





**WATER AND RESOURCE RECOVERY
CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS 2020-2025**



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Endorsement Table

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Position	Date Endorsed	Print Name	Signed
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Council Report:	# 6137496
Council Minutes:	# 6487755
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Submission Letter to Regulator:	# 6501287

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Overview of Commercial Business Unit

Cairns Regional Council

Cairns Regional Council adopted its Corporate Plan 2021-2026 at the Ordinary Meeting of 28 June 2021. The five-year plan provides a blueprint for Council to achieve a sustainable future for our region. It also provides the basis from which specific Council strategies, plans and policies are developed.

Our Vision

- Shaping the future

Our Values

- Trust – Honouring the trust of our residents, each other and staff.
- Responsibility – Transparency and responsibility to our community.
- Cairns-ness – Safeguarding what makes Cairns, Cairns.

Our Focus

- Robust Economy – supporting a diversified and resilient economy that backs business innovation, growth and jobs.
- Natural Assets – Promoting, protecting and enhancing our iconic natural environment now and for generations to come.
- Design for Liveability – Creating a safe, sustainable and connected place that supports a quality life.
- Community & Culture – Fostering a vibrant and healthy community where everyone feels they belong.
- Focused Council – Being a leader in local government.

Water and Resource Recovery: A Commercial Business Unit of Cairns Regional Council

Overview

Cairns Water and Cairns Resource Recovery are commercialised business units of Cairns Regional Council with a charter for:

- Supplying safe, reliable drinking water to consumers
- Collection and treatment of domestic wastewater, commercial and industrial trade waste
- Collection, recycling and disposal of municipal solid waste
- Planning for and delivering water, wastewater and waste infrastructure
- Maintenance of the community's water, wastewater and waste infrastructure
- Environmental management of water, wastewater and waste infrastructure and facilities

For reporting purposes under the National Competition Policy, the Water and Resource Recovery (WaRR) Department of Cairns Regional Council is classed as providing two significant business activities, these being water and wastewater (collectively) and waste services. Both the WaRR businesses are also considered a significant business activity under the *Local Government Regulations 2012*. Accordingly, these businesses have been commercialised under this legislation and report to Council as such.

In all business undertakings Cairns Regional Council strives to achieve service provision to the Cairns community in a manner which maximises both Cairns Regional Council and community ideals. This is achieved through economic, social and environmental objectives being assessed in all stages of water, wastewater and waste operations from long term planning through to operational delivery.

Purpose of Customer Service Standards

The Customer Service Standards are intended to protect customers where there is no contract between them and the provider. This is to ensure customers are adequately informed about the service they are receiving, the level of service they can expect to experience and how they interact with the provider.

Council's Obligations

The *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* requires Cairns Regional Council to implement measures to ensure the continuity of services. Cairns Regional Council is required to quantify these measures and supply a copy to its customers.

The Customer Service Standards aim to provide details on the following:

- The level of service expected for the delivery of water, wastewater and waste services;
- The expectations we have for our customers; and
- Processes for establishing new services, billing, metering, lodging complaints, dispute resolutions as well as customer engagement and consultation.

Under the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, the Resource Recovery business does not have the same requirement to supply details on the level of service that customers can expect. However, levels of service have been incorporated into the Customer Service Standards. This is to ensure customers are

adequately informed as to the types of services they are receiving, the level of service they can expect to experience, and how they interact with the Resource Recovery business.

These Customer Service Standards also take into account provisions outlined in the *Local Government Act 2009*, the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, AS 3500.1:2018 Plumbing and Drainage, Water Services; Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Development Manual; *Planning Act 2016*; *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*; AS 3565.4 2007 Meters for water supply Part 4: In-service compliance testing, *National Measurement Act 1960*, *Water Supply (Safety & Reliability) Act 2008*, the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* and the *Cairns Regional Council Local Law No. 14 (Town Water) 2016*, *Water Act 2000*, and the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

This Customer Service Standard does not apply during periods of declared natural disasters, including cyclones until as soon as practicable after the affected normal services have been restored.

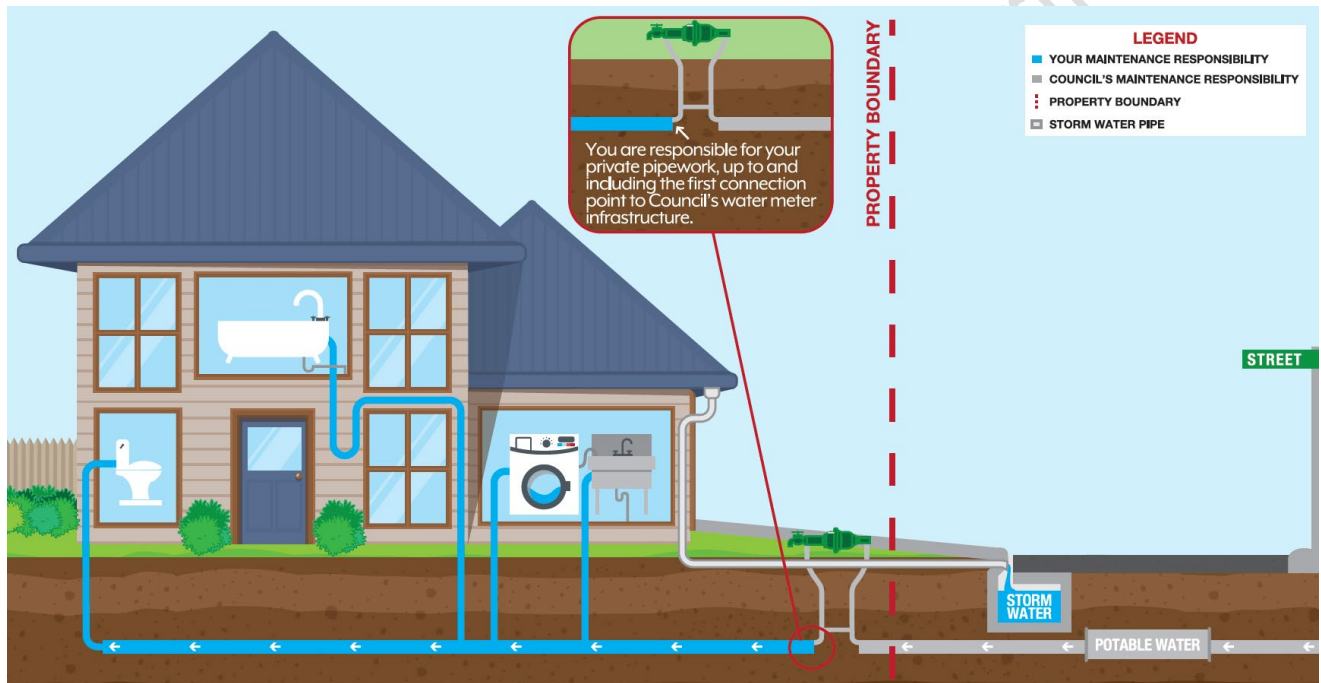
Expectations and responsibilities of Our Customers

