

Customer enquiry, complaint and dispute resolution process

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Contents

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2 | Purpose..... | 3 |
| 3 | Glossary | 4 |
| 4 | References | 5 |
| 5 | Customer enquiries..... | 5 |
| 6 | Commitment to customer enquiries | 7 |
| 7 | Guiding principles..... | 8 |
| 8 | How to make a complaint..... | 8 |
| 9 | Method of response | 9 |
| 10 | Complaint escalation | 9 |
| 11 | Complaint recording..... | 9 |
| 12 | Our Customer Charter | 10 |
| 13 | Privacy Principles | 10 |

1 Introduction

SA Water is a successful, modern water utility that is wholly owned by the Government of South Australia. We employ more than 1,700 South Australians across a broad range of disciplines who operate over \$14 billion of assets. We deliver essential water, wastewater and recycled water services to more than 1.7 million South Australians.

We operate in a geographically and climatically diverse service area, with sites and locations from Ceduna through to Port Augusta, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, across to the Riverland and down to Mount Gambier, and most places in between.

Our strength and expertise have been shaped throughout our history by many challenges – the driest state on our continent, vast distances, prolonged drought conditions and the quality and scarcity of our source water.

We interact with a large number of stakeholders and customers, both internal and external, which shape our operating environment. The quality of our products and services has a broad impact, from an immediate contact with our residential and business customers to a statewide influence as an enabler of South Australia's growth and prosperity.

The importance of our products and services means we have several independent regulators to ensure we comply with legislative and other obligations. To manage risk, maintain compliance and improve business efficiency, we have several management systems in place, such as our Drinking Water Quality Management System, Environmental Management System and Safety Management System.

SA Water was issued with a Water Retail Licence for the sale and supply of water and wastewater services on 1 January 2013. The Water Retail Code - Major Retailers issued by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA), sets out the requirements for compliance with SA Water's Water Retail Licence.

Our Customer Care Centre manages most customer interactions and is the first point of contact for general enquiries and complaints. Our Customer Advocate team manages, tracks and coordinates responses for all written complaints requiring investigation and escalated complaints received.

More information can be found in our Customer Charter on our website www.sawater.com.au.

2 Purpose

This document should be read in conjunction with our Customer Charter and outlines our customer enquiry, complaints and dispute resolution processes, which include recording, managing and responding to complaints, enquiries and escalations which are received from our customers.

These processes apply to all enquiries and complaints received from external customers and consumers via our dedicated telephone lines, in writing, in person or electronically.

This document ensures our customers are fully aware of the channels available to them to raise queries or complaints about our services. It also ensures that accurate information is collected and can be used to analyse trends, identify areas for improvement and provide feedback to our people.

This document is reviewed periodically and is subject to change.

3 Glossary

| Term | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Complaint | An expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products or services, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. |
| Compliment | Praise or support for the services/products provided, policies and values demonstrated or satisfaction with interaction with an SA Water employee, contractor or agent. |
| Customer | An external person who owns land in relation to which a retail service is provided and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) where the context requires, a person seeking the provision of a retail service b) in prescribed circumstances, a person supplied with retail services as a consumer or user of those services (without limiting the application of this definition to owners of land c) a person of a class declared by the regulations to be customers. |
| Enquiry | An enquiry is a customer interaction with us requesting information through the nominated enquiry channels. |
| ESOCSA | Essential Services Commission of South Australia. |
| EWOSA | Energy and Water Ombudsman of South Australia |
| First point of contact | The employee and/or SA Water contractor or agent who first received the customer complaint, compliment or suggestion. |
| Investigation | An investigation is required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a response cannot be provided to a customer based on information that is available to SA Water with SA Water systems or previous documentation/inspection notes b) an inspection of the property is required; and/or c) a complaint is received about the behaviour of an employee or contractor. |
| Information Privacy Principles | The Government of South Australia has a set of Information Privacy Principles to regulate the way personal information can be collected, used, stored and disclosed. |
| Regulatory Services Standards | Timeframes for response to complaints as contained in <i>Water Industry Guideline No. 2 (WG2/01)</i> released by ESCOSA in December 2012. |
| SA Water | South Australian Water Corporation |
| Suggestions | Advice, recommendation or comment from a customer that proposes to lead to some improvement in SA Water's ability to deliver a higher level of customer service. |

