



SINGLETON
COUNCIL

Water and Sewer Group

CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

June 2018

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is the responsible authority for the delivery of water supply and sewerage services to the Singleton Local Government Area (LGA). The water supply and sewerage network is large and traverses the LGA boundary covering rural, residential, commercial, industrial and native bushland areas.

The purpose of the Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan is to clearly articulate Council's responsibilities for providing water and sewerage services in a sustainable way, the minimum levels of service customers can expect and our performance as a Local Water Utility for ease of comparison of the customer experience against industry-wide benchmarks.

The Water and Sewer Groups Vision, Mission and Values are summarised below. They are consistent with Council's Values and Code of Conduct as the guiding principles on which Council bases its beliefs and behaviour. They underpin all Council does as an organisation.

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan meets these objectives and is broadly consistent with the Council's adopted Customer Service Strategy, and the NSW Department of Industry (DoI) – Water's Customer Service Plan requirements. The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan abides by the customer service requirements of NSW Water Directorate members.

Council is committed to providing a high level of customer service and standards across the organisation. The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan is a centric water utility document.

1.1. OUR MISSION

The mission of the Council's Water and Sewerage business is;

To provide high quality water supply complying with the recognised drinking standards to residents, businesses and visitors and collect, treat and manage sewage in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

1.2. OUR VALUES

Our strategic decision and day to day activities in achieving our Mission will be guided by the following values, providing a balanced approach to the service provision;

- **Our Customers** – effectively anticipate and response to customer needs
- **Our Environment** – maintain the sustainability of the Singleton catchment
- **Our People** – establish and maintain productive and valued staff
- **Our Assets** – apply best practice in operating and maintaining our assets
- **Our Finances** – maintain Council's Local Water Utility as a competitive and financially responsible and accountable entity
- **Our Sustainability** – manage the business to be commercially successful in the long term
- **Our Accountability** – demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders



1.3. OUR WATER AND SEWER ASSETS

Council owns and maintains a significant underground network of water and sewer mains. The infrastructure delivers to most urban towns and villages and collects then treats sewage from a large portion of those homes and businesses. Council's water and sewer network and assets include:

- 1 Sewage Treatment Plant;
- 1 Water Treatment Plant;
- 25 kilometres Water Trunk Main (Raw);
- 74.7 kilometres Water Transfer Main;
- 172.78 kilometres Water Retricuation Mains;
- 126 kilometres Sewer Reticulaton Mains;
- 26 kilometres Sewer Rising (Pressure) Mains;
- 15 Sewer Pump Stations;
- 9 Water Pump Stations;
- 12 Water Reservoirs;
- 200 Pressure Sewer Systems;
- 4 Sewer Backup Generators; and
- 17 Remote Telemetry Systems.

1.3.1. WATER SUPPLY SERVICE SUMMARY

Council provides high quality water services to approximately 18,031 people, through the connection of 6,349 domestic and 795 commercial / industrial properties. Potable water is supplied to Singleton town, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Jerrys Plains and Broke. About 441 ML/year bulk potable water is supplied to large customers (Singleton Abattoir, Army Camp), potable water traders and three coal mining complexes.

Council's raw water is drawn from Glennies Creek Dam and conveyed to Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, where it is treated to drinking water standards before distribution to consumers. Council holds high security water supply licences which allows for use of allocated water on a priority basis, including in the event of drought.

1.3.2. SEWER SUPPLY SERVICE SUMMARY

Council provides sewerage treatment services to approximately 14,709 people in the urban footprint of Singleton, including Singleton town, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview and Darlington. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customers. Council does not supply sewer services to Branxton.

Council operates one sewage treatment plant, located in Whittingham, which provides tertiary treatment of effluent. Operation of the sewage treatment plant is governed by the requirements of Council's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Licence and treated effluent is discharged into Doughboy Hollow near the Hunter River.



1.4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Council's participates in NSW Department of Primary Industry (DPI) – Water annual performance monitoring program for Local Water Utilities. This leads to an audited Water and Sewer Performance Monitoring Report being issued annually by DPI Water. Council generally performs well and the 2015/2016 report assessing the performance of Council's water and sewer supply system shows that 100% compliance with best practice was achieved.

1.5. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this document is to describe Council's customer services and responsibilities in accordance with the legislative framework for Local Water Utilities in NSW.

DPI Water *Best Practice Management Guidelines for Local Water Utilities 2007* require Councils with Local Water Utilities to publish a Customer Service Plan. This document provides:

- An explanation of the services offered for drinking water, effluent, sewage collection and treatment. General information is also provided about the provision of trade waste services; however, trade waste customers are expected to have individual contracts with Council that will contain information specific to their requirements.
- Information on a range of customer service processes including connections, metering, billing, managing maintenance work (for example: backflow devices), complaints and dispute resolution.
- A list of key performance indicators and targets to express the levels of customer service or '**Customer Service Standards**' that Council aims to deliver to its customers and the environment. This includes critical items such as standards for drinking water, water pressure, water supply interruptions, sewer overflows and odours, response times and repair completion times, as may be applicable.

Overall, this document informs our customers of the service that they can expect from Council and Council's performance as reported by the various NSW Government and/or National regulators. The document is available to all customers and is not necessarily limited to the owners of individual properties that utilise our services. The Customer Service Standards set out in this document are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligation or rights. The times, service levels and benchmarking are not intended to be prescriptive of exact times or service standards to be provided, rather a guide as to the core business responses that customers can expect to receive from the services of Council.

"Customer Service is an ATTITUDE, not a department"
Mo Hardy



2. OUR SERVICES

2.1. WATER SUPPLY

2.1.1. STANDARD SERVICE AREA – DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Council distributes a reliable supply of drinking water to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 via our network of reservoirs, pump stations and mains connected to the two treated water supply schemes.

Further details about a connection entitlement to the schemes and the service areas can be obtained through the Water Supply Services Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website. A map of the water supply network is available in [Appendix 1 – Map of Supply Areas](#).

Singleton Water Supply Scheme

Council provides potable drinking water to customers within specified urban and some semi-rural areas of the LGA. This generally covers those developed properties within Singleton Town, Singleton Heights, Huntview, The Retreat, Maison Dieu, Mount Thorley, Broke, Singleton Military Area and through Whittingham to the Abattoir.

The Mount Thorley water supply area had higher than normal infrastructure costs when established due to its location, the high capacity reservoir and pipelines installed to supply water and provide firefighting capacity to a heavy industrial area and there being no State Government subsidy available for the works. As a result, it has a higher pricing model for base and consumption charges.

Council manages the bulk water supply of treated water to the Singleton Military Area and Abattoir, and the bulk supply of both treated and untreated water to three mines (Bulga Coal, Mount Thorley/Warkworth and Integra Coal) and Mushroom Composters under the terms and levels of service nominated in the joint venture agreement.

The Singleton Water Supply Scheme supplies reticulated treated water from Obanvale Water Treatment Plant on Bridgman Road, Obanvale.

Jerrys Plains Water Supply Scheme

The village of Jerrys Plains receives a treated potable water supply under the same quality and pressure standards as the Singleton Water Supply Scheme customers, but do not have fire hydrants installed in the water reticulation network.

Jerrys Plains Water Supply is treated by AGL Macquarie, on behalf of Council and reticulated by Council, servicing the village of Jerrys Plains.

2.1.2. STANDARD SERVICE AREA – NON-POTABLE WATER SUPPLY

Mount Thorley Joint Venture

Council manages the bulk water supply of untreated water to three mines (Bulga Coal, Mount Thorley/Warkworth and Integra Coal) and Mushroom Composters under the terms and levels of service nominated in the joint venture agreement.

Non Potable Raw Water Scheme

Council provides an irrigation and stock supply for property owners between Glennies Creek Dam and Council's Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, including Judan Road. This supply is by way of connection to Council's Glennies Creek Trunk Water Main before Obanvale Water Treatment Plant.



Image: Lake St Clair; the dam was formed by Glennies Creek Dam in 1983 and supplies water for various uses throughout the Singleton LGA.

2.1.3. NON-STANDARD SERVICE AREAS – WATER SUPPLY

Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID)

The Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District (PID) pipeline is a community funded and constructed irrigation water supply servicing members in the Broke Fordwich, Bulga and Milbrodale areas. The Broke Fordwich PID was established under the *Private Irrigation Districts Act 1973* (now the *Water Management Act 2000*).

The PID is privately owned and operated by its members; this service is not provided by Council. Further information on the Broke Fordwich PID, including contact details can be found on the Broke Fordwich PID website www.bfpid.com.au.

Branxton Service Area - Hunter Water

By agreement with Council, Hunter Water provides water and sewer supply services to Branxton and North Rothbury areas. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in Branxton and surrounds, including contact information, can be found on the Hunter Water website www.hunterwater.com.au.

2.1.4. STANDARD WATER CONNECTIONS

A standard water connection is based on a single residential meter size of 20mm. Applications for new water connections, upgrades of existing connections, downsizing or disconnection of water connections can be made by lodging a form that can be downloaded from Council's website.

Council undertakes all standard metering services at a fixed cost as per the annual fees and charges. A quotation will be provided for unusual connections or services requiring specific works.



2.1.5. WATER SUPPLY BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Backflow is the reverse flow of water into our service lines, pipes and/or mains. All connections to our water supply must be protected with backflow prevention containment devices. This includes fire service connections.

A backflow prevention device will stop water flowing back into our system from individual properties and protect the quality of the treated water. Council has a responsibility to provide safe drinking water and therefore our aim in the Backflow Prevention Program is to ensure:

- All residential properties have an approved potable cold water meter installed with non-return valve;
- Ongoing water meter replacement program;
- Available backflow prevention information and policy;
- Comprehensive assessment of backflow needs as part of any development application process; and
- Registration and annual testing program of testable devices.



Image: Fire Service Backflow Device

The testing of devices is the responsibility of property owners and Council will notify customers when these devices are due for test. Testing can only be undertaken by backflow certified plumbers. The importance of these devices in accordance with the Australian Standards cannot be ignored as they are critical in maintaining the integrity of the water supply scheme.

2.1.6. WATER TANKER BULK FILLING STATIONS – STAND PIPES

A number of fixed water tanker bulk water filling stations or stand pipes are installed across the LGA. These units enable water to be extracted from the main direct into a water tanker. The key operated units provide bulk supplies more quickly and volume data inputs regulate the amount of water required.

Council currently has two permanent standpipes. These are located at the Works Depot - 39 Maison Dieu Road Gowrie and Water and Sewer Depot – Waterworks Lane.

Council's Customer Service Centre can be contacted on 02 6578 7290 for information on the application process and associated fees and charges. Council's Water Carters Policy outlines the responsibilities of those who access the water tanker bulk filling stations or stand pipes. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

2.2. SEWER SUPPLY

Council operates one sewer system and one sewage treatment plant across the LGA. Council is subject to stringent environmental and health protection standards and is licensed to operate the sewer system and sewage treatment plant by the EPA



Indicative Performance Measure – Percentage of sewerage treated that was compliant – 100%. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

2.2.1. STANDARD SERVICE AREA

Council manages and supplies customers with essential sewer services in the area of Singleton, Glenridding, Singleton Heights, The Pinnacle, Hunterview and Darlington. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customers.

2.2.2. NON-STANDARD SERVICE AREAS – SEWER SUPPLY

By agreement with Council, Hunter Water provides water and sewer supply services to Branxton and North Rothbury areas. Council does not provide water and/or sewer services to these areas.

Further information about water and sewer supply services in Branxton and surrounds, including contact information, can be found on the Hunter Water website www.hunterwater.com.au.

2.2.3. SEWER CONNECTIONS

New connections to sewer supply areas are subject to entitlement, approval and payment of charges as applicable. It is mandatory to connect to Council provided sewerage infrastructure if your property falls within the defined boundary of the service supply area.

If your property is vacant and falls within the sewer service supply area, the fixed residential sewerage discharge annual fee is payable. This amount is set annually via Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

Connections might occur as a consequence of:

- New dwellings in developed areas; or
- At the request of a customer to replace on-site systems (newly connected villages or where private works to connect to the system is approved); or
- Connections made under the direction of Council to replace an on-site sewer system system.

Further details about a connection entitlement to the schemes and the service areas can be obtained through the Sewer Supply Services Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website. A map of the sewer supply network is available in [Appendix 1 – Map of Supply Areas](#).

New commercial properties or changes to a commercial undertaking which requires a sewer service from the Council may require a larger connection and approval. This will be coordinated by Council's Water and Sewer Group. Information about Council's requirements for assessing water and sewer infrastructure and connection requirements in association with the development process can be found on Council's website.



Image: Aerial view of Sewer Treatment Plant

2.2.4. TRADE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Trade waste is liquid waste generated from any commercial or industrial undertaking. This does not include discharges from domestic sewer, toilets, hand basins and showers.

Wastes such as cooking oil, grease and food solids are produced by a large number of food outlets across the LGA. If such waste is discharged directly into the sewer system, it could block the system and cause overflows that could harm public health and the environment. To prevent this, all commercial properties that discharge greasy waste must have a grease trap installed.

Trade waste may also contain a variety of toxic or harmful substances, such as heavy metals, organic compounds, solvents, oils and grease from industrial and commercial businesses. Sewer treatment plants are not designed to treat higher level substances and they could pose a serious work health and safety risk to staff working at these facilities, as well as the environment.

Commercial or industrial premises can only discharge waste to the sewer system that complies with the Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System Policy. All such premises that generate trade waste and discharge to the sewer system must have a current Trade Waste Approval with Council as per Council's Environmental Protection Licence with the EPA. In some circumstances, (for example: ability of receiving sewage treatment plant to take the liquid trade waste discharges or other disposal options available to discharger) and with the concurrence of the DoI Water, Council may implement approval conditions different to those contained within the Policy.

Council operates a waste tracking program to monitor the regular removal and disposal of waste from grease traps and other industrial holding tanks. The approval granted by Council stipulates how often grease traps must be cleaned out. Any commercial, businesses, trade or manufacturing customers wishing to discuss liquid trade waste are encouraged to contact Council's Trade Waste Officers directly.