In addition to paying for water supply, wastewater and waste services in accordance with Cairns Regional Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges, Cairns Regional Council's Water and Resource Recovery Department expects our customers to assist us in providing services by:

- Applying to Cairns Regional Council, and receiving approval before connecting to water and wastewater systems;
- Using water in a water wise manner; adhering to permanent water conservation measures – i.e. watering times etc.
- Maintaining internal property pipes and fittings (water and wastewater) in accordance with obligations under s70 of the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*. See Figures 1 and 2 - internal plumbing responsibility (water and wastewater);
- Engaging a licensed plumber to do work internally within the property;
- Not building structures over water or sewer mains and selecting garden vegetation that won't damage water supply and sewerage infrastructure;
- Manholes should not be covered or obstructed by soil, mulch, retaining walls, vehicles or anything else that would inhibit access by Cairns Regional Council;
- If a manhole is obstructed and Cairns Regional Council need to gain access, any obstructions will be removed, and the owner notified (where possible consultation with the owner will occur to plan the works);
- Notifying us of any faults that they have encountered so that Cairns Regional Council can rectify problems as soon as possible;
- Preventing the discharge of stormwater into the wastewater network;
- Taking care not to discharge prohibited substances into sewers;
- Applying to Cairns Regional Council for a Trade Waste Approval (industrial and commercial customers) to discharge trade waste to sewers;
- View waste as a valuable resource and think about how to use that resource most efficiently;
- Following the Waste Hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle to reduce waste in the first place then reuse and recycle as much as possible;

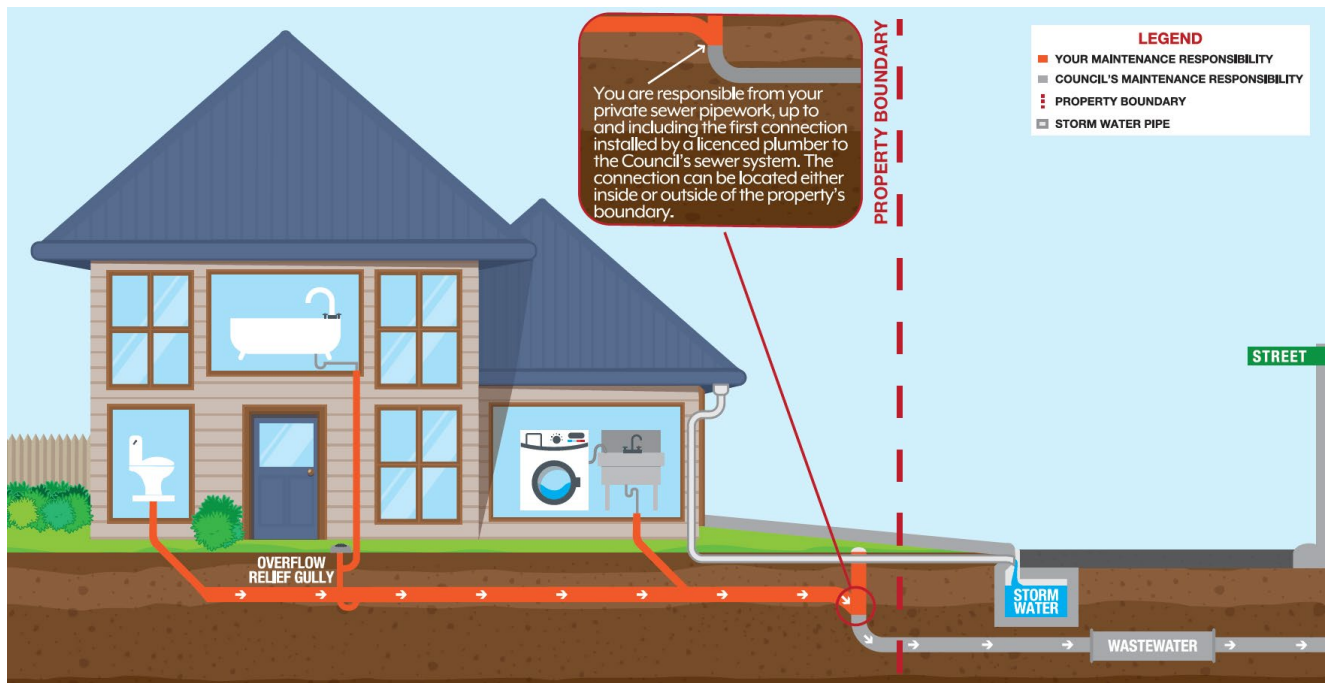
- Recycle Right and ensure only the correct material, as advised by Cairns Regional Council, is placed into waste and recycling bins;
- Notifying Cairns Regional Council’s Customer Service Centre of any missed waste and recycling collection services to be collected within 24 hours;
- Positioning bins at kerbside for collection according to advice provided by Cairns Regional Council;
- Placing bins on the kerbside on the correct collection day prior to 6:00am;
- Ensuring bins are returned to the property within 12 hours after collection; and
- Ensuring all loads being transported to Transfer Stations are adequately secured.

