



# **CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER**

**FOR**

# **WASTEWATER SERVICES**

**SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG**

**REVISED December 2015**

## CONTENTS

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	The role of this charter	3
1.2	Our commitment to service	3
1.3	Services we provide	3
1.4	How to contact us	3
1.5	Emergency Assistance	3
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Your Basic Rights</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Your rights to domestic wastewater services	4
2.2	Your rights to industrial and commercial wastewater services	4
2.3	Your rights to relation to sewerage spills	4
2.4	Your rights to consultation and information	4
2.5	Your rights to assistance, redress and compensation	4
2.6	Charges and Accounts	5
2.7	Review of Bill	5
2.8	Review of Service Charges	6
2.9	Connecting to our services	6
2.10	Disconnection	7
2.11	Enquiries, suggestions, complaints and disputes	7
2.12	Information required under Section 37 of the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013	8
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Our Powers</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1	Entry to your property	11
3.2	Rectifying defective work	11
3.3	Service interruptions	11
3.4	Maintenance	11
3.5	Discharge of unauthorised substances	12
3.6	Limitation or Withdrawal of Services	12
3.7	Liability	12
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>14-25</b>
4.1	A - System Defect Report	15
4.2	B - Application for Wastewater Service	16
4.3	C - Disconnection of Wastewater Service	17
4.4	D - Fees and Charges	18
4.5	E - Risk and SWOT Analysis	19
4.6	F - Financial Hardship Policy	20

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *The Role of this Charter*

This Charter sets out the broad philosophy of the Shire in supplying sewerage services to the town of Dumbleyung in accordance with the Licence issued by the Economic Regulation Authority under the Water Services Act 2012.

The Charter informs you, the customers of the Shire, of your rights in accordance with the provisions of the Licence, including service interruptions, levels of service, complaints procedures. If you would like a free copy of the Customer Service Charter or the Operating Licence please contact the Shire of Dumbleyung on 9863 4012 or the Economic Regulation Authority on (08) 6557 7900.

### 1.2 *Our Commitment to Service*

The Shire will provide its services in a manner which is fair, courteous and in a timely manner with a focus on consultation with our customers, respecting your rights, and meeting your reasonable expectations.

### 1.3 *Services we Provide*

The Shire will use its best endeavours to provide a service to collect, treat and dispose of domestic sewerage discharged from each customer's property to the Shire's sewer system. In addition, the Shire shall provide other services on terms agreed upon between the customer and the Shire.

The areas of operation of the Shire's Sewerage Scheme are provided in the Dumbleyung town site and a copy is available to view at the Administration Office.

### 1.4 *How to Contact Us*

Postal Address:	PO Box 99, DUMBLEYUNG, WA, 6350
Street Address:	Cnr Harvey & Dawson Street, DUMBLEYUNG
Office Hours:	8.00am – 4.00pm
Telephone:	(08) 9863 4012
Facsimile:	(08) 9863 4146
E-mail:	ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au
Contact Officers:	Chief Executive Officer – General Operations Manager of Works – General Operations Payroll/Rates Officer – Rating Enquiries

### 1.5 *Emergency Assistance*

The Shire maintains a 24 hour emergency contact service for emergency events, such as an overflow from the sewer. The emergency customer service telephone number is the Shire Offices on (08) 9863 4012.

The AFTER HOURS emergency service telephone contact number is:

Chief Executive Officer      Mobile: 0429 634 012

## **2.0 YOUR BASIC RIGHTS**

### **2.1 *Your Rights to Wastewater Services***

Subject to the applicable water legislation, the Shire shall provide a service for the removal, treatment and disposal of wastewater under the terms set out in this Charter and the Licence. In certain circumstances, the Shire may supply water for other than drinking purposes (e.g. treated effluent in a manner agreed with the customer).

The Shire shall treat and dispose of wastewater in an environmentally responsible manner. All wastewater treatment plants shall operate in accordance with the Licence conditions set by, and or agreements with, the Department of Environmental and Conservation and the Department of Water.

Occasionally some odours occur in treatment plants, and these may affect nearby residents. The Shire shall respond to complaints of odours by investigating the report and advising the customer of the outcome within 24 hours.

