, including leaks from internal plumbing failures. To prevent water loss, Council recommends regularly monitoring your meter and turning off the water supply at the valve (near the meter) when the property is vacant. This valve can be locked if needed to prevent tampering or theft.

To check for leaks:

1. Turn off all taps and water-using appliances.
2. Observe the meter—if the dials move, a leak is likely.
3. For slow leaks, take a meter reading or photo before bed and check again in the morning before using any water.
4. If the dials move overnight, inspect fixtures or call a licensed plumber.

Figure: Typical water connection



19 BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Customers must consult Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit for any development that may affect water or sewer infrastructure. Council is responsible for:

- Assessing whether a property can be serviced by water and sewer systems.
- Ensuring new developments do not impact existing infrastructure or service levels.
- Enforcing compliance under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* (S305, S306, S307) and *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* (S64, S68).
- Ensuring development meets Council's Developer Specifications for water and sewer systems.

All developments are assessed by Council's Planning and Environmental Services Group, except for water and sewer considerations, which are handled separately.

When reviewing an application under Section 305 of the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* or Section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)*, or when issuing a notice or written advice under the SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes), Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit assesses the proposed development within its jurisdiction.

19.1 Building Restrictions Near Water and Sewer Assets

Without prior consent from Council, customers must not:

- Interfere with water supply or sewer infrastructure.
- Build over easements for water or sewer purposes.
- Construct buildings or place fill next to or over Council's water or sewer systems.

This ensures infrastructure is protected, and any required Water and Sewer approvals are obtained before development proceeds.

19.2 Building Plan Assessment - Water and Sewer

If you are building, renovating, or developing land within Council's water and sewer supply areas, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit must assess the development to determine any impact on water and sewer infrastructure and whether additional approvals are required. These may include:

- Water connection approval
- Building in the vicinity of water and sewer assets approval
- Certificate of compliance under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)*

This applies to all Exempt and Complying Development, as well as residential (including ancillary development), non-residential (commercial, industrial, and change of use), and subdivision developments.

How to Apply?

All developments within Singleton Council's Water and Sewer Supply areas must submit a Building Plan Assessment Application before lodging any application, including Complying, Exempt, and State Development Applications. This must include a full set of scaled plans and payment of the [associated fee](#).



Once received, Council will:

- Assess the development plans
- Review the water and sewer servicing needs and their impact on existing infrastructure
- Stamp the plans
- Provide a Building Plan Assessment Advice letter outlining any impacts or additional requirements

These will be sent via email. Incomplete or incorrect information may cause delays.

A Building Plan Assessment Application must be lodged before development approval.

19.3 Privately Certified Development

Privately certified developments require a Building Plan Assessment by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit before the development is determined. This assessment identifies any impacts or conditions related to Council's water and sewer assets.

As the Local Water Utility, Council assesses all proposed developments within its area of responsibility, at the time of considering an application Section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* or at the time of issuing a notice or advice under the SEPP (*Exempt and Complying Development Codes*) 2008.

19.4 Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets

Council's water and sewer assets provide essential services to you and your neighbours. Before building or excavating near or over these assets, you must get approval from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.

This applies to all developments needing Council or private certifier consent, as well as those exempt under the *Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)*. Examples include:

- Constructing a building or driveway
- Installing utilities via excavation or boring
- Laying pipes and cables

Key points to consider before applying for approval:

- Sewer infrastructure must be protected, with required clearances from proposed structures.
- Unrestricted access to manholes, lampholes, maintenance shafts, and junctions must be maintained.
- Concrete encasement may be required for sewer mains to protect pipes and infrastructure.

Understanding these requirements ensures you don't damage Council's assets and that we can maintain them properly.

When Do You Need Council Approval?

You need approval from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit before moving, replacing, or removing Council's pipes, or building over them or within their zone of influence. This also applies to altering land levels by filling over water and sewer assets. Council must ensure safe access to infrastructure for maintenance and repairs.

Contact Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer to obtain approval.



How to Apply

Submit a Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets Application to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit with the following:

- Full set of building plans
- Completed application form
- Payment of relevant fees

Additional information may be requested, including:

- Site survey plan by a Registered Surveyor (with levels in Australian Height Datum)
- Certified engineering plans, showing soil classification, protection requirements for sewer infrastructure, and proposed/existing structures, as per Council's Building over Sewer Policy.

Refer to Council's [POL/26015 - Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains Policy](#) for more details.

Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets Requirement Letter

Once your application is received, Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer will assess it. After assessment, a Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets Requirements Letter will be issued, outlining:

- Conditions to be met
- Inspection requirements
- Council's requirements for works near or over its infrastructure

Once all requirements are satisfied, the stamped approved plans will be emailed.

All sewer-related works must comply with the Development Application Notice and Requirements Letter.

Inspections must be booked at least two working days in advance and are at the applicant's expense.

Water Supply Infrastructure

Building over water supply assets is strictly not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, water service lines, mains, fittings, and fixtures.

If development is planned adjacent to a water supply asset, a Building in the Vicinity of Water and Sewer Assets Application must be submitted to Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer for assessment and approval.

20 CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

As a Local Water Utility under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)*, Council is responsible for identifying and managing any impacts on its water and sewer infrastructure.

For developments in the Singleton local government area that affect water and/or sewer systems, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will assess the application in line with Sections 305, 306, and 307 of the Act and relevant regulations.



Council will issue a Section 306 Notification of Requirements, detailing the charges and/or works the developer must complete. Once all fees are paid, requirements satisfied, and the works are completed and approved, Council will issue a Section 307 Certificate of Compliance.

20.1 Section 306 Notification

The Section 306 Notification of Requirements outlines the conditions a developer must meet to obtain a Certificate of Compliance before receiving an Occupation Certificate or Subdivision Certificate, as applicable.

The notice includes three sections:

- Application Details – Includes the development proposal, applicant information, and location of the proposed development.
- Development Conditions – Lists requirements at various stages, such as:
 - Before Demolition
 - Before Issuing a Construction Certificate
 - Before Starting Works
 - During Construction
 - Before Issuing an Occupation Certificate
 - Before Granting a Certificate of Compliance
- Applicant Advice & Completion Declaration – Provides guidance on fulfilling conditions and submitting required documents for the Certificate of Compliance.

20.2 Section 307 Certificate of Compliance

Once all Section 306 Notification of Requirements conditions are met, including supporting documents, associated fee and an application for a Section 307 Certificate of Compliance to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.

Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer will review the submission. If all conditions are satisfied, a Section 307 Certificate of Compliance will be issued, confirming the development meets Council's water and sewer requirements.

20.3 Section 64 (Developer) Charges

As the Water Supply Authority under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* and in accordance with Section 64 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, Council may impose fees or require specific water management works as a condition for connecting developments to the water supply network.

Developer charges (also known as headworks) or distribution charges are upfront payments that help recover part of the cost of providing water infrastructure. These costs may arise from existing supply systems or future capital works needed to service new developments or changes to existing ones that increase demand on Council's water and sewer systems.

According to the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's *Developer Charges Guidelines for Water Supply, Sewerage, and Stormwater (2016)*, developer charges serve three key purposes:

- Funding infrastructure for new urban development.



- Signalling development costs, encouraging more cost-effective growth.
- Ensuring fair pricing for water-related services.

Council has developed a Development Servicing Plan (DSP), in line with *Section 64* and the *Developer Charges Guidelines for Water Supply, Sewerage, and Stormwater (2016)*, detailing water supply headworks and distribution charges for developments using Council's water infrastructure.

For developments outside the DSP, separate developer and distribution charges will be determined based on actual service costs, at Council's discretion.

Note: Section 64 contributions may also be referred to as headworks charges, developer charges, or developer contributions.

20.3.1 Calculation of Section 64 (Developer) Charges

Developer charges apply when new equivalent tenements (ET) are created or modified.

- Standard residential lots (450m²–2,000m²) have an initial water ET loading of 1.
- Larger or rural residential lots (>2,000m²) have an initial water ET loading of 1.2 at subdivision.
- Commercial and industrial developments are assessed based on an average ET loading per hectare, as outlined in the *Water Directorate Section 64 Determination of Equivalent Tenements Guidelines (2017)*.

At subdivision, charges provide a base entitlement for each lot. When a lot is developed, its actual ET is recalculated based on the proposed land use.

Developer charges are determined by:

- The estimated ET loading of the development.
- Council's Development Servicing Plan (DSP).
- Council's annual Fees and Charges schedule (charges increase annually if payment is delayed).

Exemptions: Some Small home-based businesses with less than 1 ET additional loading may be exempt from developer charges. Contact Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer for details.

21 AUGMENTATION OF WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE SYSTEMS

If a development is required to upgrade water supply or sewer infrastructure, the following conditions apply:

- The design of the required works must meet Council's Developer (Technical) Specifications.
- If Council completes the work, the developer will be charged a contribution, calculated by Council, and must be paid before work begins.
- If the developer carries out the work and is entitled to an offset against their contribution, the design and cost must be approved by Council before starting.
- Failure to obtain written design approval and a cost agreement will result in no offset being applied.



- If Council anticipates future demand exceeding the development's requirements, it may opt to increase the infrastructure size and cover the additional costs.

For more details, refer to [Council's Technical Specifications](#) on Water and Sewer Systems, or contact the Water and Sewer Development Engineer.

22 LIQUID TRADE WASTE APPROVALS

Council's Liquid Trade Waste Officer can assist with applications for liquid trade waste approvals. To apply, you may need to submit:

- A Liquid Trade Waste Application Form
- Site plans showing buildings and infrastructure
- A plan of the proposed or existing treatment system
- Technical specifications for the trade sewer system
- A list of hazardous chemicals

Each application is risk-assessed based on factors like activity type, discharge quality and volume, pre-treatment, and sewer treatment works. Site inspections may be included. This helps determine the appropriate trade sewer category, as defined in Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System Policy](#).

Once all requirements are met, property owners will receive a liquid trade waste discharge approval.

22.1.1 Liquid Trade Waste Fees and Charges

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW), liquid trade waste fees are levied based on the discharge category. These fees include:

- Application fees for new trade waste customers
- Annual agreement fee
- Variable discharge fees based on the strength and volume of trade waste (where applicable)
- Additional inspection fees (where applicable)
- Excess mass charges (where applicable)
- Food waste disposal charge (where applicable)
- Non-compliance charges for liquid trade waste, excess mass, and pH
- Non-compliance penalty infringements

23 AVAILABLE WATER PRESSURE STATEMENT

Council can provide a statement of available water pressure to developers or property owners' hydraulic consultants to help design fire service systems.

To request this, submit an [Available Pressure Statement Application](#) with the required flow rates and pay the applicable fees. Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer or Utilities Plumber will conduct the necessary tests and provide the available pressure and main capacity at the specified location.



The fees and charges are adopted annually by Council and can be found in the [Adopted Fees and Charges](#).

24 CONNECTIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS

24.1 Water Connections

24.1.1 Connecting to Council's Water Supply

Connection to Council's water supply is in accordance with Section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*. To submit a [Water Connection Request – Meter Installation Application](#), available on Council's website. You may submit the application and supporting documents in person or via email at council@singleton.nsw.gov.au.

Your application must include:

- Water and Sewer Owner Declaration Form (if applicant is not the property owner)
- A Meter Location Plan

Failure to include these documents may delay or reject your request.

If you cannot apply online, download the form from the website and submit it by email, post, or in person at Council's Administration Centre.

After receiving your request, Council will assess the property and connection requirements and provide a written cost estimate. After payment is received, Council's Water and Sewer Network Delivery Team will install the water meter and finalise the connection within 20 business days. Please note that site obstructions may cause delays.

24.1.2 Downsizing a Connection

Property owners can downsize their water meter to reduce service charges, but only if the meter is larger than 20mm and a larger service is not required. An application and fee are required.

In some cases, customers must obtain an independent Hydraulics Assessment (at their expense) to ensure the smaller connection meets the property's water needs.

24.1.3 Disconnection of Water by the Customer

Property owners can request to disconnect their property from the water main or sewer branch with Council's written consent.

Council may refuse consent if the disconnection poses a risk to public health, the environment, or lacks reasonable grounds.

Even after disconnection, property owners must pay vacant (non-connected) service availability charges if the service remains available.

For full requirements, refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

24.2 Fire Service Installations

Council is responsible for the following in fire service design and construction:



- Providing the main tapping, tee, and valve according to the approved hydraulic design, at the developer's cost.
- Supplying and installing an appropriately sized bypass meter, as per the approved hydraulic design, at the developer's cost (if required).

The developer/property owner is responsible for:

- Submitting the hydraulic design and/or calculations for approval by Council.
- Engaging a licensed contractor to install the remaining fire service components, ensuring compliance with Australian Standards.

Council does not permit the installation of in-ground hydrants on private property.

Water connections for fire hydrants or sprinkler systems must include a Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) with a 20-25mm bypass meter. The DCVA must be installed inside the property boundary, close to the water main connection, and before any suction/booster assembly.

Only prefabricated dual check valve assemblies with bypass meters and backflow prevention to Australian standards are permitted, and installation must be approved by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.

All low-flow bypass meters installed by licensed contractors will be inspected by Council for billing purposes.

Council monitors low-flow bypass meters. If excessive flow is detected, a site inspection will be conducted. This may identify issues such as misuse, leakage, required system testing, or actual firefighting use.

24.2.1 Metering of Fire Services

Water metering for fire control services is assessed based on the development's type, size, and use.

- Hose Reel Services must be connected to a metered supply (as per the *Plumbing Code of Australia 2019*). If not already metered, Council will work with property owners to install a compliant connection at the owner's expense.
- Designated Fire Hydrant Services must have an Australian Standard-approved Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) and an appropriately sized bypass water meter, installed according to Australian Standards.
- Residential/Home Fire Sprinkler Services (AS2118.4 or AS2118.5) that use low water volumes must also have an Australian Standard-approved DCVA and bypass meter, installed to meet Australian Standards.

Using unmetered fire services for non-fire-related purposes is considered water theft.

Mechanical metering of fire services is not allowed, but digital metering is permitted if compliant with Australian Standards.

24.3 Sewer Connections

New sewer connections require entitlement, approval, and payment of applicable charges.



If your property is within a designated sewer supply area, connection to Council's sewer infrastructure is mandatory. Vacant properties within this area must pay the fixed residential sewerage discharge annual fee, as set in Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

Connections may be required due to:

- New dwellings in developed areas.
- Customer requests to replace on-site systems (for newly connected villages or approved private works).
- Council directives to replace an on-site sewer system.

For details on connection entitlements and service areas, refer to the [Sewer Services Policy](#). A sewerage service [network map](#) is available on Council's website.

New commercial properties or business changes requiring a sewer connection may need a larger service and approval. Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will coordinate these requests. More information on infrastructure and connection requirements is available on Council's website.

24.4 Disconnection of Sewer

Customers who no longer need a sewer connection or wish to relocate it must have the service cut off and capped by a licensed plumber to prevent water or soil from entering the system.

The connection pipe should be cut as deep as practical to avoid future damage from landscaping or construction, following relevant Plumbing and Drainage standards.

Disconnection does not exempt property owners from paying fixed sewer service availability charges. Refer to the [Residential Charges](#) section for details.

For disconnections from deep sewer mains (greater than 1.5m), only Council staff or approved contractors can perform the work. See the [POL/26031 Sewer Service Policy](#) for more information.

24.5 Pressure Sewer Connections

The supply and installation of pressure sewer system components are managed by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit, covering assessment, quotation, and installation. A Pressure Sewer System Application must be completed before a Construction Certificate is issued.

How to Apply for a Pressure Sewer System

1. Submit an application

- Complete and submit a [Pressure Sewer System Application](#) to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.
- Include a site plan and proposed floor plan.
- For commercial and strata properties, submit hydraulic designs for Council approval.
- The site plan must indicate the pressure sewer unit, alarm/control panel, pressure service lines, power supply, meter box, and other related infrastructure in relation to the property and planned structures.

2. Site Assessment & Quotation

Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will:

- Inspect the site and assess any issues.



- Provide:
 - A Pricing Schedule covering unit costs and any additional site-related expenses.
 - General Terms and Conditions.
 - An Installation, Maintenance, and Service Agreement.
 - Any necessary changes to the proposed system location.
- The applicant must sign and return the Installation, Maintenance, and Service Agreement, confirming the system's location.
- Once received, Council will approve the plans, execute the agreement, and issue an invoice if requested.

3. Payment & Installation

- Once full payment is received, Council will coordinate installation.
- Installation typically occurs at the lock-up stage of construction to prevent damage to the unit.
- The applicant/property owner is responsible for internal plumbing and electrical connections from the pressure sewer system to the property.

Ongoing Maintenance

- After installation, annual maintenance fees will be added to the property.
- The first year's fee is calculated pro-rata and included in the annual Rates Notice.

25 RATES AND CHARGES

25.1 Water and Sewer Pricing Framework

In July 2022, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) (then Department of Planning and Environment) released the *Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities*, followed by the Guidance on Strategic Planning Outcome – Implement Sound Pricing and Prudent Financial Management in December 2022. These guidelines require Council to apply sound pricing and financial management practices.

Council's 2025/2026 pricing structure has been developed primarily in compliance with this framework with a further review of pricing structure to occur in 2025/2026 to ensure complete compliance with the new framework.

Fees and Charges

- All current fees and charges are outlined in Council's Operational Plan, Revenue Policy, and Fees and Charges Schedule, updated annually after public consultation and formal adoption in June.
- Any changes to fees will be publicly announced before implementation.
- Water and sewer fees are set to ensure the financial sustainability of these essential services, as detailed in the 20-Year Water and Sewer Financial Plan.
- Pricing follows the NSW DCCEEW guidance and supports full cost recovery, ensuring continued investment in capital works programs for water and sewer infrastructure.



25.2 Charges for Vacant Land

Vacant land where water or sewer services are available under Section 552 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) will incur a service availability charge, regardless of whether the property is connected.

Why is this charge applied?

- Water and sewer infrastructure require significant investment, including pumping stations, land purchases, mains, and treatment plants. It is not feasible for Council to fund these systems solely based on when individual property owners choose to connect.

What do service availability charges cover?

- These charges help fund the ongoing costs of:
- Operating and maintaining the water and sewer distribution systems
- Running water and sewer treatment plants
- Improving treatment processes
- Protecting the environment

When does the charge apply?

- A service availability charge is only applied if a property meets the location requirements and has feasible access to a main (e.g., the property fronts a main).

25.3 Goods and Services Tax

Under the *New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (GST Act), certain supplies are GST-free, including:

- Water and sewer service access
- Water usage
- Sewer volumetric usage
- Liquid trade waste access and volumetric usage

Council ensures all customer accounts are fully compliant with GST requirements, regardless of whether GST applies to the goods or services provided.

Council's ABN is 52 877 492 396.

26 ANNUAL CHARGES FOR WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

The key charges for water supply and sewerage services are outlined below.

26.1 Residential

Under Section 501(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW), Council can levy annual charges for water and sewer services.



- Residential charges include:
- Water service availability charge (fixed)
- Sewer service availability charge (fixed)
- Water consumption charge (based on usage)

Properties with access to water or sewer services but not connected may also incur a vacant land use charge.

26.1.1 Water Service Availability Charge

The Singleton, Jerry's Plains, and Broke water supply service availability charge is a fixed annual fee included in the Rates Notice and payable quarterly.

- The charge applies to properties connected or able to connect to the water supply system.
- It is based on the size of the water meter—larger or multiple meters incur higher fees.
- The charge applies to all properties, including vacant land, within 225 metres of a water main, provided they can connect without crossing private property.

26.1.2 Sewer Service Availability

The sewer service availability charge is a fixed annual fee included in the Rates Notice and payable quarterly.

- It applies to properties connected or able to connect to the sewer system.
- All residential properties are subject to this charge.
- The charge applies to properties within 75 metres of a Council sewer main, including vacant land, if they can connect without crossing private property.

26.1.3 Water Consumption Charge

The water consumption charge is a usage-based fee applied per kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used, based on the property's water meter reading. Unlike the service availability charge, this fee is billed after water is consumed.

Charges apply per property, not per owner or tenant, and are based on a financial year (1 July – 30 June). Water consumption bills are issued three times a year to property owners connected to the Council's water supply.

This system promotes water conservation and aligns with *NSW Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities*.

Refer to Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

26.1.4 Non-Residential Charges

In the water industry, "non-residential" typically refers to business, commercial, and non-rateable properties. These charges are similar to residential charges but include four components:

- Water supply service availability charge
- Water consumption charge
- Sewerage access and usage charge



- Liquid trade waste access and usage charge

Refer to Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

26.1.5 Water Service Availability Charge

The non-residential water service availability charge is a fixed annual fee for connecting, or having the ability to connect, to the drinking water supply system. It is included in the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments.

- The charge is based on the size of the water meter installed on the property.
- Properties with multiple or oversized meters incur higher charges.
- The charge applies to all properties within 225 metres of a water main, including vacant land and some properties adjacent to urban areas.

Refer to Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

26.1.6 Water Consumption Charge

The non-residential, non-rateable water consumption charge is a volume-based fee applied for each kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used, based on the property's water meter reading.

Water usage charges are reviewed annually. For details, refer to the Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

26.1.7 Sewerage Access and Usage Charge

Since 2008/09, Council has applied a user-pays pricing model for all non-residential, non-rateable sewer users, in compliance with *NSW Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities*. The sewerage service availability charge for non-residential customers is based on the estimated volume of sewer discharge from the property.

Non-residential, non-rateable customers are charged through a two-part tariff:

1. An annual service availability charge, based on the water connection size, reflecting the potential load on the sewer system.
2. A uniform sewerage usage charge per kilolitre of discharge, reflecting the marginal costs of the Council's Sewerage Business. This charge is based on an estimated discharge volume, determined by a discharge factor for each business type.

The pricing calculation method is detailed in Council's Operational Plan. For more information, refer to the Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

If a customer believes the discharge differs from the industry standard, they can request a variation, providing supporting data and evidence. Additional details on site-specific discharge factors are available in Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

The sewerage billing system and charges are reviewed annually and published in the Council's Operational Plan.



26.1.8 Liquid Trade Waste Access and Usage Charge

Non-residential, non-rateable sewerage customers may need liquid trade waste approvals to discharge to the sewer. Most approvals require pre-treatment using approved equipment.

Trade waste access and usage charges apply to businesses that discharge liquid trade waste (other than domestic sewage). These are additional sewer quality charges for commercial, industrial, trade, or manufacturing businesses. The specific pricing method is outlined in the Council's Operational Plan, available on the Council's website.

Liquid trade waste customers are invoiced three times a year, with charges based on a proportion of the annual fee plus usage for the period. Full details on pre-treatment, discharge categories, applications, fees, and charges are in Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

The billing system and charges are reviewed annually and published in the Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

26.1.9 Pressure Sewer System – Annual Maintenance Fee

Properties in the pressure sewer system require an individual pressure sewer system, installed within the property and connected to the sewer main. All pressure sewer systems are covered by an Installation, Maintenance, and Service Agreement, with Council currently undertakes this work for an annual fee.

The pump maintenance fee is set annually as part of the Operational Plan. It is based on the number of pumps installed and is in addition to other sewer charges. This fee is included in the annual Rates Notice.

Refer to Council's [Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

27 ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS

Section 501(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) allows Council to levy an annual charge for various services, including:

- Water supply services
- Sewerage services
- Drainage services
- Waste management services (excluding domestic waste management)

Section 503 permits Council to levy an annual charge in addition to the ordinary rate and, if applicable, a special rate. Charges under Section 503 can also apply to non-rateable properties, but only for recovering the cost of providing the service.

27.1 Water Accounts

Council issues water consumption accounts three times a year to property owners connected to the town's water and/or sewer system. There are two types of accounts:

- Residential water accounts



- Non-residential water and sewer accounts for non-residential, non-rateable properties, which may include sewer service availability charges.

Charges follow the financial year (1 July – 30 June) and apply per property, not per owner or tenant. Property owners are responsible for all charges, including overdue amounts and interest. Interest on water usage charges is applied 21 days after the account is issued to the owner or managing agent.

Council's 2025/2026 pricing structure has been developed primarily in compliance with this *NSW Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities* with a further review of pricing structure to occur in 2025/2026 to ensure complete compliance with the new framework.

27.1.1 Meter Reading

Council reads water meters three times a year to calculate water charges, which are included on the Water Accounts. Bills are issued soon after readings, helping customers track and manage their water use.

High water users have their meters read monthly. Customers can request a special meter reading, usually for property sales (603 Certificate application), with a fee applicable—see Council's Fees and Charges on Council's website for details.

Most meters are at the front boundary, but some are inside the property, requiring access to read the meter. Homeowners must keep the area around the meter clear by trimming plants, removing any debris or obstacles and ensuring the meter is not buried.

27.1.2 Sending Your Account

Council will send your account to the postal or electronic address you provide or to an authorised representative. Authorisation must be in writing.

If no address is specified, the account will be sent to the property address or your last known postal address.

Customer that would like to have their Water/Sewer account sent by email need to register their details and agree to the terms and conditions using the following link www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/emailme.

27.1.3 Information on Your Account

Water Accounts will follow the National Guidelines for Residential Customers' Water Accounts and generally include the following details:

- Customer name
- Postal address, assessment number, property address, and description of the property receiving water and sewer services
- Date of postage and supply period
- Previous and current meter readings
- Breakdown of volumetric charges
- Total consumption for the current period, along with a comparison to the daily average consumption from the previous period and the same period last year
- Payment due date and available payment methods
- Any outstanding credit or debit balances from previous accounts and payments made since the last bill



For residential customers, a graph will show the average rate of water use for each billing period, comparing it to the same period in the previous year.

Council offers a variety of payment options, in addition to those listed on each Water Account.

Each Water Account also includes educational flyers with information on services provided by the Water and Sewer Business Unit. These flyers help communicate water-saving strategies and other important initiatives.

27.1.4 When Payment is Due

The amount set out in the account is due for payment within 21 (twenty-one) days of the date of the account.

27.1.5 Payment Options

Council offers the option to receive electronic versions of water usage accounts. For more information, visit www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/emailme.

Payment options available:

- Australia Post: Pay at the Post Office and receive a receipt.
- Direct Debit: Set up automatic payments from your bank account on the due date, either tri-annually or by instalments (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly). Complete the application form available on Council's website.
- Mail: Detach the payment slip from your notice and return it with your cheque to: Singleton Council, PO Box 314, Singleton NSW 2330.
- In Person: Pay at Council's Customer Service Centre (Mon-Fri, 8:00am-4:00pm) or at the Singleton Visitor Information Centre (7 days a week, 9:00am-5:00pm).
- Credit Card: Pay by MasterCard or Visa using the automated service, available 24 hours at 131 816 (Amex and Diners are excluded).
- Internet Banking: Pay through Post Billpay at www.postbillpay.com.au.
- BPAY View: View and pay your bills directly through online banking with BPAY View®.

27.1.6 Experiencing Payment Difficulties

Council understands that some customers may face financial hardship due to circumstances beyond their control, impacting their ability to pay their Water Accounts. Customers experiencing hardship can apply for assistance under Council's [POL/6009 Hardship Policy](#).