Figure 1 – Internal Plumbing Responsibility (Water)



Note: The above figure is a representation only. The customer is responsible from their private water pipe work up to and including the first connection point to Council's water meter infrastructure.

Figure 2 – Internal Plumbing Responsibility (Wastewater)



Note: The above figure is a representation only. The customer is responsible from their private sewer pipe work, up to and including the first connection installed by a licensed plumber to the Council's sewer network. The sewer connection point location can vary throughout the Cairns Region. It may be located inside or outside the property boundary.

Customer Service Standards

1. New Services

If customers wish to apply for a water or wastewater connection or kerbside waste and recycling collection within the serviced area, they will need to submit application forms together with appropriate fees to Cairns Regional Council. State Government legislation provides time frames for processing the applications. Information & applications for new residential water services; rural water services; commercial water services; sub divisional connections; water service relocation; subsidiary water meters and alterations to sewer and water mains. The application forms are available from the Cairns Regional Council's Customer Service Centre, or electronically from the Cairns Regional Council website or by calling 1300 69 22 47.

1.1. New Water Supply and Wastewater Connections

1.1.1 Minimum Water Pressure

During normal operating periods, minimum water pressure supplied to the customer shall be 220kPa in Council's water mains near to the connection point (not at the property boundary, and immediately upstream of the water meter connection point on the water main). Note that the supply pressure may occasionally be affected by non-standard operating conditions, such as maintenance activities or fire-fighting events.

Some individual customers or small areas of reticulation in elevated / hillslope areas may experience pressure below this limit at the building pad and may require their own pressure booster equipment within the property boundary. The supply, installation, operation and maintenance of any such private pressure boosting equipment would be at the property owner's cost.

1.1.2 Standard 20 mm Domestic/Urban or Recycled Water Service

The standard size water service for a house is 20mm and other sizes will not be considered. Council will only install a Standard 20mm Domestic/Urban or Recycled water service at the scheduled rates providing that;

- The water main is on a standard 2.7 – 2.8 metre alignment for Urban Residential Properties or 1.0 metre off the carriageway for Low Density Residential properties.
- There are no driveways, footpaths without conduits installed etc. inhibiting the installation of a Standard Service.
- If any of the above criteria cannot be met, the service will be installed at actual cost and the customer will be provided with an estimate prior to the service being installed.

1.1.3 Wastewater Connections

If a reticulated sewerage system is available for the property, the property owner must connect to the system.

1.1.4 Water Meter Installation

Local Law No. 14 (Town Water) 2016 is in place and provides the direction on the installation of water meters. This Local Law is available on the Cairns Regional Council website.

Cairns Regional Council will maintain water meters within industry standard limits of accuracy (i.e. $\pm 2\%$).

Where a customer has reason to doubt either the accuracy or reliability of their water meter, Cairns Regional Council will offer to test the meter for the fee prescribed in Cairns Regional Council's fees and charges. If the meter is the cause of overcharging and is outside the above Australian standards, the overcharged amount will be refunded, and no fee will be charged for the meter test.

Water services shall be located at an alternate boundary to Ergon Energy's pillar box. Exceptions may be considered in individual circumstances where unusual conditions or lot layout exist and where approved by Council.

For more information about water meters, visit the Cairns Regional Council website.

1.2. New Waste or Recycling Services

To apply for a new domestic waste and recycling wheelie bin, customers will need to fill in a 'Request for New Cleansing Service' form, available from the Cairns Regional Council Customer Service Centre, the Cairns Regional Council website or by calling 1300 69 22 47.

1.3. Water Meters

A water meter will be installed as part of a new water service connection and will remain the property of Cairns Regional Council. The alignment of water meters will be in accordance with section 1.1.2. The meter will be used as the primary source of any consumption component of water charges.

1.4. Community Title Development

Community Title Development is a form of development where allotments are individually owned, with all associated infrastructure being owned in common and privately operated. All associated infrastructure is to be in accordance with the Far North Queensland Regional Organization of Councils (FNQROC) Standards and approved as a part of a Development Application. Cairns Regional Council has an obligation to ensure that all services meet its statutory obligation at the property boundary for the Development as a whole. Further information on servicing Community Title Development can be gathered by contacting Council on 1300 69 22 47.

1.5. Declared Service Areas

As a registered water and sewage service provider under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* Cairns Regional Council ensures that connections, disconnections and changes to water supply and sewerage infrastructure are systematically managed to meet customer needs, protect public health and minimize the impact on the environment.

Following legislative amendments to the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* in May 2019, all local governments that supply a reticulated water service or sewerage service are required to declare their water and/or sewerage service areas by Council resolution and publish maps showing these areas and the related infrastructure.

Council must provide, to the greatest practicable extent, a service to the property service point for all allotments in a declared service area. Cost to connect and any extension of mains required will still be assessed per current processes and costs passed on to the requesting person/developer.

Information about declared service areas is available on Council's website or can be obtained by contacting Cairns Regional Council on 1300 69 22 47.

1.6. Extension of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure to Service a Property

Any proposal to extend Council's water and wastewater reticulation system to enable a water or wastewater connection to a property is subject to approval by Council. The property owner is responsible for the cost of any approved extension and is subject to agreement on costs to be recovered from the property owner for the extension works as applicable under s165 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

2. Existing Services

2.1. Water

Service alterations to the network can be requested in writing by the customer. Utility Services staff will inspect the site and proposed alterations, and if changes are possible, will provide a quote for alteration works to the customer.