### **2.2 *Your Rights to Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Services***

Industrial and Commercial wastewater may be accepted for discharge into the Shire's wastewater systems subject to compliance with the Shire's requirements. An agreement with a customer for Industrial and Commercial wastewater services that are provided by the Shire shall be documented in an Industrial or Commercial waste permit issued by the Shire.

### **2.3 *Your Rights in Relation to Sewerage Spills***

If a sewer overflow occurs on your property due to failure of the Shire's assets, representatives of the Shire shall be on site as soon as possible, and endeavouring to be within two hours of being notified. Action shall be taken to restore service, clean up the affected area and minimise any damage or inconvenience

### **2.4 *Your Rights to Consultation and Information***

The Shire is committed to involving its customers in issues relating to its programs and services. Community involvement in the Shire's service planning and decision making processes will be sought through forums such as focus groups, customer surveys and displays at local functions. The Shire will use local media bulletins to advise customers of any system change that may result in significant variation in its service levels.

The Shire will publish and make available at its premises information on matters relating to its wastewater services and on other aspects such as charging and complaints handling. Information regarding these matters can be obtained from the Shire Administration Office.

The Shire's representatives will provide personal identification when engaging in business discussions with customers.

### **2.5 *Your Rights to Assistance, Redress and Compensation***

If the Shire's activities have caused damage to your property or disruption to you, such as a sewer overflow, the Shire shall deal with the matter in a fair and reasonable manner, whether or not a complaint is received. The Shire shall rectify property damage and consider reasonable compensation subject to the Water Services Act 2012 and the Health Act 1911.

## 2.6 Charges and Accounts

Charges for services to customers shall comply with the relevant provisions and regulations of the Health Act 1911 and the Local Government Act 1995.

If an error occurs resulting in the customer paying more than the correct amount, the excess amount shall be held in credit for a future charge, or refunded at the discretion of the customer. Similarly an error in undercharging may require the customer to pay the extra amount.

The Shire can make special financial arrangements to assist a customer experiencing hardship in payment of their accounts. Information of this option is available from the Shire's Administration Office.

Statements of account for outstanding charges are issued on a regular basis and the Shire shall supply additional statements of account on request. A fee may apply for this service.

Utility service availability and other charges are made against the owner of the land to which services are available or supplied and are the responsibility of the property owner at the address on the Shire's rate base. It is the property owner's responsibility to notify the Shire of any change of address.

The Shire may charge interest on overdue accounts and a customer's cheque not honoured will incur additional costs.

## 2.7 Review of Bill

We will review your bill at your request in accordance with the requirements of the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013*. After conducting a review of a bill, if we are satisfied that the bill is correct we may:

- Request payment of any unpaid amount;
- Provide you with information concerning the process and operation of both our internal and external complaints handling process, which includes your right to refer any complaint to the Energy and Water Service Ombudsman.

Where you have been overcharged, we must tell you and follow the procedures set out in the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013* for repaying the money.

We will:

- Tell you if an overcharge has occurred within **15 business days** of becoming aware of the overcharging;
- Provide you with the options on how to have the overcharged amount either credited to your account, or refunded to you, at your request;
- Provide the refunds of any overcharged amount within **15 business days** of your lodged request.

If you have been undercharged we may recover the undercharged amount from you in accordance with the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013*.

We will:

- Only recover the amount undercharged for a service provided in the 12 months prior to the date of which we notify you the undercharging has occurred;
- Not charge a late payment fee or bill interest on any undercharged amount;
- Offer you the opportunity to pay this amount in instalments, interest free, over the same period that you were undercharged.

Please note that this section is only applicable to charges levied under the Water Services Act 2012.

Please note that the customer does not have to, use the Shire of Dumbleyung's complaints procedure before or instead of applying to the Water Services Ombudsman or making an appeal from, or applying for a review of, the decision that gave rise to the complaint, to the State Administrative Tribunal.

## **2.8** *Review of Service Charges*

The Shire of Dumbleyung sewerage charge is set by Council each year and can only be reviewed by Council. A written request to review the service charge is required for Council to review the service charge.

For residential properties, the wastewater and drainage service charge components of your bill are based on the rateable value (Gross Rental Value or GRV) of your property set by the Valuer General.