A copy of the Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System Policy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

2.3. OTHER SERVICES

Council provides a range of other services that customers can access. These include:



- Water demand management advice (managing water use, high volume water customers and commercial activities);
- Drinking water quality information;
- Locating water and sewer infrastructure including dial-before-you-dig (DBYD);
- Information for plumbers;
- Water meter testing;
- Rainwater tank and dual flush toilet rebates;
- Assistance to connect to services;
- River flow, rainfall, water storage and consumption information;
- Providing plans of water and sewer mains;
- Special water meter readings;
- Checking of water meter readings and onsite water loss;
- Investigate and respond to application for water and sewer main extensions, adjustments or deviations, viability of providing reticulated services to new developments;
- Processing sub division and development applications;
- Providing water pressure certificates & sewer drainage diagrams; and
- Water & sewer design checks, linen plan, works as executed and preparation of final plans with estimates.

Details on the response timeframes for many of the above services are contained within the Customer Service Standards at Appendix 2. Our Customer Service Standards are outlined more fully in Section 4 of this plan.

*"It is important to try and see things from the customer's point of view;
ask yourself what you would expect if you were in their situation"*
Mary-Anne Crawford, Manager Development & Environment



3. OUR CHARGES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

All current Fees and Charges are contained within the Council Operational Plan, Revenue Policy and Fees and Charges Schedule, which is issued following public consultation and formal adoption by Council in June of each year. The fees and charges applicable for Council customers are summarised together within the document for ease of access and clarity.

If fees and charges are amended, Council will advise customers via public notice prior to adoption and any subsequent implementation. Proposed charges, structure of charges together with Council's Revenue Policy are broadly contained within Council's Operational Plan.

All Water Supply and Sewer related fees and charges stem from the need to ensure the financial viability of the business as calculated within the 30 year Water and Sewer Financial Plan. A critical element of the Water and Sewer Financial Plan is the capital works programs of both the water and sewer funds. Water and sewer pricing is designed to achieve full cost recovery of the services to ensure the continued sustainability of providing these essential services.

Pricing for water supply and sewerage services complies with the NSW Government, DoI Water - Water Supply, Sewerage and Trade Waste Pricing Guidelines. These guidelines are based on and comply with the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Strategic Framework for Water Reform, National Competition Policy and the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) Pricing Principles for Local Water Authorities.



Indicative Performance Measure – NSW Implementation of Best Practice Management (BPM) Requirements – 100% Compliant. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

The key charges for water supply and sewerage services are outlined below.

3.2. RESIDENTIAL

Section 501(1) of the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* permits council to make and levy annual charges for the provision of water and sewer supply services. Residential water and sewer charges comprise of three components:

- Water service fixed access charge;
- Sewer service fixed access charge; and
- Water consumption user charge.

Residents who have access to water or sewer services but are not connected may also be levied a vacant land use charge.

3.2.1. WATER SERVICE ACCESS CHARGE

The Singleton, Jerry's Plains and Broke water supply access charge is a fixed annual base charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the drinking water supply system. The size of the water meter installed on the property determines that base charge. Higher charges apply to properties with multiple or oversized water meter service connections.



The water service access charge applies to all properties and some adjacent to urban areas, which are within 225 metres of a water main, including vacant land that can feasibly connect to the water reticulation main without crossing private property.

3.2.2. SEWER SERVICE ACCESS CHARGE

The sewer service access charge is a fixed annual base charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the sewer distribution system. All residential properties are levied a fixed sewer access charge.

The sewer service access charge applies to all properties located within 75 metres of a Council sewer main, including vacant land that can feasibly connect to the sewer main without crossing private property.

3.2.3. WATER CONSUMPTION CHARGE

The water consumption charge is a volume based charge levied for each kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used and is based on the reading from a property's water meter. Unlike the service access charge, this fee is charged after the water is used. The water consumption charge is a tiered usage charge dependant on the volume used and is based on the long run marginal operating cost of the water supply system.

Since 2008/2009, if a threshold usage of 450 kilolitres is reached, a higher usage charge is applied. Charges are based on a financial year (from 1 July to 30 June) and are charged per property not per owner or tenant. This means if a property reaches 450 kilolitres in the first trimester and a new owner or tenant occupies the property for the remainder of the financial year, all water consumed will be charged at the higher rate. Water Consumption Accounts are issued three times per year to property owners that are connected to the Council water supply.

This charging method encourages lower water consumption and is in line with the water industry best practice. Large families who may be unduly affected by the tier charge can apply for relief from the full effect of the charge increase, with each case being treated by Council on its merits. Refer to Council's Operational Plan and Revenue Policy available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

The water and sewer charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.



Indicative Performance Measure – NPR Annual Residential Bill Water Supply + Sewerage based on 200 KL/a. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

3.2.4. CHARGES FOR VACANT LAND

Vacant land where the water or sewer service is available in accordance with Section 552 of the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* will be levied an access charge regardless of whether the property is connected or not. Water and sewerage schemes are significant constructions, with costs that include pumping stations, land purchases, mains and treatment plants. It is not possible for a Council to pay for the construction works whilst charging on the basis of an individual property owner's connection, when at a point in time they choose to utilise it.

The water and sewer service access charges help cover the fixed costs of:

- The operation and maintenance of the extensive water and sewer distribution systems;



- Operation of water and sewer treatment plants;
- Improvements to water and sewer treatment processes; and
- Helping to protect the environment.

Base charges for vacant land for water and/or sewer services will only be applied to a property meeting the access charge location requirements and are able to feasibly connect to a main. For example a water main fronts the property.

3.3. NON-RESIDENTIAL CHARGES (BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL & NON-RATEABLE)

Non-residential is a commonly referred to term in the water industry and usually defined as Business, Commercial and Non Rateable properties.

Non-residential charges are similar to residential charges but are comprised of four components:

- Water service access charge;
- Water consumption charge;
- Sewerage access and usage charge; and
- Liquid trade waste access and usage charge.

3.3.1. WATER SERVICE ACCESS CHARGE

The water service access charge is a fixed annual base charge (levied as part of the Rates Notice and payable in quarterly instalments) for the connection, or ability to connect, to the drinking water supply system. The size of the water meter installed on the property determines that base charge. Higher charges apply to properties with multiple or oversized water meter service connections.

The water service access charge applies to all properties and some adjacent to urban areas, which are within 225 metres of a water main, including vacant land.

The water service access charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

3.3.2. WATER CONSUMPTION CHARGE

Non-residential, non-rateable water consumption charge is a volume based charge levied for each kilolitre (1,000 litres) of water used and is based on the reading from a property's water meter. Non-residential, non-rateable properties are not subject to the tiered usage charge.

The water usage charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

3.3.3. SEWERAGE ACCESS AND USAGE CHARGE

Since 2008/2009 Council has applied a user pays pricing to all non-residential, non-rateable sewer users based on guidelines issued by DoI – Water. The sewerage access charge for non-residential customers is based on the volume of sewer that is assumed to be discharged from the property into the system.

For non-residential, non-rateable customers, sewerage accounts are based on a two part tariff – an annual access charge and a uniform sewerage usage charge per kilolitre discharged. The sewerage access charge is proportional to the area of the water connection to reflect the load that can be placed on the sewer system, and the usage charge reflects the marginal costs of Council's Sewerage Business. It is applied to



the estimated volume discharged into the sewer system using a sewerage discharge factor determined for each business type. The specific pricing calculation method is details in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

If a customer believes that the actual proportion of sewer discharged from the property differs from the standard industry based discharge factor, then the property owner can lodge a request for variation based on their data and evidence. Obtaining the necessary information to support a case for a lower discharge factor might entail a property owner:

- Installing a permanent sewer discharge meter on the point of discharge from the property to the sewer system; or
- Installing a permanent water meter within the property to measure amounts of water that DO NOT return to the sewer system; or
- Installing a temporary sewer flow monitoring device to monitor an agreed specified period.

The sewerage billing system and associated charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.



Indicative Performance Measure – NSW Non-Residential Sewer Usage Charge 166c/kL, lower than the average of 181c/kL for Water Utilities of the same class in NSW. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

3.3.4. LIQUID TRADE WASTE ACCESS AND USAGE CHARGES

Non-residential, non-rateable sewerage customers may also be required to hold liquid trade waste approvals to discharge to the sewer. Most approvals require pre-treatment in approved equipment before discharging to the sewer. The trade waste access and usage charges are additional sewer quality charges to customers that operate commercial undertakings, industry, trade or manufacturing businesses that discharge liquid trade waste other than domestic sewer. The specific pricing calculation method is detailed in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

Liquid trade waste customers will be invoiced three times annually, with the charges being calculated upon a proportion of the annual fee, plus usage charges for the period. Full details concerning pre-treatment, discharger categories, applying for liquid trade waste approvals, fees and charges are available in the Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System Policy, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

The liquid trade waste billing system and associated charges are reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan, available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.



4. OUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In general terms, Council:

- Has the right to enter a customer's property for the purpose of reading, replacing or maintaining the meter.
- Has the right to enter a customer's property at other times if the situation is deemed an emergency or a breach of legislation is suspected.
- Requires meter readers and our staff to carry identification and produce if requested.

This section provides a general overview of core activities undertaken as standard business practice.

4.1. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Council sets itself very high standards for all its water supply and sewer services which are consistent with the Council corporate vision and commitment to customers. This includes our responsibilities to the environment.

Across the industry there are a number of terminologies used to specify and measure service performance including Levels of Service, Service Standards, Service Delivery Levels, Customer Service Measurement, Customer Service Targets and Service Codes. Council has adopted a range of Customer Service Standards which more closely reflect and more easily describe those key elements of our activities which are core to our industry and which, primarily ensure that our customers are adequately informed about the services they receive and the timeframe that they can expect for those services. As an overall business philosophy for our core essential service activities, Council will make every reasonable effort to:

- Provide water and sewer services on a continuous basis unless an interruption is required for emergency repairs or planned maintenance of the network, infrastructure or operations thereof;
- Supply high quality drinking water free from harmful organisms, colour, taste or odour in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research (NHMRC) Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (exceptions include Glennies Creek and Mount Thorley Raw water supply schemes). This also includes the *Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957 (NSW)*;
- Minimise overflows from the sewer collection system and ensure affected areas are cleaned up and disinfected as soon as possible if such occurs; and
- Compile a summary of all customer complaints as required under the National Perform Reporting framework and report publically on an annual basis.



Indicative Performance Measure – 2 water service complaints (per 1,000 properties) in 2011/16. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

Service delivery is not just about response times; it is also about making sure that our business provides a high quality level of service. [Appendix 2 – Customer Service Standards](#) outlines the Customer Service Standards together with the target and benchmark used to partially measure our success as contained at [Appendix 3 – Targets and Benchmarking](#).

4.2. BEST PRACTICE MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL WATER UTILITIES

The Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines are published by Department of Industries – Water (DoI - Water) and provide guidance on achieving best-practice NSW Local Water Utilities. The purpose of Best Practice Management is to:



- encourage the effective and efficient delivery of water supply and sewerage services; and
- promote sustainable water conservation practices and water demand management throughout NSW.

There are six facets that form Best Practice Management:

- Strategic Business Planning;
- Pricing (including Developer Charges, Liquid Trade Waste Policy and Approvals);
- Water Conservation;
- Drought Management;
- Performance Reporting; and
- Integrated Water Cycle Management.

The activities required under BPM are integral to the direction of Council's Local Water Utility and form the direction of the Water and Sewer Group to effectively service Singleton LGA with water and sewer services now and into the future.

4.3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As the Local Water Utility provider for the community Council's Water and Sewer Group has a requirement to comply with the Local Government Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework (IP&R) 2010. This includes the requirement of Council to prepare;

- Community Strategic Plan (CSP);
- Resourcing Strategy;
- 4 year Delivery Program;
- Annual Operational Plan; and
- Annual Report.

The Community Strategic Plan sits at the top of the Council planning hierarchy and identifies the community's main priorities for the future and the ways to achieve these goals.

The Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines provide the specific roadmap for Local Water Utilities to comply with the IP&R process.

Council members conduct Stakeholder Engagement and Project Delivery Plan meetings for major capital works and seek comment, feedback and opinion on a continual basis via website, telephone or mail.

4.4. WEBSITE

Council maintains a website, which is consistent with the water industry to provide specific information to our customers regarding water supply matters. The website is maintained with important news items including significant water supply outages, restrictions or sewer related disruptions during emergency or weather impacting events. The information is updated regularly and includes environmental data reported in compliance with Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.

The website also includes important demand management initiatives.



4.5. METER READING

Water meter readings are used to calculate consumption charges that appear on the Water Accounts. Council reads water meters on a tri annual basis. Meters are read and Water Accounts issued as soon as possible after the reading of the meter. This ensures that customers obtain consumption information in a timely fashion in order to address any high and unexpected volumes. High level water consuming customers are read on a monthly basis. Special water meter reading can be undertaken on application, usually in conjunction with a 603 Certificate application on the sale of a property.

In most cases the water meter is located on the front boundary of a property. There are cases however, where the meter is located further inside a property and meter readers are required to enter the property to take the reading.

Meter accuracy may reduce with the increasing age of the unit or usage as the dials tend to wear and they tend to record less consumption than actually occurs. Council therefore has a meter replacement program and meters are replaced at Council expense unless damage has occurred from wilful destruction. Disruption to customers is minimised and for high consumption properties contact is always made before a water meter is replaced. When a water meter is replaced, the final reading is recorded for billing prior to the new meter being installed. Details are always provided to customers with the next water account issued.

4.6. WATER ACCOUNTS

A Water Account is sent from Council to the title owner of a property three times a year. Two types of accounts are produced by Council: residential water account and a non-residential water and sewer account issued for non-residential, non-rateable customers and will, if applicable, include the sewer access charges.

Both Water Accounts will comply with the National Guidelines for Residential Customers' Water Accounts. A Water Account will generally include the following information:

- Customer name;
- Your postal address, assessment number, address and description of the property for the purpose of water and sewer services to which the charges apply;
- The date of postage and the supply period;
- The previous and current meter readings;
- Separation of the volumetric charges;
- The total consumption for the current period and comparison with the daily average consumption for the previous period and same period last year;
- The date by which you are required to pay and the ways by which you can pay; and
- Information on contacting us including a 24 hour telephone number for faults and emergencies.

Council will provide a range of payment options for Water Accounts. In addition to those shown on each Water Account (space limited), a number of other alternative methods are provided and these are summarised on the Council website, or in the later section on [Payment Options](#).

Council also provide a range of topical information flyers contained within each Water Account to educate, inform and highlight to customers the services provided by Council's Water and Sewer Group. The information flyers are an important means by which we can communicate regularly with customers about initiatives and water saving strategies.