2.1.1. Service Alterations

Service alterations can be requested in writing by the customer. Plumbing staff will inspect the site and proposed alterations, and if changes are possible, will provide a quote for alteration works to the customer.

2.1.2. Disconnection of Water Services

If a customer no longer requires a water supply, they may apply in writing to Cairns Regional Council for disconnection.

2.1.3. Reconnection of Water Services

If customers wish to reconnect water services, customers will be required to apply for such and be required to pay a fee to cover the reconnection service. Customer's water services can be

reconnected by a licensed plumber/drainer with the design and inspection of the works undertaken by a WaRR Plumbing Inspector – note that an additional fee is levied for the inspection of works.

2.2. Wastewater

Service alterations to the network can be requested in writing by the customer. Utility Services staff will inspect the site and proposed alterations, and if changes are possible, will provide a quote for alteration works to the customer.

2.2.1. Service Alterations

Service alterations can be requested in writing by the customer. Plumbing staff will inspect the site and proposed alterations, and if changes are possible, will provide a quote for alteration works to the customer.

2.2.2. Disconnection of Wastewater Services

If a customer no longer requires a sewerage supply, they will need to submit application forms together with appropriate fees to the Plumbing & Trade Waste Unit in the WaRR Department.

All service request forms are available from the Cairns Regional Council Customer Service Centre, the Cairns Regional Council website, or by calling 1300 69 22 47.

2.3. Waste and Recycling

2.3.1. Additional Cleansing Service

An additional set of bins (waste and recycling) can be requested by a property owner and the charges will be applied to the rates notices. The service is provided at a cost equivalent to the current cleansing rate charged for the property. Contact Cairns Regional Council Customer Service by calling 1300 69 22 47.

2.3.2. Replacement / Repair to Bins

If customers have waste or recycling bins that are in need of repair this can be arranged free of charge by calling the Cairns Regional Council Customer Service Centre on 1300 69 22 47 or via the Cairns Regional Council website.

2.3.3. Missed Bin Services

Missed waste or recycle bins need to be reported to Council with 24 hours of the properties scheduled service day. All reports are investigated and where the collection contractor is responsible, a return service is provided free of charge.

If the bin was not out by 6am on the collection day and has been missed, a return service can be arranged for a fee via Council's online self-service portal - Extra Bin Collection Request.

2.3.4. Additional Bin Collection Service

An additional bin collection (waste and recycling) can be requested outside of the customer's nominated collection time and day (weekdays only) for a fee of \$9.50. To request an additional collection service, complete the Extra Bin Collection Request form on Council's Online Self Service platform.

2.4. Damage to Infrastructure and Works and Repairs

Section 192 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* lists what is defined as interfering with service provider's infrastructure and details the following associated penalties.

- (1) A person must not, without the written consent of a service provider, interfere with a service provider's infrastructure.
Maximum penalty—1000 penalty units.
- (2) A person must not, without the written consent of a service provider, build over, interfere with access to, increase or reduce the cover over, or change the surface of land in a way causing ponding of water over an access chamber for a service provider's infrastructure.
Maximum penalty—500 penalty units.
- (3) However, despite subsections (1) and (2), a person does not require the written consent of the service provider if the person carries out building work for a building or structure on a lot that contains, or is adjacent to a lot that contains, a sewer or water main of the service provider.
- (4) In this section— building see the *Building Act 1975*, schedule 2. building work see the *Building Act 1975*, section 5. structure see the *Building Act 1975*, schedule 2.

2.5. Building Over or Near Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Property owners are to be aware that under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (s 192 Interfering with service provider's infrastructure) any proposal for building works over or near Council's water and wastewater infrastructure is subject to approval from Council, unless the works comply with the acceptable solutions in the Queensland Development Code (QDC) MP1.4. If conducting earthworks near water and wastewater infrastructure, it is recommended to discuss this with Council prior to carrying out the works. Refer to Council's FNQROC development manual for further details on the requirements for these works.

2.6. Trade Waste

Industrial and commercial customers may discharge treated trade waste to the sewerage system provided the customer has first obtained a "Trade Waste Approval" or entered into a "Trade Waste Agreement" with Cairns Regional Council.

Cairns Regional Council will only accept trade waste into the sewerage system where there is no likelihood that the trade waste will harm the system, will not pose any risk to the health and safety of sewerage workers, will not inhibit biological processes at the wastewater treatment plants, will not accumulate in bio-solids making their re-use difficult or impractical and will not contain contaminants that may pass through the wastewater treatment plants untreated resulting in environmental contamination. All trade waste discharged to sewer must meet all the requirements contained in Council's Trade Waste Plan. The Trade Waste Plan and Trade Waste Forms are available on our website.

2.7. Subsidiary Water Meters

For properties built since 1st January 2008, it is compulsory for all multi-unit dwellings and some non-residential premises to have subsidiary water meters installed at construction. Cairns Regional Council has a General Policy in place for all subsidiary water meters installed in the Cairns Region. Technical details relating to subsidiary water meter installations can be found in the WW Subsidiary Water Meter Technical Specifications document available on the Cairns Regional Council website.

For all Multi Unit and Non-Residential Properties Built before 1 January 2008, the following Options Apply:

Option A - Full Cairns Regional Council Involvement

This may be the best approach for reading and billing a unit owner directly for water used, however cost of installation will depend on number of units and plumbing layout on property.

