

WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE

CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN



2022/2023 and 2023/2024

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Glossary

Term	Definition
ADWG	<i>Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011)</i> published by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).
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.
Consumption	Water that is consumed by humans or livestock via water meters.
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.
Fire Service	A fire service is a water service dedicated only to service fire hydrants, fire hose reels, fire service fitting, including water storages, installed and used solely for firefighting in and around a building or property and testing. Under certain conditions part of a fire sprinkler system may be included. A fire service that can be used for other purposes is deemed to be a water service
Kilolitre	One thousand litres.
Leakage	Water that is lost in transit from a pipe.
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council.
NPR	National Performance Report.
Yard Gully	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, designed to release any sewerage overflow outside of the home in the event of a blockage in the sewerage main.
Potable Water	Drinkable water. Usually treated freshwater that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
Rainwater Tank	Onsite storages to collect roof water for beneficial use.
Sewage	A liquid containing human wastes drained from houses, factories, schools etc.
Sewerage	A network of pipes, channels and pump stations to convey the sewage to the treatment plant. By extension, the entire system to collect, transfer and treat sewage is also called a sewerage scheme.
Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)	A facility for the treatment of sewerage to remove pollutants (solid matter and pathogens) producing treated recycled water and bio-solids safe to the environment.
Liquid Trade Waste	Liquid trade waste is defined as all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.
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.

1. Introduction and Background

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

This document provides:

- An explanation of the services offered for drinking water, septic waste, effluent, sewerage collection and treatment. General information is also provided on the provision of trade waste services; however, trade waste customers are required to have individual approvals 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 and complaints.
- A list of 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, sewerage overflows and odours, response and repair completion times, as may be applicable.

Overall, this document informs our customers of the service that they can expect from Council. The customer service standards as set out in this document are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The times and service levels 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.

Council is committed to providing a high level of customer service and standards across the organisation.



2. SERVICES – WATER SUPPLY

2.1 Drinking Water Supply

Council distributes a reliable supply of drinking water to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 ([Australian Drinking Water Guidelines | NHMRC](#)) via our network of reservoirs, pump stations and mains connected to four water supply schemes.

A full outline of the water supply system including water extraction entitlements and licences is contained within our Drought Contingency and Water Emergency Response Plan (DCWERP).

If the treatment of water becomes compromised and Council cannot be certain the water is safe to drink, Council will issue the following notices in conjunction with NSW Health or other regulatory bodies:

Boil Water Notice

When this Notice is issued water must be boiled before consumption by humans. Water may be used for all other purposes without the need for boiling (refer to NSW Health website for detailed information).

Do Not Drink Notice

When this Notice is issued water must not be consumed under any circumstances. Boiling will not make the water safe. Water may be used for all other purposes (refer to NSW Health website for further information).

To issue or lift either of the above notices, Council will publicise on its website, through media or other appropriate communication methods.

2.2 Water Supply Service Areas

Council provides drinking water to customers within specified urban and some rural areas of the Local Government Area (LGA). Council adopts different standards for water supply service areas within the LGA.

Further details about a connection entitlement to the schemes and the service areas can be obtained in Council's Water Supply Services Policy.

2.3 Water Meters

Council will arrange the installation of any water meter that supplies drinking water to your property. Water meters will be installed on both water services and fire services.

Council has adopted smart automated water meter reading technology across the LGA. A smart meter is a device that automatically records water use, has the ability to electronically report water usage information at regular intervals and provides instant access to data that can highlight any issues or trends to better manage the water network.

Benefits of smart water meters include:

- Facilitation of early detection of leaks
- Enables customers to monitor their water usage
- Allows customers to develop strategies to reduce water usage.
- Enables Council to respond more effectively to usage enquiries.

Customers will be provided access to the customer portal MyDRC Water, to access and monitor their own water usage: <https://mydrcwater.dubbo.nsw.gov.au>



The Honeywell V200HT Intergrated Smart Meter is installed if the customers existing meter requires full replacement due to age or default



Clip on device - These attach to existing meters which are working fine and are not due for replacement in the coming years



Also used for different sized meters for larger properties, businesses or council buildings

2.4 Water Supply Backflow Prevention

All connections to Council's water supply must be protected with a backflow prevention containment device in accordance with the Plumbing Code of Australia and Council's Water Supply Services Policy. This includes fire service connections.

Backflow is the unintended reversal of potentially contaminated water from a property, back into Council's drinking water supply system. If contaminated water enters the water reticulation network, it could be used by other customers and may cause serious health issues and even death. This may occur when there is a sudden reduction in pressure in the water reticulation network. Backflow prevention devices reduce the risk of contamination of the water supply from backflow, back siphonage and cross connections.

Council has a responsibility to provide safe drinking water and therefore the 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.

The testing of devices, if required, is the responsibility of property owners. Council will notify customers when these devices are due for testing. Testing can be undertaken by backflow accredited plumbers. Council maintains a list of backflow accredited plumbers on its website: www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au

It is important devices are maintained in accordance with the Australian Standards and in order to maintain the integrity of the water supply system, Council will undertake the required tests if they are not carried out.

2.5 Fire Services

Water connections to properties are to be either a water service or a fire service. The customer is to be made aware that combined water connections, for fire services and water services, are not permissible and that applicants must specifically require a water service or a fire service. Fire services can only be used for firefighting and for Council to recognise them as fire services the property owner must submit a Fire Service Certificate from a licensed plumber, or other approved persons, indicating the fire service is in fact a fire service in strict compliance with the national Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA).

