

South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code

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1 Introduction

This **Code** outlines the rights and responsibilities of small customers and service providers in South East Queensland (**SEQ**) under the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 (DR Act)*.

It provides small customers and the water and sewerage service providers with information about their obligations under the Code.

This Code is a statutory instrument made under section 93 of the DR Act. Some parts of the Code reference legal requirements of the DR Act; the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006 (EWO Act)*; or water legislation.

If any Code provision is inconsistent with the relevant legislation, the legislation overrides the Code to the extent of the inconsistency.

Note: The key terms and/or phrases used in this Code will be **bolded**, generally where first used, and are defined in the Glossary in section 25.

2 Purpose

The SEQ Customer Water and Wastewater Code outlines:

- who a small customer is
- the standards and conditions that apply to SEQ service providers when providing water and sewerage services to small customers
- what SEQ service providers should expect from small customers in relation to those services
- what services are covered by the Code
- the types of disputes that can be referred to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (**EWOQ**) if a small customer and an SEQ service provider are unable to resolve a dispute.

3 Small customers

This Code applies to **small customers** of **SEQ service providers**. A small customer includes residential and non-residential customers.

You are a residential small customer if your residential property is in **the SEQ region**¹ and:

- is connected to an SEQ service provider's water or sewerage service; and
- you receive an **account** or a rate notice in your name for the property that includes charges for water and sewerage services

or

- is not connected to the service provider's water or sewerage service but the service provider would be obliged to connect your property under the water legislation; and
- you receive an account or a rate notice in your name for the property that includes **fixed access charges** for water or sewerage services.²

¹ People who are small customers for this Code are treated as small customers (water) for the purposes of the dispute resolution functions of the EWOQ under section 6 of the EWO Act.

² For example, see section 99BRDQ of the DR Act and sections 100 and 101 of the Local Government Regulation 2012; a fixed access charge is sometimes referred to as a service charge.

You are a non-residential small customer if your non-residential property is in the SEQ region and:

- you use, or would use, if connected, no more than 100 **kilolitres (kL)** of drinking water and/or reticulated recycled water per annum (i.e. a small business customer as defined under the DR Act).

If a non-residential customer has no volumetric history (e.g. they are a new customer or have changed premises), the SEQ service provider must treat the customer as a small customer if:

- similar non-residential customers typically use less than 100 kL per annum; or
- the non-residential customer advises the SEQ service provider that it is likely to use no more than 100 kL per annum.

Customers may be charged a fixed access charge to access water or sewerage services, whether the property is connected to the services or not. This may occur if the service provider's infrastructure is **available** to be connected to. However, the property owner cannot be charged consumption charges if their property is not connected to the service.

3.1 Who is not a small customer

The following customer groups are not classified as small customers and are not covered by this Code:

- non-residential (other than small business customers) such as commercial, business or industrial customers
- tenants and non-owner occupants
- residents in retirement villages or a complex owner, including caravan parks
- a body corporate for a community titles scheme
- residential properties owned by incorporated entities (with some exceptions, listed below)
- residential properties held in trust (with some exceptions, listed below).

3.1.1 Tenants and non-owner occupiers of residential properties

A tenant or occupier who does not own the property receiving the water or sewerage service does not have a direct billing relationship with the SEQ service provider.

The customer is the property owner (even if the tenant is paying for water used under the terms of a residential tenancy agreement) because the service provider issues the account in the owner's name. The owner is a small customer under the Code.

3.1.2 Occupiers in complexes (e.g. retirement villages)

People who do not have freehold title over the property where they reside, such as some retirement villages and caravan parks, do not have a direct billing relationship with the SEQ service provider.

Usually these residents are charged for their water and sewerage services as part of overall charges for residing in the complex, which are levied by and payable to the complex owners.

The account for the water and sewerage services is issued to the complex owner and therefore the complex owner is the customer, but is not a small customer under this Code.

3.1.3 Bodies corporate (common areas and particular circumstances)

In a community titles scheme, usually an individual lot owner receives an account directly from the SEQ service provider in their name. They are considered to be a small customer and are covered by this Code.

However, in some cases the account does not go to individual lot owners and the SEQ service provider bills the body corporate. This can occur where water is used in common areas (e.g.

swimming pools and gardens). It may also occur where the SEQ service provider has an agreement with the body corporate to bill the body corporate on behalf of the lot owners.³

Where the body corporate receives the account, the body corporate is the customer but the body corporate is not a small customer under this Code.

3.1.4 Properties owned by incorporated entities

Residential properties may be owned by incorporated entities such as companies, some partnerships and incorporated associations.

Water accounts are issued to the incorporated entity and not to a natural person living in the residential property, so incorporated entities are not considered to be small customers and do not fall subject to the Code. The following are exceptional instances where incorporated entities that own residential properties are considered to be a small customer:

- where an owner of the incorporated entity resides in the residential property owned by the incorporated entity
- where one of the shareholders of the incorporated entity resides in the residential property owned by the incorporated entity
- where one of the partners of the incorporated partnership resides in the residential property owned by the incorporated partnership.

3.1.5 Properties held by trusts

Many residential properties are held in trust for beneficiaries. For instance, a family trust may hold a residential property in trust for the benefit of family members and distribute a yearly profit to them.

A trust is not a small customer under this Code because it is not a separate legal entity and does not have the status of a natural person. This is because legal ownership and title of trust property vests in the trustee. There are three instances where a trust holding residential property is a small customer:

- where a natural person beneficiary of the trust resides in the residential property
- where a natural person trustee is also a beneficiary and resides in the residential property
- where a trustee is a beneficiary company and the owner of that company resides in the property.

4 Special needs property

A **special needs property** is a property where a small customer or a tenant or other non-owner occupant resides who requires continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other special medical needs.

