



# Customer Charter

AUGUST 2016



*Delivering more than just water*

## Our fundamental commitments

GMW is committed to improving our service delivery to benefit our customers and stakeholders. Underpinning our approach are our three fundamental commitments which lay the foundation for our strategic priorities and initiatives. They are:

- Partnering with our customers
- Creating the opportunity to increase production in northern Victoria over the next 20 years
- A high performing organisation.

## Our commitments to you, our customer

**We will strive to establish and foster positive relationships through:**

- showing you courtesy and respect
- acting in an honest and fair manner
- being accessible, understanding and helpful
- listening and providing you with considered and timely responses
- taking ownership of, and dealing with, any issues that arise
- managing expectations and honouring our commitments.

### **We will provide you with timely and accurate information**

We will make it easy for you to contact us and will use plain English in our communication with you. We will strive to provide you with reliable and timely information.

### **We will consult with you regularly and listen to your feedback**

Your feedback is critical, as it helps us improve the way we serve you. We will not make important decisions that impact on your service without proper consultation.

We will:

- strive to understand what is important to you
- provide a range of options for how and when you can provide feedback
- consult with you regularly and include your feedback in our decision making to the extent possible
- keep you informed about changes to our services
- monitor our performance and service levels every year to ensure we continue to improve.

### **We will respect and protect your privacy**

We will only collect the information we need to conduct our business and will strive to keep your information up to date. Private or personal information will not be released without your consent unless we are reasonably and lawfully required to do so.

### **We will respond to your issues and concerns**

If you contact us, or request that we resolve an issue we will ensure you receive a timely, reliable and accurate response. We will respond to your complaint or concern within 10 business days.

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# About GMW's Customer Charter

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) manages the storage, delivery and drainage systems for 70 per cent of Victoria's stored water resources and 50 per cent of Victoria's underground water supplies. GMW exists for the benefit of our customers and communities and operates on a cost-recovery basis which means we do not generate profit.

GMW services a region of 68,000 square kilometres, bordered by the Great Dividing Range to the south, the River Murray to the north and stretching from Corryong in the east to Nyah in the west.

By operating and maintaining storage dams and channel infrastructure, we provide water storage, delivery and drainage services to about 38,000 customers including irrigators, river diverters, groundwater users, domestic and stock supply, urban water providers and the environment.

## Purpose of the charter

The purpose of the Customer Charter is to provide our rural water customers with important information about the rights and responsibilities of customers and GMW, as regulated by the Essential Services Commission (ESC). The charter sets out the standard of service that customers can reasonably expect to receive and against which GMW's performance can be judged.

The charter implements the terms of the Rural Water Customer Service Code published by the ESC under Section 4F of the *Water Industry Act 1994 (Vic)*, and Clause 15 of the Water Industry Regulatory Order.

## Scope of the charter

This charter outlines our commitment to our customers and in turn how our customers can help us provide quality service. This charter outlines our communication to our customers and in turn how our customers can help us provide quality service. It applies to GMW's standard operations and includes information about:

- how to gain information or enquire about any matter
- Water Services Committees

- how customers can give us feedback on our performance
- our operating performance and service standards
- GMW's and our customers' legal obligations under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)* and other relevant legislation
- our responsibilities to supply water
- our commitments to maintenance, repair and replacement of the infrastructure that delivers water
- when and why we might need access to a customers' property
- how to have a complaint or dispute dealt with promptly and satisfactorily
- how water prices are set
- our customers' obligation to pay our accounts for water supply and other services.

## Operation and review of the charter

This charter will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is achieving its objectives and that the information remains valid. Before adopting or varying this charter, GMW will consult with representatives on our Water Services Committees. GMW may also amend the charter at the request of the ESC to deal with matters raised as a result of its assessment.

## Accessing the charter

GMW will provide a copy of the charter or a summary version to customers within one month of becoming a customer or upon request.

Additional copies of the charter and the charter summary can be downloaded from our website [www.gmwater.com.au/customer-charter](http://www.gmwater.com.au/customer-charter) or phone us on 1800 013 357 to request a copy by email or post.

Our website also has an accessible electronic version available for vision impaired customers.

# Our commitments to you

## Our customer focus

We are committed to providing a consistently high standard of service and to putting customers first by:

- making it easy for you to contact us
- being courteous, friendly and professional
- listening and responding to your needs and concerns
- respecting your privacy, and
- using plain language in all our communications with you.

## Contacting us

When you call us, we will:

- identify ourselves on answering your call
- aim to resolve your enquiry in the first point of contact
- aim to transfer you only once if your enquiry requires specialist attention, and
- arrange for an appropriate person to return your phone call within one business day, or at a time convenient to you if we cannot answer your query immediately.

## Enquiries

Our customer service centres and our call centre can provide information for a range of customer enquiries including:

- account information
- account payment options
- concession entitlements
- programs available to customers who are having payment difficulties
- our complaint handling procedures and information about the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria
- water allocations
- ordering water
- water entitlement and licence applications
- applicable fees
- the Connections Project, and
- maintenance and construction works.

We can provide access to an interpreter and a Telephone Typewriter (TTY) service. If you are deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment, you can contact GMW through the National Relay Service by following these instructions:

- TTY users – phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 013 357
- Speak and Listen users – phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1800 013 357
- Internet relay users – connect to [internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au](http://internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au) then ask for 1800 013 357

For more information on the National Relay Service go to [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)



If English is not your first language and you need to contact us, please phone 03 9280 1993 and you will be transferred to us with an interpreter on line to assist.

Në se nuk flisni Anglisht dhe keni nevojë të na telefoni, ju lutem telefononi numrin: (03) 9280 1993 dhe thirrja e juaj do të na transferohet me një përkthyes ne linjë për të na ndihmuar.

إذا كنت لا تتحدث الانجليزية وبحاجة للتواصل معنا، يرجى الاتصال على الرقم (03) 9280 1993 وسوف يتم تحويل مكالمتك إلينا مع الاستعانة بمترجم للمساعدة في المكالمة.

اگر به انگلیسی صحبت کرده نه میتوانید و ضرورت دارید که با ما تماس بگیرید، لطفاً به شماره ۱۹۹۳ ۹۲۸۰ (۰۳) تلفون کنید. تلفون شما به ما انتقال داده می شود با یک ترجمان آنلاین که شما را کمک کند

Αν δεν ομιλείτε αγγλικά και πρέπει να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μας, καλέστε στο (03) 9280 1993 και η κλήση σας θα μεταβιβαστεί σε εμάς με ένα διερμηνέα στη γραμμή για να σας βοηθήσει.

