



Customer Service Standards

Water Supply and Sewerage

Registered Water Service Provider No SP485

"Our water, our future"



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Introduction

Gympie Regional Council (Council) is the service provider for drinking water and sewerage services in Gympie, Imbil, Kandanga, Amamoor, Kilkivan, Goomeri, Cooloola Cove, Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach. Service providers are required by the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* to develop and adopt a Customer Service Standard that documents:

- the level of service provided to customers
- processes for customer interaction.

Council recognises that our services are an everyday part of our customers' lives and underpin the wellbeing of our community. With approximately 14,200 connections, we are committed to being customer-focused and meeting our customers' expectations.

Each year we supply over 3,700 megalitres of drinking water, and remove and treat in excess of 2,800 megalitres of sewage from our residential and commercial customers. Our aim is to provide value for money, safe and reliable water supply and sewerage services to the Gympie area. We are regional leaders in the water sector and aim to provide innovative long-term planning solutions.

This document outlines our water supply and sewerage Customer Service Standards that align with Council's Customer Service Charter. These Standards apply to all of our water customers and describe what you should expect to receive when dealing with us, as well as your rights and responsibilities as our customer. These Customer Service Standards have been developed to achieve:

- adequacy and quality of the water supply system
- day-to-day continuity of your water supply
- effective transport of sewage.

For more information on Council's Customer Service Charter please refer to website www.gympie.qld.gov.au.





Customer Service Standards

Our Customer Service Standards below detail our commitment to you for your water and sewerage services.

Water quality

We will supply you with safe and clean drinking water.	Council commits to the effective and safe management of the water supply in order to provide a safe, high quality drinking water that complies with the physical, chemical and microbiological health limits of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). Less than two water quality complaints per 1,000 properties per financial year (FY).
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Water service reliability

We will provide you with a reliable water supply that meets your needs.	Less than 10 unplanned water interruptions per 100km of water main per FY. Less than 10 planned water interruptions per 100km of water main per FY.
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Water pressure and flow

We will provide you with water pressure that meets our minimum standards.	Not less than 12 metres head of water in all areas except those designated as low pressure areas.
We will provide you with water flow that meets our minimum standards.	Not less than 20 litres per minute for all areas except those designated as low pressure areas. At least 1 litre per minute for those designated as low pressure areas.

Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions

We will respond to water and sewerage incidents as soon as possible.	Respond to urgent incidents in less than one hour, on 80 per cent of occasions. Respond to non-urgent incidents in less than 24 hours, on 80 per cent of occasions.
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Interruption of water supply or sewerage service

If there is an unplanned interruption to your water supply or sewerage service, we will work to restore service as soon as we can.	Restore in less than five hours of notification on 90 per cent of occasions. Where practical, provide an alternate water supply.
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We will provide sufficient notice of planned water service interruptions

If there is planned interruption to your water supply or sewerage service, we will provide sufficient notice.	Minimum of two business days' notice for occupants of residential properties. Minimum of four business days' notice to occupants of identified special needs residential properties.
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Water Restrictions

We will impose water restrictions if required and publish them on Council's website.	It is the responsibility of Council to impose and publish any formalised water restrictions. It is the responsibility of our customers to be aware of and abide by any water restrictions that are in place. Refer to Council's policy for further information at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/water-restrictions .
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Sewerage service reliability

We will provide a reliable sewerage network that safely removes sewage and minimises impacts on the environment and our customers.	Less than 10 sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100km of sewerage main per year. Less than 10 overflow incidents per year. Less than 0.4 sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties per year.
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Billing

We will provide clear, easy to understand and accurate notices.	We issue your water and sewerage charges on your half-yearly rates notice. If you dispute the amount of your water and sewerage charges you can request a review and we will respond within 10 business days. If we determine you have been overcharged, we will correct the notice within 7-10 business days.
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Complaint management

We will do our best to resolve water quality and sewerage complaints within 10 business days.	If we cannot resolve your water quality or/and sewerage complaint within this timeframe, you will be kept informed of our progress. Customer feedback and administrative systems will be continually reviewed and best practice implemented.
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Customer consultation

We will work with our customers and the community in resolving issues.	Council will provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice to its customers before any planned interruptions to water and sewerage services.
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Please view "Glossary of common terms" on page 13 for more detail on Customer Service Standard definitions.



