

Customer Service Standards Mackay Water Services



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Introduction

Our commitment

Mackay Regional Council (council) is committed to delivering affordable, high-quality water and sewerage collection services to more than 100,000 customers.

Under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act), council must implement measures to ensure service continuity in line with defined service levels. These cover expectations for water reliability and quality, and how council manages service delivery and customer interactions.

Purpose

The Customer Service Standards (CSS) are intended to protect customers' rights where there is no contract directly with the provider.

Section 116 of the Act states the service provider's Customer Service Standards must state:

- A target for the level of service to be provided for the Customer Service Standards Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- The process for service connections, billing, metering, payments, customer consultation, complaints and dispute resolution.

The Customer Service Standards apply to residential and industrial/commercial connections and are prepared in accordance with regulator guidelines.

Vision and mission

As a Significant Business Activity of Mackay Regional Council, Water Services shares council's purpose and vision:

To create the opportunity to thrive. To become the best region for liveability and livelihood.

Water Services endorse the mission statement of the operations programs (within the Infrastructure and Operations directorate) of:

One council, delivering service excellence for our region.

Contact us

Mackay Regional Council's main Customer Service Centre is in the Sir Albert Abbott Administration Building at 73 Gordon Street, Mackay, and is open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Additional customer service offices are also available in [Mirani](#) and [Sarina](#).

Council can be contacted through the following channels:



PO Box 41, Mackay Qld 4740



1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529), 8.30am-4.30pm. All other times for emergencies only.



council@mackay.qld.gov.au



www.mackay.qld.gov.au for [Customer Portal](#) for online services/lodging a [Customer Request](#).



In the event of an emergency or immediate threat to life, health, or property, dial 000. For assistance outside of council's standard operating hours, the Customer Service Centre is available 24 hours a day on 1300 622 529.

Additional emergency information is available on the council website under [Emergency Management](#).



Key Performance Indicators

As part of its obligations of supplying services to our customers, council must comply with the established Customer Service Standards and achieving set targets for key performance indicators (KPIs) that informs compliance. We will strive to meet or exceed the specific service KPIs as outlined in Table 1.

Under certain circumstances, as noted below, there may be a need to interrupt or limit these services:

- To inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of the system.
- When new mains are being connected to the system.
- When there are periods of declared water supply restrictions.
- If there is a possibility of a significant health risk arising from continuance of the service.

Council will make every reasonable effort to limit disruption to services caused by operations and maintenance activities. However, it is not possible to provide notice of service disruption caused by unplanned and emergency events. Where prior notice is unable to be provided, completion of all work will be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise disruption to our customers.

Council reserves the right to immediately stop the supply without notice if there is serious risk to public health, a likelihood of serious injury to persons or damage to infrastructure or another emergency as detailed in the Act.

Legislative changes to the Act in May 2019 mandated that local governments declare their reticulated water and sewerage service areas by council resolution, provide a map and publish these details to clarify service boundaries and infrastructure access, with requirements for annual review of these maps to ensure clarity for residents and providers. For further information on the [Declared Service Areas](#), refer to the [Revenue Statement Policy](#) available on council's website.

Please note:

Customer Service Standards do not apply during periods of declared natural disasters, such as cyclones, until as soon as practicable after the affected normal services have been restored.

During an emergency or natural disaster, council will endeavour to maintain services and infrastructure and respond to incidents as soon as practicable, depending on the availability of resources and the severity of the event.

Customer Service standards may not apply for water and sewerage services that are not installed in accordance with council's engineering design guidelines or for which a separate service contract has been established.