اگه شمو ده زبون انگلیسی گپ زده نموتنین و ضرورت درین تا ده ما تماس بگیرین، لطفاً ده تیلفون شماره (03) 9280 1993 زنگ بزنین و زنگ شمو ده ما همراهی یک ترجمو/ترجمان که کومک موکنه تیریا منتقل موشه.

Se non parlate inglese e avete bisogno di contattarci, telefonate al numero (03) 9280 1993 e la chiamata sarà trasferita a noi con l'aiuto in linea di un interprete.

यदि तपाईंले अंग्रेजी बोल्नु हुन्न भने र हामीलाई सम्पर्क गर्नुपर्ने भएमा, कृपया (०३) ९२८० १९९३ मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला र तपाईंको फोनकल सहयोगकोलागि हामीलाई दोभाषेको साथमा सम्पर्क गराईदिनेछ।

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ/ਬੋਲਦੀ ਹੋ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰਕੇ (03) 9280 1993 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਾਲ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਲਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਬਾਜ਼ੀਆ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਲਾਇਨ ਤੇ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

如果你不会说英语，但需要联系我们，请拨打 (03) 9280 1993，你的来电将通过口译员协助转接给我们。

倘若您不講英語而需要聯絡我們，請撥打 (03) 9280 1993，您就會透過在線傳譯員的幫助轉接我處。

İngilizce konuşmıyorsanız ve bizimle ilişkiye geçmeniz gerekiyorsa, lütfen (03) 9280 1993 numaralı telefonu arayın; telefonunuz, yardımcı olması için hatta bir tercümanla birlikte bize bağlanacaktır.

## Writing to us

When you write, fax or email us, we will:

- let you know who is dealing with your enquiry
- acknowledge your correspondence within two business days
- respond within 10 business days
- for more complex matters we will keep you informed of the progress of our response every 10 business days.

## Privacy

GMW is committed to protecting your privacy. GMW is required to comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and is bound by the Information Privacy Principles set out in that Act. It may also be required to comply with other laws relating to the protection of personal information. For example, if GMW collects health information it is required to comply with the Health Privacy Principles set out in the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

GMW's privacy policy outlines our practices and policies for the collection, use and management of personal information. You may gain access to and correct your personal information. For further information, please refer to our Privacy Policy at [www.gmwater.com.au/privacy](http://www.gmwater.com.au/privacy) or phone 1800 013 357 to obtain a copy of this policy.

## Customer consultation

Water Services Committees are GMW's official customer consultative committees for water storage and delivery. They help shape our services and provide advice to our Board on local services and issues.

There are a number of Water Services Committees working to represent customers across our region. Members are nominated by their communities and appointed by the GMW Board of Directors. We regularly seek input from Water Services Committees on a range of matters including service levels, pricing and our capital investment programs.

To find out who is on your Water Services Committee please visit our website at [www.gmwater.com.au/wsc](http://www.gmwater.com.au/wsc)

We also consult regularly with our broader customer base through a range of methods including public meetings, focus groups and surveys.

## Regulatory information

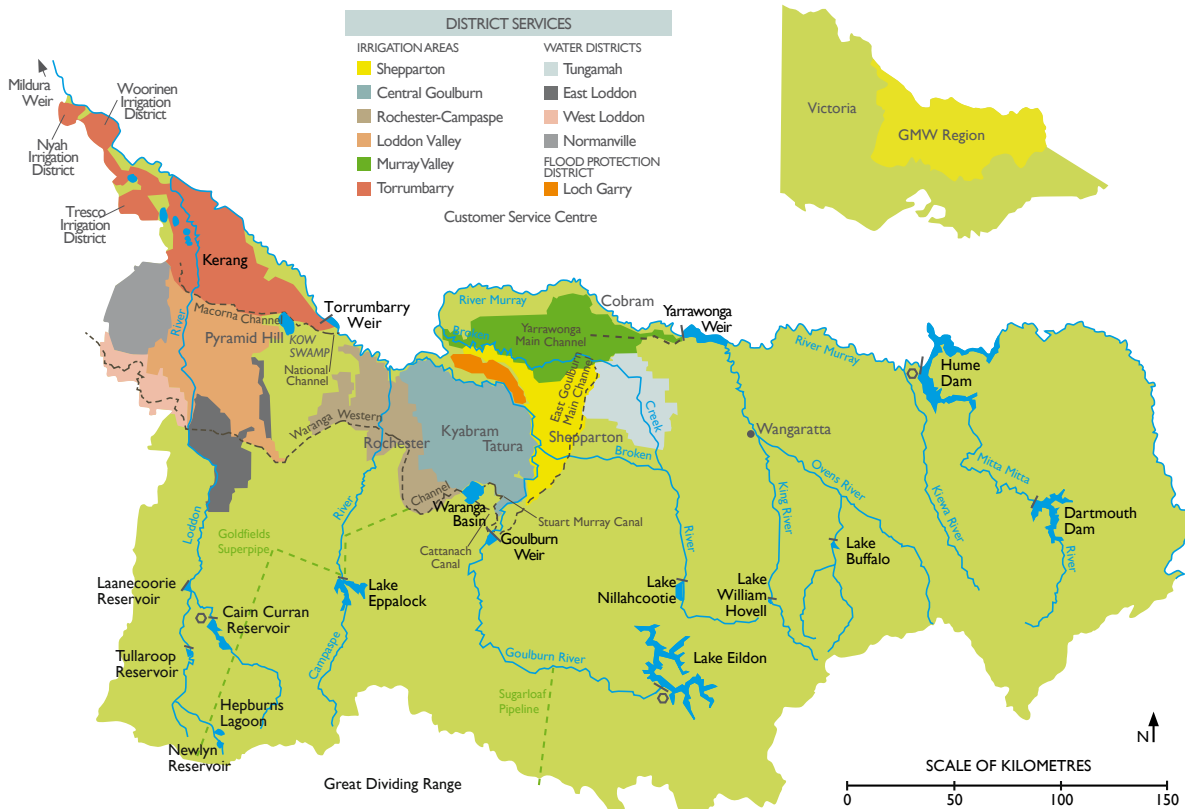
GMW will provide customers, upon request, any relevant regulatory instruments other than the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*, including a copy of this charter.