Water quality

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

Less than two water quality complaints per 1,000 properties per financial year (FY).

We will:

- Supply you with water that is safe to drink.
- Monitor and assess the quality of the drinking water supplied.
- Publish annual water quality data on our website.

You can help us by:

- Ensuring all internal plumbing (including taps, pipes and drains) is maintained in good order and complies with plumbing regulations.
- Referring to our website for general information on water quality or contacting us - see 'Contacts us' section.
- Reporting any emergencies or issues regarding water quality to us - see 'Contact us' section.

Water supply reliability

We operate a network of eight water treatment plants, 449 kilometres of water mains, six water pumping stations and 21 reservoirs to deliver water to your property.

We will:

- Maintain and operate our drinking water service up to your meter.
- Manage water pressure and flow across our network of pipes.
- Implement effective pressure and leakage management to control leaks, conserve water and assist in minimising pipe failures.
- Assist the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service as the primary provider of fire and emergency services in Queensland, by maintaining and making water available through our network for firefighting purposes.

You can help us by:

- Maintaining all private fittings, mains connected to water tanks and pipes on your property.
- Regularly checking your water meter, taps and fittings for leaks.
- Engaging a licensed plumber to repair any leaks on your side of the water meter.
- Advising us immediately if damage occurs to any of our assets by calling us - see 'Contact us' section.
- Using water efficiently, useful tips are on our website www.gympie.qld.gov.au/water-wise.
- Using Dial Before You Dig to confirm the location of any pipes. Call Dial Before You Dig on 1100 or visit www.1100.com.au.



Water pressure and flow

During normal operating periods, water will be provided to the meter at a pressure of 12m of head and at rate of 20L/min.

Properties that are in a designated constant flow system area are subject to different water service conditions, particularly pressure of supply. The only constant flow system area is Kingfisher Estate.

Information on the service conditions for designated constant flow system areas can be provided on request – see 'Contact us' section for details.

Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions

A water supply incident is any event affecting Council's water infrastructure which adversely affects the service provided to customers, and to which service complaints can be attributed.

Council will respond to urgent incidents in less than one hour, on 80 per cent of occasions and respond to non-urgent incidents in less than 24 hours, or next working day on 80 per cent of occasions.

An example of an urgent incident is where:

- a person/s safety is at risk
- major damage to property
- loss of water supply service
- environmental impacts of sewage overflow.

An example of a non-urgent incident is where:

- there is minimal impact to persons and/or property
- loss of water pressure
- sewer odour where no overflow is observed.

You can help us by:

- informing Council as soon as practicable – see 'Contact us' section
- providing factual information to answer where, when, how, who and why (to the best of your knowledge) the incident has occurred.

Interruption to water supply and sewerage service

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

We will:

- consider your needs including those of special needs customers
- provide notice of planned water service interruptions
- respond to unplanned interruptions and restore water supply as soon as possible and where practical, provide an alternate water supply.

You can help us by:

- reporting any service interruptions and emergencies – see 'Contact us' section.

Dialysis and life support machines

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





Water restrictions

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

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

It is the responsibility of Council to impose and publish any formalised water restrictions. It is the responsibility of the customer to be aware of and abide by any water restrictions that are in place. Refer to Council's policy for further information at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/water-restrictions.





Sewerage service reliability

All you have to do is flush your toilet and your sewage is removed, treated and returned to the environment. This is accomplished by a network of 415 kilometres of sewerage mains, 74 sewage pump stations and seven sewage treatment plants. Disposing of rubbish down sinks, pipes and toilets can leave you with an expensive plumbing bill to unblock pipes. It can also lead to sewage overflows and problems in our sewerage network. The efficient operation of our sewerage network depends on ensuring that your private stormwater drainage is connected to the stormwater network and not our sewerage network. It is an offence to discharge stormwater to our sewerage network.

We will:

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

You can help us by:

- only flushing human waste and toilet paper down the toilet
- ensuring your overflow relief gully is kept clear to prevent sewage from flooding your house
- ensuring your stormwater drainage is not connected to the sewerage system
- always checking for pipes before planting and choosing trees with root systems that are less likely to enter pipes and cause blockages.

