



**Mareeba**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

## **Water and Wastewater**

## **Customer Service Standard**

**July 2024**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Created By</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Issued To</b>	<b>Date</b>
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## 1. Introduction

This Customer Service Standard (CSS) meets the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (Qld) (the Act) Division 3 requirement to ensure customers are protected by standards relating to the water supply. As per section 116 of the Act, the CSS must state targets for the level of service to be provided for the relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The CSS must be reviewed at least every five years. ***This CSS does not apply during periods of declared natural disasters, including cyclones until as soon as practicable after the affected normal services have been restored.***

### 1.1 Water and Wastewater Facilities

Mareeba Shire Council (MSC) has four potable water schemes (Chillagoe, Dimbulah, Kuranda and Mareeba WTP), one non-potable scheme (Mt Molloy) and two sewerage schemes (Kuranda and Mareeba). The Mareeba Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is covered under Environmental Authority (EA) EPPR01792213 (the EA) as it has a capacity of treating >10ML/day (19.9ML/day). The Chillagoe, Dimbulah and Kuranda WTP treat less than 10ML/day and therefore do not require an EA. Additionally, the EA covers both the Kuranda and the Mareeba Sewage Treatment Plants (STP), several sewage pumping stations and a smaller sewage treatment plant (21-100 Equivalent Persons).

## 2. Corporate Plan

MSC *Corporate Plan* sets out our strategic direction for the five-year period 2021-2025, meeting the requirements of section 165 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (Qld).

The Corporate Plan document the Vision, Mission and Values and provides details for Strategic Priorities, Goals and Strategies.

The Corporate Plan is published on the [MSC website](#).

## 3. Our Water and Wastewater Obligations

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

- Supply of safe, reliable drinking water to consumers
- Collection and treatment of domestic wastewater, commercial and industrial trade waste
- Delivery of water, wastewater infrastructure
- Maintenance of the community's water and wastewater infrastructure
- Environmental management of water and wastewater infrastructure and facilities

In providing these services we must pursue the objectives of the MSC Corporate Plan, comply with MSC policy and local laws, and satisfy all statutory requirements with respect to management and operation of MSC's water and wastewater business activities. The Act requires MSC to implement measures to ensure the continuity of services, as well as to quantify these measures through KPIs and supply a copy of the results to its customers. A copy of the results is provided in the yearly published SWIM report on the [MSC website](#).

The CSS aims to provide details on the following:

- Performance targets for water and wastewater services ([Section 3.2](#));
- The expectations we have for our customers ([Section 3.3](#)); and
- Processes for establishing new services, billing, metering, lodging complaints, dispute resolutions as well as customer engagement and consultation ([Section 4](#)).

### 3.1 Relevant Acts, Guidelines and Australian Standards

This CSS also takes into account provisions outlined, but not exclusive to, these listed in the legislation, guidelines and Australian Standards below;

- *Water Supply (Safety & Reliability) Act 2008 (Qld)*,
- *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*,
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*,
- *Planning Act 2016 (Qld)*,
- *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018 (Qld)*,
- Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA),
- Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011
- Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Development Manual 2020,
- AS 3500.1:2018 Plumbing and Drainage,
- AS 3565.4 2007 Meters for water supply Part 4: In-service compliance testing.

### 3.2 Performance Targets for Water and Wastewater Services

The water and wastewater 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.

Table 1: Targets for level of service

Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Target	SWIM Code
<b>Total water main breaks</b>	Per 100km of water main	30 per annum	AS8
<b>Total sewerage main breaks and chokes</b>	Per 100km sewerage main	30 per annum	AS39
<b>Incidence of unplanned interruptions – water</b>	Per 1000 properties	224 per annum	CS17
<b>Water quality complaints</b>	Per 1000 properties	20 per annum	CS9
<b>Total water and sewerage complaints</b>	Per 1000 properties	100 per annum	CS13

### 3.3 Expectations of Our Customers

In addition to paying for water supply and wastewater 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 covering sewer manholes with soil and or mulch;
- Not building structures over water or sewer mains and selecting garden vegetation that won't damage water supply and sewerage infrastructure;
- 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;

## 4. Customer Service Processes

### 4.1 Process for Water and Sewerage Service Connections

#### 4.1.1 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. A Water Service Request form can be obtained from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461. We aim to install water and sewerage connections within 14 days.

The declared water service areas for Mareeba Shire are available from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

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

#### 4.1.2 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 MSC on 1300 308 461.

### 4.2 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.

MSC water restriction policy is available on the [website](#).

A Water Restrictions-Application for Exemption-Residential can be obtained from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

### 4.3 Process for Water Metering and Billing Process

#### 4.3.1 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 MSC'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.