General Info	Owner/Body Corporate are to be supplied with Cairns Regional Council meters at their own cost by a licensed plumber with Council inspectors to approve the installation. One subsidiary meter per unit plus one master meter.
Application	Applicant to complete and submit Application for Compliance assessment Form 1 and application for Subsidiary Water Meter. All the owners of the property must agree with the installation and revised billing arrangement.
Council Fees	Refer to Fees & Charges.
Meters	Applicant to purchase meters from Cairns Regional Council.
Installation	At owner's cost. To be installed by a Queensland licensed plumber in accordance with relevant laws, standards and Cairns Regional Council's policies (near to primary meter on property).
Inspection	Cairns Regional Council Plumbing Inspector to verify the subsidiary water meter installed as approved and complete a subsidiary meter installation details form.
Reading	Cairns Regional Council will read all registered meters at the designated meter reading cycle.
Billing	Cairns Regional Council will bill each unit owner direct for water used and the body corporate for common property as revised agreement.
Maintenance	Cairns Regional Council will maintain all meters, which are the property of the Cairns Regional Council.

Option B - Non-Cairns Regional Council Involvement

Depending on number of units on property and existing plumbing layout this could be the most economical approach to monitor water usage.

General Info	Owner/Body Corporate may purchase meters from retail suppliers and install at any location throughout property to monitor water usage.
Application	Applicant to complete and submit Application for Compliance Assessment Form 1 Plumbing Works. It will need to be assessed and inspected by a plumbing inspector. Therefore, only a single inspection fee is charged.
Council Fees	Refer to Fees & Charges.
Meters	Cairns Regional Council will not supply meter. Meter of own choice to be purchased from any retail supplier.
Installation	At owners' cost. To be installed by a Queensland licensed plumber in accordance with relevant laws, standards and Cairns Regional Council's policies (at any location within the property boundary).
Inspection	Cairns Regional Council's Plumbing Inspector to verify the subsidiary water meter installed as approved.
Reading	Cairns Regional Council will not read unregistered meters. Owner/Body Corporate to read meter as it is considered necessary.
Billing	Cairns Regional Council will not bill on unregistered meters. Billing will continue to be made on usage of water through the primary meter.
Maintenance	Owner/Body Corporate will be responsible for maintaining unregistered subsidiary meters.

Option C - Body Corporate/Deed of Agreement

Minimal cost to establish with the Body Corporate assuming the liability of the owners or occupiers of lots. A good alternative if the Body Corporate is aware of water usage patterns (e.g. vacancies, etc.).

General Info	Owner/Body Corporate enters into an agreement with Cairns Regional Council, which holds the Body Corporate responsible for payment of all water usage.
Application	Agreement forms are available from Cairns Regional Council on 1300 69 22 47
Council Fees	N/A.
Meters	No Change. Primary meter already existing on property.
Installation	N/A.
Inspection	N/A.
Reading	No change. Cairns Regional Council will continue to read the primary meter on the property at the designated meter reading cycle.
Billing	Cairns Regional Council will bill the Body Corporate for all water consumption with the Body Corporate being responsible for water usage charges.
Maintenance	No change. Cairns Regional Council will maintain all meters which are the property of Council.

2.8. Water Restrictions

Cairns Regional Council has permanent water conservation measures in place and designated watering times.

In certain instances, additional water supply restrictions may need to be imposed by Cairns Regional Council. Chapter 2 Part 3 of Division 3 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* provides Cairns Regional Council with the power to restrict water supply due to climatic conditions or for water conservation.

2.8.1. Approval to Impose Restrictions

In normal circumstances, approval to impose water restrictions must be sought via a report to Council and recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer as delegate for Council for the water restriction powers under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*. In emergency situations, the Chief Executive Officer may impose water restrictions in accordance with this policy and the provisions of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* upon advice from the General Manager of WaRR. In these circumstances a report on actions taken must be provided to the next scheduled Council meeting.

2.8.2. Notification of Water Restrictions

For s43 (1) of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* Cairns Regional Council must give notice of the water restriction to anyone affected by it in the way considered appropriate having regard to the circumstances in which the restriction is imposed. Except in emergencies, the notice will be advertised in the local media. In emergencies the notice will be given in the way the Chief Executive Officer considers appropriate. Under s43 (2) of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, water restrictions do not have effect until the day after the notice is given.

2.8.3. Exemptions

The General Manager of WaRR as delegate of the Chief Executive Officer may grant exemptions to water restrictions upon application from water users based on the following grounds:

1. For reasons of public health and safety.
2. To allow the undertaking of essential works.
3. Minor or infrequent uses of water outside the restrictions (e.g. sporting or community events).
4. Any other criteria deemed appropriate under the water supply conditions at the time.

2.8.4. Non-Compliance with Water Restrictions

Failure to comply with water restrictions may incur penalties as described in s43 (3) of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

3. Charges and Customer Accounts

3.1. Rates, Fees and Charges

Rates, fees and charges will be set annually by Cairns Regional Council resolution. Water services are subject to an annual connection fee and volumetric fees based on water consumption. Different rates exist for residential and commercial volumetric use. Water meters are read approximately every 4 months with notices sent at the same frequency.

Unmetered properties will be charged a fee based on the deemed reasonable consumption for the particular premises.

Sewerage services are subject to an annual charge per residential property and per water closet for commercial properties.

Waste services are subject to an annual cleansing charge per residential property. This entitles the residents to one waste 240L wheelie bin and one recycling 240L wheelie bin, collected weekly and fortnightly respectively. Fees and charges can be found on the Cairns Regional Council website.

Additional statements of account will be available to customers on request. However, a fee will be charged for this additional service.

Cairns Regional Council may charge a customer interest on overdue accounts as prescribed in Cairns Regional Council's Revenue Policy.

If customers pay by a cheque which is not honored for any reason, Cairns Regional Council may include any costs incurred in the process of receiving payment with the next account.

3.2. Assistance with Paying Accounts

Cairns Regional Council has a range of payment options and can negotiate special financial arrangements to assist customers experiencing hardship in the payment of accounts. Information on these options is available from the Cairns Regional Council's Customer Service Center or by calling 1300 69 22 47.