4.1 Registering a special needs property

A service provider must keep up-to-date a register of special needs properties.

Where a **registered medical specialist**, treating hospital or dialysis centre confirms a person requires continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other special medical needs, the service provider must:

- register the property as a special needs property to ensure the service provider can comply with the Code requirements by giving:
 - adequate notice of planned **interruptions**
 - immediate alert of any unplanned interruptions

³ See section 196 of the *Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997*.

- priority to restoring their service following any interruptions to the extent this is possible or practicable.

5 SEQ service providers

There are five service providers in SEQ subject to this Code (see figure 1). A service provider is either a distributor-retailer or a local council.

5.1 Distributor-retailers

A distributor-retailer is a council-owned business that provides relevant services to small customers in their geographic area within the SEQ region. There are two distributor-retailers in SEQ:

- Unitywater (operating in SEQ north)
- Queensland Urban Utilities (operating in SEQ central).

5.2 Withdrawn councils

There are three local councils that provide relevant services to small customers in their local government area:

- Gold Coast City Council
- Redland City Council
- Logan City Council.

See figure 1: Distributor-retailer and withdrawn council boundaries.

6 Relevant services

6.1 Services subject to this Code

Service providers provide a number of services relating to water and wastewater. However, not all of those services are covered by this Code.

The following types of services provided to small customers are covered by this Code and a complaint or dispute relating to such services may be subject to dispute resolution under the EWO Act. These services are referred to as **relevant services** in this Code:

- drinking water—sometimes referred to as potable water, that is reticulated to households and businesses and used for drinking and other activities
- recycled water—where available, known as dual reticulation recycled water that is supplied through a purple pipe
- sewerage service—service providers transport and treat sewage and grey water (i.e. toilet, kitchen, bathroom and laundry wastewater).

A customer or service provider may refer a dispute about the performance of a **water entity function** to the EWOQ, if they are unable to resolve the matter. A water entity function⁴ is a function or obligation that is performed, required or permitted to be performed by an SEQ service provider under this Code.

6.2 Services not subject to this Code

The following services are not relevant services and are not subject to this Code or dispute resolution under the EWO Act:

- drinking water supplied to a **metered standpipe**
- raw water supplies (water that is not intended for drinking)

⁴ See section 8A of the EWO Act.

- trade waste services (liquid waste generated by commercial enterprises)
- stormwater harvesting (water that comes from a storm and is treated and stored for use)
- stand-alone recycled water (recycled water other than dual reticulation).

Complaints about drinking water quality supplied to small customers cannot be referred to EWOQ.

7 Customer obligations

A small customer must comply with the requirements of this Code including, but not limited to, the following:

- pay your account on time and in full including charges not in dispute⁵
- contact your service provider before the payment due date if you are unable to pay your account
- advise your service provider if your postal address changes or other account details change (e.g. **nominated person**, email address)
- advise your service provider of a change in ownership of the property⁶
- ensure your service provider has safe and unhindered access to the water meter and other service provider infrastructure
- advise your service provider if you or a tenant or other occupant have special needs that require continued, uninterrupted and unrestricted water supply for life support or other special medical needs⁷
- promptly notify your service provider of any service difficulties or faults
- maintain the plumbing and drainage (fittings and pipes) located on your property
- try to resolve any complaint or dispute between you and your service provider first in good faith before referring the dispute to EWOQ.

As a small customer you should take reasonable steps to check your property for concealed leaks including by regularly reading the water meter for your property.

As a small customer, you must not:

- interfere with, or damage, your service provider's infrastructure
- use water or do anything that interferes with the supply of a service to another small customer or causes damage to another party.

There are significant financial penalties that may apply to a person for conviction of an offence against sections 191 to 195 of the **Water Supply Act**. These provisions include offences for connecting or disconnecting to a service provider's infrastructure without consent, interfering with a service provider's infrastructure without consent (including building over infrastructure), discharging particular substances, polluting water and taking water without approval.

8 Service provider obligations

Service providers must comply with the requirements of this Code including, but not limited to, the following:

- provide relevant services to small customers according to their service standards
- publish and maintain the following information on their website:
 - service standards
 - customer service charter

⁵ In the event that part of a small customer's account is in dispute, the small customer should pay any undisputed amounts.

⁶ See section 99AX of the DR Act and section 161 of the Local Government Regulation 2012. NB: A new owner is not required to notify their service provider of the change of ownership if the relevant transfer documents have been given to the registrar of titles.

⁷ See section 4.1 Special needs property.

- financial hardship policy⁸
- concealed leaks policy
- complaints and disputes policy⁹
- provide customers with a copy of their customer service charter free-of-charge upon request
- provide information about concession entitlements offered by state and local governments
- advise customers of changes to fees and charges for relevant services
- give each customer an account for relevant services supplied to the customer at least each quarter
- register a special needs property where a customer, tenant or other occupant needs uninterrupted supply of water for life support or other special medical needs
- try to resolve any complaint or dispute with a customer first in good faith before referring the dispute to EWOQ
- give customers whatever notice is possible to unplanned interruptions to a service provider's service
- advise customers (or the nominated person) of a planned interruption at least 2 business days before the day of the interruption and in relation to a special needs property, at least 4 business days before the day of interruption
- restore water supply flow to normal within 2 business days, after the grounds on which a supply restriction is imposed are rectified.

9 Circumstances that may affect a service provider's ability to comply with the Code

It may not be possible for some service providers to meet the requirements outlined in this Code at all times. This may be because:

- a law prevents the service provider from complying with the Code or water legislation may override the Code requirements
- the service provider has a reasonable excuse under other legislation
- water supplied to the service provider (for on-supply to small customers) is not provided in accordance with contractual requirements¹⁰
- the actions of a third party who is not performing work for, on behalf of, or in association with, the service provider¹¹
- the service provider's performance of its obligation directly relies on the small customer meeting their related obligations under this Code, and the small customer has failed to do so
- an event occurs that is outside the control of the service provider such as a natural disaster or declared disasters.