For Council to recognise a dedicated fire service, and exempt from water access charges, the property owner must submit to Council a Fire Service Certificate during the months of March, April or May commencing from the 2024/2025 financial year and every five years thereafter.

If the Fire Service Certificate is not lodged or does not comply with the PCA, the service will be deemed to be a water service and charged water access and non-residential sewerage charges according to Council's Revenue Policy.

2.6 Metered Standpipes

The use of privately owned or hired standpipes to draw water from Council's drinking water reticulation is prohibited.

The drawing of water by using metered standpipes fitted with approved backflow operation devices inserted in fire hydrants is only permissible by:

- Suitably trained Council employees.
- Contractors working directly for Council.
- Emergency services personnel.

2.7 Water Filling Stations

A number of water filling stations are installed across the LGA as a convenient way for contractors, registered water carters and rural customers to access bulk drinking water. Details including the station locations, access and costs are available on Council's website: www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au



3. Services - Sewerage Collection, Treatment and Disposal

3.1 Sewerage Systems

Council operates five sewerage systems and treatment plants across the LGA. Council is subject to stringent environmental and health protection standards and is licensed to operate the sewerage treatment plant/s by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

3.2 Sewerage Connections

New connections to sewerage areas are subject to entitlement, approval and payment of charges as applicable. Connections might occur as a consequence of:

- New dwellings in developed areas.
- At the request of a customer to replace onsite systems (newly connected villages or where private works to connect to the system is approved).
- Connections made under the direction of Council to replace an onsite system.

Further details can be obtained from Council regarding connection or changes to connections. New commercial properties or changes to a commercial undertaking which requires a sewerage service from the sewerage schemes may require a larger connection and approval.

3.3 Repairs and Maintenance

Council will give you reasonable notification of work that will affect sewerage services provided to your property, especially if this involves entry to your property.

Should Council officers enter your property, and you are not home, a written card or similar notice will be left advising of the visit and the reason for the visit.

Council will take all reasonable efforts to ensure that there are no interruptions to sewerage services to your property. Should an interruption occur, Council will provide reasonable notification.

3.4 Liquid Trade Waste Management

Liquid trade waste is defined as all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.

Trade waste may also contain a variety of toxic or harmful substances, such as heavy metals, organic compounds, solvents, oils and grease. Sewerage 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.

Commercial or industrial premises can only discharge waste to the sewerage system that complies with the Liquid Trade Waste Policy and NSW Department of Planning and Environment Liquid Trade Waste Management Guidelines 2021. All such premises that generate trade waste and discharge to the sewerage system must apply and obtain Trade Waste Approval from Council. In some circumstances (eg ability of receiving sewage treatment plant to take the liquid trade waste discharges or other disposal options available to discharger) with the concurrence of the Department and Council may implement approval conditions different to those contained within the Policy.

3.5 Septage Receiving Station

Under Council's Liquid Trade Waste Policy, the discharge of septage and septic effluent from septic tanks, chemical toilet waste and pan contents into Council's sewerage system is considered a discharge of liquid trade waste.

Licensed waste transporters are required to apply for approval to access the septage receiving stations for the disposal of septage and septic effluent, under the Liquid Trade Waste Classification 2S. Approved trade waste transporters are required to discharge this waste at the Dubbo or Wellington septage receiving station and pay applicable charges as outlined in Council's Revenue Policy.



4. Other Services

- Council provides a range of other services that customers are able to 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.
- Education and information programs (promotion and advice on water conservation).
- Educational tours of water and sewer treatment plants.
- Water meter testing.
- 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.
- Investigate and respond to applications for water and sewer main extensions, adjustments or deviations, viability of providing reticulated services to new developments.
- Fire flow investigations.
- Processing subdivision and development applications.
- Providing water pressure certificates and sewer drainage diagrams.
- Water and sewer design checks, plans, works-as-executed and preparation of final plans with estimates.

5. Fees and Charges

5.1 Introduction

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

All water supply and sewerage related fees and charges stem from the need to ensure the financial viability of the business as calculated within the 20 Year Financial Plan. A critical element of the Financial Plan is the capital works programs of both the water and sewer funds. Proposed charges, structure of charges together with the Revenue Policy of Council are broadly contained within the Council's 2040 Community Strategic Plan.

Pricing for water supply and sewerage services complies with the NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment (Department) Water Supply, Sewerage and Trade Waste Pricing Guidelines. These guidelines are based on and comply with the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Strategic Framework for Water Reform, National Competition Policy and the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) *Pricing Principles for Local Water Authorities*. The key charges for water supply and sewerage services are outlined below:

5.2 Residential Charges

Residential water and sewerage charges comprise three components:

- Water service fixed availability charge.
- Sewerage service fixed availability charge.
- Water consumption volumetric usage charge.

The water service access charge is a fixed annual fee for the connection, or ability to connect, to the drinking water supply system. It is charged in advance and properties with multiple water meter service connections are levied multiple charges.

The charge is determined by the size of the meter connected to the property, or if no meter is connected, the default rate for one 20 mm meter is charged. Note: Most residential meters are 20 mm.

The sewerage service availability charge is also a fixed annual fee for the connection, or ability to connect to the sewerage distribution system. This reflects the load that a discharger may place on the sewerage system and accords with the Department guidelines. All residential properties are levied a sewerage fixed availability charge based on a 20 mm connection regardless of the actual size.

Vacant land where the water or sewerage service is available in accordance with Section 552 of the Local Government Act will be levied an availability charge regardless of whether the property is connected or not. The water and sewerage service availability charges help cover the fixed costs of:

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

The water consumption volumetric usage charge is 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 single amount per kilolitre, in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy.