4.7. UNDETECTED / CONCEALED WATER LEAKS

Council has assistance available to customers, providing some relief for significantly higher Water Accounts emanating from undetected or concealed water leaks. Whilst water that has passed through a meter connection is the responsibility of a property owner, subject to the provisions of section 5.2 Concessions and Rebates in Council's Water Supply Service Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

4.8. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Council's Local Water Utility is currently developing an 'Asset Criticality Framework and Management Strategy' to ensure a clear understanding is identified for its infrastructure systems and how such relate to/impact upon various customer groups. By identifying critical assets, it will allow Council to develop appropriate management strategies that minimise the risk of catastrophic events and achieve optimum balance between the risk of asset failure and the lifecycle costs of inspecting, maintaining, repairing and renewing assets.

Whilst this framework and management strategy is a comprehensive document, it remains in its infancy for implementation as IT systems, software and processes are require enhancement to enable wide adoption. This section of the Customer Service Plan however, provides some specific core business actions with regard to continuation of services as a result of works involving repairs and or maintenance of water and sewer infrastructure.

4.9. PLANNED MAINTENANCE WORKS

From time to time, Council will need to undertake planned maintenance work and unplanned/emergency repairs to the water supply and sewerage system. Council always is mindful of the disruption that can be caused to customers and for planned works will always aim in general terms to:

Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake planned work that involves shutting down the water supply or sewer system at a time that minimises disruption to customers.• Provide notice to occupiers of affected properties 24 hours prior to commencing planned work.• Notice will be given via letter box drops, social media, Council's website and variable message board (where possible).• Every reasonable effort will be made to perform planned work between 8.30am and 3pm in residential areas where prolonged outages are planned.• Provide alternative water supplies where possible through temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake planned work that involves shutting down the water supply or sewer system at a time that minimises disruption to customers.• Provide 7 seven days' notice (or by agreement) prior to

Customer Type	Action
	<p>commencing planned work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be given via letter box drops, social media, Council's website and variable message board (where possible). • Every reasonable effort will be made to perform this work between 6pm and 6am or on weekends in commercial and industrial areas where prolonged outages are planned. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.
<p>Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers</p> <p>Critical Water Supply Customers</p> <p>(refer also Section 4.11 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and other Critical Water Supply Customers to negotiate, where possible, a mutually convenient time to minimise impacts of interruption. • Notice will be given, via doorknocking/letter box drops or direct contact. • Provide 7 seven days' notice (or by agreement) prior to commencing planned work. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.

4.10. UNPLANNED INTERRUPTIONS

If there is unplanned interruption to your services, Council will use all reasonable endeavours to keep any inconvenience to you minimised by restoring the services as quickly as possible. Council's Customer Service Centre will be able to provide information in relation to the unplanned interruption as well as estimated times for restoration. Council will also make every effort to provide advice on the unplanned interruption via social media and Council's website, particularly where the interruption affects a large area.

Customer Type	Action
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be given, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. • If interruption will be less than four hours, notice via doorknocking will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme inconvenience. • Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.
Commercial/Industrial Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice will be given, where possible, via doorknocking/letter box drops, social media, Council's website and/or variable message board. • If interruption will be less than four hours, notice via doorknocking will only be given to those customers who are put at extreme



Customer Type	Action
	<p>inconvenience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.
<p>Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers</p> <p>Critical Water Supply Customers</p> <p>(refer also Section 4.11 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise notification, via doorknocking or direct contact, and action to restore supply Provide alternative water supplies, where possible, through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 8 hours.

4.10.1. FORCE MAJEURE

Council's ability to provide water and sewer services may be affected by events beyond its control, such as: severe weather or conditions resulting from severe weather or physical natural disaster including fire, flood, lightning or earthquake.

4.10.2. EMERGENCY REPAIR WORKS

For emergency repairs and service faults, Council will, where possible:

- Respond to service faults within quoted timeframes.
- Maintain a listing of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers and immediately notify outage/provide regular updates on progress of repairs (see table below).
- Attempt to contact all affected properties for isolated supply disruptions and/or use social media, website, radio or other means to reasonably inform customers.
- Try to limit water interruptions to a minimum.
- Provide alternative water supplies where possible through temporary connections and/or emergency bottled drinking water for outages predicted to be greater than 6 hours.
- Provide water from hydrants in urban areas for fire-fighting where possible.



Indicative Performance Measure – Average Duration of Unplanned Water Supply Interruptions in 2015/16 was 5.5 hours. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

4.11. CRITICAL WATER SUPPLY CUSTOMERS

In the event of planned and unplanned supply interruptions Council will prioritise notification and action to restore supply Council for all Critical Water Supply Customers.

Council will maintain a register of Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers for use when planning and scheduling works and in the event of an unplanned supply interruption. Council will also consider the impact of planned and unplanned works on Critical Water Supply Customers. However, it is not always possible to schedule planned works to accommodate the needs of all Critical Water Supply Customers.

Criticality Grading	Definition	Customer Type
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Extremely Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which the disruption of water supply may present a serious threat to human life, safety or welfare or a serious threat to animal welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-patient hospitals and surgical facilities • Dialysis facilities / patents
Critical Water Supply Customers	Customers for which disruption of water supply would present a significant impact on facility operations but not a serious threat to life or safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors and dentists • Medical facilities and out-patient hospitals • Assisted living facilities • Educational institutions (schools, universities) • Daycare and Preschool facilities • High water users (>35 megalitres / year) • Medical / food production facilities • Large scale animal housing or processing facilities

Table: Critical Water Supply Customers

4.12. DIRTY OR DISCOLOURED WATER

'Dirty' water is a change in the appearance or the colour of your water - usually to a brown or yellow. This discolouration is caused by trace materials within the water, such as iron or manganese. When these materials enter the water supply system they are in extremely low levels, however changes to the supply as it travels through the system can cause these materials to accumulate and become visible, discolouring the water.

4.12.1. HOW ARE THE MAINS FLUSHED?

The flushing process consists of cleaning the interior of the water mains by sending a rapid flow of water through the main. This is known as scouring. By flushing the water under higher release pressure through the mains, the build-up of sediment will be dislodged. Some slight discolouration of the water supply may occur after mains flushing in the immediate area, but this will quickly disperse after running a tap for a short period of time.

Council will notify residents of any planned scouring occurring. If you experience dirty, or discoloured water after a scheduled clean, try running the outside tap for 1-5 minutes until the water clears.

4.12.2. WHERE AND WHEN DOES DIRTY WATER USUALLY OCCUR?

Residents living in areas furthest away from the nearest reservoir, or at the end of a street, may experience discolouration more frequently than others. This is because the water has further to travel and this allows heavier particles to settle out of the water and become visible. Weekenders or untenanted houses in any area may also experience discolouration when first turning on a tap after a period of time without using water at the home.

Discolouration can also be caused by old household connections as well as certain types of pipes. For example discolouration will occur more often in houses with galvanised water pipes. Galvanised pipes are no longer used in homes, with copper - or more recently polyethylene pipes have become the norm.



Anyone who experiences regular water discolouration and has galvanised water pipes in their home may consider replacing them and should seek further advice and assistance from a local plumber.

4.12.3. IS DIRTY WATER CONSIDERED A HEALTH HAZARD?

Council is constantly testing the quality of drinking water in our area to ensure it complies with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, administered by NSW Health. Generally dirty water is not a hazard to health, although it may appear unpleasant.

4.12.4. WHAT IF I HAVE MILKY OR WHITE COLOURED WATER?

Water that is milky or white in colour is the result of small air bubbles within the water. This is usually due to air becoming trapped in the pipes - perhaps after the repair of a broken water main. This water is harmless and if left in a container on the bench, the air will quickly dissipate and the water will become clear. It will not stain your washing.

4.12.5. DOES DIRTY WATER AFFECT WASHING?

Discolouration of the water supply by materials such as iron and/or manganese may cause a rust coloured stain on your clothing and linen while washing. If you notice a discolouration in the water from your household taps, don't use your washing machine until the water is clear.

If your property, including clothes, household furniture or fittings, has been damaged by a dirty water (water discolouration) event, Council will consider, on application, requests to clean, replace or repair the damaged items. Council will attempt to have the items cleaned the items in the first instance.

4.12.6. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I NOTICE DIRTY WATER?

If you notice water discolouration in your home, we suggest you wait an hour or two then check that the water from your front tap (nearest to the water meter) is clear. If it is clear, go to the tap at the furthest point from your water meter (usually the garden tap in the backyard) and run the water for a few minutes until it also runs clear. If the water coming into your front tap is not clear contact Council and we can arrange flushing of the water mains in the local area. While flushing is being undertaken, customers can experience very dirty water, however this will clear shortly afterwards.

Council has approximately 300 kilometres of water mains, 9 water pump stations and 12 water reservoirs, so we are unable to monitor them all at the same time, so we do rely on residents to advise us of any severe or ongoing discolouration to the water supply in order to take action in the immediate area.

4.13. ACCESS AND ENTRY TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

If in the event, it is necessary to enter your property to access water supply (water meter reading notwithstanding) or sewerage infrastructure (for example: pressure sewer units, manholes, mains or inspection openings), Council will:

- Make every effort to contact the occupier/owner of the property prior to entering upon the land to undertake urgent repairs;
- Ensure that all Council staff and/or authorised contractors as applicable, produce their identifications upon arrival;
- Advise the occupier/owner of the property as to the nature of the work being undertaken, the staff and equipment necessary involved and the timeframe to complete the work;
- Undertake the work as carefully as possible with all effort made to minimise the impact upon the



property and disruption to the occupier;

- Leave a 'calling card' after completion of the work if the occupier/owner of the property is not present;
- Discuss any reinstatement works with the occupier / owner prior to commencement and
- Make every effort to reinstate the property to its prior state as quickly as possible after completion of the work.

In all circumstances Council will:

- Undertake works in a safe manner in line with best practice;
- Present ourselves in a neat and tidy manner; and
- Conduct ourselves professionally and courteously at all times and refrain from any offensive behaviour or coarse language.

4.14. REINSTATEMENT OF SURFACES

In the majority of cases, water and sewer mains are located beneath the street, footpath or inside the rear/side boundary of a property. Sometimes it is necessary that landscaping and/or concrete driveway works will need to be undertaken in order to repair or replace water mains and other infrastructure. Council will take reasonable care in undertaking these works and where driveways are involved, will seek and alternative to cutting the driveway wherever possible. Should an alternative solution not be viable, cutting may be unavoidable. Council will restore the driveway and this includes concrete, exposed aggregate, decorative, pavers or stamped concrete.

For works undertaken upon grassed verges or nature strips the replacement of turf may be by way of grass seed and topsoil to promote growth.

4.15. WATER RESTRICTIONS

Council may interrupt, limit or place restrictions on the supply of water when necessary by the Mayor and General Manager, including the:

- purposes for which the water can be used;
- times when the water can be used;
- methods by which the water can be used; and
- quantities of water that can be used.

Water restrictions are applied in the case of drought or other emergency, if the available stored water or capacity to supply is so limited to make extraordinary measures necessary in the general interest of all water consumers.

Water restrictions will be widely advertised across various platforms to ensure awareness by all customers. Residents must comply with the conditions of the water restrictions on and from the date specified in the notice. Non-compliance with the conditions of the water restrictions may result in a penalty notice for ignoring water restrictions, in accordance with the relevant legislation and Council resolution.

Water restrictions will always be widely advertised to ensure total awareness by all customers. Details concerning the supply triggers for water restrictions and the restriction categories are available within Council's Drought Management and Emergency Responses Plan – 2010. A copy of the Drought Management and Emergency Response Plan is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.



4.15.1. RESTRICTION OF WATER SUPPLY – UNPAID CHARGES OF MISUSE OF WATER

Under the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* and General Regulations, Council may restrict or cut off the supply of water in a number of circumstances including:

- If any rates or charges in respect of the water supplied to the premises are unpaid,
- If the owner or occupier or other person requiring a supply of water fails to comply with a lawful order or requirement to repair or alter water connections, pipes, fittings or fixtures connected to the water supply system.

In the cases above, Council will not undertake the restriction of water supply to critical customers, pensioner accounts or properties with farm animals.

The restriction of water supply will not be undertaken for unpaid charges without a reminder and notice of restriction being first provided. In cases where the property address and owner postal address differ, an advice will be sent to the property owner(s) and occupier of the pending action.

If Council take restriction action, reasonable flow or health and hygiene purposes will be provided. If it is believed that the restriction will cause a health hazard the resident must contact Council within seven days of the date on the notice of restriction.

Resumption of full supply will occur when the reason for the restriction of services no longer applies and the payment of the applicable charge has been made.

4.15.2. WATER WISE RULES

As part of Council's commitment to ensuring good water conservation practices within its LGA, a set of water wise rules have been developed to reduce the demand on drinking water. These are common sense outdoor actions to help save water wastage and reduce bills, which apply to everyone who uses water sourced from Council, including residents, businesses and government.

The key rules are;

- All hand held hoses must have a trigger nozzle attached.
- Watering with a sprinkler, irrigation system or hose is permitted any day before 10am or after 4pm. This avoids the hottest part of the day when water wastage occurs due to evaporation. Watering-cans can be used at anytime, as can filling a bucket, washing a vehicle, building or pet, or topping up / filling a swimming pool, provided a trigger nozzle or pressure cleaner is used.
- No hosing of paths, driveways, concrete and other paved areas except when cleaning with water is necessary for reasons of safety, health, emergency, construction activity or surface discolouration. Use a broom or blower.

Council's water supply can be used:

- In the event of, or to prevent an accident, health hazard, surface discolouration or environmental issue;
- To defend property from fire or test fire protection systems;
- Watering systems can be used to establish new lawns and gardens for up to 14 days from



installation; and

- The use of water is allowed at any time for the purpose of cooling people or animals.

Exemptions do exist for health, safety and emergency reasons and for certain businesses, such as commercial nurseries and landscapers, sporting grounds, firefighting and the use of rain or bore water.

Any imposed water restrictions will override the water wise provisions set out above.

4.15.3. WATER SAVING TIPS AROUND THE HOME

What better place to start to use water wisely than inside the home. It's where we have the most control over how things are done.