10 Service standards and other requirements

10.1 Service standards

An SEQ service provider must set **service standards** under this Code and provide relevant services to a customer's property in accordance with their service standards. The service standards must be published on the service provider's website.

⁸ A withdrawn council's financial hardship policy may be, or form part of a document or documents, of a different name prepared for a purpose under the *Local Government Act 2009* or Local Government Regulation 2012. The policy should be accessible from a simple search of the provider's website.

⁹ A withdrawn council's complaints and disputes policy may be, or form part of a document or documents, of a different name prepared for a purpose under the *Local Government Act* or *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The policy should be accessible from a simple search of the provider's website.

¹⁰ In SEQ, bulk water treatment and supply is provided to an SEQ service provider by the bulk water supply authority owned by the State. It would be inappropriate to require service providers to comply with particular standards if the service provider cannot control the quality of those services.

¹¹ It would not be an excuse if the non-compliance were due to work done by the service provider's contractors.

Service standards must state what the service provider will do and the standard of performance the provider aims to achieve in relation to:

- total water main breaks (# breaks / 100 km of water main)¹²
- total sewerage main breaks and chokes (# breaks / 100 km of sewerage main)¹³
- incidence of unplanned **interruptions** (# incidence of unplanned interruptions – water / 1000 properties)¹⁴
- average response time for water and sewerage incidents¹⁵
- restoring services following unplanned interruptions (percentage within # hours)
- the minimum flow rate and pressure at a customer's property connection (litres / minute at connection, m³ per second, metres head or other appropriate basis)¹⁶
- any other matters as decided by the service provider.

Service standards which an SEQ service provider may set and report on to regulators that are outside the Code include the number of water quality noncompliance and complaints; and total water and sewerage complaints.

10.2 Minimum flow and pressure

Service providers must ensure that the water supply to properties is at least equal to the minimum flow rates and pressure specified in their service standards. However, sometimes a service provider may not be able to meet the minimum flow rate because it is affected by outside influences, such as:

- the location of the service connection point
- the customer's own infrastructure impacting minimum flow and pressure
- water being used for firefighting or testing purposes
- reduced pressure to manage water leakage and line breaks
- an imposed water restriction or emergency
- a planned or unplanned interruption
- supply is restricted in accordance with this Code.

10.3 Planned interruption

A planned interruption to a water or sewerage service is one that is planned and scheduled by the service provider to undertake repairs, maintenance work or to replace infrastructure, including a water meter.

Service providers must give at least 2 business days' notice¹⁷ of a planned interruption before the day of the interruption and include:

- details of the interruption and any restrictions on the use of the service during the period
- when normal service is expected to be restored.

A notice may be provided by mail, letterbox drop, telephone, door knock or any other means that are suitable and reasonable in the circumstances, including electronic means such as SMS or telephone.

¹² See QG 4.5 of the *Key Performance Indicators for Queensland Urban Water Service Providers Definitions Guide* (version 1.2).

¹³ See QG 4.6 as above.

¹⁴ See QG 4.7 as above.

¹⁵ See QG 4.8 and 4.9 as above.

¹⁶ It is preferable that the standards indicate differences if the connection is for rural trickle feed.

¹⁷ See the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, section 38 (Reckoning of time). In calculating at least 2 business days' notice, exclude from the count the day notice is given, count the next day as day 1, the following day as day 2; and the interruption may occur on the next business day. Do not count non-business days. There must be at least two clear business days between the day notice is given and the day of the interruption. See also the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, sections 39 (Service of document) and 39A (Meaning of service by post etc.).

However, for work that needs to be performed without delay, the service provider must give whatever notice is practicable and reasonable in the circumstances.

A service provider must have policies, practices and procedures in relation to providing small customers and others affected by planned interruptions with access to supplies of drinking water in the case of extreme circumstances caused by the interruption.

10.4 Special needs properties

Service providers must give small customers and other occupants with special needs at least 4 business days' notice before a planned interruption.

Small customers and other occupants with special needs may request a longer notification period.

10.5 Unplanned interruptions

An unplanned interruption is an interruption to water or sewerage services that cannot be planned for by service providers. An unplanned interruption can occur if a service provider's infrastructure:

- is accidentally damaged
- bursts or leaks
- has a sewage spill, blockage or overflow
- needs urgent repair or maintenance work to prevent one of the above.

Service providers must respond to and give whatever notice is possible in the circumstances and must have policies, practices and procedures to manage unplanned interruptions that include:

- immediately alerting the small customer or occupant at a special needs property by the most expedient means
- providing information about unplanned interruptions through a 24-hour telephone facility and whatever other means the provider has capacity to use and deems appropriate in the circumstances, such as an online facility, SMS or email
- promptly attending the site when notified or becoming aware of a burst, leak, blockage or overflow
- taking action to fix the situation by assessing the impact on customers, the environment and property
- ensuring that, if there is a sewage spill on a customer's property from the provider's infrastructure, it is cleaned up promptly and the affected area disinfected, if needed.

A service provider must have policies, practices and procedures in relation to providing small customers and others affected by unplanned interruptions with access to supplies of drinking water in the case of extreme circumstances caused by the interruption.

10.6 Restoring water and sewerage services

Service providers must, as far as reasonably possible, restore water and sewerage services according to a priority level. The priority level must take into account the:

- number and type of customers affected including small customers
- impact of the interruption on the customer and others affected.

To the extent it is possible or practicable, the service provider must prioritise restoring water and sewerage services to a special needs property before other customers or properties.