5.3 Non-residential Charges (Commercial)

Non-residential charges are similar to residential charges but are comprised of five components:

- Water service fixed availability charge
- Sewerage service fixed availability charge.
- Water consumption volumetric user charge.
- Sewerage volumetric usage charge.
- Trade waste volumetric usage charge.

Non-residential properties are charged an annual water service access and sewerage service access availability charge based on the proportional size of the water meter connection. A minimum non-residential sewerage charge is applicable.

The sewerage volumetric usage charge for non-residential customers is based on the volume of sewerage that is assumed to be discharged from the property into the system. This is calculated by multiplying the customer's water consumption by an industry based sewerage discharge factor. Some high-volume dischargers are charged based on flow monitoring device installations.

The trade waste charges may be comprised of three parts, one for access, one based on the volume and one based on strength/quantity of waste accepted by Council for treatment. The trade waste charges are additional sewerage quality charges to customers that operate commercial undertakings, industry, trade or manufacturing businesses that discharge liquid trade waste other than domestic sewerage.

6. Rights and Responsibilities

6.1 Introduction

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 authorised contractors and Council staff to carry identification and produce such if requested.

This section provides a general overview of core activities undertaken as standard business practice.

6.2 Customer Service Standards

Council sets high standards for all its water supply and sewerage services which are consistent with Council's corporate vision and commitment to customers. This includes Council's responsibilities to the environment.

Across the industry there are a number of terminologies used to specify and measure service performance. Council has adopted a range of water supply and sewerage customer service standards which more closely reflect and more easily describe those key elements of activities which are core to our industry and which, primarily ensure that Council's customers are adequately informed about the services they receive and the

timeframe 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 sewerage 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 2011. This also includes the NSW Government Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957:
- Minimise overflows from the sewerage collection system and ensure affected areas are cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible if such occurs.

Service delivery is not just about response times, it is also about making sure that Council provides a high quality level of service.

Council will supply drinking water to your property upon demand. However, at times of water shortages, such as droughts, Council may require you to reduce demand by restricting how you use water. Council will ensure the system of water restrictions is available on their website, and that the proclamation of water restrictions is widely advertised.

Council will supply drinking water to your property that exceeds the following nominal minimum water pressure at the water meter at least 95% of the time, in the following water supply areas:

- Urban Water Supply Area 170 kilopascals (kPa)
- Rural Water Supply Area 150 kPa
- Buninyong Water Supply Area 80 kPa

Council will ensure maps showing these water supply service areas are available on Council's website.

Council will supply drinking water to your property that exceeds the following absolute minimum water pressures at the meter, except when there are abnormal demands such as fire flows, or main breaks:

- Urban Water Supply Area 120 kPa
- Rural Water Supply Area 80 kPa
- Buninyong Water Supply Area 0 kPa

Council will supply drinking water to your property at a pressure that does not exceed 600 kPa, measured at the water meter, at least 95% of the time.

Council will ensure that the pressure of drinking water at your meter never exceeds 1,400 kPa.

Council will ensure that the spacing of hydrants along water mains do not exceed the following maximum hydrant spacing:

- In the Dubbo Urban Water Supply Area 60 metres
- In the Rural Water Supply Area 120 metres

There is no maximum spacing of fire hydrants in the Buninyong Water Supply Area.

Council will ensure the noise at the boundary of a water facility does not exceed 35 decibels on the "A" reference scale from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), at all times.

Table 1: Water Supply Failures Response Times

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure to maintain continuity of quality or supply to customer. • Traffic or safety hazard. • 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 customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced water supply. • Minor or no property damage. • Minor environmental impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known fault, non-urgent minor problem or complaint which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council. • No property impact or financial disadvantage to the customer.
Typical cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water treatment plant malfunction. • Valve failure. • Water main or service break. • No water. • Water quality - odour/ taste/dirty. • Stop valve faulty (works to be carried out). • Medical condition requiring continuing supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor main break. • Leaking main break. • Partial valve failure. • Poor pressure. • Leak causing a safety/ traffic issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty water meter/ minor leak. • Damaged meter (unable to read). • Missing/faulty stop valve (no work being carried out). • Faulty valve or hydrant.
Response time **	Within two hours (normal business hours).	Within two business days.	Within 10 business days.
<p>** Response time defined as time staff are to respond or commence with arranging rectification of problem after notification by public or own staff. Response time does not indicate onsite or completed repair time.</p>			

A typical set of levels of service is provided below:

Table 2: Typical Industry Levels of Service - Water Supply

<i>Description</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Level of Service</i>
Service Provision		
Service area		All residential areas and industrial areas where economically viable.
Connection time for a new service in serviced areas (90% of the time)	days	40
Availability of Supply		
Fire Fighting:		
Maximum spacing of hydrants along water mains; Dubbo Urban Water Supply Area	Metres	60
Rural Water Supply Area	Metres	120
Pressure:		
Nominal minimum water pressure at least 95% of the time:		
Dubbo Urban Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	170
Rural Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	150
Buninyong Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	80
Absolute minimum water pressure at least 95% of the time:		
Dubbo Urban Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	120
Rural Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	80
Buninyong Water Supply Area	Kilopascals (kPa)	0
Maximum pressure at least 95% of the time	Kilopascals (kPa)	600
Supply Interruptions to Consumers (planned)		
Temporary supply arrangements during interruptions.		Where possible
Planned: (95% of time)		
- Notice given to domestic customers	Hours	24
- Notice given to commercial customers	Days	7
- Notice given to major industrial customers	Days	7
Response Times		
Defined as time staff respond or commence with arranging rectification of problem after notification by public or own staff. Response time does not indicate onsite or completed repair time.		
Supply Failure:		
Priority one (1)	Hours	2
Priority two (2)	Business Days	2
Priority three (3)	Business Days	10
Customer Complaints/Enquiries:		
Personal/Oral	Working Days	10
Written	Working Days	10
Note: Times apply for 95% of occasions.		
Service Provision:		
Time to provide a domestic individual connection to water supply in serviced area (90% of time).	Working days	40

Note:

Special Customers: Certain customers may have special needs by virtue of specific health, commercial or industrial circumstances. Specific levels of service will be negotiated with these customers.