## Reference documents

GMW will provide customers, upon request, any relevant reference documents.

## Area Map

The GMW region is segmented into water delivery areas and districts, the map below shows where these are located.



# Service standards

## Approved service standards

The GMW service standards reflect how customers want the organisation to deliver:

- customer service
- licensing administration
- water delivery and drainage
- response to bursts and leaks
- water storage and harvesting
- resource management.

As well as meeting customer expectations, service standards link to our regulatory and legislative obligations.

Service standards specify the quality, availability, reliability and safety of the service customers can expect to receive. Current approved service standards are articulated in the 2016 Water Plan, the ESC's Rural Water Customer Service Code and this charter. Our current service standards are summarised in the table below.

Service standards	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>General Customer Service</b>				
<b>Licensing and Administration</b>				
Processing allocation trade applications within five business days	90%	90%	90%	90%
Processing water share applications within 10 business days	95%	95%	95%	95%
Processing change of ownership applications within 10 business days	90%	90%	90%	90%
<b>Customer Service</b>				
Complaints to EWOV (per 1,000 customers)	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17
Customer complaints to GMW (per 1,000 customers)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Telephone calls answered within 30 seconds	80%	80%	80%	80%
Customer complaints responded to within 10 business days	100%	100%	100%	100%
Rate of first point resolution (for phone calls)	50%	52%	54%	56%
<b>Gravity Irrigation</b>				
<b>Water Delivery</b>				
Efficiency achieved as a percentage of delivered	80.5%	82%	83.5%	85%
Percentage of orders delivered on day requested	93%	93%	93%	93%
Percentage of orders within +/- 10% of flow rate for 90% of time	80%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of orders within +/- 40mm of supply level 90% of time	80%	80%	80%	80%
<b>Maintenance Delivery</b>				
Maintenance requests responded within target (percentage Priority 1-2)	90%	90%	90%	90%
Unplanned service interruptions (> 12 hours)	5	5	5	5
<b>Drainage</b>				
Availability of surface drainage	98%	98%	98%	98%
Availability of subsurface drainage	98%	98%	98%	98%



## Service standards

2016/17      2017/18      2018/19      2019/20

Pumped irrigation				
Irrigation water orders delivered on day requested	98%	98%	98%	98%
Number of unplanned supply interruptions greater than 12 hours	5	5	5	5
Efficiency achieved as a percentage of delivered	92%	92%	92%	92%
Notification provided to affected customers on system restoration within two hours of unplanned outage	100%	100%	100%	100%
Water Districts				
Number of supply interruptions for continuous periods in excess of 96 hours	0	0	0	0
Efficiency achieved as a percentage of delivered	85%	85%	85%	85%
Diversions				
Groundwater resource monitoring data is collected in accordance with management plan requirements and is readily accessible to our customers. Monitoring data made accessible within two weeks of data being submitted by the monitoring contractor	90%	90%	90%	90%
Customer access to groundwater is managed through seasonal allocations which are announced in accordance with relevant management plans	100%	100%	100%	100%
Access to unregulated stream flows is managed in accordance with restriction triggers in Local Management Rules. Number of verified concerns per 1000 customers	2	2	2	2
Bulk Water				
The ability of each regulated system to deliver water to meet customer demand as a percentage of time	99%	99%	99%	99%
The ability of each regulated system to maximise harvesting opportunities up to 100 per cent of the design storage capacity as a percentage of time	100%	100%	100%	100%
Minimum flow requirements for regulated waterways as specified in the relevant bulk entitlements are satisfied as a percentage of time	98%	98%	98%	98%
Seasonal determination announcements for regulated systems to be made within defined timeframes each month	100%	100%	100%	100%
Risk of spill announcements for relevant regulated systems to be made within defined timeframes each month	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Meeting our service standards

GMW and our customers share mutual obligations to ensure that agreed standards of service can be achieved. These services are provided in accordance with our approved service standards.

## GMW's obligations

- operate and maintain the system to achieve approved service standards
- be responsive to requests in accordance with service standards
- minimise unplanned interruptions to service
- provide effective communication systems to and from customers.

## Customer obligations

- ensure farm works (pump or gravity) are sized and maintained so that desired flow rate can be achieved at the service point (i.e. sufficient head difference to obtain the required flow rate is achieved)
- operate service points in accordance with their order as required by GMW
- operate within the flow range approved for the service point

- place water orders as per GMW's procedures
- ensure orders are an accurate description of the delivery that will be taken
- report maintenance issues and faults on GMW infrastructure
- provide sufficient notice of intentions to change scheduled start and finish times.

Where notification is not given, locally operated service points continuing to operate after the scheduled finish time may be closed by GMW.

# Services we provide

## General information

GMW provides a range of services across our region. We aim to provide a high standard of service to our customers which meet their requirements.

### Rectification

We will rectify any deficiency within our control as soon as possible after we become aware of the deficiency, or within a time agreed with our customer.

### Obligation to provide reliable services

We develop and implement plans, systems and processes and manage assets to ensure that supply services are reliable. All reasonable endeavours will be made to minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to supply services.

### Planned interruptions - information and response

Should we be required to conduct maintenance on the water supply system that may cause an interruption to any customer's supply, affected customers will be informed of the time and duration of any planned interruption at least five days in advance.

### Irrigation season

#### Gravity irrigation

We will supply water to customers during the irrigation season. The gravity channel irrigation season is determined by GMW each year and is normally 15 August to 15 May unless there is an approved variation.

Outside of the irrigation season, water delivery will be negotiated with customers who have a special requirement. This delivery, however, will be at the discretion of GMW in accordance with our Delivering Water Policy and Procedure which is available upon request at our customer service centres or call centre.

GMW does not guarantee water supply (including domestic and stock) during the non-irrigation season.

#### Other

For pumped irrigation districts, river and groundwater diversions, the irrigation season is normally 1 July to 30 June.

### Ordering water

#### Requirement to order a water delivery

Customers who divert water from the irrigation district and regulated rivers are required to place orders for water delivery.

For customers on regulated systems, water may be diverted within the irrigation season when orders are placed on WaterLINE. Customers must comply with the conditions of any rostering or restriction of use.