The Hardship Policy outlines the process for assessing hardship applications, ensuring fairness, integrity, confidentiality, and compliance with statutory requirements. It applies to requests for payment waivers, alternative arrangements, or the reduction of rates, charges, and interest.

Hardship applications must be submitted in writing using the approved Hardship Rate Relief Application Form. Council may also request an interview to better understand the financial difficulties.

The application form and policy provide detailed information on eligibility, required supporting documents, and approval conditions.



27.1.7 What Happens if You Do Not Pay Your Account by the Due Date?

Council will make every effort to assist customers facing payment difficulties. If a customer misses the payment due date, Council or its authorised agent will send a Reminder Notice, which will include information on available assistance and the date when interest will be applied. Council's [POL/6002 Debt Recovery Policy](#) outlines the process followed in the event of non-payment of bills.

27.1.8 Interest and Other Charges

Council may charge interest on outstanding amounts as required by law, unless Council's [POL/6009 Hardship Policy](#) states otherwise. Customers will be notified when interest is applied.

27.1.9 Dishonoured Payments

If your cheque or Direct Debit payment is not honoured by your bank, Council may charge an administrative fee based on the fee charged by Council's bank.

27.1.10 Account Queries and Disputes

If you have questions about the charges on your bill, contact Council's Revenue Team using the General Enquiry contact details.

If there's a dispute over the amount owed, you must still pay the due amount by the stated due date. Any adjustments will be made once the dispute is resolved, either as a credit or a refund to your nominated bank account.

27.1.11 Restriction of Water Supply – Unpaid Charges of Misuse of Water

Under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and General Regulations, Council may restrict or cut off water supply in certain situations, including:

- Unpaid water rates or charges.
- Failure to comply with a lawful order to repair or modify water connections, pipes, fittings, or fixtures.

However, water supply will not be restricted for critical customers, pensioners, or properties with farm animals.

Before restricting water due to unpaid charges, Council will issue a reminder and a notice of restriction. If the property address differs from the owner's postal address, both the owner and occupier will be notified.

If a restriction is applied, a minimum water flow will still be provided for health and hygiene purposes. Residents who believe the restriction poses a health hazard must contact Council within seven days of the notice.

Full water supply will be restored once the issue is resolved, and any outstanding charges are paid.



27.2 Concessions and Rebates

27.2.1 Pensioner Rebates

Council offers a statutory pensioner concession on rates and charges under Section 575 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) for eligible pensioners. This rebate applies to domestic waste management, water, and sewer charges.

To apply, pensioners must complete the Pensioner Rebate Form and provide all required information for assessment.

The Application for Council Pensioner Concession Rates Rebate Form and [POL/6008 Pensioner Concession Policy](#) outline eligibility criteria, required documentation, and approval conditions.

27.2.2 Community Service Obligations - Water and Sewer Service Availability Charge Rebate

Council supports and encourages non-rateable, community-based water services within its LGA.

A Non-Rateable Customer is defined as land exempt from all rates except water supply special rates, as per Section 556 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW). Owners or occupiers of properties primarily used for:

- Education
- Hospitals and nursing care
- Religious worship
- Outdoor sports and recreation
- Charitable purposes

may qualify for a rebate on water and sewer service availability charges if these activities are not-for-profit.

The [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#) outline eligibility criteria and subsidy levels for Community Service Organisations. These policies are available on Council's website.

For more information, contact Council's Revenue Team.

27.2.3 Concealed or Undetected Water Leaks

Council offers assistance to customers facing significantly higher than normal Water Accounts due to undetected or concealed leaks.

What qualifies as an undetected leak?

An undetected leak is one hidden from view, such as underground or under concrete, where the customer could not reasonably be aware of its existence. It may also be due to internal plumbing issues.



Concealed Leak Rebate

If a customer discovers and repairs an undetected leak, they may apply for a rebate on a portion of their Water Usage Account. For commercial properties, this may also include sewer and/or trade waste usage charges if applicable.

- The maximum rebate is a conditional one-off reduction of 200 kilolitres per property as a goodwill gesture.
- The rebate is only available once per property ownership, highlighting the need for ongoing monitoring of internal plumbing.

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify, customers must:

- Have the leak repaired by a licensed plumber.
- Provide proof of repair.
- Submit a Water Consumption Adjustment Application within 20 working days of receiving the Water Usage Account.

Customers remain responsible for any outstanding charges. Full details are available in the *Concessions and Rebates* section of the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

27.2.4 Plumbing Reimbursement Claim

If a water supply issue falls within the property owner's responsibility, they must cover the plumbing costs. However, if a plumber identifies and repairs an issue within Council's responsibility, the owner may be eligible for a Plumbing Reimbursement to cover reasonable repair costs.

How to Apply for a Plumbing Reimbursement

- Submit a Plumbing Reimbursement Claim within 60 days of the repair.
- Include a detailed tax invoice and proof of full payment.
- Applications can be made online via the Community Portal or submitted by post, email, or in person.

Conditions

- Council may inspect the repairs or consult the plumber before approving a claim.
- Claims may be denied if costs are excessive or unjustified.
- Full terms and conditions are available in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

Plumbing Reimbursement Reasonable Costs

Council estimates that diagnosing a plumbing issue within its responsibility takes about one hour. Reimbursement limits for such cases are outlined in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and assessed individually.

27.2.5 Dual Flush Toilet Rebate

Toilets use a significant amount of water, often flushing away valuable drinking water. Upgrading to a water-efficient toilet, such as a dual flush model, can help reduce household water use while also:

- Lessening the strain on Council's sewer system.



- Conserving drinking water supplies.
- Lowering household water bills.

Water-efficient toilets perform just as well as older models but use far less water. Traditional toilets can use up to 12 litres per flush, whereas dual-flush toilets use only 3 litres for a half flush.

Council encourages residents to install dual flush toilets and offers a rebate for eligible water customers in Singleton, Broke, and Jerrys Plains. Each property is eligible for one rebate only. The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's Operational Plan, with full eligibility criteria outlined in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

27.2.6 Rainwater Tank Rebate

Rainwater tanks help conserve drinking water and provide a valuable source of water for gardens, cleaning, and other household uses. However, NSW Health does not recommend using rainwater for drinking or food preparation if town water is available.

To reduce demand on drinking water, conserve resources, and lessen stormwater runoff, Council encourages the installation of rainwater tanks. Council offers a rebate for eligible customers, with one rebate per property, regardless of how many tanks are installed.

The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's Operational Plan, with full eligibility criteria outlined in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

For more information on rainwater tanks, refer to NSW Health guidelines [\[here\]](#).

Information, Privacy and Communication

Council is committed to maintaining strong relationships with customers and the community through ongoing engagement and quality service. The Plan ensures:

- Clear Customer Service Standards are set and met.
- Performance is benchmarked, with improvements made as needed.
- Council's charges are clearly defined and communicated.
- Effective communication strategies inform the community about water supply and sewerage matters.

The plan aligns with Council's [Customer Service Charter](#) and serves as a single point of reference for service commitments.

28 COMMUNICATION

28.1 Stakeholder Engagement

As the Local Water Utility provider, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit must comply with the Local Government Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework (IP&R) 2010. This requires Council to prepare:

- Community Strategic Plan (CSP) – Outlines the community's long-term priorities and strategies to achieve them.
- Resourcing Strategy – Details how resources will be managed to support strategic objectives.
- 4-Year Delivery Program – Sets out Council's key actions over a four-year period.



- Annual Operational Plan – Provides a yearly breakdown of planned activities and budgets.
- Annual Report – Reviews Council's performance against its plans.

The NSW DCCEEW's *Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities*, ensures that local water utilities manage key risks and achieve effective, evidence-based strategic planning. It sets expected outcomes and assesses whether utilities meet these standards.

Council encourages community involvement by holding Stakeholder Engagement and Project Delivery Plan meetings for major capital works. Community members can provide feedback through the Council website, phone, or mail.

28.2 Customer Consultation

Water supply and sewerage services can sometimes cause community concerns, particularly regarding service changes, charge increases, and major construction projects impacting the environment. To address this, Council runs an ongoing education program and provides regular community updates, including:

- Four-year pricing plans for core charges
- Annual capital works programs
- Tri-annual information flyers with Water Accounts
- Printed materials on water-saving initiatives and restrictions
- News updates on the Council website
- Outage and event notifications via social media and Council's website
- Opportunities for community feedback on major planned works.

28.3 Customer Satisfaction

Council prioritises a personal service approach to water and sewer supply across the LGA, with a focus on strong customer satisfaction. This is achieved through effective communication and performance.

Our dedicated customer service team is available to assist with any enquiries. Council provides a 'one-stop shop' for water and sewer services from 8am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, and offers after-hours support 24/7.

We actively seek customer feedback through various methods, including:

- Follow-up surveys after customer requests
- Follow-up cards from Water and Sewer Network staff
- Random surveys on areas of concern
- Customer response forms, available online or over the counter at Council
- Annual customer satisfaction survey

28.4 Website

Council maintains a website to provide customers with essential water supply information, including updates on outages, restrictions, and sewer disruptions during emergencies or severe weather. The



site is regularly updated and includes environmental data in compliance with the EPA's Environmental Protection Licence.

The NSW DCCEEW requires local water utilities to understand customer service needs. The *NSW Regulatory and Assurance Framework for Local Water Utilities* outlines how to meet this standard.

Council prioritises service needs, which guide operations, maintenance, capital works, and strategic planning for assets, workforce, and finances. Under section 3.2 of the framework, local water utilities must:

- Understand customer needs, values, and preferences.
- Consider current and future demands on water and sewer systems.
- Align with state and regional strategies, including the NSW Water Strategy.

Council is committed to providing excellent customer service. Your feedback helps us improve—visit our [website](#) to share your thoughts or view survey results.

28.5 Boil Water Alert Notifications

When a boil water alert is issued, Council will urgently notify customers using one or more of the following methods:

- Letterbox drops or doorknocking
- News releases
- Signs on public taps and bubblers
- Social media updates
- Variable message boards
- Radio announcements
- Website updates
- Emails

Council will also directly notify vulnerable and special customers, including:

- Water carters and carted water consumers
- Schools and childcare centres
- Hospitals, nursing homes, and medical facilities
- Accommodation providers and caravan parks

29 COMPLAINTS

Council defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about its services, decisions, or complaint-handling process, where a response or resolution is expected. Complaints are recorded for reporting and improvement purposes.

The [POL/40007 Compliments and Complaint Handling Policy](#) outlines how Council manages complaints and is available on the Council website.



What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint may involve:

- Negative feedback about interactions with Council
- Dissatisfaction with a decision made under Council policy
- Dissatisfaction with Council's actions or failure to act
- Service responsiveness, measured through:
 - Water quality complaints
 - Water and sewerage service complaints
 - Billing and account complaints

What is NOT a Complaint?

- Requests for service or assistance
- Enquiries about water meter connections
- Requests to fix leaks or service faults
- Clarifications regarding water accounts
- Concerns about pricing, property connections, or tariffs

What to Expect When Making a Complaint

Customers can submit complaints via phone, email, letter, or in person. When lodging a complaint, customers can expect:

- Confidentiality of personal details
- Courtesy and respect
- Support for special needs (e.g., interpreter services)
- Acknowledgement of the complaint, if requested
- A reference number for follow-up
- Thorough and objective investigation
- Regular updates on the process and outcome
- A final decision, if applicable

Complaint Response Time

Council prioritises complaints based on their seriousness and complexity but will provide a response within 21 working days in all cases.

29.1 Reporting Odour Complaints

Sewerage systems naturally produce gases that may cause odours. If you notice an issue, report it to Council's Customer Service Centre at 02 6578 7290 (available 24/7). Council will investigate and address the problem in line with our service standards. All odour complaints are taken seriously under our Environmental Protection Licence from the EPA.



29.2 Reporting Sewer Overflows

Sewer overflows can occur due to blockages. Report any overflow immediately to Council's Customer Service Centre at 02 6578 7290 (available 24/7). Council treats these incidents seriously, responding according to our service levels. All overflows are recorded and reported as required by our Environmental Protection Licence from the EPA.

30 COMPLIMENTS

Council values compliments as they highlight best practices and exceptional service. This feedback helps us improve and maintain high standards across all areas. You can submit compliments using the [contact details](#) in this document, and they will be shared with the relevant staff for recognition.

31 INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

Council collects and stores personal and health information to conduct its business, ensuring it is used only for its intended purpose.

In compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* (PPIPA) and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)* (HRIPA), Council follows strict privacy guidelines. [The Privacy Management Plan](#) (POL/30004) outlines Council's commitment to safeguarding personal information and ensuring staff compliance with privacy laws.

As a custodian of sensitive electronic information, Council has a duty to protect data from unauthorised access, loss, or misuse. We are committed to maintaining the privacy and security of all customers, business contacts, Councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers.



32 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
ADWG	Australian Drinking Water Guideline – A framework for the management of drinking water quality, 12 elements in total.
Approved	Acceptable to, authorised by or approved by Council.
Backflow	A reverse flow condition occurs when a pressure difference causes water to flow backward into potable water supply pipes from an unintended source.
Backflow Prevention Device	A device that prevents water supply contamination, such as a break tank, registered air gap, pressure vacuum breaker, reduced pressure zone device, or testable double check valve.
Boundary Kit	A valve box at the property boundary containing an isolating valve, non-return valve, and inspection tee.
Building Adjacent to Sewer	If a structure is proposed within the zone of influence but not directly over the sewer, it may still affect Council sewers and related infrastructure.
Building Over Sewer	The construction of a structure over or within the sewer's zone of influence.
Catchments	An area of land where rainfall collects and flows into surface water bodies, wetlands, and groundwater reserves.
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
Consumption	Water that is consumed by humans or livestock via water meters.
Control Panel	The box incorporating the alarm controls for the pump and the emergency generator connection point.
Council	Singleton Council
Demand Management	Strategies to reduce water consumption across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, focusing on efficient use of existing resources as a cost-effective alternative to expanding infrastructure.
Developer Charge	A measure of the impact a development will have on infrastructure, based on the average water consumption or sewage discharge of a typical residential dwelling.
Developer Servicing Plan - DSP	A document outlining the calculation of developer charges within the Council's LGA. It includes the charge amount, assumptions used, and planning details for water and sewer infrastructure. This is required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and follows the Water Directorate Guidelines.
Dirty Water	A change in the colour or appearance of potable water, typically brown or yellow, caused by trace materials like iron or manganese.
Discharge Pipe	The pipeline from the Pressure Sewer Unit to the pressure sewer main via the boundary kit.
Distribution System	A network of pipes leading from a treatment plant to customers' plumbing systems.
DCCEEW - NSW	Department of climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; NSW state government regulatory body



Term	Definition
DCCEEW	Department of climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; Federal government regulatory body
Drinking water	Water intended primarily for human consumption (but excluding bottled water, for the purposes of this policy).
Drinking Water Management System (DWMS)	A systematic evaluation of activities, documents, procedures, and supporting information that outlines Council's system for safely supplying drinking water.
Easement	An area of land, or part of a lot reserved by law for a specific purpose such as the containment of water assets.
Easement to Drain Sewage	A legal entitlement placed over a parcel of land for the purpose of the provision, operation, and maintenance of sewer infrastructure.
Eligible Pensioner	A person who is in receipt of the Pension Concession Card issued by Centrelink, the Department of Veteran Affairs Gold TPI or EDA Card.
Encasement	The protection of a sewer pipe by encasing all around with concrete to Council standards.
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
Equivalent Tenements – ET's	A measure of the demand or loading a development will have on infrastructure in terms of the average water consumption or average sewage discharge for an average residential dwelling.
Heavy/Permanent Structures	Any approved structure typically constructed from masonry, brick, steel, timber or concrete and it is neither reasonable nor practical to remove or dismantle the structure for the purpose of carrying out sewer repairs or refurbishment. Some examples are dwelling houses, garages, onsite cabins.
High Level Alarm	An alarm activated when the volume of sewer in the storage vessel exceeds the normal level that controls the pump by a pre-determined amount.
Improvements	Are deemed to include but not be limited to pavements, shrubs, gardens, retaining walls, fences, and all other structures.
Kilolitre	One thousand litres.
Lamphole	A vertical pipe or shaft between manholes into which a light may be lowered for inspecting sewer.
Leakage	Water that is lost in transit from a pipe.
Lightweight/Demountable Structures	Any approved structure that can, at the owner's risk and expense, be easily and readily dismantled and re-erected at the request of Council, if access to the main (by excavation) was required. Some examples are domestic carports, small tool or garden sheds, pergola.
Liquid Trade Waste	Liquid trade waste means all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.
Local Government Area (LGA)	Area of Singleton Council's operation
Maintenance Shaft	Allows a sewer system to be inspected, cleaned, and repaired from the surface.



Term	Definition
Maintenance Hole	A chamber with a removable cover which allows human and machine access to a (typically buried) sewer; abbreviation MH retains the traditional abbreviation for "maintenance hole". Also referred to as Access Chamber or Manhole
Miscellaneous Structures	Any approved structure where no special protection measures for the sewer main should be required as long as the minimum clearance requirements have been met. Some examples are rainwater tanks, driveways, or retaining walls.
Multiple barrier	The use of more than one preventative measure as a barrier against hazard.
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
Non-Rateable Land	Land exempt from all rates, other than water supply special rates as outlined in Section 556 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> .
Not Fully Enclosed	Where at least one side of the carport/veranda is completely open, or two sides are partly open. Doors of any type are to be considered as closed sides.
NPR	National Performance Report
Overflow Gully (Yard Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, that allows sewage to overflow away from the interior of your home and outside to the garden if there is a sewer blockage.
Owner	The Agency, Authority, Board, Company, Controlling Authority, Corporation, Council, Department, Individual, Regulator, Utility or other legal entity who is the Owner or lessee of the property and/or who has responsibly for the property.
Potable Water	Drinkable water. Usually treated freshwater, intended for human consumption that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. For the purposes of this policy excludes bottled water/
Pressure Sewer System	An overall system including the Pressure Sewer Unit, control panel, discharge pipe, boundary kit and pressure sewer pipes up to a discharge point in a conventional sewer.
Principal place of residence	The property that the ratepayer occupies as their sole or dominant residence.
PSS	Pressure Sewer System
Quality System	Organisation structure, procedures, processes, and resources needed to implement quality management (AS/NZS ISO 8402:1994)
Rainwater Tank	On-site storages to collect roof water for beneficial use.
Rate Payer	The person liable for payment of the rates and charges of the property for which the pensioner concession is claimed
Risk	Effect of uncertainty on objectives. (AS/NZ ISO31000:2018) Note 1: An effect is a deviation from the expected. It can be positive, negative or both, and can address, create or result in opportunities and threats; Note 2: Objectives can have different aspects and categories, and can be applied at different levels; and Note 3: Risk is usually



Term	Definition
	expressed in terms of risk sources, potential events, their consequences and their likelihood.
Risk Consequence	Outcome of an event affecting objectives. Note 1: A consequence can be certain or uncertain and can have positive or negative direct or indirect effects on objectives; Note 2: Consequences can be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively; and Note 3: Any consequence can escalate through cascading and cumulative effects.
Risk Event	Occurrence or change of a particular set of circumstances. Note 1: An event can have one or more occurrences and can have several causes and several consequences; Note 2: An event can also be something that is expected which does not happen, or something that is not expected which does happen; and Note 3: An event can be a risk source.
Risk Likelihood	Chance of something happening.
Risk Management	The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk.
Risk Source	Element which alone or in combination has the potential to give rise to risk.
Sewage	See Sewer
Sewer	An asset owned by Council used for the conveyancing of sewage, whether raw or treated. A sewer may be 'live' or disused.
Sewer Line / Main / Pipe	An asset owned by Council, controlled, and maintained by the Water and Sewer Business Unit, used for the conveying of sewage (raw or treated). A sewer may be operational or disused.
Sewer /Sewerage System	The system of pipes and pump stations for collecting and transporting sewer from each property to the sewer treatment plant.
Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)	A facility for the treatment of sewer to remove pollutants (solid matter and pathogens) producing treated recycled water and bio-solids.
Stakeholders	Any person, company or relevant authority that can affect or be affected by Singleton Council's actions, objectives and policies.
Trade Waste	Toxic and other potentially harmful substances discharged to the sewer system.
Undetected (Concealed) Water Leak	A leak that is hidden from view either underground or under concrete, and a property owner could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence; or that internal plumbing has shortcomings. A concealed leak is water escaping on the ratepayer's side of the water meter, which is hidden from view; be it underground, or within concrete, or underneath a building and where the owner or occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its existence.
Vent Shaft	Also known as a ventilation shaft or vent stack is a tall shaft designed for the safe release of gases built up in the sewers.
Wastewater/Sewerage	Wastewater from toilets, sinks, showers and washing machines is carried through the sewer mains to be treated at the sewerage treatment plant.



Term	Definition
Water Conservation	Preventing and reducing wasteful, uneconomical, impractical, or unreasonable use of water resources.
Water Demand	Total water use requirements of an area for drinking, agriculture, industry, recreation, and gardening. This demand is seasonal and highly influenced by the weather.
Water Quality	Physical, chemical, and biological measures of water.
Water Treatment Plant (WTP)	A facility that treats freshwater piped from reservoirs into potable water for supply to the community.
Works	All those Works being sewers, maintenance structures, vents, pumping stations, pressure mains and accessories and shall include valve chambers and storage facilities as shown on the Design Drawings and includes any part or parts of the Works.
Yard Gully (also see Overflow Relief Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, designed to release any sewer overflow outside of the home in the event of a blockage in the sewer main.
Zone of Influence	<p>The 'zone of influence' of a sewer is that area of soil/strata that is likely to be influenced by building loads. Factors that determine the 'zone of influence' include trench width and depth and soil classification (by qualified structural engineer as per AS 2870) and groundwater / level of the water table.</p> <p>The boundary of the 'zone of influence' coincides with the angle of repose of the strata encountered (including cut/fill). This boundary shall commence at the bottom corner of the trench nearest the proposed foundation. If the trench is partly in rock or shale the boundary shall commence at the top of the rock or shale strata. In heterogeneous soil the angle of repose may differ.</p> <p>The above criteria do not apply to water charged strata. Foundations in water charged ground are to be designed by a structural engineer and approved by Council.</p>



Appendix A – Customer Service Standards, Priorities and Timeframes and Levels of Service

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WATER + SEWER CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN 2025

APPENDIX A
Customer Service Standards
Priorities + Timeframes
Levels of Service

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1 WATER SUPPLY SERVICE

This section outlines the standard Levels of Service that meet minimum water supply requirements for Singleton. In future, separate service levels may be developed for smaller villages where delivering these standards is not cost-effective.

Water supply service levels typically cover:

- Supply availability
- Water quality
- Response times to supply failures
- Customer complaints

References to Levels of Service in this document assume compliance with all statutory, regulatory, and licensing requirements.

These service levels are not contractual and do not create any legal obligations. They serve as a general guide to the core services customers can expect from Council.

1.1 Water Supply Service - Customer Service Standards

The table below outlines the Customer Service Standards for key aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. The targets, priorities, and response times apply only to potable water customers and exclude those on special agreements. Annual targets are based on the median performance of similar councils for each performance measure.

Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
Drinking water pressure to boundary	Provide between 12 metres and 90 metres head of water in the reticulation system. The minimum water pressure is based on minimum firefighting requirements and the maximum pressure protects Council and house plumbing from bursting. The minimum drinking water pressure provided by Council will fill a standard 9 L bucket in 1.5 mins.	95% of all residential properties during summer whilst conveying a minimum of 6 L/min**	2	Industry standard



Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
Extent of unplanned drinking water interruptions, including their number, duration and cause (e.g. water main breaks).	<p>An unplanned water supply interruption occurs when a property is without a service due to any cause. This excludes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property service connection interruptions (unless the burst or leak requires the main to be shut down for repairs which affect multiple customers). Interruptions that cause some reduction to the service but where normal activities are still possible. Planned interruptions except where the customer has not received notification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C15 – Unplanned interruption duration < 120 mins C10 – < 4 water service complaints per 1,000 properties A8 – < 12 main breaks per 100km of water main C17 – < 32 unplanned interruptions per 1,000 properties 	1	<p>National Performance Benchmarking Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C15 – Average Duration of unplanned interruptions water in minutes C10 – Water Service, complaints no. per 1000 properties A8 – Water main breaks no. per 100 km of water main C17 – Average frequency of unplanned interruptions – water no. per 1,000 properties
Time for restoration of water service – unplanned interruptions	Restoration occurs where all interrupted connections are restored to normal service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A8 – < 12 main breaks per 100km of water main C15 – Unplanned interruption duration < 120 mins 	1	<p>National Performance Benchmarking Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A8 – Water main breaks no. per 100 km of water main C15 – Average duration of unplanned interruptions water in minutes
Notification for planned water service interruptions (Refer to 15.1 of the Customer Service Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide notice, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours. 	N/A	2	Industry standard



Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise notification and resumption of supply to Critical and Extremely Critical Customers (e.g. dialysis patients) 			
Drinking water quality and/or complaints*	Supply drinking water in the reticulated system which meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and minimise the number of water quality complaints resulting from operational practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H3 – 100% of the service population for which population microbiological compliance is achieved. C9 – < 3 water quality complaints per 1,000 properties 	2	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H3 - % of population where microbiological compliance was achieved. C9 – Water quality complaints per 1,000 properties
Water for firefighting	Properties connected to the town water supply receive potable water at a guaranteed level of service and meets the NSW Brigade requirements for firefighting in accordance with AS2419. Council has committed to progressively replacing sub 100mm water mains to provide the minimum firefighting pressure by 2030.	Available in all urban areas**	N/A	N/A
Consumption restrictions	The adopted consumption trigger levels are aimed at ensuring that Singleton is affected by water restrictions for less than 10% of the time and no more than 5 times per 100 years. Restrictions are only applied when severe water shortages are evident. There are three levels of restrictions (1 – low level restrictions to 3 – emergency restrictions), each with an increasing impact on consumption, in accordance with the current Drought and Emergency Response Management Plan. Restrictions will be widely advertised to ensure total awareness by all customers.	No more than 5 times per 100 years	1	N/A



* Excludes non-potable supply including Glennies Creek Trunk Water Main and Mount Thorley Raw Water Scheme

** Excludes water mains less than 100mm consistent with Clause 142 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations, 2005 (NSW)* (for example water supply to the Abattoir) and Jerrys Plains Water Supply Scheme.

