

Customer Charter – Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS)

Berri Barmera Council is provider of Community Wastewater Management Services (CWMS) for serviced townships within the Council district.

The aim of our Charter is to provide our CWMS customers with a clear understanding of the standards of service they can expect from us and their rights and responsibilities.

The *Water Retail Code-Minor & Intermediate Retailers*, developed by Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA), contains a detailed description of your rights and our responsibilities in providing you with sewerage services and can be found at (www.escosa.sa.gov.au).

Sewerage services provided

We provide customers in serviced townships with CWMS domestic and trade waste services.

SEWERAGE REMOVAL (QUALITY)

We will:

- remove sewage and wastewater from your property in accordance with all relevant health and environmental regulatory requirements.
- use our best endeavours to minimise the frequency and duration of interruptions or limitations to your sewerage service
- provide you with information on any planned interruptions to your sewerage service at least 4 business days prior to us undertaking any works or maintenance
- provide an emergency telephone number on our website for you to call in the event of an emergency or interruption to the supply of your sewerage service

You:

- will report any spills, leaks or incursions to us as soon as possible by calling the emergency telephone number displayed on our website
- will not discharge restricted items, substances or wastewater into our sewerage infrastructure
- may be liable to pay us for a proportion of the costs reasonably attributable to you for a blockage, burst or leak. We will advise you of the reasons for cost recovery in these circumstances and any amounts payable will be subject to the payment assistance and financial hardship provisions of your contract with us
- will contact us to discuss our requirements for disposal of industrial or non-domestic waste into our sewerage infrastructure

Our prices

PRICE LIST

We will:

- publish our Price List, which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the sale and supply of your sewerage service, each year by 30th October on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au. We will also make this available at our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri
- publish our Pricing Policy Statement, which outlines how our fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by 30th October on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au. We will also make this available at our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri
- in the case that any fees and charges set out in the Price List change, publish these on our website 15 business days prior to these fees and charges taking effect, and make these available at our office.
- publish our CWMS service charges which sets out all of the fees and charges associated with the supply of your sewerage service, each year by 30th October on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au. We will also make this available at our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri
- publish our CWMS fee charges which outlines how our fees and charges are compliant with ESCOSA's pricing principles set out in its Price Determination, each year by 30th October on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au. We will also make this available at our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri

SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGE

The Local Government Act 1999/Roxby Downs Indenture Ratification Act 1982 allows us to recover a "service availability charge" from you where our sewerage infrastructure runs adjacent to your property. We will require you to pay our "service availability charge" where your property is serviced by Council's CWMS.

SEWERAGE CONCESSIONS

Sewerage concessions are administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To check your eligibility for current sewerage concessions, assistance or advice visit www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions, phone the Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 or email concessions@dcsl.sa.gov.au.

Connections

EXISTING CONNECTIONS - WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Change of property ownership is managed through formal conveyancing process. Fees and charges related to rates and included CMWS charges will be incorporated in formal conveyancing processes in which Council is informed of change of ownership.

CONNECTIONS – WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Where your property is not serviced by CWMS costs associated with an extension of the CWMS would be borne by the developer. However subject to legislative requirements there may be a number of alternative options for onsite wastewater management. Please contact Council at your earliest convenience to discuss these options.

Further details on connecting new properties to our infrastructure are available on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri.

Billing and payments

We will:

- include your sewerage charges on your rates notice, (separately identified), issued quarterly,
- provide you with a detailed bill and give you at least 12 business days to pay your bill
- offer you the ability to pay your bills in person, by the following means:
 - by mail (cheque or money order) as detailed on your rate notice.
 - by telephone using debit or credit card (Excluding American Express & Diners), telephone 08 8582 1922
 - by BPAY facilities as detailed on your rates notice
 - by Centrepay as detailed on your rate notice
 - by Internet as detailed on your rates notice
 - in person at the Council office locations, EFTPOS facilities are available for payments (Excluding American Express & Diners)
 - in person at any Post Office

You will:

- pay your rates bill by the payment due date unless we have agreed on a flexible payment arrangement
- pay any fee we incur if any of your payment methods are dishonoured

Payment by Instalments

- Payments can be made by four approximately equal instalments. A separate rate notice will be sent for each instalment. The four instalments will be due and payable each financial year on:
 - 1st September
 - 1st December
 - 1st March
 - 1st June

- If you wish to make alternative payment arrangements please contact us to discuss arrangements prior to the due date.
- Further details on alternative arrangement is found in our Fines/Rates Recovery Policy located on our website.

