



CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

Water Supply and Sewerage

CONTENTS

<i>Vision, Purpose, Values</i>	3
<i>Service Commitments</i>	4
<i>Service Standards</i>	5
<i>Response Times</i>	6
<i>Water</i>	7
<i>Sewerage</i>	8
<i>Restrictions</i>	10
<i>Billing, Meter readings and estimates</i>	10
<i>Privacy & Contact Us</i>	15



Pictured: Mary River

Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision

Gympie Regional Council has a vision for embracing opportunities, promoting wellbeing and celebrating strong communities.

Our Purpose

To leave a positive legacy for future generations by embracing progress through good planning and efficient service delivery.

Our Values



Accountability

We are open, transparent and take responsibility for our actions.



Communication

We consult with the community, actively listen to and respond to the input of residents, and keep people informed.



Customer Service Focused

We meet the needs of our community in an efficient and effective manner. We strive to continually improve, show empathy and are environmentally aware in our service delivery.



Integrity

We act with honesty and respect in all we do and respect all residents, colleagues and visitors.



Teamwork & Collaboration

We recognise and support everyone's contributions. We are inclusive and contribute respectfully working as a team. We will care for ourselves and others.



Customer Charter and Service Commitments

This Customer Service Standard outlines what you can expect in your dealings with The Water Branch and what we expect in return.

Shared rights and responsibilities

Council is accountable for maintaining your water service for all properties up to the water meter while for sewer services, Council is responsible up to the connection point.

Service Standards

Our Responsibility



Provide a consistent level of service



Maintain service commitments



Assess and prioritise customer requests



Be fair and impartial in customer dealings



Engage with the community to ensure your views are considered in service planning and delivery

Your Responsibility



Be courteous and respectful to our staff



Refrain from using abusive language



Be direct in your communication with us regarding any service issues or enquiries

Response Times

Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions.

We will respond to water and sewerage incidents as soon as possible.

*Respond to urgent incidents in **less than 90 minutes**, on **80%** of occasions. After hours - 2 hours*

*Respond to non-urgent incidents in **less than 24 hours**, on **80%** of occasions. Business days*

Entry onto your property

Our employees and contractors have the right to enter and undertake works on your property under the *Water Act 2000*.

Our team may need to access your property to:

- Carry out investigations and inspections, including responding to emergencies,
- Inspect pipes, fittings and sewer pits,
- Read the meter located at the property.

Water Quality

Council commits to the effective and safe management of the water supply in order to provide safe, high quality drinking water that complies with the physical, chemical and microbiological health limits of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Less than two water quality complaints per 1,000 properties per financial year

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply you with water that is safe to drink, - Monitor and assess the quality of the drinking water supplied, - Publish annual water quality data on our website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all internal, including taps, pipes and drains, is maintained in good working order and complies with plumbing regulations, - Refer to our website for general information on water quality, - Report any emergencies or issues regarding water quality to us.

Water Supply Reliability

We will provide you with a reliable water supply that meets your needs.

Less than 10 unplanned water interruptions and less than 10 planned water interruptions per 100km of water main per financial year.

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and operate our drinking water service up to your meter, - Manage water pressure and flow across our network of pipes, - Implement effective pressure and leakage management, control leak, conserve water and assist in minimising pipe failures, - Assist the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service as the primary provider of fire and emergency service as the primary provider of fire and emergency services in Queensland, by maintaining and making water available through our network for firefighting purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain all private fittings, mains connected to water tanks and pipes on your property, - Regularly check water meter, taps and fittings for leaks, - Engaging a licenced plumber to repair any leaks on your side of the water meter, - Advise us immediately if damage occurs to any of our assets by calling us, - Use water efficiently - useful waterwise tips on our website, - Use Dial before you dig to confirm the location of any pipes on 1100 or visit www.1100.com.au.

Sewerage Service Reliability

Council manages a sewer network of 415 Km of sewerage mains and 74 sewage pump stations and seven sewage treatment plants. With a simple flush, your sewage is removed, treated and returned to the environment.

We will provide a reliable sewerage network that safely removes sewage and minimise impacts on the environment and our customers.

Less than 10 sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100km of sewerage main per year.

Less than 10 overflow incidents per year.

Less than 0.4 sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties per year.

Our Responsibility

- Maintain and operate the sewerage service from the property connection point for your property,
- Monitor the quality of our treated sewage before it returns to the environment,
- Respond to sewage overflows in our network as soon as possible.