10.7 Reasonable care and remedy

If a service provider does any work on a customer's property they must take reasonable care and must restore the area to a state that is safe and as close as reasonably possible to what it was before undertaking the work.

11 Customer service charter

Service providers must make a customer service charter that:

- summarises the customer's rights and obligations under this Code and Chapter 4, part 4 (Other customer service provisions) of the DR Act¹⁸
- provides information about the service provider's:
 - relevant services
 - policies about:
 - customer hardship because of inability to pay accounts (hardship policy)
 - the payment of accounts by instalments (payment plans)
- states how the service provider will deal with complaints and disputes (complaints and disputes policy)
- states when a dispute may be referred to EWOQ if the customer is not satisfied with their service provider's decision on, or handling of, a complaint.

Service providers must publish their customer service charter on their website and provide customers with a free copy of the charter, if requested.¹⁹

11.1 Appointments

This section applies if a customer wishes to be present at their property when their service provider is:

- doing a special meter reading, testing, maintaining or inspecting the water meter²⁰
- inspecting, altering or adding to the small customer's water service or sewerage service.

The service provider may specify a time period for the appointment within the period determined by them, but the time must be within five hours for urban areas or one day for rural areas. Small customers or service providers may reschedule the appointment by providing reasonable notice to the other party before the appointment time.

A service provider's **authorised person** may enter property at any reasonable time without prior notice to do any of the following:

- read a meter
- check the accuracy of a meter
- maintain or replace a meter.²¹

12 Supply restriction

A service provider may restrict (reduce) the flow of water to a small customer's property if they have not paid a charge for the water service. However, customers must have been given:

- at least 1 months' notice to pay the charge²²
- at least 2 reminder notices stating the account is overdue and there has been no request for help to pay the account.

A service provider may also restrict the water supply to a property if a small customer fails to comply with a **payment plan** 2 or more times within a 12-month period, e.g. the customer has not paid an instalment by the agreed time.

¹⁸ See section 99AD of the DR Act.

¹⁹ See section 99AEA of the DR Act.

²⁰ This section does not stop the service provider from doing (without an appointment) its normal meter reading and maintenance in accordance with this Code and water legislation.

²¹ See section 37 of the Water Supply Act.

²² See section 99AT(1)(c) of the DR Act.

A service provider may also temporarily restrict the water supply if there is a health and safety risk that requires a supply restriction to fix it and customers are given reasonable notice in the circumstances.

12.1 Supply restriction notice

Before a service provider restricts the water supply they must give small customers a **supply restriction notice** at least 10 business days before the scheduled restriction. The supply restriction notice must:

- state that if the water supply flow is restricted, the service provider may charge the customer the cost of putting the restriction device in place and removing it
- provide an estimated cost for installing and removing the restriction device
- provide information about EWOQ and their contact details.

12.2 Limitations on supply restrictions

While service providers may reduce the flow of water to a customer's property, they must not reduce the flow below the **prescribed minimum flow rate** or completely shut off the property's water supply. Water supply flow cannot be restricted if:

- the property is registered as a special needs property
- the account is less than 1 month in arrears
- the small customer has been identified as experiencing financial hardship or is being assessed under the provider's hardship policy and/or is negotiating with the provider regarding payment options
- the property is tenanted and the owner has not paid a charge for the water service
- the small customer is disputing all or part of an account or money owed on their account and they, or the service provider, has referred the dispute to EWOQ
- it is after 3:00 pm on a Friday, or a Saturday, Sunday, public holiday or the day before a public holiday
- there is a local fire ban or fire emergency declared in the area.²³

12.3 Return to normal supply

Service providers must remove the restriction device and restore the property's water supply flow to normal within 2 business days after the account has been paid in full (and the funds cleared) or the small customer has negotiated a payment plan or other remedy with the service provider.

13 Complaints and dispute resolution

13.1 Internal complaint process

Service providers must have a complaints handling process that is consistent with the Australian Standard (AS ISO 10002—2006 Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations).²⁴

13.2 Complaints and disputes policy

Service providers must publish their complaints and disputes policy on their website.

For a withdrawn council, the complaints and disputes policy may be, or form part of a document or documents, of a different name; however, the provider's website must direct small customers to the document/s or part of the document/s as the provider's complaints and disputes policy as required under this Code.

²³ This does not require removal of a device that is already in place.

²⁴ See section 99AC of the DR Act.

The policy must include the following information, at a minimum:

- the timeframe the service provider will endeavour to reply to a customer's complaint
- the reply to the customer should deal with the substance of the complaint or, if the complaint is complex, advise the customer when they will receive a reply
- provide reasons to the customer on any decision relating to the complaint
- outline a complaint escalation process, which allows the customer to request a review of the decision on their complaint by a more senior person
- information about how to refer the complaint to EWOQ if the customer is dissatisfied with the decision or outcome of their complaint
- note that the service provider will not seek to recover an amount of money in dispute or charge interest on such amounts until the dispute has been resolved
- the service provider may seek to recover or charge interest on overdue charges that are not in dispute.

Note: If the complaint or dispute relates to an account, customers can ask their service provider to review the account under section 17.4 of this Code.

13.3 Internal complaint resolution

Customers and service providers must endeavour to resolve any dispute about relevant services. Service providers may consider a complaint has been resolved if:

- they inform the customer of their decision (including giving reasons for the decision) and
- 10 business days have passed since informing the customer and the customer has not requested a review of the decision by escalating the complaint to the level of senior manager.

A customer may elect to refer their complaint to EWOQ if they are unsatisfied with the decision or outcome.

If a complaint is escalated to a senior manager, the complaint remains current and will only be considered resolved when the customer is informed of the decision on the review. The complaint is resolved and finalised at this point unless either party, the small customer or their service provider, refer the matter to EWOQ for dispute resolution.

