



CUSTOMER CHARTER

CONTACTING SOUTHERN RURAL WATER

By telephone:

For all enquiries, including emergencies, please call:

1300 139 510

or

(+61) (03) 5139 3100

Waterline (for water ordering):

1300 360 117

Duty Officer (for 24 hour emergencies):

Dial 1300 139 510 and follow the prompts, or dial direct on

0412 860 250.(South Eastern region)

0417 589 183 (South Western region)

Family Violence Hotline

1300 654 059

By email:

srw@srw.com.au

By Fax:

(+61) (03) 5139 3150

By post:

PO Box 153

Maffra, Vic 3860

DX Mail

Southern Rural Water

DX217245, MAFFRA

In person:

Maffra
88 Johnson St

Werribee
1 Tower Rd

Warrnambool
132 Fairy St

Our website:

www.srw.com.au

Roster and restriction hotlines:

1300 656 020 Moorabool River, Barwon River, Leigh River
1300 365 607 Merri River, Mt Emu Creek, Cudjee Creek, Hopkins River
1300 654 062 Upper Latrobe River, Moe River system, Traralgon Creek, Little Narracan and
Narracan Creeks, Ten Mile and Wilderness Creeks, Morwell River
1300 654 043 Avon River, Valencia Creek
1300 723 294 All East Gippsland rivers (Mitchell, Tambo, Nicholson, Cann etc)

OUR COMMITMENT

Our purpose is to manage rural water sustainably for the benefit of our communities. We seek to have an effective working relationship with our customers and to provide for customers to have genuine input and influence into our decision-making.

We are committed to striving for great service at a fair price.

We make the following commitments to you - our customer:

- **No surprises**

Whether you are applying for a licence, transferring an entitlement, or actively irrigating, we will provide you with as much regular, reliable and timely information as we can, to help you to make decisions without wasting time and money.

- **Listening**

We value your feedback, both positive and negative, and we welcome any opportunity to learn more about your business, your circumstances and your challenges – so that we can improve our business and our service to you.

- **Privacy**

We respect and protect the privacy of our customers. We only collect the information we need to conduct our business. Essential personal information is not released without your consent unless reasonably and lawfully required for related government business.

- **Regular information**

Our customers rely on information from us to assist in their own planning. We are committed to ensuring that we share information regularly, through newsletters, district and regional updates, and meetings.

- **Consultation**

We will not make important decisions that impact on your business without proper consultation.

- **Responding**

If you contact us, by any means and on any matter, we will ensure that you receive a timely, reliable and accurate response.

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SECTION A: OUR MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS

1 About the Charter

1.1 Purpose

This Customer Charter gives you important information about your rights and responsibilities and those of Southern Rural Water (SRW).

The Charter implements the terms of the Rural Water Customer Service Code published by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) under Section 4F of the Water Industry Act 1994, and Clause 15 of the Water Industry Regulatory Order.

1.2 Scope

In this Customer Charter you will find advice about:

- our operating performance and service standards
- our responsibilities to supply you with water
- how your water prices are set
- our commitments about maintenance, repair and replacement of the infrastructure that delivers your water
- our and your legal obligations under the Water Act 1989
- your obligation to pay our accounts for water supply and other services
- how to order water
- cooperation with SRW and its staff
- when and why we might need access to your property
- how to gain information or enquire about any matter
- how to have a complaint or dispute dealt with promptly and satisfactorily
- your Customer Consultative Committee
- how and when you can give us feedback on our performance

Nothing in this Charter is intended to limit our powers under water legislation.

1.3 Operation and review

This Charter is subject to periodic review in order to ensure that it is achieving its objectives and that the information it contains remains valid.

If you have a suggestion for improvement or you think that there are issues of importance that the Customer Charter should cover but doesn't, then please feel free to forward your comments to us (our contact details are on the first page of this Charter).

1.4 Additional copies of the Charter

This Charter can be downloaded from our website (www.srw.com.au) or call us on 5139 3100 to receive a copy by email or post.

2 Our obligations

SRW has a wide range of statutory responsibilities under the *Water Act 1989*.

The following are our main obligations to you as our customer:

- **In managing groundwater and surface water**

To manage water extractions in groundwater and surface water systems sustainably, responsibly, and equitably between those who rely on water, including the environment.

- **In managing irrigation districts**

To provide, manage and operate systems for the supply of water to your irrigable lands in the district.

- **In assessing applications**

To assess licence applications in accordance with the provisions of the *Water Act 1989* and consistent with Government policy.

- **In undertaking compliance**

To carry out our regulatory activity in a reasonable and consistent manner.

- **When dealing with water shortages**

To ensure that allocations, restrictions and rosters apply equitably to customers with similar entitlements.

- **When entering land**

To cause as little harm and inconvenience as possible when entering onto your land to carry out any authorised activity or works, not to stay on the land any longer than reasonably necessary, to remove our plant, equipment etc after completing the works, and to leave the land as nearly as possible as we found it.

- **In all of our dealings**

To act with courtesy and respect.

3 Your obligations

Our relationship is built on communication. We seek and rely on your cooperation in many areas of our business.

Specifically, we require of you:

- **Within irrigation districts**

That you place orders for the water you need.

For more information on water ordering, refer to page 18.

- **If you have a licence to take and use water from a stream or bore**

That you ensure your licence is valid

That you comply with all of the conditions on your licence

That you make yourself aware of any rosters and restrictions that apply from time to time.

For more information on rosters and restrictions, contact us (contact details at the front of this Charter).

- **If you are planning or carrying out on-farm works**

That you tell us when things go wrong or when you are planning any action or activity that might impact on our infrastructure, any unregulated water system, or the delivery of water.

We specifically ask that you contact us before you:

- do anything which affects the flow of water in any of our channels or drains, or unregulated water systems
- divert water onto your own property unless you have a confirmed water order or valid take and use licence
- do any work which has the effect of impeding or restricting access to any of our works or equipment
- place any works, equipment, plant or structure on our land or works
- plant any tree or other flora on our land or works, especially trees on or near channel banks or drains
- remove any growing thing from our land or works
- do any spraying or other chemical application operation which has the potential to introduce toxic substances into our channels or drains or any unregulated water system

- release any discharge of water, effluent or other liquid into our channels or drains, or any unregulated water system, other than stormwater for the purposes of urgent flood relief

We also ask that you contact us immediately if you observe any other person undertaking any activity in, on or around our works that you feel is improper, or if you observe any accident or other incident which affects or has the potential to affect either our works or the supply of water within an irrigation system, or any unregulated water system.

- **When we need access to your property**

That you help us maintain safe access for our staff.

We also understand that you may have special requirements for access to your property, for bio-security or other reasons. If this is the case, we ask that you contact us so that we can agree on access arrangements that meet our mutual needs.

- **With regard to your bills**

That you make payment in full by the due date.

If you are having trouble paying your account, please call **1300 139 510** to discuss with our friendly staff.

- **With regard to our staff**

That you act with courtesy and respect.

4 Our powers

The following are our main powers under the *Water Act 1989* that may affect you as a customer:

- to enter your land to read a meter, inspect any works or undertake any test to ensure the Act is being complied with
- to enter your land, with 7 days' notice in writing, to carry out any works on that land we are empowered to carry out (notice is not required in an emergency or if entry is with your consent)
- to issue notices preventing or prohibiting anything that is in breach of the Water Act or any licence conditions
- to reduce, restrict or ban the take and use of water in order to avoid shortages, or if you are in breach of legislation or of any orders issued to you, or if you have not paid your account for supply of water
- to install a meter to measure the amount of water taken by you
- to take appropriate compliance action, including possible prosecution for breaches of the Act
- to require you to carry out repairs or maintenance to any works of yours that do not comply with the standards of the *Water Act 1989* or which threaten the resource in any way

5 Our service measures

5.1 Overview

We are committed to the following customer outcomes:

- SRW provides great customer service
- SRW's water supply system enables good practice irrigation
- SRW manages water resources well, maintaining a good balance between my needs as a water user and the sustainability of the resource
- SRW works with me to manage my water needs and entitlements
- SRW keeps prices as low as possible.

Each outcome is supported by measures and targets, which are a combination of objective business performance data and subjective customer sentiment, as defined in survey questions.

5.2 SRW provides great customer service

SRW is committed to providing professional and prompt service to our diverse customers in their preferred manner.

Measure: Application processing

SRW processes a wide range of applications for water users in both regulated and unregulated water systems. These include new licences, infrastructure construction or to vary or transfer existing licences. Timely processing allows our customers to progress their business plans.

Our target is 90% applications completed within set timeframes.

The set timeframes are:

3 days
Bore construction licence
Information Statement
Allocation trade
Divide a water share
7 days
Licence transfer
Water share transfer
Information statements
10 days
Subdivision
30 days
Farm dam licence
Take and use licence

These timeframes are much shorter than standards previously used across the industry, and for transactions via the Victorian Water Register, are shorter than the standards reported nationally.

5.3 SRW's water supply system enables good practice irrigation

SRW's infrastructure provides adequate service levels, is efficient and reliable.

Delivery volume accuracy - WID and BMID customers typically receive water into storage dams from which they pump to irrigate crops. They determine the volume they need, place the order and rely on SRW to deliver that volume. We measure accuracy as the percentage of orders where the actual volume delivered is within a defined range of the ordered volume. Our target is:

98% of deliveries are >90% of order volume or within 0.1ML.

Measure: Channel pool performance

MID customers typically take water from channels. By maintaining channel pools at a consistent height, we provide customers with a consistent water flow. This allows them to better control irrigation on farm, improving water efficiency and productivity. We measure channel pool performance as the percentage of time that pool levels are within specified ranges. Our targets are:

	Current	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
MID	75%	78%	79%	81%	83%	85%

Measure: Delivery efficiency

To maximise the water available for production, water security and economic value from an irrigation district, we seek to minimise losses caused by outfalls, seepage, leakage, measurement error, theft and evaporation. We measure efficiency as the percentage of water released into the system that is actually delivered to customers. Our targets are:

	Current	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
MID	80%	80%	82%	85%	85%	85%
WID	60%	70%	75%	80%	80%	80%
BMID	60%	70%	75%	80%	80%	80%

Measure: Customer access to Demand Management System

Customers who have outlets on modernised channel and pipeline systems can also access online, an enhanced ordering and communication system known as the 'Demand Management System (DMS)' that allows shorter order lead times, as well as instant confirmation of start time and date of orders. DMS also allows customers the ability to manipulate water flow rates without contacting planning staff. A quarter of customers currently have access to DMS. Our target is 75% customers using the DMS by 2023, which is around 650 MID customers.

	Current	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
MID	25%	40%	50%	60%	70%	75%

Measure: Delivery reliability

SRW seeks to minimise supply interruptions to customers due to problems such as channel breaks or weed growth. This is measured as the percentage of orders unaffected by unplanned interruptions. Our target is 99% for each district.

5.4 SRW Manages water resources well, maintaining a good balance between my needs as a water user and the sustainability of the resource.

SRW is committed to resource management that maximises the water available for consumptive use while ensuring sustainability.

Measure: Bulk water harvest

To maximise seasonal allocations for customers, it is important that water harvest is maximised in our off-stream storages at Pykes Creek and Merrimu (other major storages are on-stream so harvest performance does not apply). Our target is:

- Water is harvested at the maximum possible rate >95% of time available (when dam capacity is available).

Measure: Recycled water salinity

Management of recycled water salinity delivered to the WID is important to manage compliance and on-farm impacts. Our target is:

- WID recycled water shall be delivered at less than or equal to 1800EC.

Measure: Headwork release accuracy

It is important to maximise the accuracy of water release from our storages to minimise water losses. We will measure performance as the percentage of time that the released flow is within defined limits of the ordered flow. Our targets are:

- Werribee system: 95% of time within 10% or 5ML.
- Maribyrnong system: 95% of time within 10% or 1ML
- Latrobe system: 95% of ordered release time when actual flow is within 10% of ordered flow.

The different levels of precision in the definition for each system reflect the different equipment for measuring and making releases at the different storages, as well as the differing customers and volumes.

5.5 SRW works with me to manage my water needs and entitlements

SRW is committed to helping customers to meet their business goals in a variable and changing climate.

Measure: Unregulated systems

In our groundwater and rivers water systems, allocation is generally capped and no new allocations are available. There is, however, a very high proportion of allocated water that is unused. SRW is working to increase trade and productive water use, while maintaining sustainability. This will help customers find more water to meet their business needs and/or

realise the short-term economic value of their water entitlements as a commodity in themselves. Trade and water use are impacted by seasonal conditions so it is important to look at longer term trends and customer behaviour. We will:

- Promote water trade and educate customers on the benefits through increased contacts – 1,000 customer contacts per year.

Measure: Regulated systems

Through modernising our supply system we improve delivery efficiency and thus generate water savings. These can then be converted into new water shares and provided to assist customers in managing their water needs for security or expansion. We plan to release these water savings to customers as part of the benefit delivery plan for the irrigation districts.

District	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
WID		1,300	533		
BMID		200	167		
MID	800	800	800	7,300	800

5.6 SRW keeps prices as low as possible

SRW is committed to modernising our business with minimal price increases.

Measure: Price change (irrigation districts)

Price increases to be no more than 10% (after adjusting for CPI) between 2013-14 and 2033-34.

6 Billing and payments

6.1 Charges

Most customers will receive an annual entitlement or service charge. These are charged at the start of each season, and are based on the entitlements, shares, meters, licences etc that you own or access.

For customers within our irrigation districts, usage charges are billed at the end of each season, and are based on the actual water that you have used.

For further information on our tariffs, refer to page 19.

6.2 Our billing timetable

Our billing arrangements have evolved in consultation with our customer committees, and we currently operate two billing regimes.

Charges for Werribee and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District services are billed on a quarterly basis, typically in August, October, January and April.

All other services, including Macalister Irrigation District services and surface and groundwater licences, will be issued a single bill for annual service charges, typically in October - payable over four instalments. For Macalister Irrigation District customers, a bill for annual usage charges is typically issued in July/August.

For more information on our billing and charges, refer to page 23.

6.3 Making payments

We provide a range of payment options, including payment by mail, payment at any post office, payment at SRW Maffra office, by credit card (over the phone or via the internet), by direct debit or via BPAY. Payments can also be made in advance. Our payment options are included on the tear-off payment slip with your bill.

We do not require customers to agree to direct debit as a condition of providing services or issuing a licence.

If you are having trouble paying your account, please call 1300 139 510 to discuss with our friendly staff.

7 Complaints

7.1 Principles

We welcome any feedback from customers, both positive and negative, and will always seek to:

- resolve customer complaints in a non-threatening, informal and acceptable manner
- address any concerns or complaints raised by customers immediately

Where appropriate, our complaints handling procedures will be consistent with the processes and guidelines set out in Australian Standard AS ISO 10002-2006.

7.2 Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by:

- Telephone, on **1300 139 510**
- Mail, to **PO Box 153, Maffra, VIC 3860**
- Our website, at www.srw.com.au – click on “Contact” at the top of the page, and then follow the link to “feedback”
- Email, to srw@srw.com.au
- Fax, on **(03) 5139 3150**

7.3 Our process

We will, **within 1 day of receiving your complaint**, acknowledge the complaint. This may be by post, phone or email.

We will work to resolve the complaint **within 10 working days**. If we are unable to meet this timeframe, we will notify you of our progress on a weekly basis, until the matter is resolved.

In our response, we will provide the reasons for our decision, including details of any legislative or policy issues.

7.4 What happens if you are not happy with the outcome?

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint, you can request an Internal Review. This request must be in writing.

The internal review is conducted by the Managing Director, and will be completed **within 28 days** of receipt of your request to seek internal review.

If you remain unhappy with the result of an Internal Review, you can refer your complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) on **FREECALL 1800 500 509** or at www.ewov.com.au.

7.5 What happens if my complaint relates to my account?

If your complaint involves a disagreement regarding your account, we will not seek payment while we investigate your complaint. If you owe any other amount which does not directly relate to your complaint, this must be paid.

SECTION B: INFORMATION TO HELP YOU

8 Understanding your bill

statement of account
THIS INVOICE IS FOR A GST FREE SUPPLY
ABN: 70 801 473 421

Southern Rural Water
Managing Water. Serving Communities.

For all enquiries, including emergencies, please call 1300 139 510

Period **1 July 2008 - 30 June 2009**

Account No. **123456**

Statement Date **22/04/2009**

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Last Statement	\$6,550.20
Payments Received	\$-6,335.64
Adjustments	\$0.00
Interest	\$3.04
Other	\$0.00
Carried Forward	\$217.60

current charges (see over for details)

Water Share - High Reliability Water Share Macalister	\$1044.00
Water Share - Low Reliability Water Share Macalister	\$261.00
Delivery Share Infrastructure Fee Macalister	\$5472.20

Total of Current Charges \$6777.20

Total Payable \$6994.80

Due date 22/12/2008

Instalment	\$	Due by
1st	\$1,911.90	8/12/2008
2nd	\$1,694.30	22/01/2009
3rd	\$1,694.30	22/03/2009
4th	\$1,694.30	22/05/2009

HOW TO PAY ...

... in person
Pay in person at Southern Rural Water's office.
88 Johnson St Maffra
8:15am - 4:30pm (Mon-Fri)
Cash, cheque, money order and credit cards accepted.

... Australia Post
Billpay Code: **0334**
Ref: **00123456**

... by mail
Detach payment slip and mail with your cheque or money order to:
Southern Rural Water
PO Box 153
MAFFRA, VIC 3860

... BPAY
Bill Code: **16329**
Ref: **00123456**
Contact your participating Bank, Credit Union or Building Society.

payment slip

JOHN CITIZEN
Account No: 123456
Pay the total amount of: **\$6994.80** by **22/12/2008**
OR
1st Instalment of: **\$1911.90** by **8/12/2008**

AUSTRALIA POST *334 003.00454 4

This is the period the bill relates to - usually a financial year.

This is your account number, and should be quoted when making payments or enquiring about your account.

This is the date on which the bill was issued.

This section tells you what has happened on your account since your last bill.

If you owe anything from your last bill, it will appear here.

This is a summary of your current charges. More detail is on the back of the bill.

This is how much you owe, including any amounts owing from your last bill.

This is the due date.

Most of our accounts are payable by instalment, and the dates and amounts are listed here.

Tear off this slip to make your payment.

There are lots of ways you can pay your bill.



charge details

WEE01234 - High Reliability Water Share (Macalister)
 Associated ABA: ABA01237 Legal Owner: J CITIZEN
 High Reliability Water Share Fee

WEE01235 - Low Reliability Water Share (Macalister)
 Associated ABA: ABA01237 Legal Owner: J CITIZEN
 Low Reliability Water Share Fee

DSE01236 - Delivery Share (Macalister)
 Legal Owner: J CITIZEN
 Delivery Share Infrastructure Fee
 Service Point Fee - Standard
 Service Point Fee - Pump

quantity	rate	charge
120.00	\$8.70	\$1044.00
		\$1044.00
60.00	\$4.35	\$261.00
		\$261.00
1.38	\$3690.00	\$5092.20
2.00	\$150.00	\$300.00
1.00	\$80.00	\$80.00
		\$5472.20

This section gives more details on your charges, including how much of each "product" the charge relates to, and who owns each entitlement (if you lease a property, you may not own the entitlements)

important notes

PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES

If you are experiencing difficulties paying this account, please call 1300 139 510 to discuss with our friendly staff.

CHANGING YOUR DETAILS

Please advise in writing any changes of address or ownership details, to:
 PO Box 153
 Maffra, VIC 3860

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN (VICTORIA)

Southern Rural Water is pleased to help you in any matter regarding our services. If you have any concerns please call us on 1300 139 510.

If we are unable to resolve the matter, you can call the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) on FREECALL 1800 500 509

CONCESSIONS

Concessions are available on domestic water charges for holders of valid concession cards. Call 1300 139 510 for details.

LICENCE CHARGES

If this account contains charges relating to a licence, failure to pay may result in cancellation of that licence.



If you require an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. Charges apply.

There are some notes here which we change from time to time to alert you to important information.



9 Understanding your entitlements, shares and licences

9.1 Water shares – irrigation districts

A water share is a legally recognised, secure share of water allocated from an irrigation water system.

A water share is expressed in megalitres, representing the amount of water that can be taken when an allocation of 100% is declared against that water share. So, if you have a water share of 50ML, you will be able to use up to 25ML when an allocation of 50% is declared, and up to 50ML if the allocation is 100%.

There are two classes of water share – high reliability and low reliability. When the allocation reaches 100% for high reliability water shares, we start allocating any further water against low reliability water shares.

Water shares can be traded permanently or leased. For more information please call please call **1300 139 510**.

9.2 Allocation Bank Account (ABA) – irrigation districts

Your ABA is like a bank account, but instead of money it holds your water balance. The balance of water in your ABA is how much water you can use.

Water goes into your ABA when we announce an allocation against a class of water shares that you own (or are leasing), and water comes out of your ABA as you use it.

If you allow someone to lease your water share, allocations against that share will be credited to their ABA. Similarly, you will receive the credit into your ABA for any water shares that you are leasing from others.

9.3 Delivery share – irrigation districts

A delivery share gives you a share of the capacity of the delivery system - i.e. the channels and pipelines that deliver water across the irrigation district.

A delivery share is expressed in megalitres per day, and when a delivery system is congested it provides a share of the available water flow.

Delivery shares are linked to a property and stay with that property if the water share is transferred. Irrigators can continue to pay delivery share charges if they wish to retain their delivery share for the future, trade all or part of their delivery share to another property, or pay the relevant termination fee and surrender the delivery share.

Delivery shares can only be traded to other properties on interconnected channel systems. Irrigators who want to transfer delivery share will need to get the consent of anyone holding a mortgage over the property.

For more information please call please call **1300 139 510**.

9.4 Take and use licences

A take and use licence allows you to use up to a specific volume of groundwater from a bore, or surface water from a river, stream or dam. These licences are issued to land owners or occupiers to allow them to use water for a variety of purposes including commercial, irrigation and dairy use on specified land.

These licences may be traded upon sale of property. Transfers of water entitlement on either a permanent or temporary basis can also be considered, depending on location.

Information about application fees and forms is available from our website or by calling **1300 139 510**.

9.5 Works licences

A works licence usually gives you approval to construct a bore, pump, or dam. These are shorter term licences which only allow for the construction of the works, subject to licence conditions.

A works licence can also be issued to a land owner or occupier to allow you to operate a bore, pump or dam. This type of licence is generally issued at the same time as a take and use licence but is subject to specific conditions.

Information about application fees and forms is available from our website or by calling **1300 139 510**.

10 Ordering water

10.1 Who must order water?

Water ordering is required for customers in our three irrigation districts – Macalister, Werribee and Bacchus Marsh – and also customers with licences on the Latrobe and Maribyrnong Rivers.

10.2 How to place an order

To place an order, you can either telephone our 24 hour Waterline service on **1300 360 117** or contact us through the internet at www.srw.com.au/worder.

Orders typically require three days' (72 hours') notice – though this may be shorter for automated sections within the Macalister Irrigation District.

10.3 Confirming orders

Orders on manually operated sections within the Macalister Irrigation District, and on the Latrobe River, must be confirmed between 4pm and midnight on the day before the requested start date.

To confirm an order, you can either telephone our 24 hour Waterline service on **1300 360 117** or contact us through the internet at www.srw.com.au/worder.

Automated system customers, and customers within the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation Districts, do not have to confirm orders.

10.4 Changing orders

If you need to change your watering finish time for any reason, please contact your planner ASAP. Changes may not be possible on short notice as this may affect other customers, or may waste water.

You must get approval from your planner prior to vary your flow or shut your outlet/s.

Automated system customers within the Macalister Irrigation District can change finish times through “Waterline” or the internet without contacting a planner.

11 Understanding our tariffs

11.1 Water Share Fees – High and Low Reliability

These are annual fees, and reflect the costs of operating, maintaining and renewing the reservoirs in which your water shares are harvested and stored.

Applies to: Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District

11.2 Delivery Share Fees

This is an annual fee and reflects the costs of operating, maintaining, renewing and upgrading the channels, pipelines and regulators that we use to deliver your water.

Applies to: Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District

11.3 Service Point Fees

These fees apply to each service point associated with your delivery or extraction share, and reflect the costs of operating and maintaining your outlet or meter.

Applies to: Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District

11.4 Water Usage Fees

Water usage charges are calculated on the amount of water you use, and are billed progressively with quarterly accounts for Werribee and Bacchus Marsh, and in August for the Macalister Irrigation District.

We will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that you have an actual meter reading at least once every 12 months.

Applies to: Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters)
Werribee Irrigation District Recycled Water Scheme

11.5 Drainage Diversion Fees

This fee is for irrigators who hold agreements to divert water from the irrigation drainage system.

Applies to: Macalister Irrigation District
Werribee Irrigation District

11.6 Licence Fixed Charges

This is an annual fee and applies to each unregulated surface water and groundwater licence.

Applies to: Surface water licences (unregulated systems plus Latrobe & Maribyrnong)
Groundwater licences

11.7 Licensed Volume Charges

This is an annual fee and applies to each megalitre of licensed volume for unregulated surface water and groundwater licences.

Applies to: Surface water licences (unregulated systems plus Latrobe & Maribyrnong)
Groundwater licences

11.8 System Management Charges

This is an annual fee and applies to each megalitre of licensed volume for surface water and groundwater licences in specified areas. This reflects the additional costs associated with managing licences in these areas, and may include storage costs on regulated systems, resource monitoring costs, or increased field presence in areas of intensive water use.

Applies to: Surface and groundwater water licences in specified areas

12 Understanding our customer committees

The views and needs of our customers are represented by our Customer Consultative Committees. These groups play an important role in consultation, collaboration and feedback in the operation of our business. Our committees include:

- The Macalister Customer Consultative Committee
- The Werribee and Bacchus Marsh Customer Consultative Committee
- The Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

We supplement these committees with working groups and local committees as needed to deal with specific issues as they arise.

Our Committees and Forum are appointed by the SRW Board, from a panel of nominees called when positions fall due for re-appointment. The members are appointed for four years on a rotating basis, with half the membership retiring each two years.

If you are interested in nominating for membership or would like more information on membership, the work these committees do on your behalf or when they meet, please contact SRW on **1300 139 510**.

13 Understanding the Victorian Water Register

The Water Register is a web-based register of all water entitlements and licences in Victoria.

It was formed to meet a key Victorian Government aim of improving monitoring and public reporting of the state's water resources.

It records water entitlements, enables proper water accounting, keeps track of the water market and produces crucial information for managing Victoria's water resources

The register includes licences on regulated and unregulated rivers, groundwater and farm dams from across the state.

As part of the process of putting licences into the Water Register, licensing authorities have worked to standardise licence conditions across the state.

Licence holders need to check the conditions when a new licence is received and ensure they operate to them. We will let you know if your conditions have changed prior to renewing your licence.

Southern Rural Water's role in issuing and reviewing licences does not change. We will create all new and amended licences in the Water Register, where the information will be held.

For more information about the Water Register, visit www.waterregister.vic.gov.au, or contact Southern Rural Water on **1300 139 510**.

SECTION C: SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS

14 Charges and billing

14.1 Pricing

Our prices are approved by the Essential Services Commission. Before recommending tariffs to the Commission, we consult with and seek the opinion and recommendation of our irrigation customer consultative committees and our Groundwater and Rivers Forum.

Prices are set to cover:

- all operating, maintenance and administrative costs
- an appropriate share of corporate overheads
- providing adequately for the rehabilitation and replacement of the assets used in the business, particularly the infrastructure assets (depreciation and renewals charges)
- the business's share of the costs of operating the dams and weirs used to harvest the water supplied to you
- providing funds for investment in improvements to the existing infrastructure, to improve service or eliminate existing defects and problems in the system, and to reduce the risk of infrastructure failure
- an appropriate share of the costs of operating stream gauging sites and groundwater bores that allow us to manage the resource (where applicable)

Our approved fees and charges are published on our website at www.srw.com.au and can be provided upon request.

We will not charge for the provision of any information or advice, unless specified within our approved tariff schedule.

If you are interested in the Financial Plans or business objectives of our business in more detail, you can inspect our five-year Water Plan or our Corporate Plan at our Maffra office during normal business hours. These plans are also available on our website at www.srw.com.au.

14.2 Issue of bills and payment of accounts

We will issue bills to the preferred address nominated by you, which can include an agent or other person authorised to act on your behalf. If you don't give us particular instructions, we will issue the bill to the address of the property or your last known address.

The bill will clearly itemise the charges for different services. Important information on your account will include:

- a description of the service eg, Water Share, Groundwater licence etc
- the quantity of the service (usually in ML), and
- the price of the service.

Charges for Werribee and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District services are billed on a quarterly basis, and are payable no less than 28 days after they have been issued. The due date will be clearly stated on each bill.

All other services, including Macalister Irrigation District services and surface and groundwater licences will be issued a single bill for annual service charges, which can be paid over four instalments, typically due in November, January, March and May. These arrangements will be clearly outlined on the bill, and instalment slips will be issued to customers taking up this option.

Macalister Irrigation District customers may also receive a bill for annual usage charges, typically in July/August. This will be payable no less than 28 days after it is issued, and the due date will be clearly stated on the bill.

A range of payment options are available to you, including payment by mail, at your local Post Office, by credit card (either in person or over the phone), or via B-Pay.

14.3 Payment difficulties

If you are having trouble paying, you should contact SRW without delay to discuss our flexible payment options.

We can offer a flexible repayment schedule. Your overdue account will incur an account service charge, but the scheduled repayments will reflect your capacity to pay. Where you make a payment, we will apply that sum to the debt that has been outstanding the longest.

We will provide written confirmation of any flexible arrangement within 10 business days.

You can re-negotiate your flexible arrangement if there is a sudden change in your circumstances.

We are not required to offer you a flexible payment arrangement if you in the past 12 months, have had two flexible payment plans cancelled due to non-payment unless you provide us with a fair and reasonable assurance (based on circumstances) that you will comply with the plan.

Upon request we will provide information on programs relating to:

- Flexible payment plans
- Any government assistance/rebate packages available and rural financial counselling services

Further information about debt management procedures is available on our website.

We may also be able to refer you to a government funded assistance program or a rural financial counsellor.

14.4 Non Payment

We rely on you to pay your bills promptly. If you do not pay your account by the due date, we will:

- issue a reminder encouraging you to pay the account, or
- arrange a flexible repayment schedule

If you still do not pay or make other arrangements we will send you a warning notice giving 5 days' notice of our intention to:

- in irrigation districts, suspend supply of water to you or physically restrict your supply
- for take and use surface or groundwater licences, cancel your licence
- refer your account to a collection agency
- take legal action to recover the outstanding amounts

Any assistance that is available to customer including contact information for Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

These actions may be taken if:

- You have outstanding charges on your account
- more than 10 business days have elapsed since the issue of a reminder notice
- more than 5 business days have elapsed since the issue of a warning notice; and
- we have been unable to contact you or to make suitable payment arrangements

These actions will not be taken where:

- the amount owed is less than \$200, unless you have failed to pay consecutive bills in full over a period of not less than 12 months;

- you are awaiting determination of an application for an eligible government funded concession relating to amounts charged; or
- the amount in dispute is subject to an unresolved complaint procedure.

We will not suspend or restrict supply on:

- a Friday, public holiday, weekend, day before a public holiday, or after 3.00 pm; or
- a day of total fire ban declared by the Country Fire Authority in the area in which your property is located.

We will restore a supply service suspended or restricted under this clause within 1 business day of becoming aware of the reason for suspension or restriction no longer persisting.

If your take and use surface or groundwater is cancelled and you are in an area where the resource is capped, you may then not be able to obtain a new licence if you later decide to reapply.

If you continue to take water without a valid licence you will be in breach of the Water Act and liable to appropriate compliance action.

14.5 Additional costs

Failure to pay your bills on time adds to our costs which we will pass on to you. This includes:

- interest on the overdue account
- collection costs incurred from the use of a collection agency
- legal costs
- bank charges from dishonoured cheques or direct debits

Interest starts accruing on the day the amount is due and ends on the date all unpaid amounts are paid in full, both days inclusive.

The rate of interest that we apply to overdue amounts will be shown on your bill, and will not be higher than the maximum rate set by the Essential Services Commission for this purpose.

14.6 Variation to charges

If we identify that we have undercharged on your account, we will notify you, and we will allow you to pay the undercharged amount over a time period equal to the period in which undercharging occurred, up to a maximum of 12 months. The amount to be repaid will be listed as a separate item on your bill.

You will not be required to pay any for any undercharging that occurred more than 12 months before being notified. If you are having trouble paying, you should contact SRW without delay to discuss our flexible payment options.

If we have undercharged a customer as a result of the customer's illegal use of water, an estimate of water use will be applied.

If we identify that we have overcharged on an account, we will:

- inform you within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error; and
- refund or credit the amount overcharged in accordance with your instructions

14.7 Variation to prices

Our prices are set and approved annually. If, in exceptional circumstances, we need to vary a price within a financial year, we will:

- notify you of the variation with your next bill; and
- calculate a pro-rata charge (or credit).

14.8 Information statements and special meter readings

If you require information about your charges within a billing cycle you can apply for an Information Statement. If water usage charges apply to one or more of your services, you may also apply for a special meter reading to ensure that usage information is up to date.

For customers who order water within our irrigation districts, you can enter your own meter readings, and also generate usage statements. For more information telephone our 24 hour Waterline service on **1300 360 117** or contact us through the internet at www.srw.com.au/worder.

14.9 Application of payments

Payments will be applied against charges in order of their due dates, so that oldest debts are paid first.

14.10 Dishonoured payments

If your cheque or other payment is dishonoured, we will recover any amount charged by our financial institution for that dishonour.

14.11 Power of sale of transfer

If an amount owed remains outstanding for 33 months, we may exercise our power of sale or transfer in accordance with the *Water Act 1989*.

In such an event, we will notify you in writing of:

- our powers under water law to sell or transfer the property, and
- when we intend to exercise our power of sale or transfer, and
- the process and consequences of those actions

14.12 Billing history

Upon request, we can provide account and usage history for the preceding three years. This will be provided within 10 business days. We may refuse access where the information differs to our family violence policy and the refusal is not in breach of law.

We may also be able to access information beyond three years, though charges may apply if this information must be retrieved from archives.

15 Working on your land

15.1 General principles

Whilst the Water Act gives SRW staff and our contractors right of entry when on SRW business, we prefer to build relationships with landowners rather than rely on our statutory powers. In all dealings with landowners we will:

- show courtesy and respect
- deal honestly and fairly
- be accessible, understanding and helpful
- listen and provide considered responses
- take ownership of, and deal with, any issues that arise
- manage expectations and honour commitments

We will only enter properties for legitimate SRW business purposes and endeavour to:

- leave land in the same state as when we arrived
- minimise land damage and the risk of spreading any disease to or from farmland
- minimise restrictions on the use of the land caused by our activities
- complete our works without delay

15.2 Communication

For activities other than reading water meters and, in irrigation districts, routine water distribution, we will take reasonable steps to:

- contact you before entering your land
- inform you of our intentions and timeframe before entry
- consult with you regarding any planned works that may have a significant impact eg tree felling

When undertaking works on your land we will:

- Respond to your queries promptly and courteously
- Inform you immediately of any damage or interference to your operations, services, structures or property
- Handle any complaints in accordance with our complaint handling policy and procedures

15.3 Staff identification

We will carry identification cards and produce them upon request.

15.4 Protecting your property and services

When undertaking works on your land, we will take reasonable steps to:

- protect your equipment and services from damage during our activities
- ensure that debris does not enter any drain, channel or waterway
- ensure that any road or track is kept clear of any build up of debris (eg clay, sand) from the equipment used on the site
- minimise damage to vegetation
- As far as possible confine operations to easements or reserves - and where it is necessary to move beyond these, confine operations to an area agreed upon with the landowner

Before starting work on your land, we will check with you to find out the location of important assets (both above and below ground) in the area.

We will obtain your consent before:

- storing materials or equipment on the land
- removing or moving your property
- obstructing any drains or channels

If we hold keys to your property, we will take care to keep them safe, and return them to you whenever:

- you request them
- we no longer require them
- we are aware that you are leaving the property

15.5 Protecting your business operations

When working on your land, we will:

- Where required by you, provide an alternative means of access where access is disrupted by our works
- Provide fencing where necessary for the protection of people, animals and crops and to prevent trespass - to your reasonable requirements
- Leave all gates as found and take all necessary precautions to prevent the straying of livestock
- Take reasonable steps to avoid disturbance to livestock - and consult with you prior to the use (except in an emergency) of noisy equipment eg chainsaws, jack hammers, air compressors, heavy-duty equipment

- Comply with regulations or good practice to minimise the risk of spreading disease or weeds
- Promptly remove all temporary buildings, roadways, surplus materials and equipment etc on completion of works

15.6 Respect

We will ensure that our staff or contractors, when working on your land:

- Are in uniform or dressed appropriately
- Dispose properly of personal rubbish
- Do not bring dogs onto the site
- Do not use coarse or vulgar language within public hearing
- Use proper toilet facilities at all times
- Obtain your consent before:
 - lighting fires (and then comply with any fire restrictions that apply)
 - entering your buildings (other than a workplace for the purpose of meeting you and/or your staff)
- Drive responsibly and carefully at all times - avoiding raising excessive road-dust, and staying on existing roads and tracks, or on routes and areas previously agreed with you

16 Repairs, maintenance and other works in irrigation districts

Normally, SRW would not expect any maintenance of or repairs to its irrigation systems during the declared irrigation period to have any effect on your supply.

From time to time, however, we need to restrict or discontinue supply during the irrigation season to carry out urgent repairs. Occasionally also emergency situations arise, such as a break in a channel or the failure of a regulator, which need immediate attention and require us to shut down part of the system to undertake the necessary works.

If we need to undertake planned urgent repair or maintenance works during the irrigation period we will:

- notify all customers whose supply will be affected, not less than 7 days prior to the works taking place
- make arrangements for those customers to receive priority for supply of water during the seven days prior to the works
- complete any such works within 5 working days

If we need to undertake emergency works during the irrigation period we will:

- notify all affected customers within 24 hours of the emergency occurring, including advice on the estimated duration of the shut down, and details of any emergency supply arrangements which have been set up or are proposed
- give customers whose supply is affected by an emergency event priority for supply of water after the works are completed

17 Compliance with performance standards

We will develop and implement plans, systems and processes, and manage our assets to ensure that supply services are provided on a reliable basis and to minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to supply services.

We aim meet the approved service standards, except to the extent that:

- the customer does not comply with any applicable requirements of service or supply;
- the customer's infrastructure falls short of the required condition;
- a supply service is provided via private infrastructure;
- there is a drought or an emergency;
- there is an unplanned or planned interruption;
- supply is restricted or suspended in accordance with this code;
- for a drainage service, use of the supply service would exceed applicable limitations of the drainage system;
- amendments to approved service standards have been agreed with customers; or
- water law provides otherwise.

In the event of a planned interruption, at least five business days in advance we will inform affected customers of the time and duration of that interruption.

18 Investment and asset management in irrigation districts

SRW is committed not only to maintaining our system in good operating condition, but also to working collaboratively with Customer Consultative Committees to:

- identify problem areas within the irrigation infrastructure that lead to restricted capacity, inadequate service standards, or other water supply problems
- establish priorities for works to eliminate these problem areas and continuously improve service and performance standards
- set prices which create funds for investment in these works

If you have concerns about areas of the irrigation supply system that you feel impede service levels or create other problems for customers, or if you can see ideas for further improvement of the current infrastructure, please pass these concerns and ideas to us.

All issues and suggestions raised will be fully investigated and options for improvement identified. SRW will continue to work closely with your Customer Consultative Committees to establish and implement programs of works aimed at improving the ability of our irrigation infrastructure to meet your business needs.

19 Water quality

As a rural water supplier, SRW either:

- supplies you with water directly from our storage and supply systems, or
- licenses customers to take water direct from waterways, catchment dams, groundwater bores or SRW drains

This means that **we do not warrant the quality of the water we supply to you in any respect.**

In particular, please note that the water has not been treated in any way and is therefore **not** fit for any use which may involve human consumption, directly or indirectly. We also do not warrant its suitability for stock watering, domestic purposes or commercial use (eg vegetable washing).

We do, however, make the following commitment to all customers:

- If an event significantly affects the quality of water under our management we will advise you at the earliest opportunity
- If we believe that the risk posed to people, livestock and/or produce warrants it, we will use our powers under the Water Act to restrict or suspend your ability to take and use that water

20 Overuse

You are responsible for ensuring that you only take water that you are legally entitled to take. We treat overuse as a compliance matter, and you may be prosecuted if you:

- Take more water than you have been allocated within an irrigation district
- Take more water than you are licensed to take under a surface or groundwater take and use licence
- Take water in contravention of any existing ban, roster or restriction

21 Family Violence

Family violence poses substantial risk to the health and wellbeing of our customers. SRW actively endorses measures to support customers experiencing family violence.

SRW has comprehensive processes to support customers experiencing family violence. Support will be respectful and sensitive with a focus on safety and wellbeing as well as debt or payment assistance.

The Business Services Team will provide individual case managers to customers experiencing family violence. Customer information is not disclosed to perpetrators and that any information provided is accessible only by authorised staff (our case managers). SRW will provide a dedicated phone line available to the customer preventing the need to retell their story to another person.

Where there is (or has been) a joint account, it is acknowledged that routine privacy protections may be at risk. Through the case management approach, SRW will endeavour to uphold a customer's confidentiality and minimise the risk of inadvertent disclosure. Such accounts will be "flagged" and referred to case managers.

Throughout individual case management, customers will not have their supply restricted nor any legal action or additional debt recovery costs applied while engaging with a case manager. Any debt recovery that has already commenced will be suspended until the matter is out of case management.

Awareness training is provided to all SRW staff including as part of the induction for new starters. The Business Services Team will continue to undertake specialised training due to the complexity and sensitive nature of the work involved in family violence.

Information regarding SRW's approach to family violence is outlined in numerous policy and procedure documents with links to these documents quickly and easily accessible on the website. A hardcopy can be provided upon request.

These documents are reviewed periodically to ensure information is relevant and current.

22 Privacy Policy

We respect and protect the privacy of our customers. Our Privacy Policy can be found on our website (www.srw.com.au)

Our Privacy Policy specifies that:

- We only collect the information necessary to conduct our business
- Essential personal information is not released without customer consent unless reasonably and lawfully required for related government business
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the management of personal information collected and disclosed complies with the *Water Act 1989* requirements and privacy
- Any individual is able to gain access to their information

Under the terms of our Privacy Policy, Southern Rural Water may disclose information about a customer for the collection of overdue amounts owed by that customer. Southern Rural Water may also exchange information about a customer to that customer's credit providers, including those named in a consumer credit report issued by a credit reporting agency

23 Dispute resolution

SRW will endeavour to resolve in good faith any dispute directly with our customers and others affected by our operations.

In the case of a dispute about non-payment of an account, we may consider a dispute resolved if:

- we have informed you of our decision on the complaint or any internal review of the complaint, and
- 10 business days have passed since, and
- You have not sought a further review or lodged a claim with EWOV (Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria) or another external dispute resolution forum

We will not consider a dispute resolved until any claim lodged with EWOV or another external dispute resolution forum has been finalised.

24 Further information

24.1 Enquiries

Enquiries can be made:

- By telephone on 1300 139 510 or (03) 5139 3100
- By email to srw@srw.com.au
- By fax to (03) 5139 3150
- By post to PO Box 153, Maffra, Vic 3860
- In person at 88 Johnson St, Maffra, 1 Tower Rd Werribee, 132 Fairy St Warrnambool

Our friendly staff can assist you with:

- account information;
- bill payment options;
- concession entitlements;
- programs available to customers who are having payment difficulties;
- information about the water business's complaint handling procedures;
- information about EWOV;
- water allocations;
- water ordering;
- licence applications and renewals; and
- applicable fees.

24.2 Water allocation

Our website (www.srw.com.au) contains details of the water allocation method for each irrigation district. We can also provide you a Fact Sheet explaining this.

24.3 Regulatory information

Upon request, we can provide you any regulatory instruments other than the Water Act.

24.4 Communication assistance

We can provide access to a free interpreter and a Telephone Typewriter (TTY) service. If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service www.relayservice.gov.au:

- TTY (Telephone Typewriter) /voice users 133 677

- Speak and Listen users 1300 555 727
- Translating and interpreting services 131 450
- SMS Relay 0423 677 767
- Internet relay users – internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au
- Video relay – open Skype and contact nrs.videorelay
- Captioned replay – captioned-relay.nrscall.gov.au