4 References

The following table identifies the documents and/or articles that are referenced in this document:

| Title/URL | Version | Date |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Australian Standard AS ISO10002 | 2022 | Mar 2022 |
| SA Water - Our Charter | | Sept 2021 |
| SA Water - Standard Customer Contract | | June 2018 |
| South Australian Government - Information Privacy Principles | | May 2020 |
| Water Industry Act 2012 | July 2020 | July 2020 |
| Water Industry Guideline No2_WG2_01 | | Dec 2012 |
| Water Industry Regulations 2012 | July 2020 | July 2020 |
| Water Retail Code - Major Retailers | | 1 July 2020 |

5 Customer enquiries

We will:

1. Ensure enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution is available to all our customers via:
 - a. telephone
 - b. email
 - c. written correspondence
 - d. our website
 - e. in person.
2. Provide a source of customer-related information as directed by the Water Retail Code including our Customer Charter and Standard Customer Contract.
3. Provide early resolution of customer enquiries and complaints and resolve matters at the first point of contact where possible.
4. Manage customer expectations by providing relevant information and meeting the service standards related to enquiry and complaint responsiveness.
5. Ensure customer enquiries and complaints are dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner.
6. Encourage customers who may require a language interpreting service to facilitate communication with SA Water by phoning 13 14 50 to gain access to free interpreting services.

7. Encourage customers who are deaf, hearing impaired or who have a speech impediment to contact SA Water via the National Relay Service. Contact can be made by the following communication channels:
 - a. teletypewriter or textphone (TTY) users, phone 13 36 77 then ask for SA Water on 1300 729 283.
 - b. Speak and Listen users, phone 1300 555 727 then ask for SA Water on 1300 729 283.

How to contact SA Water

You can contact us on the following dedicated phone lines, between 8.30am and 5.00pm weekdays (excluding public holidays) to discuss your concerns, as detailed below.

These services are also available through the interpreting and National Relay Service facilities mentioned at section 4.7 above.

1. General enquiries – 1300 729 283

- a. Accounts and billing
- b. Change of name and/or address
- c. Complaints, compliments and suggestions
- d. Concessions, grants or rebates
- e. How to obtain technical water efficiency advice for your home or business
- f. Major SA Water Projects
- g. Meter readings and water use
- h. Payment arrangements and financial hardship
- i. Registration of Special Needs Customers
- j. Water restrictions or conservation measures in place

2. Service faults and emergencies (24 hours) – 1300 883 121 (local call)

- a. Water supply, water quality
- b. Leaking or faulty water meter
- c. Sewer blockage or overflow

3. Connection enquiries – 1300 650 951 (local call)

- a. Applications for connections
- b. Availability of services
- c. Land development

4. Australian Water Quality Centre – 1300 653 366 (local call)

- a. Water sampling and testing

5. Dial Before You Dig – 1100 (free call)

- a. Statewide water and sewer main plans

You can also contact us in these other ways:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Email | customer@saewater.com.au |
| Mail | GPO Box 1751 Adelaide 5001 |
| In person | 250 Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Adelaide |
| Website | www.saewater.com.au |

6 Commitment to customer enquiries

We will ensure our Customer Contact Centre team, who receive calls on the enquiry line, is equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality service, handle interactions professionally and efficiently and communicate effectively.

Our people will:

- Treat customers in a polite and courteous manner.
- Request details necessary to ensure the customer receives the service they expect.
- Attempt to resolve the matter at the first point of contact.
- Make an accurate record of the contact so the matter can be tracked, monitored and reported.
- Endeavour to respond to all enquiries in a timely and efficient manner.

Recording and monitoring enquiries

We record and monitor all customer enquiries made through our dedicated phone lines and other mediums. Enquiries are tracked to ensure service standards are met and to help improve our customer service.

If you do not wish for your call to be recorded, please advise the staff member assisting you.

Complaints and dispute resolution

We welcome your complaint as an opportunity to maintain your confidence and trust as well as improve our customer service performance and efficiency.

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction whereby a resolution or response is expected (either explicitly or implicitly). It may be related to our products, services, or the complaints handling process itself. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services or products, please contact us so we can resolve your concerns.

Our commitment to complaints and dispute resolution

We will address customer concerns in a timely and efficient manner, with a view to resolving issues in a non-confrontational, non-adversarial environment. We will:

- listen to your concerns
- identify ourselves
- ensure correspondence has a contact name and telephone number
- respect your right to privacy
- provide you with accurate information and advice
- provide information and guidelines in plain language.

When contacting us with a complaint we ask our customers to:

- treat us with courtesy
- be honest in all your dealings with us
- provide us with information when requested to help us address the issue.