Around the House

- Check for leaks regularly. Advice on testing your meter can be found in the **Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks** section of this document.
- If you discover a leak, call a plumber to help you detect where the leak may be.
- If you are away or not regularly at the property turn the water meter off before you leave to prevent unintended water usage.
- Some hot water systems (including solar panels), air conditioning units, reverse cycle systems and pool solar heating have pressure release valves and overflow outlets which release water. This should be diverted away from the house to prevent damage; consider re-using this water on gardens or lawns.

Around the Garden

- Wash your car or boat on the lawn and water the grass at the same time.
- Use a broom, rake or outdoor blower to clean paths and driveways.
- Make sure taps and hose fittings are not leaking, a dripping tap can waste more than 2000 litres a month.
- A forgotten sprinkler can waste thousands of litres of water, consider using a timer to prevent wastage.
- When watering the garden use a trigger nozzle hand held hose and only water when required. Water in the early mornings or evenings and avoid watering in hot windy weather.
- Choose the right plants, there are many water wise varieties available which need much less maintenance and watering.
- Mulching the garden is a great way to reduce evaporation and water run-off. Good quality mulch will also provide nutrients and reduce weed growth.
- Install a rainwater tank for garden use.



In the Kitchen

- Kitchens account for up to 20% of your indoor water usage, installing an efficient low-flow tap will help reduce the amount of water you use.
- Always turn taps off so they don't drip.
- When hand washing dishes, never run water continuously.
- When using a dishwasher only wash full loads, use the shortest cycle possible.
- When cleaning fruits and vegetables, wash them in a partially filled sink and rinse off quickly under the tap.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge instead of running the tap until the water gets cool each time you want some water to drink.

In the Bathroom

- Upgrade old toilets and install dual flush cisterns. See Dual Flush Rebate section of this document for rebates currently available to customers.
- Check toilets for leaks; try putting a small amount of food colouring in the tank and look to see whether it seeps into the bowl without flushing.
- When shaving partially fill the sink and use that water rather than running the tap continuously, use short bursts of water to clean razors.
- Short showers use less water than baths, but if you still prefer bathing, avoid overfilling the bathtub.
- Capture water in a bucket while you are waiting for the hot water to heat up, your plants will love it.
- Don't run water whilst brushing teeth.

In the Laundry

- Wash only full loads in your washing machine and use the shortest possible washing cycle.
- If your washing machine has an adjustable water level indicator, set the dial to use only as much water as necessary.
- If you have a septic system, spread your washing out to avoid heavy use days that could overload the system and always use environmentally friendly products.

4.15.4. PROVISION OF WATER SAVING STRATEGIES

Council takes its responsibilities to the community and the environment seriously. Water conservation means looking after our resources and protecting the environment. Council provides a number of education resources and actively facilitates water saving initiatives which promote water, sewer and associated efficiencies. Council maintains and promotes as standard demand management initiatives:

- Dual Flush Toilet Rebate;
- Rainwater Tank Rebate; and
- Water Saving Information.

4.16. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

As a large user of energy resources within the LGA, together with the high cost of operating the large water and sewer infrastructure, Council takes a serious view toward energy management. Council operates within a highly regulated environment with responsibilities extended to satisfy our broad customer base including various industry stakeholders, private, commercial, government, regulators and visiting consumers.



Aging infrastructure and capital technology advancements dramatically increase the risk profile around asset performance and cost. Energy distributors challenge users with complex tariff structures, therefore Council continually reviews the level of energy consumption to maximise the best available rates to ensure costs are minimised.

Energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions are reported in Council's annual performance reporting requirements to DoI – Water and the EPA. The results of these audited reports are published annually and can be found in [Appendix 3 – Targets and Benchmarking](#).

*"If the answer to a customer enquiry is unknown, say so;
but commit to finding to the answer and always get back to them quickly."*

Katie Hardy – Manager Water and Sewer



5. YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In general terms Customers are:

- Responsible for internal plumbing on the property. Internal plumbing should be maintained, including preventing tree root intrusion on sewer pipes, and regularly checking for leaks on water pipes;
- Responsible for ensuring their water meter is readily accessible by staff or contracted water meter readers;
- Responsible for the cost of a sewer blockage in their property connection if caused by a covered inspection hole, defective fitting on their property or placement of inappropriate items into the sewer system;
- Required to notify us of any dangers on their property e.g. dangerous dogs or obstacles which may prevent, hinder or stop the water meter from being accessed;
- Required to advise us if they require uninterrupted/high volumes of water for use by life support equipment so we are aware of the situation; and
- Required to ensure that stormwater drainage is not connected to or not permitted to enter the sewer system through the overflow relief gully.

In addition, customers must allow an authorised person from Council access to their property to:

- Install, read, test, maintain or alter meters;
- Replace meters and other equipment;
- Connect, restrict or restore supply;
- Inspect, make safe, operate, change, maintain, remove, repair or replace any infrastructure or equipment; and
- Disconnect unauthorised connections to the system.

5.1. INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

Council collects and holds personal and health information for the purpose of facilitating its business. It is important that the use of this information is confined to the purpose for which it is acquired.

The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, NSW* (PPIPA) requires all public sector agencies to prepare, implement and review their Privacy Management Plan at least every three years. Council complies with the legislative requirements of the PPIPA, the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002, NSW* (HRIPA) and the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government in this regard.

The Privacy Management Plan has been publicly adopted in order to inform the community and maintain the education of staff on issues regarding access to personal information and to introduce Council policies and procedures to maximise compliance with the PPIPA and the HRIPA.

Electronic information is the basis on which Council conducts much of its business. As the custodian of a large volume of information that is sensitive for business, governance, personal or political reasons, Council has a fundamental responsibility to protect that information from unauthorised or accidental modification, loss, release or impact on the safety and well-being of individuals.

Council is committed to protecting the privacy of our customers, business contacts, Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers. A copy of the Privacy Management Plan is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website



5.2. SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

It is necessary for customers to advise Council if there is a requirement for water to maintain special medical needs. Council maintains a register of Life Support Machines; a register of residential properties that operate life support machines such as dialysis machines. This information is available to Council staff to ensure, as much as possible, that a continuous supply of drinking water is maintained at those locations in the event of a burst water main or planned shutdown.

Council will maintain regular contact with customers registered, including providing emergency numbers. We also maintain and provide details to Renal Units, so that information can be provided to patients.

Some special health needs customers may also receive a rebate on water charges. Further details about these rebates can be obtained through the Water Supply Services Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.3. PROPERTY CONNECTIONS

5.3.1. DEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTIES

Customers must be aware it is their responsibility to contact Council's Water and Sewer Group regarding any development or redevelopment of their property that affects Council's water and or sewer assets and infrastructure.

Council's Water and Sewer Group are implementing a new process for assessing water and sewer infrastructure and connection requirements in association with the development process. This process maintains efficient and accurate processing of development assessments, but allows the Water and Sewer Group to ensure any impacts on Council's water and sewer infrastructure are identified and either controlled or eliminated.

This new process is in its infancy for implementation; as software enhancements, documentation and community engagement needs are identified and developed to ensure a successful change in process. Enquiries from customers on the development of properties involving water and sewer supply services should be directed to Council's Water and Sewer Group, in addition to Council's Development and Environment Group.

5.3.2. REDEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTIES

Sometimes when a property is redeveloped, it is necessary to relocate or upgrade the existing water supply and/or sewer connections. Property owners are responsible to contact Council's Water and Sewer Group, if a redevelopment is to occur and advice will be provided about any conditions or works necessary to the water and sewer supply infrastructure, appropriate to the changes.

5.3.3. DISCONNECTION OF WATER SUPPLY OR DOWNSIZING OF WATER METERS

If a property owner no longer requires water supply, Council can disconnect the water meter and/or the service line to the main. This action may incur a cost. Customers should note that the applicable fixed access charges will apply for single services in accordance with legislation, if those services remain available even though they may not necessarily be used; refer to Residential Charges section of this document for further information on these charges.

For multiple connections or downsizing of water meters, disconnection/downsizing or nominal sizing can be undertaken, subject to customers completing the required documentation and payment of any applicable

fee, as set each year by Council's Fees and Charges. Customers may however be required to obtain, at their expense, an independent Hydraulics Assessment to confirm the sizing of connections applicable to the development. Refer to Residential Charges section of this document for further details.

5.3.4. DISCONNECTION OF SEWER

Customers no longer requiring an existing sewer connection or seeking relocation, the disconnected service must be cut off and capped by a licensed plumber to prevent water or soil entering the system.

Customers should ensure that the connection pipe is cut off as deep in the ground as is practical to avoid being damaged by future landscaping or building works. Please note that disconnection of sewer does not preclude payment of the fixed access charges for sewerage services; refer to [Residential Charges](#) section of this document for further details.

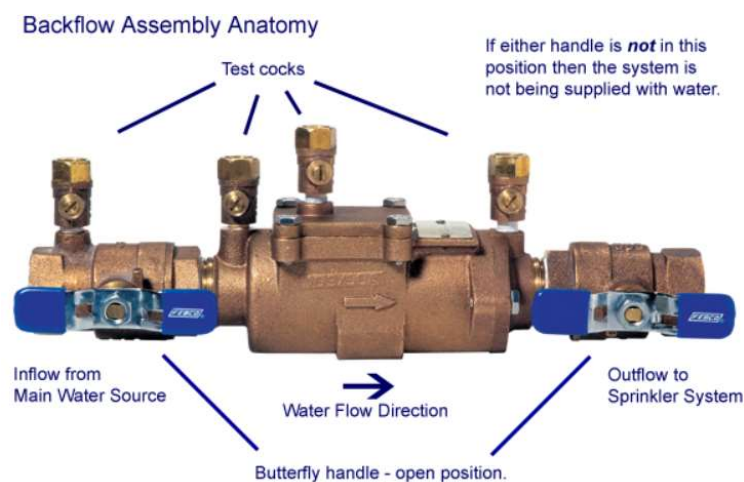
5.3.5. FLOW AND PRESSURE TESTS

Flow and pressure tests can normally be undertaken for customers by licensed plumbers. Council can provide a water pressure certificate on application and payment of associated fees and charges.

5.3.6. BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Backflow prevention is the term used to prevent the reverse flow of water from a potentially polluted or contaminated source into the potable drinking water supply system. This can more often occur in commercial and industrial facilities that have:

- Taps or running water outlets in a contaminated area
- Submerged water outlets used for filling tanks in a commercial/industrial process, and
- Water supply connected to commercial or industrial process pipes.



Backflow prevention is also required for properties that are connected to rainwater tanks which are connected to the internal plumbing. The installation of new water meters will generally suffice for appropriate backflow prevention.

Most commercial premises have a backflow responsibility. Backflow is prevented with larger metered connections by installing a prevention device such as a one-way valve that prevents contaminants from entering the drinking water supply system. These are supplied in testable and non-testable types depending on the risk associated with the possible contamination.



Customers who have a testable backflow control device are required to have the device tested annually to ensure the backflow prevention device continues to operate correctly. Further information on backflow prevention requirements is available from Council's Trade Waste Officers.

A backflow event can cause health issues for water supply customers. Council has a responsibility to follow strict standards to ensure that the public drinking water supply remains safe. To assist Council has produced the Backflow Prevention and Cross Connection Control Program Guideline. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.4. NO BUILDING OVER SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Customers have a responsibility to ensure that construction is not undertaken, without approval from Council's Water and Sewer Group, adjacent to or over our sewer assets. This includes construction works that are exempt from approvals under *Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (NSW)*.

Council's first position is that structures not be constructed over or close to sewer assets. Special conditions may apply to activities such as design and construction of buildings, structures and excavation within proximity of all water assets and/or easements in favour of Council on public and private land and each case will be considered on its merits having regard to the Building Over or Adjacent to Sewers Policy.

Persons undertaking such works are required to consult with Council's Water and Sewer Group and may be required to lodge an application and pay associated fees and charges to obtain specific advice and/or approval.

Application must be made to Council in accordance with the Building Over or adjacent to Sewers Guideline. Both are available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.5. DISCHARGE OF STORMWATER INTO THE SEWER SYSTEM

It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that stormwater is not discharged into the sewer. This can cause sewer overflows into properties downstream, public health impacts and environmental damage.

Illegal sources of stormwater can include:

- Connection of roof downpipes into the sewer system (including carports, patio covers and extensions added after a property was originally constructed);
- Connection of garden drains and 'agi' pipes from behind retaining walls;
- Concrete, paving or turfing up to the level of the yard gully (see diagram below); and
- Inadequate property drainage that leads to flooding of the yard gully during heavy rainfalls.

Council regularly inspects and investigates areas that incur wet weather inflows into the sewer system or overflows to the environment.

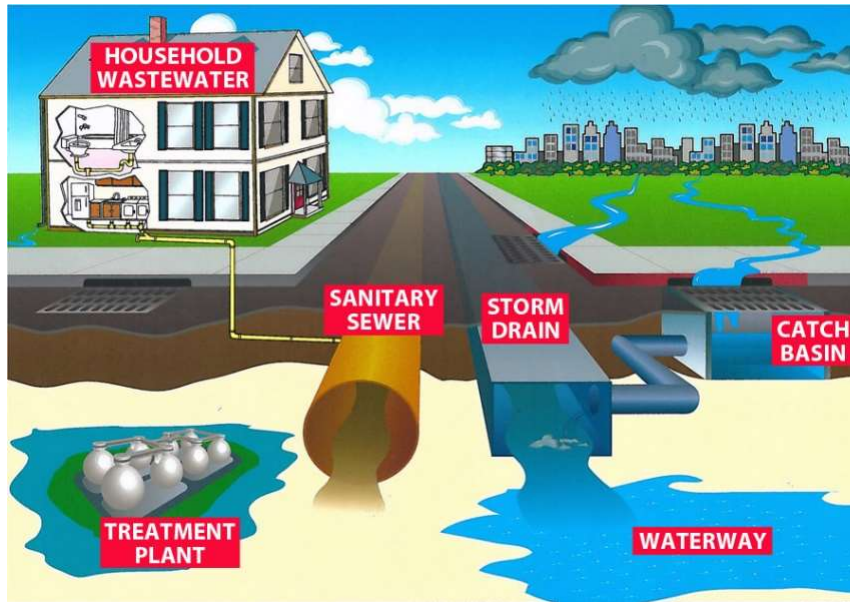


Figure: Two underground systems – stormwater must never enter the sewer system

The yard gully is a fitting outside the home designed to release wastewater overflows safely. The shape and size of the yard gully can vary but in general they are round grated drains between 100mm and 150mm in diameter. The grating may be metal or plastic and black, white or silver in colour.