Table 3: Sewerage Services Failures Response Time

	Priority 1	Priority 2
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure to contain sewage within the system or any major sewerage problem affecting customers. • Traffic or safety hazard. • Personal injury or risk to public health. • Major property damage eg subsidence. • Environmental impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minor problem which can be dealt with at a time convenient to the customer and Council. • Minor inconvenience or disruption.
Typical cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access chamber overflowing. • Broken gravity/rising main. • Missing access chamber lids. • Surcharge - internal property. • Break, collapse, choke overloading the system and extended wet weather. • Subsidence causing immediate danger. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pump station noisy (not causing major concern to customer's peace and quiet). • Planned work. • System investigation. • Adjustment to access chambers
Response time**	Within two hours.	Within 10 business days.
** Response time defined as time staff respond or commence with arranging rectification of problem after notification by public or own staff. Response time does not indicate onsite or completed repair time.		

Council will ensure the noise at the boundary of a sewerage facility does not exceed 35 decibels in the "A" reference scale from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) at all times.

Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that there are no objectionable odours from sewerage facilities detectable at the boundary of the sewerage facility.

6.3 Meter Reading

Water meter readings are used to calculate consumption charges that appear on the water accounts. Council reads water meters on a quarterly basis. Meters are read and the water meter information including consumption is shown on the Rates and Charges Instalment Notice each quarter. The consumption figure is for the water consumed in the previous quarter.

6.4 Water Meter Tampering

Should the water meter be removed or tampered with, Council will replace the meter, repair any damage and charge the client the costs for undertaking such works.

If the removal or tampering of the meter result in water usage not being recorded, Council will make a reasonable estimate of water usage and charge the client accordingly.

Council may also take legal action under the Local Government Act 1993 or other legislation.

6.5 Customer Service Surveys - Water Supply and Sewerage

Council conducts a biennial survey of water and sewerage customers via an online and/or telephone survey.

The survey is designed to gain valuable feedback to improve future services for all properties that access potable town water and are connected to town sewerage services.

Feedback, compliments and complaints on Council's water supply and sewerage services can be submitted anytime by contacting Council.

6.6 Repairs and Maintenance

Please contact Council if the water meter or pipework on Council's side of the water meter is damaged. Council will repair the damage and charge the client the actual cost of the work, unless another person indicates, in writing, that they caused the damage and are prepared to pay the cost of repairs.

Council will give you reasonable notification of works that will affect water services provided to your property, especially if this involves entry to your property.

If Council staff enters your property and you are not home, staff will leave a written card or similar advice that they were there and the reason for the visit.

From time to time, Council will need to undertake planned maintenance work and emergency repairs to the water supply and sewerage system. Council is always mindful of the disruption that can be caused to customers and for planned works will always aim in general terms to:

- Provide notice to occupiers of affected properties 24 hours prior to commencing the planned work.
- Dialysis patients and other Critical Water Supply Customers will be advised in advance of planned interruptions and where unplanned interruptions occur, notified and action taken to prioritise re-supply. Council maintains a list of dialysis patients and critical customers.
- Provide notice to industrial customers seven days prior or by agreement to commencing the planned work.

In some urgent cases, Council cannot give you advance notice of interruption to supply. When this occurs, Council will publicise the interruption to supply.

- Undertake planned work that involves shutting down the water supply or sewerage system at a time that minimises disruption to customers. Every reasonable effort will be made to perform this work between 7 am and 4 pm in residential areas.
- Should interruption be less than four hours, notice will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme inconvenience.

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

- Respond to service faults within quoted timeframes.
- Maintain a listing of Critical Water Supply Customers and immediately notify outage/provide regular updates on progress of repairs.

-
- Attempt to contact all affected properties for isolated supply disruptions and/or use social media, radio or other means to reasonably inform customers.
 - Attempt to limit water interruptions to a minimum.
 - Provide alternative water supplies through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water where possible, as applicable.
 - Water will be available from reticulated hydrants in urban areas for fire-fighting purposes.



6.7 Access to Private Property

If in the event it is necessary to enter your property to access water supply (water meter reading notwithstanding) or sewerage infrastructure (eg pressure sewer units, access chambers, mains or inspection openings), Council will:

- Make every effort to contact the occupier/owner of the property prior to entering upon 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.
- 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.
- Conduct ourselves professionally and courteously at all times

6.8 Reinstatement of Surfaces

In the majority of cases, water and sewerage mains are located beneath the street, footpath or inside the rear/side boundary of a property. It is therefore necessary from time to time that landscaping and/or concrete driveway works will need to be undertaken in order to repair or replace water mains and other infrastructure. Council will take reasonable care in undertaking these works and where such works involve driveways, find an alternative to cutting wherever possible. Should an alternative solution not be viable, cutting may be unavoidable.

Council will restore the driveway and this includes concrete, exposed aggregate, decorative, pavers or stamped concrete. 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.

