



# RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER CHARTER



ENRICH QUALITY OF LIFE



# INTRODUCTION

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At Urban Utilities, we recognise our services are an everyday part of our customers' lives and underpin the wellbeing of our community. We are committed to being customer-focused and aligning with our customers' expectations.

As our customers, you can turn on the tap at home at any time of the day or night for safe drinking water. You can have a shower or flush the toilet and the waste disappears. We provide a largely unseen service but one that enhances the quality of our lives.

As one of the largest water distributor-retailers in Australia, we provide a high standard of water services (including drinking water, recycled water and sewerage services) to more than 1.5 million customers in South East Queensland.

Servicing the local government areas of our five shareholding councils – Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset, we manage a vast network of over 18,000 kilometres of water and sewer pipes (laid end to end, these would stretch from Australia to London).

This Customer Charter applies to all Urban Utilities' residential customers and outlines what you should expect to receive when dealing with us, as well as your rights and responsibilities as our customer. Our water and sewerage services are delivered in alignment with our Customer Service Standards, which form part of this Customer Charter.



# CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

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Our Customer Service Standards below detail our promises to you for your water and sewerage service.

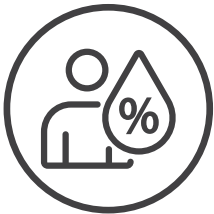


## Water quality

- We will supply you with safe and clean drinking water.

**Standard** – Safe and clean drinking water that continually complies with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

**Standard** – Less than or equal to six water quality complaints per 1000 properties per year.



## Water service reliability

- We will provide you with a reliable water supply that meets your needs.

**Standard** – Less than or equal to 100 unplanned water interruptions per 1000 properties per year.

**Standard** – 39 water main breaks per 100 km of water main per year.



## Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions

- We will respond to water and sewerage incidents as soon as possible.

**Standard** – Respond to urgent incidents in less than one hour, on 80% of occasions.

**Standard** – Respond to non-urgent incidents in less than 24 hours, on 80% of occasions.



## Restoration of supply after unplanned water and sewerage interruptions

- If there is an interruption to your water supply or sewerage service, we will work to restore service as soon as we can.

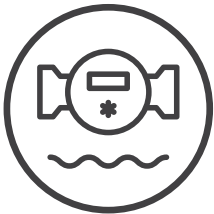
**Standard** – Restore in less than five hours on 90% of occasions.



### **Sewerage service reliability**

- We will provide a reliable sewerage network that safely removes sewage and minimises impacts on the environment and our customers.

**Standard** – 30 sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 km of sewerage main per year.



### **Water pressure**

- We will provide you with water pressure that meets our minimum standards.

**Standard** – Not less than 10 metres head of water in designated trickle feed areas and designated lower pressure areas where properties are likely to require a private pressure booster pump as part of their plumbing.

**Standard** – Not less than 21 metres head of water in all other areas.



### **Water flow**

- We will provide you with water flow that meets our minimum standards.

**Standard** – 25 litres per minute in all areas except those designated as trickle feed.

**Standard** – 3.2 litres per minute in trickle feed areas.

Please view “Glossary of common terms” on page 14 for more detail on Customer Service Standard definitions.

# RELIABILITY OF WATER SUPPLY

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To deliver drinking water to you, we operate a network of 9,000 kilometres of water mains, 65 water pumping stations, 82 water boosters and 116 reservoirs.

We will:

- maintain and operate our drinking water service up to the property connection point for your property
- manage water pressure and flow across our network of pipes
- implement effective pressure and leakage management to control leaks, conserve water and assist in minimising pipe failures
- assist the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service as the primary provider of fire and emergency services in Queensland, by maintaining and making water available through our network for firefighting purposes.

You can help us by:

- maintaining all private fittings, mains connected to water tanks and pipes on your property
- regularly checking your water meter, taps and fittings for leaks
- engaging a licensed plumber to repair any leaks on your side of the water meter
- advising us immediately if damage occurs to any of our assets or services on your property by calling us on **13 23 64** (24/7)
- using water efficiently, useful tips are on our website [urbanutilities.com.au/waterefficiency](http://urbanutilities.com.au/waterefficiency)
- using Dial Before You Dig to confirm the location of any pipes. Call Dial Before You Dig on 1100 or visit [www.1100.com.au](http://www.1100.com.au)

## Interruption to water supply

While we work hard to ensure your water supply is not interrupted, we occasionally need to carry out planned maintenance on our assets. In these situations your water service may be interrupted for a short time.