A Water Meter Test Request is available from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

#### **4.3.2 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 [MSC Fees and Charges Website](#), as well as the [SWIM Report](#). Further details are provided in the Rates, Fees and Charges section ([Section 4.4.1](#)).

#### **4.3.3 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.

#### **4.3.4 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).

#### **4.3.5 Adjustment of Water Consumption**

Council will consider a request for a reduction of water consumption charges in accordance with MSC's [Water Leak Management Policy](#). Reasons may include; undetected water leaks, incorrect meter reading, defective/faulty meter.

An Adjustment of Water Consumption application can be obtained from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

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

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

Rates, fees and charges will be set annually by MSC's 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 [MSC 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 MSC's Revenue and Debt Recovery Policies. 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 [MSC website](#).

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

MSC 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 MSC's Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

#### **4.4.3 Debt Recovery and Flow Restrictions**

MSC has a specific Debt Recovery Policy detailing the timeframes of notification, customer rectification timeframes and outlines the ability for MSC to install flow restricting devices on property services. Full details can be found on the [MSC website](#).

### **4.5 Process for Customer Service**

#### **4.5.1 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 (e.g., water restrictions), or other options as appropriate. MSC places a high level of importance on engaging with the community.

#### **4.5.2 Community Engagement**

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 MSC to better understand issues and provide services that are tailored to community needs.

MSC falls under the [Tablelands Community Plan 2021](#) that was developed with extensive community engagement.

#### **4.5.3 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. MSC officers will respond promptly to customer inquiries, complaints and requests.

#### **4.5.4 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 MSC's complaints resolution process. Complaints can be lodged via the following options:



- In person at the customer service centres in
  - Mareeba (65 Rankin St, Mareeba QLD, 4880)
  - Kuranda (Kuranda Library, Kuranda Community Precinct 18-22 Arara St, Kuranda QLD 4881)
- Via phone (1300 308 461),
- Via email ([info@msc.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@msc.qld.gov.au)), or by
- Writing (addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Mareeba Shire Council, PO Box 154, Mareeba QLD).

MSC also has [Water Leak Management 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.

#### **4.5.5 Emergency Assistance**

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

In case of a life-threatening emergency, call 000.

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

In certain circumstances, MSC 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 MSC will be identified from wearing the MSC logo on clothing.

#### **4.5.7 Special needs (e.g., dialysis)**

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.

### **4.6 Process for Water and Wastewater Services**

#### **4.6.1 Extension of water and wastewater infrastructure to service a property**

Any proposal to extend MSC's water and wastewater reticulation system to enable a water or wastewater connection to a property is subject to approval by MSC. The property owner is responsible for the cost of any approved extension.

#### **4.6.2 Water Standpipes**

In accordance with the [Metered Standpipe Policy](#) MSC will lease metered standpipes 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 MSC's Customer Service Centre.

#### **4.7 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 a 'Trade Waste Agreement' with MSC.

Trade Waste Application forms are available from the [website](#), MSC Customer Service Centres or by calling 1300 308 461.

MSC will only accept trade waste into the sewerage system where there is no likelihood that the trade waste will

- harm the system,
- pose any risk to the health and safety of sewerage workers,
- inhibit biological processes at the wastewater treatment plants,
- accumulate in bio-solids making their re-use difficult or impractical
- contain contaminants that may pass through the wastewater treatment plants untreated resulting in environmental contamination.

All trade waste discharged to sewer must meet all the requirements contained in the [MSC Trade Waste Policy](#) which is available on [MSCs website](#).

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

Properties with on-site sewage treatment and disposal systems (e.g., 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 MSC 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.

## 5. Contact Details

### 5.1 Online

Website: <https://msc.qld.gov.au/>

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

### 5.2 Phone

Emergency Contacts: 1300 308 461

Facsimile: 07 4092 3323

### 5.3 Customer Service Centres

Customer Service Centres:

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

#### 5.3.1 Office Hours

Please note that both Customer Service Centres are closed during public holidays.

Mareeba Service Centre

- Monday: 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Tuesday: 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Wednesday: 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Thursday: 9.00am – 4.30pm
- Friday: 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Kuranda Service Centre

- Monday: 10.00am – 4.30pm
- Tuesday: 10.00am – 4.30pm
- Wednesday: 10.00am – 4.30pm
- Thursday: 10.00am – 4.30pm
- Friday: 10.00am – 4.30pm
- Saturday & Sunday: Closed

### Postal Address

Manager Water and Waste

PO Box 154, Mareeba QLD 4880

Water and Waste Operations Address: Kowa Street Mareeba QLD