6.9 Drought Management

Council's Drought Contingency and Water Emergency Response Plan (DCWERP) provides the framework for decision-making and strategic mechanism for managing water supply in the Dubbo LGA during periods of drought or emergency incidents.

This Plan is an adaptive management approach to its operation that includes monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan, investigating new technologies to assist in demand management, analysing new information holistically and monitoring surface and ground water availability.

The DCWERP is based on the NSW Best Practice Guidelines for Drought Management Plan development. It expands on the guidelines to:

- Incorporate emergency management.
- Consider risk identification.
- Incorporate NSW State Government audit feedback from the Drought Management Plan 2015.
- Incorporate issues from the Integrated Water Cycle Management Issues Paper 2019.

Water restrictions will always be widely advertised to ensure total awareness by all customers. Details concerning the 'triggers' for water restrictions and the restriction categories are contained within DCWERP.

6.10 Restriction of Water Supply (unpaid charges or misuse of water)

Under the Local Government Act and General Regulations, Council may restrict or cut off the supply of water in a number of circumstances including:

- If any rates or charges in respect of the water supplied to the premises are unpaid.
- If the owner, occupier or 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.
- Water meter tampering or theft.

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 occupier of the pending action.

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.

6.11 Provision of Water Saving Strategies

Council takes our responsibility to the community and the environment seriously. Water conservation means looking after our resources and protecting the environment. Consequently, Council provides a number of education resources and actively facilitates water saving initiatives which promote water, sewerage and associated efficiencies. Council maintains and promotes as standard demand management initiatives:

- Water saving information on Council's website.
- Water saving flyers and promotional materials.
- Educational tours of water treatment plants.
- School and community education programs (eg National Water Week).



7. Customers' Rights and Responsibilities

7.1 Introduction

In general terms, customers are:

- Responsible for internal plumbing on the property. Internal plumbing should be maintained, including preventing tree root intrusion on sewerage pipes and regularly checking for leaks on water pipes.
- Responsible for ensuring their water meter is readily accessible by staff or contractors.
- Responsible for the cost of a sewer blockage if caused by a covered inspection hole, defective fitting on their property or placement of inappropriate items into the sewerage system.
- Required to notify us of any dangers on their property (eg dangerous dogs or obstacles which may prevent, hinder or stop the water meter from being accessed).
- Required to advise Council if they require uninterrupted/high volumes of water for use by life support equipment to ensure Council are aware of the situation.
- Required to ensure that stormwater drainage is not connected to or not permitted to enter the sewerage system through the overflow relief gully (ORG).

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.
 - Disconnect unauthorised connections to the system.

7.2 Information and Privacy

Council collects and holds personal 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.

Council is committed to protecting the privacy of its customers, business contacts, councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers. Council complies with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. Dubbo Regional Council is committed to the privacy principles contained within these Acts and provides a Privacy Management Plan for staff members on proper information handling practices. Council's Privacy Management Plan also explains how your personal information will be treated and is available on the A-Z Policies section on our website. Information on Council's Privacy Management is also available on our website.

7.3 Internet Access

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.

7.4 Notification of Special Health Needs

It is necessary for customers to advise Council if there is a requirement for water to maintain special medical needs. For example, Council maintains a register of residential properties that operate 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 a planned shut-down.

Council will maintain regular contact with customers registered with us including emergency numbers. Council also maintains contact and provides our details to renal dialysis units so that information can be provided to patients.

7.5 Property Connections

7.5.1 Development of Properties

Enquiries from customers on the development of properties including change in use, reconfiguring of a parcel of land (lot), and operational works involving water supply or sewerage should be directed to Council. Customers should be aware that it is their responsibility to contact Council regarding any development or redevelopment of their property.

7.5.2 Redevelopment of Properties

Sometimes when a property is redeveloped, it is necessary to relocate or upgrade the existing water supply and/or sewerage connections. Property owners are required to contact Council if a redevelopment is to occur and advice will be provided regarding any conditions or works necessary appropriate to the changes.

7.5.3 Connection of Water Supply

Council will advise if it is possible for your property to be connected to the water supply.

The size of the water services and fires services are to be determined entirely by the customer. Customers may wish to engage a private hydraulic consultant for advice. In accordance with Council's Water Supply Services Policy, water connections to properties are to be either a water service or a fire service. Combined water connections for fire services and water services are not permissible. In the absence of specific advice from the customer new water connections will be deemed to be a water service.

Applications for new water connections, upgrades of existing connections, downsizing or disconnection of water connections can be made by lodging an application to connect to Council's water supply system, which can be downloaded from Council's website: www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Council will provide a written quote to the applicant within 10 working days of receipt of the quote request. The quote will only be valid for three months from the date of issue. Council will complete the construction work within 40 working days of receiving payment for the work.

Council will arrange a connection for a water service, or fire service to your property if it can be serviced, once appropriate fees are paid. Council will arrange a connection of the size requested, provided the requested size is commercially available.

After Council constructs the water or fire service, you can arrange its connection to the internal or private water pipes on your property. When Council says 'internal', it is meant the water pipework from the outlet of the water meter connection, not just those pipes that are inside the building on your property.

As a condition of some water connections, Council may require you arrange the installation of an appropriate backflow prevention device at/or downstream of the water meter. Requirements and further information is outlined in Council's Water Supply Services Policy.

Council requires, as a condition of connection, that your internal or private plumbing downstream of the meter complies with the Plumbing Code of Australia.

Should your internal or private pipes no longer comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia, Council may disconnect your property from its water supply system.