1.2 Water Supply Service - Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details

The table below shows the response and repair timeframes, along with priority details, for key aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. These targets and timeframes apply only to potable water customers and do not include those on special agreements.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Definition	Complete failure to maintain continuity or quality of supply to customers or a critical user at a critical time. Immediate traffic or safety hazard.	Partial failure to maintain continuity or quality of supply customers or a critical user at a non-critical time. Minor traffic or safety hazard.	Known fault, minor problem or complaint which requires rectification with some urgency.	Known fault, non-urgent minor problem or complaint which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council
Typical Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pump station failure • Water treatment plant malfunction • Control valve failure • Major water main break • No water • Stop tap faulty (flooding house – urgent shutdown required) • Suspected waterborne illness (potable water supplies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor main or service break • Leaking main • Partial valve failure • Poor pressure • Leak causing a minor safety/traffic issue • Dirty water (colour/odour/taste) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor leak from main or service line (not causing safety/traffic issue) • Partial failure of connections • Minor leak from a hydrant point • Missing/faulty stop tap (work being carried out) • Asset locations – no plant or machinery on-site • Install temporary service • Faulty valve or hydrant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty water meter • Damaged meter (unable to read) • Missing/faulty stop tap (no work being carried out) • System investigation • Water hammer
Typical Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major property damage • Water treatment plant output diminished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor property damage • Minor environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No property and/or minor environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No property impact or financial disadvantage to the customer



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal risk to public health • Significant depletion of service reservoir • Major environmental impact • Major water supply interruption • Boil water alert 			
Maximum Response Time	Within 2 hours (business hours) Within 4 hours (after hours)	Within 4 hours (business hours) Within 6 hours (after hours)	Within 24 hours or next business day	Within 72 hours or next 2 business days
Fault Repair Objective (i.e. asset functioning and back in service)	Within 5 hours	Within 2 business days	Within 5 business days	Within 14 business days
Surface Reinstatement and Clean-up Completion (if applicable)	Within 10 business days*	Within 10 business days*	Within 10 business days*	Within 14 business days*

* Some repairs may take up to 20 business days where specialist restoration is required (e.g. driveway repair)



1.3 Water Supply Service – Levels of Service

The table below outlines the Levels of Service for as requested aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. The target response times apply to standard service requests for potable water customers and do not cover complex developments or special servicing arrangements.

For complex cases, Council will aim to meet these service levels and will inform applicants of any expected delays or deviations.

Item	Description	Target	Comments
Water Connection Quotation – Domestic	Quotation for standard domestic water connection	3 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered as a Customer Request (CRM)
Water Connection Quotation – Commercial	Quotation for commercial water connections, including fire service installation quotations	5 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered as a CRM
Water Connection and Meter Installation (Domestic and Commercial)	Supply and installation of meter on existing property service line or supply and installation of meter including construction of property service line	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Fire Service (Installation of Tee and Valve)	Installation of tee and valve on Council's water main. Building of fire service frame (including valving) to be completed by developer/property owner's plumber	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Statement of Available Pressure	Provision of available pressure at nominated hydrant; typically, by undertaking a site visit and performing a pressure test at the hydrant	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Water Meter Disconnection	Includes removal of water meter and capping of service pipes	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Water Main (new) Connections and Isolations	Scheduling requirements in Technical Specifications	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.



Item	Description	Target	Comments
Location of Assets	Locate Council's underground assets	10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service and registered by CRM.
Water Carter Approvals	Non-potable and private use approval Potable user approval	10 working days 20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with. Potable user approved allows for Environmental Health Officer (EHO) inspection (if required).

All timeframes begin from the date full payment is received and all required information is provided.

For services involving special or custom orders, Council will make every effort to meet the stated service levels. Any delays or changes will be communicated to the applicant.

For complex or large numbers of water main (new) connections and isolations, Council will make every effort to meet the stated service levels, but this may not always be possible. Any delays or changes will be communicated to the applicant.



2 SEWERAGE SYSTEM

This section outlines the standard Levels of Service that meet the minimum requirements for Singleton's sewerage system. These typically cover:

- Service availability
- System failures
- Response times to failures
- Customer complaints and inquiries
- Odours and pests (e.g. flies, vermin)
- Impact of treatment plants on nearby residents
- Effluent and biosolid management

Effluent discharge, biosolids, noise, and odours are regulated by environmental laws and licensing requirements. References to Levels of Service in this document assume compliance with all statutory and regulatory obligations.

These Customer Service Standards are not contractual and do not create legal obligations. They serve as a guide to the typical service customers can expect from Council.

2.1 Sewerage System - Customer Service Standards

The table below outlines the customer service standards for on-request aspects of Council's sewerage system. Annual targets are based on the median performance of similar councils for each measure.

Standards	Description	Target	Priority	Benchmark
Sewerage overflows to customer properties.	Sewerage overflows to customer properties may occur either as a result of onsite plumbing or offsite sewerage issues. Customers are advised in the first instance to contact their plumber. If the plumber identifies the issue is within the area of Council's responsibility, Council will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A14 – < 38 Sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 km of sewer main 	1	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A14 – Sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 km of sewer main



Standards	Description	Target	Priority	Benchmark
	reimburse the plumber/customer for the work and undertake rectification.			
Sewer odour complaints	Sewer odour complaints can be generated as a consequence of a range of shortcomings with operational maintenance of the system. Action is taken to minimise the disruption from such occurring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 – < 0.9 odour complaints per 1,000 properties 	2	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 – Odour Complaints per 1,000 properties
Effluent quality from Sewage Treatment Plant	To meet and ensure ongoing compliance with licence regulations by the EPA for the operation of the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E5 – > 98% of sewage volume treated compliant with EPA licence 	N/A	National Performance Benchmarking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E4 – Percentage of sewage volume treated was compliant (%)

2.2 Sewerage System - Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details

The following table outlines the Sewerage System Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details for the essential service aspect of Council's Sewerage System.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Definition	A complete failure to contain sewage within the system or any problem affecting customers or a critical user at a critical time. Traffic or safety hazard.	A minor failure to contain sewage within the sewer system or any problem affecting multiple customers.	A minor failure to contain sewage affecting a single property.	A minor problem, request or complaint which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council.
Typical Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manhole overflowing • Pump station failure/fault • Broken gravity/rising main • Missing manhole lids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cracked pipe or partial blockage of the sewer • Partial sewer blockage in branch line • Partial main line choke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden extra hydraulic load which backs up but then clears itself • Minor subsidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer odour not occurring at the time • System investigation



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break, collapse, choke overloading the system and extended wet weather • Subsidence causing immediate danger • Sewerage treatment plant critical alarms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidence causing danger • Broken junction connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noisy or odorous manhole or pump station 	
Typical Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal injury or risk to public health • Surcharge or overflow in dry weather • Surcharge or overflow in wet weather • Surcharge inside/outside a building • Property damage e.g. subsidence • Major environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor environmental impact, i.e. odour problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow moving toilet flush • Minimal or no environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor inconvenience or disruption
Maximum Response Time	Within 2 hours (business hours) Within 4 hours (after hours)	Within 4 hours (business hours) Within 6 hours (after hours)	Within 24 hours or next business day	Within 5 business days
Fault Repair Objective (i.e. asset functioning and back in service)	Within 5 hours	Within 8 hours	Within 5 business days	Within 14 business days
Surface Reinstatement and Clean-up	Within 10 business days*	Within 10 business days*	Within 10 business days*	Within 14 business days*



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Completion (if applicable)				

* Some repairs may take up to 20 business days where specialist restoration is required (e.g. driveway repair)

2.3 Sewerage System – Levels of Service

The following table outlines the Sewerage System Levels of Service for the upon-request, aspects of Council's Sewerage System. These target times indicated are for standard service requests only and do not extend to those more complex developments and servicing arrangements. In complex developments and servicing requirements, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service, if required, will be communicated with the applicant. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

Item	Description	Target	Comments
Sewer Connection	Connection of property to Council's sewer system, known as a new junction. This is typically undertaken by the Developer or plumber but can be undertaken by Council	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Pressure Sewer System Installation	Installation and connection of pressure sewer system and connection to Council's sewer system	30 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and signing of installation agreement and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council or applicant are complied with.
Sewer Disconnection	Disconnection and capping of property discharge line at Council's sewer main. This is typically undertaken by the Developer or plumber, except in the case of a deep sewer main, with notification to Council.	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Adjustment to Maintenance Chambers	Raise / lower maintenance chamber	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.



Item	Description	Target	Comments
Depth of Sewer Maintenance Chamber	Provide depth of sewer maintenance chamber; typically, by undertaking measurement during site visit	10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered as a CRM
Location of Assets	Locate Council's underground assets	10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered as a CRM
Sewer Main (new) Connections and Isolations	Scheduling requirements in Technical Specifications	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Liquid Trade Waste	Classification A and B Classification C – referral to and concurrency from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) required	5 working days 40 working days (dependent on DCCEEW)	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.

All timeframes are from the date of payment of all associated fees as quoted and the provision of sufficient information.

For services that require ordering of special or custom items, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service will be communicated with the applicant.

For complex or large numbers of sewer main (new) connections and isolations, Council will make every effort to meet the stated service levels, but this may not always be possible. Any delays or changes will be communicated to the applicant.



3 WATER AND SEWER – DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING SERVICES

As the Local Water Utility, any proposed development located within Council's Water Supply and/or Sewerage System areas requires an assessment of the proposed development, to identify potential impacts on water and/or sewer infrastructure in the area and any Water and Sewer related applications and approvals. This is in accordance with the provisions of section 305 of the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* or section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* or at the time of issuing a notice or other form of written advice, e.g. under the *SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*.

Levels of Service with respect with development engineering services within the Water and Sewer Group are typically concerned with the following areas:

- Protection of existing infrastructure; and
- Response times to provide advice and approvals.

The Customer Service Standards are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

3.1 Development Engineering Services – Levels of Service

The following table outlines the Water and Sewer Development Engineering Services Levels of Service for the core aspects of Council's Water and Sewer Building and Development Services. These target times indicated are for standard developments only and do not extend to those more complex developments and servicing arrangements. In complex developments and servicing requirements, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service, if required, will be communicated with the applicant.

Item	Description	Target	Comments
WMA S306 Notice Requirement	Review of application and determination of requirements for development to be able to obtain WMA S307 Certificate of Compliance	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.



Item	Description	Target	Comments
WMA S307 Certificate of Compliance	Review of compliance against WMA S306 Notice of Requirements and provision of Certificate of Compliance	20 working days	From date of payment and provision of all required documentation demonstrating compliance with WMA S306 Notice of Requirements Note that s307 of the <i>Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)</i> permits up to 60 days.
Building in Vicinity of Sewer and Water Trunk Mains	Assessment of applications to build in the vicinity of water and sewer mains; typically including review of design drawings	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Design Review Response	Response to customer on additional information and timeframe for design approval	10 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees, provision of sufficient information and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Building Plan Assessment	Assessment of application building plans for impact on Council's water and sewer assets	5 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered as a CRM





SINGLETON
COUNCIL

Water and Sewer

Customer Service Plan

April 2023

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan outlines the commitments, responsibilities and standards of service that Singleton Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will provide to our customers.



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Disclaimer

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1 Introduction

About this Plan

The purpose of this document is to describe Singleton Council's (Council) customer services and responsibilities in accordance with the legislative framework for Local Water Utilities in NSW.

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan (Customer Service Plan) sets out Council's obligations to customers and clearly articulates Council's responsibilities for providing water and sewerage services in a sustainable way and the minimum levels of service customers can expect.

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan meets these objectives and is broadly consistent with the Council's adopted Customer Experience Strategy, and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) – Guidance on Strategic Planning Outcomes – Understanding Service Needs. The Customer Service Plan abides by the customer service requirements of NSW Water Directorate members.

Council is committed to providing a high level of customer service and standards across the organisation. The Customer Service Plan is a centric water utility document and forms part of our commitment to understanding our customers' needs and meeting their expectations.

The Customer Service Plan does not remove any obligations of Council to comply with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, other laws or statutory obligations.

1.1 Background

This document provides:

- An explanation of the services offered for drinking water, discharging effluent, and the collection and treatment of sewage. General information is also provided about the provision of trade waste services; however, trade waste customers are expected to have individual contracts with Council that will contain information specific to their requirements.
- Information on a range of customer service processes including connections, metering, billing, managing maintenance work (for example: backflow devices), complaints and dispute resolution.
- A list of key performance indicators and targets to express the levels of customer service or '**Customer Service Standards**' that Council aims to deliver to its customers and the environment. This includes critical items such as standards for drinking water, water pressure, water supply interruptions, sewer overflows and odours, response times and repair completion times, as may be applicable.

Overall, this document informs Council's customers of the service that they can expect from Council and Council's performance as reported by the various NSW Government and/or



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National regulators. The document is available to all customers and is not necessarily limited to the owners of individual properties that utilise Council's services. The Customer Service Standards set out in this document are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The times, service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

1.2 Interpretations

1.2.1 Employees and Contractors

Where the Customer Service Plan imposes an obligation on Council, the obligation extends to its officers, employees, and contractors.

Where the Customer Service Plan confers a right on Council, its officers, employees, and contractors may enjoy the right to the extent permitted by Council.

1.2.2 The Customer

A person is a customer and is covered by the Customer Service Plan if they:

- Own and occupy a serviced property connected to Council's water or sewerage systems.
- Own a serviced property connected to Council's water or sewer systems, but do not occupy it - for example, a landlord or an owner of an unoccupied property.
- Occupy a serviced property which is connected to Council's water or sewer system and are liable to pay water usage or sewer volumetric charges as set out in Section 10 Annual Charges for Water and Sewerage, for example, a tenant or caravan park resident.
- Own a property which has Council's water/sewer services available for connection, for example, vacant land.

The owners and occupiers of unserviced properties or properties that are outside Council's water supply and/or sewer service supply areas are not customers under this Customer Service Plan.

1.2.3 The Customer's Property

Unless the Customer Service Plan states otherwise, 'property' or 'customer's property' means the property owned and/or occupied by the customer within Council's Water and Sewerage Supply areas.



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1.2.4 Policies

A reference to any of Council's Policies or Standards means the policies and standards as published on Council's website at any one time and any amendment or replacement applying to the same or similar subject matter.

2 About Council's Water and Sewer Business

Council is the responsible authority for the delivery of water supply and sewerage services to the Singleton Local Government Area (LGA). Council's water supply and sewerage networks are large and traverses the LGA boundary covering rural, residential, commercial, industrial, and native bushland areas. This is managed by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit.

2.1 Council's Water and Sewer Assets

Council owns and maintains a significant underground network of water and sewer mains. The infrastructure delivers to most urban towns and villages and collects then treats sewage from a large portion of those homes and businesses. Council's water and sewer network is made up of:

- 1 Sewage Treatment Plant;
- 1 Water Treatment Plant;
- 35.8 kilometres Water Trunk and Reticulation Mains (Raw);
- 19.2 kilometres Water Transfer Main;
- 245 kilometres Water Reticulation Mains;
- 127.6 kilometres Sewer Reticulation Mains;
- 29.5 kilometres Sewer Rising (Pressure) Mains;
- 15 Sewer Pump Stations;
- 8 Potable Water Pump Stations;
- 3 Raw Water Pump Stations;
- 13 Potable Water Reservoirs;
- 1 Raw Water Reservoir;
- 175 Active Pressure Sewer Systems;
- 4 Permanent Sewer Backup Generators;
- 1 Mobile Emergency Generator; and
- 54 Remote Telemetry Systems.

2.1.1 Water Supply Service Summary

Council provides high quality water services to approximately 20,000 people, through the connection of over 6,000 domestic and 750 commercial / industrial properties. Potable water



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is supplied to Singleton town, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Jerrys Plains and Broke. About 950 ML/year bulk potable water is supplied to large customers (Singleton Abattoir, Army Camp), potable water traders and three coal mining complexes. Council does not provide water services to Branxton and its surrounding areas.

Council's raw water is drawn from Glennies Creek Dam and conveyed to Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, where it is treated to drinking water standards before distribution to consumers. Council holds high security local water utility licences which allows for use of allocated water on a priority basis, including in the event of drought.

2.1.2 Sewerage Service Summary

Council provides sewerage treatment services to approximately 16,500 people in the urban footprint of Singleton, including Singleton town, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview and Darlington. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customer. Council does not supply sewer services to Branxton and its surrounding areas.

Council operates one sewage treatment plant, located in Whittingham, which provides tertiary treatment of effluent. Operation of the sewage treatment plant is governed by the requirements of Council's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Licence and treated effluent is discharged into Doughboy Hollow near the Hunter River.

3 Regulatory and Assurance Framework for Local Water Utilities

The *Regulatory and Assurance Framework for Local Water Utilities* is published by Department of Planning & Environment – Water (DPE - Water) and provide guidance on achieving local water utility sector objectives. The sector objectives are to continue to ensure:

- safe and secure drinking water supply to protect public health and the environment, and to support economic development and liveability
- effective sewerage services to protect public health and the environment, and to support economic development and liveability
- services that meet customer and community needs, expectations, and preferences
- financially sustainable water utilities with efficient and affordable pricing for services.

These objectives are integral to the direction of Council's Local Water Utility and form the direction of the Water and Sewer Business Unit to effectively service Singleton LGA with water and sewer services now and into the future.



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4 Contacting Us

For general enquiries or further information on any of Council's products or services, customers can contact Council using the following methods:

- telephone **02 6578 7290** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- email council@singleton.nsw.gov.au
- website www.singleton.nsw.gov.au online enquiry form
- community portal
- post **PO Box 314, Singleton 2330** (attention Water and Sewer Business Unit); or
- in person Corner Queen and Civic Avenue, Singleton (8.30am to 4.30pm)

For technical advice, issues or fault finding, please contact Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit via council@singleton.nsw.gov.au or Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290.

For advice regarding building and development projects and/or building in the vicinity of the pressure sewer components or please contact Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer via council@singleton.nsw.gov.au or Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290.

4.1 Emergency Contact Numbers

For emergency attendance please call Council on **02 6578 7290** (24 hours, 7 days a week).

Water and Sewerage Services

5 Water Supply

Council distributes a reliable supply of drinking water to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 via Council's network of reservoirs, pump stations and mains connected to the two treated water supply schemes.

Further details about a connection entitlement to the schemes and the service areas can be obtained through the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#). A [map of the water supply network](#) is available on Council's website.

5.1 Potable (Drinking Water Supply)

5.1.1 Singleton Water Supply Scheme

Council provides potable drinking water to customers within specified urban and some semi-rural areas of the LGA. This generally covers those developed properties within Singleton



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Town, Singleton Heights, Hunterview, The Retreat, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Broke, Singleton Military Area and through Whittingham to the Abattoir.

Council manages the bulk water supply of treated water to the Singleton Military Area and Abattoir, and the bulk supply of both treated and untreated water to three mines (Bulga Coal, Mount Thorley/Warkworth, and Integra Coal) and Mushroom Composters under the terms and levels of service nominated in a joint venture agreement.

The Singleton Water Supply Scheme supplies reticulated treated water from Obanvale Water Treatment Plant on Bridgman Road, Obanvale.

5.1.2 Jerrys Plains Water Supply Scheme

The village of Jerrys Plains receives a treated potable water supply under the same quality and pressure standards as the Singleton Water Supply Scheme customers, but do not have fire hydrants installed in the water reticulation network.

Jerrys Plains Water Supply is treated by AGL Macquarie, on behalf of Council and reticulated by Council, servicing the village of Jerrys Plains.

5.2 Non-Potable Water Supply

5.2.1 Mount Thorley Joint Venture

Council manages the bulk water supply of untreated water to two mines (Bulga Coal and Mount Thorley/Warkworth) and Mushroom Composters under the terms and levels of service nominated in the joint venture agreement.

5.2.2 Non-Potable (Raw) Water Scheme

Council provides an irrigation and stock supply for property owners between Glennies Creek Dam and Council's Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, including Judan Road. This untreated, non-potable water is supplied by way of connection to Council's Glennies Creek Trunk Water Main before Obanvale Water Treatment Plant.

5.3 Non-Council Service Areas

5.3.1 Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID)

The Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID) pipeline is a community funded and constructed irrigation water supply servicing members in the Broke Fordwich, Bulga and Milbrodale areas. The Broke Fordwich PID was established under the *Private Irrigation Districts Act 1973* (now the *Water Management Act 2000*).

The PID is privately owned and operated by its members; this service is not provided by Council. Further information on the Broke Fordwich PID, including contact details can be found on the Broke Fordwich PID website www.bfpid.com.au.



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5.3.2 Branxton Service Area - Hunter Water

Hunter Water provides water and sewer supply services to Branxton and North Rothbury areas. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in Branxton and surrounds, including contact information, can be found on the Hunter Water website www.hunterwater.com.au.

5.3.3 Huntlee Water

Huntlee Water provides water and sewer supply services to the Huntlee Area. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in the Huntlee Area, including contact information, can be found on the Huntlee Water website www.huntlee.com.au.

5.4 Fire Hydrants

Council's water mains are usually located within public road, public reserve and pathways or water supply reserves. A property owner will be required to install a private hydrant (or hydrants) wherever an existing or proposed development is out of reach of the street hydrant on Council's reticulation and has a fire compartment exceeding 500 m² in floor area.

New urban residential lots must have full fire hydrant coverage to Australian Standard AS 2419. There is a limited exception for battle-axe lots that fit into the requirements of NSW Fire Brigades Policy Number 8.

Where fire service coverage from a fire hydrant in accordance with Australian Standard AS 2419 is not practical either a private fire service or a tank storage alternative acceptable to Council's Development and Environment Group, NSW Fire Brigades and NSW Rural Fire Service will be required.

All proposed fire service plans and requests need to be submitted to Council after they have been certified by a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant and either the NSW Fire Bridge or NSW Rural Fire Service, as relevant.

5.5 Standpipes - Water Tanker Bulk Filling Stations

A number of fixed water tanker bulk water filling stations or standpipes are installed across the LGA. These units enable water to be extracted from the main direct into a water tanker. The key operated units provide bulk supplies more quickly and volume data inputs regulate the amount of water required.

Council currently has two permanent standpipes. These are located at the Works Depot - 39 Maison Dieu Road Gowrie and Water and Sewer Depot – Waterworks Lane.



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Council's Customer Service Centre can be contacted on 02 6578 7290 for information on the application process and associated fees and charges. Council's [POL/10066 Water Carters Policy](#) outlines the responsibilities of those who access the water tanker bulk filling stations or standpipes. A copy of the form and policy is available on Council's website.

5.6 Connection Types

5.6.1 Standard Connection

A standard connection is one that gives you the level of service outlined [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and this Customer Service Plan.

Applications for new water connections, upgrades of existing connections, downsizing or disconnection of water connections can be made by lodging a form that can be downloaded from Council's website.

Council undertakes all standard metering services at a fixed cost as per the annual fees and charges. A quotation will be provided for unusual connections or services requiring specific works.

5.6.2 Non-Standard Connection

A standard connection is one that gives you the level of service outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and this Customer Service Plan. If a standard connection is not available, then you may seek a non-standard connection. Examples of non-standard connections are Above Obanvale irrigation and stock supply connections.

If we approve a non-standard connection, this will give you access to our service, but these services will be provided at a different standard to those outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and this Customer Service Plan.

If you have questions about your non-standard connection, you should contact Council's Revenue Team via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).

5.6.3 Rural Connection

Properties connected to the rural water supply receive a non-standard connection. This connection has the same level of quality as the town supply, but the rural water supply does not meet firefighting requirements and water pressure may vary and continuity of supply cannot always be guaranteed.

5.6.4 Fire Service Connection

A fire service connection is a water connection used to supply essential fire safety measures, such as fire sprinklers, drenchers, and hydrants. Fire services include combined services.



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The supply of water from a fire service for any purpose other than firefighting or testing of firefighting equipment is not allowed and will be considered as water theft. Full details on ownership, installation and maintenance responsibilities for fire services are outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

If you have questions about your fire service connection, visit Council's website, [Fire Services](#) or contact Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).

5.6.5 Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control Installations

Backflow is the reverse flow of water into Council's service lines, pipes and/or mains. All connections to Council's water supply must be protected with backflow prevention containment devices. This includes fire service connections.

A backflow prevention device will stop water flowing back into Council's system from individual properties and protect the quality of the treated water. Council has a responsibility to provide safe drinking water and therefore Council's aim in the Backflow Prevention Program is to ensure:

- All residential properties have an approved potable cold water meter installed with non-return valve;
- Ongoing water meter replacement program;
- Available backflow prevention information and policy;
- Comprehensive assessment of backflow needs as part of any development application process; and
- Registration and annual testing program of testable devices.

Council will maintain a compliance register of installed testable backflow prevention devices fitted on high and medium hazard properties.

The customer is responsible for installation of the appropriate backflow prevention devices on any property that has a high or medium hazard rating as set out in AS/NZS 3500.1 Section 4. The customer must engage an accredited backflow prevention plumber to install the backflow prevention device and submit the record of installation to Council.

All domestic meters will have a dual check valve device as a minimum requirement. These are incorporated within the water meters provided by Council for 20mm and 25mm meters. These are assumed to provide a sufficient level of protection for domestic activities. Larger meters will require separate devices.

Additional backflow controls may be required for residential properties that have a risk of cross contamination of water supplies i.e., where Council's potable water supply is used to fill a rainwater tank.

For full details on Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control device installation requirements and conditions refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) or contact Council's Liquid Trade Waste officer via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).



Water and Sewer**6 Sewerage System**

Council operates one sewer system and one sewage treatment plant across the LGA. Council is subject to stringent environmental and health protection standards and is licensed to operate the sewer system and sewage treatment plant by the EPA.

6.1 Standard Service Area

Council manages and supplies customers with essential sewer services in Singleton, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Huntview and Darlington. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customer. A [map of the sewerage service network](#) is available on Council's website.

6.2 Non-Standard Service Areas**6.2.1 Huntlee Water**

Huntlee Water provides water and sewer supply services to the Huntlee Area. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in the Huntlee Area, including contact information, can be found on the Huntlee Water website www.huntlee.com.au.

6.2.2 Hunter Water

Hunter Water provides water and sewer supply services to Branxton and North Rothbury areas. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in Branxton and surrounds, including contact information, can be found on the Hunter Water website www.hunterwater.com.au.

6.3 Liquid Trade Waste Services

To control the discharge of trade waste into Council's sewerage system, you must obtain Council's written consent and, if required, enter into a separate agreement with us to discharge trade waste into Council's sewerage system in accordance with Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

Council will not provide Council's consent if, by accepting the trade waste, we are in breach or potentially in breach, of any Laws, including the Act or Council's Environment Protection License(s).



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6.3.1 What is Liquid Trade Waste?

Trade waste is liquid waste generated from any commercial or industrial undertaking. This does not include discharges from domestic sewer, toilets, hand basins and showers.

Wastes such as cooking oil, grease and food solids are produced by a large number of food outlets across the LGA. If such waste is discharged directly into the sewer system, it could block the system and cause overflows that could harm public health and the environment. To prevent this, all commercial properties that discharge greasy waste must have a grease trap installed.

Trade waste may also contain a variety of toxic or harmful substances, such as heavy metals, organic compounds, solvents, oils and grease from industrial and commercial businesses. Sewer treatment plants are not designed to treat higher level substances and they could pose a serious work health and safety risk to staff working at these facilities, as well as the environment.

Commercial or industrial premises can only discharge waste to the sewer system that complies with Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#). All such premises that generate trade waste and discharge to the sewer system must have a current Trade Waste Approval with Council as per Council's Environmental Protection Licence with the EPA. In some circumstances, (for example: ability of receiving sewage treatment plant to take the liquid trade waste discharges or other disposal options available to discharger) and with the concurrence of the DPE Water, Council may implement approval conditions different to those contained within the Policy.