Table 1. Summary of Key Performance Indicators

*QG KPI/ NPR code	Key Performance Indicator	Performance measure/unit	Target threshold
<i>Water supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008</i> – section 44	Provide notice to customers directly affected by a planned interruption	Hours	≥ 48
QG4.5/AS8.1	Total water main breaks	Per 100km/year	≤20
QG4.6/AS39.1	Total sewerage main breaks and chokes	Per 100 km sewer mains/year	≤20
QG4.7/CS17	Number unplanned water interruptions	Per 1000 properties/year	≤120
QG4.8a/CS66	Respond to 90 per cent of water incidents (bursts and leaks)	Hours	≤4
QG4.9a/CS65	Respond to 90 per cent of sewerage incidents (main breaks and chokes)	Hours	≤4
QG4.10/CS9	Water quality complaints (including discolouration, staining, taste, odour, illness or cloudy water)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤5
QC4.11/CS13	Total water and sewerage service complaints	Per 1000 properties/year	≤10
QG4.12/CS10	Water service complaints (including bursts, leaks, interruptions, adequacy, pressure and reliability)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤3
QG4.13/CS11	Sewerage service complaints (including sewer chokes and overflows, odours and reliability)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤2
QG4.14/CS12	Billing and account complaints (water and sewerage)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤5

*Under section 142A of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, relevant water and sewerage service providers in Queensland are required to report on Queensland Government Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for urban water service providers. Service providers with greater than 10,000 water connections are required to report against the Bureau of Meteorology's National Performance Reporting (NPR) indicators. Urban National Performance Report (NPR) codes relate to the Urban National Water Utility Performance Reporting Framework as reported to the Statewide Information Management (SWIM) system.

Customer rights and responsibilities

Customers have the right to safe, reliable and compliant services, timely and accurate information, fair complaints handling, respectful interactions and the protection of personal information.

Access

Council staff or authorised contractors may require access to a property to carry out connection work, read or test meters, inspect, maintain, repair or replace council-owned infrastructure in accordance with sections 36 and 37 of the Act.

Property owners are responsible for providing unhindered access to the water meter and any associated Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) device or any sewer manholes for maintenance purposes. The area must be free from vegetation, garden beds and other obstructions such as fences, concrete, vehicles or other barriers. This includes ensuring that manholes are not covered or blocked by items such as pot plants. Any costs incurred to restore access will be charged to the property owner.

All staff will carry council-issued photo identification, and property owners are entitled to request to see this identification before answering questions or permitting work to proceed.

Service connections

Customers within the Declared Water Supply/Sewerage Service areas may apply for new water and sewerage connections by completing and submitting the relevant application as found on the council website under [Forms and applications](#).

Approval of service connections is subject to compliance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018 (Qld)* and the availability of appropriate infrastructure in accordance with the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act).

Customers must obtain the required plumbing and drainage approvals prior to commencing any regulated plumbing work. Please refer to the [Plumbing and Drainage Application Guide](#) on council's website which outlines mandatory requirements, including application documentation, fees, lodgement processes, assessment stages, inspection and permit amendments. Customers are encouraged to review this guide to ensure all necessary information is provided when lodging their plumbing application.

Disconnection from the water or sewerage supply requires prior approval from council. Connecting to or disconnecting from council infrastructure without prior approval is an offence under the Act. Council may issue a [Penalty Infringement Notice \(PIN\)](#) for breaches of this Act. Please refer to the council website for information on the PIN review process.

Consultation and communication

Council is committed to keeping customers informed on relevant matters through active two-way communication. Council will:

- Provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice to customers directly affected by a planned interruption.

Current planned and unplanned water and sewerage interruptions can be viewed on the Community alerts page on council's website. Significant interruptions affecting a large population will be shared on council's Facebook page.

Notification letters which are sent to residents about planned works can be found at connectingmackay.com.au under [Community notification letters](#).

General information and notices may also be provided by brochure, media bulletins or online via council website.

Requests for information from council may be directed in writing or by telephone to the relevant department. As part of our legislative obligation under the Act, we are required to undertake community consultation on the Customer Service Standards every five years.

Complaints and dispute resolution

Customers may lodge a [Customer Request](#) or complaint by telephone, email or in writing. Any initial concerns or requests for service should first be managed by lodging a Customer Request on council's website.

In cases of suspected overcharging, payment of the invoiced amount in full is recommended and then submit a billing dispute to council. Council will review and respond to all billing disputes within 20 business days of receiving the request.

