

# Customer Enquiry, Complaints and Dispute Handling Management Guideline



MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE	
Reference Number	724338
Responsible Business Unit	Corporate Services
Responsible Officer	General Manager Corporate Services
Legislation	Water Industry Act 2012 Water Industry Guidelines No.2 (WG2/001) Water Industry Regulations 2012 Water Retail Code – Minor and Intermediate retailers Australian Standards AS ISO 10002-2006
Relevant Delegations	Water Industry Act 2012 Local Government Act 1999
Related Policies Management Guidelines Frameworks	Customer Hardship Policy – Water and Sewerage Retail Services Customer Charter – Water and Sewerage Retail Services
Link to Strategic Plan	Objective 1.2 - Infrastructure Development
Council Resolution	67.3
Date Adopted	8 April 2019
Review Date	2023
Previous Revisions	10 February 2015, item 43.4

## INTRODUCTION

The Rural City of Murray Bridge were issued with a Water Industry Retail Licence on the 28 February 2013 for the purposes of Water and Sewerage Services delivered to our customers of Riverglenn and Woodlane.

The Water Retail Code – Minor and Intermediate Retailers, issued by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, sets out the requirements we must comply with in relation to the provision of our Water and Sewerage Services.

More information on these requirements can be found in the Rural City of Murray Bridge Customer Charter at [www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au](http://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au).

## PURPOSE

This document outlines our Customer Enquiry, Complaints and Dispute Handling processes. This document should be read in conjunction with our Customer Charter and other policies and procedures referred to within the document.

This process applies to all enquiries and complaints received from our customers who benefit from the Water and Sewerage Services we provide.

This process ensures that customers are fully aware of the channels available to them to raise queries or complaints about the services.

It also ensures that accurate information is collected and can be used to analyze trends and areas for improvement.

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## CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES

We will ensure enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution is available to all Rural City of Murray Bridge water and sewerage customers via;

- Telephone;
- E-mail;
- Written correspondence;
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge Website;
- In person.

### We will:

- provide a source of customer-related information as directed by the Water Retail Code including the Rural City of Murray Bridge's Customer Charter and Standard Customer Contract;
- Provide early resolution of customer enquiries and complaints and resolve matters at the first point of contact where possible;
- Manage customer expectations by providing relevant information and meeting the service standards related to enquiry and complaint responsiveness;
- Ensure customer enquiries and complaints are dealt with in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner;
- Encourage customers who may require a language interpreting service to access an independent interpreting service.

## **HOW CAN I CONTACT THE RURAL CITY OF MURRAY BRIDGE?**

### **General Enquiries**

08 8539 1100

- Accounts;
- Change name and/or address;
- Payment arrangements;
- Hardship and difficulty paying bills;
- Complaints, compliments and suggestions;
- Availability of any relevant Government Concessions;
- Registration of Special Needs Customers

### **Service Faults (24 hours)**

08 8539 1100

- Water supply, water quality
- Leaking or faulty water meter; and

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- Sewer blockage or overflow

## Connection enquiries

08 8539 1100

- Application for connection
- Availability of services

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You can also contact the Rural City of Murray Bridge and access information in a variety of ways:

Enquiries Email	<a href="mailto:council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au">council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au</a>
Fax:	08 85322 766
Post:	PO Box 421, Murray Bridge SA 5253
In Person:	2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge
Website:	<a href="http://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au">www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au</a>

## COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES

The Rural City of Murray Bridge will ensure our staff is equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality service to our customers. Our staff will:

- Treat customers in a polite and courteous manner;
- Obtain any details necessary to ensure the customer receives the service they expect;
- Attempt to resolve the matter at the first point of contact;
- Make an accurate record of the contact so the matter can be tracked, monitored and reported;
- Respond to all enquiries in a timely and efficient manner.

## COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Rural City of Murray Bridge welcomes your complaint as an opportunity to maintain your confidence and trust as well as improve our customer service.

We consider complaints as an opportunity to better understand dissatisfaction with our service, and provide you with a response in order to arrive at a resolution. It may be related to our products, services, or the complaints handling process itself. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services or products, please contact us so that we can resolve your concerns.