As a Council water customer you cannot sell water to another person. As a Council water customer you cannot supply water free of charge to another person.

7.6.4 Resizing or Relocation of Water Meter

For downsizing, upsizing or relocation of water meters, a request for connection to a property must be submitted to Council and Council will provide a written quote. Council will complete works within 40 working days of receiving payment for the work.

7.6.5 Disconnection of Water Supply

If a property owner no longer requires water supply, Council can disconnect the water meter and/or the service line to the main. Disconnection of a water service is free of charge, however if you wish to connect a water service, a request for connection to a property must be submitted and appropriate charges will apply. Customers should note that the applicable fixed availability charges will apply for single services in accordance with legislation, if those services remain available even though such may not necessarily be used.

Please note that disconnection of water does not preclude payment of the fixed availability charges for water supply services.

7.6.6 Connection to Sewerage

Requests for connection to Council's sewerage system can be made by lodging an application to connect to Council's sewerage system, which can be downloaded from Council's website: www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Council will provide a written quote to the applicant within 10 working days of receipt of the quote request. The quote is only valid for three months after issue. Council will complete the construction work within 40 working days of receiving payment for the work.

Council will arrange for a junction to be constructed to which internal or private drainage pipework may be connected. Council will maintain its sewer pipe and the junction. You are responsible for maintenance of all other internal pipework. When Council say 'internal' we mean the private pipework upstream of the junction, not just those pipes that are inside the building on your property.

Council requires, as a condition of connection, that internal or private drainage pipes upstream of Council's junction comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia.

Council may disconnect your property from its sewerage system should your internal or private pipes no longer comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia.

Council will accept sewage from your property whether it enters Council's sewerage system by gravity, or by pumping.

If you have an onsite sewage treatment unit on your property Council may accept sewage effluent from your property whether it enters Council's sewerage system by gravity, or by pumping.

7.6.7 Disconnection of Sewer

Customers no longer requiring an existing sewer connection or seeking relocation, must submit a Sewer Disconnection application to Council. In accordance with Council's Policy, only Council and contractors appointed by Council are permitted to complete any work on a sewer main.

Please note that disconnection of sewer does not preclude payment of the fixed availability charges for sewerage services.

7.7 Fire Flow and Pressure Tests

Requests for fire flow investigations can be made by completing an application form through DRC&Me or via Council's website and paying the applicable fee. Council will provide the applicant written notification of results.

If an occupant experiences low or high water pressure at their property, please contact Council. Council will conduct a pressure test at the property's water meter and advise the occupant if test results are within acceptance levels of customer service standards.

7.8 Building Over Sewers

Customers have a responsibility to ensure that construction is not undertaken without approval adjacent to or over Council's sewer assets. Council's first position is that structures not be constructed over or close to sewers. However, each case will be considered on its merits having regard to Council's policy, a copy of which is available from Council.

7.10 Discharge of Stormwater into the Sewerage System

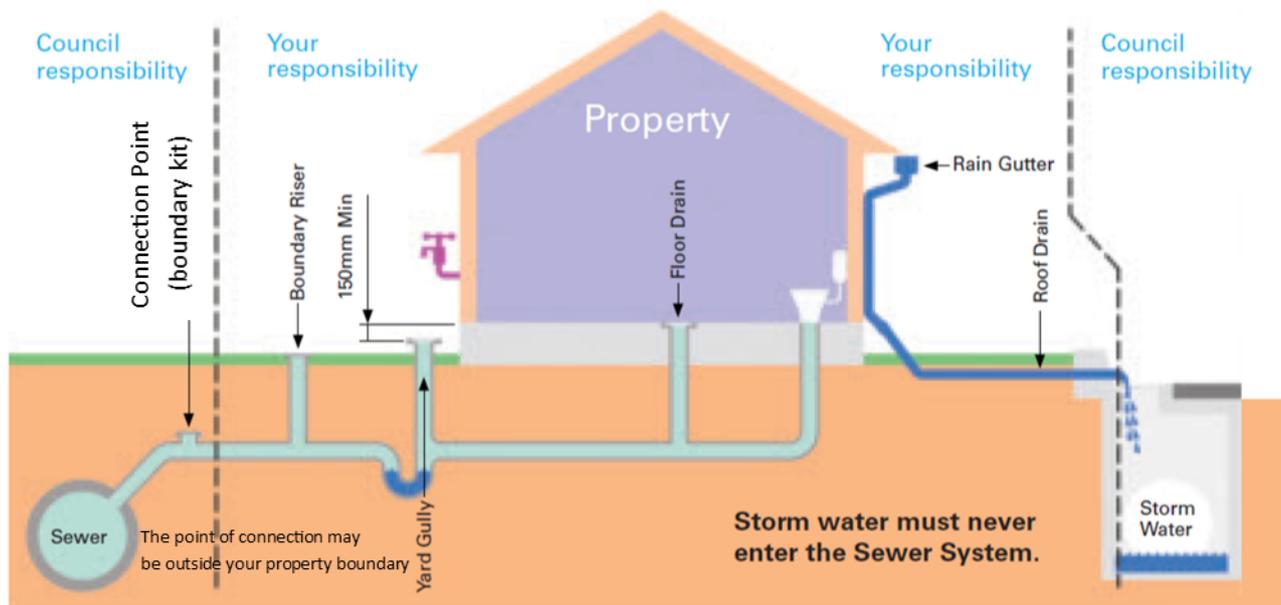
It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that stormwater is not discharged into the sewer. This can cause sewerage overflows into properties downstream, public health impacts and environmental damage.