7 Guiding principles

We are committed to the following complaints management guiding principles when handling your complaints:

1. **Visibility** – Information about how and where to make a complaint is visible to customers, staff and other stakeholders.
2. **Accessibility** – Customers can easily access the complaints management process and the methods of making complaints will be flexible.
3. **Responsiveness** – All customers should receive timely acknowledgement that their complaint has been received and best endeavours will be made to provide a response within the required response targets.
4. **Objectivity** – Each complaint will be addressed in an equitable, objective, and unbiased manner.
5. **Charges** – No fees will be charged to manage legitimate customer complaints and enquiries.
6. **Confidentiality** – Personally identifiable information should be available where needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint with us. All customer information will be actively protected from disclosure unless the customer expressly consents to its disclosure.
7. **Customer-focused approach** – The rights of customers to disagree with us will be respected and supported by providing and promoting an accessible, timely, fair, and friendly process for the lodgement and management of customer complaints.
8. **Accountability** – We will ensure systematic reporting of customer complaints against documented standards and lessons learned is undertaken.
9. **Continual Improvement** – Analysis of customer complaints will drive improvement in customer service and the complaints management process.

8 How to make a complaint

There are two ways to contact and lodge a complaint with us:

1. Speak to our Customer Care Centre

If you are dissatisfied with any of our products or services, please contact us on 1300 729 283 and discuss your concern with our Customer Care Centre. Alternatively, you can speak to us in person at 250 Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga, Adelaide.

Our Customer Care Centre will endeavour to resolve your concerns over the telephone at the first point of contact. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request to have your complaint reviewed by a Team Leader, Manager, or our Customer Advocate Team who will further investigate your concerns.

2. Write to us

If you prefer, write to us with the details of your complaint:
Customer Advocate Team SA Water GPO Box 1751 ADELAIDE SA 5001

Alternatively, you can send an email to customercare@sawater.com.au or lodge your complaint via our website www.sawater.com.au.

Upon receipt of your complaint, we will provide you with a written acknowledgement as well as the contact details of the person who will be managing your complaint.

9 Method of response

We endeavour to resolve all complaints at the first point of contact. However, there are some instances where this is not possible and further investigation may be required. In these instances, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and aim to provide you with a resolution within the times set out in our regulated service standards.

Should we be unable to meet these timeframes, we will advise you of our suggested course of action and timeframe, as well as the name of a contact person for any further queries regarding this matter until it is resolved.

We will respond via the same channel as the complaint is received, unless you advised otherwise.

10 Complaint escalation

If you have attempted to resolve your concerns through the above process, you may escalate your complaint to a Team Leader, Manager, or the Customer Advocate Team, for further review.

If the matter still cannot be resolved, you will be advised of your option to escalate your complaint to an ombudsman - an independent, free service available to residential and business customers.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman of South Australia can assist with complaints about billing, account payment, connection, supply, marketing, and customer service. Ombudsman SA can assist with concerns regarding SA Water's processes used to make decisions and determine if they are fair, reasonable, and lawful.

Energy and Water Ombudsman SA

Address: Level 11, 50 Pirie Street, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Postal address: GPO Box 2947, ADELAIDE SA 5001

Telephone: 1800 665 565 (free call)

Email: contact@ewosa.com.au

Ombudsman SA

Address: Level 8, 95 Grenfell Street, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Postal address: PO Box 3651, RUNDLE MALL SA 5000

Telephone: 08 8226 8699

Toll free: 1800 182 150 (outside metro areas only)

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au

11 Complaint recording

We will record and monitor all complaints received from customers for the purposes of monitoring compliance with our regulated service standards and to help improve the service experience of our customers.

We report regularly to our Board of Directors on complaints received and the timeliness of our response and the resolution.

Statistical non-personally identifiable complaints data is also disclosed and publicly reported to external bodies.

12 Our Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter is available on our website at www.sawater.com.au/customer-charter.pdf and provides more information on a range of topics including:

- how to register life support equipment (special needs residential customers)
- financial hardship information
- translation and interpreting Services
- large print requirements.

13 Privacy Principles

We are governed by the South Australian Government's Information Privacy Principles. We will collect, use, disclose and store personal information in a manner that meets community expectations and reflects the current Information Privacy Principles.

A copy of the Information Privacy Principles can be found on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet website at www.dpc.sa.gov.au/Information-Privacy-Principles-IPPS-Instruction.pdf.