Your Responsibility

- Only flush human waste and toilet paper down the toilet,
- Ensure your overflow relief gully is kept clear to prevent sewage from flooding your house,
- Ensure your stormwater drainage is not connected to the sewerage system,
- Always check for pipes before planting and choosing trees with roots systems that are less likely to enter pipes and cause blockages,
- Complaints about odours caused by sewage can be made by contacting Council.

Interruption and response to water supply and sewerage service

While we work hard for your water supply and sewerage service not to be interrupted, we occasionally need to carry out planned maintenance on our assets. In these situations your service may be interrupted for a short time. Should your supply be interrupted due to planned or unplanned works, our priority is to minimise any inconvenience to you.

Respond to urgent incidents in less than ninety minutes on 80 per cent of occasions (after hours – two hours).

Respond to non-urgent incidents in less than 24 hours on 80 per cent of occasions - business days.

Restore in less than six hours of notification 90 per cent of occasions (after hours – eight hours).

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider your needs including those with special needs, - Provide minimum of two business days' notice for occupants of residential properties or businesses, - Provide minimum of four business days' notice to occupants of identified special needs residential properties, - Respond to unplanned interruptions and restore water supply as soon as possible and where practical, provide an alternate water supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report any service interruptions and emergencies by calling us.

Dialysis and life support machines: If you are a special needs customer including customers who require home haemodialysis, we must be informed by Queensland Health that you require continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other special medical needs. We will maintain your details and provide you with prioritised service should your water supply be interrupted. Customers who have an increased consumption of water due to its use in haemodialysis may be eligible for a concession on water rates from Council.

Water restrictions

Gympie Regional Council is a registered water service provider and has powers under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* to impose water restrictions on its customers. The Chief Executive of the Department of Resources (*Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water*) as Regulator may also direct a water provider to impose restrictions.

The primary aim of the restriction policy is to ensure that the equitable sharing of available resources between the competing users with the urban and irrigation communities is not compromised when the available resource is limited.

On occasion council may be required to impose water restrictions depending on a range of factors or as directed by the Regulator.

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Impose appropriate water restrictions as required,- Publish and communicate formalised water restrictions on Council's website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Be aware of and abide by any water restrictions that are in place. Refer to information on Council's website.

Water and sewerage service charges

We apply a two-part water tariff consisting of a half-yearly charge and a two-tier consumption charge based on your water meter reading.

The first-tier consumption charge is for consumption up to 250 kilolitres per year. The second-tier consumption charge is for consumption above 250 kilolitres per year. Tiered pricing uses water consumption thresholds to encourage customers to use water efficiently.

Sewerage charges are subject to a fixed half-yearly access charge. Details of the categories of customers (including residential premises, vacant allotments, commercial premises, etc.), charges, discounts and pension rebates are available in our Revenue Statement and can be found at www.gympie.qld.gov.au.

Billing, meter readings and estimates

We understand the importance of ensuring meter readings are accurate and consumer charged correctly.

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide clear, easy to understand and accurate notices issued on your half-yearly rates notice and sent to the address you have provided to us,- Read your meter according to a regular schedule to maintain consistency of reading periods,- Estimate a reading, based on previous consumption levels when a water meter is not accessible or cannot be located,- If you have been overcharged, we will correct the notice within 7-10 business days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure your meter is not obstructed and is not tampered with,- If you have a dispute regarding the amount of your water and sewer charges you can request a review within 10 business days by contacting us.

A special meter read provides the applicant with an accurate account of the water consumed as at the read date. This information can then be used to calculate the amount of water charges that are to be paid by the seller and purchaser on settlement day. Fee information for this service can be found on Council's website.

Testing your meter

If you believe your meter is not reading accurately, you can request a meter test.

Our Responsibility	Your Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide you with information on how to self-check for water leaks (we recommend that you self-check before lodging a meter test application), - Provide you with a meter testing service for a prepaid fee and provide you with the test results, - Replace the water meter, refund the test charge and review water consumption charges for the property if the meter is found to be faulty (within 5 per cent accuracy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take regular readings of your water meter to promptly detect any unusual increases, which could indicate an undetected leak, - Check your consumption for the period against the same period in the previous year, - Consider any changes to your consumption (e.g. filling your pool), - Check your property for any signs of a leak, - Report any damage or significant problem with the water meter.