### The Rural City of Murray Bridge's commitment to complaints and dispute resolution

We will address customer concerns in a timely and efficient manner. **We will:**

- Listen to your concerns;

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- Identify ourselves;
- Ensure that our correspondence has a contact name and telephone number;
- Respect your privacy;
- Provide you with high quality information and advice;
- Provide information and guidelines in plain language.

When you contact us with a complaint we ask our customers to:

- Treat us with courtesy
- Be honest in all your dealings with us
- Provide us with information when requested to help us address the issue.

## Guiding Principles

We are committed to following the complaints management guiding principles when handling your complaints:

**Visibility** – Information about the “how and where” to make a complaint is visible to customers, staff and other stakeholders

**Accessibility** – Complainants can easily access the complaint management process and the methods of making complaints will be flexible

**Responsiveness** – All complainants should receive timely acknowledgement that their complaint has been received and best endeavours will be made to provide a response within the required response targets.

**Objectively** – Each complaint will be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

**Charges** – No fees will be charged to manage legitimate customer complaints and enquiries.

**Confidentiality** – Personally identifiable complainant information should be available if needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within the Rural City of Murray Bridge. The complainant's information will be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer expressly consents to its disclosure.

**Customer Focused Approach** – A customer focused approach will be adopted and the rights of customers to disagree with us will be respected and supported by providing and promoting an accessible, timely, fair and friendly process for the lodgment and management of customer complaints.

**Accountability** – The Rural City of Murray Bridge will ensure that systematic reporting of customer complaints against documented standards and lessons learned is undertaken.

**Continual improvement** – Analysis of customer complaints will drive improvement in customer service and the complaints handling process.

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## **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT**

There are two ways to contact and lodge a complaint with us:

- **Speak to a relevant staff member**

If you are dissatisfied with any of our services, please contact us on 08 85391100 and discuss your concern with a relevant staff member. Alternatively, you can speak to us in person at the Local Government Centre, 2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge, SA 5253.

The staff members are able to resolve most of your concerns over the telephone at the first point of contact. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request to have your complaint reviewed by a Manager who will further investigate this matter.

- **Write to us**

If you prefer, write to us at the following address with the details of your complaint:

Rural City of Murray Bridge, PO Box 421, Murray Bridge SA 5253

Alternatively you can send an email to [council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au)

Upon receipt of your correspondence, we will provide you with a written acknowledgement of your complaint as well as the contact details of the relevant staff member who will be managing your complaint.

## **METHOD OF RESPONSE**

We endeavour to resolve all complaints at the first point of contact. However, there are some circumstances where this is not possible and further investigation may be required. In these instances, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five business days and aim to provide you with a resolution within twenty business days.

Should we be unable to meet these timeframes, we will advise you of our suggested course of action and timeframe, as well as the name of a contact person for any further queries regarding this matter.

As a general rule, we will respond via the same channel as the complaint is received unless advised otherwise.

## **COMPLAINT ESCALATION**

If you have attempted to resolve your concerns through the above process without resolution, you may escalate your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer for further review.

If the matter still cannot be resolved, you will be advised of your option to escalate your grievance to an independent external mediator.

### **What is Mediation?**

Mediation is a process in which people, organisations or businesses in dispute are aided by a Mediator to assist them to reach an agreement which settles the dispute. Mediation encourages negotiation in a non-threatening environment.

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## **COMPLAINT RECORDING**

The Rural City of Murray Bridge will record and monitor all complaints received from Customers for the purposes of monitoring compliance with Regulatory Service Standards but also to assist in improving the experience of our Customers.

## **RURAL CITY OF MURRAY BRIDGE CUSTOMER CHARTER**

Customers requiring more information should refer to our Customer Charter, available on our website – [www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au](http://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au)

## **PRIVACY**

All personal information that is supplied by a customer will be treated in confidence. Personal information should only be collected from a customer where it is necessary to assist the Rural City of Murray Bridge with its investigations and resolution of a complaint and/or enquiry.

## **REFERENCES**

Australian Standards AS ISO10002-2006

Rural City of Murray Bridge Customer Charter

Rural City of Murray Bridge Customer Contract

Rural City of Murray Bridge Hardship Policy

Water Industry Act 2012

Water Industry Guideline No.2 (WG2/01)

Water Industry Regulations 2012

Water Retail Code – minor and intermediate retailers