Should your supply be interrupted due to planned or unplanned works, our priority is to minimise any inconvenience to you.

We will:

- consider your needs including those of special needs customers
- provide sufficient notice of planned water service interruptions:
  - minimum of two business days' notice for occupants of residential properties
  - minimum of four business days' notice to occupants of identified special needs residential properties.
- respond to unplanned interruptions and restore water supply as soon as possible and where practical, provide an alternate water supply.

You can help us by:

- reporting any service interruptions and emergencies on **13 23 64** (24/7).

To view current water service interruptions, visit [\*\*urbanutilities.com.au/interruptions\*\*](http://urbanutilities.com.au/interruptions)

## Special needs

If you are a special needs customer (including customers who require home haemodialysis), we must be informed that you require continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other special medical needs.

We will maintain your details and provide you with prioritised service should your water supply be interrupted.

## Water quality

Your drinking water goes through rigorous testing to ensure it meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and complies with statutory requirements under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

We will:

- supply you with water that is safe to drink
- monitor and assess the quality of the drinking water supplied
- publish annual water quality data on our website.

You can help us by:

- ensuring all internal plumbing (including taps, pipes and drains) is maintained in good order and complies with plumbing regulations
- referring to our website for general information on water quality or contacting us on **13 26 57** (8am-6pm weekdays)
- reporting any emergencies or issues regarding water quality to us on **13 23 64** (24/7).

## RELIABILITY OF SEWERAGE SERVICES

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All you have to do is flush your toilet and your sewage is removed, treated and returned to the environment by more than 9,000 kilometres of sewerage mains, 336 sewage pump stations and 29 sewage treatment plants.

Putting the wrong things down sinks, pipes and toilets can leave you with an expensive plumbing bill to unblock pipes. It can also lead to sewage overflows and problems in other parts of our sewerage network.

The efficient operation of our sewerage network also depends on ensuring that your private stormwater drainage is connected to the Council owned stormwater network and not our sewerage network. It is an offence to discharge stormwater to our sewerage network.

We will:

- maintain and operate the sewerage service from the property connection point for your property
- monitor the quality of our treated sewage before it returns to the environment
- respond to sewage overflows in our network as soon as possible.

You can help us by:

- looking after your household pipes to prevent blockages by only flushing human waste and toilet paper down the toilet and using a sink strainer in the kitchen
- ensuring your overflow relief gully (located at least 75mm above ground level) is kept clear to prevent sewage from flooding your house
- ensuring your stormwater drainage is not connected to the sewerage system
- always checking for pipes before planting and choosing trees with root systems that are less likely to enter pipes and cause blockages.

For more information, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/dontflushthat](http://urbanutilities.com.au/dontflushthat)

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Urban Utilities is the planning regulator for water and sewerage in the Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset local government areas. In this regard, we provide a number of development services including:

- assessing and approving applications from customers relating to the connection to, disconnection from or alteration of existing connections to our drinking water and sewerage network
- providing preliminary advice via Services Advice Notices before lodgement of formal applications
- assessing build over asset referrals
- engineering searches.

We have published our service commitments so you know what to expect when working with our Development Services team. You can read these at [urbanutilities.com.au/servicecommitments](https://urbanutilities.com.au/servicecommitments)

To contact our Development Services team or for advice about a water or sewerage development application, call **07 3432 2200** (8.30am to 4.30pm weekdays) or email [developmentenquiries@urbanutilities.com.au](mailto:developmentenquiries@urbanutilities.com.au)

### Water Netserv Plan

Our Water Netserv Plan outlines our strategic infrastructure planning direction, details how we will ensure the provision of safe, reliable and secure water and sewerage services and describes how we support property development.

Our Connections Policy sets out our current and future connection areas, criteria for different types of connections, and the process for making a water approval application.

You can view the Water Netserv Plan at [urbanutilities.com.au/waternetservplan](https://urbanutilities.com.au/waternetservplan)





# YOUR METER

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## Meter readings and estimates

We understand the importance of ensuring meter readings are accurate and consumers are charged correctly.