In the event of a sewer blockage or high stormwater inflows into the sewer system, the yard gully should 'pop off' to release the pressure and direct any sewer away from the home. This prevents sewer entering into the home from toilets, drains, shower drains or other disposal points.



Figure: Maintain a clear yard gully to prevent wastewater entering the home

Plumbing regulations require that the yard gully must be installed at a level that is at least 150mm lower than the lowest drain inside the home (particularly the shower, toilet and any laundry or bathroom floor drains). It must also be installed at least 75mm above the surrounding ground level to ensure that stormwater does not flow into the sewer system via the yard gully.

The following diagram provides customers with a graphic of responsibility for sewerage infrastructure within properties.

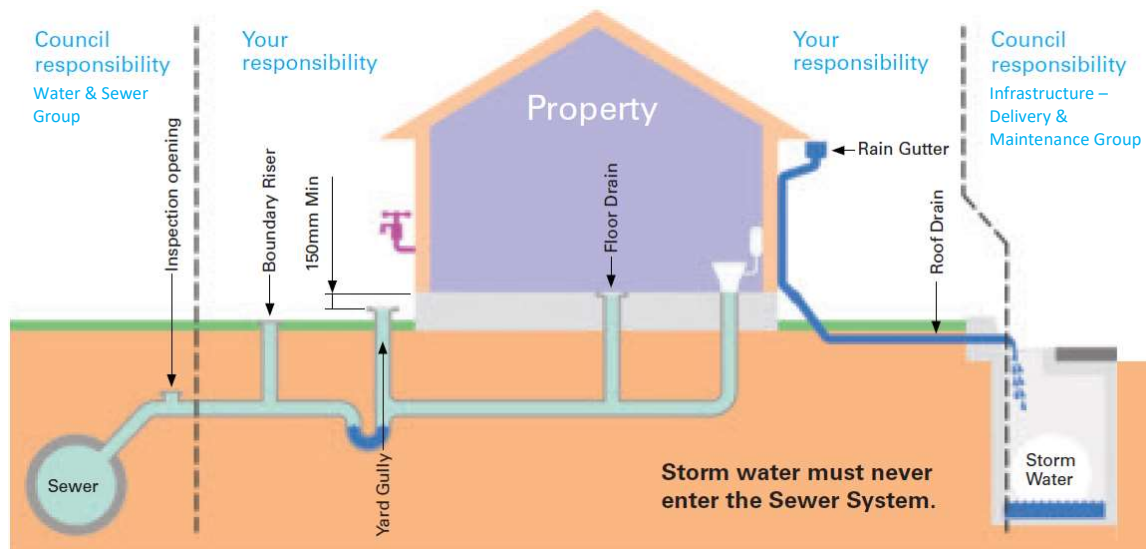


Figure: Responsibilities for sewerage infrastructure within a property

It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that their home has a properly installed and operational yard gully. It must also not be:

- Covered by an object such as a pot plant;
- Covered by landscaping or garden beds; and
- Unable to 'pop off' because it is locked in place, corroded, filled with silt or concreted in.

5.6. PRESSURE SEWER

Council has pressure sewer systems operating at a number of locations across Singleton where gravity sewer is not able to provide sewer services to properties. The Maison Dieu area is connected to a pressure sewerage system servicing industrial and residential customers. These systems involve a 'grinder pumping unit' installed upon the owner's property. Whilst Council is responsible to maintain these units they are driven by electricity from the property switchboard which is the owner's responsibility together with the house drainage.

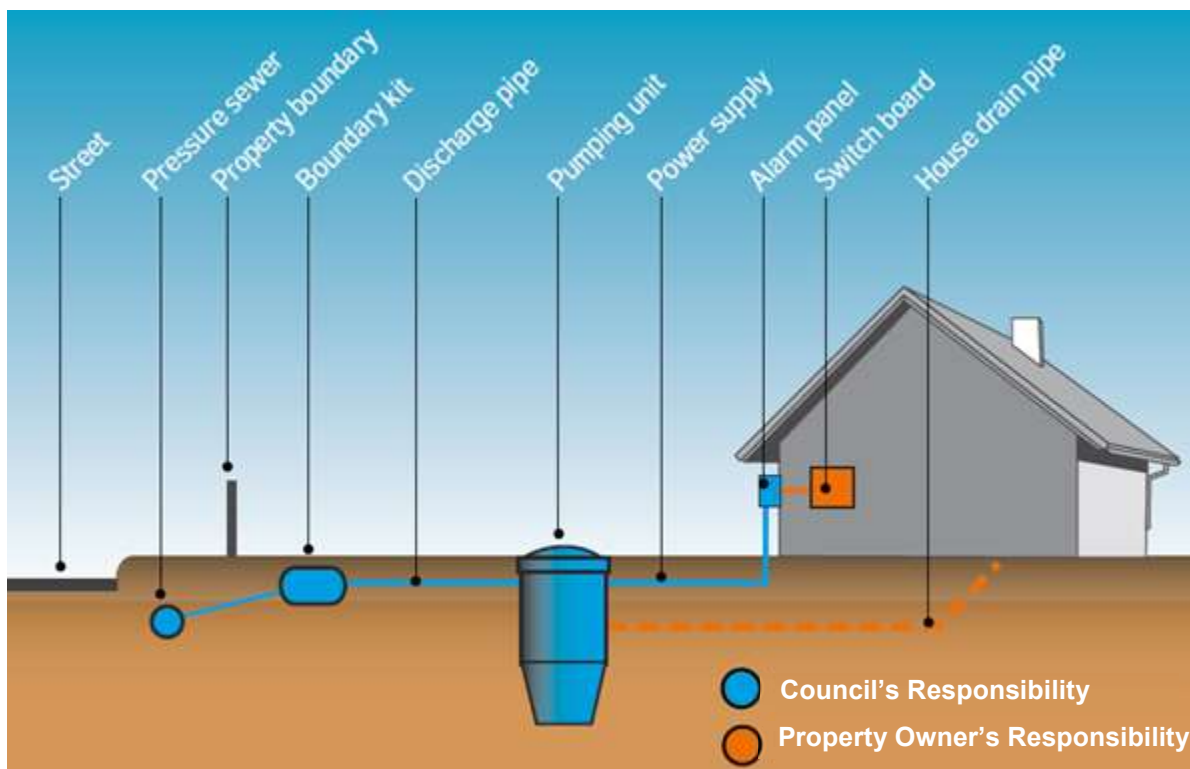


Figure: Typical Pressure Sewer System - Responsibilities

In order for these systems to operate effectively and to avoid blockages and damage to the units, it is important for the home owner to not place foreign objects into the system, such as the following items:

- Glass, metal, gravel or sand.
- Needles and syringes.
- Seafood shells and kitty litter.
- Nappies, materials such as cotton, linen etc.
- Plastic and metal object (including bobby pins).
- Explosives and other flammable materials.
- Lubricating oils, grease, strong chemicals or stormwater.

These items should never be disposed into any form of sewerage system. A detailed list of substances not permitted in the pressure sewer system and additional information, together with the responsibility for the systems, helpful hints, maintenance and contact numbers in the event of problems can be found in the Sewer Supply Services Policy, Pressure Sewer System Maintenance Agreement and Customer Guideline, all available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.7. METERING

The property water meter is used to record the amount of water that has been utilised by a property. To maintain integrity in metering consumption, Council has an ongoing meter renewal program, renewing all meters older than 10 years.



5.7.1. METER INSTALLATION

The location of the water meter is to be on the property and at the sole discretion of Council. Council will generally locate the water meter within 1 - 2 metres of the front property boundary, however, for units, rural or commercial properties, this may not be the case.

Only Council approved contractors may install water meters that measure the water supplied from Council's water supply system. A person must not connect in any way to Council's water supply system without the approval of Council.

5.7.2. INACCESSIBLE WATER METERS

Council needs access to water meters for the purpose of meter reading or replacement. The meter must be accessible at all times to Council's meter readers and employees. Boundary fences, wall recesses, retaining walls, and garden beds must be setback to facilitate Council's access to water meters.

Water Meter in Concrete

The service pipes to the meter are contained in solid concrete, leaving insufficient pipe visible to allow the meter to be removed or replaced without damage to these pipes. Should these pipes be damaged, this would compromise the water service. The concrete needs to be removed, usually breaking up with a hammer or similar device. Depending on the depth of the concrete a plumber may need to turn off the water service prior to work being performed. 10 to 15cm of vertical pipe must be accessible with no restrictions to these pipes (such as concrete, rocks, etc.)

Water Meter Buried or Insufficient Clearance to Pipes

Where the water meter is buried or there is insufficient clearance to pipes, the surrounding vegetation / earth must be dug out to ensure 10 to 15cm of vertical pipe is accessible with no restrictions on these pipes (such as dirt, rocks, lawn, etc.)

Water Meter Obscured by Overgrown Gardens

Where the water meter is obscured by an overgrown garden, the obstructing garden is required to be cleared, so that a meter reader or replacement officer could work unimpeded. This could require enough space for tools to be attached to the meter and the ability to turn and bend if necessary.

Water Meter Behind Locked Gate

Please ensure the water meter service is able to be accessed and is not behind a locked gate or door. Council has provisions for averaging water accounts where meters are inaccessible and attempts to contact the resident to gain access have not been successful. Details of averaging water usage accounts for inaccessible meters can be found in the Water Supply Services Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

Water Meter Located in Same Proximity as a Dog

Due to safety requirements Council meter readers and replacement officers are not to enter a property where any type of dog has access to the water meter. All animals, including dogs should be secured in another section of the property.

If the occupant is home at the time, Council can request the dog be secured for the duration of the meter read. Council has provisions for averaging water accounts where meters are inaccessible due to unsecured dogs. Details of averaging water usage accounts for inaccessible meters can be found in the Water Supply Services Policy. A copy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.7.3. METER READING

The property water meter is read by Council contracted meter readers tri-annually. Any consumption that has passed through the meter since the last reading will be billed to the registered occupant of the property. All meters will have dials showing the amount of water that has been consumed since the meter was installed. These dials are coloured black and red, and range from six to nine dials depending on the size and make of your meter.

Reading a Water Meter

This meter reads 12345 kilolitres and 678 Litres

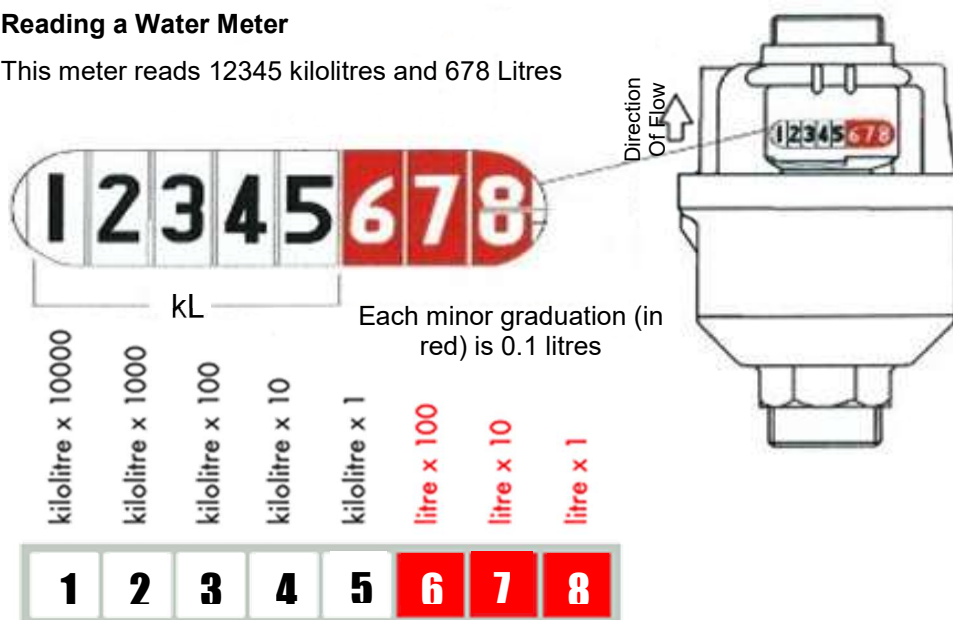


Figure: How to read the property water meter.

As per the above diagram, the black numbered dials indicate how many kilolitres of water have passed through the meter. The red numbered dials indicate how many litres have passed through the meter. Council uses the black dials only when obtaining a reading from a property.

5.7.4. SPECIAL METER READS

Property owners or their representatives (conveyancer, solicitors etc.) can request a special water meter reading, for example:

- If the property is being sold and a water charge adjustment is required as part of the final settlement figures, or
- If a tenancy agreement requires the tenant to pay or contribute to the water consumption charges.

A special water meter reading is ordered by contacting Council. Readings are generally carried out within 10 working days from date of request and a standard fee is payable upon application. Council offers special water meter reads in conjunction with 603 Certificate applications for a fee. A Special Water Meter Read letter is generated as part of the reading process. Council will take all reasonable action to provide the meter reading in the week after it was ordered.

5.7.5. SUB-METERING OF MULTI OCCUPANCY DEVELOPMENTS

Historically, multi-unit developments have had two options for the management of their water consumption:

- Have the total consumption recorded on the 'Parent or master' meter and any 'Child or sub-meter' which might be attached to a manifold and which is then connected directly to the water main,



billed direct to the individual strata owners and body corporate as applicable, or

- Have the total consumption recorded on the 'Parent or master' meter billed entirely to the Body Corporate.

It is current NSW Government Best Practice to separately meter each unit in new developments, and Council complies with this practice. All new strata or multi occupancy units are to be provided with a separate external (located at the property boundary) water meter to register the water usage for each unit.

During the planning of new multi-unit complexes, discussions will be conducted with developers to ensure compliance with the Water Supply Services Policy, the Australian standard and NSW Best Practice. All requirements for connection will be contained within Development Application and Compliance Certificate Conditions issued by Council.

All existing child or sub-meters must be secure and easily accessible by Council and Council water meter readers.

5.7.6. METER ACCURACY TESTING

Customers have the right, if they are concerned that the water meter is not responding correctly, to have the meter tested. This can be done by application and payment of associated fees and charges. It is recommended customers self-check the meter first, advice on checking a meter can be found in the [Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks](#) section of this document.

