



TOWNSVILLE WATER

# Customer Service Standards



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We are committed to providing safe, reliable, value for money water services for the Townsville community.



## **TOWNSVILLE WATER - WHO ARE WE?**

Townsville Water is a commercial business unit of the Townsville City Council (council). Our core business is to provide water supply and wastewater services to the council local government area, including the supply of potable water, the collection and processing of wastewater, and the supply of recycled water. Townsville Water is a registered Service Provider under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, value for money water services for the Townsville community.

## **WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD?**

The Customer Service Standard ensures you, as customers, are aware of Townsville Water's obligations and standards relating to the services we provide and your rights as a customer. The Customer Service Standard sets out the expectations we have of you to provide information and comply with council policies and procedures.

The Customer Service Standard outlines the process for establishing new services, billing, metering, customer consultation, lodging complaints and dispute resolution.

### **» Does the Customer Service Standard apply to me?**

The Customer Service Standard applies to any customer currently connected including:

- Property owners with water and/or wastewater connections or access to the infrastructure; and
- Persons who use our services (residents, tenants, the general community and visitors).

The Customer Service Standard only applies to properties located in water supply and wastewater service areas within the Townsville City Council local government area. The Customer Service Standard does not apply to customers who have a separate contract with the council for the supply of water and or wastewater services to their premises. The Customer Service Standard does not cover Trade Waste services provided by council, which are governed by the Trade Waste Policy.

This Customer Service Standard will not apply during periods of declared natural disasters e.g. cyclones, until as soon as practicable after the affected normal services have been restored. During an emergency or natural disaster Townsville Water will endeavour to maintain services and infrastructure and respond to incidents as soon as practicable depending on the availability of resources and the severity of the event.





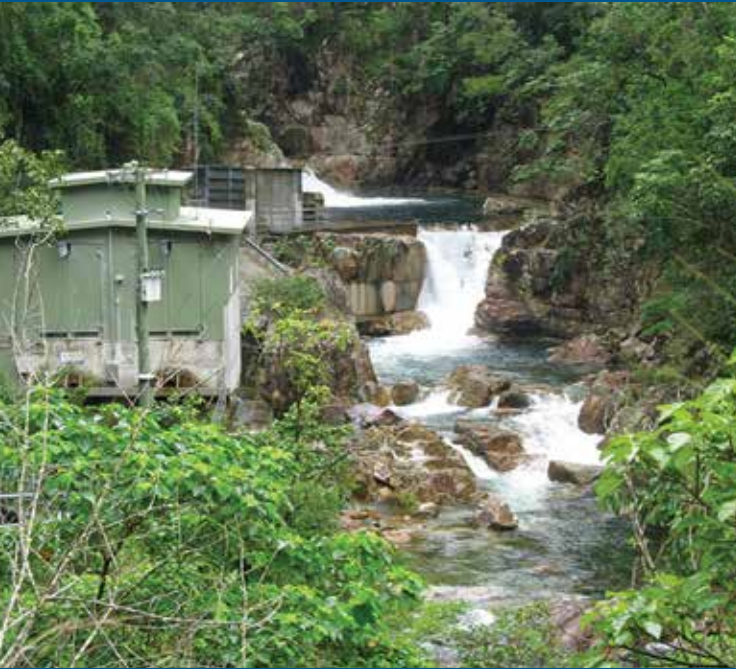
Provide efficient and secure operational facilities to assure community health and minimise environmental impact.

### » What will Townsville Water do for me?

We will comply with the standards set out in the Customer Service Standard when providing water supply and wastewater services to our customers.

We will:

- Comply with all legislative and statutory requirements, including but not limited to: the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld), the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 (Qld), Public Health Act 2005 (Qld), Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 (Qld), Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld) and the Ombudsman Act 2001 (Qld);
- Be responsible for collecting and storage of raw water and distributing treated drinking water to the community to the standards required under our Drinking Water Quality Management Plan and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011. We do not deal with the management of stormwater (run off from weather events);
- Collect, transport and treat sewage (household and commercial wastewater that may contain faecal matter). Wastewater includes black water (from residential and commercial toilets) and grey water (from showers, laundry and kitchen sinks) generated from residential premises;
- Release effluent to environmental licence requirements;
- Provide treated recycled wastewater services to the appropriate environmental and public health standards;
- Ensure timely connection and establishment of services;
- Operate and maintain infrastructure and assets to ensure efficient services with minimal disturbances;
- Provide efficient and secure operational facilities to assure community health and minimise environmental impact;
- Educate and inform customers by ensuring there are clear policies, procedures and forms available;
- Ensure adequate resources including material and equipment, adequately trained personnel, outside expertise and finances are provided, maintained and audited; and
- Maintain third party certification for ISO 9001 Quality Management and ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems.



