



**Mareeba**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

**Water and Wastewater**

**Customer Service Standard**

**SPID 557**

**November 2014**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Created By</b>	<b>Issued To</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1</b>	Jacqueline Perkowicz	MSC Ordinary Meeting	Draft for Noting	5/11/2014
		MSC Website	Comment	On website from 10/11/2014 - 23/11/2014
<b>2</b>	Jacqueline Perkowicz	MSC Ordinary Meeting	Adoption	Council Adopted 17/12/2014

## **1. Corporate Plan**

Mareeba Shire Council's (MSC) Corporate Plan sets out our strategic direction for the five year period 2014-2019. The main focus is on service delivery and the extent to which existing service levels can continue to be maintained, while putting in place the required financial strategies to ensure ongoing sustainability.

MSC's Corporate Values and Principals state that the customer is our singular focus. We keep the fact that "the community are our customers" in the forefront of every decision and action we take. We are here to serve our community in everything we do. We will operate in an efficient and effective businesslike manner to ensure long-term sustainability and to meet community expectations, giving them real value for their money.

### **1.1 Vision**

A growing and confident Shire comprised of diverse communities who share common values of a relaxed lifestyle and respect for the beauty of the natural environment of the region.

### **1.2 Mission**

It is the Council's mission to preserve the values expressed in its vision by creating the foundations for a strong and financially sustainable future for the Shire, by responsible and accountable decision-making, cost-effective service provision, and community capacity building through collaborative partnerships.

### **1.3 Corporate Values and Principles**

Our strategic decisions and day-to-day activities will be guided by the following organisational values:

1. Customer focused
2. One united team
3. Empowered staff who make decisions
4. Whole of Council approach

The corporate values are communicated and reinforced in induction programs, various leadership actions and through performance management. Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer, management and staff actively promote and consistently demonstrate the corporate values.

### **1.4 Our Water and Wastewater Obligations**

MSC will plan for, establish, operate and maintain systems for the following:

- Collection and treatment of raw water and distribution of drinking water
- Collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of wastewater

In providing these services we must pursue the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan, comply with Council policy and local laws, and satisfy all statutory requirements with respect to management and operation of Council's water and wastewater business activities.

## 1.5 Expectations of Our Customers

In addition to paying for water supply, wastewater and waste services in accordance with MSC's schedule of fees and charges, MSC expects our customers to assist us in providing services by:

- Applying to MSC and receiving approval before connecting to MSC's systems;
- Using water in a 'waterwise' manner;
- Maintaining internal property pipes and fittings (water and wastewater);
- Engaging a licensed plumber to do work internal to your property;
- Providing access to the water meter, sewer manholes and other infrastructure within and adjacent to their property;
- Not building structures over water or sewer mains and selecting garden vegetation that won't damage water supply and sewerage infrastructure;
- Not covering sewer manholes with soil and or mulch;
- Notifying us of any faults that you have encountered so that we can rectify the problem as quickly as possible;
- Taking care not to discharge unauthorised substances into sewers;
- Applying to us for a trade waste permit (industrial and commercial customers) to discharge trade waste to sewers;

## 1.6 Performance Targets for Water and Wastewater Services

The water and sewerage supply services in Mareeba and Kuranda; and the water supply services in Dimbulah and Chillagoe have been designed to provide a continuous service. However, under certain circumstances, such as those described below, we may need to interrupt or limit these services:

- If we need 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; and
- If there is a possibility of a significant health risk arising from the continuance of the service.

Except in emergencies and short duration interruptions, we will give you 48 hours notice of interruption to your service by delivery of a written notice placed in the mailbox or under the front door of each affected property.

We 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 events. Where we are unable to provide prior notice we will complete all work as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise disruption to the daily activities of our customers.

The following performance indicators reflect the level of service we intend to provide to our customers for water and wastewater services. Performance against these indicators will be measured separately for each drinking water and sewerage service scheme.

Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Target	QG/NPR/SWIM Code
Total water main breaks	Per 100km of water main	25	QG4.5/A8/AS8
Total sewerage main breaks and chokes	Per 100km sewerage main	15	QG4.6/A14/AS39
Incidence of unplanned interruptions – water	Per 1000 properties	5	QG4.7/C17/CS17
Average response time for water incidents (bursts & leaks)	Minutes	60	QG4.8/ - /CS37
Average response time for sewerage incidents (including main breaks and chokes)	Minutes	60	QG4.9/ - /CS33
Water quality complaints	Per 1000 properties	10	QG4.10/C9/CS9
Total water and sewerage complaints	Per 1000 properties	100	QG 4.11/ C13/CS13

## 2. CUSTOMER SERVICE PROCEDURES

### 2.1 Process for Water and Sewerage Service Connections

#### *New connections and reconnections*

If customers wish to apply for a water or sewerage connection or reconnection within the serviced area, an application form and appropriate fees should be forwarded to MSC. These forms are available from any Council Customer Service Centre or by calling 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500. We aim to install water and sewerage connections within 14 days.

If a water and/or sewerage system is available for the property, the property owner is required to connect to the system.

#### *Community Title Connections*

Community Title Development is a form of development where allotments are individually owned, with all associated infrastructure being owned in common and privately operated. All associated infrastructure is to be of FNQROC Standards and approved as a part of a Development Application. MSC has an obligation to ensure that all services meet its statutory obligation at the property boundary for the Development as a whole. Further information on servicing Community Title Development can be gathered by contacting Council on 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500.

#### *Process for Restricting Water Supplies*

In certain instances, water supply restrictions may need to be imposed by MSC. These circumstances may include:

- Possible bulk supply limitations;
- During a drought, or on the anticipated approach of a drought where the water supply needs to be protected;

- To ensure continuity of supply where there are short term problems with system capacity and asset performance.

## **2.2 Process for Water Metering and Billing Process**

### ***Water Meters***

A water meter will be installed as part of a new water service connection and will remain the property of MSC. The meter will be read twice a year and used as the basis of any consumption component of water charges.

MSC aims to maintain water meters within industry standards limits of accuracy. Where a customer has reason to doubt either the accuracy or reliability of their water meter, MSC will offer to test the meter for the fee prescribed in Council's fees and charges. If the meter is found to be defective and resulting in overcharging, the overcharged amount will be refunded and no fee will be charged for the meter test.

### ***Water Billing***

Water Bills are issued twice a year at the same time as general rates notices. A two tier charging system is in place, depending on the volume of water used. These tiers and charges are available on the Council Fees and Charges Website. Further details are provided in the Rates, Fees and Charges section below.

### ***Special Meter Reads***

When customers sell their home or there is a change of tenancy, customers can request a special water meter reading to determine the amount of water used. Customers will be charged a fee to cover the cost of this service.

### ***Estimation of Water Consumption***

In certain circumstances, MSC may need to estimate customer water consumption charges. Such estimation will be based on either past usage records or use by similar customers under similar circumstances. This estimate may be necessary where:

- A water meter is shown by test to be recording inaccurately;
- A water meter ceases to register;
- Access to the water meter is prevented; or
- An illegal connection has been made.

In circumstances where the meter is located within the customers property, it will be the customer's responsibility to ensure their water meter is accessible to meter readers (i.e. not overgrown with vegetation or otherwise accessible).

## **2.3 Process for Accounting - Charges and Customer Accounts**

### ***Rates, Fees and Charges***

Rates, fees and charges will be set annually by Council resolution. Water services are subject to an annual access fee and volumetric fees based on water consumption. These are outlined annually in the July Budget Papers and are available on the Council website. Different rates exist for residential

and commercial volumetric use. Water meters are read approximately every 6 months with invoices sent at the same frequency. Unmetered properties will be charged a fee based on the deemed reasonable consumption for the particular premises. Sewerage services are subject to an annual charge per residential property and per water closet for commercial properties.

MSC may charge customers interest on overdue accounts as prescribed in Council's Revenue and Debt Recovery Policies (refer to Council website for details). There are special concessions available for those on Home Renal Dialysis and those concessions are outlined in the MSC Water Concession for Home Renal Dialysis Policy on the Council website.

### ***Assistance with Paying Accounts***

The Council has a range of payment options and can negotiate special financial arrangements to assist customers experiencing hardship in the payment of accounts. Information on these options is available from Council's Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500.