14 Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

14.1 How to refer a dispute to EWOQ

EWOQ is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service that customers can access if they have raised a complaint with their service provider and are unable to resolve the matter to their satisfaction. Service providers can also refer a dispute with a customer to EWOQ.²⁵

EWOQ's functions are to:

- receive and investigate, and facilitate the resolution of referred disputes
- resolve the disputes if they cannot be resolved by agreement, negotiation or mediation.

A referral may be oral or written, and made by a customer or another person on their behalf, if authorised by the customer. EWOQ can be contacted for details about the circumstances in which it will receive and investigate disputes.

EWOQ's contact details can be found in the service provider's complaints and disputes policy. The general contact number for EWOQ is 1800 662 837.

²⁵ EWOQ can refuse to deal with certain types of complaints, for example, complaints that are not made within the timeframes required by the EWO Act and complaints that are considered trivial or vexatious.

14.2 Dispute resolution process

If a customer has not raised a complaint with their service provider in the first instance, they will be referred back to their service provider.

EWOQ may accept a complaint from a customer, i.e. a dispute referral about the performance of a water entity function,²⁶ and the matter is not otherwise subject to other restrictions or limitations e.g. EWOQ cannot accept a referral about or investigate the fixing of:

- charges for water and sewerage services
- the methodologies for fixing the charges.²⁷

This does not mean disputes about water and sewerage charges, billing issues and accounts cannot be referred to EWOQ, but does mean that customers cannot object to the prices their service provider charges for water and sewerage services or the methodology the service provider uses to set the price.

The matter under dispute must have occurred within the previous 12 months, unless the customer or service provider only became aware of the matter within the previous 12 months. The EWOQ may investigate a dispute outside this timeframe if it considers the referrer had good reason for not referring the dispute within 12 months.²⁸

EWOQ may refuse to accept a dispute referral, or discontinue an investigation, on a number of grounds, e.g. if the matter is considered to be trivial, frivolous or vexatious or not made in good faith, or the referrer has another avenue of appeal or review and has not exhausted those other mechanisms.²⁹

Where a small customer makes a complaint (a dispute referral) against a service provider concerning a disputed monetary amount, EWOQ may require the customer to pay an amount which the Energy and Water Ombudsman or delegate considers is not in dispute.³⁰

While most matters will tend to be settled by agreement between the customer and service provider (facilitated by EWOQ), EWOQ has the power to make binding orders about a dispute. If such an order provides for a stated amount to be paid to a customer and it is not complied with, the order can be filed in the Magistrates Court and enforced as a judgment of that court.³¹

14.3 When is a dispute resolved?

If a dispute has been referred to EWOQ, the dispute is considered resolved and closed if EWOQ:

- advises it cannot accept the dispute referral or refuses to investigate the referred dispute
- facilitates a resolution between the customer and service provider
- makes final orders about the dispute if resolution cannot be reached by agreement, negotiation or mediation.

EWOQ will issue a notice of closure when a matter is closed.

15 New connections to water and sewerage services

A service provider has an obligation to connect all properties in its **connection area** that can reasonably be connected (technically feasible) to its services.

²⁶ See section 8A and 18A of the EWO Act.

²⁷ See section 12A of the EWO Act.

²⁸ See sections 19A and 20 of the EWO Act.

²⁹ See section 22 of the EWO Act.

³⁰ See the EWOQ administrative policy: Payment of amounts not in dispute, 2014.

³¹ See section 42 of the EWO Act.

15.1 Small customer obligations

Before a property is connected to the service provider's relevant service (where the connection is technically feasible), the small customer must:

- ask the service provider to connect their property
- pay all applicable application and connection fees or charges
- comply with the terms and conditions of connection including undertaking preparatory work, if necessary, on their property to enable the service to be supplied.³²

15.2 Service provider obligations

Once the customer has met their obligations and their property is ready³³ to be connected, the service provider must, within the period applicable under the service provider's **connections policy**:

- connect the property to their service
- provide services to the customer in accordance with this Code.

16 Billing and customer accounts

16.1 Billing cycle

Service providers must bill customers for water and sewerage services at least every 3 months (quarterly).

For accounts issued quarterly, the service provider must set a payment due date that is at least 30 days after the date of issue.

16.2 Receiving an account

Accounts can be sent to customers in any of the following ways:

- to the customer's physical (property) address, postal or **electronic address** (such as email)
- to another nominated person if the customer has made a request in writing to the service provider.

16.3 Accounts from withdrawn councils

If the service provider is a withdrawn council, accounts for water and sewerage services will be in the form of a rate notice. However, if water and sewerage charges are levied at the same time as general rates and charges, the water and sewerage charges must be:

- listed on a separate page to the general rates and charges, and clearly identified as an account to the customer from the council for water and sewerage services.³⁴

A local government charge for water or sewerage services is a utility charge that may be levied on property owners where these services are provided or available to be provided. Utility charges can be levied separately and at a different frequency to general rates but are usually levied at the same time as general rates and charges and included in the same rate notice.

³² See sections 167 and 168 of the Water Supply Act.

³³ See section 164 of the Water Supply Act; section 53AQ of the DR Act applies to distributor-retailers after a water netserv plan is in effect, section 92DB of the DR Act applies to withdrawn councils after a water netserv plan is in effect; see also section 99RBAU of the DR Act.

³⁴ See section 99AW of the DR Act.

16.4 Contents of an account

A withdrawn council should use their best endeavours to comply with the account content requirements and display the content information on or with the water and sewerage account.

Service providers must include the following information in a small customer's account:³⁵

Account information:

- the customer's name and the property address to which the services are provided
- account number or unique identifier, if applicable.

Other information:

- the methods by which the account can be paid
- an enquiries telephone number for payment and account enquiries, including payment difficulties
- a 24-hour telephone number for faults and emergencies
- any concessions, discounts or rebates applied in working out the amount charged under the account.