### » What are my obligations as a customer?

We expect our customers to assist in providing services by:

- Paying for water and wastewater services in accordance with council's Schedule of Rates and Charges;
- Applying and receiving approval before connecting or disconnecting to our infrastructure;
- Using water in a 'water wise' manner;
- Minimising wastewater discharge (including fats, oils and grease from residential premises);
- Preventing the discharge of prohibited substances to sewerage, including but not limited to solids, stormwater and floodwater;
- Maintaining private plumbing and drainage in accordance with the requirements of the Plumbing and Drainage Act and Regulations;
- Engaging a licensed plumber to do work on private plumbing and drainage systems internal to the customer's property;
- Providing access to the water meter, sewer maintenance holes and other water and wastewater infrastructure within and adjacent to your property for investigations and/or work on the water supply and wastewater networks;
- Complying with the Queensland Development Code and appropriate council policies when building in the vicinity of Townsville Water infrastructure e.g. water and sewer mains;
- Minimising the chances of damaging water supply and wastewater infrastructure e.g. selecting appropriate garden vegetation around infrastructure;
- Keeping sewer maintenance holes clear of soil and/or mulch;
- Not opening or accessing sewer maintenance holes;
- Contacting us first if there is a suspected blockage in sewerage (e.g. toilet);
- Obtaining our approval before engaging a private plumber to work on our infrastructure;
- Contacting us if there are any service difficulties and faults that you encounter (e.g. water leaks), account enquiries, general and technical inquiries, and suggestions, complaints or compliments; and
- Complying with the water restrictions imposed by us as outlined on the council's website.



## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT?

### » Council policies and procedures

In addition to the standards and expectations of customers outlined in the Customer Service Standard, customers need to be aware of council policies. You must consult policies for the specific requirements associated with making certain applications to council. The policies state council's intent, commitment and position on strategic issues and assist in informing the community and council officers on council's desired outcomes.

Current council policies are located on the council's website.

Townsville Water's Customer Service Standards are complimented by Townsville City Council's Customer Service Charter and Customer Service Standards. These documents can be located on the council's website.

# Townsville Water's Goals

## PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The following performance targets reflect the level of service Townsville Water intends to provide to its customers for water and wastewater services. Townsville Water will be accountable for our performance against these targets by reporting at least annually to Council. All results will be published on the council's website.

Water Services	Target
<b>Day to Day Continuity of Supply</b>	
Total water main breaks (excluding those on the property owner's side) per 100kms of water main per year.	<30
Incidence of unplanned water interruptions per 1,000 connections per year.	<100
Time for restoration of service if excavation is required - unplanned interruptions.	>95% within 24 hours of receipt of underground service plans and necessary permits.
Average time to respond to an incident (excluding disasters), note: the problem may not be fixed on the initial response.	Within 4 hours of advice of incident being reported
Install new water meters within 4 weeks of the Water Operations Department receiving a compliant meter application.	100%
<b>Adequacy and Quality of Supply</b>	
Compliance with drinking water quality requirements in accordance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the Townsville Water Drinking Water Quality Management Plan.	100%
Number of water pressure customer complaints per 1,000 connections per year.	<5
Number of drinking water quality customer complaints per 1,000 connections per year.	<5
Number of drinking water quality incidents (non-compliance with water quality criteria reportable to the Regulator) per 1,000 connections per year.	<7

Wastewater Services	Target
<b>Effective Transport of Wastewater</b>	
Total sewage overflows per 100km of main per year.	<10
Sewage overflows to customer properties per 1,000 connections per year.	<3
Number of odour complaints per 1,000 connections per year.	<2
Time for restoration of services if excavation is required – unplanned interruptions.	>95% within 24 hours of advice from appropriate underground service authority.
Time for restoration of services if no excavation is required – unplanned interruptions	>95% within 5 hours of incident being reported.
Average time to respond to an incident (excluding disasters), note: the problem may not be fixed on the initial response.	Within 4 hours of advice of incident being reported
Total sewerage main breaks and chokes per 100kms of sewer main per year.	<10
<b>Water and Wastewater Services</b>	
Total water and sewerage complaints – per 1000 connections per year.	<13





Our water supply and wastewater systems are designed to be available 24 hours a day.