We will:

- read your meter according to a regular schedule to maintain consistency of reading periods
- estimate a reading, based on previous consumptions levels, when a water meter is not accessible or cannot be located.

You can help us by:

- ensuring your water meter is not obstructed (for example by a garden bed or barrier) and is not tampered with.

## Special meter readings

A special water meter read provides you with an accurate account of the water consumed as at the read date. This information can then be used to calculate the amount of water and sewerage charges that are to be paid by the seller and purchaser on settlement day, and to identify arrears on an account. A fee applies for this service.

For more information, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/specialread](http://urbanutilities.com.au/specialread)

## Testing your meter

If you believe your meter is not reading accurately, you can request a meter test.

We will:

- provide you with information on how to self-check for water leaks (we recommend that you self-check before you lodge a meter test application)

- provide you with a meter testing service for a prepaid fee. This can be either an on-site test or an independent laboratory test where your meter is replaced and your original meter tested off-site
- allow you to be present during testing if you wish. You will be responsible for all costs associated with this attendance
- provide you with a copy of the test results
- replace the water meter, refund the test charge and review water consumption charges for the property if the meter is found to be faulty.

You can help us by:

- taking regular readings of your water meter to promptly detect any unusual increases, which could indicate a concealed leak
- checking your consumption for the period against the same period in the previous year
- considering any changes to your consumption shown by the meter reading dates on your bill that may have resulted in a change in consumption (e.g. filling a pool)
- checking your property for any signs of a leak
- contacting us on **13 23 64** (24/7) to report any damage or significant problems with the water meter.

## Replacing your meter

To maintain the accuracy of your water and sewerage bills, we will replace the water meter if it is faulty, damaged or due to be replaced under our meter replacement program.

## CONCEALED LEAKS

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Some water leaks can go undetected for long periods of time because the source of the leak is not visible.

We have a Concealed Leaks Policy that provides the framework to support you if you experience a concealed leak that has impacted your water and sewerage account. Please note that eligibility criteria will apply.

You can find the policy on our website by visiting [urbanutilities.com.au/concealedleaks](http://urbanutilities.com.au/concealedleaks)

We understand leaks can cause distress for our customers. Other than reading your water meter regularly to keep track of consumption, there are also other options available to help protect you against the impact of leaks.

To find out more about these options, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/leaks](http://urbanutilities.com.au/leaks)

## BILLING AND PAYMENTS

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### Issuing bills

We will provide clear, easy to understand and accurate bills.

We issue your water and sewerage bill quarterly and send your bill to the address you have provided to us.

You can also apply to receive your bill via email. You can apply online either through MyAccount at [urbanutilities.com.au/MyAccount](http://urbanutilities.com.au/MyAccount) or [urbanutilities.com.au/emailbills](http://urbanutilities.com.au/emailbills) or call **13 26 57**.

With MyAccount, you can view, pay and manage your bill easily and securely online 24/7. You can update contact details, opt to receive your bills via email and access your bills.

Your bill will include information such as your water usage charges including the State Government bulk water component, sewerage charges, the period of the bill, as well as any subsidies applied.

We provide you with 30 days to pay your bill, and reserve the right to charge interest where the bill is overdue or where the terms of an agreed payment plan are not met.

### Water and sewerage service charges

Our water and sewerage charges can be found at [urbanutilities.com.au/pricing](http://urbanutilities.com.au/pricing)

### Paying your bill

We offer a range of payment options. You can pay your bill:

- by Direct Debit. Apply online at [urbanutilities.com.au/directdebit](http://urbanutilities.com.au/directdebit) or call **13 26 57**
- through your financial institution using BPAY®
- online including via MyAccount – using your MasterCard or Visa (surcharges apply)
- by phone – 1300 123 141 using your MasterCard or Visa (surcharges apply)
- by mail to Queensland Urban Utilities PO Box 963, Parramatta, NSW 2124
- in person
- by using Centrepay (available from October 2017 for customers experiencing financial hardship).

To find out more about our payment options, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/paymentoptions](http://urbanutilities.com.au/paymentoptions)

### Overdue bills

We are committed to providing our customers who are having difficulty paying their bills with all reasonable opportunities to rectify any outstanding charges.