For river diversions customers on unregulated systems, water ordering is not normally required as access to water is determined by the water flow or availability.



For customers sourcing water from unregulated streams or groundwater under a Licence to Take and Use Water, supply may be taken at any time where:

- the entitlement volume is not exceeded
- water taken is in accordance with roster restrictions in place
- in cases where the services are not metered, only applied to the area specified on the licence is irrigated.

#### How to place an order

GMW's WaterLINE service provides customers with three options to order water:

1. Phone - 1300 469 469 (1300 GMW GMW)
2. Online - <https://waterline.g-mwater.com.au>
3. Smart phone and tablet app – to access view the above website on a mobile device.

These services operate 24 hours a day seven days a week during the irrigation season and allows you to:

- lodge irrigation orders
- communicate with our Water System Planners
- confirm irrigation start times
- check your allocation account balance (online only)
- monitor the available capacity at your service point (online only)
- input your meter readings.

#### Water order notice required

The more notice provided, the greater the chance customers have to secure the requested delivery time and flow rate. Orders can be placed up to a maximum of 10 days in advance.

The required notice for customers on a modernised system may vary throughout the season. Customers will be notified by GMW of any changes.

The tables on the next page detail the required notice for ordering water and amending water orders for various service and service point types.

Gravity – Modernised and Natural Carriers		
Service point type	Required water order notice	Required notice to amend water order
100mm or less	No order required	No minimum notice
Greater than 100mm	24 hours	15 minutes

Gravity – Non-Modernised Systems		
Service point type	Required water order notice	Required notice to amend water order
100mm or less	No order required	No minimum notice
Greater than 100mm	48 hours	12 hours

Diversion Systems		
Service point type	Required water order notice	Required notice to amend water order
50mm or less	No order required	No minimum notice
Greater than 50mm	96 hours	24 hours

Pumped Systems		
Service point type	Required water order notice	Required notice to amend water order
All types	no minimum notice	no minimum notice

## Water supply levels

We will make every endeavour to maintain the water level in gravity irrigation channels at the design supply level during a planned irrigation supply.

Customers who access water from rivers, streams and creeks are responsible for ensuring pumps are able to access water during low and high flow events.

## Water quality

GMW reminds customers that water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated.

GMW's incident response procedures include the notification of customers and the general public in the event of poor water quality being detected.

## Irrigation districts

### Delivery

#### Gravity irrigation

We deliver water to customers in the Shepparton, Central Goulburn, Rochester, Loddon Valley, Murray Valley and Torrumbarry irrigation areas through an extensive water distribution network.

GMW provides a gravity delivery network to our customers who receive supply via:

- the modernised delivery system
- the non-modernised delivery system
- natural carriers such as rivers, streams and lakes, which form part of the gravity network.

GMW's gravity irrigation network is in the process of being upgraded and modernised by the Connections Project. Further information about the Connections Project can be found by visiting [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au)

#### Pumped irrigation

We deliver water to customers in the Nyah, Tresco and Woorinen pumped irrigation districts through dedicated piped supply networks.

## Drainage

### Surface drainage

GMW provides surface drainage services mainly in irrigation districts.

Properties that have access to GMW drains are classified into drainage divisions depending on the area of land that has access to the drain. Additional information on the classifications and how charges are applied is available from our customer service centres or by contacting us on 1800 013 357.

Customers must not discharge drainage water into a gravity irrigation channel without consent. Under certain conditions where formal drainage schemes do not exist, permits to discharge may be given.

**Level of service:** The level of service provided by each drain is defined by the period of time over which the drain is designed to remove a specific rainfall event from properties. The majority of GMW drains are designed to remove the excess runoff from a property produced by a summer storm over an irrigated catchment within five days.

GMW drains will provide a reduced level of service for events bigger than the design event with water taking longer to be drained. GMW is progressively declaring the level of service of its drains to provide greater clarity on their intended performance during large rainfall and flood events.

**Connection:** Discharge to GMW drains is via authorised drainage inlets only. Operation of drainage inlets is generally the responsibility of the landholder or drainage group.

Where a customer is authorised to discharge drainage into a water supply channel (where no alternative drainage service exists) they must act in accordance with the conditions of discharge.

**Drainage water quality:** Water discharged into GMW drains and/or channels (with permit from GMW) must not be polluted, with dairy or piggery effluent or other unauthorised chemical or fuel residues.

**Accessing water from surface drains:** GMW may approve use of water from its drains subject to the availability of flows and in accordance with agreed conditions. Access, water quality and availability are variable.

### Subsurface drainage

GMW operates and manages a network of groundwater pumps to provide subsurface drainage in the Shepparton Irrigation Region. In the Campaspe West,

Nyah, Tresco and Woorinen areas, GMW provides a service to collect subsurface drainage discharge from private properties.

## Water districts

Water district customers receive water through dedicated supply networks. Pipeline supply is provided within the Tungamah, Normanville and East Loddon (South) water districts. Gravity supply is active within East Loddon (North) and West Loddon water districts.

### Pipeline

**Access to water:** Customers on the piped network can access water at any time during the year.

Notification of intention to take water is not required. Water is normally available on demand where customers adhere to their pipeline capacity share.

Customers are required to have on-farm storage for four days use, based on peak daily allowance. The water districts piped supply season is normally between 1 July and 30 June.

**Meter reading:** Piped water district customers have metered service points. Final meter readings will be taken in the month of June. Alternatively, customers may phone us on 1800 013 357 with an updated meter reading during the year.

### Gravity

**Access to water:** Gravity customers in water district areas are provided one dam fill per year. In some instances a second fill may occur.

We will provide at least one week's notice of a proposed gravity dam fill. It is the customer's responsibility to coordinate individual start times within the dam fill scheme.

Customers are required to maintain private channels for gravity fed dam fills in a clean condition, capable of carrying the required flow prior to commencement of dam filling.

## Flood protection district

The Loch Garry Flood Protection District protects an area of 14,000 hectares and includes nine kilometres of levee bank and one regulator. The levee and structure are maintained and manually operated by GMW in times of flood when Goulburn River levels at Shepparton exceed a particular trigger level. The activation of Loch Garry allows flood waters to flow across the natural floodplain, reducing downstream peaks and flooding on the narrower part of the Goulburn River below Shepparton.