## OUR SERVICES - THE ESSENTIAL FACTS

### » Water quality

Townsville Water is committed to promoting and protecting public health by managing our water supply to provide safe, high-quality drinking water. The quality of water is dependent on a number of factors including taste, odour and visual aesthetics. We comply with the Australian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines, which are the framework for good management of water supplies to ensure safety at the point of use. We also comply with our regulator approved Drinking Water Quality Management Plan, which sets out our daily obligations and the actions we will undertake to protect public health.

We will integrate the needs and expectations of consumers, stakeholders, regulators and employees in our planning to provide and maintain a safe water supply. We establish and maintain regular and effective drinking water quality monitoring and reporting mechanisms to provide relevant and timely information, and to promote confidence in the management of our water supply systems. Townsville Water maintains third party certification for Quality in accordance with ISO9001.

### » Water pressure

We provide the required minimum pressure of 220kPa (22m) and 30L/min to the property boundary (at the meter) under normal operating circumstances. The pressure inside your house is dependent on a number of internal factors and circumstances. For example pressure limiting devices on internal plumbing and whitegoods and internal pipework.

Although we provide the minimum water pressure to your property, the pressure between properties across Townsville will vary. The pressure received by a property is dependent on various factors including: the location of the property and the proximity to the reservoir, elevation of the block, the distance from main pipework and the size of the pipework. Your individual pressure will also vary depending on the time of day and the usage on the system at that time.

### » New connections and services

To apply for a new water or wastewater service to a property, you can contact a Customer Service Centre who will provide you with the appropriate application form. After receiving the application fee we will install infrastructure on your property to make water and/or wastewater services available to the land. You are responsible for connecting the dwelling/building to the infrastructure, which will involve a private plumber.

The application forms are available from any Customer Service Centre or the council's website. To alter, relocate or disconnect a service please contact a Customer Service Centre or refer to council's website.



We will complete all work as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise disruption to your daily activities where unplanned events occur.



### » Water meters

A water meter will be installed as part of a new water service connection and will remain the property of council. We aim to ensure new water meters are connected within 4 weeks of our Water Operations Department receiving the compliant application. The meter will be used to measure the water consumption component of any water charges. Residents are encouraged to read the meter for monitoring their water usage.

If there are any concerns relating to your meter's accuracy you may have the meter tested for a fee, in accordance with council policy. It is your responsibility to ensure the meter is kept visible and accessible at all times to allow easy access by council staff to read and maintain. It is a legal requirement for sub-metering in all new multi-unit developments. This is an initiative aimed at water conservation measures and the sustainability of water supply.

### » Property connections for sewerage

A property connection will be installed as a part of connection to Townsville Water's sewerage system. You are responsible for the sanitary drain up to the connection point.

### » Availability of services

Our water supply and wastewater systems are designed to be available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. However, we may need to interrupt or limit services on certain occasions including, but not limited to: when there are periods of declared water supply restrictions; to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of the system; and if there is a potential public health risk with continuing the service.

### » Interruptions

We will minimise interruptions to your supply during peak demand hours, and will provide a minimum of 48 hours notice for planned interruptions.

We will complete all work as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise disruption to your daily activities where unplanned events occur.

We will minimise the likelihood of interruptions occurring to schools, hospitals and doctors' and dental surgeries and will ensure priority is given in the case of water interruptions to hospitals. Special contact will be made with customers registered with council, who require water supply to operate a life support machine or for another medical reason.