Billing period, payments and account balance:

- date the account is issued
- payment due date
- the period of the account (e.g. quarter year 1.1.2015 to 31.3.2015)
- the total charge
- the charge under the most recent account
- payments since last account and account balance (for a withdrawn council, if the provider's billing system has capacity to show this information)
- if interest is to be charged for late payment and the interest rate
- the amount of interest that has been charged on overdue amounts owing on the account (for a withdrawn council, if the provider's billing system has capacity to show this information).

Meter information:

- whether the charge for water consumption is based on a meter reading or an estimate of water consumption
- dates of the previous and current meter readings were taken where applicable and readings
- number of days between the previous meter reading to the current meter reading
- total water consumption during the period in kilolitres.

Water comparison data:

- a comparison of the customer's water consumption with:
 - usage from the previous billing period
 - usage compared to the same period in the previous year
 - for residential customers – other residential customers.

Charges information:

- any change to a charge (increase or decrease) since the last account was issued
- the date the new charge applied from (unless separate advice has been provided to the customer prior to the account being issued), or on a separate advice provided with the account.

³⁵ See section 99AV of the DR Act.

Bulk charges for water:

- under the heading, State bulk water price, the bulk water component and the amount of the charge.

The bulk water price is the price the bulk water supply authority (Seqwater) charges SEQ service providers for the supply of bulk services. It is the price the SEQ service provider pays for purchasing treated drinking water and is passed on to customers based on the customer's consumption of water.

Distribution and retail charges—water and sewerage:

- under the headings of:
 - for a withdrawn council – Local Government distribution and retail price
 - for a distributor-retailer – Distributor-retailer price
- the amounts charged for water and sewerage services:
 - water consumption:
 - unit price for water (e.g. per kilolitre)
 - total cost of water supplied during the billing period
 - period charged for water supplied (between meter reads)
 - volumetric charge for sewerage service (where applicable)
 - access to services
 - charges for being able to be provided with water and sewerage services
 - period charged for access to services.

Optional information:

- the account may include or be accompanied by other relevant information, such as:
 - translation or interpretative services that a customer may access in relation to the account
 - concessions that the customer may be eligible for
 - advice about the provider's hardship policy, complaints and disputes policy, or concealed leaks policy
 - managing infrastructure on the property
 - monitoring water use and guidance and tips about saving water
 - how to read a water meter
 - activities of the service provider during the billing period or proposed future works.

16.5 Payment options

Service providers must give customers the opportunity to pay their account:

- in person at one or more agencies or payment outlets
- by mail
- by electronic means
- by direct debit
- using Centrepay (for small customers experiencing financial hardship)
- by phone.

A service provider must allow a customer in financial hardship to use the Centrepay bill paying service for making regular payments towards their water and sewerage account; other customers may ask their service provider if they can use Centrepay.

Service providers must not force customers to agree to a direct debit arrangement as a condition of receiving services.

16.6 Paying an account in advance

Service providers may give customers the option to pay in advance of the account being issued for water and sewerage services, but cannot require that payments be made before the due date.

Customers may make payments at the times agreed with their service provider, for example, fortnightly or monthly, to smooth the quarterly billing costs of the services.

Note: Not all SEQ service providers have the same capacity to accommodate account payments in advance. Customers should contact their service provider to discuss what their options are.

17 Overdue accounts

17.1 Interest

Customers will not be charged interest if:

- their account is paid by the due date
- they dispute charges and have made a complaint relating to their account
- the customer or the service provider has referred a dispute about an account or other amount in dispute to EWOQ
- they are paying their account through a payment plan (and are up-to-date with instalments).

Customers may be charged interest if they:

- do not pay their account by the due date and do not make any alternative arrangement with the service provider for payment
- are on a payment plan and have not paid the instalment by the due date.

However, if a withdrawn council cannot stop interest accruing on overdue charges which are in dispute, then subject to the outcome of the dispute being resolved in the customer's favour, the service provider must either remove the interest charges from the account or **refund** the customer if the charges have already been paid.

The interest rate charged can be no more than the **prescribed interest rate**.³⁶

17.2 Reminder notices

If a small customer has not paid their account by the due date, the service provider must issue a reminder notice to pay the account. The reminder notice must be issued prior to taking any form of recovery action.

A reminder notice may be issued in the same way as the customer's original account was issued or in a different form, such as electronic form, if appropriate. The reminder notice does not need to include the same level of itemised detail or information as the original account but must include advice about what help is available if the customer is experiencing financial difficulty, the service provider's telephone number for account enquiries and payments and advice about consequences if the account is not paid and no alternative arrangements are made.

The service provider may send additional reminder notices if the account is not paid and:

- is not under review or the subject of a complaint
- is not otherwise subject to dispute resolution with EWOQ
- the customer has not sought alternative arrangements to pay the account by instalments under a payment plan or another payment arrangement.

³⁶ See section 53AT of the DR Act and section 133 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

If a customer has made a complaint to the service provider about their account or referred a dispute to EWOQ, the service provider must not send further reminder notices until the dispute is resolved.

It is noted that, for a withdrawn council, it may not be possible to stop reminder notices being issued if overdue and/or disputed amounts include general rates and charges.

17.3 Account history

Customers can ask their service provider for copies of previous accounts. The service provider must provide the copies within 20 business days of the request (if the data is available) and may charge a reasonable fee for providing the information.

17.4 Account review

Customers may ask their service provider to review an account for water and sewerage services and the service provider must conduct the review within 20 business days of receiving the request, e.g. in relation to the following:

- whether the correct charge, category or tariff has been applied
- estimation of water consumption
- calculation of the total charge
- application and/or calculation of any discounts or concessions that may apply
- period for which the charges are applied
- an adjustment for a faulty meter
- interest applied on overdue charges.