If you wish to dispute the GRV you need to contact Landgate or visit [landgate.wa.gov.au](http://landgate.wa.gov.au).

Please note that this section is only applicable to charges levied under the Water Services Act 2012.

## **2.9** *Connecting to our Services*

Applications for wastewater service connections are to be made to the Shire Administration Office, accompanied by the related building plans. Single applications for approval shall be processed within 24 hours of receipt, while multiple applications shall be processed within 72 hours.

Where a Shire wastewater reticulation main is available to your land and has the capacity to service, the Shire shall, on application approve connection to the wastewater system, under the terms and conditions set out in this Charter, the Licence and applicable water legislation. Where a junction to an available sewer does not exist, a junction will be provided by the Shire in consultation with the licensed plumber installing the property sewer. No fee applies where a service availability charge has been applied to a property, except for those subject to redevelopment.

If the Shire's wastewater system is available to a property that produces or has capacity to produce wastewater, it is a requirement for that property to connect to the system.

### **2.10 Disconnection**

If the wastewater service is no longer required by you, a disconnection from the Shire's services may be approved provided that –

- the Shire is first notified of the intention,
- a fee is paid to the Shire which shall arrange the disconnection , and
- the property has no further wastewater disposal requirement

In most circumstances, disconnection of a wastewater service does not terminate this Charter. The Shire is required under the Waters Act and Licence to levy a service availability charge to the owner of land (including vacant land) where wastewater services are available for connection. The Charter is void if there were no services available and no charges levied.

The Shire shall reconnect its services at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A reconnection fee shall apply.

### **2.11 Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes**

The Shire values your enquiries and suggestions on ways it can improve its services. If you have an enquiry you can telephone on 9863 4012 during business hours. You will receive prompt and courteous assistance.

Telephone calls to the emergency numbers or counter enquiries shall be answered and responded to promptly and advice of action to be taken/given within one hour of your call.

The Shire has a process of dealing with complaints relating to the Dumbleyung Sewerage Scheme. When you lodge a complaint in writing or verbally, the Shire shall address the issue in a timely and efficient manner, including a response in person within 2 business days and a written reply within 10 days.

If you are not satisfied with the response or action taken with regard to the complaint, you may seek referral to the Chief Executive Officer, who shall investigate the complaint, assess the appropriateness and confirm or amend the proposed solution or action.

The Shire must resolve complaints within 15 business days. If your complaint has not been resolved within 15 business days, the Shire will inform you of the option of referring your complaint to the Department of Water.

If you have a dispute with the Shire regarding a provided or requested water service, you may refer your dispute to the Department of Water.

The Department of Water will seek a detailed explanation of the nature of the complaint, the solutions or actions offered by the Shire of Dumbleyung and the reasons why these are not acceptable to you. The Department of Water will respond with its opinion on the matter and suggest a solution to the parties involved.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may submit the matter to arbitration by an Arbitrator selected by you from a list provided by the Department of Water. The Arbitrators decision, including award of costs, will be binding on both parties and will

preclude further action on the matter. You may elect to bypass the arbitration process and take legal action to resolve the matter.

A customer may, but does not have to, use the Shire of Dumbleyung's complaints procedure before or instead of the procedures under the Act:

- a) Applying to the Water Services Ombudsman or making an appeal from, or applying for a review of, the decision to the State Administrative Tribunal;
- b) Making an appeal from, or applying for a review of, the decision that gave rise to the complaint to the State Administrative Tribunal.

The benefits to a customer choosing to use the Shire of Dumbleyung's complaints procedure before or instead of the procedures under the Act are that the complaint must be resolved within 15 days and that there are no costs associated.

The Department of Water's contact details are as follows:

Customer Services Officer  
The Department of Water  
Water Services Branch  
P O Box K822  
Perth WA 6842

The Atrium  
168 St Georges Terrace  
Perth Western Australia

Phone Number: (08) 6364 7600

Fax Number: (08) 6364 7601

Website Address: [www.water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au)

Email Address: [Atrium.Reception@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:Atrium.Reception@water.wa.gov.au)

## **2.12 Information required under Section 37 of the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013**

### **(a) Fees and Charges**

The Shire of Dumbleyung imposes a non-quantity based on the Gross Rental Value of the property. This charge is in line with powers of the Shire of Dumbleyung under the Local Government Act 1995.