## Diversions

### Surface water

#### Regulated surface water diversions

Regulated diversions is a natural system of streams, creeks and rivers that are controlled or 'regulated' from water storages which allow the water to be released when it is required. Availability of resource for extraction from regulated waterways is managed through allocations against water entitlements known as Water Shares. Customers require a works licence for private pumping infrastructure on these systems in accordance with the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*.

#### Unregulated surface water diversions

Unregulated diversions are a natural system of streams, creeks and rivers where flows are not controlled by releases from water storages.

GMW manages the licensing of unregulated surface water diversions within its region in accordance with its delegated functions of the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*.

Unregulated surface water diversion is managed through a Licence to Take and Use Water and Licence to Operate Works. Licence holders are authorised to divert water for stock and domestic, irrigation and commercial purposes subject to any restrictions that may be in place. Entitlements are generally capped and new licences can only be issued with trade of licence volume from an existing licence holder.

### Groundwater

GMW manages the licensing of groundwater within its region in accordance with its delegated functions under the *Water Act 1989 (Vic)*. GMW also has the delegation to issue licences to construct and operate bores.

**Accessing groundwater for irrigation or commercial purposes:** Groundwater extraction is permitted by a Licence to Take and Use Water. Licence holders are authorised to extract groundwater volumes subject to conditions, as well as any restrictions that may apply seasonally; such as those within a management plan. In some areas groundwater extraction is capped and new licence entitlements cannot be issued. For detailed information contact one of our customer service centres or visit our website.

**Accessing groundwater for domestic and stock purposes:** A person has the right to take water without a Licence to Take and Use Water for genuine domestic and stock purposes from a bore located on land they occupy. Domestic and stock includes household purposes, for the watering of a kitchen garden, or for the watering of pets or stock, as long as the water is not used for intensive or commercial use.

**Private groundwater discharge:** Groundwater from private groundwater bores may be discharged into drains and channels, however only where and when specifically authorised by GMW.

#### Groundwater diversions

Groundwater is a highly valuable water resource used for a range of purposes from numerous aquifers located across GMW's region.

The extent of these aquifers is generally well understood, and groundwater taken from these aquifers supports important irrigated agricultural and commercial enterprises; as well as being a vital source of urban supply for some regional towns. Groundwater is also widely used as a domestic and stock supply.

Most aquifers in GMW's region are subject to management plans which apply to designated areas called Groundwater Management Units.

Groundwater management plans contain rules which clearly explain how licence holders can maximise the use of their entitlements. For example, a plan may include rules about trading licence entitlement and allow carryover of groundwater entitlement. Management plans set caps to protect the long term sustainability of groundwater resources and include important water sharing arrangements during times of water shortage.

A key aim of a management plan is to provide clear information about groundwater access for all users.

The long term health of groundwater resources in GMW's region is monitored by analysing data taken from a large network of observation bores.

#### Shepparton Irrigation Region shallow groundwater

Shallow groundwater in the Shepparton Irrigation Region Groundwater Management Area (SIR GMA) is managed differently to other resources. Land salinisation and water logging from high water tables have been significant threats to agricultural productivity and the environment across the SIR GMA. Private pumping for irrigation provides an important salinity control measure and will remain a key part of managing salinity and high water tables in the future.

Shallow groundwater quality in the SIR GMA can vary and frequently requires blending with surface water before it is suitable for irrigation.

Despite this, the SIR GMA management plan recognises that shallow groundwater provides an important opportunistic resource during dry periods; and encourages users to retain their groundwater licence to maximise opportunities for its productive use. This in turn helps to control the salinity impacts of shallow groundwater.

For these reasons there is no cap on new groundwater entitlement in the SIR GMA.

## Storages

GMW operates major storages across northern Victoria in accordance with the Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD) guidelines and ensures harvesting opportunities are maximised and stored water is managed efficiently for our customers. The ANCOLD guidelines can be found at [www.ancold.org.au](http://www.ancold.org.au)

## Works and maintenance

### GMW maintenance obligations

GMW has an extensive channel, pipeline and drainage system and relies on the input of customers to ensure we can address maintenance issues as soon as they arise.

If a maintenance problem is reported by a customer, it will be assigned a priority rating and we will aim to have the problem rectified within the target timeframes.

### Customer maintenance obligations

Customers are responsible for maintaining all private channels and works from the point of connection to the GMW system. Details regarding GMW's system boundaries are available from our customer service centres or by phoning us on 1800 013 357.

### Damage to GMW assets

Customers are responsible for any costs relating to damage they cause to GMW assets.

### Stock damage

Stock access to GMW channel and drain reserves may be permitted. Customers can apply to access GMW reserves for stock grazing at a local customer service centre. Applications are subject to approval.

Should damage by stock be identified, each matter will be dealt with on an individual basis in accordance with the Control of Livestock on Authority Property Policy which is available from our customer service centres or can be downloaded from our website.

### Work on your land

#### General principles

To maintain our water delivery system and service our customers, we are at times required to enter customers land. We have established the following general principles for our staff to build positive working relationships with our customers on these occasions.

We will only enter properties for legitimate GMW business purposes and we endeavour to:

- leave the land in the same state as when we arrived
- minimise land damage and the risk of spreading any disease or weeds to or from farm land
- minimise disruptions to customers
- where GMW holds keys to a customer's property, the keys will be held in safe custody and returned to the customer if access is no longer required.

#### Communication

For activities (other than reading water meters and routine water distribution) which require that we enter and/or carry out works on your land we will take reasonable steps to:

- contact you before entering your land
- inform you of our intentions and timeframe before entry
- consult with you regarding any planned works that may have a significant impact on your property
- respond to your queries promptly and courteously
- inform you immediately of any damage or interference to your operations, services, structures or property
- listen and respond promptly to any concerns or complaints.

## Conduct of GMW staff and contractors

GMW staff will:

- carry identification cards and produce them upon request
- be in uniform or dressed appropriately
- dispose properly of personal rubbish
- not bring dogs or any other animals on to the site
- not use coarse or vulgar language
- obtain your consent before:
  - » lighting fires (and then comply with any fire restrictions that apply)
  - » entering your buildings (other than a workplace for the purpose of meeting you and/or your staff)
- drive responsibly and carefully at all times - avoiding raising excessive road-dust, and staying on existing roads and tracks or on routes and areas previously agreed with you.

## Vermin and noxious weed control

The control of vermin and noxious weeds is a shared responsibility between GMW and our customers.

The following responsibilities apply:

- **Customer:**  
Water supply and drainage easements.

- **GMW:**  
Water supply and drainage reserves on GMW land.
- **Lessee:**  
For land leased from GMW in accordance with licence/lease conditions.

Those responsible for control as listed above must act in accordance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1992 (Vic)*.

Only herbicides and pesticides that are registered for the designated situation are to be used and usage must comply with all conditions listed on the product label.

Those responsible for control must keep records of the management practices undertaken for weed or vermin control on the area.

## GMW use of herbicides

GMW conducts annual weed-spraying programs which involve the use of herbicides. Customers who have concerns about the use of herbicides near their property should contact GMW.

We use pesticides (herbicides and insecticides) in accordance with relevant requirements issued by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (available at [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)).





# Understanding your water entitlements

## The Victorian Water Register

The Water Register is the state-wide register of all water entitlements and licences in Victoria. It records water entitlements and licences, enables proper water accounting, provides information about the water market and produces crucial information for managing Victoria's water resources.

The Register holds records of all water shares, delivery shares and licences held by customers in irrigation districts, as well as licences held in regulated and unregulated rivers, groundwater and farm dams from across the state.

For more information about the Water Register visit [www.waterregister.vic.gov.au](http://www.waterregister.vic.gov.au) or contact GMW.

## Water entitlements and licences

A summary of the most common water entitlements and licences held by GMW customers is provided below.

For more detailed information about water entitlements, water products and licences visit [www.waterregister.vic.gov.au](http://www.waterregister.vic.gov.au) or contact GMW.

### Water shares

A water share is an ongoing entitlement to a share of the water available in a particular water system. It provides the right to a share of the water stored in a GMW dam.

The volume of a water share is defined as a maximum amount of seasonal allocation that can be made against it each year. The seasonal allocation is the percentage of the water share volume available under current resource conditions, as determined by the Northern Victorian Resource Manager.

For example, in a dry year a 50 per cent allocation to your 100 ML water share provides 50 ML of water available to use or trade. A 100 per cent allocation means that you have your full water share volume available.

Water shares can be high or low reliability. Allocations are made to high-reliability water shares before low-reliability shares.

The ownership of a water share can be permanently transferred, or leased to another party for a specified term of up to 20 years.

### Allocation Account (ABA)

A water share is linked to an Allocation Account (ABA) which keeps track of allocation issued to the water share and any water that is used or traded. Water is credited to an ABA when an allocation is issued or traded into your account and water is debited from an ABA when it is used or traded out of it.

The available balance of water in the ABA represents the volume of water available to use or trade.

### Carryover

Carryover allows water entitlement holders to take their unused water allocation into the next irrigation season.

It provides all water users - irrigators, urban water corporations, environmental managers and hydro power generators - with greater flexibility to manage their own water availability between seasons.

Carryover is possible in the regulated water systems of northern Victoria, except for the Ovens system where storages are too small to support carryover.

Unused allocation will automatically carry over as long as it is held in an ABA linked to your water shares on 30 June. ABA owners can only carry over a volume equivalent to the volume of the water shares linked to the ABA. Five per cent of the volume carried over is deducted to cover water that evaporates when it's stored in the dam through the new season.

The rules are designed to maximise the water available in the early part of the season, up to the total volume of water shares linked to an ABA. This means carryover is recorded against low-reliability shares first and then high-reliability.

### Delivery share (irrigation district customers)

A delivery share is an entitlement to have water delivered to land in an irrigation area. It provides access to a share of the available capacity in the channel or piped network that supplies water to a property.

It provides the security of having water delivered when there is high demand for water from other landholders on the channel or network.

A delivery share is defined by a rate of megalitres per day. This rate establishes how deliveries will be shared if everyone on the channel or piped network wants water on the same day. When there are more customer orders than the system can deliver, the delivery share rate is used to decide how deliveries are rationed.

# Understanding your water entitlements and licences

A delivery share is linked to the land and stays with the farm if it is bought or sold. It also stays with the farm if the water share is sold separately. If a property is sold, the delivery share automatically transfers to the new owner.

Customers who wish to reduce their delivery shares can trade all or part of their delivery share to another customer, or pay the relevant termination fees and surrender the delivery share.

Customers pay an infrastructure access fee each year to access the delivery system.

This fixed charge per megalitre of delivery share is based on the share of the channel capacity. It's the main way that the costs of operating and maintaining the channels, pipes and automated gates are shared.

These fees are significant and can be the main item on a customer's account. They can also include fees based on the number of service points and a service fee.

## Water - Use Licence/registration

A Water-Use Licence (WUL) authorises water to be used for irrigation on land specified in the licence.

The licence includes a number of standard water use conditions including an Annual Use Limit (AUL) to ensure irrigation is carried out in accordance with the Victorian Government's water use objectives. A licence may also contain conditions specific to the location and circumstances of the licence.

A Water-Use Registration is similar to a Water-Use Licence, except that it authorises the use of water for purposes other than irrigation (such as domestic and stock use or commercial use).

The licence/registration is attached to a specific parcel or parcels of land, so if land relating to the licence is sold the new owner will become the owner of the licence/registration.

## Take and Use Licence (unregulated diversions and groundwater customers)

A Take and Use Licence is a fixed-term entitlement to take and use surface or ground water from a waterway, catchment dam, spring, soak or aquifer. Each licence is subject to conditions which are specified on the licence.

Licences are issued to land owners or occupiers to allow them to use water for a variety of purposes including commercial, irrigation, domestic and stock and dairy use.

Take and Use Licences can be transferred to a new owner upon sale of property. Transfers of water entitlement on either a permanent or temporary basis can also be considered, depending on the location.

## Works Licences (diversions and groundwater customers)

A Works Licence is a licence to construct, operate, alter, decommission or remove works associated with the extraction of water (i.e. bores, pumps and dams). Each licence is subject to conditions specified on the licence.

## Overuse of water entitlements

It is important that customers do not use more water than their entitlement allows. Any water used in excess of entitlement means less water available for other entitlement holders.

Customers are responsible for ensuring they only take water if authorised to do so.

We treat overuse as a serious matter, and customers may be prosecuted if they:

- take more water than they have been allocated within an irrigation district
- take more water than they are licensed to take under a surface or groundwater Take and Use Licence
- take water in contravention of any existing ban, roster or restriction.

# Complaints and disputes

We recognise that effective management of complaints is fundamental to ensuring high quality customer service. We value your feedback on our performance and any suggestions that you may have on how we can improve.

GMW's management of complaints is consistent with the Australian Standard, AS ISO 10002:2006 and the Essential Services Commission Customer Service Code.

## Our obligations

A person making a complaint can expect to:

- have an acknowledgement letter sent within two business days of GMW receiving the complaint
- have the complaint treated as genuine
- have their complaint properly investigated
- be contacted about the complaint within 10 business days
- be given appropriate information written in plain English regarding the complaints process.

To ensure complaints are managed effectively we promise to:

- provide sufficient resources to ensure all complaints are adequately managed and investigated
- encourage and expect employees to actively listen to a customer making a complaint
- resolve the complaint, or make the complainant aware of the progress towards the resolution of their complaint, within 10 business days
- within the bounds of legislative and policy requirements, do our best to assist in a resolution that is to the satisfaction of all parties
- provide reasons, in plain English, for any decision we make and if appropriate include the legislative or policy basis for our decision.

## Escalation of a complaint

If you are not happy with our initial response to your complaint, or you have not received a response within 10 days you can request that the complaint be escalated within GMW.

If your complaint has been escalated to a higher level within GMW we will also provide you with information about referral to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria or another external dispute resolution forum.

If your complaint has been escalated at least once within GMW and you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV) by phoning 1800 500 509 or visiting [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)

## Complaints about your account

If your complaint involves a disagreement regarding your account, we will not seek payment while we investigate your complaint and then only if the dispute has been resolved in our favour. However, if you owe any other amount which does not directly relate to your complaint, this must be paid.

## Making a complaint

To lodge a complaint customers can complete a Complaint Form. This Form is available from our customer service centres and our website, [www.gmwater.com.au/feedback](http://www.gmwater.com.au/feedback)

Customers may also write, call, email or visit us.

Visit: any of our customer service centres

Phone: free call 1800 013 357

Fax: (03) 5826 3334

Email: [info@gmwater.com.au](mailto:info@gmwater.com.au)

Mail: Goulburn-Murray Water  
PO Box 165  
Tatura VIC 3616

If customers lodge a complaint by phone, or in person we may ask to clarify the details of their concerns in writing to ensure we have all of the relevant information we need in order to fully investigate and resolve the complaint.

It is important customers provide as much relevant information as possible at the outset to help resolve a complaint. Customers should include any supporting documentation and any evidence supporting claims or concerns.

# Charges and billing

## Prices and charges

Our prices and charges are reviewed and approved by the ESC.

A schedule of our charges is available from any GMW customer service centre and can be downloaded from [www.gmwater.com.au/pricing](http://www.gmwater.com.au/pricing). We will provide new customers with a schedule of charges before an infrastructure service is provided and to any person on request, within 20 business days.

We will make available to all customers a schedule of charges not later than 10 business days before the new charges come into effect.

We will publish a schedule of charges on our website and in a newspaper that circulates within the GMW region.

We will not charge a fee for the provision of publicly available information or advice to customers about our operations unless otherwise stated.

## Accounts

Accounts are sent to the preferred mailing address nominated by customers, which may include an agent or other person authorised to act on their behalf. If a customer does not provide any particular instructions, we will issue the account to the address where service is provided or last known address.

The account sets out charges for different services, and provides customers with important information including:

- the date the account has been issued and the billing period
- the billing address and account number
- the address of the property the charges relate to
- the date on which the meter was read (variable charges)
- the calculation and basis of the charge
- the amount the customer is required to pay
- the date by which the account must be paid
- the interest rate that applies to late payment
- payment options available

- information about interpreter services offered by GMW
- information on concessions available and any concession to which the customer may be entitled
- information about how to contact us in relation to questions about the account.

## Billing frequency

Each year we send two types of accounts: fixed and variable.

Fixed Charge Accounts are issued once per year normally in July.

Variable Charges Accounts are issued at least annually but may be issued more frequently. These accounts are generally issued in March (interim account) and June (final account).

If we propose to materially vary the frequency or timing of our billing schedule, we will consult with Water Services Committees.

## Billing history

Upon request, we can provide account and usage history for the preceding three years. This will be provided within 10 business days.

We may also be able to access information beyond three years, though charges may apply if this information must be retrieved from archives.

## Meter readings

### Standard meter readings

Meter readings are taken at the start and end of each irrigation season and all meters are read at least annually. Some are read more frequently for billing and verification of usage.

### Special meter readings

Customers can request a special meter reading for the purposes of a property settlement or another reason. A special meter reading request will attract a fee.

Customers can enter their own meter reading to record and manage use directly into GMW's water ordering system.

## Adjustment of accounts

### Undercharging

Where GMW has undercharged a customer due to our error, we may recover the amount undercharged according to the following guidelines:

- the amount to be recovered is limited to the amount undercharged in the 12 months (except where illegal use has occurred) prior to GMW notifying the customer that undercharging has occurred
- the amount to be recovered is listed as a separate item and is explained on or with the customer's account
- customers can make arrangements to pay the amount recovered over a time period equal to the period in which undercharging occurred, up to a maximum of 12 months
- if requested, the customer may be offered an agreed instalment plan for the recoverable amount in accordance with this charter.

Where GMW identifies an amount undercharged as a result of a meter failure or customer's illegal use of water, an estimate of water use will be applied in accordance with this charter.

### Overcharging

Where a customer has been overcharged as a result of an error caused by us, GMW will:

- inform the customer within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error
- refund or credit the amount overcharged in accordance with the customer's instructions
- no interest shall accrue to a credit or refund as a result of overcharging.

## Payment of accounts

### Payment options

A range of payment options are available, including payment by mail, payment at any post office, payment at any GMW customer service centre, by credit card (over the phone or via the internet), by direct debit or via BPAY.

We will not require customers to agree to direct debit as a condition of providing a supply service or issuing a licence. In most cases payments received by GMW will be applied to the debt that has been outstanding the longest.

### Payment due dates

Payment for fixed charges is normally due in mid-December\*. GMW may offer a discount for in full, early payment; if a discount is offered the details and due date will be shown on your account.

Alternatively, payment can be made by instalments if all arrears are paid.

Payment for variable charges is normally due 30 days after the account is issued.

The due dates for payment in full and early payment discounts or payment by instalment options (if applicable) are listed on your account.