If the customer and service provider cannot agree on the amount owing following the review, the customer can lodge a complaint, according to the service provider's complaints and disputes process and policy.

If the complaint is not resolved within 20 business days, the service provider may require the customer to pay the higher of the:

- portion of the account that is not part of the complaint or is not in dispute, pending resolution
- average amount of the accounts for water and sewerage services in the previous 12 months, pending resolution.

Once the complaint is resolved, the customer must pay any balance owing to the service provider, or the service provider must deduct the overcharged amount from the next account or refund the amount within 20 business days if requested by the customer.

17.5 Adjustment timeframe

If there has been a billing error that results in the customer being overcharged or undercharged, an adjustment cannot be made if the period is more than 12 months from the time the error is discovered.

17.6 Overcharged

If the service provider finds that a customer has been overcharged within the previous 12 months they must:

- tell the customer within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error
- deduct the amount they were overcharged from their next account or refund the amount within 20 business days if requested by the customer.

17.7 Undercharged

If the service provider finds that a customer has been undercharged within the previous 12 months they must:

- tell the customer within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error
- list the amount owing as a separate item on the customer's account or on a separate document with the account
- offer the customer time to pay the amount by instalments, over a period no longer than 12 months (or an equivalent period during which the undercharging occurred if it is less than 12 months).

17.8 Interest on adjusted amounts

Service providers must not charge any interest on any amount the customer has been undercharged (unless the amount becomes overdue under a payment plan under section 17.7) and do not have to pay the customer interest on the amount they were overcharged.

17.9 Dishonoured payment

Service providers may recover from customers any amount their financial institution charges them if a customer's payment is dishonoured.

18 Support for customers with payment difficulties

A customer who has the intention but not the capacity to pay their account within the timeframe required may have temporary **payment difficulties** or may be experiencing **financial hardship**.

If customers are experiencing difficulties meeting a payment of their quarterly account for water and sewerage services, they should contact their service provider as soon as possible and before the payment due date to discuss their situation.

Service providers must have a **hardship policy** that provides for, among other things, the opportunity to pay off an account by instalments over time under a payment plan. If the customer does not contact their service provider before the payment due date, they may be charged interest from the day after the payment due date.

18.1 Payment difficulties

A customer who is experiencing temporary payment difficulties and requires more time to pay the account should contact their service provider to discuss their situation. The service provider may extend the due date to allow more time to pay the account without financial penalty.

Service providers must allow customers to pay an account by instalments under a payment plan for customers experiencing payment difficulties. Customers may be required to provide information about their financial situation to satisfy the provider of their payment difficulties. Customers do not need to be assessed as being in financial hardship to access a payment plan.

18.2 Financial hardship policy

Service providers must have a hardship policy that assists small customers who want to pay their account within the timeframe required, but do not have the capacity to pay, because of financial hardship. A small customer suffering from financial hardship can be identified by:

- the small customer
- the service provider
- EWOQ
- an independent accredited financial counsellor
- a not-for-profit organisation providing assistance to people experiencing financial difficulty.

A hardship policy must contain:

- processes to identify a small customer who is in financial hardship that are designed to make an early identification of a customer in hardship
- measures to promote the hardship policy to customers
- flexible payment options (including a payment plan and Centrepay)
- grounds the service provider may consider deferring payment, waiver or concessional tariffs
- programs that the service provider may use to assist the customer pay their account
- information about relevant government concessions and information or referral to financial counselling services or community service organisations
- information about water efficiency measures
- the circumstances in which the hardship policy will cease to apply to a customer
- a timeframe for periodic review of the hardship policy and the associated administrative procedures of at least every 4 years.

18.3 Payment plans

Service providers must offer customers a payment plan for the amount they owe (made up of agreed instalment amounts) if they are experiencing payment difficulties or financial hardship (established in accordance with their hardship policy), unless they have failed to comply with 2 or more plans in the previous 12 months.

If a customer has failed to comply with a payment plan twice in 12 months, their service provider may, at their discretion, offer another plan. When offering a payment plan, the service provider must:

- take into account the customer's ability to pay e.g. how much they can pay and how often
- allow for the payment plan to be renegotiated if there is a change in circumstances that affects the customer's ability to meet the agreed plan and can be demonstrated by the customer.

Customers should contact their service provider if they need to renegotiate their payment plan due to a change in circumstances.

The payment plan must state the:

- amount owed
- period of time over which the customer will pay the instalments
- amount and timing of each instalment during the period
- any other terms or conditions of the payment arrangement.

Customers will be required to confirm their agreement to this plan.

18.4 Interest on payment plan

Service providers cannot charge interest on the amount customers are paying off under a payment plan. However, if a customer does not pay an instalment by the agreed due date, interest may be charged.

19 Concealed leaks

19.1 Concealed leaks policy

Customers are responsible for the infrastructure (e.g. fittings and pipes) on their property connected to the water meter.

A concealed leak is when water escapes from underground infrastructure (including, but not limited to, fittings, fixtures and pipes) and is hidden from view due to plants, organic matter, soil or physical structures such as buildings, driveways or under concrete. A concealed leak may be caused by

broken or cracked pipes and a small customer would not reasonably be expected to know of its existence.

Service providers can help customers with managing concealed leaks and must have in place a concealed leaks policy that is published on their website. The policy must include:

- the types of concealed leaks the policy covers
- information to assist customers to physically identify a concealed leak
- a remission (a reduction in the amount payable) to be provided to offset the cost of the water lost due to a concealed leak.