A second water meter is run in line with the original meter and both meters are read over a three week period to determine if the meter is within the acceptable tolerance of four percent. If the test shows that the meter is inaccurate, and is reading by more than four percent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, it is deemed to be faulty and Council will:

- Repair or replace the meter;
- Refund any charge paid by you for the test; and
- Adjust your latest account on the basis of a daily usage equal to the average daily usage during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year, or similar basis.

If the test shows that the meter is reading by less four per cent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, it is deemed to be reading correctly and Council will:

- Keep the associated fees and charges paid; and
- The water account stands.

It is recommended the customer self checks the water meter prior to making an application. Advice on self check / testing your meter can be found in the [Monitoring of Water Use and Water Leaks](#) section of this document below.

The tolerance level of four percent of the actual quantity of water passing through the meter, is defined in *Part 6, Division 3, Clause 158 (5) of Local Government (General) Regulations, 2005 (NSW)*.

5.8. MONITORING OF WATER USE AND WATER LEAKS

Customers are responsible for all water that has passed through the water meter. Consequently, customers are also responsible for water leaks that occur on their property from failure of internal water lines or devices.

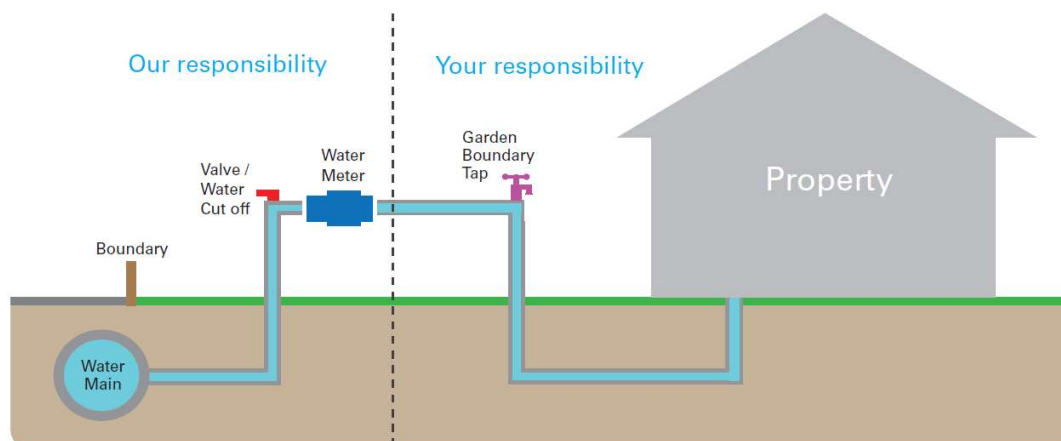


Figure: Typical water connection

Council recommends that all customers monitor their water use regularly by reading the water meter. Refer to the Meter Reading section above to find out how. If the property is vacant it is strongly recommended that water be turned off at the valve which is located near the meter. These valves also have the facility, allowing them to be locked. Such action will prevent loss of water through burst lines or water tamper / theft.



Figure: Meter stop tap or isolation valve

To perform a water leak check, turn off all the taps and water using appliances in and around the property. Then check the water meter. If the dials on the water meter are moving there could be a water leak. If able, taking a photo of the meter dials and return 5 or 6 hours later and take another photo, compare the two pictures.

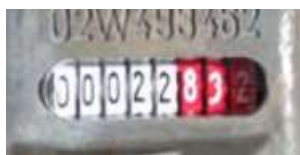


Figure: Check for movement on the red dials

If there is no movement of the dials, there may still be a slow leak. As the water pressure is at its highest during the evening, follow the same steps above, but read the meter before going to bed. Do not use any water throughout the night and read the meter again in the morning, before using any water including the flushing of toilets.

If the dials have moved, a water leak is most likely occurring. To fix this, check all fixtures and fittings or call a licensed plumber.

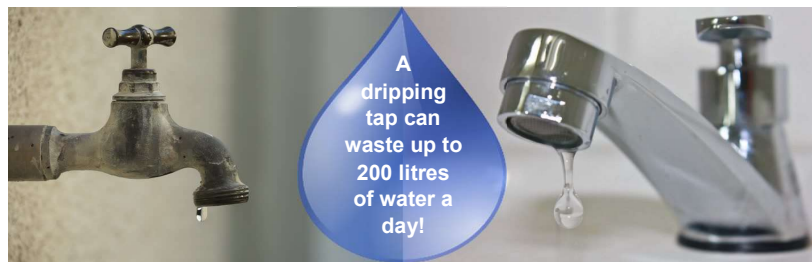


Figure: Water wastage can really add up

Larger water consumers may wish to monitor their water consumption more regularly. There are data loggers available from private companies which typically consist of an electronic probe connected to the water meter that transmits pulses from water meter to a data collection point. This process allows an analysis of water consumption across 24 hour periods. Council must be contacted and approval given before a data logger is installed upon the water meter. This is to ensure that the probe does not affect the functioning or reading of the water meter.

5.9. WATER CONSERVATION

Council has adopted any permanent water conservation measures. Singleton has only once in the last 30 years been exposed to the need for the imposition of tough water restrictions. However, current water storage levels indicate that there may be a need for water restrictions in 2018/2019. Council encourages its customers to practice water efficiency wherever possible and in March 2018 introduced the Water Saving Measures to decrease residential water usage. The 2016/17 average water consumption of 258 kilolitres per household for residential customers, which indicate water usage in Singleton LGA is above the state wide median for water usage by residential users.



Indicative Performance Measure – average domestic water consumption for 2015/16 was 258 kilolitres per household (kL/property); a small increase on 2014/15's 251kL/property. See [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

Customers are responsible for the level of their water consumption and are provided with timely information by which they can reconcile the use against affordability. Water accounts are issued tri-annually and within a short timeframe of the water meter reading, as this ensures that unexpected water loss is identified by customers early. High water users in Council's Local Government Area are issued monthly.

To assist customers with achieving water conservation Council has a number of initiatives. These include:

- Rainwater Tank Rebates; and
- Dual Flush Toilet Rebates.

5.10. RAINWATER TANKS

Rainwater tanks help conserve the drinking water supply and can provide a valuable source of water for gardens, cleaning and other household purposes. NSW Health does **not** recommend the use of water from rainwater tanks for drinking or food preparation if a town water supply is available.

Aimed at reducing the demand on the drinking water supply, to conserve water and reduce stormwater runoff, Council encourages the installation of rainwater tanks. Council offers a rainwater tank rebate to



eligible customers, at a rate of one rebate only per property for rainwater tanks installed, regardless of the number of tanks installed on the property.

The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan. The eligibility criteria are detailed in Council's Water Supply Services Policy. Both are available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

Further information from NSW Health regarding rainwater tanks can be found [here](#).

5.11. DUAL FLUSH TOILETS

Toilets use a lot of water and the water we flush away is usually valuable drinking water. Switching to a more water efficient toilet, such as a dual flush toilet, can make a big difference to the household's water use, as well as;

- Reduce the impact on Council's sewer system.
- Protect our drinking water supplies.
- Reduce household water bills.

Water-efficient toilets do the same job as inefficient toilets but use much less water. Older model toilets can use up to 12 litres of water per flush, whereas dual-flush toilets use only 3 litres on a half-flush.

Council encourages the installation of dual flush toilets. Council offers a dual flush toilet rebate to eligible Singleton, Broke and Jerrys Plains water customers, at a rate of one rebate only per property.

The rebate amount is reviewed annually and published in Council's adopted Operational Plan. The eligibility criteria are detailed in Council's Water Supply Services Policy. Both are available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.12. WATER ACCOUNTS

Section 501 (1) of the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* permits Council to make and levy an annual charge for various services provided, including:

- Water supply services;
- Sewerage services;
- Drainage services; and
- Waste management services (other than domestic waste management services).

Section 503 permits Council to make and levy an annual charge in addition to an ordinary rate and an annual charge in addition to, or instead of, a special rate. Charges levied under Section 503 can apply to a non-rateable property but only for the recovery of the cost of providing the service.

Council issues water consumption accounts three times per year to property owners that are connected to the town water supply. As has been the case since 2008/09, if a threshold consumption of 450 kilolitres for the property is reached, a higher usage charge is applied, for residential properties only. This charging method encourages lower water consumption; it is in line with water industry best practice and is being vigorously encouraged by the NSW State Government through its "Best Practice Guidelines".

Charges are based on a financial year from 01 July to 30 June and are charged per property, not per owner or tenant. This means, if a tenant consumes 450 kL in the first trimester and a new tenant occupies the property for the remainder of the financial year, all water consumed will be charged at the higher rate.



The owner of the property is responsible to acquit any charges overdue or payable, including interest charges. Interest on water usage charges will be calculated 21 days after the account is mailed to the property owner or managing agent.

5.12.1. PAYMENT OPTIONS

Council is able to provide customers with the option to receive electronic versions of water usage accounts (see Council's website for further details www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/emailme), as well as alternative ways to pay accounts. Payment options available to the customer include:

- Australia Post - The Post Office will issue you with a receipt.
- Direct Debit - Direct Debit can be arranged where payment can be automatically deducted from your nominated bank account on the due date. Direct debit can be made tri annually or by installment (weekly, fortnightly or monthly), see application form for details. An application form is required to be completed. A copy is available on the Forms A-Z page of Council's website.
- Mail - Detach the payment slip on your water usage notice and return it together with your cheque to: Singleton Council PO Box 314 Singleton NSW 2330.
- In person - Pay at Council's Customer Service Centre Monday to Friday 8:00am-4:00pm or seven days a week at the Singleton Visitor Information and Enterprise Centre, open 9am-5pm.
- Credit Card – MaterCard or Visa payments using the automated service is available 24 hours, call 131 816 (Amex and Diners excluded).
- Internet Banking - Go to Post Billpay (www.postbillpay.com.au) and follow the on-screen prompts.
- Bpay View – Managing your bills with online banking is even easier. BPAY View® sends your bills and statemetns to the same online bank you use to pay them. Saving you shuffling paper.

5.12.2. PENSIONER REBATES

Council provides a statutory pensioner concession relating to Rates and Charges under the provisions of *Section 575 of the Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* to eligible pensioners. The mandatory rebate of rates and charges includes those levied for domestic waste management and water and sewer charges.

An application for a pension concession on a property must be made by completing the pensioner rebate form and all information must be provided before the application can be assessed. The pensioner rebate application form and Pensioner Concession Policy outline the eligibility criteria, supporting information required and approval conditions. A copy of the form is available on the Application Forms A-Z page of Council's website and the policy on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.12.3. HARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Council recognises that some customers may experience genuine financial hardship and this can often be due to circumstances beyond their control. This can affect the customer's ability to meet the payment terms for their Water Accounts. Customers have every right to seek assistance through Council's Hardship Policy.

Council's Hardship Policy establishes guidelines for assessment of a hardship application applying the principles of fairness, integrity, confidentiality and compliance with statutory requirements. It applies to all applications for waiving, alternative payment arrangements or writing off rates, annual charges and interest accrued on such debts. Council has statutory requirements under the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* and other relevant legislation in relation to the waiving or reduction of rates due to hardship.

Application for Hardship must be received in writing on the approved Hardship Rate Relief Application Form. Council may also request the ratepayer attend an interview to assist Council in the understanding of the issues causing hardship.



The hardship rate relief application form and Hardship Policy outline the eligibility criteria, the supporting information required and approval conditions. A copy of the form is available on the Application Forms A-Z page of Council's website and the policy on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.12.4. CONCEALED OR UNDETECTED WATER LEAKS

Council is responsible for all water breaks and repairing leaks to the water main. This includes all water lines upstream of a water meter in road reserves.

The property owner is responsible for breaks and repairing water leaks downstream of a water meter within their property. In the event of a burst or leaking pipe, the property owner must arrange and pay for a licensed plumber to undertake the repair. In some cases, where an undetected water leak occurs on a property and is not associated with fittings, some assistance can be provided.

An undetected water leak is one that is hidden from view either underground or under concrete, and a property owner could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence; or that internal plumbing has shortcomings. In cases where an undetected water leak has been found and repaired, the property owner can lodge an application for relief from some of the Water Usage Account charges. For commercial properties this can include the sewer and/or trade waste usage charges if applicable.

The relief is in the form of a partial refund which has conditions, but is provided as an act of good faith and in the interests of good public relations. The leak must have been repaired by a licensed plumber and relief is only available once in an ownership. This highlights to the owner that the internal plumbing at the property may be an ongoing problem and require constant vigilance to reduce the chances of a recurring large Water Usage Account.

The maximum concessional allowance assistance will be a one off reduction of 200 kilolitres per property. To be eligible, Council requires the completion of the Water Consumption Adjustment Application Form and proof of repair. Applications must be received within 21 days of the receipt of the Water Usage Account being issued. An application of the undetected leak reduction does not remove the customer's obligation to pay outstanding charges for the water supplied. The full conditions of the assistance available are contained in Section 5.2 Concessions and Rebates of the Water Supply Services Policy.

A copy of the form is available on the Application Forms A-Z page and the policy on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.12.5. COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Council wishes to assist and encourage the provision of non-rateable water customer based services in its LGA. Non-Rateable Customer is defined as land exempt from all rates, other than water supply special rates as outlined in Section 556 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*.

Section 5.2 Concessions and Rebates of the Water Supply Services Policy and section 5.2 of the Sewer Supply Services Policy sets out the criteria for non-rateable water customer to qualify as Community Service Organisation and the degrees of subsidies for these charges. A copy of the policy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

5.13. BURSTS, BLOCKAGES AND SPILLS

In a large system like ours, problems can unexpectedly occur and cause interruptions to service and other unforeseen issues, such as water leaks or sewer blockages. As these kinds of service faults are usually unplanned, we rely on the community to tell us about problems.



Please contact us on 02 6578 7290 during business hours or 02 6572 1400 after hours, 24 hours a day, seven days a week if there is something we should know about.

5.13.1. SEWER BLOCKAGES

A sewer blockage; sometimes known as a sewer choke is a blockage in a sewer pipe. They occur when there is something inside the pipe that stops it working properly. Blockages or chokes are usually caused by;

- Tree roots that have found their way into the pipes; or
- Someone has put something down the toilet that is not designed for it; for example, wet wipes, nappies, rag or children have been known to put soft toys among other things down the toilet.