Illegal sources of stormwater can include:

- Connection of roof downpipes into the sewerage 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).
- 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 sewerage system or overflows to the environment.

The following diagram provides customers with a graphic of responsibility for sewerage infrastructure within properties.



The yard gully is a fitting outside the home designed to release sewerage overflows safely. The shape and size of the yard gully can vary, but in general they are round grated drains between 100 mm and 150 mm in diameter.

The grating may be metal or plastic and black, white or silver in colour.

In the event of a sewerage blockage or high stormwater inflows into the sewerage system, the yard gully should 'pop off' to release the pressure and direct any sewerage away from the home. This prevents sewerage entering into the home from toilets, drains, shower drains or other disposal points.

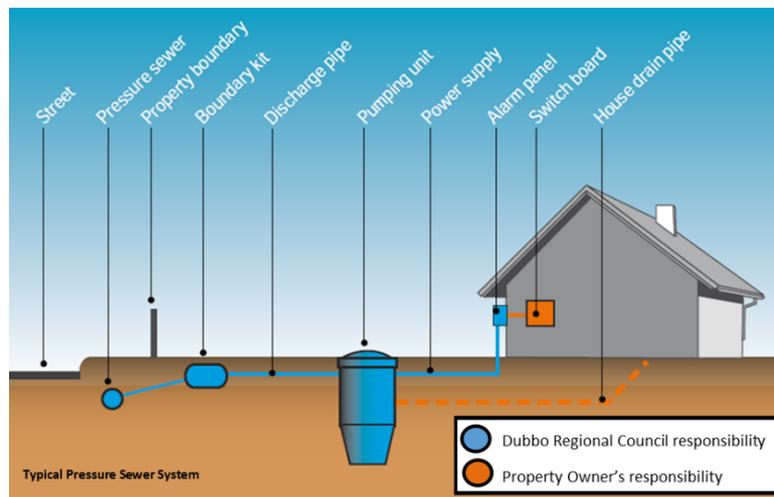
Plumbing regulations require that the yard gully must be installed at a level that is at least 150 mm lower than the lowest drain inside the home (particularly the shower, toilet and any laundry or bathroom floor drains). It must also be installed at least 75 mm above the surrounding ground level to ensure that stormwater does not flow into the sewerage system via the yard gully.

It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that their home has a properly installed and operational yard gully. It must also not be:

- Covered by an object such as a pot plant.
- Covered by landscaping or garden beds.
- Unable to 'pop off' because it is locked in place, corroded, filled with silt or concreted in.

7.11 Pressure Sewer Systems

Council has pressure sewer systems operating at a number of locations. 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's switchboard which is the owner's responsibility together with the house drainage.



In order for these systems to avoid blockages and important for the the system the following

- Glass, metal, gravel
- Seafood shells and
- Nappies, plastic,



to operate effectively and damage to the units, it is occupant not to place into items:

- or sand.
- kitty litter.
- materials such as cotton,

linen etc.

- Explosives and other flammable materials.
- Lubricating oils, grease, strong chemicals or stormwater.

These items should never be disposed into any form of sewerage system.

Information together with the responsibility for the systems, helpful hints, maintenance and contact numbers in the event of problems can be found at Council's website. A pressure Sewer Manual is available to property owners and occupants.

7.12 Onsite Effluent, Septic or Aerated Systems

All onsite human waste disposal systems for properties not connected to the reticulated sewerage system are the responsibility of the property owner.

Customers of onsite systems have a responsibility to maintain the system in an environmentally sustainable fashion. The onsite systems might include pump stations and many types of sewerage treatment and land application such as septic tanks, aerated sewerage treatment systems, bio filter systems, composting toilets and activated sludge systems. Onsite sewerage facilities within the LGA are regulated by Council's Environmental Compliance Team.

7.13 Metering

7.13.1 Special Meter Readings

Property owners or their representatives (conveyancer, solicitors etc) can request a special water meter reading as part of the final settlement if the property is being sold. Application for a Special Reading of Meter can be applied for online and a fee is charged in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy (Note: Standard meter reads are completed in two working days).

7.13.2 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 completing an application and payment of the applicable fee.

The water meter is sent away for accuracy testing by a NATA accredited facility. The compliance conditions of the National Framework for Urban Water Metering requires that cold potable meters have an acceptable level of confidence within a maximum permissible limit of error + or – 4%.

If the test returns an error rate outside of the maximum permissible limit of error to **+ or – 4%**, the cost of the test will be refunded. An adjustment will also be made for the estimated amount that has been over-charged.

7.15 Rainwater Tanks

Rainwater tanks help conserve the drinking water supply and can provide a valuable source of water for gardens, cleaning and other household purposes. Health NSW does not recommend the use of water from rainwater tanks for drinking or food preparation if town water supply is available.

7.16 Water Accounts

7.16.1 Payment

Council levies annual Rates and Charges on all rateable properties in Council's LGA in July of each year in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993.

Rates notices are issued by 1 August each year in accordance with Section 562 of the Local Government Act 1993. Section 562(3) of the Act defines that rates and annual charges may be paid by a single instalment by 31 August or by quarterly instalments. The water consumption is shown on the Rates and Charges Instalment

Notice each quarter. The consumption figure is for the water consumed in the previous quarter. Rates and Charges not paid by the due date are considered outstanding.

The property owner is responsible to acquit any charges overdue or payable. A range of payment options are available and further details can be obtained by contacting Council.