### »» Responsibility for infrastructure

For each type of infrastructure (water or wastewater) there is a connection point, where a customer's private infrastructure connects to Townsville Water infrastructure so that a service may be received. Townsville Water is responsible for maintaining and repairing the infrastructure on their side of the connection point. For example this includes: a water meter and anything from the meter towards the foot path, and for a sewerage connection anything from the connection point to the main sewerage system. A customer is responsible for all private infrastructure located on their property after the connection point to and inside their house/structure. For example this includes all water pipes after the water meter, irrigation pipes and internal sanitary drains (grey and black water).

### »» Damage to infrastructure

If council's infrastructure is damaged please report the damage to council's Customer Service Centre. If council's infrastructure is damaged intentionally this is an offence and is provided for in the Water Supply Act. Council may charge the owner or occupier of the property with reasonable cost of repair for accidental and/or intentional damage to council's infrastructure.

If damage is done to infrastructure on the property owner's side of the property boundary, then it is the responsibility of the owner to repair or replace the infrastructure. Council will only be responsible for damage on the owner's side if it was through fault of a council employee.

### »» Entry to private property

In certain circumstances, representatives of Townsville Water may need to enter your property (other than your house) to carry out investigations and/or work on the water supply and wastewater transportation system. To limit any inconvenience, we will attempt to carry out this work during business hours or at other times convenient to property owners and occupiers, except in emergencies.

Authorised persons of Townsville Water can enter private property at certain times without needing the consent of or notifying an owner or occupier. For example to read, maintain and check the accuracy of water meters at reasonable times or if urgent action is required. Where required we will provide notice to an occupier in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. When entering private property Townsville Water representatives must show occupiers their identity card and explain to them their reasons for being there.

When conducting works or repairs to our infrastructure we will ensure that the area is left in a reasonable standard given consideration to all the circumstances relating to the repairs, including the condition of the area prior to the repairs and type and location of the works. Any work area will also be adequately fenced or signed to ensure safety.



### » Rates, fees and charges

Rates, fees and charges will be set annually by council resolution. Water is charged based on consumption measured through meter readings conducted quarterly, which is billed every 6 months through your rates notice. Currently council offer two different plans for water billing; standard plan and water watchers. For further information on these plans and the application and timing of water and wastewater utility charges, please consult council's current Schedule of Rates and Charges. Wastewater is charged as a set amount on the rates notice. For other standard services provided by Townsville Water please refer to council's Schedule of Fees and Charges. These are both available on the council's website.

A range of payment options may be negotiated for special financial arrangements to assist customers experiencing hardship in the payment of accounts. Information on these options is available from council's Customer Service Centre.

### » Averaging of water consumption

For billing purposes if a water meter is found to be inaccessible or inoperative during any period of consumption, Townsville Water may average the amount of water consumed during the period. The basis for the averaging of consumption will be on the usage recorded in the equivalent consumption period in each of the previous three years. If there is insufficient consumption history or if this calculation is not appropriate to use in the circumstances, council may average the consumption using any other period of prior consumption or on the basis of the best available information that is reasonably available.

### » Complaints and dispute resolution

You have the right to make a complaint regarding the service provided by Townsville Water by contacting a Customer Service Centre by phone or email; or by lodging a written complaint directed to council's postal address. These will be investigated in accordance with council policy. Council will treat all complaints confidentially and with due respect, and complainants will not suffer any reprisal from council or staff from making a complaint. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated in a timely manner (and in accordance with the principles of natural justice) with the aim of reaching a resolution to both council and the complainant. If the customer remains dissatisfied with the result they may contact the Queensland Ombudsman.

### » Customer consultation

Townsville Water will communicate with customers on changes to the water supply and wastewater services through: local media stories, via our website and other digital feeds, distribution of published brochures, or alternative methods as appropriate. We are committed to educating you, our customer about what we do. From time to time we will seek your feedback in order to inform our service planning and decision making process. This will be done through various forums, such as focus groups and customer surveys when needed. We look forward to hearing from you about our services when this occurs.



## For more information

### › **Customer Service Centres:**

**Townsville City** Ground Floor, 103 Walker Street, Townsville.

Monday to Friday: 8am to 5.00pm

**Thuringowa Central** 86 Thuringowa Drive, Thuringowa.

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5.00pm

### › **Contact Us:**

13 48 10

[enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au)

[www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au)

PO Box 1268, Townsville Qld 4810