Council operates a waste tracking program to monitor the regular removal and disposal of waste from grease traps and other industrial holding tanks. The approval granted by Council stipulates how often grease traps must be cleaned out. Any commercial, businesses, trade or manufacturing customers wishing to discuss liquid trade waste are encouraged to contact Council's Trade Waste Officers directly.

7 Water Conservation

Council encourages its customers to practice water efficiency wherever possible and introduced the Water Saving Measures, in March 2018 to decrease residential water usage.

Customers are responsible for the level of their water consumption and are provided with timely information by which they can reconcile the use against affordability. Water accounts are issued tri-annually and within a short timeframe of the water meter reading, as this ensures that unexpected water loss is identified by customers early.

To assist customers with achieving water conservation Council has a number of initiatives. These include:

- Rainwater Tank Rebates; and
- Dual Flush Toilet Rebates.



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7.1 Permanent Water Wise Rules

As part of Council's commitment to ensuring good water conservation practices within its LGA, a set of water wise rules have been developed to reduce the demand on drinking water. These are common sense outdoor actions to help save water wastage and reduce bills, which apply to everyone who uses water sourced from Council, including residents, businesses, and government.

The key rules are:

- All hand held hoses must have a trigger nozzle attached.
- Watering with a sprinkler, irrigation system or hose is permitted any day before 10am or after 4pm. This avoids the hottest part of the day when water wastage occurs due to evaporation.
- No hosing of paths, driveways, concrete and other paved areas. Use a broom or blower.

Council's water supply can be used:

- In the event of, or to prevent an accident, health hazard or environmental issue;
- To defend property from fire or test fire protection systems;
- Watering systems can be used to establish new lawns and gardens for up to 14 days from installation; and
- The use of water is allowed at any time for the purpose of cooling people or animals.

Exemptions do exist for health, safety, and emergency reasons and for certain businesses, such as commercial nurseries and landscapers, sporting grounds, firefighting and the use of rain or bore water.

Any imposed water restrictions will override the water wise provisions set out above.

7.2 Water Restrictions

Council may interrupt, limit or place restrictions on the supply of water, when necessary, by the Mayor and General Manager, including the:

- purposes for which the water can be used;
- times when the water can be used;
- methods by which the water can be used; and
- quantities of water that can be used.

Water restrictions are applied in the case of drought or other emergency, if the available stored water or capacity to supply is so limited to make extraordinary measures necessary in the general interest of all water consumers.

Water restrictions are widely advertised across various platforms to ensure awareness by all customers. Residents must comply with the conditions of the water restrictions on and from



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the date specified in the notice. Non-compliance with the conditions of the water restrictions may result in a penalty notice for ignoring water restrictions, in accordance with the relevant legislation and Council resolution.

Water restrictions will always be widely advertised to ensure total awareness by all customers. Details concerning the supply triggers for water restrictions and the restriction categories are available within [Council's Drought and Emergency Response Management Plan](#).

8 Other Services

Council provides a range of other services that customers can access. These include:

- Water demand management advice (managing water use, high volume water customers and commercial activities);
- Drinking water quality information;
- Locating water and sewer infrastructure including dial-before-you-dig (DBYD);
- Information for plumbers;
- Water meter testing;
- Rainwater tank and dual flush toilet rebates;
- Assistance to connect to services;
- River flow, rainfall, water storage and consumption information;
- Providing plans of water and sewer mains;
- Special water meter readings;
- Checking of water meter readings and onsite water loss;
- Investigate and respond to application for water and sewer main extensions, adjustments or deviations, viability of providing reticulated services to new developments;
- Processing subdivision and development applications;
- Providing water pressure certificates & sewer drainage diagrams; and
- Water & sewer design checks, linen plan, works as executed and preparation of final plans with estimates.

Details on the response timeframes for many of the above services are contained within the Customer Service Standards attached as [Appendix A](#).

9 Rates and Charges

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) released the *NSW Regulatory and Assurance Framework for Local Water Utilities* in July 2022 and the underlying *Guidance on strategic planning outcome – Implement sound pricing and prudent financial management* in December 2022 which outlines Council's requirement to implement sound pricing and



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prudential financial management. Council's 2023/24 pricing structure has been developed primarily in compliance with *NSW Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines* (now superseded) with a review of pricing structure to occur in 2023/24 to ensure compliance with the new framework.

All current Fees and Charges are contained within the Council Operational Plan, Revenue Policy and Fees and Charges Schedule, which is issued following public consultation and formal adoption by Council in June of each year. The fees and charges applicable for Council customers are summarised together within the document for ease of access and clarity.

If fees and charges are amended, Council will advise customers via public notice prior to adoption and any subsequent implementation. Proposed charges, structure of charges together with Council's Revenue Policy are broadly contained within Council's Operational Plan.

All water supply and sewer related fees and charges stem from the need to ensure the financial viability of the business as calculated within the 30-year Water and Sewer Financial Plan. A critical element of the Water and Sewer Financial Plan is the capital works programs of both the water and sewer funds. Water and sewer pricing is designed to achieve full cost recovery of the services to ensure the continued sustainability of providing these essential services.

Pricing for water supply and sewerage services complies with the NSW Government, DPE Guidance on Strategic Planning Outcome – Implement Sound Pricing and Prudent Financial Management. This guidance was developed in partnership with the local water utilities sector.

9.1.1 Charges for Vacant Land

Vacant land where the water or sewer service is available in accordance with Section 552 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* will be levied an service availability charge regardless of whether the property is connected or not. Water and sewerage schemes are significant constructions, with costs that include pumping stations, land purchases, mains, and treatment plants. It is not possible for a Council to pay for the construction works whilst charging based on an individual property owner's connection, when at a point in time they choose to utilise it.

The water and sewer service availability charges help cover the fixed costs of:

- The operation and maintenance of the extensive water and sewer distribution systems;
- Operation of water and sewer treatment plants;
- Improvements to water and sewer treatment processes; and
- Helping to protect the environment.

Service availability charges for vacant land for water and/or sewer services will only be applied to a property meeting the service availability charge location requirements and are able to feasibly connect to a main. For example a property fronts the water main.



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9.1.2 Goods and Services Tax

The 'New Tax System' (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 ('GST Act') identifies GST free supplies. Water and Sewer service access, water usage, sewer volumetric usage and liquid Trade Waste access and volumetric usage charges are GST free.

Council will, always issue the customer with fully compliant accounts, regardless of GST being charged on the particular goods or services provided.

Council's ABN is 52 877 492 396.

10 Annual Charges for Water and Sewerage Services

The key charges for water supply and sewerage services are outlined below.

10.1 Residential

Section 501(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* permits council to make and levy annual charges for the provision of water supply and sewer services. Residential water and sewer charges comprise of three components:

- Water service fixed service availability charge.
- Sewer service fixed service availability charge; and
- Water consumption user charge.

Customers who have access to water or sewer services but are not connected may also be levied a vacant land use charge.

10.1.1 Water Service Availability Charge

The Singleton, Jerry's Plains and Broke water supply service availability charge is a fixed annual service availability charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the water supply system. The size of the water meter installed on the property determines that service availability charge. Higher charges apply to properties with multiple or oversized water meter service connections.

The water service availability charge applies to all properties and some adjacent to urban areas, which are within 225 metres of a water main, including vacant land that can feasibly connect to the water reticulation main without crossing private property.

10.1.2 Sewer Service Availability

The sewer service availability charge is a fixed annual service availability charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the sewer distribution system. All residential properties are levied a fixed sewer service availability charge.



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The sewer service availability charge applies to all properties located within 75 metres of a Council sewer main, including vacant land that can feasibly connect to the sewer main without crossing private property.

10.1.3 Water Consumption Charge

The water consumption charge is a volume-based charge levied for each kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used and is based on the reading from a property's water meter. Unlike the service availability charge, this fee is charged after the water is used. The water consumption charge is a tiered usage charge dependant on the volume used and is based on the long run marginal operating cost of the water supply system.

Since 2008/2009, if a threshold usage of 450 kilolitres is reached, a higher usage charge is applied. Charges are based on a financial year (from 1 July to 30 June) and are charged per property not per owner or tenant. This means if a property reaches 450 kilolitres in the first trimester and a new owner or tenant occupies the property for the remainder of the financial year, all water consumed will be charged at the higher rate. Water Consumption Accounts are issued three times per year to property owners that are connected to Council's water supply.

This charging method encourages lower water consumption and is in line with the water industry best practice. Large families who may be unduly affected by the tier charge can apply for relief from the full effect of the charge increase, with each case being treated by Council on its merits. Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2 Non-Residential Charges

Non-residential is a commonly referred to term in the water industry and usually defined as Business, Commercial and Non-Rateable properties.

Non-residential charges are like residential charges but are comprised of four components:

- Water supply service availability charge;
- Water consumption charge;
- Sewerage access and usage charge; and
- Liquid trade waste access and usage charge.

Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2.1 Water Service Availability Charge

Non-residential water service availability charge is a fixed annual service availability charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the drinking water supply system. The size of the water meter installed on the property determines that service availability charge. Higher charges apply to properties with multiple or oversized water meter service connections.



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The water service access charge applies to all properties and some adjacent to urban areas, which are within 225 metres of a water main, including vacant land.

Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2.2 Water Consumption Charge

Non-residential, non-rateable water consumption charge is a volume-based charge levied for each kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used and is based on the reading from a property's water meter. Non-residential, non-rateable properties are not subject to the tiered usage charge.

The water usage charges are reviewed annually. Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2.3 Sewerage Access and Usage Charge

Since 2008/09 Council has applied a user pays pricing to all non-residential, non-rateable sewer users based on guidance issued by DPE – Water. The sewerage service availability charge for non-residential customers is based on the volume of sewer that is assumed to be discharged from the property into the system.

For non-residential, non-rateable customers, sewerage accounts are based on a two-part tariff – an annual service availability charge and a uniform sewerage usage charge per kilolitre discharged. The sewerage service availability charge is proportional to the area of the water connection to reflect the load that can be placed on the sewer system, and the usage charge reflects the marginal costs of Council's Sewerage Business. It is applied to the estimated volume discharged into the sewer system using a sewerage discharge factor determined for each business type. The specific pricing calculation method is details in Council's adopted Operational Plan. Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

If a customer believes that the actual proportion of sewer discharged from the property differs from the standard industry-based discharge factor, then the property owner can lodge a request for variation based on their data and evidence. Further information relating to the site-specific discharge factors can be found in Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

The sewerage billing system and associated charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2.4 Liquid Trade Waste Access and Usage Charge

Non-residential, non-rateable sewerage customers may also be required to hold liquid trade waste approvals to discharge to the sewer. Most approvals require pre-treatment in approved equipment before discharging to the sewer. The trade waste access and usage charges are additional sewer quality charges to customers that operate commercial undertakings, industry, trade, or manufacturing businesses that discharge liquid trade waste other than domestic sewage. The specific pricing calculation method is detailed in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on Council's website.



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Liquid trade waste customers will be invoiced three times annually, with the charges being calculated upon a proportion of the annual fee, plus usage charges for the period. Full details concerning pre-treatment, discharger categories, applying for liquid trade waste approvals, fees and charges are available in Council's [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage Systems Policy](#).

The liquid trade waste billing system and associated charges are reviewed annually and published in [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

10.2.5 Pressure Sewer System – Annual Maintenance Fee

Properties located in the pressure sewer system require an individual pressure sewer system installed within the allotment, connected to the sewer main in the street. All pressure sewer systems are subject to an Installation, Maintenance and Service Agreement. Currently, Council undertakes this work for an annual fee.

The pump maintenance fee is set annually as part of the Operational Plan, is charged based on the number of pumps installed in the system and is in addition to other sewer charges applicable to the property. This amount is included in the annual Rates Notice.

Refer to [Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy](#).

11 Accounts and Payments

Section 501 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* permits Council to make and levy an annual charge for various services provided, including:

- Water supply services.
- Sewerage services.
- Drainage services; and
- Waste management services (other than domestic waste management services).

Section 503 permits Council to make and levy an annual charge in addition to an ordinary rate and an annual charge in addition to, or instead of, a special rate. Charges levied under Section 503 can apply to a non-rateable property but only for the recovery of the cost of providing the service.

11.1 Water Accounts

Council issues water consumption accounts three times per year to the title owner of a property connected to the town water supply and/or sewer supply. Two types of accounts are produced by Council: residential water account and a non-residential water and sewer account issued for non-residential, non-rateable customers and will, if applicable, include the sewer service availability charges.

As has been the case since 2008/09, if a threshold consumption of 450 kilolitres for the property is reached, a higher usage charge is applied, for residential properties only.



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Council's 2023/24 pricing structure has been developed primarily in compliance with *NSW Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines* (now superseded) with a review of pricing structure to occur in 2023/24 to ensure compliance with the new framework.

Charges are based on a financial year from 01 July to 30 June and are charged per property, not per owner or tenant. This means, if a tenant consumes 450 kL in the first trimester and a new tenant occupies the property for the remainder of the financial year, all water consumed will be charged at the higher rate.

The owner of the property is responsible to acquit any charges overdue or payable, including interest charges. Interest on water usage charges will be calculated 21 days after the account is mailed to the property owner or managing agent.

11.1.1 Meter Reading

Water meter readings are used to calculate consumption charges that appear on the Water Accounts. Council reads water meters three times a year. Meters are read and Water Accounts issued as soon as possible after the reading of the meter. This ensures that customers obtain consumption information in a timely fashion to address any high and unexpected volumes.

High volume water consuming customers are read monthly.

Upon request by the customer, a special water meter reading can be undertaken outside the normal meter reading cycle to determine any outstanding water usage charges, usually in conjunction with a 603 Certificate application on the sale of a property. A fee for the special meter reading will apply, refer to the [annual fees and charges](#) on Council's website.

In most cases the water meter is located on the front boundary of a property. There are cases however, where the meter is located further inside a property and meter readers are required to enter the property to take the reading.

11.1.2 Sending Your Account

Council will send your account to the postal or electronic address you provide or to your agent or any person authorised to act on your behalf. This authorisation must be provided in writing.

If no address has been specified, Council will send your account to the address of the property to which the charges apply or to your last known postal address.

11.1.3 Information on Your Account

Both Water Accounts will comply with the National Guidelines for Residential Customers' Water Accounts. A Water Account will generally include the following information:

- Customer name.



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- Your postal address, assessment number, address, and description of the property for the purpose of water and sewer services to which the charges apply.
- The date of postage and the supply period.
- The previous and current meter readings.
- Separation of the volumetric charges.
- The total consumption for the current period and comparison with the daily average consumption for the previous period and same period last year.
- The date by which you are required to pay and the ways by which you can pay; and
- Any outstanding credit or debit balance from previous accounts and payments made by the customer since the last account was sent.

For residential customers, a graphical illustration of their average rate of water uses at the property for each billing period back to, and including, the equivalent period in the previous year.

Council will provide a range of payment options for Water Accounts. In addition to those shown on each Water Account (space limited), a number of other alternative methods are provided.

Council also provides a range of topical information flyers contained within each Water Account to educate, inform, and highlight to customers the services provided by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. The information flyers are an important means by which we can communicate regularly with customers about initiatives and water saving strategies.

11.1.4 When Payment is Due

The amount set out in the account is due for payment within 21 (twenty-one) days of the date of the account.

11.1.5 Payment Options

Council can provide customers with the option to receive electronic versions of water usage accounts (see Council's website for further details www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/emailme), as well as alternative ways to pay accounts. Payment options available to the customer include:

- Australia Post - The Post Office will issue you with a receipt.
- Direct Debit - Direct Debit can be arranged where payment can be automatically deducted from your nominated bank account on the due date. Direct debit can be made tri annually or by instalment (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly), see application form for details. An application form is required to be completed. A copy is available on the [Form's](#) page on Council's website.
- Mail - Detach the payment slip on your water usage notice and return it together with your cheque to: Singleton Council PO Box 314 Singleton NSW 2330.



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- In person - Pay at Council's Customer Service Centre Monday to Friday 8:00am-4:00pm or seven days a week at the Singleton Visitor Information Centre, open 9am-5pm.
- Credit Card – MasterCard or Visa payments using the automated service is available 24 hours, call 131 816 (Amex and Diners excluded).
- Internet Banking - Go to Post Billpay (www.postbillpay.com.au) and follow the on-screen prompts.
- BPAY View – Managing your bills with online banking is even easier. BPAY View® sends your bills and statements to the same online bank you use to pay them. Saving you shuffling paper.

11.1.6 Experiencing Payment Difficulties

Council recognises that some customers may experience genuine financial hardship, and this can often be due to circumstances beyond their control. This can affect the customer's ability to meet the payment terms for their Water Accounts. Customers have every right to seek assistance through Council's [POL/6009 Hardship Policy](#).

Council's [POL/6009 Hardship Policy](#) establishes guidelines for assessment of a hardship application applying the principles of fairness, integrity, confidentiality and compliance with statutory requirements. It applies to all applications for waiving, alternative payment arrangements or writing off rates, annual charges and interest accrued on such debts. Council has statutory requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and other relevant legislation in relation to the waiving or reduction of rates due to hardship.

Application for hardship must be received in writing on the approved [Hardship Rate Relief Application Form](#). Council may also request the ratepayer attend an interview to assist Council in the understanding of the issues causing hardship.

The hardship rate relief application form and Hardship Policy outline the eligibility criteria, the supporting information required and approval conditions.

11.1.7 What Happens if You Do Not Pay Your Account by the Due Date?

All reasonable efforts will be made by Council to provide assistance to customers with payment difficulties during the collection cycle.

If a customer fails to pay by the due date on their account, Council, or an authorised agent working on behalf of Council, will send a Reminder Notice which will state information on assistance available and the date from which interest will be applied.

11.1.8 Interest and Other Charges

Council may charge interest in accordance with legislation, except in cases where its hardship policy provides otherwise. Council will inform customers when interest is to be applied to outstanding amounts.



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11.1.9 Dishonoured Payments

If you pay your Council water usage account by cheque or Direct Debit, and the payment is not honoured by your bank, then Council may charge you the administrative fee charged by Council's bank.

11.1.10 Account Queries and Disputes

If you have questions regarding the charges on your bill, you should contact Council's Revenue Team via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).

If there is an unresolved dispute concerning an amount of money to be paid by you, you are obliged to pay any amount by the due date shown on your account. Any amount owed, will be either credited to the appropriate account or remitted to the nominated bank account on the resolution of the dispute.

11.1.11 Restriction of Water Supply – Unpaid Charges of Misuse of Water

Under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and General Regulations, Council may restrict or cut off the supply of water in several circumstances including:

- If any rates or charges in respect of the water supplied to the premises are unpaid; or
- If the owner or occupier or other person requiring a supply of water fails to comply with a lawful order or requirement to repair or alter water connections, pipes, fittings, or fixtures connected to the water supply system.

In the cases above, Council will not undertake the restriction of water supply to critical customers, pensioner accounts or properties with farm animals.

The restriction of water supply will not be undertaken for unpaid charges without a reminder and notice of restriction being first provided. In cases where the property address and owner postal address differ, an advice will be sent to the property owner(s) and occupier of the pending action.

If Council take restriction action, reasonable flow or health and hygiene purposes will be provided. If it is believed that the restriction will cause a health hazard the resident must contact Council within seven days of the date on the notice of restriction.

Resumption of full supply will occur when the reason for the restriction of services no longer applies, and the payment of the applicable charge has been made.

11.2 Concessions and Rebates

11.2.1 Pensioner Rebates

Council provides a statutory pensioner concession relating to Rates and Charges under the provisions of Section 575 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* to eligible pensioners.



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The mandatory rebate of rates and charges includes those levied for domestic waste management and water and sewer charges.

An application for a pensioner concession on a property must be made by completing the pensioner rebate form and all information must be provided before the application can be assessed.

The [Application for Council Pensioner Concession Rates Rebate Form](#) and [POL/6008 Pensioner Concession Policy](#) detail the eligibility criteria, supporting information required and approval conditions.

11.2.2 Community Service Obligations - Water and Sewer Service Availability Charge Rebate

Council wishes to assist and encourage the provision of non-rateable water community-based services in its LGA. A Non-Rateable customer is defined as land exempt from all rates, other than water supply special rates as outlined in Section 556 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*.

Owners/occupiers of properties used predominantly for:

- education purposes.
- hospitals and nursing care.
- religious worship.
- outdoor sporting and recreational activity; or
- charities.

may be eligible for a rebate on their water and sewer service availability charges, provided these activities are undertaken on a not-for-profit basis.

Concessions and Rebates of the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#) sets out the criteria for non-rateable water customer to qualify as Community Service Organisation and the degrees of subsidies for these charges. A copy of the policy is available on Council's website.

Customers can obtain further information by contacting Council's Revenue Team.

11.2.3 Concealed or Undetected Water Leaks

Whilst water that has passed through a meter connection is the responsibility of the customer, Council has assistance available to customers, providing some relief for significantly higher Water Accounts resulting from undetected or concealed water leaks.

An undetected water leak is one that is hidden from view either underground or under concrete, and a customer could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence; or that internal plumbing has shortcomings.



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In cases where an undetected water leak has been found and repaired, the customer can apply for a concealed leak rebate for a portion of the Water Usage Account charges. For commercial properties this can include the sewer and/or trade waste usage charges, if applicable.

The maximum rebate is a conditional one-off reduction of 200 kilolitres per property, provided as an act of good faith and in the interests of good public relations. The rebate is only available once in an ownership; highlighting customer that the internal plumbing at the property may be an ongoing problem and requires constant vigilance to reduce the chances of a recurring large Water Usage Account.

To be eligible, Council requires:

- the leak to have been repaired by a licensed plumber.
- proof of repair; and
- the completion a Water Consumption Adjustment Application.

Applications must be received within 20 working days of the receipt of the Water Usage Account being issued.

An application of the undetected leak reduction does not remove the customer's obligation to pay outstanding charges for the water supplied.

The full conditions of the assistance available are contained in the Concessions and Rebates section of the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

11.2.4 Plumbing Reimbursement Claim

If a water supply issue is in your area of responsibility, the property owner is required to pay the plumbing expenses. However, if the attending plumber identifies and repairs the water supply issues and confirm it is in Council's area of responsibility, Council may cover reasonable costs for the rectification works in the form of a Plumbing Reimbursement.

A "Plumbing Reimbursement Claim" must be submitted together with a line itemised tax invoice and receipt for payment in full within 60 days of the work being performed and forwarded to Council. Full terms and conditions are outlined in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

Council reserves the right to inspect the work carried out at the property or liaise with the plumber after receiving an application, to determine eligibility for reimbursement. Council may reject claims if it believes costs and works are excessive and justification cannot be provided.

Application can be made online via the Community Portal or by completing the application form and submitting via post, email or in person.



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Plumbing Reimbursement Reasonable Costs

Council considers attending a site and diagnosing the issue location (if located in Council's area of responsibility) would take approximately one hour. Limits for reimbursement when a plumbing issue is within Council's responsibility are set [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) and are considered case by case.

11.2.5 Dual Flush Toilet Rebate

Toilets use a lot of water and the water we flush away is usually valuable drinking water. Switching to a more water efficient toilet, such as a dual flush toilet, can make a big difference to the household's water use, as well as;

- Reduce the impact on Council's sewer system.
- Protect our drinking water supplies.
- Reduce household water bills.

Water-efficient toilets do the same job as inefficient toilets but use much less water. Older model toilets can use up to 12 litres of water per flush, whereas dual-flush toilets use only 3 litres on a half-flush.

Council encourages the installation of dual flush toilets and offers a dual flush toilet rebate to eligible Singleton, Broke and Jerrys Plains water customers, at a rate of one rebate only per property.

The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted [Operational Plan](#). The eligibility criteria are detailed in Council's [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

11.2.6 Rainwater Tank Rebate

Rainwater tanks help conserve the drinking water supply and can provide a valuable source of water for gardens, cleaning, and other household purposes. NSW Health does **not** recommend the use of water from rainwater tanks for drinking or food preparation if a town water supply is available.

Aimed at reducing the demand on the drinking water supply, to conserve water and reduce stormwater runoff, Council encourages the installation of rainwater tanks. Council offers a rainwater tank rebate to eligible customers, at a rate of one rebate only per property for rainwater tanks installed, regardless of the number of tanks installed on the property.

The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted [Operational Plan](#). The eligibility criteria are detailed in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

Further information from NSW Health regarding rainwater tanks can be found [here](#).



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Quality of Service

Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit's objective is to:

- manage Council's assets to provide reliable water and sewer services;
- supply drinking water to customers which complies with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines; and
- take reasonable care to operate the sewerage system in an environmentally responsible manner as required by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

Council conducts extensive water quality monitoring programs and publishes results on the [Pollution Monitoring and Reporting](#) page of Council's website.

12 Drinking Water Management System

Council is constantly testing the quality of drinking water in Council's area to ensure it complies with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, administered by NSW Health.

12.1 Discoloured Dirty Water

'Dirty' water is a change in the appearance or the colour of your water - usually to a brown or yellow. Sudden increase in the rate or direction of water flow in the mains can stir up sediment. This becomes suspended in the water, making it appear dirty. Discolouration is caused by trace materials in the water, such as iron or manganese.

When these materials enter the water supply system they are in extremely low levels; generally, dirty water is harmless and the water is safe to use and is not hazardous to health, although it may appear unpleasant.

Residents living in areas furthest away from the nearest reservoir, or at the end of a street, may experience discolouration more frequently than others. This is because the water has further to travel, and this allows heavier particles to settle out of the water and become visible. Weekenders or untenanted houses in any area may also experience discolouration when first turning on a tap after a period without using water at the home.

Dirty water can also be the result of planned or unplanned scouring and/or galvanised pipes in older homes.

12.1.1 From Scouring

Dirty water most often occurs when flushing of the mains, known as scouring. Scouring is the cleaning of the inside of water mains by sending a rapid flow of water through the main under high pressure. During this process the build-up of sediment will be dislodged. Some discolouration of the water supply may occur after mains flushing in the immediate area, this will quickly disperse after running a tap for a short period of time.



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If you experience dirty, or discoloured water after a scheduled clean, try running the outside tap for 1 to 5 minutes until the water clears and avoid doing laundry until you have confirmed the water is clear.

Council will notify residents of any planned scouring.

12.1.2 From Galvanised Pipes

Corrosion may occur in older homes with galvanised pipes, causing the water to look orange or brown. Discolouration will occur more often in houses with galvanised water pipes. Galvanised pipes are no longer used in homes, with copper - or more recently polyethylene pipes have become the norm.

Anyone who experiences regular water discolouration and has galvanised water pipes in their home may consider replacing them and should seek further advice and assistance from a licensed plumber.

Any rectification works for galvanised pipes are at the customer's expense.

12.1.3 Milky White Coloured Water

Water that is milky or white in colour is the result of small air bubbles within the water. This is usually due to air becoming trapped in the pipes - perhaps after the repair of a broken water main. This water is harmless and if left in a container on the bench, the air will quickly dissipate, and the water will become clear. It will not stain your washing.