Complaints about odours caused by sewage can be made to the Council Customer Contact Centre - see 'Contact us' section. For more information, visit www.gympie.qld.gov.au/sewerage.

Billing

Meter readings and estimates

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

We will:

- read your meter according to a regular schedule to maintain consistency of reading periods
- estimate a reading, based on previous consumptions levels, when a water meter is not accessible or cannot be located.

You can help us by:

- ensuring your water meter is not obstructed (for example by a garden bed) and is not tampered with.

Special meter readings

A special water meter read provides the applicant with an accurate account of the water consumed as at the read date. This information can then be used to calculate the amount of water charges that are to be paid by the seller and purchaser on settlement day. A fee applies for this service. For more information, visit www.gympie.qld.gov.au/property-searches.



Testing your meter

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

We will:

- provide you with information on how to self-check for water leaks (we recommend that you self-check before you lodge a meter test application)
- provide you with a meter testing service for a prepaid fee
- provide you with the test results
- replace the water meter, refund the test charge and review water consumption charges for the property if the meter is found to be faulty (within 5 per cent of accuracy).

You can help us by:

- taking regular readings of your water meter to promptly detect any unusual increases, which could indicate an undetected leak
- checking your consumption for the period against the same period in the previous year
- considering any changes to your consumption (e.g. filling a pool)
- checking your property for any signs of a leak
- contacting us to report any damage or significant problems with the water meter – see 'Contact us' section.

Replacing your meter

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

Undetected leaks

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

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

- leaking taps, toilet cisterns, hot-water systems or other water appliances
- filling of a rainwater tank
- property sprinkler or other irrigation systems
- swimming pools, spas, ponds and other outdoor water features.

You can find the form on our website by visiting www.gympie.qld.gov.au/rates.

Damage to infrastructure

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

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

Issuing Rates Notice

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

Water and sewerage service charges

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

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

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

Paying your Rates Notice

We offer a range of payment options. You can pay your rates notice by:

BPAY	Contact your financial institution
Direct Debit	Complete request form found at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/payments or call 1300 307 800
BPoint	Use your credit card to pay bills online, all visa and mastercards accepted. Phone BPOINT: 1300 276 468
Post Office	In person at a Post Office
Mail	Cheque or money order only to Gympie Regional Council, PO Box 155, Gympie Qld 4570
In person	Town Hall, 2 Caledonian Hill, Gympie or Kilkivan Branch Office, 26 Bligh Street, Kilkivan

To find out more about our payment options, visit www.gympie.qld.gov.au/payments.

Overdue Rates Notice

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

Payment assistance

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

- flexible payment plans
- referrals to free community financial counselling services
- water conservation and efficiency advice.

Financial Hardship Policy

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

Disputed charges

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

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

Complaint Management

We aim to provide the highest level of service at all times, however we appreciate that there may be times when we don't get it right first time. We encourage your feedback to improve our service to you – see the 'Contact us' section for details. If you would like more information about the way we manage complaints, you can read our Complaints Management Policy at www.gympie.qld.gov.au/complaints-management.

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

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

Phone	1800 662 837
Post	PO Box 3640 South Brisbane Qld 4101
Email	info@ewoq.com.au
Web	ewoq.com.au

Customer consultation

Council will provide a minimum of 48 hours notice to its customers before any planned interruptions to water and sewerage services. This will usually take the form of a hand delivered letter or letter in the letterbox. Requests for information from Council should be either directed in writing to the Chief Executive Officer or by telephoning the appropriate Council department.

Privacy and information

Privacy

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

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

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

Right to Information

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

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

Contacts us

Emergency assistance

For immediate danger to persons and/or property, call 000

24-hour Customer Service Centre on 1300 307 800

Enquiries, faults, rates, damage, water and sewage applications

Monday – Friday
8.30am to 4.45pm call the Customer Service Centre on 1300 307 800

Email

council@gympie.qld.gov.au

Online

www.gympie.qld.gov.au





Glossary of common terms

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)

provide an authoritative reference to the Australian community and the water supply industry on what defines safe, good quality water, how it can be achieved and how it can be assured.

Connection area is determined by properties already connected, properties not connected but attracting vacant land charges or properties able to be serviced by our infrastructure. For these properties, we guarantee to provide connections that comply with our connection criteria to our water and sewerage infrastructure provided they are within the designated service areas.