### **(b) Bill Payment Options**

Charges for the provision of a sewerage system by the Shire of Dumbleyung appear on the annual rates notice that is distributed under the powers contained in the Local Government Act 1995. The following options are available to ratepayers:

- Direct Debit
- Internet

- Telephone
- Post
- In-Person

No charges are associated with any of the rate notice payment options. You may make a payment in advance towards a future bill however not credit interest will be applied to the amount paid in advance.

If you cannot pay due to payment difficulties, that is you are experiencing short-term financial disadvantage such as an unexpected event or crisis, please get in touch with the Shire of Dumbleyung to organise an payment plan or other arrangement under which you are given more time to pay the bill.

If you cannot pay due to financial hardship, that is you are experiencing more than short-term financial disadvantage in which your ability to meet basic living needs is adversely affected, please get in touch with the Shire of Dumbleyung. More information can be found in the Shire of Dumbleyung's Financial Hardship Policy, available on our website and in the office.

If you have been in touch with the Shire of Dumbleyung and made a payment arrangement, the Shire of Dumbleyung will not commence or continue actions to recover the debt.

**(c) *Discounts, Rebates and Concessions***

Discounts, rebates and concessions on rates levied by the Shire of Dumbleyung are given under the Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferrals) Act 1992.

**(d) *Services Provided***

All services required under Section 36 of the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013 are available.

Shire of Dumbleyung

(08) 9863 4012

TTY 133 667

TIS 131 450

0429 634 012

[ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au)

**(e) *Power To Enter Without Consent***

This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.

**(f) *Obligations of Customers Regarding Meters***

This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.

**(g) *Cut Off or Reduction of Service***

This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.

**(h) *Licensee's Power***

This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.

- (i) Supply of Water***  
This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.
- (j) Quality of Water and its Management***  
This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.
- (k) Sustainable Use of Water***  
This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.
- (l) Planned and Unplanned Interruptions***  
This is not applicable to the Shire of Dumbleyung.

## **3.0 OUR POWERS**

### **3.1 *Entry to Your Property***

The circumstances, in which Shire representatives may enter your property to carry out investigations and/or work on the Shire's wastewater system, are set out in applicable legislation and the Health Act 1911. Any such entry shall normally occur during business hours, except in cases of emergency. For planned work within a property, the Shire shall advise the occupier in advance. In cases of emergency, the occupier, if present, shall be informed of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated length of time for the work.

### **3.2 *Rectifying Defective Work***

If the Shire becomes aware of the presence of any defective or improper work forming part of the wastewater pipes and fittings which may impair the effective operation of the Shire's system, it may serve a notice requiring you to remedy such defect or improper work within a specified time.

If the terms of the notice are not followed, the Shire may enter the customer's property to remedy the defective or improper work. This action, if taken, shall be in accordance with the relevant Acts and the full cost of any remedial work shall be charged to the customer.

### **3.3 *Service Interruptions***

The Shire's wastewater services are designed to be available 24 hours a day. However, the Shire may interrupt, postpone or limit its wastewater services to customers:

- if any part of works is damaged, for example by bursting, blockages, breakdowns,
- it is necessary to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of works,
- for connection of new works or services; or
- an event occurs beyond the Shire's control, including acts by others, sabotage, flood earthquake, power or water shortage or industrial action.

Except in emergencies, the Shire shall give notice to you of its intention to interrupt, postpone or limit the supply of services for the purpose of regular maintenance or works programs. Unless interruptions are limited to a few minutes, notifications shall be given to domestic customers, at least 24 hours prior, and for commercial and industrial customers, at least 7 days prior to the event.

### **3.4 *Maintenance***

The Shire's wastewater services are provided from the point where the pipes serving your property connect to the Shire's wastewater reticulation main.

Wastewater reticulation mains (sewers) and associated fittings remain the property of the Shire whether or not they are located within private property. The location of these structures can be obtained from the Shire. You are required to ensure that the Shire's pipelines and structures are reasonably accessible, not interfered with, covered, built close to or over and not damaged.

Prior to undertaking building or construction activity on land connected or capable of being connected, it is a requirement to gain Shire approval. In the first instance, you should

contact the Shire's office. Unauthorised property improvements, which interfere with the Shire's assets, may be required to be removed at your cost.