3.3. Debt Recovery and Flow Restrictions

Cairns Regional Council has a specific Debt Recovery Policy detailing the timeframes of notification, customer rectification timeframes and outlines the ability for Cairns Regional Council to install flow restricting devices on property services. Full details can be found on Council's website by viewing the [Debt recovery policy](#).

3.4. Special Meter Reads

When customers sell their home or there is a change of tenancy, customers can request a special water meter reading to determine the amount of water used. Customers will be charged a fee to cover the cost of this service.

3.5. Averaging of Water Consumption

In certain circumstances, Cairns Regional Council may need to estimate customer water consumption charges. Such estimation will be based on either past usage records or use by similar customers under similar circumstances. This estimate may be necessary where:

- A water meter is shown by test to be recording inaccurately;
- A water meter ceases to register;
- A water meter is damaged and unable to be read;
- A water meter is dysfunctional due to maintenance reasons and deemed to be recording inaccurately;
- Access to the water meter is prevented; or
- An illegal connection has been made and/or meter has been tampered with.

In circumstances where the meter is located within the customers property, it will be the customer's responsibility to ensure their water meter is accessible to meter readers (i.e. not overgrown with vegetation or otherwise inaccessible). Where the customers meter has been inaccessible for at least 2 consecutive bill periods, access needs to be arranged prior to the current read attempt to avoid meter relocation at cost to property owner's and / or further penalty.

4. Customer Assistance

4.1. Customer Assistance Provisions

Customer support may be provided in the following circumstances.

4.1.1. Provision of Assistance in the Instance of Sewer Surcharge

Any damage caused by a sewer surcharge is to be documented and sent directly to the customer's insurance company who will liaise with Cairns Regional Council's insurance company.

Cairns Regional Council will assist with clean-up of the affected areas. This may include bringing in professional cleaners.

If the premises are uninhabitable and residents do not have alternative accommodation, Cairns Regional Council may assist with accommodation for 48 hrs.

4.1.2. Sewer Blockages

Cairns Regional Council maintains and operates the sewerage services from the network up to the customer's property connection point. Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of the private sewer pipes on their properties up to the connection point. This includes the cost of any repairs to, or damage caused by the pipes on the property.

If a sewer blockage has occurred, Council recommends calling a licensed private plumber to identify the blockage location.

Where a private plumber has conducted work on the customer's property and a problem has been identified outside the property connection point, the plumber is to notify Cairns Regional Council to inspect the site as soon as practicable by calling 1300 69 22 47.

Alternatively, where blockages have been identified by Cairns Regional Council on private infrastructure, Council shall notify the customer in writing of the findings. If repeat incidents occur, Cairns Regional Council shall pursue charging the property owner to recover the costs of repair works.

Note: Slow-draining sinks, toilets or showers, or a sewage overflow occurring in dry weather – particularly located at the overflow relief gully (ORG) could be a sign of a blockage in your pipes, or Council's.

4.1.3. Private Plumber Works Reimbursement

Where works have been conducted by a private plumber on sewer infrastructure and the problem was identified in Council's sewer infrastructure, the plumber and/or the customer shall notify Cairns Regional Council to investigate as soon as practicable by calling 1300 69 22 47.

Where Cairns Regional Council confirms that the cause of the problem was in fact a Council issue, the customer shall submit the invoice to Council for reimbursement, which may be a percentage deemed reasonable by Cairns Regional Council. Note that the acceptance of the invoice does not imply that reimbursement will be forthcoming.

The reimbursement will be subject to Management review and the customer will be notified of the outcome once the investigation has been finalised. Contact Council as soon as possible on 1300 69 22 47 for assistance and provide:

- Your name and contact details
- Details of the incident
- Address of the incident/blockage
- Compensation sought
- Plumber's report
- Copy of the plumber's itemized invoice or account (if available).

4.1.4. Odour Complaints

Cairns Regional Council will attend the site of the odour complaint, investigate possible causes and notify the customer of any findings of the investigation.

4.1.5. Sewer Main Infrastructure Within a Body Corporate

Where a sewer main passes through a gated community to service properties beyond the boundary of the community, Cairns Regional Council will maintain this infrastructure.

Where the sewerage infrastructure enters the body corporate gated community to service only the gated community, the infrastructure will be maintained by the Body Corporate.

4.1.6. Private Sewer Pump Stations

Within a gated community, the private pump station and associated maintenance is the responsibility of the body corporate.

In instances of overflow that are not being addressed, Cairns Regional Council will notify the Environmental Regulator as a duty of care. If Cairns Regional Council are called to site by a customer within the Body Corporate and they attend site, they will assist the customer to ensure the site is safe and notify them of the issues found during the investigation to notify the Body Corporate for repair and action. Recovery of cost is at the discretion of Cairns Regional Council.

4.1.7. Water Main Break Causing Property Inundation

Any damage caused by a water main break is to be documented by the owner/occupier and directly consult their insurance company who will then liaise with Cairns Regional Council's insurance company.

Cairns Regional Council will assist with clean-up of the affected areas.

If the premises are uninhabitable and residents do not have alternative accommodation, Cairns Regional Council may assist with accommodation for 48hrs.

4.1.8. Concealed Leakage on Private Property

Cairns Regional Council will provide assistance to qualifying residential and Not-For-Profit water customers who have larger than normal water accounts due to the existence of a concealed leak. Provision of assistance is subject to conditions, and assistance is calculated using a defined methodology. Refer to Cairns Regional Council's website for more details regarding the Concealed Water Leak General Policy.

4.1.9. Water Quality Complaint

Cairns Regional Council log water quality complaints in the Customer Request Management system (CRM). These complaints are provided to the appropriate operational staff for actioning.