Drinking water is water that meets the requirements of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the *Public Health Act 2005*.

Drinking water supply is drinking water supplied to the property from our infrastructure. For the purposes of this charter, this excludes water filling stations and metered standpipes.

Kilolitre (kL) = One thousand litres.

Megalitre (ML) = One million litres or 1 thousand kilolitres. An Olympic swimming pool holds approximately 2.5 megalitres.

Overflow relief gully is a grated outlet located in the ground outside your residence, usually near the laundry area. It is designed to act as a release valve in the event of a blockage in your plumbing, directing the overflow outside, rather than inside the residence.

Planned interruption is a planned or scheduled interruption to water supply for the purposes of undertaking repairs, maintenance or infrastructure replacement, and for which the customer has been notified.

Responding to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions

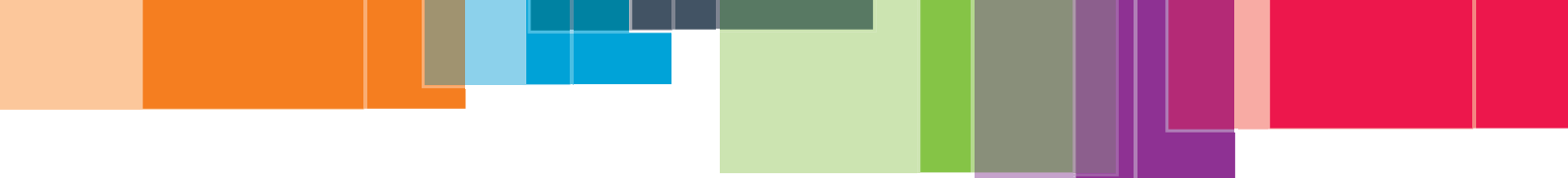
is measured from the time we are notified of the incident to the time taken to determine appropriate restoration action. The response can include an on-site assessment or a remote technical assessment. We assess and prioritise incidents for response based on a criteria matrix including factors such as public health and safety risks, environmental damage, and scale of customer impact and volume of water loss.

Restoration (water service incident) is where normal water supply is restored to all interrupted customers. The restoration time starts when we are advised of an interruption to water supply, or where we must interrupt water supply to undertake repairs, whichever occurs earliest.

Sewage overflows occur when untreated sewage spills or discharges and escapes from the sewerage system (i.e. pumping stations, pipes, maintenance holes or designed overflow structures) to the external environment. Sewage overflows can be caused by issues with our pipes and infrastructure, or the property owner's plumbing.

Sewerage main breaks and chokes include breaks and blockages in our sewerage distribution mains.

Special needs residential property is a property where a residential customer, tenant or other occupant requires continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other medical needs, as confirmed by a registered medical specialist, treating hospital or dialysis centre.



Unplanned water interruption occurs when the property is without a water service due to any cause, excluding:

- property service connection interruptions (unless the burst or leak requires the water main to be shut down for repair and therefore affects multiple customers)
- interruptions that cause some reduction to the level of service but where normal activities (shower, washing machine, toilet flushing etc.) are still possible
- breaks in house connection pipes or mains.

Planned interruptions includes an interruption for which Council provided notification of at least 24 hours in advance or as otherwise prescribed by regulatory requirements.

Water flow is the minimum flow rate that customers can expect to receive at the connection to the property. You can test the flow rate by using a five-litre bucket and a stop watch at an outside tap on the front of your property. The bucket should fill in 15 seconds.

Water main breaks includes breaks, bursts and leaks in our water distribution and reticulation mains.

Water pressure is the minimum static pressure customers can expect to receive at the connection to the property. This is measured in metres head of water. At a pressure of 12 metres, water would rise 12 metres up a vertical tube attached to the water main.

Water quality complaint is registered when a person contacts us and expresses dissatisfaction regarding the quality of our drinking water. This is any complaint regarding:

- discolouration
- taste
- odour
- stained washing
- illness
- cloudy water.



The winning entry for the water week colouring in competition
coloured by Camryn Warry, age 10.

**AUSTRALIAN
WATER**
ASSOCIATION

 *It's Time to
Change the World*

National
WATER WEEK
21-27 OCTOBER 2019



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FOR CHANGE**