*\*Specific payment dates for each financial year are published on the fixed charges account and on our website.*

### Concessions

A concession on Fixed Charges Accounts is available if you hold a specific Veteran Affairs Gold Card, pensioner concession or health care card (subject to meeting certain eligibility criteria).

### Payment difficulties

If a customer is experiencing difficulty paying their account, they can contact GMW to discuss alternative payment options. GMW will provide customers who are having payment difficulties or suffering financial hardship with information relating to programs to assist in the payment of their account on a case-by-case basis.

We are committed to working with customers to establish a payment plan which is productive and reasonable. We will outline the advantages and disadvantages of entering into a flexible payment plan to ensure customers are able to make an informed decision.

Upon request we will provide information on programs relating to:

- flexible payment plans
- any government assistance/rebate packages available and rural financial counselling services.

Further information about debt management is available in our Debt Management and Hardship Procedures. These are available from any GMW customer service centre or can be downloaded from our website, [www.gmwater.com.au/debtmanagement](http://www.gmwater.com.au/debtmanagement)

## Flexible payment plans

Any flexible payment plan offered to a customer will be confirmed in writing within 10 business days and will:

- state the period during which the customer will pay the agreed amount
- specify an amount to be paid in each period
- be able to be re-negotiated at the request of a customer if there is a sudden change in their circumstances.

If a customer enters into a flexible payment plan the overdue account may still incur interest, but the scheduled repayments will reflect the customer's capacity to pay. When a payment is made, we will apply that sum to the debt that has been outstanding the longest.

GMW is not required to offer a customer a flexible payment plan if the customer has in the past 12 months, had two flexible payment plans cancelled due to non-payment unless the customer provides GMW with a fair and reasonable assurance (based on circumstances) that they will comply with the plan.

## Non payment

We rely on our customers to pay their accounts on time. If an account is still outstanding after the due date, we will issue a Reminder Notice encouraging them to either pay the account or contact us to arrange a flexible payment plan.

If the account remains unpaid by the due date the following process will apply.

### Reminder Notice

Once the due date has past, a Reminder Notice will be issued for all outstanding balances and will include the following information:

- notification that the bill is overdue and must be paid for the customer to avoid suspension or legal action
- a revised due date for payment providing an additional ten business days
- caution that, if legal action is taken, the customer may incur additional costs in relation to those actions
- the date from which interest may be applied on outstanding amounts, and the percentage interest rate that may be applied

- any assistance that is available to customers, including contact information for Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

### Overdue Notice

If the account remains unpaid after the revised due date, or the customer has not made contact to establish a flexible payment plan, an Overdue Notice will be issued for all outstanding balances and will include the following information:

- notification that the account is overdue and must be paid for the customer to avoid suspension or legal action
- a revised due date for payment providing an additional five business days
- caution that, if legal action is taken, the customer may incur additional costs in relation to those actions
- the date from which interest may be applied on outstanding amounts, and the percentage interest rate that may be applied
- any assistance that is available to customers, including contact information for Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

### Warning Notice

If the account remains unpaid after five business days from the Overdue Notice being issued or the customer has not made contact to establish a flexible payment plan, a Warning Notice will be issued to the customer stating that further action will be taken if the account remains unpaid after five business days.

Warning Notices will include the following information:

- notification of our intention to suspend supply of water or physically restrict supply (applies to irrigation districts only)
- notification of our intention to refer the account to a debt collection agency which has been engaged for collection purposes
- notification of our intention to take legal action to recover the outstanding amounts
- information on programs available to help with payment difficulties
- any assistance that is available to customers, including contact information for Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV).

We will not refer a customer's account to a debt collection agency without informing them first via the Warning Notice.

## Actions relating to non-payment

### Suspension of supply

We can suspend supply if:

- there are outstanding charges on the account
- more than 10 business days have elapsed since the issue of a Reminder Notice
- we have issued a Warning Notice and more than five business days have elapsed
- we have attempted to contact the customer about the non-payment.

### Legal action

We may take legal action for non-payment if:

- we have complied with the steps in the clause Suspension of Supply
- we have notified the customer of the proposed suspension or legal action and the associated costs
- the customer has been offered a flexible payment plan under the clause Flexible Payment Plans and have refused or failed to respond
- the customer has failed to comply with the payment agreement under a flexible payment plan.

### Limits on suspension and legal action

We will not initiate any actions relating to non payment if:

- the amount owed is less than \$200, unless the customer has failed to pay consecutive accounts in full during a period of not less than 12 months
- the customer is eligible for and has lodged an application for a government-funded concession and the application is outstanding
- the amount in dispute is subject to an unresolved complaint procedure in accordance with the clause complaints/disputes
- it is a Friday, public holiday, weekend, day before a public holiday or after 3:00pm any day
- it is a day of Total Fire Ban declared by the Country Fire Authority in the area in which the property is located.

This does not restrict GMW's rights to pursue debt owed to it by a person who is no longer a customer.

### Removal of suspension

We will restore a service that was suspended under this clause within one business day of becoming aware the reason for suspension no longer exists.

If a customer requires water supply following the removal of a suspension they will be subject to normal water ordering procedures.

## Groundwater and unregulated surface water customers

Customers who hold a Licence to Take and Use Water (issued under Section 51 Water Act 1989) should be aware that failure to pay this account by the due date will result in a breach of your licence conditions and may result in cancellation of the licence.

## Additional costs

Additional costs incurred by GMW relating to unpaid accounts may be passed on to customers. These include:

- interest on the overdue account
- legal costs awarded by a court
- bank charges incurred by us due to a dishonoured payment.

### Interest

We may charge interest on outstanding amounts. Prior to applying interest we will inform the customer when interest is to be applied to the outstanding amounts. The basis for calculation for the purpose of charging interest on overdue amounts is available by contacting us.

## Miscellaneous fees and charges

GMW provides a wide range of miscellaneous services. Details of these services and the relevant fees and charges are available by phoning our call centre on 1800 013 357, visiting your local customer service centre or visiting our website [www.gmwater.com.au/feesandcharges](http://www.gmwater.com.au/feesandcharges)

## GMW customer enquiries

### Email

[info@gmwater.com.au](mailto:info@gmwater.com.au)

### Phone

1800 013 357

### Website

[www.gmwater.com.au](http://www.gmwater.com.au)



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