4.1.10. Repair Broken Water Meter

Where the water meter is damaged, the customer is to contact Cairns Regional Council. The water meter may be repaired at Cairns Regional Council's cost. However, if repeat incidents occur, Cairns Regional Council shall pursue charging the property owner to recover the costs of repair works.

4.1.11. Leakage on Commercial Property

When a commercial property advises of a potential water leak, Cairns Regional Council will in the first instance conduct a water meter check. If this does not identify any issues with the meter, Cairns Regional Council may offer to install a data logger to possibly identify any leaks. Any leak identified on the private property, will be the responsibility of the property owner.

4.1.12. Illegal Standpipe Use

When an illegal standpipe is identified by Cairns Regional Council, the standpipe in question will be confiscated. The customer may apply to have the standpipe returned by completing a declaration form. The Standpipe Declaration Form can be found on the Cairns Regional Council website. Details will be provided by Cairns Regional Council to the person in question regarding an application to Council for a metered standpipe or applying for a connection.

4.1.13. Access Road Maintenance to Infrastructure

Where specific access road maintenance requirements are included in easement documents, Cairns Regional Council will honor these specifications. Where there are no specifics, Cairns Regional Council will maintain access roads to infrastructure to a 4wd standard and will maintain drainage to ensure adequate flows during a rain event.

4.1.14. Customer Pavement Reinstatement

Where works conducted by Cairns Regional Council damage a private driveway or pavement over Cairns Regional Council's verge, repair and replacement of the driveway will be undertaken by the WaRR Department where possible. Often due to supplier/product changes, direct matches to existing driveways may not be able to be provided and a suitable alternative will be negotiated.

4.1.15. Reinstatement After Works

Where works conducted by Cairns Regional Council damage an area, Council will reinstate the area to a safe standard. This will be investigated onsite and reasonable reinstatement will be made. Where turf is required, Council shall provide a Council-selected turf. Where the reinstated area is on a Council verge, a maximum of two watering events within the first week to assist turf growth shall be undertaken by Council. Any further turf care shall be at the discretion and cost of the owner. Where there is erosion or an environmental risk, turf may have to be used. Cairns Regional Council will return to site after some time to ensure any natural settling is backfilled also.

4.1.16. Replacement of Trees After Works

Where construction works require trees or other flora to be removed, Cairns Regional Council may deliver to the customer's house a replacement tree with a similar species. Mature trees will be replaced by saplings where possible. The householder is responsible for planting, watering and caring for the replacement tree.

4.2. Guiding Principles for Engaging the Community

Cairns Regional Council encourages individuals, groups and communities to be involved in the business of Local Government. It recognises that residents across the region have diverse opinions, innovative ideas and a wealth of life experience and this information allows Cairns Regional Council to better understand issues and provide services that are tailored to community needs.

Council is committed to engaging the community across a range of programs, works and service issues, to work together, focusing on solutions and making a difference. Several methods are utilized to engage the community to allow for feedback, including but not limited to the "Have your say" Council website, Council Customer Service, Council corporate email inbox, letter drops and social media platforms. Cairns Regional Council will have regard to the following engagement principles, drawn from the State Government of Queensland's approach to community engagement:

1. Cairns Regional Council will be inclusive and connect with those in the community who are hardest to reach;
2. Cairns Regional Council will endeavor to find new ways to improve the ways in which the Council and the community work together, focusing on positive solutions and making a difference;
3. Cairns Regional Council will listen, understand and act on experiences that may be diverse and different from the Council's reference points;
4. Cairns Regional Council will follow ethical principles of conduct, making engagement processes open and accountable, identifying together the rules of engagement and reporting on the outcomes; and
5. Cairns Regional Council processes will recognise the diverse range of values and interests present in the community.

4.3. Customer Consultation

Cairns Regional Council will inform customers on matters relating to water supply, sewerage and waste services and on other issues such as charging and complaints handling. Customer communications may include distribution of published brochures, letter drops, local and social media bulletins and providing opportunities on the Council website for the public to supply feedback. These forms of community engagement are implemented to advise customers of any system change that may have a significant effect on local service levels (e.g. water restrictions) or other services as appropriate.

Cairns Regional Council places a high level of importance on engaging with the community. Council is committed to engaging the community across a range of programs, works and service issues, to work together, focusing on solutions and making a difference.

4.4. Customer Requests, Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Cairns Regional Council adopted a Service Charter at the Council Ordinary Meeting on 11 September 2019. This document outlines Cairns Regional Council's commitment to better understanding the needs and expectations of the community and will do so by maintaining a

centralized complaint handling system to respond to service failures and unsatisfied expectations. The Service Charter also outlines Cairns Regional Council's complaint resolution process. The Service Charter can be found on the Cairns Regional Council website.

4.5. Entry to Private Property

In certain circumstances, representatives of Cairns Regional Council may need to enter a customer's property to carry out investigations and/or work on the water supply and sewerage transportation systems. To limit any inconvenience, Cairns Regional Council will attempt to carry out this work during business hours or at other times convenient to commercial customers, except in emergencies.

For planned work within a property, Cairns Regional Council will provide customers with a minimum of 48 hours advance notice. In an emergency, Cairns Regional Council will inform the occupier, if present, of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated duration of the work. The WaRR Department will also endeavor to inform customers when the work is complete.

Entry to private property will be in accordance with delegations under the:

- *Local Government Act 2009 and*
- *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*

All representatives of Cairns Regional Council will be readily identifiable from their staff identification badge and / or documentation.

Waste or recycling collection services that require the collection contractor to enter private property will require a property damage indemnity form to be completed prior to any collection service taking place.

4.6. Emergency Assistance

Cairns Regional Council maintains a 24-hour emergency contact service 1300 69 22 47 for emergency events related to service systems such as a burst water main or sewage (wastewater) overflows.

5. Other Services

5.1. Business Recycling Services

Cairns Regional Council has a recycling service that they can provide to businesses. There is a fee for this service; current pricing is available on the Cairns Regional Council website. The recyclable material is transported to the Cairns Regional Council-owned Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting and on-sale to the market.

To apply for a business recycling service, customers will need to call 1300 69 22 47 to discuss with the Council officers the requirements for the service.

5.2. Special Needs

5.2.1. Dialysis

If you are on a registered list with the Cairns Haematology and Oncology Clinic as having a life-support machine requiring water, Cairns Regional Council will endeavor to advise of planned interruptions and emergency situations. In addition to this, Cairns Regional Council offer water charge concessions.

Council also provides an additional recycling bin service for home dialysis patients (for dialysis packaging) for the property at which the patient resides. The wheelie bin needs to be presented

kerbside on the usual recycling day. If there is no kerbside recycling service available at the residence due to truck accessibility issues (i.e. rural lots) and/or availability of site storage, the free additional recycling bin will not apply. A written letter from the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service is required to apply for this service.

Further information Cairns Regional Council website or contact Cairns Regional Council on 1300 69 22 47 to book a service.

5.2.2. *Infirm Services*

Assistance is provided to residents who are physically incapable of placing their wheellie bins out for collection and have no able-bodied person living with them. A letter from a medical professional (Doctor) is required for this service. Further information is available on the Cairns Regional Council website or contact Cairns Regional Council on 1300 69 22 47 for more information.

5.2.3. *Acceptance of Waste from On-Site Treatment Systems*

Properties with on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems (e.g., septic tanks) will need to arrange for pump-outs on a periodic basis. Cairns Regional Council will issue licenses to contractors for approval to provide sullage disposal services within the region. Cairns Regional Council will also require a disposal fee for pump-outs that are disposed of into the sewerage system. Customers should contact private operators to arrange for pump-out of their system.

6. Performance Targets

6.1. WaRR Key Performance Indicators

The water supply and wastewater systems in the Cairns Region have been designed to provide you with water and wastewater services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year. However, under certain circumstances, such as those described below, we may need to interrupt or limit these services:

- If we need to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of the system;
- When new mains are being connected to the system;
- When there are periods of declared water supply restrictions; and
- If there is a possibility of a significant health risk arising from the continuance of the service.

Cairns Regional Council will provide 48 hours' notice of interruption to your service by delivery of a written notice to each affected property. However, Cairns Regional Council reserves the right to immediately stop the supply without notice if there is a serious risk to public health, a likelihood of serious injury to persons or damage to infrastructure or another emergency as detailed in the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

Cairns Regional Council will make every reasonable effort to limit disruption to services caused by operations and maintenance activities. However, it is not possible to provide notice of service disruption caused by unplanned events. Where Cairns Regional Council is unable to provide prior notice, completion of all work will be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimize disruption to the daily activities of our customers.

The following performance indicators reflect the level of service we intend to provide to our customers for water and wastewater services:

QG KPI	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Target Threshold
QG 4.5	Total water main breaks (S)	Breaks per 100km / year	≤18
QG 4.6	Total sewerage main breaks and chokes (S)	Breaks and chokes per 100km / year	≤16
QG 4.7	Incidence of unplanned interruptions – water (S)	Water Interruptions Per 1000 properties / year	≤120
QG 4.8a	Average response time for water bursts	Hours	≤2
	Average response time for water leaks	Hours	≤24
QG 4.9a	Average response time for sewerage main breaks	Hours	≤2
	Average response time for sewerage main chokes	Hours	≤ 24
QG 4.10	Water Quality Complaints (S)	Per 1000 properties / year	≤3
QG 4.11	Total water and sewerage complaints (S)	Per 1000 properties / year	≤10

6.2. Waste Services – Cairns Resource Recovery

The waste and recycling systems are focused on achieving better and more efficient waste and resource recovery services and infrastructure for the Cairns region through identifying opportunities to reduce waste to landfill and maximise resource recovery, primarily driven through the Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy.

Waste and recycling services are provided via a weekly kerbside waste collection and fortnightly kerbside recycling collection using 240 litre mobile bins. There is a network of four transfer stations and one drop bin site where residents can take household waste, and a Buy Back Shop retail outlet. Kerbside recycling is delivered to the Council-owned and operated Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and kerbside waste is delivered to an Alternative Waste Treatment (AWT) facility (drum composting mechanical biological treatment (MBT) where the organic fraction is processed into compost.

Cairns Regional Council will make every reasonable effort to limit disruption to services caused by operations and maintenance activities. However, it is not possible to provide notice of service disruption caused by unplanned events. Where Cairns Regional Council is unable to provide prior notice, restoration of services work will be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise disruption to the waste and recycling collections of our customers.

The following performance indicators reflect the level of service Cairns Regional Council intends to provide to our customers for waste and recycling services:

	Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Target	
Effective Collection of Residential Waste	1	New Bin Delivery	Response time for new bin delivery	100% within 48 hours
	2	Missed services - kerbside waste	Number of missed services per month	≤1 per 5000 services
	3	Response time to missed services - kerbside waste	Response time for collection of missed kerbside waste services	95% within 24 hours
	4	Missed services - kerbside recycling	Number of missed services per month	≤ 1 per 5000 services
	5	Response time to missed services - kerbside recycling	Response time for collection of missed kerbside waste services	95% within 24 hours
	6	Response time to repair/replacement requests - kerbside waste and recycling	Response time to repair/replace requests for kerbside waste and recycling	95% within 48 hours

7. Contact Information for Cairns Regional Council, WaRR Department

Cairns Regional Council's main Customer Service Centre is located at 119-145 Spence Street, Cairns and is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

✉ PO Box 359, Cairns QLD 4870

☎ (+61 7) 1300 69 22 47

✉ council@cairns.qld.gov.au

🌐 www.cairns.qld.gov.au

For further information visit the WaRR website <http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/water-waste-roads>.