The property owner is responsible for clearing blockages and repairing cracks to the sewer plumbing of the property. This includes the lines down to the connection point of the sewerage main. In a case where the connection of the private plumbing to the sewerage main is outside the property boundary, then the property owner is only responsible for the private plumbing up to the line of the property boundary.

In the event of a blockage, the property owner must contact a licensed plumber in the first instance to identify the cause. If the blockage is located within the property owner's area of responsibility, then the property owner must pay for the cost of clearing the blockage and any associated repairs to the private plumbing.

If the plumber believes that the blockage is located within Council area of responsibility, then the plumber or owner must contact us as soon as possible to arrange for our attendance and rectification of the problem.

Council will liaise with the plumber or owner as required in relation to the blockage, location and our intentions regarding the problem. If the blockage is actually located in Council area of responsibility, we will reimburse reasonable charges from the plumber in attending the site.



Indicative Performance Measure – 14 sewer service complaints (per 1000 properties) reported in 2015/16 - see [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

5.13.2. COMMON CAUSES OF BLOCKAGES

Sewer blockages, as a result of 'flushable' wipes are becoming a concern for Council's Water and Sewer Group. While these products are marketed as 'flushable' this does not mean they break down. Flushable wet wipes can block pipes, which can lead to sewage overflows into homes or waterways.

Choice, the Australian consumer advocacy group, put 12 brands of 'flushable' wipes to the test, using an agitation device designed to provide a similar environment to the sewer system. The wipes, along with 4 ply toilet paper were put into the agitator and ran the device for 6 hours. Within minutes the toilet paper started to break up, disintegrating quickly leaving nothing more than milky water, while the wipes remained intact.

It is critical that anything flushed disintegrates almost immediately, otherwise it is likely to get blocked or caught in the pipes, usually on the property where it has been flushed. Help Council keep the sewer system working and dispose of the following items in your household garbage collection service after us;



- Wet wipes;
- Rags;
- Nappies;
- Sanitary items;
- Cotton buds;
- Dental floss;
- Fats and oils; and
- Cat litter.

The only safe things to flush are the 3 Ps: poo, pee and paper (toilet paper that is).



5.13.3. WATER DAMAGE AND SEWER OVERFLOWS

From time to time, water mains burst as they are under pressure to ensure adequate supply to properties; this can be caused by ground movement, tree roots, varying water pressure, vibration from heavy traffic or general wear and tear.

Blockages within a sewer system can be caused by a build-up of fats and oils, other debris or rubbish or tree root infiltration. This can result in sewage overflow either on private property or from a manhole. Council is committed to working with customers to resolve flooding issues.

It is very important to contact Council; as soon as flooding from either water or sewerage systems is identified. Council's Water and Sewer Group will respond to flooding and overflow incidents during and after normal working hours as soon as possible.

Council recognises that such an event is distressing and inconvenient. Council will, without liability, assist owners and occupiers with support and advice in the first instance and where Council is liable, take necessary action to rectify the situation. Regardless, if water damage and sewer overflows occur:

- Property owners should contact their insurers; and
- Tenants should contact their insurers in relation to any personal effects and advise the property owner/manager or agent of any damage to the property.

5.13.4. PREVENTING SEWAGE FLOODING IN THE HOME

An overflow relief gully, commonly known as a yard gully is a plumbing fitting designed to release any sewage outside and away from the interior of the home, should a property connection, drain or sewer



become blocked. In the event of a sewer blockage that causes sewage to back up, the overflow relief gully is designed with a loose fitting grate that pops open and releases the sewage outside the home. To assist preventing sewage entering the home, it is very important that the overflow relief gully is never covered, as this may prevent it working as designed.

Property owners are responsible to ensure the home is fitted with a properly designed and working overflow relief gully. Check the overflow relief gully regularly to ensure that it is not covered by garden beds, landscaping and pot plants. Ensure the grate is not prevented from popping open as a result of corrosion, being filled with silt or permanently fixed with concrete.

A licensed plumber should be contacted if you do not have an overflow relief gully or require an alteration to an older fitting. All costs are the responsibility of the property owner.

*"People don't realise their toilet is not a rubbish bin.
Just because it goes around the S bend doesn't mean 'out of sight out of mind'."
Adam Lovell, Executive Director - Water Services Association of Australia*



6. WORKING TOGETHER

Council is committed to a positive customer and community relationship engendered by continual involvement in the day-to-day activities of the business. In general, good customer relations are maintained by providing a quality service, keeping our customers informed and responding to the community needs. The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan has been created to cover these key aspects and include a single point of reference to:

- Set and meet agreed Customer Service Standards.
- Benchmark our performance and where improvement is identified, act upon such to meet our customer expectations.
- Clearly define and communicate our charges
- Provide strong communication strategies to reach all community members about water supply and sewerage matters.

The Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan has been developed to be consistent with Council's Customer Service Charter and Strategy.

6.1. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The delivery of a personal service approach to our customers, as the essential service provider of water sewer supply across the LGA, is seen by all members of our staff as an important part of attaining strong customer satisfaction results. This is facilitated by maintaining good communication and good performance in all aspects of the business. Council has a dedicated customer service team able to answer any customer enquiries relating to the services that we supply.

Council effectively maintains 'a one-stop shop' as related to water supply and sewerage services during normal business hours from 8am to 4:30pm. An after-hours service is also maintained and available to assist customers 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Council undertakes a range of initiatives to seek customer feedback and undertakes formalised survey of customers in a number of ways including:

- Follow up calls post customer requests for assistance;
- Follow up cards by Water and Sewer Network staff;
- Random customer surveys for areas of concern;
- Website, counter and community available customer response forms; and
- Annual customer satisfaction survey.

6.2. CUSTOMER CONSULTATION

The provision of water supply and sewerage services can often lead to conflict within the wider community. This is especially true regarding changes of services, increase to charges and construction of significant new works which have an obvious impact on the environment. Council is proactive in delivering an ongoing education program about the services provided as a Local Water Utility. In addition, Council is committed to providing regular updates to the community including:



- Four year price paths for core charges;
- One year capital works program;
- Tri annual information flyers contained within all Water Accounts;
- News items on the Council website;
- Updates of outages or events via social media and the website; and
- Seeking commentary and feedback on significant works in planning stages.

6.3. GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Council can be contacted during normal business hours on phone 02 6578 7290 between the hours of 8.30 am to 4:30 pm (excluding public holidays). General enquires can also be sent by email ssc@singleton.nsw.gov.au or by post to P O Box 314, SINGLETON NSW 2330.

6.4. COMPLAINTS

Council recognises that a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. This accords with the Australian Standard (AS ISO 10002-2014) and is consistent with the National Performance Reporting requirements relating to complaints, which are independently audited for compliance. The number and type of complaints about the services provided by Council or staff are captured for reporting and rectification where necessary.

The Complaint Handling Policy details how Council manages and responds to complaints. A copy of the policy is available on the Policies A-Z page of Council's website.

A complaint could include a customer:

- Providing negative feedback about dealings with Council;
- Dissatisfied with a decision made under Council policy;
- Dissatisfied with an action or failure to act by Council; and
- Customer levels of responsiveness as measured by the National Performance Reporting mechanisms for benchmarking which include:
 - Water quality complaints;
 - Water service complaints;
 - Sewerage service complaints;
 - Billing and account complaints – water and sewerage; and
 - Total water and sewerage complaints.

Examples of matters that are not classified as complaints include:

- A request for service or assistance with clarification on a matter;
- An inquiry into the progress of a water meter connection;
- A request to take action on a leaking water pipe or any other service fault;
- An inquiry to seek clarification or further information about a Water Account; and
- Government pricing policy, property connections, restrictions, tariff structures or a correctly calculated Water Account is too high.



When a customer contacts us with a complaint by telephone, email, letter or in person, customers can expect to:

- Have their complaint and personal details kept confidential;
- Be treated with courtesy and respect;
- Receive the appropriate support where special needs are identified (eg interpreter service or hearing disabled);
- Receive an acknowledgement of a complaint if sought. Be provided with a reference number for any future enquiry or follow-up;
- Have the matter investigated thoroughly and objectively;
- Be kept informed of the process and outcome; and
- Receive a decision on the complaint if applicable.

Customers can be assured that Council will prioritise complaints based on the seriousness and complexity of a complaint but in all cases we will provide a response within 21 working days.



Indicative Performance Measure – 2 water quality complaints (per 1,000 properties) in 2015/2016 Reporting Year - see [Appendix 3.1 National Performance Reporting](#).

6.5. REPORTING ODOUR COMPLAINTS

Sewerage naturally produces gases that can cause some odour. Customers are invited to report any odour issues in their area by contacting Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290 during business hours and 02 6572 1400 outside of business hours. We will investigate to find the cause and rectify in line with our service levels at the end of this document. We take all odour complaints seriously as is required by Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.

6.6. REPORTING SEWER OVERFLOWS

From time to time sewerage may overflow as a result of a blockage. It is important that Customers report these overflows as soon as possible to Council's Customer Service Centre on 02 6578 7290 during business hours and 02 6572 1400 outside of business hours. Sewer overflows are treated seriously by our staff and responded to in line with the service levels described at the end of the Water and Sewer Customer Service Plan. Council also has a requirement to record and report sewer overflows as required by Council's Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA.

'Better today than we were yesterday: better tomorrow than we are today.'

Anon



7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Council provides water and sewer services appropriate to the current and future needs of local communities in accordance with the relevant Acts, Regulations, Australian Standards, Codes of Practice and Industry Guidelines. These include:

Local Government Act 1993

The *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* outlines Council's power to do a range of functions, including those relating to water and sewer supply. This includes Council's power to:

- construct water supply works (Chapter 6, Part 3, Division 2);
- specify when certain approvals are required (Chapter 7, Part 1, Division 1);
- order a person to connect to the water supply system if the premises are within 225 metres of a water pipe of the Council (Chapter 7, Part 2);
- authorise an employee to enter any premises to carry out water supply work (Chapter 8, Part 2);
- transfer a return on capital invested payment (dividend) from the Water Fund to the General Fund subject to compliance with Government guidelines (Chapter 13, Part 3);
- charge for water services, in particular by the quantity of water supplied and an annual service charge (Chapter 15);
- levy water charges for vacant land within 225 metres of a water pipe of the Council (Chapter 15, Part 5, Division 2);
- exempt certain types of land from water supply charges (some types of land must be exempt, eg. land owned by the Crown, not being land held under a lease for private purposes) (Chapter 15, Part 6);
- charge a fee for service (Chapter 15, Part 10, Division 2); and
- prosecute for work not carried out by licensed tradespeople, interference or damage to any water supply property (including the meter) or negligently wastes or misuses water from a public water supply (Chapter 16, Part 3).

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

The Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, made under the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)*, further outlines and defines Council's powers regarding the provision of water and sewer services. This includes:

- installation of water meters on all connections (Part 2, Division 3);
- approvals relating to water supply work (Part 2, Division 3);
- adoption of the Building Code of Australia (Part 2);
- the power relating to orders (Part 3, Division 1);
- information to be shown on the water bill (Part 5);
- water restrictions, fire hydrants and inspections (Part 6); and
- work to be carried out in accordance with the NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage (Schedule 1, Part 2).

Water Management Act 2000 and Water Management (General) Regulations 2011

The Water Management Act 2000 provides for the sustainable and integrated management of water sources in the State and regulates the extraction of water from the natural environment. The Act also contains provisions relevant to Council relating to developer contributions for water supply works (Chapter 6, Part 2, Division 5).



Water Act 1912

The Water Act 1912 is to be repealed on the whole commencement of Schedule 7 of the Water Management Act 2000. The Water Act 1912 currently has provisions relating to licences for water supply, including bores.

Public Health Act 2010

The Public Health Act 2010 contains provisions relating to the safety of drinking water and the functions of the Chief Health Officer (NSW Health) regarding any possible risks to health involved in the consumption of drinking water.

The Public Health Act 2010 has provisions relating to the management of waste water, including the protection of public health from handling and treatment of waste water.

Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957

The Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957 provides for the Secretary of the Department of Health to approve or direct a Local Water Utility to add fluoride to any public water supply.

Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991

The Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 aims to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment in NSW, having regard to the need to maintain ecologically sustainable development, to reduce the risks to human health, and prevent degradation of the environment.

Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 introduces a holistic approach to protecting the environment, changing from pollution control legislation to environment protection legislation. The Act sets out explicit protection of the environment policies involving environmental standards, goals, protocols and guidelines.

Under the POEO Act, it is an offense for Council to cause pollution to water, land and air, including odour and includes:

- Control wastewater and stormwater disposal;
- Control of run-off or escape of contaminants entering water courses;
- Regulating pollution activities and issues of licenses, as well as the monitoring of and reporting on waste output; and
- Due diligence requirements and disposal procedures for chemicals and sludge and details penalties for causing environmental impacts.

Protection of the Environment Operations Regulation 1998

Councils are required to submit annual national pollutant inventory returns if any of the specified reporting thresholds are exceeded). Council reports for the Sewer Treatment Plant on an annual basis.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2008

The EPA Act required Council to prepare Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and development Control Plans (DCPs) and carry out environmental assessment of all activities and environmental impact statements for designated activities, including water and sewer supply services.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

The EPA Regulation contains provisions requiring the submission of, and compliance with, a BASIX certificate, which is designed to achieve more sustainable development including reduced consumption of mains-supplied potable water.



Competition Policy Reform Act 1995

Council is subject to prohibition on anti-competitive behaviour according to the Trades Practices Act. Provision of Water Supply Services is subject to compliance with the National Water Commission (formerly the National Competition Council).

Waste Avoidance and Recovery (WARR) Act 2001

Establishes Council's requirement to: avoid or minimise waste (including Liquid Trade Waste), increase resource use efficiency, reduce natural resource consumption, and minimise environmental impact through ecologically sustainable development and sustainable waste management systems.

Water Act 2007 (Commonwealth Act)

Under Part 7 of the Water Act 2007, the Bureau of Meteorology is required to collect, hold, manage, interpret and disseminate Australia's water information. Section 126 of the Act places an obligation on persons specified in the Regulations to give certain water information to the Bureau.

Water Regulations 2008 (Commonwealth Regulation)

The Water Regulations 2008 defines who must give specified water information to the Bureau and the time and format in which it must be supplied. Council is identified in this Regulation.

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 have been developed by the National Health and Medical Research in collaboration with the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. The Guidelines provide the Australian community and the water supply industry with guidance and sets standards on what constitutes good quality drinking water.