Fines

- We will charge a 2% fine for late payment of rates in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.
- Further details on fines and action for late payment can be found in our Fines/ Rates Recovery Policy located on our website.

PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

We will:

- provide you with the ability to pay your rates bills by instalments or enter into a flexible payment arrangement
- offer you the ability to make payments towards future bills, grant payment extensions and agree to have your bill redirected to another person (where that person agrees)
- inform you about, and assess your eligibility for, our Hardship Program if requested

You will:

- inform us if you are having difficulty paying your rates bills prior to the due date

Further details on our Hardship Policy are available on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri. We will provide you with a copy of our Hardship Policy upon request.

REVIEWING YOUR BILL/BILLING DISPUTES

We will:

- not commence our debt collection processes where you have contacted us to query your account and a rates bill (or part of a bill) is in dispute
- review your rates bill and inform you of the outcome of our review within 30 business days of your request
- inform you about our independent external dispute resolution body where you remain dissatisfied following our review

You will:

- pay any portion of your rates bill that is not in dispute while your bill is being reviewed or any future bills that become due

Overcharging

We will:

- inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of you being overcharged as a result of an act or omission by us and credit the overcharged amount to your next bill
- pay the overcharged amount directly to you within 10 business days if you have ceased to purchase a sewerage service from us

Undercharging

We will:

- in relation to CWMS services, limit the amount we recover from you to the amount undercharged in the 12 months prior to the error being advised to you in writing
- list the undercharged amount as a separate item in a special bill or in your next bill with an explanation of that amount and, if requested, offer you an extended time to pay the amount
- not charge you interest on the undercharged amount

DEBT RECOVERY

We will:

- only commence debt collection/recovery action where you have failed to pay your rates bill(s) by the due date and you have not contacted us to discuss a payment extension or other flexible payment arrangements (including eligibility for our Hardship Program).

You will:

- contact us if you are having difficulty paying your rates bills prior to the due date

Disconnections

Subject to any applicable regulatory requirements that prohibit disconnection, we will only disconnect your sewerage service if:

- there is a public health, environment or safety risk to our services from your connection point (e.g. backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge)
- you request the disconnection in connection with a development approval application

Entry to your property

We will:

- provide you with at least 24 hours if we need to enter your supply address for the purposes of connecting, disconnecting, restricting, inspecting, repairing or testing your sewerage service. Note: this does not apply to emergency situations which require immediate access to investigate and remedy a defect or malfunction which might otherwise result in harm to human health, property or the CWMS infrastructure if otherwise left unattended

You will:

- ensure safe access to our infrastructure located at your supply address

Complaints and dispute resolution

We will:

- respond or acknowledge your complaint or enquiry within 5 business days
- refer you to our Manager Environmental Services and Major Projects if you are not satisfied with our initial response or resolution or, if required, escalate you to Chief Executive Officer
- advise you of your option to escalate your complaint to our nominated independent dispute resolution body and provide you with the details of that organisation

Further details on our Enquiry, Complaint & Dispute Resolution Procedures are available on our website at www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au or by visiting our office at 19 Wilson Street Berri. We will provide you with a copy of our procedures upon request.

Contacting Us

If you need to know more about us or the content of this Charter, please contact us on the details below

General Enquiries 08 8582 1922

Faults & Emergencies Trility 1800 797 178

Website www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au

Email bbc@bbc.sa.gov.au

Office 19 Wilson Street Berri

Business hours Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm