



Customer Charter

July 2023



Version	Description	Date	Author	Approved
1	Updated to accord with the Water Industry Standard – Rural Customer Service published by the Essential Services Commission on 27/09/2022	27 February 2023	Craig Smith	Elisa Hunter
2	Updated to reflect comments received from the Essential Services Commission on 23/03/2023	23 May 2023	Craig Smith	Elisa Hunter
3	Updated to reflect approved Price Submission 23	31 July 2023	Craig Smith	Elisa Hunter

Charter = SRW Customer Charter March 2023

DMS = Demand Management System

ESC = Essential Services Commission

SRW = Southern Rural Water

Acknowledging Traditional Owners

Southern Rural Water (SRW) acknowledges and recognises Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which we work and live, and we respect their deep and ongoing connection to Country. We are committed to honouring the knowledge, aspirations, and ongoing connection to Country of Aboriginal Victorians in our operations, water planning activities and decision-making. We understand the mutual benefit of working in partnership and seek to embed this ethos into everything we do.

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Contact SRW

You can contact SRW via any of the means below:

By telephone: For all enquiries, including emergencies, please call:

- 1300 139 510 or (+61) (03) 51393100

For water ordering (Waterline):

- 1300 360 117

Duty Officer (for 24 hour emergencies):

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

0412 860 250 (Gippsland and South-Eastern Victoria)

0417 589 183 (Melbourne and South-Western Victoria)

By email: srw@srw.com.au

By post: PO Box 153
Maffra, Vic 3860

In Person: 88 Johnson St Maffra (Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm.)
132 Fairy St Warrnambool (by appointment)
1 Tower Rd Werribee (by appointment)

Our website: www.srw.com.au

You can obtain information about rosters and restrictions by calling:

- 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, 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)
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Part A – INTRODUCTION

About this Charter

Purpose

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

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

Scope

In this Charter, you will find SRW's service standards and targets for:

- assessing and/or processing licensing and other administrative applications
- responding to correspondence or complaints and providing information for each applicable service
- providing a reliable water supply
- other customer-related areas.

You will also find advice about:

- our operating performance and service standards
- our responsibilities to supply you with water
- our responsibilities in administering groundwater and surface water diversions
- our responsibilities in administering works approvals and dam licences
- 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 (Vic)*
- 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 limits our powers under legislation.

Structure

This Charter is in three parts:

- Part A provides important contextual information
- Parts B provides information required by the Standard
- Parts C provides additional information which may be of assistance to you.

Operation and review

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

If you have a suggestion for improvement or think that there are issues of importance that the Charter should cover but doesn't, then please contact us, as set out on page 4.

Additional copies of the Charter

You can obtain additional copies of this Charter by:

- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***
- ***visiting our website - <https://www.srw.com.au/more/about-us/acts-regulations-and-policies>***

About SRW

Who is SRW?

SRW is a state-owned water corporation.

Under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*, SRW has functions that include:

- the delivery of water and irrigation drainage services
- managing seven major dams and eight diversion weirs
- administering water shares
- administering licences for the taking of ground and surface water and the construction of farm dams.

We service an area of 88,000 square kilometres, stretching from the South Australian border to the New South Wales border and from the Great Dividing Range to the Victorian coastline.

Our functions are further defined by the Statement of Obligations, which provides the framework for the economic regulation of water corporations, the Letter of Expectations to support delivery of actions identified in *Water for Victoria*, as well as specific directions provided by the Minister.

Irrigation

SRW manages the release and delivery of water to the Werribee, Bacchus Marsh, and Macalister irrigation districts. This includes operating and maintaining regulated channels, pipeline networks, drainage systems and the supply of recycled water.

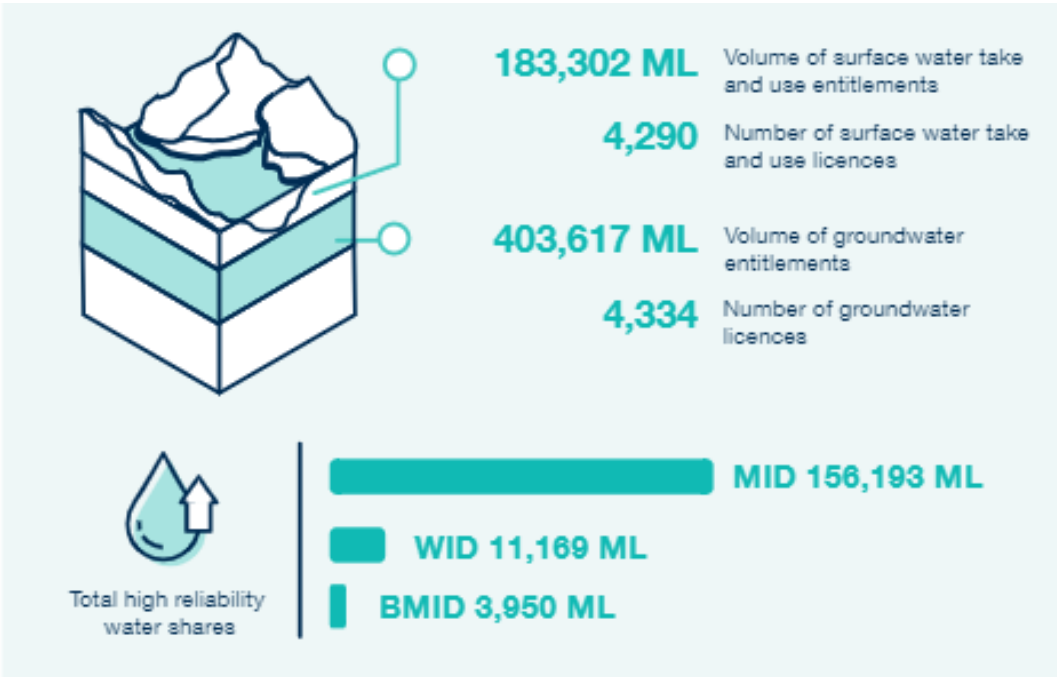
Managing dams

SRW operates and maintains seven dams to harvest water on behalf of irrigators and other bulk entitlement holders, including power generators and urban water utilities.

We manage three weirs (Lerderderg, Cowwarr and Maffra weirs) and the Willang Yarn balancing storage, all of which help us to manage water flows through our systems.

We also work with catchment management authorities, Melbourne Water, and the Victorian Environmental Water Holder to manage the release of environmental flows.

SRW at a glance



7

Major storages



1187 KM

Channels, pipes and drains in the WID, BMID and MID



\$1.85 B

In assets



8

Diversion weirs



487,000 ML

Total storages capacity volume



WID 7,864 ML

Total recycled water customer contracted volume



The following table lists the storages we manage and the customers they service.

Storage	River	Customers
Blue Rock Lake	Latrobe	Gippsland Water, power generators, licensed diverters, Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Department of Treasury and Finance
Lake Narracan	Latrobe	Power generators, Department of Treasury and Finance
Lake Glenmaggie	Macalister / Thomson	Macalister irrigators, licensed diverters, Victorian Environmental Water Holder
Rosslynne Reservoir	Maribyrnong	Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water, licensed diverters
Melton Reservoir	Werribee	Werribee irrigators, Bacchus Marsh irrigators, licensed diverters
Merrimu Reservoir	Werribee	Greater Western Water, Werribee irrigators, Bacchus Marsh irrigators, licensed diverters, Victorian Environmental Water Holder
Pykes Creek Reservoir	Werribee	Greater Western Water, Werribee irrigators, Bacchus Marsh irrigators, licensed diverters

Groundwater and rivers

SRW is delegated under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* to manage licensed water use from southern Victoria's unregulated rivers and groundwater aquifers. Our role includes:

- assessing applications to take and use water
- assessing applications to construct new farm dams (including potentially hazardous farm dams, catchment dams and in-stream dams) and bores
- metering water use and ensuring compliance with legal requirements
- monitoring rivers and aquifers and applying rosters and restrictions where necessary to protect environmental outcomes.

Recreational facilities

SRW provides a range of recreational facilities at our storages. These range from picnic grounds, playgrounds and barbecues to boat launching ramps catering for fishing and water-skiing. In doing so, we cater for a variety of visitors from those engaging in more passive activities like picnicking, through to fishing at Blue Rock Lake and more intensive boating like water-skiing and jet-skiing at Pykes Creek Reservoir, Melton Reservoir and Lake Glenmaggie.

Our powers

SRW's main powers under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* that may affect customer, include to:

- enter your land to read a meter, inspect any works or undertake any test to ensure the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* is being complied with
- enter your land, with 7 days' notice in writing, to conduct 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)
- issue notices preventing or prohibiting anything that is in breach of the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* or any licence conditions
- 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
- install a meter to measure the amount of water taken by you
- take appropriate compliance action, including possible prosecution for breaches of the Act
- 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 (Vic)*, or which threaten the resource in any way.

Mutual Obligations

Our relationship is built on communication and trust.

Our obligations to you

SRW has a wide range of statutory responsibilities under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*. The following are our main obligations to you as our customer:

When	Our commitment to you
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 <i>Water Act 1989 (Vic)</i> and consistent with Government policy.
In undertaking compliance	To conduct 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 our dealings	To act with courtesy and respect.

Your obligations to us

We seek and rely on your cooperation. Specifically, we ask:

When	Our ask of you
Within irrigation districts	That you place orders for the water you need. (Typically orders require three days: this may be shorter for automated sections of our districts).
If you have a licence to take and use water from a stream or bore	That you ensure your licence is valid and that you comply with all the conditions on your licence That you make yourself aware of any rosters and restrictions that apply.
If you are planning or conducting 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 specific requirements for access to your property, for biosecurity 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 or in quarterly instalments by the due dates. If you are having trouble paying your account, please contact us, as set out on page 4.
With regard to our staff	That you act with courtesy and respect.



Part B – THE CHARTER

1. Quality and Reliability of Services

1.1 Water supply quality

SRW does not treat water. Hence, the water that we provide, or license is not fit for human consumption. Similarly, we do not warrant the suitability of the water for stock, irrigation use, commercial use (e.g., vegetable washing) or any other purpose.

From time to time, we may need to suspend supply or warn of water quality issues e.g.:

- Salinity levels in reuse water from the western treatment plant exceed 1800 csm
- BGA levels reach the intervention levels set out in SRW's BGA Incident Management Plan
- SRW is using chemicals close to water ways (especially magnicide H)
- In other circumstances where water may be unsuitable for the intended use.

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 1989* (Vic) to restrict or suspend your ability to take and use that water.

1.2 Delivery of water and access to drainage services

Except in the following circumstances, SRW will seek to supply water in accordance with the service standards and targets set out in Clause 1.5:

- you do not comply with any applicable requirements of service or supply
- your infrastructure falls short of the required condition
- a supply service is provided via private infrastructure
- there is a drought, rationing or an emergency
- there is an unplanned or planned interruption
- supply is restricted or suspended in accordance with this industry standard
- for a drainage service, use of the supply service would exceed applicable limitations of the drainage system
- exemptions to service standards have been agreed with you or
- the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic) provide otherwise.

1.3 Water supply rectification

SRW cannot guarantee to supply water. While licences and entitlements provide access to water, the amount that a customer can receive is influenced by catchment and storage conditions. Hence the supply of water is limited by applicable rosters, restrictions, and allocations.

From time to time, we experience faults in our system. SRW will seek to rectify any disruptions as soon as possible after becoming aware of the fault.

Our targets are:

District	Target
MID	All unplanned or emergency disruptions restored within 10 days
WID	No more than twice per annum can recycled water not be supplied for 5 consecutive days due to salinity levels ($\leq 1,800$) or the potential presence of blue green algae
WID	All unplanned disruptions restored within 3 days
BMID	All unplanned disruptions restored within 3 days

1.4 Obligation to provide reliable services

SRW has developed and implements programs and processes, including its asset management system and operational procedures, to manage and maintain its assets to ensure that supply services are provided on a reliable basis.

1.5 Service standards

SRW has adopted the standards in the following table:

Standards

1. Applications that do not require public notification completed within:	
• allocation trades, divide a share	3 days
• licence transfer (on sale of land), water share transfers, information statements, subdivisions	7 days
• farm dam licences, take and use licences	60 days
2. Maximum time to respond to correspondence or complaints	10 days
3. Water is delivered	On agreed days
4. Maximum disruption times in the MID	10 consecutive days
5. Maximum disruption times in the BMID and WIDMID	3 consecutive days
6. Bulk entitlements orders delivered	On agreed days
7. Maximum number of days water can not be supplied due to high salinity (>1,800) or BGA in the WID.	5 consecutive days
8. Minimum amount of new permanent water shares offered for sale in the MID	1000 ML/annum
9. Maximum time properties are inundated after a 1:50 rainfall event in the MID and WID.	24 hours

These standards reflect the outcomes that were developed in consultation with our customers in the development of our Price Submission 2023:

Reliable water supply	
What's the outcome we are seeking?	Customers have access to reliable water supplies to support their business needs.
What did our customers say?	Our customers have told us that access to a reliable supply of quality water when it is needed is critical to their business, both now and into the future. Having modern and efficient assets enable us to provide a reliable service, while ensuring that we allocate water within sustainable limits will enable us to provide water security into the future.
SRW commitment	SRW is committed to maintaining efficient infrastructure and management systems capable of supplying a reliable source of water.
How will we measure this?	<p>Our performance measures and targets focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All orders from district customers delivered on day that was confirmed ● Minimising supply disruptions in the MID, WID and BMID ● Water quality in the WID ● Bulk entitlement orders delivered

Great service	
What's the outcome we are seeking?	Customers have access to great service.
What did our customers say?	<p>Our customers have told us of the desire for SRW to be an efficient and cost-effective organisation. They have asked us to focus on our core purpose and to maintain existing standards of service.</p> <p>To provide great service, it is critical that we aim for optimum efficiency, where our people are supported with the right systems, processes, and technology to deliver great service to our customers.</p>
SRW commitment	SRW is committed to providing professional and prompt service to our diverse customers in their preferred manner.
How will we measure this?	<p>Our performance measures and targets focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer complaints - All ● Complaints managed quickly - All ● Applications completed within set timeframes – G&R ● Drainage management – MID & WID ● Drain maintenance – MID & WID ● MID drain maintenance based on rainfall events of up to 84mm in 24hrs ● WID drain maintenance based on rainfall events of up to 75mm in 6hrs.

Sustainable water

What's the outcome we are seeking? Allocations are managed in a sustainable way for customers, community, and the environment to ensure a secure future

What did our customers say? Our customers have told us that access to water is their biggest challenge over the next five years with some expressing concerns about the challenges of drought, climate change and the long-term availability of water. There is going to be the need to balance the economic, social, and environmental values of water in an uncertain future.
One of the key ways we can provide greater certainty is to secure untapped resources for our customers and the environment.

SRW commitment SRW is committed to effective resource management that maximises the water available for consumptive use, community, and the environment.

How will we measure this? Our performance measures and targets focus on:

- Investigation of unauthorised use - All
- Release of additional water entitlements in the MID
- Delivery efficiency – MID, BMID & WID

Valued community member

What's the outcome we are seeking? We deliver value to regional communities through direct action and relationships with Traditional Owners, stakeholders, customers and the general community.

What did our customers say? SRW has strong relationships with its customers and stakeholders. Our customers have told us that they value their relationship with SRW and appreciate our efforts to advocate on their behalf. Stakeholders have also told us that they value our partnerships and the opportunity to work together. While some customers have expressed concern about our involvement in some areas (e.g., climate change, environmental and traditional owners), government and societal expectations are placing greater focus on these areas.

SRW commitment SRW is committed to being a good corporate citizen, partnering with our customers and the community to facilitate the health of the regions in which we operate.

How will we measure this? Our performance measures and targets focus on:

- Emission reductions – All
- Environmental flows – bulk entitlement holders
- Harvesting – bulk entitlement holders

Fair and reasonable prices	
What's the outcome we are seeking?	Prices reflect customer value.
What did our customers say?	Our customers have told us that prices are a concern to them. In fact, this was the number one priority identified by irrigation customers. SRW has maintained a program of limited price increases and in some cases price reductions and freezes. However, we manage an asset portfolio with a replacement cost of approximately \$1.85 billion where the current revenue stream leads to a gap in the financial sustainability of the business.
SRW commitment	SRW is committed to modernising our business with minimal price increases.
How will we measure this?	<p>Our performance measures and targets are focussed on our input costs and revenues so that prices are consistent with Price Submission 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating costs are on budget (+/- 5%) • Capital expenditure is on cumulative budget • Efficiency improvements are delivered

1.6 Unplanned interruptions

SRW has procedures to minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to supply services (including restoration as soon as possible, and the provision of information).

We have adopted the following targets:

District	Target
MID	All unplanned disruptions restored within 10 days
WID	No more than twice per annum can recycled water be supplied for 5 consecutive days due to high salinity ($\leq 1,800$) or blue green algae
WID	All unplanned disruptions restored within 3 days
BMID	All unplanned disruptions restored within 3 days

1.7 Planned interruptions

SRW will inform you as soon as practicable of the time and duration of any planned interruption to a supply service by their preferred method of communication and, if possible, by SMS, at least five business days in advance.

2. Guaranteed Service Levels

As a rural water corporation, SRW does not have guaranteed service levels.

3. Works and Maintenance

3.1 Worker identification

SRW staff must:

- not enter your property without appropriate identification
- show the identification to the property owner/manager on request.

3.2 Keys held by water business

SRW will keep any of your keys that you provide to us in safe custody and return them to you upon notification of your vacation of the relevant property or if access is no longer required.

4. Meter readings

SRW will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that all customers whose properties have a meter which measures volumetric use for billing purposes have an actual meter reading at least once every 12 months. However, this may not always be possible (e.g., SRW staff may have difficulty in finding or accessing a meter).

4.1 Customer self-reads

SRW may ask you to provide a self-read if we are unable to locate or read the meter.

You may also undertake a self-read if SRW has provided an 'estimated read'.

We will not charge you for a self-read.

We will inform you in writing:

- that a self-read is an option, if the bill you have received is based on an estimated read
- that you may request an adjusted bill, if you have received a bill based on an estimated read
- of any changes to your payment obligations if you request an adjusted bill
- of the methods for undertaking a customer self-read.

Where you request an adjusted bill, SRW will promptly and at no extra charge, provide you with an adjusted bill based on your self-read.

You can request an adjusted bill by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

4.2 Special meter readings

SRW may charge an additional fee for a special meter reading outside of the normal billing cycle.

We will not charge a fee for a special meter reading:

- if that is a self-read was undertaken in response to an 'estimated read' or
- if the property has a digital meter.

Upon request we will determine your charges outside the normal billing cycle by:

- accepting a self-read
- arranging for a special meter read
- providing an estimate of the bill.

You can request a special meter read by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

4.3 Data and digital water metering

SRW can undertake digital meter reads in some cases.

We have developed procedures explaining how data is collected, managed, and used.

You can obtain further details on our data and digital water metering procedures by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

5. Charges

5.1 Schedule of charges

SRW's prices are approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC). 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 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)
- our 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 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.

You can obtain further details on our fees and charges by:

- ***visiting our website*** – <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/prices-and-forms>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

5.2 Variation

SRW will notify you directly on or with the first bill after a decision has been made to change our fees.

We will use the most effective method practicable to publicise any variation, including prominent website updates, radio interviews, social media and/or SMS.

We may calculate a pro rata charge to affect a variation in charges where the variation date falls within a billing period.

6. Billing

6.1 Billing frequency

Our billing timetable

SRW's billing arrangements have evolved in consultation with our customer committees.

We 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 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.

6.2 Issue of bills

SRW will send (directly, or through an E-bill) a bill to:

- you at the physical or electronic address specified by you or
- your agent or representative at the physical or electronic address as specified by you.

If no address has been specified, SRW will send the bill to the physical address of the property in respect of which the charges have been incurred, or to your last known physical or electronic address.

6.3 Content of bills

SRW's bills contain a lot of information, including:

- the date of issue
- your billing address and account number
- the address of the property to which the charges in the bill relate
- (as applicable) the date on which the meter was read, or if the reading is an estimation, a clear statement that the reading is an estimation
- (as applicable) your water usage
- the amount you are required to pay
- an explanation of charges
- the date by which you are required to pay
- the ways in which you can pay the bill.

- information about help that is available if you are experiencing difficulties paying
- details of SRW's enquiry facility, including a 24-hour emergency telephone service number
- referral to interpreter services offered by SRW
- any outstanding credit or debit from previous bills
- the total of any payments made by since the last bill was issued
- information on concessions available and any concession to which you may be entitled
- if SRW intends to charge interest on outstanding amounts, a clear statement of the rate of interest and from what future date it is to be applied
- if the bill relates to a licence, that failure to pay may result in suspension of the licence.

An example of a bill is provided on the following page:

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


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

JOHN CITIZEN
C/- MOOJUICE FARMS P/L
99 UNSEALED RD
MAFFRA VIC 3860

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**



Managing Water. Serving Communities.

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

Total Payable \$6994.80

Interest will be charged at 12.25% on any amount outstanding, effective from the due date

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

payment slip

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.

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

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

... BPAY
Billier Code: 16329
Ref: 00123456

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 -
- This is your account number, and should be quoted when
- This is the date on which the bill was
- This section tells you what has happened on your
- If you owe anything from
- This is a summary of your current charges. More
- This is how much you owe, including any amounts
- This is the due date.
- Most of our accounts are payable by
- Tear off this slip to make your payment

There are lots of ways you can pay

Example of a typical SRW bill (page 1)



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.



Example of a typical SRW bill (page 2)

6.4 Explanation of charges

SRW's bills distinguish between:

- any service charge to the property
- any usage charge in connection with the provision of services provided
- any interest payable on outstanding amounts
- any rates and other charges.

You can obtain further details on our fees and charges by:

- **visiting our website** – <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/prices-and-forms>
- **contacting us, as set out on page 4.**

6.5 E-bill

SRW does not currently provide E-bills but is looking to do so in the future. When we do this, the bill will contain:

- a clear and accessible link to the full bill or instructions about how to access the full bill
- the amount payable and the due date
- the methods by which the bill can be paid
- (if applicable) your water usage for the current billing period
- information about assistance that is available if you are experiencing difficulties paying and how to access this assistance
- information about our customer support policy.
- any other information we may consider necessary.

6.6 Adjustment of bills

SRW may recover from you an amount undercharged if:

- except in the case of illegal usage, the amount is limited to the amount undercharged in the four months prior to SRW notifying you that undercharging has occurred
- the amount to be recovered is listed as a separate item and is explained on or with your bill
- it allows you to pay the amount to be recovered in instalments over four months or through SRW's flexible payment plan.

SRW will not charge interest on undercharged amounts.

SRW may identify an amount undercharged as a result of an illegal use of water by estimating, in accordance with the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*, the usage for which has not paid.

If SRW overcharges you, 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.

7. Payments

7.1 Payment methods

SRW provides 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, via BPAY, or through a facility provided by a provider of income support (for example Centrelink). Payments can also be made in advance.

Details of when, where, and how to pay are contained on our bills.

Our payment options are included on the tear-off payment slip with your bill.

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

Please contact us, as set out on page 4, if you are having trouble paying our bills.

7.2 Flexible payment plans

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

SRW can offer a flexible repayment schedule. The plan will:

- state how the amount of the payments has been calculated
- state the period over which you will pay the agreed amount
- specify an amount to be paid in each period
- be able to be modified, at your request, to accommodate change in their circumstances, in accordance with our customer support policies
- the total number of payments to be made to pay the arrears
- the period over which the payments are to be made
- the date by which each payment must be made
- the amount of each payment.

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 ten business days.

You can seek to modify your flexible arrangement if there is a sudden change in your circumstances.

We are not required to offer you a flexible payment arrangement, if in the past 12 months, you 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.

8. Chosen representative

SRW is willing to communicate with a support person or other representative.

Please contact us, as set out on page 4, if you would like to discuss this option.

9. Payment assistance

9.1. Payment assistance

Please contact us, as set out on page 4, if you are having troubles paying our bills.

SRW has established a Debt Management and Hardship Procedure (the Procedure).

The procedure establishes transparent, fair, and equitable debt management principles for customers to support them in understanding our debt management approach.

The procedure applies to the management of outstanding debt relating to fixed and variable charges, sundry debtors, interest and miscellaneous charges. They have been developed to meet the requirements and standards of the ESC Standard and to supplement this Charter.

The procedure provides for an approach that is appropriate to your circumstances on a case-by-case basis in accordance with your capacity to pay.

If you are experiencing payment difficulties, we offer the following:

- flexible payment plans
- the option to extend the due date for some or all of an amount owed
- redirection of a bill to another person for payment if that person agrees in writing
- more frequent billing or payment options
- information on how to reduce water usage, improve water efficiency and referral to relevant government water efficiency programs
- where appropriate and available, referral to:
 - government funded assistance programs
 - an independent rural financial counsellor at no cost to you.

If you are experiencing payment difficulties, we may offer, without limitation:

- waiver of late fees or any other fees
- waiver of any interest accrued
- suspension of the accrual of interest
- information of any circumstances in which it will waive or suspend interest payments on outstanding accounts
- waiver of debt.

9.2. Customer Support policy

SRW *Debt Management and Hardship Procedure* applies to small business customers and non-business customers who are identified either by themselves, the water business, an independent accredited rural financial counsellor, or a qualified accountant as experiencing payment difficulties.

In accordance with the procedure, we will:

- engage in a genuine discussion with you to determine the best option for payment, recognising that you may have short term financial issues which may be resolved in the near to medium term future where others may require a different type of approach for long term or ongoing financial issues
- suspend formal debt recovery processes, including the sale of debt, if a payment plan is established with you
- inform you about the availability of Government pension concessions where applicable
- provide this procedure and other payment assistance information to you on request
- provide contact details of an accredited financial counsellor on request
- in the case of a complaint regarding this procedure, we will advise you about your right to lodge a complaint with the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

You can obtain a copy of our Debt Management and Hardship Procedures by:

- ***visiting our website*** – <https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Debt-Management-and-Hardship-Procedure.pdf>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

10. 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.

We will not tolerate family violence and will maintain a culture of respectful relationships.

SRW will ensure staff are trained to identify and assist in cases where colleagues or you may be 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.

We will provide individual case managers to you if you are experiencing family violence. Your information will not be disclosed to accused perpetrators. Any information provided to us is accessible only by authorised staff (our case managers). SRW will provide a dedicated phone line available to you 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 your confidentiality and minimise the risk of inadvertent disclosure. Such accounts will be “flagged” and referred to case managers.

Throughout individual case management, you will not have your supply restricted nor any legal action or additional debt recovery costs applied while engaging with a case manager. Any debt recovery that has 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. We 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.

You can obtain a copy of our family violence policy by visiting our website

- https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Family-Violence-Policy_20180606.pdf
- <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/help-and-support/customer-assistance#>

You can obtain additional information or discuss your personnel circumstances by contacting:

- ***us, as set out on page 4.***
- ***Victoria’s 24/7 family violence response centre for confidential crisis support, information and accommodation. Phone: 1800 015 188***
- ***The national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service 1800 RESPECT or 1800 737 732.***

11.1 Enquiries

You can obtain further information about our Charter and our commitments to you, by:

- **visiting our website** – <https://www.srw.com.au/more/about-us/acts-regulations-and-policies>
- **contacting us, as set out on page 4.**

This could include, among other things:

- account information
- bill payment options
- concession entitlements
- programs available to customers who are having payment difficulties, including our customer support policy
- information about our complaint handling procedure
- information about EWOV
- water allocations
- water ordering
- licence applications and renewals
- applicable fees.

11.2 Fees for information or advice

Unless stated otherwise in this Charter, SRW will not charge a fee for the provision of information or advice required under this Charter to you or others affected by its operations.