If you remain dissatisfied with an action or decision by council after you have already raised it with the relevant council program, you may lodge an [Administrative Action Complaint \(AAC\)](#). Please refer to council's website for details on the submission process of an AAC.

When a complaint is registered, council will record it in the Customer Portal, assign a senior staff member to investigate and inform the customer of the outcome in writing.

If the customer is still dissatisfied after this process, they have the right to escalate the matter to the Queensland Ombudsman through the AAC pathway.

Water restrictions

Customers must comply with any water restrictions in place. Details of the [Permanent Water Conservation Measures](#) and [Water Restrictions Policy](#) are available on council's website.

Infrastructure – interference or damage

It is the responsibility of the customer to maintain plumbing and drainage systems in good working order and comply with any permit conditions in accordance with Section 70 of the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*. Please refer to the [House drain connection factsheet](#) on website for more information.

The property owner is responsible for the safekeeping and security of water meters and Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) located on their property.

Responsibility:

- Meters – property owner.
- Sewer and water mains – contractor or third party.

A person must not interfere with a service provider's infrastructure without the written consent of a service provider. Intentional damage is a prosecutable offence under section 192 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act). Any damage to council infrastructure, including sewer or water mains, must be reported immediately to council by phone.

Council will recover the reasonable cost of repairs from the property owner, or in some circumstances the contractor or third-party, excluding where the damage is caused by council employees or council-appointed contractors.

Building over and/or adjacent to sewers (BOAS)

Under section 192 of the Act, any proposal for building works over or near council water or sewer infrastructure requires council approval unless the works comply with the acceptable solutions outlined in the Queensland Development Code (QDC) MP 1.4.

Prior discussion with council is recommended before undertaking earthworks near water or sewer infrastructure to ensure compliance and prevent potential issues.



Water Services

Incidents

A water supply incident is any event affecting council's water infrastructure that adversely impacts service delivery and may result in customer complaints.

- The response time for 90 per cent of water incidents will be within four hours of formal notification.

Reliability

Council aims to maintain continuity of water supply and will strive to meet the following annual performance targets:

- Fewer than 20 water main breaks per 100 kilometres/year.
- Fewer than 120 unplanned interruptions per 1000 connections/year.

Maintenance

Council is responsible for the maintenance of all water infrastructure up to and including the water meter. All plumbing works after the meter is the responsibility of the property owner. Council will replace water meters in accordance with council's Meter Replacement Program.

For properties with billable sub-metering, council will maintain the sub-meter. The infrastructure located between the master meter and the sub-meter remains the responsibility of the property owner.

For further information refer to council's [Sub-Metering Policy](#) which can be found on council's website.

Water meters and Automated Meter Reading Devices (AMRs)

A water meter and an Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) device are installed at the property boundary as part of each water service connection. Both the water meter and AMR device remain the property of council.

While council strives to provide water usage data through AMR devices, this service is supplementary and cannot always be guaranteed.

Accuracy testing

Council will arrange for the accuracy of a water meter to be tested upon request by the property owner. A pre-paid fee applies for this service; however, the fee will be refunded if the meter is found to be inaccurate.

All meter testing will be conducted by an independent accredited testing agency to ensure compliance with industry standards.

Water pressure

During normal operating conditions, water will be supplied to properties (excluding tank replenishment schemes) as follows:

- At a minimum pressure of 22m head (220kPa) at the water meter located at the property boundary.
- The water supply flow rate is a minimum of 20L/minute at the residential property.

Properties participating in the Tank Replenishment Scheme are subject to non-standard service conditions, particularly regarding supply pressure. These conditions apply to properties located on:

- Cape Hillsborough Road, Cape Hillsborough.
- Wainai Road, Farleigh.
- Palm Ridge Drive, Richmond.
- Ian Reddacliff Drive, The Leap.
- Droughtmaster Drive, Hay Point.
- Austin Drive, Eton.
- Rural View Drive, Nindaroo.
- Mooreland Street, Bakers Creek.
- Midge Point Road, Bloomsbury.

Further details on [Tank Replenishment Scheme](#) service conditions are available upon request.