The Shire is responsible for the maintenance of sewer property connections where they are unable to be cleared or repaired from the inspection shaft, provided that the depth of the repair job is 2.5 metres or more, and/or the fault in the property connection is outside the property concerned.

You are responsible for all plumbing, pipes and fixtures on or serving your property to the point where pipes connect to the Shire's sewer property connection. Where the sewer property connection is at a depth of less than 2.5 metres and is situated within the property boundary, you are responsible for maintenance of that property sewer connection.

### **3.5 Discharge of Unauthorised Substances**

It is your responsibility to ensure that stormwater (including roof runoff) and other unauthorised substances are not discharged into the Shire's sewers, unless authorised by in writing. Certain waste products are not suitable for disposal in the wastewater system because of their nature and ability to pollute. These are:

- cooking oil and grease
- paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvents, acids, alkalis, laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons, polishes or cleaning products
- products like disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, tampons, cotton buds, syringes, toilet deodorant packs and razors

### **3.6 Limitation or Withdrawal of Services**

The Shire may discontinue its wastewater services in the following circumstances:

- If you do not comply with the terms and conditions of this Charter.
- If there is a public health, environmental and/or safety risk to the Shire's service connection (e.g. risk of backflow or unauthorised industrial waste discharge); or
- If you do not pay, or make arrangements to pay, the overdue charges for the service.

If there is a health and safety risk the Shire shall discontinue the service immediately. In all other cases, the Shire shall provide 48 hours notice in writing of its intentions to refuse or alter or restrict its services.

The Shire shall reinstate its supply of services at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A fee applies for the service.

### **3.7 Liability**

The Shire is liable for any loss or damage that you may suffer,

- As a result of a breach of this Charter by the Shire, its servants or agents;
- As the result of a negligent act or omission by the Shire, its servants or agents; and
- As a result of the failure to meet standards prescribed by its Operating Licence or Regulations (if any).

The Shire's liability is limited as follows:

Section 77 of the Water Services Act 2012 allows the Shire to interrupt, suspend or restrict the provision of a water service if, in the Shire's opinion it is necessary to do so because of an accident, emergency, potential danger or other unavoidable cause. The Shire is not liable for any loss or damage that arises from any such interruption, suspension or restriction unless the customer has an agreement with the Shire which expressly states that the Shire is, to the extent that the agreement states, liable in those circumstances.

The Shire's liability under breach of Charter is limited to the rights of compensation and redress set out in this Charter. The Shire's liability for failure to meet prescribed standards is limited to the amount prescribed as a penalty in its Operating Licence or Regulations.

#### **4.0 APPENDICES**

- A. System Defect Report
- B. Application for Wastewater Service
- C. Disconnection of Wastewater Service
- D. Fees and Charges
- E. Risk and SWOT Analysis
- F. Financial Hardship Policy for Water Services

**APPENDIX A**

Clause 2.9  
**Shire of Dumbleyung**

**Sewerage System Defect Report No. \_\_\_\_\_**

Date & Time of Report	
Name of Person Making Report	
Location of Fault	
Description of Fault	
Repair Work Carried Out	
Repairs Carried Out By	
Date & Time Completed	
Other Work Required	
Date & Time Register Completed	
Sighted By	

**APPENDIX B**

**Clause 2.7  
Shire of Dumbleyung**

**Application for Wastewater Service**

**Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Property Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date Lodged:** \_\_\_\_\_

*NB: Site plan of all buildings and proposed buildings must accompany this application*

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**

**Clause 2.8  
Shire of Dumbleyung**

**Disconnection of Wastewater Service**

**Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Property Address:  
(for disconnection)** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*NB: Disconnection fee to be paid prior to disconnection being authorised and following inspection of property by Shire officers.*

**Fee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Paid:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Authorising Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

#### **Fees and Charges (Sewerage Rates)**

The Shire of Dumbleyung imposes a non-quantity based on the Gross Rental Value of the property. This charge is in line with powers of the Shire of Dumbleyung under the Local Government Act 1995.

Council's fees and charges are published and amended from year to year in the Budget Newsletter that is sent out with the Rate Notice.