11.3 Water allocation policy

SRW has established water allocation procedures for its storages and irrigation districts. We have also developed roster and restrictions guidelines for ground water and river diversions.

Allocations are managed in a sustainable way for customers, community, and the environment to ensure a secure future.

You can obtain further information about our procedures by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

11.4 Unauthorised use policy

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

- take more water than you have been allocated, or take without an order within an irrigation district
- take more water than you are licensed to take under a surface or groundwater licence
- take water in contravention of any existing ban, roster or restriction.

SRW has established procedures for the unauthorised taking of water.

You can obtain further information about our procedures by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

11.5 Efficient and responsible use of water

SRW is proud to deliver water to agriculture, power generation, urban water suppliers and the environment in a manner that balances economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

As indicated previously, allocations are managed in a sustainable way for customers, community, and the environment to ensure a secure future.

Our modernisation program is designed to drive efficiencies by:

- reducing system losses
- reducing delivery losses
- facilitating on farm improvements leading to the more efficient and responsible use of water.

Similarly, our metering program is designed to provide for more accurate usage data and encourage greater on farm efficiency.

You can obtain further information about our procedures by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

11.6 Billing history

SRW will provide you with your account and usage history for the preceding three years within 10 business days, or such other period as agreed with you.

We may refuse to provide you with your account and usage history where the provision of such information is contrary to the information handling procedures set out in SRW's family violence policy and the refusal is not in breach of law.

We may impose a reasonable charge for providing your account and usage history held beyond three years in accordance with the relevant Public Record Office Standard General Disposal Schedule for the Records of Water Authorities.

You can request your billing history by contacting us, as set out on page 4.

11.7 Regulatory information

SRW will provide you upon request any regulatory instruments other than the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), including a copy of the Water Industry Standard - Rural Customer Service.

11.8 Communication assistance

SRW will seek to communicate with you via your preferred method of communication.

We will:

- use reasonable endeavours to determine a customer's preferred method of communication and use the preferred means of communication where reasonable
- use reasonable endeavours to meet the discrete communications needs of its customers as required on a case-by-case basis
- provide, or provide access to, an interpreter service and a Telephone Typewriter (TTY) service for speech and hearing-impaired customers and customers that do not speak English.

11.9 Written communication

SRW will provide written communication to you that is:

- expressed in plain language
- legible
- presented clearly and appropriately having regard to its nature.

11.10 Customer obligations

We will use reasonable endeavours to keep you informed of your material obligations under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) and the *Water Industry Act 1994* (Vic).

11.11 Privacy

SRW respects and protect the privacy of our customers.

Our Privacy Policy specifies that:

- we only collect the information necessary to conduct our business
- essential personal information is not released without your 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, we may disclose information about you for the collection of overdue amounts owed by you. We may also exchange information about you to our credit providers.

You can obtain a copy of our Privacy Policy by

- ***visiting our website - <https://www.srw.com.au/privacy-policy>***
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

12. Complaints and disputes

12.1 Complaints and disputes policy

SRW welcomes 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.

We have established procedures for the handling of complaints from customers and others affected by our operations.

You can make a complaint or provide feedback by:

- ***visiting our website - <https://mysrw.com.au/form/customer-feedback>***
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

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 ten 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.

Our reply will deal with the substance of the enquiry or complaint.

We will give the reasons for any decision, including details of the legislative or policy basis for the reasons if appropriate.

12.2 Resolution of disputes

SRW will use reasonable endeavours to resolve in good faith any dispute directly with its customers and others affected by our operations.

If you are not happy with the outcome, you can request an internal review. This request must be in writing.

The internal review will be 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) by:

- ***calling 1800 500 509***
- ***visiting www.ewov.com.au.***

Payment disputes

SRW may consider a dispute about non-payment resolved if:

- we have informed the complainant of our decision or any internal review of the complaint
- 10 business days have passed since the complainant was informed
- the complainant has not:
 - (i) sought a further review under this clause or
 - (ii) lodged a claim with EWOV or another external dispute resolution forum.

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

We are restricted in its ability to recover an amount of money, the subject of which is in dispute, until the dispute has been resolved.

13. Collection

13.1 Appropriate communication

SRW will communicate in language and style that is sensitive and appropriate, with a focus on the support available and encouraging you to contact us.

13.2 Reminder notices

SRW relies on customers paying their bills promptly.

We will send you a reminder notice of an unpaid bill, no earlier than two business days after the due date if the bill is not paid by the due date.

The notice will include:

- the overdue amount
- the date of issue
- an explanation in plain language of the notice and of why it is being issued
- the date by which payment must be made, which must not be earlier than six business days from the issue date of the reminder notice
- statement that payment of the overdue bill is required to be made by the due date:
- payment options
- information about payment difficulty assistance available
- a warning of the further action that we may take, including (if relevant) referral of any outstanding amount to an external debt collection company for collection
- details of how to contact us
- any additional information in the notice it considers necessary.

13.3 Final notices

If the reminder notice remains unpaid, SRW will send a customer a final notice within 15 days of the issue date of a reminder notice. The final notice will include:

- the overdue amount
- the date of issue
- an explanation in plain language of the notice and of why it is being issued
- the date by which payment of the final notice must be made to avoid further action, which must not be earlier than six business days after the issue of the final notice
- a statement that payment of the overdue bill is required to be made
- any assistance that is available to the customer, including contact information for EWOV (including EWOV's telephone number), concessions, government assistance programs and our customer support policy

- a statement that that we might be able to recover outstanding amounts at the time of any sale of the customer's property (if the customer is also the property owner)
- a statement that if legal or restriction action is taken, the customer may incur additional costs
- clear and unambiguous advice about what the customer needs to do to avoid legal action or being restricted from their water supply
- the date from which interest (if any) may be applied on outstanding amounts, and the percentage interest rate that may be applied
- details of how to contact us
- information about the applicable fees to remove a restrictor.