12.1.4 Dirty Water and Laundry

Discolouration of the water supply by materials such as iron and/or manganese may cause a rust-coloured stain on your light-coloured clothing and linen while washing. If you notice a discolouration in the water from your household taps, it is recommended you do not wash clothing and linens in discoloured water due to the risk of stains.

If discoloured water is present, residents should delay washing clothes. If this is not possible, Council recommends:

- running some water into the machine to check the water colour before washing clothes; and
- checking the water colour before the washing machine reaches the rinse cycle – as it is at this stage that clothes can be stained.

If your load of washing is stained from dirty water, you should keep the washing completely wet, and not hang it out. The stain only becomes permanent if the laundry is allowed to dry. If you have a nappy stain remover then the affected washing should be soaked and washed as directed, this can often remove the stains once the water has been cleared.



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Some washing powders cause the pH level of the water in the washing machine to increase, and this has the effect of causing manganese or iron in the water to come out of solution and to stain the washing. Also, powders high in phosphorus can also have the same effect.

A good quality liquid washing detergent can also help remove dirty water stains.

If your property, including clothes, household furniture or fittings, has been damaged by a dirty water (water discolouration) event, Council will consider on a case-by-case basis, requests to clean, replace or repair the damaged items. Details on how to make a claim and the terms and conditions of damaged items due to a dirty water event are detailed in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

12.1.5 What Should I do if I Notice Dirty Water?

If you notice water discolouration in your home, especially after a water interruption or after works in your area; we suggest waiting an hour or two, then;

1. turn on the outside tap closest to the nearest water meter until it runs clear, this can take up to five minutes.
2. go to the tap at the furthest point from your water meter (usually the garden tap in the backyard) and run the water for a few minutes until it also runs clear; and
3. after five minutes flushing of the property water pipes, the water should run clear.

By following the above steps, the water should run clear. If the water is still dirty water, contact [Council](#) and report the issue. Council will arrange flushing of the water mains in the local area. While flushing is being undertaken, customers can experience very dirty water, however this will clear shortly afterwards.

Council has approximately 300 kilometres of water mains, 11 water pump stations and 14 water reservoirs, so we are unable to monitor them all at the same time, so we do rely on residents to advise us of any severe or ongoing discolouration to the water supply in order to take action in the immediate area.

12.1.6 Tips While Your Water is Dirty

- Don't use the dishwasher or washing machine until the discolouration clears.
- Make sure the water is completely clear before using any hot water, dirty water can affect hot water systems.
- Running a tap for 5 minutes to clear the water uses an average of 75 litres of water, which costs less than 20 cents, depending on the water supply area; and
- Collect the water used to flush the water pipes in a bucket and use this on your lawn or garden.



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12.2 Earthy or Musty Odour and Taste - Geosmin and MIB

Seasonal increases in naturally occurring algae or bacteria in the dam, can sometimes cause odour and taste issues with drinking water, where the water is often reported as having an earthy or musty taste and smell. This is due to harmless, naturally occurring dissolved compounds in the water, called Geosmin and Methylisoborneol (MIB)

Human noses and tastebuds can detect Geosmin and MIB at very low concentrations. These compounds are sometimes present in drinking water, but not usually at noticeable levels. Changes in the temperature can increase some kinds of algae and bacteria naturally present in the water source (Glennies Creek Dam) that can cause a rise in Geosmin and/or MIB above the taste and odour threshold.

Unfortunately, Geosmin and MIB are not removed from water using routine treatment processes. However, the water is safe to drink and use for all normal purposes. Council's water treatment processes are working normally with water quality results being consistently compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

In times when increased levels of Geosmin and MIB are present, extensive monitoring of the water quality occurs to confirm there are no health risks associated with the drinking water. Council may implement additional treatment processes, such as Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) dosing to reduce these compounds, but it will not remove them completely.

Geosmin is only an aesthetic concern. We do appreciate people's patience and understanding in these events, as we continue to do everything, we can to improve the taste and odour problems in our drinking water supply.

12.2.1 Geosmin and MIB and the Treatment Process

Council's uses many treatment processes to remove algae, particulates and dissolved compounds from the water sourced from Glennies Creek Dam.

To remove Geosmin and MIB, to below detectable odour and taste levels, activated carbon can be added as a pre-treatment, which is then removed as part of the filtration process. Activated carbon is extremely porous and absorbs taste and odour compounds onto its surface.

However, the amount of activated carbon needed to remove the levels of Geosmin and MIB below the odour and taste detection levels in some instances exceeds the design capacity of the water treatment plant. In the event of detectable levels of Geosmin and MIB, water quality testing is increased and all treatment options available to Council are investigated.

Is the water safe to drink?

Yes, the potable town water supplied by Council, as the Local Water Utility, is safe to drink. Our treatment processes are designed to remove any harmful toxins, algae and other organic matter or particulates. All potable water we supply fully complies with all health-based requirements in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, and extensive monitoring continues to confirm there are no health risks associated with the drinking water. Geosmin is only an aesthetic concern.



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Why can I still taste and smell it, is it being removed?

Unfortunately, Geosmin has a very strong, unpleasant taste and odour, which is harmless. Sensitive individuals may still detect the odour of Geosmin at extremely low levels, as it has a taste and odour threshold of approximately 0.00001 mg/L (10 ng/L). In comparison, the taste threshold for chlorine is generally considered to be between 0.1 and 0.4 mg/L.

When will it be fixed?

Due to a warmer than usual winter and ongoing favourable conditions for algae growth it is not possible to predict how long the Geosmin and MIB will remain at high levels in the raw water. Once the algae level has declined, there may still be high levels of Geosmin in the water afterwards. As the weather cools, Geosmin levels typically decrease. All treatment process options to reduce the effects of Geosmin and MIB on the drinking water supply are being investigated by Council.

Is there anything I can do to reduce the taste?

There have been reports that putting water in a jug in the fridge can help with any taste and odour issues. As well as adding lemon or fruit wedges (orange, mint, cucumber, watermelon, etc) to water to help mask the odour and taste.

12.3 Boil Water Alert

In extraordinary circumstances, it may be necessary to issue a notice to potable water customers that indicates the water supply is not suitable for drinking; this is known as a 'boil water alert'. These instances may include detection of contamination in the potable water system, failure of the treatment process (including exceedance of critical control points) or poor raw water quality.

Under Section 22 of the *Public Health Act 2010*, the Chief Health Officer has the power to issue advice, for the benefit of the public, concerning the safety of drinking water and any possible risks to health. This advice may include a boil water alert. Council will issue the advice to the public in a form and manner directed by the Chief Health Officer.

Council may issue a boil water alert of its own discretion. However, before issuing a boil water alert, Council will consult with Public Health Unit (PHU) wherever possible.

Once a boil water alert has been issued, Council will notify customers urgently and will use a combination of the contact and communication methods.

Council will consider providing alternate sources of water to affected customers, including bottled water, dependent on the scale and anticipated length of time the boil water alert is anticipated to last.

Council will consult with the PHU before lifting a boil water alert. In lifting a boil water alert, Council will endeavour to communicate the information in the same way the alert was issued.



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Information on considerations in determining the need for a boil water alert and communication methods can be found in [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#), available on Council's website.

13 General Rights and Responsibilities

In general terms, Council:

- Has the right to enter a customer's property for the purpose of reading, replacing or maintaining the meter.
- Has the right to enter a customer's property at other times if the situation is deemed an emergency or a breach of legislation is suspected.
- Requires meter readers and Council's staff to carry identification and produce it, if requested.

In general terms, Customers are:

- Responsible for internal plumbing on the property. Internal plumbing should be maintained, including preventing tree root intrusion on sewer pipes, and regularly checking for leaks on water pipes;
- Responsible for ensuring their water meter is readily accessible by staff or contracted water meter readers;
- Responsible for the cost of a sewer blockage in their property connection if caused by a covered inspection hole, defective fitting on their property or placement of inappropriate items into the sewer system;
- Required to notify us of any dangers on their property e.g. dangerous dogs or obstacles which may prevent, hinder or stop the water meter from being accessed;
- Required to advise us if they require uninterrupted/high volumes of water for use by life support equipment so we are aware of the situation; and
- Required to ensure that stormwater drainage is not connected to or not permitted to enter the sewer system through the overflow relief gully.

In addition, customers must allow an authorised person from Council access to their property to:

- Install, read, test, maintain or alter meters;
- Replace meters and other equipment;
- Connect, restrict or restore supply;
- Inspect, make safe, operate, change, maintain, remove, repair or replace any infrastructure or equipment; and
- Disconnect unauthorised connections to the system.



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Reliability of Service

In a large system like Council's, problems can unexpectedly occur and cause interruptions to service and other unforeseen issues, such as water leaks or sewer blockages. As these kinds of service faults are usually unplanned, we rely on the community to tell us about problems.

Council is only responsible for maintaining and repairing its infrastructure.

Please contact us on 02 6578 7290, 24 hours a day, seven days a week if there is something Council should know about.

14 Bursts, Blockages and Spills

14.1 Sewer Blockages

A sewer blockage, sometimes known as a sewer choke is a blockage in a sewer pipe. They occur when there is something inside the pipe that stops it working properly. Blockages or chokes are usually caused by;

- Tree roots that have found their way into the pipes; or
- Someone has put something down the toilet that is not designed for it; for example, wet wipes, nappies, rag or children have been known to put soft toys among other things down the toilet.

The property owner is responsible for clearing blockages and repairing cracks to the sewer plumbing of the property. This includes the lines down to the connection point of the sewerage main. In a case where the connection of the private plumbing to the sewerage main is outside the property boundary, then the property owner is only responsible for the private plumbing up to the line of the property boundary.

In the event of a blockage, the property owner must contact a licensed plumber in the first instance to identify the cause. If the blockage is located within the property owner's area of responsibility, then the property owner must pay for the cost of clearing the blockage and any associated repairs to the private plumbing.

If the plumber believes that the blockage is located within Council area of responsibility, then the plumber or owner must contact us as soon as possible to arrange for Council's attendance and rectification of the problem.

Council will liaise with the plumber or owner as required in relation to the blockage, location, and Council's intentions regarding the problem. If the blockage is actually located in Council area of responsibility, we will reimburse reasonable charges from the plumber in attending the site.



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14.1.1 Common Causes of Blockages

Sewer blockages, as a result of 'flushable' wipes are becoming a concern for Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. While these products are marketed as 'flushable' this does not mean they break down. Flushable wet wipes can block pipes, which can lead to sewage overflows into homes or waterways.

Choice, the Australian consumer advocacy group, put 12 brands of 'flushable' wipes to the test, using an agitation device designed to provide a similar environment to the sewer system. The wipes, along with 4 ply toilet paper were put into the agitator and ran the device for 6 hours. Within minutes the toilet paper started to break up, disintegrating quickly leaving nothing more than milky water, while the wipes remained intact.

It is critical that anything flushed disintegrates almost immediately, otherwise it is likely to get blocked or caught in the pipes, usually on the property where it has been flushed. Help Council keep the sewer system working and dispose of the following items in your household garbage collection service after us;

So, if it's not pee, paper, or poo...don't flush It!

Just because something can be flushed, doesn't mean it should be. To help ensure your pressure sewer system works properly and to avoid blockages and damage to the pump unit, the following must **NOT** be placed into the pressure sewer or any other household sewer system:



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In addition to the infographics above, the following must NOT be placed in any sewer system:

- Pesticides, herbicides and/or wastes arising from the preparation of these substances;
- Natural or synthetic resins, plastic monomers, synthetic adhesives, and rubber plastic emulsions;
- Radioactive substances and/or substances the subject of a Chemical Control Order under the *Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Act, 1985*;
- Any substance liable to produce noxious or poisonous vapour;
- Any substance likely to cause injury to personnel employed in the servicing of sewerage system, or to the environment into which the sewage effluent is discharged;
- Any substance likely to be damaging to, or will form compounds that may damage, the pod with pump/s, on the Council's sewerage system or treatment works;
- Trade waste (except with the approval of the Council); and
- Any matter prohibited to be discharged to "waters" under the *Protection of Environment Operations Act, 1997*, unless specifically approved by the Council, being the Sewerage Authority.

14.1.2 Water Damage and Sewer Overflows

From time to time, water mains burst as they are under pressure to ensure adequate supply to properties; this can be caused by ground movement, tree roots, varying water pressure, vibration from heavy traffic or general wear and tear.

Blockages within a sewer system can be caused by a build-up of fats and oils, other debris or rubbish or tree root infiltration. This can result in sewage overflow either on private property or from a manhole. Council is committed to working with customers to resolve flooding issues.

It is very important to contact Council as soon as flooding from either water or sewerage systems is identified. Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will respond to flooding and overflow incidents during and after normal working hours as soon as possible.

Council recognises that such an event is distressing and inconvenient. Council will, without liability, assist owners and occupiers with support and advice in the first instance and where Council is liable, take necessary action to rectify the situation. Regardless, if water damage and sewer overflows occur:

- Customers should contact their insurer(s); and
- Tenants should contact their insurer(s) in relation to any personal effects and advise the property owner/manager or agent of any damage to the property.

14.1.3 Claim for Damages

In the event of loss, damage or injury to you or your property as a result of Council's activities, you may be entitled to reimbursement for any loss suffered. All claims must be submitted in writing on the [Request for Compensation Form](#) that is available on Council's website or by



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contacting us. The claim must specify the nature of the problem and the compensation sought.

On receiving your claim Council will:

- acknowledge receipt of the claim, and
- advise the name and contact details of the Council officer assisting with the claim.

Council will undertake investigations into the circumstances surrounding the incident in question. We will provide a decision regarding your claim, outlining the reasons for the decision and the type of compensation, if any, to be provided.

If you have insurance, you may wish to consider contacting your insurance company for advice and to determine if the loss or damage is covered by your insurance policy.

14.1.4 Preventing Sewage Flooding in the Home

An overflow relief gully, commonly known as a yard gully is a plumbing fitting designed to release any sewage outside and away from the interior of the home, should a property connection, drain or sewer become blocked. In the event of a sewer blockage that causes sewage to back up, the overflow relief gully is designed with a loose-fitting grate that pops open and releases the sewage outside the home. To assist preventing sewage entering the home, it is very important that the overflow relief gully is never covered, as this may prevent it working as designed.

Property owners are responsible to ensure the home is fitted with a properly designed and working overflow relief gully. Check the overflow relief gully regularly to ensure that it is not covered by garden beds, landscaping, and pot plants. Ensure the grate is not prevented from popping open as a result of corrosion, being filled with silt, or permanently fixed with concrete.

A licensed plumber should be contacted if you do not have an overflow relief gully or require an alteration to an older fitting. All costs are the responsibility of the property owner.

14.2 Water Breaks Responsibilities

Council is responsible for all water breaks and repairing leaks to the water main. This includes all water lines upstream of a water meter in road reserves.

The property owner is responsible for breaks and repairing water leaks downstream of a water meter. In the event of a burst or leaking pipe, the property owner must arrange and pay for a licensed plumber to undertake the repair. In some cases, where an undetected water leak occurs on a property and is not associated with fittings, some assistance can be provided.



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15 Factors Affecting Service

15.1 Planned Maintenance Works

From time to time, Council will need to undertake planned maintenance work and unplanned/emergency repairs to the water supply and sewerage system. Council always is mindful of the disruption that can be caused to customers and for planned works will always aim in general terms to:

Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake planned work that involves shutting down the water supply or sewer system at a time that minimises disruption to customers. Provide notice to occupiers of affected properties 24 hours prior to commencing planned work. Notice will be given via letter box drops, social media, Council's website and variable message board (where possible). Every reasonable effort will be made to perform planned work between 8.30am and 3pm in residential areas where prolonged outages are planned. Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through water tanker, temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake planned work that involves shutting down the water supply or sewer system at a time that minimises disruption to customers. Provide 7 seven days' notice (or by agreement) prior to commencing planned work. Notice will be given via letter box drops, social media, Council's website and variable message board (where possible). Every reasonable effort will be made to perform this work between 6pm and 6am or on weekends in commercial and industrial areas where prolonged outages are planned. Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through water tanker, temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.



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Customer Type	Action
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers Critical Water Supply Customers (Refer also Section 15.5 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and other Critical Water Supply Customers to negotiate, where possible, a mutually convenient time to minimise impacts of interruption. • Notice will be given, via doorknocking/letter box drops or direct contact. • Provide 7 seven days' notice (or by agreement) prior to commencing planned work. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through water tanker, temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.

15.2 Unplanned Interruptions

If there is an unplanned interruption to your services, for example during an emergency, Council will use all reasonable endeavours to keep any inconvenience to you minimised by restoring the services as quickly as possible. Council's Customer Service Centre will be able to provide information in relation to the unplanned interruption as well as estimated times for restoration. Council will also make every effort to provide advice on the unplanned interruption via social media and Council's website, particularly where the interruption affects a large area.

Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be given, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. • If interruption will be less than four hours, notice via doorknocking will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme inconvenience. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than eight hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be given, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. • If interruption will be less than four hours, notice via doorknocking will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme inconvenience. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency



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Customer Type	Action
	bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than eight hours.
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers Critical Water Supply Customers (Refer also Section 15.5 below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise notification, via doorknocking or direct contact, and action to restore supply • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than eight hours.

15.3 Emergency Repair Works

For emergency repairs and service faults, Council will, where possible:

- Respond to service faults within quoted timeframes;
- Maintain a listing of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and immediately notify outage/provide regular updates on progress of repairs (see table below);
- Attempt to contact all affected properties for isolated supply disruptions and/or use social media, website, radio or other means to reasonably inform customers;
- Try to limit water interruptions to a minimum;
- Provide alternative water supplies where possible through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours;
- Provide water from hydrants in urban areas for firefighting where possible.

In an emergency, Council will attempt to contact the customer when Council needs to enter a customer's property to inspect or maintain water supply and/or sewerage systems. Where the customer cannot be contacted directly, then Council will use social media and Council's website to inform customers of the situation and its plans to overcome the emergency.

15.4 Force Majeure

Council's ability to provide water and sewer services may be affected by events beyond its control, such as: severe weather or conditions resulting from severe weather or physical natural disaster including fire, flood, lightning, or earthquake.

15.5 Critical Water Supply Customers

In the event of planned and unplanned supply interruptions Council will prioritise notification and action to restore supply Council for all Critical Water Supply Customers.



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Council will maintain a register of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers for use when planning and scheduling works and in the event of an unplanned supply interruption. Council will also consider the impact of planned and unplanned works on Critical Water Supply Customers. However, it is not always possible to schedule planned works to accommodate the needs of all Critical Water Supply Customers.

Criticality Grading	Definition	Customer Type
Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which the disruption of water supply may present a serious threat to human life, safety or welfare or a serious threat to animal welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-patient hospitals and surgical facilities • Dialysis facilities / patents
Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which disruption of water supply would present a significant impact on facility operations but not a serious threat to life or safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors and dentists • Medical facilities and out-patient hospitals • Assisted living facilities • Educational institutions (schools, universities) • Daycare and Preschool facilities • High water users (>35 megalitres / year) • Medical / food production facilities • Large scale animal housing or processing facilities

15.6 Special Health Needs

It is necessary for customers to advise Council if there is a requirement for water to maintain special medical needs. Council maintains a register of Life Support Machines; a register of residential properties that operate life support machines such as dialysis machines. This information is available to Council staff to ensure, as much as possible, that a continuous supply of drinking water is maintained at those locations in the event of a burst water main or planned shutdown.

Council will maintain regular contact with customers registered, including providing emergency numbers. We also maintain and provide details to Renal Units, so that information can be provided to patients.



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Some special health needs customers may also receive a rebate on water charges. Further details about these rebates can be obtained through the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

16 Access and Entry to Private Property

If it is necessary to enter your property to access water supply (water meter reading notwithstanding) or sewerage infrastructure (for example: pressure sewer units, manholes, mains, or inspection openings), Council will:

- Make every effort to contact the occupier/owner of the property prior to entering the land to undertake urgent repairs;
- Ensure that all Council staff and/or authorised contractors as applicable, produce their identifications upon arrival;
- Advise the occupier/owner of the property as to the nature of the work being undertaken, the staff and equipment necessary involved and the timeframe to complete the work;
- Undertake the work as carefully as possible with all effort made to minimise the impact upon the property and disruption to the occupier;
- Leave a 'calling card' after completion of the work if the occupier/owner of the property is not present;
- Discuss any reinstatement works with the occupier/owner prior to commencement; and
- Make every effort to reinstate the property to its prior state as quickly as possible after completion of the work.

In all circumstances Council will:

- Undertake works in a safe manner in line with best practice;
- Present ourselves in a neat and tidy manner; and
- Always conduct ourselves professionally and courteously and refrain from any offensive behaviour or coarse language.

17 Impact on a Customers Property

17.1 Reinstatement of Surfaces

In most cases, water and sewer mains are located beneath the street, footpath or inside the rear/side boundary of a property. Sometimes it is necessary that landscaping and/or concrete driveway works will need to be undertaken to repair or replace water mains and other infrastructure.

Council will take reasonable care in undertaking these works and where driveways are involved, will seek an alternative to cutting the driveway wherever possible. Should an



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alternative solution not be viable, cutting may be unavoidable. Council will restore the driveway following the works.

For works undertaken upon grassed verges or nature strips the replacement of turf may be by way of grass seed and topsoil to promote growth.

18 Customer Service Standards

Council sets itself very high standards for all its water supply and sewer services which are consistent with the Council corporate vision and commitment to customers. This includes Council's responsibilities to the environment.

Across the industry there are several terminologies used to specify and measure service performance including Levels of Service, Service Standards, Service Delivery Levels, Customer Service Measurement, Customer Service Targets and Service Codes. Council has adopted a range of Customer Service Standards which more closely reflect and more easily describe those key elements of Council's activities which are core to Council's industry and which, primarily ensure that Council's customers are adequately informed about the services they receive and the timeframe that they can expect for those services. As an overall business philosophy for Council's core essential service activities, Council will make every reasonable effort to:

- Provide water and sewer services on a continuous basis unless an interruption is required for emergency repairs or planned maintenance of the network, infrastructure or operations thereof;
- Supply high quality drinking water free from harmful organisms, colour, taste or odour in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research (NHMRC) Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (exceptions include Glennies Creek and Mount Thorley Raw water supply schemes). This also includes the *Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957 (NSW)*;
- Minimise overflows from the sewer collection system and ensure affected areas are cleaned up and disinfected as soon as possible if such occurs; and
- Compile a summary of all customer complaints as required under the National Performance Reporting framework and report publically on an annual basis.

Service delivery is not just about response times; it is also about making sure that Council's business provides a high-quality level of service. [Appendix A – Customer Service Standards, Priorities and Timeframes and Levels of Service](#) outlines the Customer Service Standards together with the target and benchmark used to partially measure Council's success. This appendix also includes the levels of service customer can expect.

18.1 Performance Monitoring

Council participates in NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) – Water annual performance monitoring program for Local Water Utilities.



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See [Local Water Utility Performance Monitoring Report](#) for Council's full performance monitoring report and data.

Works and Maintenance

19 Ownership and Maintenance Responsibilities

Council provides and maintains your water meter and will repair or replace it if a fault is detected, or as part of the replacement program at no cost to the owner. If the meter is damaged or tampered with, Council will charge the property owner repair or replacement costs.

Council is responsible for the maintenance of the water main, fittings, water service from the water main up to and including the meter and approved internal meters on private property. This means the property service line, pipes leading from the water main to the water meter and the water meter.

All pipes, taps, fittings, and backflow prevention devices on your property that come from the meter, including the boundary garden tap on the meter frame are the responsibility of the property owner.

19.1 Fire Services

Council has ownership and is responsible for the maintenance of the fire service connection up to and including the isolating valve at the water main. That is the water main, tee and isolating valve.

The property owner has ownership and is responsible for the maintenance of the fire services, pipelines, and fittings from the isolating valve.

The owner of the fire service must lodge an annual Backflow Prevention Device Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Report in accordance with [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) for the service to be considered a Fire Service.

19.2 Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control Devices

The property owner is responsible for the installation, maintenance, and certification of backflow prevention devices on their property in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.1.

The testing of devices is the responsibility of property owners. Testing can only be undertaken by backflow certified plumbers. The importance of these devices in accordance with the Australian Standards cannot be ignored as they are critical in maintaining the integrity of the water supply scheme.

Each property owner is responsible for their property complying with the Backflow and Cross Connection Control section of this policy. The property owner is to ensure all backflow



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prevention devices installed comply with Council's [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

19.3 Water Meters

Council is responsible for the maintenance of the water main, fittings, water service from the water main up to and including the meter and approved internal meters on private property. This means the property service line, pipes leading from the water main to the water meter and the water meter.

All pipes, taps, fittings, and backflow prevention devices on the property that come from the meter, including the boundary garden tap on the meter frame are the responsibility of the property owner.

Council provides and maintains the water meter and will repair or replace it if a fault is detected, or as part of the replacement program at no cost to the owner. If the meter is damaged or tampered with, Council will charge the property owner repair or replacement costs.

19.4 Sewer Services and Components**19.4.1 Sewer Maintenance Shaft**

Council is responsible for maintenance and repair of the maintenance hole for access. However, the property owner is responsible for ensuring the maintenance shaft is accessible with a minimum of one metre clearance for access and maintenance. It is illegal to build over maintenance shafts or cover them with soil, grass, or other materials.

Where driveways or paving are constructed over or within one metre of a Council maintained maintenance shaft, the owner will be responsible for all costs associated with any demolition and/or reinstatement works necessary to allow maintenance and/or repair to the asset affected.

19.4.2 Sewer Main Outside Property Boundary

If the sewer main is located outside the property boundary, the following maintenance responsibilities apply:

The property owner is responsible to maintain and repair sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point to Council's sewer main. This includes the boundary shaft, also known as the inspection shaft.

Council is responsible for maintenance and repair of:

- the sewer main;
- the property connection drain up to the boundary shaft opening, or 1m inside the property boundary, whichever is lesser; or



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- 1m inside the property boundary if there is no boundary shaft.

19.4.3 Sewer Main Inside Property Boundary

If the sewer main is located inside the property boundary, the following maintenance responsibilities apply.

The property owner is responsible to maintain and repair sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point to Council's sewer main. This includes the boundary shaft, also known as the inspection shaft.

Council is responsible for maintenance and repair of;

- the sewer main and maintenance hole,
- the property connection drain up to the boundary shaft opening, or 1m from the sewer main, whichever is lesser, or
- 1m from the sewer main if there is no boundary shaft.

19.4.4 Deep Sewer Mains with Vertical Risers

Deep sewer mains may have sealed vertical risers, a narrow pipe rising vertically from the sewer main to reach a minimum depth of 1.5m below the finished surface level of the allotment. The property connection is then branched through a junction to the vertical riser. In some of these installations boundary traps and vent lines are present.

If the deep sewer main is located outside the property boundary, the following maintenance responsibilities apply:

The property owner is responsible to maintain and repair sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point to Council's sewer main. This includes the boundary shaft, also known as the inspection shaft, boundary traps, 55 vents and vent lines.