Where you have not paid your water and sewerage bill by the due date, we will issue you with a reminder notice.

## Payment assistance

We understand that from time to time, you may face circumstances that make it difficult for you to manage your water and sewerage bill.

We have a range of services to support customers experiencing financial difficulties. These include:

- flexible and affordable payment plans
- referrals to free community financial counselling services
- water conservation and efficiency advice.

## Flexible payment plans

If you do not have the capacity to pay your water and sewerage bill on time and in full, we will work with you to find a solution and may offer a payment plan consistent with your capacity to pay.

Contact us on **13 26 57** (8am-6pm weekdays) to discuss payment plan options.

## Financial Hardship Policy

We have a Financial Hardship Policy that provides the framework to support our customers when they are experiencing financial hardship and difficulty paying their water and sewerage bill. For more information, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/paymenthelp](http://urbanutilities.com.au/paymenthelp)

## Bill reviews and adjustments

If you dispute the amount of your water and sewerage bill you can request a review and we will respond within 20 business days.

If we cannot reach agreement on the amount owing, you may lodge a complaint through our complaints process.

If we determine you have been overcharged, we will credit the amount to your next water and sewerage bill within 20 business days.

If we determine you have been undercharged, we will advise you accordingly and the amount owing will be included as a separate item on your water and sewerage bill.

You will be offered the option to repay the undercharged amount in instalments and interest will not be charged on undercharged amounts.



# HOW TO CONTACT US

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## Enquiries, feedback and complaints

We encourage you to let us know what we are doing well and where we can improve. You can contact us in a number of ways:

### Online

Via our website's enquiry form  
[urbanutilities.com.au](http://urbanutilities.com.au)

### Email

[customerservice@urbanutilities.com.au](mailto:customerservice@urbanutilities.com.au)

### Phone

For general enquiries contact us from 8am to 6pm weekdays on **13 26 57**

For faults and emergencies contact us on **13 23 64** (24/7)

### In writing

Urban Utilities  
GPO Box 2765  
Brisbane Qld 4001

## How we manage complaints

We aim to provide the highest level of service at all times, however we appreciate there may be times when we don't get it right first time.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received, please let us know.

If you would like more information about the way we manage complaints, you can read our Complaints Management Policy at [urbanutilities.com.au/policies](http://urbanutilities.com.au/policies)

If you are not satisfied with our decision or handling of your complaint, you have the right to contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland if you are a small business customer, or the Queensland Ombudsman if you are a large business customer.

## Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

### Phone

1800 662 837

### Post

PO Box 3640  
South Brisbane Qld 4101

### Email

[info@ewoq.com.au](mailto:info@ewoq.com.au)

### Web

[ewoq.com.au](http://ewoq.com.au)

## Queensland Ombudsman

### Phone

1800 068 908

### Post

GPO Box 3314  
Brisbane Qld 4001

### Email

[ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

### Web

[ombudsman.qld.gov.au](http://ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

Both Ombudsman organisations require that the respective parties first work together to resolve complaints before they are referred to them.

# PRIVACY AND INFORMATION

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We are committed to protecting the privacy of our customers and employees, in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.

We protect and maintain the security of individual's personal information and only use this for the purpose which it was collected or as otherwise authorised.

We have developed an *Information Privacy Policy*, which you can find at [urbanutilities.com.au/policies](http://urbanutilities.com.au/policies)

You can apply to access or update your personal information by completing an Information Privacy Application form on our website.

## Right to Information

We try to make as much information available to our customers free of charge through our website, quarterly newsletters and social media. However, if you need more specific information, you can make a Right to Information application under the *Right to Information Act 2009 (QLD)*. A Right to Information Application must be made on the approved form and accompanied by the prescribed fee.

To find out more information about this process, visit [urbanutilities.com.au/information](http://urbanutilities.com.au/information)



# GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

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**Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)** provide an authoritative reference to the Australian community and the water supply industry on what defines safe, good quality water, how it can be achieved and how it can be assured.

**Connection area** is determined by properties already connected, properties not connected but attracting vacant land charges or properties located within 50 metres of our infrastructure. For these properties, we guarantee to provide connections that comply with our connection criteria to our water and sewerage infrastructure.

**Drinking water** is water that meets the requirements of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the *Public Health Act 2005*.