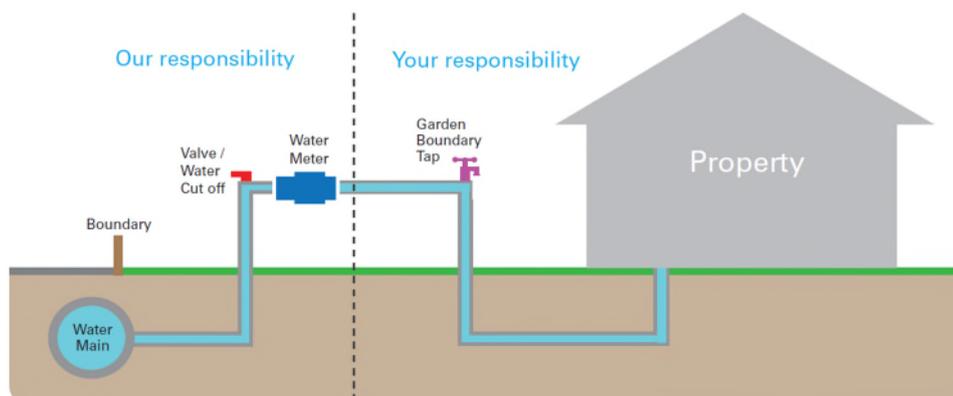
7.16.2 Hardship Arrangements

Council recognises that some customers may experience 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 rates and water or sewer charges/invoices.

Council's Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy details the options available to ratepayers experiencing genuine financial hardship, and establishes guidelines for assessing financial hardship applications. This policy applies to all applications for alternative payment arrangements, writing off of rates, annual charges, fees or interest in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

7.16.3 Monitoring of water usage and Water Leaks

Council has installed smart meter technology which allows customers to monitor and track their water usage including the ability to set high usage and leak alerts through the online customer portal, MyDRC Water. The property owner is responsible for maintaining and repairing all internal pipes and water leaks downstream of the water meter within their property. In the event of a burst or leaking pipe, the property owner must arrange and pay for a licensed plumber or other appropriate licenced tradesperson to undertake repairs. In some cases, where an undetected water leak occurs on a property, assistance may be provided in accordance with Council's Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy.



7.17 Bursts, Blockages and Spills

7.17.1 Sewer Blockages

The property owner is responsible for clearing blockages and repairing cracks to the internal sewer plumbing of their 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, 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's area of responsibility, the plumber or owner must contact Council as soon as possible to arrange for our 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's area of responsibility, Council will reimburse reasonable charges from the plumber in attending the site.

7.17.2 Water Damage and Sewer Overflows

From time to time, water mains burst as they are under pressure to ensure adequate supply to properties; and sewer pipes can get blocked from tree roots or other debris, causing an overflow. Council recognises that such an event is distressing and 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:

- Property owners should contact their insurers.
- Tenants should contact their insurers in relation to any personal effects and advise the property owner/manager or agent of any damage to the property.

8. WORKING TOGETHER

8.2 General

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. This Customer Service Plan has been created to cover these key aspects and include a single point of reference to:

- Set and meet agreed water supply and sewerage customer service standards.
- Benchmark Council's performance and where improvement is identified, act upon such to meet customer expectations.
- Discourage the wastage of water and provide a range of community programs to educate on water conservation.
- Provide strong communication strategies to reach all community members regarding water supply and sewerage matters.

8.2 Customer Satisfaction

The delivery of a personal service approach to Council's customers, as the essential service provider of water supply and sewerage across the LGA, is seen by all members of 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 experience team able to answer any enquiries relating to the services that Council supply. Council effectively maintains 'a one-stop shop' as related to water supply and sewerage services during normal business hours from 9 am to 5 pm. An after-hours service is also maintained for emergency water supply and sewerage matters.

8.4 General Enquiries

Council can be contacted during normal business hours on phone (02) 6801 4000 or by attending Dubbo or Wellington's civic administration buildings between 9 am and 5 pm (excluding public holidays). General enquiries can also be lodged through:

Website: www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au then select DRC&Me
Email: council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au
Post: PO Box 81, Dubbo NSW 2830

8.4.1 Feedback

Council encourages and values your feedback, which is used as an opportunity to learn and improve Council's customer experience and service delivery. You can provide your feedback by attending in person at a Customer Experience Centre, phone, write, email or submit an online enquiry. Please tell Council when we have done things well, as it confirms that the service Council is providing is a service that you value, and helps us to recognise the efforts of our people.

8.4.2 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. This accords with the Australian Standard (AS ISO 10002-2006) and is consistent with the National Performance Reporting requirements relating to complaints, which are independently audited for compliance. The number and type of complaints about the services provided by Council or staff are captured for reporting and rectification where necessary.

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.
- 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
 - 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.
- Government pricing policy, property connections, restrictions, tariff structures or a correctly calculated water account is too high.

8.4.3 Handling Customer Complaints

When a customer contacts Council 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, by being 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.
- 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. Council have a formal Complaints Handling Policy which outlines standards and processes for actioning matters raised by customers quickly and effectively.

8.4.4 Work Health and Safety

Council is committed to the Work, Health and Safety Act and associated legislation to comply with all relevant aspects of workplace accident prevention, hazard control and removal, injury and protection and health preservation to ensure the health, welfare and safety of Council employees, contractors, volunteers and the public.

Issues of importance specific to water and sewerage operations include ensuring that:

- Water supply and sewerage operators are trained, to appropriate certification levels.
- Operators are familiar with all current practices including WH&S requirements.
- An up-to-date training program is in place for all staff.
- A quality management system based on ISO 22001 is implemented.