Council is responsible for maintenance and repair of:

- the sewer main and maintenance hole,
- the property connection drain up to the boundary trap opening, or 1m inside the property boundary, whichever is lesser, or
- 1m from the vertical riser if there is no boundary trap.

If the deep sewer main is located inside the property boundary, the following maintenance responsibilities apply:

The property owner is responsible to maintain and repair sewer pipes within the property up to the boundary connection point to Council's sewer main. This includes the boundary shaft, also known as the inspection shaft, boundary traps, 55 vents and vent lines.



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Council is responsible for maintenance and repair of;

- the sewer main and maintenance hole,
- the property connection drain up to the boundary trap opening, or 1m from the vertical riser, whichever is lesser, or
- 1m from the vertical riser if there is no boundary trap.

19.4.5 Maintenance of the Boundary Shaft

The sewer boundary shaft is installed by the licensed plumber engaged by the property owner or developer and forms part of the private sewer system on the property. The sewer boundary shaft is the responsibility of the property owner.

In the event of a sewer blockage the boundary shaft must be located and inspected by the property owner or occupant, before contacting Council or a plumber. Boundary shafts are located close to the property boundary nearest the sewer main.

If a boundary shaft was originally constructed on the property, the Plumbing Code states this point should always remain at surface level.

If Council attends a property to clear a blockage and the boundary shaft is buried, Council may require you to arrange works to raise the boundary shaft to surface level. This will be at the property owner's expense.

If there is no boundary shaft installed, the property owner is required to engage a licenced plumber to install a boundary shaft for the property and/or development. This must be undertaken in accordance with the following requirements:

- The Building Code of Australia;
- The Plumbing Code of Australia (inclusive of NSW amendments); and
- Australian Standard AS/NZA3500.2 Plumbing and Drainage.

Council requires access to the property boundary shaft to conduct inspections and maintenance on the sewer main and sewer junction point. Clear safe access is to be made available by the property owner for this task.

Council is not responsible for locating boundary shafts or connections. Council will provide where possible, sewer sanitary drainage diagrams free of charge to the plumber or property owner on request.

19.4.6 Maintenance of Overflow Relief Gully (ORG)

The Overflow Relief Gully (ORG) also known as the Yard Gully is the most important fixture on your property. It prevents sewage from flowing inside your home. The overflow gully must be:

- Installed in accordance with the Building Code of Australia, Plumbing Code of



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- Australia and Australian Standard AS/NZS3500.2 Plumbing and Drainage;
- Strategically placed to provide minimum of 150mm difference in the height between all internal fixtures (floor wastes), and the spill level of the ORG;
- Incorporate an unobstructed loose grating lid, which allows free relief; and
- Not allow the ingress of surface or stormwater.

Council requires that one specified sewer ORG is installed on each individual dwelling for multi lot or strata dwellings.

19.4.7 Maintenance of Boundary Traps and Vent Lines in Deep Sewer Main Connections

The sewer boundary traps, vents and vent lines are installed by the licensed plumber during construction of the sanitary drainage lines and forms part of the private sewer system on the property.

Maintenance of sewer boundary traps, vents and vent lines are the responsibility of the property owner.

19.5 Pressure Sewer Systems

Council has pressure sewer systems operating in several locations across Singleton where gravity sewer is not able to provide sewer services to properties. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customers. A pressure sewer sewerage system is a way of collecting, transporting and disposing of Sewerage from households in certain areas within Council's sewer supply area because of the unsuitability and/or cost of a conventional sewer system.

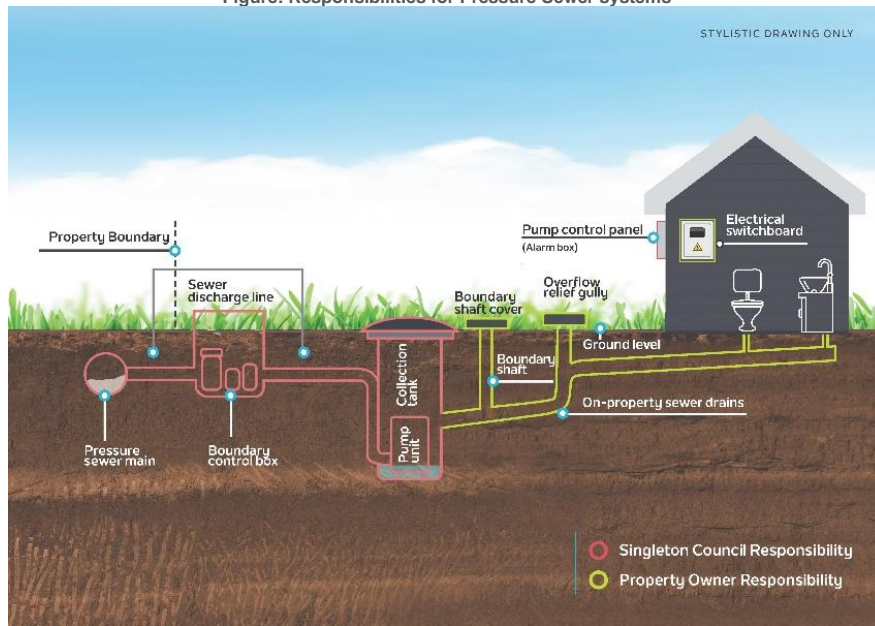
These systems involve a 'grinder pumping unit' installed upon the owner's property. Whilst Council is responsible to maintain these units, they are driven by electricity from the property switchboard which is the owner's responsibility together with the house drainage.

If your property is serviced by a pressure sewerage system, Council owns (under the provisions in the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*) and is responsible for maintaining the pump unit and all works from the unit to the sewer. The property owner is responsible for maintaining all sewerage works on the property beyond the unit.



Water and Sewer

Figure: Responsibilities for Pressure Sewer systems



The terms and conditions of connection require the property owner to maintain the power supply, the independent circuit breaker, and the power cable to the pump control panel on the property and to pay electricity charges for operating the pump.

If the pump unit or works on Council's side of that unit require repairs, please contact Council on **02 6578 7290** (24 hours, 7 days).

The following responsibilities also apply to properties serviced by a pressure sewer system, the property owner:

- is responsible for any costs to Council for maintenance, repair or replacement of Council assets resulting from their damage, destruction or their failure to act in accordance with the requirements of the [Guide for Home Owner's](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#);
- must not attempt to repair nor in any way interfere with the Council's assets.
- will report all failures and faults of the system or the Council assets to Council and will provide 24-hour access in accordance with the [Guide for Home Owner's](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#).

Full terms and conditions relating to pressure sewer systems, including operation and maintenance requirements are outlined in the [Guide for Home Owner's](#) and [POL/26031 Sewer Services Policy](#). Both available on [Council's website](#) and by contacting us.



Water and Sewer

19.6 Discharge of Stormwater into the Sewer System

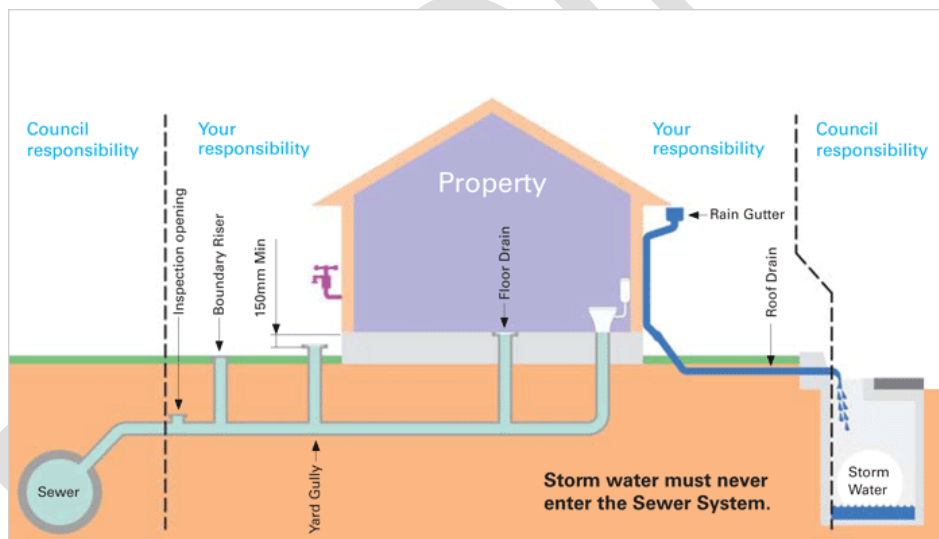
It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that stormwater is not discharged into the sewer. This can cause sewer overflows into properties downstream, public health impacts and environmental damage.

Illegal sources of stormwater can include:

- Connection of roof downpipes into the sewer system (including carports, patio covers and extensions added after a property was originally constructed);
- Connection of garden drains and 'agi' pipes from behind retaining walls;
- Concrete, paving or turfing up to the level of the yard gully (see diagram below); or
- Inadequate property drainage that leads to flooding of the yard gully during heavy rainfalls.

Council regularly inspects and investigates areas that incur wet weather inflows into the sewer system or overflows to the environment.

Figure: Two separate underground systems – stormwater must never enter the sewer system



The yard gully is a fitting outside the home designed to release sewer overflows safely. The shape and size of the yard gully can vary but in general they are round grated drains between 100mm and 150mm in diameter. The grating may be metal or plastic and black, white or silver in colour.

In the event of a sewer blockage or high stormwater inflows into the sewer system, the yard gully should 'pop off' to release the pressure and direct any sewer away from the home. This prevents sewer entering the home from toilets, drains, shower drains or other disposal points.

Plumbing regulations require that the yard gully must be installed at a level that is at least 150mm lower than the lowest drain inside the home (particularly the shower, toilet and any

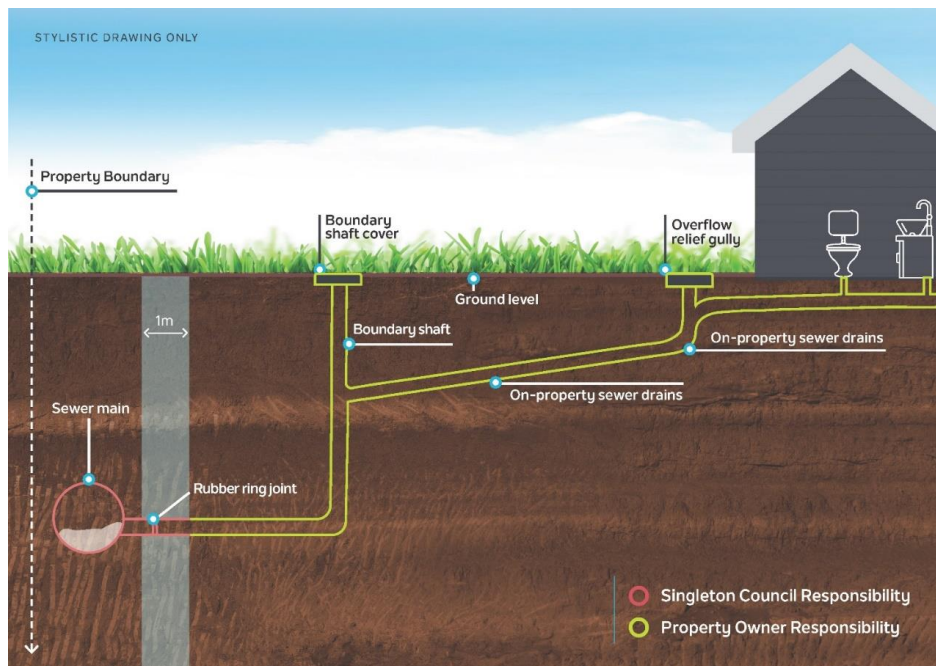


Water and Sewer

laundry or bathroom floor drains). It must also be installed at least 75mm above the surrounding ground level to ensure that stormwater does not flow into the sewer system via the yard gully.

The following diagram provides customers with a graphic of responsibility for sewerage infrastructure within properties.

Figure: Responsibilities for sewerage infrastructure within a property



It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that their home has a properly installed and operational yard gully (overflow relief gully). It must also not be:

- Covered by an object such as a pot plant;
- Covered by landscaping or garden beds; or
- Unable to 'pop off' because it is locked in place, corroded, filled with silt or concreted in.

19.7 Removal of Trees

If a tree on your property is obstructing, interfering with, or damaging Council's infrastructure, or is reasonably likely to do so, we may require the removal of the tree at your cost.

We will notify you in writing requiring you to remove the tree within a reasonable period. You may, with Council's consent and at your cost, take steps to eliminate the cause of damage or interference to Council's infrastructure, without removing the tree.



Water and Sewer

If you fail to comply with the notice to remove the tree by the specified date without reasonable cause (such as a delay or failure in obtaining consent from Council or refusal by Council to allow you to remove the tree), then we may remove the tree and recover the costs of removal from you.

We cannot require a tree to be removed that is the subject of a protection or conservation order under the *Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)* or the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)* or similar law, but not including any environmental planning instrument.

19.8 Defective Work

If Council become aware of any defect with, or unauthorised work to, your water or sewerage system, that impacts or poses risks to the operation of Council water supply or sewerage system, we will request the defect to be fixed within a reasonable time.

A defect includes where private sewerage pipes or stormwater pipes allow rainwater, groundwater, or surface runoff to enter and impact the operation of Council's sewerage system. Council may remedy the defect or unauthorised work and you may be charged the reasonable costs incurred by us in undertaking this work.

19.9 System Failures

You should inform Council, if you become aware of any failure of Council's water supply or sewerage system. If you notify Council of an interruption to your water supply, a burst or leak in Council's water system, a disruption to the sewerage drainage from your property or an overflow or leakage from Council's systems, we will ensure that the problem is attended to as soon as practicable.

19.10 Building Work

You must not undertake any excavation, building, landscaping, or construction work on your property without firstly identifying the location of Council assets and obtaining a building plan assessment from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit, if required. In general, you require a building plan approval if the work occurs over or next to Council's assets or you need approval from Council or a Private Certifier to undertake the works.

Council will request that you remove or remediate any unapproved work that interferes with Council's water system, sewer system or stormwater drainage system at your cost. If you do not comply with Council's request within the required timeframe, we will remove or remediate the unapproved work and charge you the reasonable costs incurred by us in undertaking this work.

Properties with an existing water service must be metered during the period of excavation, building, landscaping, or construction work. The meter must be always accessible, see [Meter Installation](#).



Water and Sewer

You can obtain a sanitary drainage plan from Council, identifying the location of Council's assets. You can find further information about whether a building plan assessment is required on Council's website or by contacting us.

19.10.1 Before You Dig

Council is listed as an asset provider on the Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) National Referral Service which is designed to prevent damage and disruption to valuable and extensive pipe and cable networks providing Australians with essential services.

When you contact Before You Dig Australia, you will be sent a confirmation listing of all Before You Dig Australia members having underground assets in the vicinity of your proposed excavation. This listing shows indicative locations via email or phone for: water and sewer pipes and fixtures showing positions and depths. If critical assets in your selection are detected, you will be directed to contact Council during business hours to clarify the requested information.

For more information or to lodge your free enquiry visit www.byda.com.au.

This information is free of charge. As the information is indicative, Council does not accept responsibility for accidental damage to water and sewer infrastructure. Those who damage underground pipes or cables networks may be held financially responsible by the asset owner.

19.11 Connections to Services

You must apply and have Council's written consent to be able to connect to Council's water supply or sewerage system.

Once your application is approved and associated fees paid, connection to Council's:

- water supply system will be undertaken by Council staff and/or Council approved contractor, see [Water connections](#) for more details;
- sewerage systems are to be made using the services of a licensed plumber and in accordance with plumbing, drainage or other regulations or standards that may apply, see [Sewer connections](#) for more details; and
- pressure sewer system will be undertaken by Council staff and/or Council approved contractor, see [Pressure sewer connections](#) for more information.

19.12 Redevelopment of Properties

Sometimes when a property is redeveloped, it is necessary to relocate or upgrade the existing water supply and/or sewer connections.

Property owners are responsible to contact Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit, if a redevelopment is to occur and advice will be provided about any conditions or works necessary to the water and sewer supply infrastructure, appropriate to the changes.



Water and Sewer

19.13 Unauthorised Connections or Use

You must not:

- wrongfully take, use, or divert any water supplied by Council;
- use a dedicated fire service for any purpose other than firefighting or testing of the fire service;
- wrongfully interfere with the operation of a meter, metering system or prevent a meter from registering the quantity of water supplied by Council; or
- wrongfully discharge any substance into a system owned by Council.

If you do not comply with the requirements in this clause, Council may charge you for the estimated amount of water used. Refer to [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) for more details on averaging water usage.

You must obtain Council's consent before carrying out any activity that may alter, cause destruction of, damage or interfere with Council's water supply and sewerage system.

19.14 Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Water Trunk Mains

Customers have a responsibility to ensure that construction is not undertaken, without approval from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit, adjacent to or over Council's sewer assets. This includes construction works that are exempt from approvals under *Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (NSW)*.

Council's first position is that structures are not constructed over or close to sewer assets. Special conditions may apply to activities such as design and construction of buildings, structures and excavation within proximity of all water assets and/or easements in favour of Council on public and private land and each case will be considered on its merits having regard to the [POL/26015 - Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains Policy](#).

Refer to [Building and Development - Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains](#) for information on how to apply.

Metering

The property water meter is used to record the amount of water that has been utilised by a property. We may enter your property without notice for the purposes of reading, testing, inspecting, maintaining, and replacing the meter.



20 Water Meters

20.1 Meter Access

You must ensure that the meter is accessible for meter reading and maintenance. The meter and the visible pipe connected should be clear of concrete, plants, trees, bushes, and other obstructions.

If there is no reasonable and safe access to the meter, Council may bill the property owner an estimate of the usage. If happens on three or more occasions, we may:

- ask you to relocate the meter at your cost;
- ask you to read the meter yourself and provide us with the reading;
- seek access at a time suitable to you, which may incur an additional fee; or
- make other arrangements with you.

If you intend to relocate your meter, you must contact Council for advice.

20.2 Meter Installation

The location of the water meter is to be on the property and at the sole discretion of Council. Council will generally locate the water meter within 1 - 2 metres of the front property boundary, however, for units, rural or commercial properties, this may not be the case.

Only Council or its approved contractors may install water meters that measure the water supplied from Council's water supply system. A person must not connect in any way to Council's water supply system without the approval of Council.

Information on connection to Council's water supply system can be found in [Connecting to Council's Water Supply](#).

20.3 Inaccessible Water Meters

Council needs access to water meters for the purpose of meter reading or replacement. The meter must be always accessible to Council's meter readers and employees. Boundary fences, wall recesses, retaining walls, and garden beds must be setback to facilitate Council's access to water meters.

Water Meter in Concrete

The service pipes to the meter are contained in solid concrete, leaving insufficient pipe visible to allow the meter to be removed or replaced without damage to these pipes. Should these pipes be damaged, this would compromise the water service. The concrete needs to be removed, usually breaking up with a hammer or similar device. Depending on the depth of the concrete a plumber may need to turn off the water service prior to work being performed. 10 to 15cm of vertical pipe must be accessible with no restrictions to these pipes (such as concrete, rocks, etc.)



Water and Sewer

Water Meter Buried or Insufficient Clearance to Pipes

Where the water meter is buried or there is insufficient clearance to pipes, the surrounding vegetation / earth must be dug out to ensure 10 to 15cm of vertical pipe is accessible with no restrictions on these pipes (such as dirt, rocks, lawn, etc.)

Water Meter Obscured by Overgrown Gardens

Where the water meter is obscured by an overgrown garden, the obstructing garden is required to be cleared, so that a meter reader or replacement officer could work unimpeded. This could require enough space for tools to be attached to the meter and the ability to turn and bend if necessary.

Water Meter Behind Locked Gate

Please ensure the water meter service can be accessed and is not behind a locked gate or door. Council has provisions for averaging water accounts where meters are inaccessible and attempts to contact the resident to gain access have not been successful. Details of averaging water usage accounts for inaccessible meters can be found in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

Water Meter Located in Same Proximity as a Dog

Due to safety requirements Council meter readers and replacement officers are not to enter a property where any type of dog has access to the water meter. All animals, including dogs should be secured in another section of the property.

If the occupant is home at the time, Council can request the dog be secured for the duration of the meter read. Council has provisions for averaging water accounts where meters are inaccessible due to unsecured dogs. Details of averaging water usage accounts for inaccessible meters can be found in the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#).

20.4 Meter Reading

The property water meter is read by Council and/or its contracted meter readers tri-annually. Any consumption that has passed through the meter since the last reading will be billed to the registered occupant of the property. All meters will have dials showing the amount of water that has been consumed since the meter was installed. These dials are coloured black and red and range from six to nine dials depending on the size and make of your meter.

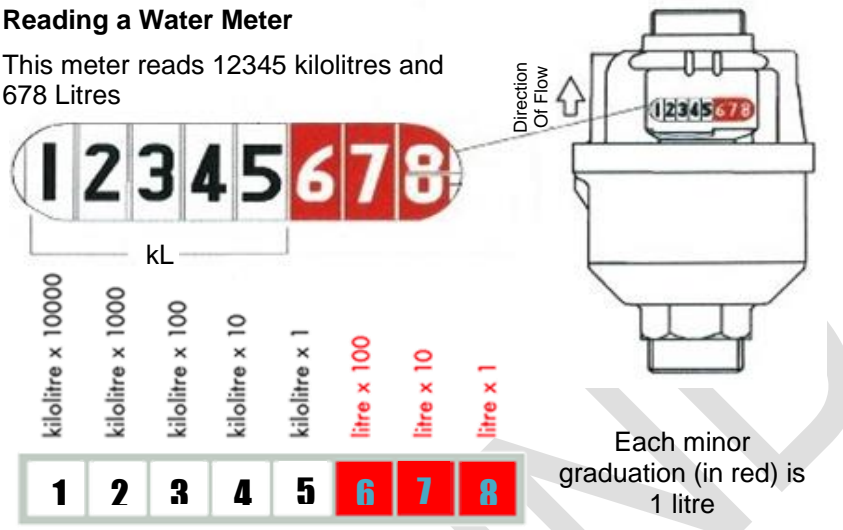


Water and Sewer

Figure: How to read the property water meter

Reading a Water Meter

This meter reads 12345 kilolitres and 678 Litres



As per the above diagram, the black numbered dials indicate how many kilolitres of water have passed through the meter. The red numbered dials indicate how many litres have passed through the meter. Council uses the black dials only when obtaining a reading from a property.

20.5 Special Meter Reads

Property owners or their representatives (conveyancer, solicitors etc.) can request a special water meter reading, for example:

- If the property is being sold and a water charge adjustment is required as part of the final settlement figures, or
- If a tenancy agreement requires the tenant to pay or contribute to the water consumption charges.

A special water meter reading is ordered by contacting Council. Readings are generally carried out within 10 working days from date of request and a standard fee is payable upon application. Council offers special water meter reads in conjunction with 603 Certificate applications for a fee.

A Special Water Meter Read letter is generated as part of the reading process. Council will take all reasonable action to provide the meter reading in the week after it was ordered.

20.6 Sub-Metering of Multi Occupancy Developments

Historically, multi-unit developments have had two options for the management of their water consumption:



Water and Sewer

- Have the total consumption recorded on the 'Parent or master' meter and any 'Child or sub-meter which might be attached to a manifold and which is then connected directly to the water main, billed direct to the individual strata owners and body corporate as applicable, or
- Have the total consumption recorded on the 'Parent or master' meter billed entirely to the Body Corporate.

To ensure water users in each unit can understand, monitor, and control their water usage Council's requires separate metering of each unit in new developments. All new strata or multi occupancy units are to be provided with a separate external (located at the property boundary) water meter to register the water usage for each unit.

During the planning of new multi-unit complexes, discussions will be conducted with developers to ensure compliance with the [POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#). All requirements for connection will be contained within Development Application and Compliance Certificate conditions issued by Council.

All existing child or sub-meters must be secure and easily accessible by Council and Council water meter readers.

20.7 Meter Replacement Program

Meter accuracy may reduce with the increasing age of the unit or usage as the dials tend to wear and they tend to record less consumption than actually occurs. To maintain integrity in metering consumption, Council has an ongoing meter renewal program, renewing all meters older than 10 years. During the meter replacement program, meters are replaced at Council expense unless damage has occurred from wilful destruction.

Disruption to customers is minimised and for high consumption properties contact is always made before a water meter is replaced. When a water meter is replaced, the final reading is recorded for billing prior to the new meter being installed.

Details are always provided to customers with the next water account issued.

20.8 Meter Replacement

Council will replace the meter at no cost to the customer if the meter:

- is found to be defective;
- can no longer be reasonably maintained; or
- is replaced as part of a meter replacement program.

Council will attempt to notify you at the time of replacement and advise that a new meter has been installed. A mutually acceptable time will be negotiated with non-residential customers for the replacement of meters.



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20.9 Meter Accuracy Testing

Customers have the right, if they are concerned that the water meter is not responding correctly, to have the meter tested. This can be done by application and payment of associated fees and charges. It is recommended customers self-check the meter first, advice on checking a meter can be found in the [Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks](#) section of this document.

A second water meter is run in line with the original meter and both meters are read over a three-week period to determine if the meter is within the acceptable tolerance of four percent. If the test shows that the meter is inaccurate, and is reading by more than four percent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, it is deemed to be faulty, and Council will:

- Repair or replace the meter;
- Refund any charge paid by you for the test; and
- Adjust your latest account on the basis of a daily usage equal to the average daily usage during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year, or similar basis.

If the test shows that the meter is reading by less four per cent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, it is deemed to be reading correctly and Council will:

- Keep the associated fees and charges paid; and
- The water account stands.

It is recommended the customer self checks the water meter prior to making an application. Advice on self check / testing your meter can be found in the [Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks](#) section of this document below.

The tolerance level of four percent of the actual quantity of water passing through the meter, is defined in *Part 6, Division 3, Clause 158 (5) of Local Government (General) Regulations, 2021(NSW)*.

For information on how to apply contact Council's Revenue Team via the General Enquiry [contact details](#).

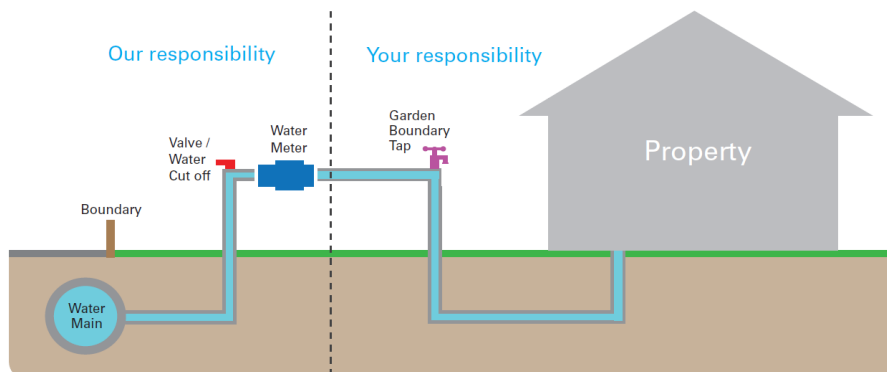
20.10 Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks

Customers are responsible for all water that has passed through the water meter. Consequently, customers are also responsible for water leaks that occur on their property from failure of internal water lines or devices.