## **2.4 Process for Customer Service**

### ***Customer Consultation***

MSC will inform customers on matters relating to water supply and sewerage and on other issues such as charging and complaints handling. Customer communication may include distribution of published brochures, local media bulletins to advise customers of any system change that may have a significant effect on local service levels (eg water restrictions), or other options as appropriate. MSC places a high level of importance on engaging with the community. One of Council's commitments is to "keep the fact that "the community are our customers" in the forefront of every decision and action we take. We are here to serve our community in everything we do".

### ***Community Engagement***

The MSC encourages individuals, groups and communities to be involved in the business of local government. It recognises that residents across the region have diverse opinions, innovative ideas and a wealth of life experience - and this information allows Council to better understand issues and provide services that are tailored to community needs.

MSC has a Community Plan that was developed with extensive community engagement.

### ***Customer Contacts***

In the interests of improving customer service, customers are encouraged to contact MSC for assistance on matters such as service difficulties and faults, account inquiries, general and technical inquiries, and suggestions. Council officers will respond promptly to customer inquiries, complaints and requests.

### ***Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution***

If customers have a complaint regarding water or wastewater services, MSC will investigate the complaint and take all reasonable action to solve the problem or address the issue promptly and effectively. If the issue or difficulty proves more complex, development of a solution will follow Council's complaints resolution process.

MSC also has a Water Leaks Dispute Resolution Policy, which sets out the process for resolving any conflict in relation to a plumbing failure or an inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter

### ***Emergency Assistance***

MSC will maintain a 24-hour emergency contact service (1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500.) for emergency events related to service systems such as a burst water main or sewerage overflow.

### ***Entry to Private Property***

In certain circumstances, Council officers may need to enter a customer's property to carry out investigations and/or work on the water supply and sewerage transportation systems. For planned work within a property, MSC will provide customers with a minimum of 48 hours advance notice. In an emergency, MSC will inform the occupier, if present, of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated duration of the work. We will also endeavour to inform customers when the work is complete.

All outdoors representatives of Mareeba Shire will be identified from wearing the MSC logo on clothing.

### ***Special needs – dialysis etc***

If you are registered with MSC as having a life-support machine requiring water, we will endeavour to advise of planned interruptions and emergency situations. Please contact MSC on 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500 for further information.

### ***Water Stand Pipes***

MSC will lease metered stand pipes for the taking of water from the reticulated water network. There are short and long-term hire agreements with forms able to be collected from Council's Customer Service Centre. Further details can be attained on the Council website or by contacting Council on 4044 3044 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500 for hire rates and consumption charges.

### ***Trade Waste Services***

Industrial and commercial customers may discharge treated trade waste to the sewerage system provided the customer has first obtained a 'Trade Waste Permit' or entered into a "Trade Waste Agreement" with MSC.

MSC will only accept trade waste into the sewerage system where there is no likelihood that the trade waste will harm the system, will not pose any risk to the health and safety of sewerage workers, will not inhibit biological processes at the waste water treatment plants, will not accumulate in bio-solids making their re-use difficult or impractical and will not contain contaminants that may pass through the waste water treatment plants untreated resulting in environmental contamination. All trade waste discharged to sewer must meet all the requirements contained in Council's Trade Waste Policy which is available on Council's website.

### ***Acceptance of Waste from On-site Treatment Systems***

Properties with on-site sewage treatment and disposal systems (eg, septic tanks) will need to arrange for pump outs on a periodic basis. MSC will issue licences to contractors for approval to



provide sullage disposal services within the Shire. We will also require a disposal fee for pump outs that are disposed of into the sewerage system.

Customers should contact private operators to arrange for pump-out of their system.

## 2.5 Contacts

Website: [www.msc.qld.gov.au](http://www.msc.qld.gov.au)

Email: [info@msc.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@msc.qld.gov.au)

Customer Service Centres:

- Mareeba Service Centre & Council Chambers, 65 Rankin Street, Mareeba
- Kuranda Service Centre & Library, 4-12 Thooree Street, Kuranda QLD 4881

Office Hours and Emergency Contacts: 1300 308 461 or 07 4086 4500

Facsimile: 07 4092 3323

Postal Address:

Manager Water and Waste

PO Box 154, Mareeba QLD 4880

Water and Wastewater Operations Address: Kowa Street Mareeba QLD