Water quality

Council is committed to providing safe, high-quality drinking water that complies with the physical, chemical and microbiological health limits outlined in the [Australian Drinking Water Guidelines](#) (ADWG).

Council aims to maintain high service standards and will strive to meet the following annual performance target:

- Fewer than five water quality complaints (including discolouration, staining, taste, odour, illness or cloudy water) per 1000 properties/year.

Fire protection

Water drawn from a street hydrant or a private fire system connected to council's reticulated network is not charged when used appropriately for firefighting purposes. Queensland Fire Department (QFD) and Emergency Services (QFES) may take water for firefighting from any source without restriction.

Unauthorised use is an offence under section 145 of the Act and may result in fines plus recovery of any associated losses or repair costs. Property owners must notify council within seven working days of any such use.

If water is drawn from a metered supply, council will arrange a meter reading to determine usage.

Dialysis and life support machines

Customers with increased water consumption due to home haemodialysis may be eligible for concession water rates. Applications must include a written request and a supporting medical certificate.

Customers registered with Mackay Water Services as having a life-support machine requiring water will be prioritised for notification of planned interruptions and emergency situations.

Dialysis requires water quality beyond standard drinking water specifications and home dialysis typically involves additional water filtration equipment.

For further information, consult Kidney Health Australia at www.kidney.org.au or call 1800 454 363.



Sewer Services

Incidents

A sewer service incident is any event affecting council's sewerage infrastructure that adversely impacts service delivery and may result in customer complaints.

- The response time for 90 per cent of sewerage incidents will be within four hours of formal notification.

Reliability

Council is committed to providing reliable sewerage services and will strive to meet the following annual performance targets:

- Fewer than 20 sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100 kilometres/year.
- Fewer than two sewerage service complaints per 1000 properties/year.

Maintenance

Council will maintain all sewerage infrastructure up to the sewerage point of connection (jump-up). All plumbing works beyond the jump-up are the responsibility of the property owner. Refer to [House Drain Connection factsheet](#) on website for guidance.

Property owners must ensure stormwater does not infiltrate the sewerage system, including avoiding illegal rainwater connections or landscaping changes that divert stormwater into sewer access holes.

Overflows and blockages

In the event of a blocked or overflowing sewer, customers should notify council immediately by phone. Council will arrange for field staff to attend the site, investigate the cause and determine whether the issue originates within council's sewerage network or within the property's private plumbing.

If the cause of the blockage is in council's sewer network, council will complete all necessary repairs. Private contractors are not permitted to work on council infrastructure.

If the cause of the blockage is within the property's private drainage, the property owner is responsible for arranging and paying for repairs. A licensed plumber should be engaged to restore service.

Billing and payment

Billing

Billing for water and sewerage services will occur at least every six months. All water registered on the meter will be deemed to have been delivered to the customer, unless a meter error can be substantiated.

If an overcharge is found to be the result of a meter misread, council will apply a credit for the overpayment to the customer's account.

Both water and sewerage access charges are reviewed and set annually by council resolution. Water usage is charged on a per kilolitre basis, in accordance with council's Revenue Statement. Council reviews billing-related service performance, including:

- Fewer than five billing and account complaints per 1000 properties/year.

In certain circumstances where an actual meter reading is unavailable, council may issue an estimated water consumption value for billing purposes. This estimate will be calculated based on the average usage recorded during the three previous billing periods for the same timeframe.

Payment

All water and sewerage-related charges must be paid by the specified due date. Additional charges may apply for late payment.

Payment methods include:

- Online.
- By telephone.
- Via BPAY.
- By mail.
- In-person at a Customer Service Centre.
- At any Australia Post outlet.

Overdue accounts will incur interest at a compounded monthly rate equivalent to 12.12 per cent per annum, calculated from the end of the financial half-year in which the charges were due. Special financial arrangements may be available in cases of verified hardship.

Council may offer property owners a financial concession where an unusually high water notice is the result of a concealed leak.

For further details, refer to the [Concessions for Concealed Leaks Policy](#) on council's website.