Water and Sewer

Figure: Typical water connection



Council recommends that all customers monitor their water use regularly by reading the water meter. If the property is vacant, it is strongly recommended that water be turned off at the valve which is located near the meter. These valves are able to be locked by the customer if required. Such action will prevent loss of water through burst lines or water tamper / theft.

To perform a water leak check, turn off all the taps and water using appliances in and around the property. Then check the water meter. If the dials on the water meter are moving, there could be a water leak. If able, taking a photo of the meter dials and return 5 or 6 hours later and take another photo, compare the two pictures.

If there is no movement of the dials, there may still be a slow leak. As the water pressure is at its highest during the evening, follow the same steps above, but read the meter before going to bed. Do not use any water throughout the night and read the meter again in the morning, before using any water including the flushing of toilets.

If the dials have moved, a water leak is most likely occurring. To fix this, check all fixtures and fittings or call a licensed plumber.

Building and Development

Customers must be aware it is their responsibility to contact Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit regarding any development or redevelopment of their property that affects Council's water and or sewer assets and infrastructure.

As the Local Water Utility, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit have the following responsibilities concerning building and land development within the Singleton Local Government area;

- Determining if the proposed site can be adequately serviced with water and/or sewer infrastructure;
- Ensuring the proposed development doesn't affect existing water and sewer supply systems, including the capacity to maintain current levels of service;



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- Providing compliance under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* (s305, s306 and s307) and *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* (s64 and s68); and
- Ensuring development meets the standards set out in Council's Developer Specifications for water and sewer supply systems.

The development assessment process by Council's Planning and Environmental Services Group will continue to address all aspects of development other than water and sewer services.

At the time of considering an application under section 305 of the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* and/or section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* or at the time of issuing a notice or written advice under the *SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes)*, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit undertake an assessment of any proposed development within Council's area of responsibility.

Customers must not, without the prior consent of Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit, undertake any building or construction work or place fill:

- That may interfere with Council water supply or sewerage system;
- Over easements for water supply, sewer purposes; and/or
- Over or next to Council water supply and sewerage systems.

This is to identify potential impacts on water and/or sewer infrastructure in the area and any Water and Sewer related applications and approvals that may be required.

21 Building Plan Assessment - Water and Sewer

If you are building, renovating and/or developing land in Council's water and sewer supply areas, the development will need to be assessed by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit to determine if there is any impact on Council's water and sewer infrastructure and if any additional approvals are required, such as water connection, building in the vicinity of sewer and trunk water mains or a certificate of compliance under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)*.

This includes Exempt and Complying Development and all residential (including ancillary development), non-residential (commercial, industrial and change of use) and subdivision development types.

21.1 How to Apply

If the development is subject to a Council lodged development approval application, this assessment is completed in conjunction with the Development Application and no additional information or plans are required. You will receive advice from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit if any additional information or applications are required.



Water and Sewer

For all other application types (exempt and/or complying development for example) a **Water and Sewer - Building Plan Assessment Application** is required, along with a full set of plans to scale and payment of the **associated fee**.

Once the application is received, Council will:

- assess the development plans;
- investigate the developments water and sewer servicing requirements and impacts on the existing infrastructure and service levels;
- stamp the provided development plans; and
- draft a Building Plan Assessment Advice letter, outlining any impact or additional requirements.

These will be returned to the applicant via email. Incorrect or insufficient information will result in delayed assessment, as will requests for additional information.

In all instances a Building Plan Assessment Application must be lodged prior to the approval of any development.

21.2 Privately Certified Development

Privately Certified development require a Building Plan Assessment by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit prior to the determination of the development to determine any impacts and conditions associated with Councils water and sewer assets.

As the Local Water Utility, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit undertake an assessment of any proposed development within our area of responsibility, at the time of considering an application Section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* or at the time of issuing a notice or written advice under the *SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*.

22 Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains

Council's water and sewer assets deliver valuable services to you and your neighbours. When you're building or excavating over or next to Council's assets, you must get approval from Councils Water and Sewer Business Unit.

This includes all developments requiring Council or Private Certifier consent, as well as developments exempt from approval under the *Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (NSW)*. For example, when you are:

- constructing a building or driveway
- installing utility services by excavating or non-intrusive means, e.g., boring
- laying pipes and cables to service the community.
- Points to consider before deciding to apply for approval to build over or near the sewer are:



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- Sewer infrastructure must be suitably protected from damage, and to enable maintenance, minimum clearances are required to be maintained from proposed structures.
- Unrestricted access to all manholes, lampholes and/or maintenance shafts and junctions shall be provided and maintained at all times.
- Concrete encasement of the sewer main maybe required for the protection of the affected pipe and any associated infrastructure due to the loss of access.

If you are building over or next to water and sewer assets, you need to understand Council's requirements. They ensure you don't damage Council's pipes and structures and we have ongoing access to maintain them.

22.1.1 When Do You Need Council Approval?

You need approval from Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit before you can move, replace, or remove Council's pipes, build over Council's pipes or within the zone of influence of Council's pipes. This includes changing the level of your land by filling over water and sewer assets. Council needs to ensure we can access the water and sewer infrastructure safely for maintenance and repairs.

Talk to Council's [Water and Sewer Development Engineer](#) about getting this approval.

22.2 How to Apply

An application must be submitted to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit that includes the following information:

- A full set of the building plans
- Completed [application form](#)
- Payment of the relevant [fees](#).

Additional information may be requested on review of the application, including:

- Site survey plan by a Registered Surveyor. All levels to Australian Height Datum (AHD).
- Certified engineering plans, indicating soil classification and type, and protection requirements of the sewer infrastructure and proposed/existing structure/s in accordance with Council's Building over Sewer Policy.

Council's [POL/26015 - Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Trunk Water Mains Policy](#) specifies the requirements for building over or close to sewer infrastructure.

22.2.1 Building in the Vicinity of Sewer and Water Trunk Mains Advice Letter

On receipt of an application, Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer will assess your application. If approved, a Building Over or Adjacent to Sewer Infrastructure Approval



Water and Sewer

Letter will be issued. This letter outlines Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit approval of the proposed works close to, or over Council's infrastructure and defines any conditions to be complied with, including any inspection requirements.

All works relating directly to the sewer infrastructure, as specified in the Development Application Notice and Building Over or Adjacent to Sewer Infrastructure Approval are required to be carried out to the satisfaction of Council's **Water and Sewer Development Engineer**.

Inspection for any works should be arranged and confirmed at least 2 working days in advance and will be at the cost of the developer/applicant.

22.2.2 Water Supply Infrastructure

Building over the water supply assets is NOT permitted (this includes but is not limited to water service lines, water mains, fittings, and fixtures). Where a development is proposed adjacent to a water supply asset, a separate written application shall be made to Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer for assessment and determination.

23 Certificate of Compliance

Council is a Local Water Utility under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* and is responsible for ensuring any impacts on Council's water and sewer infrastructure are identified and either controlled or eliminated.

If a development is proposed in the Singleton local government area and the result has implications of the water and/or sewerage systems, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will assess the application in accordance with the requirements of Section 305, 306 and 307 of the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* and associated regulations.

Council will issue a Section 306 Notification of Requirements outlining the charges and/or works that the developer must pay and/or construct for the development. When all contributions/fees are paid and the works complete and passed by council, then the Section 307 Certificate of Compliance will be issued.

23.1 Section 306 Notification

The Section 306 Notification of Requirements outlines the conditions the developer must complete to secure a Certificate of Compliance prior to obtaining an occupation certificate or subdivision certificate as applicable.

The notice is divided into three sections:

- Application details showing the development proposal, applicant information and the location of the proposed development;
- The conditions imposed on the development. This is further split into different parts (examples include but are not limited to):



Water and Sewer

- Prior to Demolition Works
- Prior to the Issue of a Construction Certificate
- Prior to Commencement of Works
- During Construction Works
- Prior to Issue of Occupation Certificate
- Prior to the Granting of a Certificate of Compliance
- Advice to applicant and formal declaration of completion of all conditions and submission of all necessary documentation for the granting of a Certificate of Compliance.

23.2 Section 307 Certificate of Compliance

At the completion of all the conditions of the Section 306 Notification of Requirements, the applicant will lodge the completed Notice, relevant supporting documentation and an application to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit for a Section 307 Certificate of Compliance.

Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer will review the completed Section 306 Notification of Requirements and documentation. If all the conditions are satisfied a Section 307 Certificate of Compliance will be issued with a certificate of compliance confirming the development has met Council's Water and Sewer Group requirements.

23.3 Section 64 (Developer) Charges

Council, as the Water Supply Authority as described under the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)*, and pursuant to Section 64 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, may levy fees or require particular water management works to be delivered as a condition of approval for connection of developments to the water supply network.

These developer charges (or headworks) and distribution charges are upfront payments levied by Council to recover part of the cost of providing the infrastructure either within Council's existing supply systems or through future capital works incurred in servicing new developments or additions/change to existing development, which impose a loading on Council's water supply and or sewer infrastructure.

As defined in the Department of Primary Industries *Developer Charges Guidelines for Water Supply, Sewerage and Stormwater* 2016, Developer charges serve three related functions:

- they provide a source of funding for infrastructure required for new urban development;
- they provide signals regarding the cost of urban development, and this encourages less costly forms and areas of development; and
- are an integral part of the fair pricing of water related services.

Council has prepared a Development Servicing Plan (DSP) in accordance with Section 64 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and Department of Primary Industries *Water*



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Developer Charges Guidelines for Water Supply, Sewerage and Stormwater, which details the water supply headworks and distribution charges to be levied upon development areas utilising Council's water supply infrastructure.

Potential development areas not included in the current DSP will be subject to separate developer and distribution charges based upon the actual cost of providing water supply services and are at the discretion of Council.

It should be noted that Section 64 contributions or charges are sometimes referred to as headworks charges, developer charges or developer contributions.

23.3.1 Calculation of Section 64 (Developer) Charges

Developer charges are levied when additional equivalent tenements (ET) are created or changed.

Standard residential lots (lot size 450m² to 2,000m²) are assumed to have an initial water ET loading of one ET, while larger or rural residential lots (lot size greater than 2,000m²) are assumed to have an initial water ET loading of 1.2 at the time of subdivision. Commercial and industrial developments initial water ET load are based on an average assumed loading per hectare. Assumed loadings are determined by the Water Directorate *Section 64 Determination of Equivalent Tenements Guidelines* 2017.

The charges applied at the time of subdivision provide a base entitlement for each allotment. As each allotment is developed, the new ET is calculated based on the type of development to be constructed.

The applicable developer charges will then be based on the estimated ET loading and Council's DSP and annual adopted Fees and Charges. Quoted charge rates will increase annually, where payment is made in future financial years.

Some exemptions from developer charges are available for small home-based businesses where the business is a casual operation and has an additional loading of less than 1ET. Contact Council's [Water and Sewer Development Engineer](#) for information on specific home-based developments being undertaken.

24 Augmentation of Water Supply and Sewerage Systems

Where a development is required by condition of development consent or section 306 Notice of Requirement, to augment water supply or sewerage system infrastructure:

- the design of the augmentation works required shall be as per Council's Developer (Technical) Specifications;
- where Council undertakes the work, the contribution required will be calculated by Council and paid by the developer prior to the work proceeding. Where the developer undertakes the work and an offset against contribution is required, the design and the value of the work shall be approved and agreed upon prior to the work commencing;



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- failure by the developer and/or consultant to obtain prior written design approval and cost agreement from Council will result in a nil offset being applied to the work; and
- where Council has identified potential future demand for infrastructure over and above that required by the development in question, Council may elect to increase the size of the infrastructure and meet the additional cost over and above the contribution calculated.

Further information regarding the construction of water and sewer assets, can be found in the [Technical Specifications – Design and Construction – Water Reticulation Systems](#) and [Technical Specifications – Design and Construction – Sewer Supply Systems](#) available on Council's website or by contacting Council's [Water and Sewer Development Engineer](#).

25 Liquid Trade Waste Approvals

Council's Liquid Trade Waste Officer will provide assistance and information to help with applications for liquid trade waste approvals. Applying for an approval or consent may involve submitting the following to us:

- Liquid Trade Waste Application form;
- site plans showing buildings and infrastructure;
- plan of the proposed or existing treatment system prior to waste entering the sewerage system;
- a technical specification of the manufacturing trade sewer system; and
- a list of hazardous chemicals.

Each liquid trade waste discharge agreement application is risk assessed, using a number of parameters such as activity type, quality of discharge, volume of discharge, pre-treatment facility and Sewer Treatment Works, this may include site inspections. This information is used to determine which trade sewer category is applicable. Liquid trade waste categories are defined in the [POL/26005 Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System Policy](#).

Following completion of all requirements, property owners are then issued with a liquid trade waste discharge approval.

25.1.1 Liquid Trade Waste Fees and Charges

The *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* also specifies that liquid trade waste fees and charges are to be levied, which are dependent on liquid trade waste discharger category.

Trade waster fees consist of:

- application fees for new trade waste customers;
- an annual agreement fee;



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- variable trade sewer discharge fees based on the strength and volume of trade sewer being discharged (where applicable);
- additional inspection fees (where applicable);
- excess mass charges (where applicable);
- food waste disposal charge (where applicable);
- non-compliance liquid trade waste usage and excess mass and pH charges, and
- non-compliance penalty infringement.

26 Available Water Pressure Statement

Council can provide a statement of available water pressure to the developer or property owners' hydraulic consultant to assist in the design of appropriate fire service systems for the development.

On receipt of the [Available Pressure Statement](#) application, nominating the flow rates required and payment of the appropriate fees and charges, Council's Water and Sewer Development Engineer and/or Utilities Plumber will undertake the required testing at the indicated location and provide advice of the main capacity and pressure available to the applicant.

The fees and charges are adopted annually by Council and can be found in the [Adopted Fees and Charges](#).

27 Connections and Disconnections

27.1 Water Connections

27.1.1 Connecting to Council's Water Supply

Connection to Council's water supply is made in accordance with section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*. A Water Connection Request must be made to Council for this connection to be completed.

Water connection requests can be made via Council's Online Services. Log in or create an account for your business or person through the Community Portal to access this form. You can sign in or register [here](#) and navigate to **Forms Centre > Water & Sewer Forms > Water Connection Quotation Form**.

Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will complete an initial review of the proposed development and advise the lodgement of a [Water Connection Request – Meter Installation](#) is required to connect the property to Council's water supply. The application will require an [Applicant Declaration and Authorisation](#) to be uploaded along with a Meter Location Plan. Not including these requirements when making the request may result in delays in processing or rejection of the request.



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If unable to apply online, download and complete the [Water Connection Request – Meter Installation Form](#). The completed water service request form can be emailed to council@singleton.nsw.gov.au or returned to Council's Administration Centre by post or in person.

On receipt of the water service request, Council will assess the property and connection requirements and provide written advice on the cost of the connection. Once payment has been made, Council's Water and Sewer Network Delivery Team will install the water meter and complete the connection. The water service will be installed within 20 working days from the date of payment. Be aware that obstructions to the site can delay installation.

27.1.2 Downsizing a Connection

A property owner may want to downsize their meter to reduce service charges on their bill. You can only downsize a meter if it's larger than 20 mm and the property doesn't need a large water service. You'll need to apply and pay a fee.

Customers may be required to obtain, at their expense, an independent Hydraulics Assessment to confirm reducing the sizing of connection will adequately service the consumption needs of the property.

27.1.3 Disconnection of Water by the Customer

A customer who owns a property may, with Council's written consent, disconnect the property from the water main or sewer branch to which it is connected.

Council is not required to consent if it believes that disconnection of the customer's property from its water or sewer systems would endanger public health or the environment, or the request is not based on reasonable grounds.

The property owner remains liable for non-connected (vacant) service availability charges where the services are available for connection.

[POL/26030 Water Supply Services Policy](#) outlines Council's requirements for disconnections of water services.

27.2 Fire Service Installations

Council provides the following, in the design and construction of a fire service:

- provide the main tapping, tee and valve in accordance with the Council approved hydraulic design and/or calculations, at the cost of the developer; and
- supply and installation of an appropriately sized bypass meter, in accordance with the Council approved hydraulic design and/or calculations, at the cost of the developer, where required.

The developer and/or property owner is responsible for the following, in the design and construction of a fire service:



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- submitting the hydraulic design and/or calculations for the fire service to Council for approval; and
- engage a licensed contractor to install the remaining elements of the fire services to be compliant with the required Australian Standard.

Council does not allow the installation of in-ground hydrants on private property.

Water connections dedicated to designated fire hydrants and/or fire sprinkler systems must have a Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) with a minimum 20-25mm diameter bypass meter fitted. The DCVA shall be installed inside the property boundary as close as possible to the connection of the water main, and prior to any suction/booster assembly.

Only bypass meters, that are part of a prefabricated dual check valve assembly incorporating a bypass meter and backflow prevention to the Australian standard is permitted to be installed by licensed contractors, on approval by Council Water and Sewer Business Unit.

All low flow bypass meters installed by private licensed contractors are to be inspected by Council Water and Sewer Business Unit for the purpose of recording meter details for billing only.

The low flow bypass meter on a fire service is monitored by Council. If excessive flows are detected, a site inspection of the property will be carried out by a representative of Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. These site inspections may reveal misuse, leakage, required fire system testing or may be the result of actual firefighting use.

27.2.1 Metering of Fire Services

Water metering of fire control services will be assessed on the type, size and use of the development. Typically:

- Hose Reel Services must be connected to a metered service (refer to the Plumbing Code of Australia 2019). Where this is not currently the case, Council will work with these property owners with a view to installing a complying connection, at the owner's expense.
- Designated Fire Hydrant Services must be fitted with an Australian Standard approved Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) and an appropriately sized bypass water meter and constructed in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.
- Residential / Home Fire Sprinkler Services designed under AS2118.4 or AS2118.5, which utilise a low volume of water, must be fitted with an Australian Standard approved DCVA and an appropriately sized bypass water meter and constructed in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.

Use of unmetered fire services for non-fire related purposes is considered water theft.

Mechanical metering of fire services is prohibited, while digital metering of fire services is permissible in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.



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27.3 Sewer Connections

New connections to sewer supply areas are subject to entitlement, approval and payment of charges as applicable. It is mandatory to connect to Council provided sewerage infrastructure if your property falls within the defined boundary of the service supply area.

If your property is vacant and falls within the sewer service supply area, the fixed residential sewerage discharge annual fee is payable. This amount is set annually via Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy.

Connections might occur as a consequence of:

- New dwellings in developed areas; or
- At the request of a customer to replace on-site systems (newly connected villages or where private works to connect to the system is approved); or
- Connections made under the direction of Council to replace an on-site sewer system.

Further details about a connection entitlement to the schemes and the service areas can be obtained through the [Sewer Supply Services Policy](#). A [map of the sewerage service network](#) is available on Council's website.

New commercial properties or changes to a commercial undertaking which requires a sewer service from the Council may require a larger connection and approval. This will be coordinated by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. Information about Council's requirements for assessing water and sewer infrastructure and connection requirements in association with the development process can be found on Council's website.

27.4 Disconnection of Sewer

Customers no longer requiring an existing sewer connection or seeking relocation, the disconnected service must be cut off and capped by a licensed plumber to prevent water or soil entering the system.

Customers should ensure that the connection pipe is cut off as deep in the ground as is practical to avoid being damaged by future landscaping or building works, in accordance with the relevant Plumbing and Drainage standards.

Please note that disconnection of sewer does not preclude payment of the fixed service availability charges for sewerage services; refer to [Residential Charges](#) section of this document for further details.

Disconnection from deep sewer mains (greater than 1.5m deep) are to be undertaken by Council staff and/or Council approved contactors, refer to [POL/26031 Sewer Service Policy](#) for details.



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27.5 Pressure Sewer Connections

The supply and installation of the pressure sewer system components are assessed, quoted, and installed by Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. Apply to install a pressure sewer system is a three parts process and is required prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate. To apply for a pressure sewer system on your property:

1. Complete and submit a **Pressure Sewer System Application** to Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit. Applications must include site plan and proposed floor plan; the site plan must show the location of the proposed pressure sewer unit including the alarm/control panel, pressure service lines, power supply, meter box and power lines from the meter to the alarm panel and pressure sewer unit in relation to the Lot and proposed residence or structure.
2. Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will conduct a site visit, investigate any site issues, prepare, and issues the:
 - o Pricing Schedule (include the price of the required unit plus any additional costs for site works such as design, difficult terrain, or any additional work);
 - o General Terms and Conditions;
 - o Installation, Maintenance and Service Agreement; and
 - o Any changes to the proposed location of the pressure sewer system.

Sign and return the Installation, Maintenance and Service Agreement and confirm the proposed location of the pressure sewer system components. On receipt, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will execute the agreement, stamp the plans and issue an invoice for the quoted amount.

3. Once payment has been made in full, Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will liaise with the applicant to plan the installation of the system in accordance with the Site Location Plan supplied. **This is generally not until the build is at lock up stage to avoid damage to the pressure sewer tank unit during construction.**

Once installation is complete Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit will organise for the annual maintenance fees to be raised against the property. The first year will be set on a pro-rata basis, and these are issued with the Rates Notice annually.

28 Damage and Illegal Works

Council is not responsible for any:

- Damage caused by a customer.
- Illegally connected services.

Council reserves the right to recharge for the costs incurred to rectify damage caused.



Information, Privacy and Communication

Council is committed to a positive customer and community relationship engendered by continual involvement in the day-to-day activities of the business. In general, good customer relations are maintained by providing a quality service, keeping Council's customers informed and responding to the community needs. The Customer Service Plan has been created to cover these key aspects and include a single point of reference to:

- Set and meet agreed Customer Service Standards.
- Benchmark Council's performance and where improvement is identified, act upon such to meet Council's customer expectations.
- Clearly define and communicate Council's charges
- Provide strong communication strategies to reach all community members about water supply and sewerage matters.

At the time of writing, the Customer Service Plan has been developed to be consistent with Council's [Customer Service Charter](#).

29 Communication

29.1 Stakeholder Engagement

As the Local Water Utility provider for the community Council's Water and Sewer Business Unit has a requirement to comply with the *Local Government Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework (IP&R) 2010*. This includes the requirement of Council to prepare;

- Community Strategic Plan (CSP);
- Resourcing Strategy;
- 4-year Delivery Program;
- Annual Operational Plan; and
- Annual Report.

The Community Strategic Plan sits at the top of the Council planning hierarchy and identifies the community's main priorities for the future and the ways to achieve these goals.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Using the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Water Utility Strategic Planning Guidance provides the specific roadmap for Local Water Utilities to comply with the IP&R process.

Council members conduct Stakeholder Engagement and Project Delivery Plan meetings for major capital works and seek comment, feedback, and opinion on a continual basis via website, telephone or mail.



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29.2 Customer Consultation

The provision of water supply and sewerage services can often lead to conflict within the wider community. This is especially true regarding changes of services, increase to charges and construction of significant new works which have an obvious impact on the environment. Council is proactive in delivering an ongoing education program about the services provided as a Local Water Utility. In addition, Council is committed to providing regular updates to the community including:

- Four year price paths for core charges;
- One year capital works program;
- Tri annual information flyers contained within all Water Accounts;
- Printed education materials for water saving initiatives and water restrictions;
- News items on the Council website;
- Updates of outages or events via social media and the website; and
- Seeking commentary and feedback on significant works in planning stages.

29.3 Customer Satisfaction

The delivery of a personal service approach to Council's customers, as the essential service provider of water sewer supply across the LGA, is seen by all members of Council's staff as an important part of attaining strong customer satisfaction results. This is facilitated by maintaining good communication and good performance in all aspects of the business. Council has a dedicated customer service team able to answer any customer enquiries relating to the services that we supply.

Council effectively maintains 'a one-stop shop' relating water supply and sewerage services during normal business hours from 8am to 4:30pm. An after-hours service is also maintained and available to assist customers 24 hours a day 365 days a year. You can contact us on the [contact details](#) in this document.

Council undertakes a range of initiatives to seek customer feedback and undertakes formalised survey of customers in a number of ways including:

- Follow up calls post customer requests for assistance;
- Follow up cards by Water and Sewer Network staff;
- Random customer surveys for areas of concern;
- Website, counter and community available customer response forms; and
- Annual customer satisfaction survey.

29.4 Website

Council maintains a website, which is consistent with the water industry to provide specific information to Council's customers regarding water supply matters. The website is



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maintained with important news items including significant water supply outages, restrictions or sewer related disruptions during emergency or weather impacting events. The information is updated regularly and includes environmental data reported in compliance with Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.

The website also includes important demand management initiatives.

29.5 Boil Water Alert Notifications

Once a boil water alert has been issued, Council will notify customers urgently and will use, where considered appropriate one, or a combination of the following methods:

- letterbox drops and doorknocking;
- news releases;
- signs on public taps and bubblers;
- social media;
- variable message boards;
- radio announcements;
- website; and
- email.

Council will also endeavour to contact vulnerable and special customers directly including:

- water carters and consumers who receive carted water;
- Schools and childcare centres;
- Hospitals, nursing homes and medical facilities; and
- Accommodation facilities and caravan parks.

30 Complaints

Council recognises that a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. The number and type of complaints about the services provided by Council or staff are captured for reporting and rectification where necessary.

The [POL/40007 Compliments and Complaint Handling Policy](#) details how Council manages and responds to complaints. A copy of the policy is available on Council's website.

A complaint could include a customer:

- Providing negative feedback about dealings with Council;
- Dissatisfied with a decision made under Council policy;
- Dissatisfied with an action or failure to act by Council; and



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- Customer levels of responsiveness as measured by the National Performance Reporting mechanisms for benchmarking which include:
 - Water quality complaints;
 - Water service complaints;
 - Sewerage service complaints;
 - Billing and account complaints – water and sewerage; and
 - Total water and sewerage complaints.

Examples of matters that are not classified as complaints include:

- A request for service or assistance with clarification on a matter;
- An inquiry into the progress of a water meter connection;
- A request to take action on a leaking water pipe or any other service fault;
- An inquiry to seek clarification or further information about a Water Account; and
- Government pricing policy, property connections, restrictions, tariff structures or a correctly calculated Water Account is too high.

When a customer contacts us with a complaint by telephone, email, letter or in person, customers can expect to:

- Have their complaint and personal details kept confidential;
- Be treated with courtesy and respect;
- Receive the appropriate support where special needs are identified (eg interpreter service or hearing disabled);
- Receive an acknowledgement of a complaint, if sought;
- Be provided with a reference number for any future enquiry or follow-up;
- Have the matter investigated thoroughly and objectively;
- Be kept informed of the process and outcome; and
- Receive a decision on the complaint if applicable.

Customers can be assured that Council will prioritise complaints based on the seriousness and complexity of a complaint but in all cases, we will provide a response within 21 working days.