Council is committed to providing water in accordance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011.

Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500:2003: Plumbing and Drainage

AS/NZS 3500:2003 provides plumbing and drainage solutions that will satisfy the performance requirements outlined in the Plumbing Code of Australia. However, the responsibility for regulation for onsite plumbing remains with the states and territories. NSW has adopted the NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006, which is based on AS/NZS 3500, with State variations and additional provisions.

Design and Construction Specifications for Water Reticulation and Sewer Supply Services

Council's development design and construction specifications, specifically for water and sewer supply, are available for downloading from Council's website.

Plumbing Code of Australia 2011

The Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) is the new technical standard for all plumbing and drainage work in NSW. All plumbing and drainage work in NSW must comply with the PCA. The PCA sets out performance requirements for the design, construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration and maintenance of plumbing and drainage installations. The new Code replaces the more prescriptive NSW Code of Practice for Plumbing and Drainage.

Under the Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW), the prior approval of Council is required for any plumbing work involving water supply or reclaimed water systems and the work must be carried out in accordance with the Plumbing Code of Australia 2011. Environmental planning instruments (State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP), Regional Environmental Plans (REP) and Local Environmental Plans (LEP)) are legal documents that regulate land use and development. Generally, a SEPP prevails over an REP and the REP prevails over a LEP, if there is an inconsistency.



NSW Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage 2007

The Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage 2007 encourage continuing improvement in performance and identify 11 criteria for best practice management of water supply and sewerage. The criteria include guidelines for the structure of the water tariff, strategic business planning, drought management and sewerage programs.

State Environmental Planning Policies

The Minister for Planning makes SEPPs to deal with issues significant to the State and people of NSW. Many may be relevant to the provision of water services. For example, Division 24 (Clauses 124 and 127) of Part 3 of SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 contains State-wide planning controls relating to water supply and sewerage systems.

Singleton Local Environmental Plan 2013

The Singleton Local Environmental Plan 2013 has been prepared to guide planning decisions in the LGA. One of the objectives of the Singleton LEP is to ensure that development occurs in a coordinated and efficient manner and that costs are borne equitably.

LEPs are prepared by Councils to guide planning decisions, through zoning and development controls. Development Control Plans (DCP's), prepared in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, are also used to help achieve the objectives of the local plan by providing specific, comprehensive requirements for certain types of development or locations for example; for urban design, and heritage precincts and properties.

In accordance with the LEP, Council cannot grant consent for a development unless satisfactory arrangements are made for the provision of water supply, if the proposed uses of the land will, in the opinion of Council, generate a need for water supply.

Singleton Council Operational Plan

Every year Council prepares an Operational Plan outlining Council's activities and revenue policy for the next year. This includes a Fees and Charges schedule for all Council's activities, including water and sewer supply services. The Operations Plan is exhibited and comments are invited from the public.

Singleton Council Development Servicing Plan: Water and Sewer Supply Services

Council has prepared a Development Servicing Plan (DSP), in accordance with State Government guidelines, which details the water and sewer supply developer charges to be levied on development areas utilising a Council's water and sewer supply infrastructure.

The developer charges cover the cost of providing the water and sewer supply capacity either within Council's existing supply systems or through future capital works. Section 64 of the *Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)* enables Local Government to levy developer charges for water and sewer supply infrastructure. This power is derived from a cross reference in that Act to section 306 of the *Water Management Act, 2000 (NSW)*.

8. RELATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Number	Title
POL/26013	Policy – Building Over Adjacent to Sewer Infrastructure
POL/26005	Policy – Discharge of Liquid Trade Waste to Sewerage System
POL/	Policy – Water Carters – Draft
POL/26030.1	Policy – Water Supply Services
POL/26031.1	Policy – Sewer Supply Services
POL/6008	Policy – Pensioner Concession
POL/6009	Policy – Financial Hardship
POL/40007	Policy – Complaint Handling
16/15191	Strategic Management Plan – Water Supply and Sewerage Services
15/40362	Asset Management Plan – Water Supply Services
15/74764	Asset Management Plan – Sewerage Supply Network
17/16347	Standard Engineering Requirements for Development – Water and Sewer (under review)
13/50853	Guideline - Building Over or Adjacent to Sewer Infrastructure

9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
ADWG	Australian Drinking Water Guideline – A framework for the management of drinking water quality, 12 elements in total.
Approved	Acceptable to, authorised by or approved by Council.
Backflow	A reverse flow condition created by a difference in water pressures that causes water to flow back into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than the intended one.
Backflow Prevention Device	A device used to protect water supplies from contamination and may include a break tank, registered air gap, pressure vacuum breaker, reduced pressure zone device or testable double check valve.
Boundary Kit	A valve box at the property boundary incorporating an isolating valve, non-return valve and inspection tee
Building Adjacent to Sewer	Where a structure is proposed to be built in the zone of influence but not over the sewer. The structure is likely to impact on Council sewers and associated structures.
Building Over Sewer	The erection of a structure over and within the zone of influence of the sewer.
Catchments	Area of land that collects rainfall and contributes to surface water, streams, rivers, dams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater reserves.
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
Consumption	Water that is consumed by humans or livestock via water meters.

Term	Definition
Control Panel	The box incorporating the alarm controls for the pump and the emergency generator connection point.
Council	Singleton Council
Demand Management	Strategies to reduce water consumption by residential, commercial and industrial sectors. These strategies can include using existing resources more efficiently as a cost-effective alternative to building additional infrastructure.
Developer Charge	A measure of the demand or loading a development will have on infrastructure in terms of the average water consumption or average sewage discharge for an average residential dwelling.
Developer Servicing Plan - DSP	A document setting out the calculation of developer charges within the Council's LGA. It includes the developer charge, assumptions used to calculate the charges, and planning information related to water and sewer infrastructure. It is required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and in accordance with the Water Directorate Guidelines.
Dirty Water	A change in the appearance or the colour of the reticulated potable water - usually to a brown or yellow, caused by trace materials in the water such as iron or manganese.
Discharge Pipe	The pipeline from the Pressure Sewer Unit to the pressure sewer main via the boundary kit.
Distribution System	A network of pipes leading from a treatment plant to customers' plumbing systems.
Dol – Water	Department of Primary Industries – Water; NSW state government regulatory body
Drinking water	Water intended primarily for human consumption (but excluding bottled water, for the purposes of this policy).
Drinking Water Management System (DWMS)	The systematic and documented evaluation of activities, documents, procedures and other supporting information that outlines Council's system for the safe supply of drinking water.
Easement	An area of land, or part of a lot reserved by law for a specific purpose such as the containment of water assets.
Easement to Drain Sewage	A legal entitlement placed over a parcel of land for the purpose of the provision, operation and maintenance of sewer infrastructure.
Eligible Pensioner	A person who is in receipt of the Pension Concession Card issued by Centrelink, the Department of Veteran Affairs Gold TPI or EDA Card.
Encasement	The protection of a sewer pipe by encasing all around with concrete to Council standards.
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
Equivalent Tenements – ET's	A measure of the demand or loading a development will have on infrastructure in terms of the average water consumption or average sewage discharge for an average residential dwelling.

Term	Definition
Heavy / Permanent Structures	Any approved structure typically constructed from masonry, brick, steel, timber or concrete and it is neither reasonable nor practical to remove or dismantle the structure for the purpose of carrying out sewer repairs or refurbishment. Some examples are dwelling houses, garages, onsite cabins.
High Level Alarm	An alarm activated when the volume of wastewater in the storage vessel exceeds the normal level that controls the pump by a pre-determined amount.
Improvements	Are deemed to include but not be limited to pavements, shrubs, gardens, retaining walls, fences and all other structures.
Kilolitre	One thousand litres.
Lamphole	A vertical pipe or shaft between manholes into which a light may be lowered for inspecting sewer.
Leakage	Water that is lost in transit from a pipe.
Lightweight / Demountable Structures	Any approved structure that can, at the owner's risk and expense, be easily and readily dismantled and re-erected at the request of Council, if access to the main (by excavation) was required. Some examples are domestic carports, small tool or garden sheds, pergola.
Liquid Trade Waste	Liquid trade waste means all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.
Local Government Area (LGA)	Area of Singleton Council's operation
Maintenance Shaft	Allows a sewer system to be inspected, cleaned and repaired from the surface.
Maintenance Hole	A chamber with a removable cover which allows human and machine access to a (typically buried) sewer; abbreviation MH retains the traditional abbreviation for "maintenance hole". Also referred to as Access Chamber or Manhole
Miscellaneous Structures	Any approved structure where no special protection measures for the sewer main should be required as long as the minimum clearance requirements have been met. Some examples are rainwater tanks, driveways or retaining walls.
Multiple barrier	The use of more than one preventative measure as a barrier against hazard.
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
Non-Rateable Land	Land exempt from all rates, other than water supply special rates as outlined in Section 556 of the <i>Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)</i> .
Not Fully Enclosed	Where at least one side of the carport/veranda is completely open or two sides are partly open. Doors of any type are to be considered as closed sides.
NPR	National Performance Report

Term	Definition
Overflow Gully (Yard Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, that allows sewage to overflow away from the interior of your home and outside to the garden if there is a sewer blockage.
Owner	The Agency, Authority, Board, Company, Controlling Authority, Corporation, Council, Department, Individual, Regulator, Utility or other legal entity who is the Owner or lessee of the property and/or who has responsibility for the property.
Potable Water	Drinkable water. Usually treated freshwater, intended for human consumption that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. For the purposes of this policy excludes bottled water/
Pressure Sewer System	An overall system including the Pressure Sewer Unit, control panel, discharge pipe, boundary kit and pressure sewer pipes up to a discharge point in a conventional sewer.
Principal place of residence	The property that the ratepayer occupies as their sole or dominant residence.
PSS	Pressure Sewer System
Quality System	Organisation structure, procedures, processes and resources needed to implement quality management (AS/NZS ISO 8402:1994)
Rainwater Tank	On-site storages to collect roof water for beneficial use.
Rate Payer	The person liable for payment of the rates and charges of the property for which the pensioner concession is claimed
Risk	Effect of uncertainty on objectives. (AS/NZ ISO31000:2018) Note 1: An effect is a deviation from the expected. It can be positive, negative or both, and can address, create or result in opportunities and threats; Note 2: Objectives can have different aspects and categories, and can be applied at different levels; and Note 3: Risk is usually expressed in terms of risk sources, potential events, their consequences and their likelihood.
Risk Consequence	Outcome of an event affecting objectives. Note 1: A consequence can be certain or uncertain and can have positive or negative direct or indirect effects on objectives; Note 2: Consequences can be expressed qualitatively or quantitatively; and Note 3: Any consequence can escalate through cascading and cumulative effects.
Risk Event	Occurrence or change of a particular set of circumstances. Note 1: An event can have one or more occurrences, and can have several causes and several consequences; Note 2: An event can also be something that is expected which does not happen, or something that is not expected which does happen; and Note 3: An event can be a risk source.
Risk Likelihood	Chance of something happening.
Risk Management	The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk.

Term	Definition
Risk Source	Element which alone or in combination has the potential to give rise to risk.
Sewage	See Sewer
Sewer	An asset owned by Council used for the conveyancing of sewage, whether raw or treated. A sewer may be 'live' or disused.
Sewer Line / Main / Pipe	An asset owned by Council, controlled and maintained by the Water and Sewer Group, used for the conveying of sewage (raw or treated). A sewer may be operational or disused.
Sewer System	The system of pipes and pump stations for collecting and transporting sewer from each property to the sewer treatment plant.
Sewer Treatment Plant (STP)	A facility for the treatment of sewer to remove pollutants (solid matter and pathogens) producing treated recycled water and bio-solids.
Stakeholders	Any person, company or relevant authority that can affect or be affected by Singleton Council's actions, objectives and policies.
Trade Waste	Toxic and other potentially harmful substances discharged to the sewer system.
Undetected (Concealed) Water Leak	<p>A leak that is hidden from view either underground or under concrete, and a property owner could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence; or that internal plumbing has shortcomings.</p> <p>A concealed leak is water escaping on the ratepayer's side of the water meter, which is hidden from view; be it underground, or within concrete, or underneath a building and where the owner or occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its existence.</p>
Vent Shaft	Also known as a ventilation shaft or vent stack is a tall shaft designed for the safe release of gases built up in the sewers.
Waste Water/Sewerage	Waste water from toilets, sinks, showers and washing machines is carried through the sewer mains to be treated at the sewerage treatment plant.
Water Conservation	Preventing and reducing wasteful, uneconomical, impractical or unreasonable use of water resources.
Water Demand	Total water use requirements of an area for drinking, agriculture, industry, recreation and gardening. This demand is seasonal and highly influenced by the weather.
Water Quality	Physical, chemical and biological measures of water.
Water Treatment Plant (WTP)	A facility that treats freshwater piped from reservoirs into potable water for supply to the community.
Works	All those Works being sewers, maintenance structures, vents, pumping stations, pressure mains and accessories and shall include valve chambers and storage facilities as shown on the Design Drawings and includes any part or parts of the Works.

Term	Definition
Yard Gully (also see Overflow Relief Gully)	A drain-like fitting located outside the home, designed to release any sewer overflow outside of the home in the event of a blockage in the sewer main.
Zone of Influence	<p>The 'zone of influence' of a sewer is that area of soil/strata that is likely to be influenced by building loads. Factors that determine the 'zone of influence' include trench width and depth and soil classification (by qualified structural engineer as per AS 2870) and groundwater / level of the water table.</p> <p>The boundary of the 'zone of influence' coincides with the angle of repose of the strata encountered (including cut/fill). This boundary shall commence at the bottom corner of the trench nearest the proposed foundation. If the trench is partly in rock or shale the boundary shall commence at the top of the rock or shale strata. In heterogeneous soil the angle of repose may differ.</p> <p>The above criteria do not apply to water charged strata. Foundations in water charged ground are to be designed by a structural engineer and approved by Council.</p>

10. APPENDICES

Appendices are available as an attachment to this document, and include:

- Maps of Supply Area – Water Supply;
- Maps of Supply Area – Sewer Supply;
- Customer Service Standards – Water Supply;
- Customer Service Standards – Sewer Supply;
- Response and Repair Timeframes and priority Details - Water Supply;
- Response and Repair Timeframes and priority Details - Sewer Supply; and
- Targets and Benchmarking.

For more information, contact Singleton Council

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