Replacing your meter: To maintain the accuracy of your water notices, we will replace the water meter if it is faulty, damaged or due to be replaced under our meter replacement program.

Undetected leaks: We recommend you regularly check your water meters. Some leaks can undetected for long periods of time because the source of the leak is not visible. These leaks can occur within the walls, underground or underneath a building or driveway. They are hidden from view and difficult to detect or locate. If you believe you may have a leak, you should take appropriate action to have it repaired as soon as possible by engaging a licenced plumber.

We have an **Undetected Leak Allowance** that provides the framework if you experience an undetected leak that has impacted your water account. Please note that eligibility criteria will apply. The undetected leak allowance does not apply to water loss from:

- Leaking taps, toilet cisterns, hot water systems or other water appliances,
- Filling of rainwater tank,
- Property sprinkler or other irrigation systems,
- Swimming pools, spa, ponds and other outdoor water features.

For more information, please see Gympie Regional Council's Revenue Statement

Damage to infrastructure

Damage to Council infrastructure should be reported as soon as practicable. Intentional damage is an offence. Council will charge the owner of the property with the reasonable cost to repair, unless the damage was caused by Council staff or Council contractors.

The safekeeping of meters and Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) is the responsibility of the owner of the property on which they are located.

Rates

We issue your water and sewerage charges in your half-yearly rates notice and send your notice to the address you have provided or you can apply to receive your rates via email. We provide you with 30 days to pay your rates and reserve the right to charge interest where the rates notice is overdue.

We are committed to providing customers who are having difficulty paying their rates notice with all reasonable opportunities to rectify any outstanding charges. Where you have not paid your rates by the due date, we will issue you with a reminder notice.

Payment assistance

We understand that from time to time, you may face circumstances that make it difficult for you to manage payment of your rates notice. We have a range of services to support customers experiencing financial difficulties, including:

- Flexible payment plans,
- Referrals to free community financial counselling services,
- Water conservation and efficiency advice.

Council has a Financial Hardship Policy that provides the framework to support our customers when they are experiencing financial hardship and difficulty paying their rates. For more information visit www.gympie.qld.gov.au/payments.

Paying your Rates notice

We offer a range of payment options:	
Bpay	Contact your financial institution or see information on your rates notice
Direct Debit	Complete a request form found at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/payments or call 1300 307 800
BPoint	Use your credit card to pay bills online, all Visa or Mastercards accepted. Phone BPoint on 1300 276 468
Post Office	In person at a Post Office
Mail	Cheque or money Order only to: Gympie Regional Council PO Box 155 Gympie QLD 4570
In Person	Town Hall, 2 Caledonian Hill, Gympie or Kilkivan Branch Office, 26 Bligh St, Kilkivan

Disputed Charges

If you believe you have been overcharged, it is recommended that you raise this matter with us and we will respond within 10 business days. If you have been overcharged due to a meter misread, council will correct your notice within 7-10 business days.

If we cannot reach an agreement on the amount owing you may lodge a complaint through our complaints process.

Complaint management

We aim to provide the highest level of service at all times, however we appreciate that there may be times when we don't get it right the first time.

We encourage your feedback to improve our service to you. If you would like more information about the way we manage complaints, please visit our Complaints Management information available on our website.

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland require that the respective parties first work together to resolve complaints before they are referred to them. If you are not satisfied with our decision or handling of your complaint, you have the right to contact Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland:

Phone	1800 662 837
Post	PO Box 3640, South Brisbane BC Qld 4101
Email	info@ewoq.com.au
Online	www.ewoq.com.au

Customer consultation

Council will provide a minimum of 48 hours notice to its customers before any planned interruptions to water and sewerage services. This will usually be through a hand delivered letter or letter in your mailbox.

Requests for information from Council should either be directed in writing to the Chief Executive Officer or by telephone the appropriate Council department.

Privacy and Information

Privacy - We are committed to protecting the privacy of our customers and employees, in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

We protect and maintain the security of individual's personal information and only use this for the purpose for which it is collected or as otherwise authorised.

We have developed an Information Privacy Policy, which can be found at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/privacy-statement

Right to information - We try to make as much information available to our customers free of charge through our website, newsletters and social media. However, if you need more specific information, you can lodge an application under the *Right to Information Act 2009*. A Right to information application must be made on the approved form and accompanied by the prescribed fee.

To find out more about this process, visit www.gympie.qld.gov.au/access-information.