**Drinking water supply** is drinking water supplied to the property from our infrastructure. For the purposes of this charter, this excludes water filling stations and metered standpipes.

**Kilolitre (kL)** = One thousand litres.

**Megalitre (ML)** = One million litres or 1 thousand kilolitres e.g. an Olympic swimming pool holds approximately 2.5 megalitres.

**Overflow relief gully** is a grated outlet located in the ground outside your residence, usually near the laundry area. It is designed to act as a release valve in the event of a blockage in your plumbing, directing the overflow outside, rather than inside the residence.

**Planned interruption** is a planned or scheduled interruption to water supply for the purposes of undertaking repairs, maintenance or infrastructure replacement, and for which the customer has been notified.

**Prescribed margin (water meter accuracy)** is the maximum permissible error rate for water meters under Schedule 1, Part 3, Division 1 of the *National Trade Measurement Regulation (Cth) 2009*.

**Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions** is measured from the time we are notified of the incident to the time taken to determine appropriate restoration action. The response can include an on-site assessment or a remote technical assessment. We assess and prioritise incidents for response based on a criteria matrix including factors such as public health and safety risks, environmental damage, and scale of customer impact and volume of water loss.

**Restoration (water service incident)** is where normal water supply is restored to all interrupted customers.

The restoration time starts when we are advised of an interruption to water supply, or where we must interrupt water supply to undertake repairs, whichever occurs earliest.

**Service territory** is the boundaries of the Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council and Somerset Regional Council areas which we serve.

**Sewage overflows** occur when untreated sewage spills or discharges and escapes from the sewerage system (i.e. pumping stations, pipes, maintenance holes or designed overflow structures) to the external environment.

Sewage overflows can be caused by issues with our pipes and infrastructure, or the property owner's plumbing.

**Sewerage main breaks and chokes** include breaks and blockages in our sewerage distribution mains.

**Special needs residential property** is a property where a residential customer, tenant or other occupant requires continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other medical needs, as confirmed by a registered medical specialist, treating hospital or dialysis centre.

**Trickle feed area** is an area (predominately rural) where properties are required to install a private water tank fed by a flow controlled water service.

Unplanned water interruption occurs when the property is without a water service due to any cause, excluding:

- property service connection interruptions (unless the burst or leak requires the water main to be shut down for repair and therefore affects multiple customers)
- interruptions that cause some reduction to the level of service but where normal activities (shower, washing machine, toilet flushing etc.) are still possible
- breaks in house connection pipes or mains
- planned interruptions.

It includes:

- planned interruptions where the prescribed notice has not been provided, or the actual duration exceeds the notified duration.

**Water flow** is the minimum flow rate that customers can expect to receive at the connection to the property. In our service areas except for trickle feed areas, you can test the flow rate by using a five litre bucket and a stop watch at an outside tap on the front of your property; the bucket should fill in 12 seconds.

**Water main breaks** includes breaks, bursts and leaks in our water distribution and reticulation mains for potable and non-potable services.

**Water pressure** is the minimum static pressure customers can expect to receive at the connection to the property. This is measured in metres head of water. At a pressure of 21 metres, water would rise 21 metres up a vertical tube attached to the water main.

**Water quality complaint** is registered when a person contacts Urban Utilities and expresses dissatisfaction regarding the quality of our drinking water, and includes water quality complaints resulting from our own operational practices. This is any complaint regarding:

- discolouration
- taste
- odour
- stained washing
- illness
- cloudy water (e.g. caused by oxygenation etc.)

As an example, if you called about discolouration, and our Contact Centre operator advised you to run the tap for a minute and this was effective in resolving the issue, but you continue to express dissatisfaction with our service a complaint would be recorded.



For more information visit  
**urbanutilities.com.au**  
or call **13 26 57**

**Urban Utilities**  
GPO Box 2765 Brisbane QLD 4001  
ABN 86 673 835 011

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当您需要口译员时，请致电 13 14 50。

اتصل على الرقم 13 14 50 عندما تكون بحاجة إلى مترجم فوري.

Khi bạn cần thông ngôn, xin gọi số 13 14 50

통역사가 필요하시면 13 14 50 으로 연락하십시오.

Cuando necesite un intérprete llame al 13 14 50