Minimum and maximum rates are derived from those published by the Water Corporation of Western Australia and through the financial requirements derived from the Asset Management Plan and adopted by the Shire of Dumbleyung Shire Council and these are published in the Budget Newsletter that is sent out with the Rate Notice.

## APPENDIX E

### SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

#### RISK AND SWOT ANALYSIS

##### **Risks**

- (a) Plant malfunction
- (b) Power failure
- (c) Water failure of supply
- (d) Environmental
  - earthquake
  - fire

##### **Strengths**

- (a) Stable workforce
- (b) Well maintained infrastructure
- (c) System will gravitate from properties with over 24 hours storage capacity at the capture basin
- (d) Ability to flush the main sewer lines with water via mobile water tankers
- (e) Personnel machinery and equipment available locally to repair damage
- (f) Stable environment not within the earthquake zone
- (g) Infrastructure essentially underground so limits fire damage

##### **Weaknesses**

- (a) Limited revenue base from which to obtain funds
- (b) Small workforce (but considered adequate)
- (c) Have no control over power or water services
- (d) Unable to control environmental damage other than provide fire protection

##### **Opportunity**

- (a) Stable well trained workforce
- (b) Ability to manage finances to enable programmed replacement of infrastructure

##### **Threats**

- (a) Population decline may reduce loading on the system to such a stage as to reduce performance

##### **Summary**

The infrastructure originally installed in the late 1960's has performed well and the population of the townsite has stabilised which provides the confidence to assume the Shire of Dumbleyung Sewerage Scheme should be able to be operated in an efficient, reliable and cost effective manner for the foreseeable future.

APPENDIX F

SHIRE OF DUMBLEYUNG

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY FOR WATER SERVICES

**Shire of Dumbleyung**  
Financial Hardship Policy  
for Water Services

February 2014

Shire of Dumbleyung

(08) 9863 4012

TTY 133 677

TIS 131 450

0429634012

[ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au)

# 1 Purpose

This Financial Hardship Policy outlines how Shire of Dumbleyung (“**we**”) will assist a residential customer (“**you**”) who cannot pay a rate notice because of financial hardship.

Our policy applies only to the **water services portion** of your rate notice.<sup>1</sup> Residential tenants who have agreed with the land owner to receive a rate notice are also covered by this policy.

If you are also having difficulty paying other charges on your rate notice or if you are a commercial customer, we encourage you to still talk to us.

We are committed to working with you to find an appropriate payment solution that works for both you and us. We understand that it can be difficult to ask for support, and will treat you sensitively and respectfully.

## What is financial hardship?

You will be considered to be in financial hardship if paying the water services portion of your rate notice will affect your ability to meet your basic living needs<sup>2</sup> – in short, if you have the intention but not the financial capacity to pay.

Financial hardship may, for example, be caused by:

- loss of your or a family member’s primary income;
- spousal separation or divorce;
- loss of a spouse or loved-one;
- physical or mental health issues;
- a chronically ill child;
- budget management issues associated with a low income; and
- other unforeseen factors affecting your capacity to pay, such as a reduction in income or an increase in non-discretionary spending.

## Identifying customers in financial hardship

If you think you may be in financial hardship we encourage you to contact us as soon as possible. You may ask a financial counsellor to contact us on your behalf.

We will assess within three business days whether we consider you to be in financial hardship. If we cannot make our assessment within three business days, we will refer you to a financial counsellor for assessment.

As part of our assessment we will consider any information provided by you and, if applicable, your financial counsellor. We will also take into account any information we may have on your payment history.

As soon as we have made our assessment, we will advise you of the outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> This is because the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013* and our water licence only require us to have a hardship policy for any water services we provide to residential customers.

<sup>2</sup> Clause 19 of the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2013* defines financial hardship as “being in an ongoing state of financial disadvantage in which the customer’s ability to meet the basic living needs of the customer or a dependant of the customer would be adversely affected if the customer were to pay an unpaid bill for a water service supplied in respect of the place used solely or primarily as the customer’s dwelling”.

## Payment plans

If we determine that you are in financial hardship, we will offer you more time to pay the water services portion of your rate notice or a payment plan for this portion. We will not charge you any fees or interest as part of your extension or payment plan.