30.1 Reporting Odour Complaints

Sewerage naturally produces gases that can cause some odour. Customers are invited to report any odour issues in their area by contacting Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290 - 24 hours, seven days. We will investigate to find the cause and rectify in line with our service levels at the end of this document. We take all odour complaints seriously as is required by Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.



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30.2 Reporting Sewer Overflows

From time-to-time sewerage may overflow as a result of a blockage. It is important that Customers report these overflows as soon as possible to Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290 - 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Sewer overflows are treated seriously by Council's staff and responded to in line with the service levels described at the end of the Customer Service Plan. Council also has a requirement to record and report sewer overflows as required by Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.

31 Compliments

Council recognises compliments are valuable to as they give us an opportunity to identify services and areas of best practice by staff and incorporate those practices and standards in other areas of Council.

Compliments of Council and its staff can be made to Council using the [contact details](#) in this document and they will be passed on to the relevant staff member for their recognition.

32 Information and Privacy

Council collects and holds personal and health information for the purpose of facilitating its business. It is important that the use of this information is confined to the purpose for which it is acquired.

The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* (PPIPA) requires all public sector agencies to prepare, implement and review their Privacy Management Plan at least every three years. Council complies with the legislative requirements of the PPIPA, the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)* (HRIPA) and the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government in this regard.

The [POL/30004 Privacy Management Plan](#) has been publicly adopted in order to inform the community and maintain the education of staff on issues regarding access to personal information and to introduce Council policies and procedures to maximise compliance with the PPIPA and the HRIPA.

Electronic information is the basis on which Council conducts much of its business. As the custodian of a large volume of information that is sensitive for business, governance, personal or political reasons, Council has a fundamental responsibility to protect that information from unauthorised or accidental modification, loss, release or impact on the safety and well-being of individuals.

Council is committed to protecting the privacy of Council's customers, business contacts, Councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers.



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Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ADWG	Australian Drinking Water Guideline – A framework for the management of drinking water quality, 12 elements in total.
Approved	Acceptable to, authorised by or approved by Council.
Backflow	A reverse flow condition created by a difference in water pressures that causes water to flow back into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than the intended one.
Backflow Prevention Device	A device used to protect water supplies from contamination and may include a break tank, registered air gap, pressure vacuum breaker, reduced pressure zone device or testable double check valve.
Boundary Kit	A valve box at the property boundary incorporating an isolating valve, non-return valve and inspection tee
Building Adjacent to Sewer	Where a structure is proposed to be built in the zone of influence but not over the sewer. The structure is likely to impact on Council sewers and associated structures.
Building Over Sewer	The erection of a structure over and within the zone of influence of the sewer.
Catchments	Area of land that collects rainfall and contributes to surface water, streams, rivers, dams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater reserves.
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
Consumption	Water that is consumed by humans or livestock via water meters.
Control Panel	The box incorporating the alarm controls for the pump and the emergency generator connection point.
Council	Singleton Council
Demand Management	Strategies to reduce water consumption by residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. These strategies can include using existing resources more efficiently as a cost-effective alternative to building additional infrastructure.
Developer Charge	A measure of the demand or loading a development will have on infrastructure in terms of the average water consumption or average sewage discharge for an average residential dwelling.
Developer Servicing Plan - DSP	A document setting out the calculation of developer charges within the Council's LGA. It includes the developer charge, assumptions used to calculate the charges, and planning information related to water and sewer infrastructure. It is required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and in accordance with the Water Directorate Guidelines.
Dirty Water	A change in the appearance or the colour of the reticulated potable water - usually to a brown or yellow, caused by trace materials in the water such as iron or manganese.



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Term	Definition
Discharge Pipe	The pipeline from the Pressure Sewer Unit to the pressure sewer main via the boundary kit.
Distribution System	A network of pipes leading from a treatment plant to customers' plumbing systems.
DPE – Water	Department of Planning and Environment – Water; NSW state government regulatory body
Drinking water	Water intended primarily for human consumption (but excluding bottled water, for the purposes of this policy).
Drinking Water Management System (DWMS)	The systematic and documented evaluation of activities, documents, procedures, and other supporting information that outlines Council's system for the safe supply of drinking water.
Easement	An area of land, or part of a lot reserved by law for a specific purpose such as the containment of water assets.
Easement to Drain Sewage	A legal entitlement placed over a parcel of land for the purpose of the provision, operation, and maintenance of sewer infrastructure.
Eligible Pensioner	A person who is in receipt of the Pension Concession Card issued by Centrelink, the Department of Veteran Affairs Gold TPI or EDA Card.
Encasement	The protection of a sewer pipe by encasing all around with concrete to Council standards.
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
Equivalent Tenements – ET's	A measure of the demand or loading a development will have on infrastructure in terms of the average water consumption or average sewage discharge for an average residential dwelling.
Heavy/Permanent Structures	Any approved structure typically constructed from masonry, brick, steel, timber or concrete and it is neither reasonable nor practical to remove or dismantle the structure for the purpose of carrying out sewer repairs or refurbishment. Some examples are dwelling houses, garages, onsite cabins.
High Level Alarm	An alarm activated when the volume of sewer in the storage vessel exceeds the normal level that controls the pump by a pre-determined amount.
Improvements	Are deemed to include but not be limited to pavements, shrubs, gardens, retaining walls, fences, and all other structures.
Kilolitre	One thousand litres.
Lamphole	A vertical pipe or shaft between manholes into which a light may be lowered for inspecting sewer.
Leakage	Water that is lost in transit from a pipe.
Lightweight/Demountable Structures	Any approved structure that can, at the owner's risk and expense, be easily and readily dismantled and re-erected at the request of Council, if access to the main (by excavation) was required. Some examples are domestic carports, small tool or garden sheds, pergola.



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Term	Definition
Liquid Trade Waste	Liquid trade waste means all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.
Local Government Area (LGA)	Area of Singleton Council's operation
Maintenance Shaft	Allows a sewer system to be inspected, cleaned, and repaired from the surface.
Maintenance Hole	A chamber with a removable cover which allows human and machine access to a (typically buried) sewer; abbreviation MH retains the traditional abbreviation for "maintenance hole". Also referred to as Access Chamber or Manhole
Miscellaneous Structures	Any approved structure where no special protection measures for the sewer main should be required as long as the minimum clearance requirements have been met. Some examples are rainwater tanks, driveways, or remaining walls.
Multiple barrier	The use of more than one preventative measure as a barrier against hazard.
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
Non-Rateable Land	Land exempt from all rates, other than water supply special rates as outlined in Section 556 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> .
Not Fully Enclosed	Where at least one side of the carport/veranda is completely open, or two sides are partly open. Doors of any type are to be considered as closed sides.
NPR	National Performance Report
Overflow Gully (Yard Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, that allows sewage to overflow away from the interior of your home and outside to the garden if there is a sewer blockage.
Owner	The Agency, Authority, Board, Company, Controlling Authority, Corporation, Council, Department, Individual, Regulator, Utility or other legal entity who is the Owner or lessee of the property and/or who has responsibly for the property.
Potable Water	Drinkable water. Usually treated freshwater, intended for human consumption that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. For the purposes of this policy excludes bottled water/
Pressure Sewer System	An overall system including the Pressure Sewer Unit, control panel, discharge pipe, boundary kit and pressure sewer pipes up to a discharge point in a conventional sewer.
Principal place of residence	The property that the ratepayer occupies as their sole or dominant residence.
PSS	Pressure Sewer System
Quality System	Organisation structure, procedures, processes, and resources needed to implement quality management (AS/NZS ISO 8402:1994)
Rainwater Tank	On-site storages to collect roof water for beneficial use.



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Term	Definition
Rate Payer	The person liable for payment of the rates and charges of the property for which the pensioner concession is claimed
Risk	Effect of uncertainty on objectives. (AS/NZ ISO31000:2018) Note 1: An effect is a deviation from the expected. It can be positive, negative or both, and can address, create or result in opportunities and threats; Note 2: Objectives can have different aspects and categories, and can be applied at different levels; and Note 3: Risk is usually expressed in terms of risk sources, potential events, their consequences and their likelihood.
Risk Consequence	Outcome of an event affecting objectives. Note 1: A consequence can be certain or uncertain and can have positive or negative direct or indirect effects on objectives; Note 2: Consequences can be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively; and Note 3: Any consequence can escalate through cascading and cumulative effects.
Risk Event	Occurrence or change of a particular set of circumstances. Note 1: An event can have one or more occurrences and can have several causes and several consequences; Note 2: An event can also be something that is expected which does not happen, or something that is not expected which does happen; and Note 3: An event can be a risk source.
Risk Likelihood	Chance of something happening.
Risk Management	The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk.
Risk Source	Element which alone or in combination has the potential to give rise to risk.
Sewage	See Sewer
Sewer	An asset owned by Council used for the conveyancing of sewage, whether raw or treated. A sewer may be 'live' or disused.
Sewer Line / Main / Pipe	An asset owned by Council, controlled, and maintained by the Water and Sewer Business Unit, used for the conveying of sewage (raw or treated). A sewer may be operational or disused.
Sewer /Sewerage System	The system of pipes and pump stations for collecting and transporting sewer from each property to the sewer treatment plant.
Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)	A facility for the treatment of sewer to remove pollutants (solid matter and pathogens) producing treated recycled water and bio-solids.
Stakeholders	Any person, company or relevant authority that can affect or be affected by Singleton Council's actions, objectives and policies.
Trade Waste	Toxic and other potentially harmful substances discharged to the sewer system.



Water and Sewer

Term	Definition
Undetected (Concealed) Water Leak	<p>A leak that is hidden from view either underground or under concrete, and a property owner could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence; or that internal plumbing has shortcomings.</p> <p>A concealed leak is water escaping on the ratepayer's side of the water meter, which is hidden from view; be it underground, or within concrete, or underneath a building and where the owner or occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its existence.</p>
Vent Shaft	Also known as a ventilation shaft or vent stack is a tall shaft designed for the safe release of gases built up in the sewers.
Wastewater/Sewerage	Wastewater from toilets, sinks, showers and washing machines is carried through the sewer mains to be treated at the sewerage treatment plant.
Water Conservation	Preventing and reducing wasteful, uneconomical, impractical, or unreasonable use of water resources.
Water Demand	Total water use requirements of an area for drinking, agriculture, industry, recreation, and gardening. This demand is seasonal and highly influenced by the weather.
Water Quality	Physical, chemical, and biological measures of water.
Water Treatment Plant (WTP)	A facility that treats freshwater piped from reservoirs into potable water for supply to the community.
Works	All those Works being sewers, maintenance structures, vents, pumping stations, pressure mains and accessories and shall include valve chambers and storage facilities as shown on the Design Drawings and includes any part or parts of the Works.
Yard Gully (also see Overflow Relief Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, designed to release any sewer overflow outside of the home in the event of a blockage in the sewer main.
Zone of Influence	<p>The 'zone of influence' of a sewer is that area of soil/strata that is likely to be influenced by building loads. Factors that determine the 'zone of influence' include trench width and depth and soil classification (by qualified structural engineer as per AS 2870) and groundwater / level of the water table.</p> <p>The boundary of the 'zone of influence' coincides with the angle of repose of the strata encountered (including cut/fill). This boundary shall commence at the bottom corner of the trench nearest the proposed foundation. If the trench is partly in rock or shale the boundary shall commence at the top of the rock or shale strata. In heterogeneous soil the angle of repose may differ.</p> <p>The above criteria do not apply to water charged strata. Foundations in water charged ground are to be designed by a structural engineer and approved by Council.</p>



Water and Sewer

Appendix A – Customer Service Standards, Priorities and Timeframes and Levels of Service

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Appendix A

Water and Sewer - Customer Service Plan

Customer Service Standards – Priorities and Timeframes - Levels of Service



Water and Sewer

Customer Service Standards and Levels of Service



1. Water Supply Service

This section outlines the standard Levels of Service which meet minimum requirements for water supply serving Singleton. A special set of Levels of Service may be developed in the future, for smaller villages where it is not cost effective to provide these standards. Levels of Service with respect to the water supply systems typically cover four areas:

- Availability of supply;
- Water quality;
- Response times to supply failures; and
- Customer complaints.

In this document, whenever **Levels of Service** are mentioned, it is assumed that statutory, regulatory and licencing requirements are met.

These standards and levels of service are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

1.1. Water Supply - Customer Service Standards

The following table outlines the Customer Service Standards for the essential service aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. The target, priority and response times indicated are for potable supply customers only and do not extend to those special customers on specific agreements. Targets are set on an annual basis and are based on the median result of other similar Council's for each performance measure.



Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
Drinking water pressure to boundary	<p>Provide between 12 metres and 90 metres head of water in the reticulation system. The minimum water pressure is based on minimum firefighting requirements and the maximum pressure protects Council and house plumbing from bursting.</p> <p>The minimum drinking water pressure provided by Council will fill a standard 9 L bucket in 1.5 mins.</p>	95% of all residential properties during summer whilst conveying a minimum of 6 L/min**	2	Industry standard
Extent of unplanned drinking water interruptions, including their number, duration and cause (e.g. water main breaks).	<p>An unplanned water supply interruption occurs when a property is without a service due to any cause. This excludes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property service connection interruptions (unless the burst or leak requires the main to be shut down for repairs which affect multiple customers). • Interruptions that cause some reduction to the service but where normal activities are still possible. • Planned interruptions except where the customer has not received notification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C15 – Unplanned interruption duration < 120 mins • C10 – < 4 water service complaints per 1,000 properties • A8 – < 12 main breaks per 100km of water main • C17 – < 32 unplanned interruptions per 1,000 properties 	1	<p>National Performance Benchmarking Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C15 – Average Duration of unplanned interruptions water in minutes • C10 – Water Service, complaints no. per 1000 properties • A8 – Water main breaks no. per 100 km of water main • C17 – Average frequency of unplanned interruptions – water no. per 1,000 properties



Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
Time for restoration of water service – unplanned interruptions	Restoration occurs where all interrupted connections are restored to normal service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A8 – < 12 main breaks per 100km of water main • C15 – Unplanned interruption duration < 120 mins 	1	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A8 – Water main breaks no. per 100 km of water main • C15 – Average Duration of unplanned interruptions water in minutes
Notification for planned water service interruptions (Refer to 15.1 of the Customer Service Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide notice, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. • If interruption will be less than four hours, notice via doorknocking will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme inconvenience. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours. • Prioritise notification and resumption of supply to Critical and Extremely Critical Customers (e.g. dialysis patients) 	N/A	2	Industry standard
Drinking water quality and/or complaints*	Supply drinking water in the reticulated system which meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and minimise the number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H3 – 100% of the service population for which population microbiological 	2	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H3 - % of population where microbiological



Standards	Description	Target*	Priority	Benchmark
	of water quality complaints resulting from operational practices.	compliance is achieved. • C9 – < 3 water quality complaints per 1,000 properties		compliance was achieved. • C9 – Water quality complaints per 1,000 properties
Water for firefighting	Properties connected to the town water supply receive potable water at a guaranteed level of service and meets the NSW Brigade requirements for firefighting in accordance with AS2419. Council has committed to progressively replacing sub 100mm water mains to provide the minimum firefighting pressure by 2030.	Available in all urban areas**	N/A	N/A
Consumption restrictions	The adopted consumption trigger levels are aimed at ensuring that Singleton is affected by water restrictions for less than 10% of the time and no more than 5 times per 100 years. Restrictions are only applied when severe water shortages are evident. There are six three levels of restrictions (1 – low level restrictions to 3 – emergency restrictions), each with an increasing impact on consumption, in accordance with the current Drought and Emergency Response Management Plan. Restrictions will be widely advertised to ensure total awareness by all customers.	No more than 5 times per 100 years	1	N/A



- * Excludes non-potable supply including Glennies Creek Trunk Water Main and Mount Thorley Raw Water Scheme
- ** Excludes water mains less than 100mm consistent with Clause 142 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations, 2005 (NSW)* (for example downtown Singleton and water supply to the Abattoir) and Jerrys Plains Water Supply Scheme.

1.2. Water Supply Service - Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details

The following table outlines the Water Supply Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details for the essential service aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. The target, priority and response times indicated are for potable supply customers only and do not extend to those special customers on specific agreements.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Definition	Complete failure to maintain continuity or quality of supply to customers or a critical user at a critical time. Immediate traffic or safety hazard.	Partial failure to maintain continuity or quality of supply to a small group of customers or a critical user at a non-critical time. Minor traffic or safety hazard.	Failure to maintain continuity or quality of supply to a single customer. Known fault, minor problem or complaint which requires rectification with some urgency.	Known fault, non-urgent minor problem or complaint which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council
Typical Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pump station failure • Water treatment plant malfunction • Control valve failure • Major water main break • No water • Stop cock tap faulty (flooding house – urgent shutdown required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor main or service break • Leaking main • Partial valve failure • Poor pressure • Leak causing a minor safety/traffic issue • Dirty water (colour/odour/taste) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor leak from main or service line (not causing safety/traffic issue) • Partial failure of connections • Minor leak from a hydrant point • Water hammer (stops when taps are turned off) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty water meter • Damaged meter (unable to read) • Missing/faulty stop cock tap (no work being carried out) • Faulty valve or hydrant • System investigation



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspected waterborne illness (potable water supplies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop cock faulty (need to be shut off supply today) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing/faulty stop tap (work being carried out) • Asset locations — no plant or machinery on-site • Install temporary service • Dirty water (colour/odour/taste) 	
Typical Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major property damage • Water treatment plant output diminished • Personal risk to public health • Significant depletion of service reservoir • Major environmental impact • Reduced water supply to Critical Water Supply Customers • Major water supply interruption • Boil water alert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor property damage • Minor environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No property and/or minor environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No property impact or financial disadvantage to the customer



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Maximum Response Time	Within 2 hours (business hours) Within 4 hours (after hours)	Within 4 hours (business hours) Within 6 hours (after hours)	Within 24 hours or next business day	Within 72 hours or next 2 business days
Fault Repair (i.e. asset functioning and back in service) Objective	Within 5 hours	Within 24 hours 2 business days	Within 24 hours 5 business days	Within 5 14 business days
Surface Reinstatement and Clean-up Completion (if applicable)	Within 10 business days	Within 10 business days	Within 10 business days	Within 10 14 business days

1.3. Water Supply Service – Levels of Service

The following table outlines the water supply Levels of Service for the ~~essential service~~ upon-request aspects of Council's Water Supply Service. These target response times indicated are for standard service requests for potable supply customers only and do not extend to those more complex developments and servicing arrangements. In complex developments and servicing requirements, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service will be communicated with the applicant.

Item	Description	Target	Comments
Water Connection Quotation – Domestic	Quotation for standard domestic water connection	3 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer



Item	Description	Target	Comments
			Service Centre and registered by Customer Request (CRM)
Water Connection Quotation – Commercial	Quotation for commercial water connections, including fire service installation quotations	5 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered by CRM
Water Connection and Meter Installation (Domestic and Commercial)	Supply and installation of meter on existing property service line or supply and installation of meter including construction of property service line	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Fire Service (Installation of Tee and Valve)	Installation of tee and valve on Council's water main. Building of fire service frame (including valving) to be completed by developer/property owner's plumber	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Statement of Available Pressure	Provision of available pressure at nominated hydrant; typically, by undertaking a site visit and performing a pressure test at the hydrant	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Water Meter Disconnection	Includes removal of water meter and capping of service pipes	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Water Main (new) Connections	Scheduling requirements in Technical Specifications	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.



Item	Description	Target	Comments
Location of Assets	Locate Council's underground assets	10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service and registered by CRM.
Water Carter Approvals	Non-potable and private use approval	10 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with. Potable user approved allows for Environmental Health Officer (EHO) inspection (if required).
	Potable user approval	20 working days	

All timeframes are from the date of payment of all associated fees as quoted and the provision of sufficient information.

For services that require ordering of special or custom items, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service, if required, will be communicated with the applicant.

2. Sewerage System

This section outlines the standard Levels of Service which meet minimum requirements for sewerage system serving Singleton. Levels of Service with respect to the sewerage systems are typically concerned with the following areas:

- Availability of supply;
- System failures;
- Response times to supply failures;
- Customer complaints and inquiries;
- Odours/vectors (flies, vermin etc.);
- Impact of sewage treatment plant on surrounding residents; and
- Effluent and biosolid management.



The discharge of effluent, and biosolids, noise and odours are covered by environmental protection statutory, and regulatory obligations, and licence requirements. In this document, whenever Levels of Service are mentioned, it is assumed that statutory, regulatory and licencing requirements are met. The Customer Service Standards are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

2.1. Sewerage System - Customer Service Standards

The following table outlines the customer service standards for the essential service aspect of Council's sewerage system. Targets are set on an annual basis and are based on the median result of other similar Council's for each performance measure.

Standards	Description	Target	Priority	Benchmark
Sewerage overflows to customer properties.	Sewerage overflows to customer properties may occur either as a result of onsite plumbing or offsite sewerage issues. Customers are advised in the first instance to contact their plumber. If the plumber identifies the issue is with the sewerage system within the area of Council's responsibility, Council will reimburse the plumber/customer for the work and undertake rectification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A14 – < 38 Sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 km of sewer main 	1	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A14 – Sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 km of sewer main
Sewer odour complaints	Sewer odour complaints can be generated as a consequence of a range of shortcomings with operational maintenance of the system. Action is taken to minimise the disruption from such occurring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 – < 0.9 odour complaints per 1,000 properties 	2	National Performance Benchmarking Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 – Odour Complaints per 1,000 properties
Effluent quality from Sewage Treatment Plant	To meet and ensure ongoing compliance with licence regulations by the EPA for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E5 – > 98% of sewage volume 	N/A	National Performance Benchmarking



Standards	Description	Target	Priority	Benchmark
	the operation of the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).	treated compliant with EPA licence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E4 – Percentage of sewage volume treated was compliant (%)

2.2. Sewerage System - Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details

The following table outlines the Sewerage System Response and Repair Timeframes and Priority Details for the essential service aspect of Council's Sewerage System.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Definition	A complete failure to contain sewage within the system or any problem affecting customers or a critical user at a critical time. Traffic or safety hazard.	A minor failure to contain sewage within the sewer system or any problem affecting multiple customers.	A minor failure to contain sewage affecting a single property.	A minor problem, request or complaint which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council.
Typical Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhole overflowing Pump station failure Broken gravity/rising main Missing manhole lids Break, collapse, choke overloading the system and extended wet weather Subsidence causing immediate danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cracked pipe or partial blockage of the sewer Pump station fault Partial sewer blockage in branch line Partial main line choke Subsidence causing danger Asset location – plant and machinery onsite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden extra hydraulic load which backs up but then clears itself Partial main line choke Partial house service choke Broken junction connection Minor subsidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pump station/manhole noisy (not causing major concern to customer's peace and quiet) Sewer odour not occurring at the time System investigation



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewerage treatment plant critical alarms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noisy or odorous manhole or pump station 	
Typical Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal injury or risk to public health • Surcharge to overflow in dry weather • Surcharge or overflow wet weather • Surcharge inside a building • Surcharge outside a building, if posing a health risk • Major property damage e.g. subsidence • Major environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surcharge outside a building, not posing a health risk • Minor property damage • Minor environmental impact, i.e. odour problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow moving toilet flush • Minimal or no environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor inconvenience or disruption
Maximum Response Time	Within 2 hours (business hours) Within 4 hours (after hours)	Within 4 hours (business hours) Within 6 hours (after hours)	Within 24 hours of a normal working day or next business day	Within 5 business days
Fault Repair (i.e. asset functioning and back in service) Objective	Within 5 hours	Within 8 hours	Within 48 hours of a normal working day 5 business days	Within 5 14 business days



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Surface Reinstatement and Clean-up Completion (if applicable)	Within 10 business days	Within 10 business days	Within 10 business days	Within 10-14 business days

2.3. Sewerage System – Levels of Service

The following table outlines the Sewerage System Levels of Service for the essential service upon-request aspects of Council's Sewerage System. These target times indicated are for standard service requests only and do not extend to those more complex developments and servicing arrangements. In complex developments and servicing requirements, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service, if required, will be communicated with the applicant. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

Item	Description	Target	Comments
Sewer Connection	Connection of property to Council's sewer system, known as a new junction. This is typically undertaken by the Developer or plumber but can be undertaken by Council	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Pressure Sewer System Installation	Installation and connection of pressure sewer system and connection to Council's sewer system	90-40 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and signing of installation agreement and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council or applicant are complied with.
Sewer Disconnection	Disconnection and capping of property discharge line at Council's sewer main. This	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms



Item	Description	Target	Comments
	is typically undertaken by the Developer or plumber, except in the case of a deep sewer main, with notification to Council		and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Adjustment to Maintenance Chambers	Raise / lower maintenance chamber	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Depth of Sewer Maintenance Chamber	Provide depth of sewer maintenance chamber; typically by undertaking measurement during site visit	5 10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered by CRM
Location of Assets	Locate Council's underground assets	5 10 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered by CRM
Liquid Trade Waste	Classification A and B	5 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
	Classification C – referral to and concurrency from Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) required	40 working days (dependent on DPE)	



All timeframes are from the date of payment of all associated fees as quoted and the provision of sufficient information.

For services that require ordering of special or custom items, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service will be communicated with the applicant.

3. Water and Sewer - Development Engineering Services

As the Local Water Utility, any proposed development located within Council's Water Supply and/or Sewerage System areas requires an assessment of the proposed development, to identify potential impacts on water and/or sewer infrastructure in the area and any Water and Sewer related applications and approvals. This is in accordance with the provisions of section 305 of the *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)* or section 109 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* or at the time of issuing a notice or other form of written advice, e.g. under the *SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*.

Levels of Service with respect with development engineering services within the Water and Sewer Group are typically concerned with the following areas:

- Protection of existing infrastructure; and
- Response times to provide advice and approvals.

The Customer Service Standards are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

3.1. DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING services – levels of service

The following table outlines the Water and Sewer Development Engineering Services Levels of Service for the essential core aspects of Council's Water and Sewer Building and Development Services. These target times indicated are for standard developments only and do not extend to those more complex developments and servicing arrangements. In complex developments and servicing requirements, every effort will be made to meet these levels of service, deviations from these levels of service, if required, will be communicated with the applicant.



Item	Description	Target	Comments
WMA S306 Notice Requirement	Review of application and determination of requirements for development to be able to obtain WMA S307 Certificate of Compliance	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
WMA S307 Certificate of Compliance	Review of compliance against WMA S306 Notice of Requirements and provision of Certificate of Compliance	20 working days	From date of payment and provision of all required documentation demonstrating compliance with WMA S306 Notice of Requirements Note that s307 of the <i>Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)</i> permits up to 60 days
Building in Vicinity of Sewer and Water Trunk Mains	Assessment of applications to build in the vicinity of water and sewer mains; typically including review of design drawings	20 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Design Review Response	Response to customer on additional information and timeframe for design approval	10 working days	From date of payment of applicable fees, provision of sufficient information and/or all reasonable terms and conditions imposed by Council are complied with.
Building Plan Assessment	Assessment of application building plans for impact on Council's water and sewer assets	5 working days	From date of registration with Council; where requested through Customer Service Centre and registered by CRM