13.4 Interest on unrecovered amounts

SRW may charge interest on any unpaid amount if:

- we fix and give notice (of at least 10 business days) of the due date of payment
- the notification indicates that interest will accrue from the due date
- any part of the amount payable by you is not paid by the due date.

13.5 Maximum rate of interest that may be charged

The maximum rate of interest that SRW will charge on unrecovered amounts is the annual rate set by the ESC, based on the 10-year Australian Commonwealth Government Bond Rate plus a margin to be determined by the ESC.

The interest starts accruing on the day the amount is due and ends on the date all unrecovered amounts of the charge are paid in full, both days inclusive.

13.6 Other charges

Apart from the application of section 274(4A) of the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) - whereby amounts owed to SRW by a customer in relation to a property owned by the customer are a charge on that property - we will not impose other charges in respect of outstanding amounts owed by you unless approved by the Commission.

13.7 Application of funds

SRW will apply payments received to any debt that has been outstanding the longest.

13.8 Dishonoured payment

SRW may recover from you the costs incurred by us due to:

- a cheque being dishonoured or
- you have insufficient funds available when paying by direct debit.

14. Actions for non-payment

SRW will restore a supply service suspended or restricted under this clause within one 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 1989* (Vic) and liable to appropriate compliance action.

14.1 Suspension

SRW may suspend a supply service for non-payment if you have outstanding charges on your account and:

- 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 final notice
- we have been unable to contact you or to make suitable payment arrangements.

14.2 Restriction and legal action to be a measure of last resort

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.

The restriction of a customer's water supply for non-payment and legal action for non-payment will be measures of last resort.

14.3 Limits on suspension, restriction, and legal action

SRW will not commence legal action or take steps to suspend or restrict a supply service due to non-payment if:

- 15 business days have not elapsed since we sent our most recent final notice
- the customer is receiving any form of assistance for payment difficulties
- the amount owed by the customer is less than \$300,
- the customer is eligible for and has lodged an application for a government funded concession relating to amounts charged by us and the application is outstanding or

- the amount in dispute is subject to an unresolved complaint procedure in accordance with our complaints policy.

This does not restrict our rights under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* and the *Water Industry Act 1994 (Vic)* to pursue a debt owed to it by a person who is no longer a customer.

14.4 Additional limits on restriction

SRW will not take steps to suspend or restrict a supply service due to non-payment if:

- it is a Friday, public holiday, weekend, day before a public holiday, or after 3.00 pm or
- it is a day of total fire ban declared by the Country Fire Authority and the Country Fire Authority has rated the fire danger in the area in which the property is located as 'Severe', 'Extreme' or 'Code Red.'