We will involve you and, if applicable, your financial counsellor in setting a payment plan. When setting the conditions of the plan, we will consider your capacity to pay and, if relevant, your usage needs.

If appropriate, we will review and revise your extension or payment plan.

We do not have to offer you a payment plan if you have had two payment plans cancelled because of non-payment.

If you are a tenant, we must make sure that the land owner is aware of us giving you an extension or entering into a payment plan with you before we do so. We can agree that you notify the land owner of the proposed extension or payment plan (and provide us with evidence that you have done so), or you can give us permission to notify the land owner.

## 2 Debt reduction and collection

If you are in financial hardship, we will consider reducing the amount you owe us.

We will also not commence or continue proceedings to recover your debt:

- while we are assessing whether or not you are in financial hardship; or
- if you are complying with your payment plan or another payment arrangement you have with us.

If you do not comply with your payment plan or other payment arrangement, we may commence debt recovery proceedings. When collecting your debt, we will comply with Part 2 of the ACCC and ASIC's *Debt collection guidelines for collectors and creditors*.

We may outsource your debt to a debt collection agency. Please be advised that additional fees may apply in this case. We will ensure that any debt collection agency we engage will comply with Part 2 of the ACCC and ASIC's *Debt collection guidelines for collectors and creditors*.

## Useful information

- **Redirection of rate notice:** We will advise you of your right to have your rate notice redirected to another person free of charge if you are absent or ill.
- **Payment options:** You may pay your rate notice by direct debit, Centrepay, internet, telephone or post.

Paying by direct debit or Centrepay may help you manage your bills more easily as your bills will be paid through regular deductions.

For more information on your payment options, please contact us.

- **Financial counselling:** We will advise you of any financial counselling services or other organisations that may be available to you.

Financial counsellors offer free, independent information to help you take control of your financial situation.

The Financial Counsellors' Association of WA (FCAWA) can refer you to a financial counsellor in your area. Alternatively, you can call the Financial Counselling Helpline. The

Helpline provides a free confidential service for all Western Australians with financial problems and queries.

Financial Counselling Helpline: 1800 007 007

The FCAWA's contact details are:

Financial Counsellors' Association of WA

Phone: (08) 9325 1617

Email: [afm@financialcounsellors.org](mailto:afm@financialcounsellors.org)

Website: [www.financialcounsellors.org](http://www.financialcounsellors.org)

- **Fees and charges:** We will charge you for the water services we provide to you.

We may charge you interest on overdue amounts if not paid by the due date.

A list of our fees and charges may be found at the shire's website ([www.dumbleyung.wa.gov.au](http://www.dumbleyung.wa.gov.au)), libraries or by contacting the shire office.

## Complaints handling

If you have a complaint, please contact us first. Our contact details are included in section 9 below.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you may refer your complaint to the Energy & Water Ombudsman. The Energy & Water Ombudsman will investigate your complaint and may mediate the dispute between you and us.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman's contact details are:

<b>Company Name:</b>	Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia
<b>In person:</b>	2nd Floor, Albert Facey House 469 Wellington Street Perth WA 6000
<b>Postal Address:</b>	PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6831
<b>Phone:</b>	08 9220 7588
<b>Freecall:</b>	1800 754 004* <i>* Calls made from mobile phones will be charged at the applicable rate.</i>
<b>TIS:</b>	Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450
<b>TTY:</b>	National Relay Service 1800 555 727
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au">energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Fax:</b>	(08) 9220 7599
<b>Freefax:</b>	1800 611 279

## Approval and review

Our policy was approved by the Economic Regulation Authority of WA.

We will review our policy at least every five years to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant.

## Our contact details

You can contact the helpful staff at the Shire of Dumbleyung:

**In Person** Shire office located on the corner of Harvey and Dawson Street, Dumbleyung WA 6350

**Postal Address** PO Box 99, Dumbleyung WA 6350

Phone: (08) 9863 4012

Mobile: 0429634012

TTY: 133 677 then ask for (08) 9863 4012

TIS: 131 450

Fax: (08) 9863 4146

Email: [ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@dumbleyung.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.dumbleyung.wa.gov.au](http://www.dumbleyung.wa.gov.au)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service ([www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au))

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for (08) 9863 4012.

The Shire of Dumbleyung office is open 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday (closed public holidays).