Contact Us

General enquiries, billing and payment difficulties:

Phone: 1300 307 800 Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:45pm

Email: council@gympie.qld.gov.au

Online: www.gympie.qld.gov.au

Faults, services and emergencies after hours

Phone: 1300 307 800

Gympie Regional Council

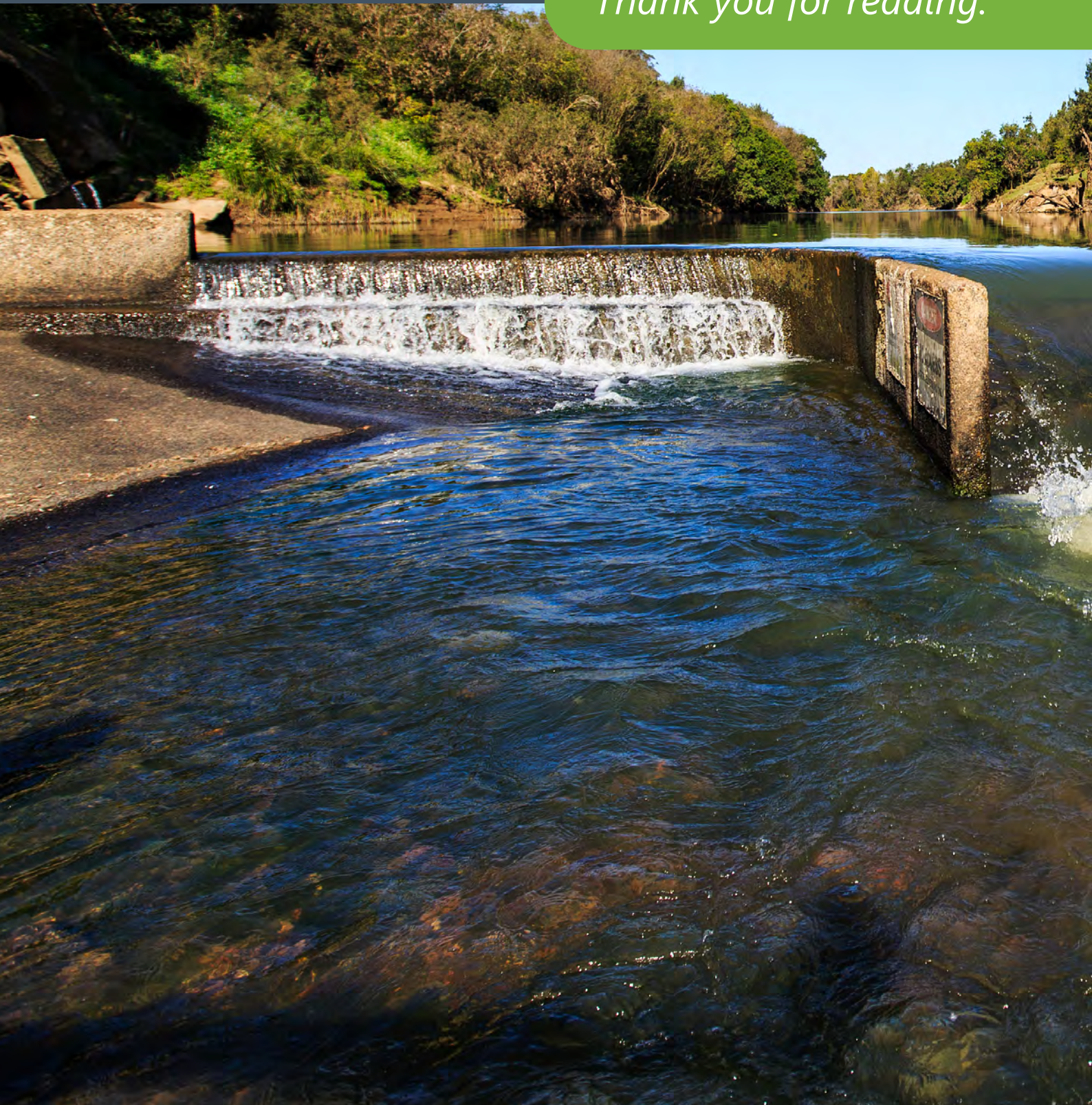
1300 307 800

2 Caledonian Hill (PO Box 155)
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gympie.qld.gov.au



Thank you for reading.



Pictured: The Gympie Weir