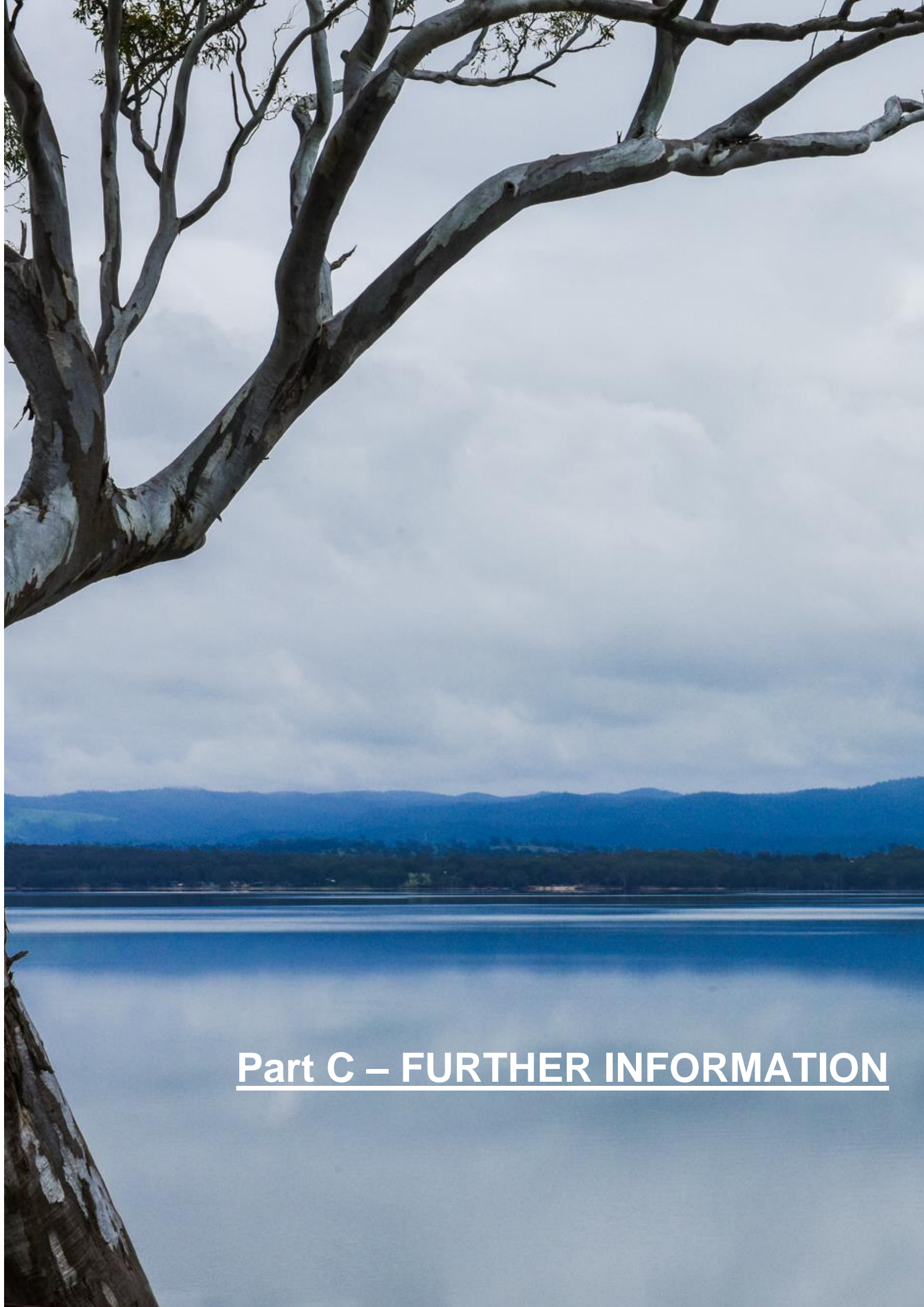
14.5 Restriction and legal action

SRW may take legal action or restrict a customer's supply service for non-payment if:

- the customer has been notified of the proposed restriction or legal action in accordance with the above and the associated costs, including the cost of removing a restrictor
- the customer has been offered a flexible payment plan and has refused or has failed to respond or
- the customer has agreed to a flexible payment plan and has failed to comply with the arrangement.

14.6 Removal of restrictions

SRW will restore a supply service suspended or restricted within 24 hours of becoming aware of the reason for suspension or restriction no longer persisting.



Part C – FURTHER INFORMATION

Supporting documents

Documents referred to in this Charter are available as follows:

Document	Availability
Customer Charter 2018	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/SRW-Customer-Charter.pdf
Customer Charter summary 2018	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Customer-Charter-summary.pdf
Statement of obligations	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Statement_of_Obligations_General_20_Dec_2015_-_as_signed.pdf
Debt Management and Hardship Procedure (CI 9.2 Customer support policy)	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Debt-Management-and-Hardship-Procedure.pdf
MID Allocation Procedure (CI 11.3 Water allocation policy)	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/allocations/allocation-macalister
WID Allocation Procedure (CI 11.3 Water allocation policy)	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/allocations/allocations-bacchus-marsh-werribee
BMID Allocation Procedure (CI 11.3 Water allocation policy)	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/allocations/allocations-bacchus-marsh-werribee
G&R Rosters and Restrictions Procedures (CI 11.3 Water allocation policy)	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/rosters-and-restrictions
11.4 Unauthorised use policy	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/help-and-support/compliance https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/SRW-Meter-Action-Plan-2020.pdf
12.1 Complaints and disputes policy	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/help-and-support/customer-assistance
4.3 Digital metering policy	https://www.srw.com.au/water-and-storage/water-management/metering
A guide to entering your meter reads WID & BMID	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-01/A%20guide%20to%20entering%20your%20meter%20readings%20-%20BMID%20%26%20WID.pdf
10 Family violence	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Family-Violence-Policy_20180606.pdf
8 Customer representation	https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/customer-committees
Privacy policy	https://www.srw.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/Privacy_Policy_March_2017.pdf
Concession information	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions
Customer feedback form	https://mysrw.com.au/form/customer-feedback

Understanding your entitlements, shares and licences

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.

You can further information on water trading by:

- **visiting our website** – <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/buy-and-sell-water/water-trading-leasing>
- **contacting us, as set out on page 4.**

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.

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.

You can further information on water trading by:

- ***visiting our website*** – <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/buy-and-sell-water/water-trading-leasing>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 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 landowners 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.

You can further information on our application forms by:

- ***visiting our website*** - <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/prices-and-forms>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

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 landowner 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.

You can further information on our application forms by:

- ***visiting our website*** –
- <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/prices-and-forms>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

Ordering water

Who must order water?

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

How to place an order

You can order irrigation water by:

- ***visiting our website*** - <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/water-ordering>
- ***call our Waterline service on 1300 360 117***
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

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

Confirming orders

Orders on manually operated sections within the Macalister Irrigation District, and on the Latrobe

You can confirm your order by:

- ***visiting our website*** - <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/accounts/water-ordering>
- ***call our Waterline service on 1300 360 117***
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

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

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.

Understanding our tariffs

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.

They apply to apply to the Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters), Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters) and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.

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.

It applies to the Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters), Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters) and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.

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.

They apply to the Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters), Werribee Irrigation District (including river diverters) and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District

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.

They applies to the Macalister Irrigation District (including river diverters) and Werribee Irrigation District Recycled Water Scheme.

Drainage Diversion Fees

This fee is for irrigators who hold agreements to divert water from the irrigation drainage system. It applies to the Macalister Irrigation District and Werribee Irrigation District.

Licence Fixed Charges

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

It applies to Surface water licences (unregulated systems plus Latrobe & Maribyrnong) and Groundwater licences.

Licensed Volume Charges

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

It applies to Surface water licences (unregulated systems plus Latrobe & Maribyrnong) and Groundwater licences.

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.

It applies to Surface and Groundwater water licences in specified areas.

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.

You can obtain more information about our committees by:

- ***visiting our website*** - <https://www.srw.com.au/customer/general-information/customer-committees>
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

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.

You can obtain more information about the water register by:

- ***visiting - www.waterregister.vic.gov.au***
- ***contacting us, as set out on page 4.***

Working on your land

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.

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 e.g., 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
- manage any complaints in accordance with our complaint handling policy and procedures.

Staff identification

We will carry identification cards and produce them upon request.

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.

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 e.g., 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.

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
- always use proper toilet facilities
- 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)
- always drive responsibly and carefully - avoiding raising excessive road-dust, and staying on existing roads and tracks, or on routes and areas previously agreed with you.

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 conduct 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.

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.

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.