

What is the Customer Charter

The Customer Charter outlines the minimum level of service delivery that Gippsland Water will provide to you, our customers, and explains your rights and obligations. This is a summary of Gippsland Water's Customer Charter.

Who is covered by the Customer Charter

Gippsland Water's Customer Charter covers customers who receive our water, wastewater and trade waste services under the *Water Act 1989*. It also covers the customers' property, our employees and contractors.

Your rights to water services, wastewater services and safe drinking water

If your property is connected to our water supply or wastewater services, we will deliver services which comply with all regulatory requirements.

If you believe our services are below standard

If you believe that we are not meeting the minimum standards as outlined in our Customer Charter, you may request, at your cost, that we test the water quality and flow and fix any problems detected.

The cost of any test undertaken will be refunded if it is found we are not meeting our standards as specified.

Charges and billing

Our billing cycle is 4 (four) months which means our customers are issued with 3 (three) accounts per year.

The charges on our bills are dependant on the services provided to the property. Some of the charges such as the water service availability charge and wastewater service availability charge are the fixed charges for the provision of the services. The water usage charge varies according to how much water is used at the property.

Our accounts are designed to assist you in monitoring your water usage by providing a graph which enables you to compare your water usage with the water usage for the same time in the previous year.

Fees may apply for other miscellaneous services.

Payment of accounts

Gippsland Water's accounts may be paid using the following methods:

- in person at Gippsland Water's office in Hazelwood Road Traralgon;
- at any Australia Post Outlet or Agency;
- by Credit Card;
- via Gippsland Water's website at www.gippswater.com.au;
- by mail to PO Box GW, Traralgon, VIC 3844;
- by Direct Debit;
- by BPay; and
- Centrepay.

Gippsland Water accounts are payable within 28 (twenty-eight) days of issue of the first account.

Payment difficulties

Gippsland Water is aware that some of our customers will experience financial hardship from time to time.

If you are experiencing difficulty paying your accounts, we can provide information on many payment options which are available. Some of these options include an extension of time for payment of the account, flexible payment plans and reference to a free independent financial counsellor.

For a brochure on the different options available please contact our Service Centre on 1800 066 401.

Health or special needs

If you require a water supply for health or special needs you may request that we register your details. In the event of a planned interruption we will notify you at least 4 (four) business days in advance.

Enquiries, complaints and disputes

If you have an enquiry or complaint please contact our Service Centre during business hours on 1800 066 401.

If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, you will be informed of who will be handling the complaint and given a time at which you will be contacted.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may have it reviewed by the Manager Customer Service.

In our response to you we will inform you of our conclusions and the reasons for those conclusions.

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome you may pursue the complaint through an external dispute resolution forum such as the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria who can be contacted on 1800 500 509.

Concessions

If you are the holder of a pension card or a health care card, you may be eligible for a state government funded concession for your water and wastewater services.

Details on how to claim your concession are included on your account, or can be obtained by contacting us on 1800 066 401 or our website at www.gippswater.com.au.

Conserving water

Gippsland Water actively promotes the sustainable use of water and will be happy to provide you with information on water conservation. Please contact us on 1800 066 401 for further information.

Information and privacy

Gippsland Water is committed to protecting the privacy of our customers.

We will ensure that information we hold about our customers is protected and only used in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

We will respond to requests for information consistent with normal commercial practices.

Copies of the following materials will be made available on request or through our website site at www.gippswater.com.au:

- our Customer Charter;
- results of our customer survey;
- results of the water quality monitoring program;
- water quality improvement programs;
- educational material about water conservation;
- schedule of charges including tariffs and taxes;
- emergency telephone numbers; and
- materials for customers with special needs.

Entry onto customer's property

Subject to the *Water Act 1989* Gippsland Water may enter onto a customer's property for the following reasons:

- to read or replace the meter;
- to carry out planned or unplanned works on your property;
- to inspect new drainage or plumbing connections;
- to restrict/reconnect the water supply;
- in an emergency;
- to remove trees; and
- for trade waste inspections.

Where Gippsland Water is to conduct planned works, we will notify you 7 (seven) days in advance, except in the case of tree removal where we will provide you with 21 (twenty-one) days notice.

Gippsland Water will take all reasonable care to ensure that the property is left as near as possible to the condition in which we found it.

Our maintenance obligations

Gippsland Water will maintain your property service pipe between the water main and the water meter, the water meter itself and the property stop tap or ball valve provided:

- the property is not serviced via a private extension;
- the property service pipe is equal to or less than 50mm; and
- the stop tap or ball valve is located within 2 (two) metres of the property boundary fronting the water main.

Should the meter be located more than 2 (two) metres from the property boundary, Gippsland Water is still responsible for maintaining the meter assembly.

Customer obligations

Gippsland Water will use reasonable endeavours to keep you informed of your obligations under water law including:

- payment of charges incurred;
- ensuring accessibility of meters;
- maintenance of your internal water and wastewater pipes;
- observation of water restrictions;
- removal of trees interfering with services; and
- alteration of any works connected to our assets.

Key standards

- No customer will receive more than 5 (five) unplanned water supply interruptions in a year.
- No customer will receive more than 3 (three) sewer blockages in a year.
- The time to respond to unplanned water supply interruptions is 1 (one) hour for priority 1 and 3 (three) hours for priority 2 bursts or leaks.
- 98% of unplanned water supply interruptions will be restored within 5 (five) hours.
- 98% of sewer spills will be contained within 5 (five) hours.

Further information

For further information or to request a copy of our complete Customer Charter, please contact us on 1800 066 401 or access our website at www.gippswater.com.au.

General enquiries	1800 066 401
Account enquiries:	1800 050 500
Faults and emergencies:	1800 057 057
Interpreter service:	131 450

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Approved by the Essential Services Commission 01/07/2008