The policy must also provide for:

- the types of customers eligible for a remission, e.g. residential customers, pensioners, community groups³⁷
- how the remission payment is calculated
- the evidence (e.g. a plumber's invoice for work done to repair a concealed leak) and the process required to support a leak remission claim
- whether there is any limit on:
 - remission claims (e.g. a cap on dollar amounts or volume of water lost)
 - the number of claims (permitted per customer or property within a given period of time).

19.2 Concealed leak remission

A concealed leak may be present if a customer has received an account and:

- believes the stated amount of water used is higher than normal
- has not changed their water use during that period from the previous period.

The customer should contact their service provider about their concealed leaks policy, their eligibility for a remission and the remission claim process.

Customers who believe they have a concealed leak should take appropriate action to detect the location of the leak and repair it as soon as possible by calling a licensed plumber.

20 Access to property

20.1 Right of access to your property

Water legislation gives the service provider's authorised person the right to enter a small customer's property under certain circumstances.³⁸ An authorised person is appointed by an SEQ service provider to carry out particular duties or functions and has the necessary qualifications or skills to undertake the duties.

The service provider's authorised person may enter the property at any reasonable time to:

- install a water meter
- inspect, operate, change, maintain, remove, repair or replace the provider's infrastructure
- install a device to reduce the water supply to the property (supply restriction).

However, the authorised person may enter a property at any reasonable time only if one of the following takes place:

³⁷ Although the Code applies only to small customers, the leaks policy may have wider application.

³⁸ See sections 33 to 40 of the Water Supply Act; a water connection officer appointed by a distributor-retailer under the DR Act, may also enter a property under powers under Chapter 2C, part 4 of the DR Act. However, 'withdrawn councils' authorised persons may have additional powers under the Local Government Act.

- the occupier consents to the entry
- the service provider has given at least 14 days' notice of the entry and the purpose of the entry
- the service provider needs to take urgent action to protect its infrastructure at the property.

If an authorised person enters a property to take urgent action, the authorised person must give the owner or person in control of the place, a notice advising the purpose of the entry.

20.2 Entry to a property

An authorised person may also enter a property at any reasonable time without prior notice to do any of the following:

- read a meter
- check the accuracy of a meter
- maintain or replace a meter.

An authorised person must comply with requirements under water legislation, e.g. they must produce their identity card for inspection or clearly display the card so it is visible before entering a property. An authorised person cannot enter any part of a customer's property that is used for residing in.

20.3 Unauthorised connections

An authorised person may also enter a property, after following the procedural requirements under water legislation, to disconnect an unauthorised connection.³⁹ The service provider has powers to recover certain costs associated with the disconnection.⁴⁰

21 Meter reading

Service providers must take all reasonable steps to read a meter at each small customer's property at least once every 6 months.⁴¹

21.1 Estimated water use

If a service provider does not or cannot physically read the meter at a small customer's property, they may estimate the water use in order to issue an account.

The service provider must ensure an estimation of water use does not happen in 2 or more consecutive billing cycles, without reasonable excuse, such as access to the meter not being available at the property.

Service providers may use any methods for estimating water use they consider appropriate if a meter cannot be read. This may include an account based on:

- the customer's water use for the previous quarter or the same quarter in the previous year
- estimating the average amount of water used by the customer within a group of small customers who have similar water use patterns
- another method that is reasonably appropriate in the circumstances to decide how much water the customer is likely to use.

Service providers must clearly indicate on or with the account when the water consumption is based on an estimate of water used rather than a meter reading.

³⁹ See sections 33 and 40 of the Water Supply Act.

⁴⁰ See sections 33 and 40 of the Water Supply Act.

⁴¹ See section 99AG of the DR Act.

21.2 Can customers read their own meters?

Normally, the service provider will read the meter each quarter in order to determine the water consumption for the quarterly billing period but the customer may read their own meter for a particular period if the service provider cannot access the property.

The service provider can choose to accept the customer's meter reading supplied to them as the water consumption for a particular period.⁴² However, the service provider must read the meter at least once every 6 months and may not estimate the water consumption in 2 or more consecutive billing cycles.

21.3 Special meter reading

The customer, their agent or the property manager may ask the service provider to do a special meter reading to work out the amount of water used since the last meter reading was taken. The service provider may charge a fee (not exceeding cost recovery) if a special meter reading is requested. If the customer pays the fee, the service provider must conduct the special meter reading.⁴³

21.4 Faulty meter

21.4.1 Meter accuracy test

Customers may request the service provider test, or arrange for an independent test, of the accuracy of the meter installed at a property. The service provider may charge a fee for this service before the test will be done; the fee must be reasonable and no more than the actual cost of carrying out each test.⁴⁴

If the customer pays the applicable fee, the service provider or **independent tester** must carry out the test.

The service provider or independent tester must:

- advise the customer that they or a nominee may be present during the test
- tell the customer when and where the test is to be carried out
- test the accuracy of the meter against the **prescribed margin**
- give the customer a written notice (report) of the results of the accuracy test as soon as practicable after completing the test.

If the test shows the meter is registering incorrectly, the notice must state the extent to which the registration falls outside the prescribed margin.⁴⁵

If the result of the meter test shows that the meter has been registering incorrectly, the service provider must refund the meter test fee to the small customer.

If as a result of the meter reading incorrectly the small customer has been overcharged or undercharged, the service provider must adjust the accounts to reflect the actual or reasonable estimation of the water supplied.

The service provider must adjust accounts up to 1 year prior to the last issued account before the meter inaccuracy was discovered.⁴⁶ See also section 17 for billing procedures for overcharged and undercharged accounts.

⁴² See section 99AFA of the DR Act.

⁴³ See section 99AI of the DR Act.

⁴⁴ See section 99AJ of the DR Act.

⁴⁵ See section 99AM of the DR Act.

⁴⁶ See section 99AN of the DR Act.

21.4.2 Meter replacement

The service provider must replace a meter, at no cost to the customer, if the meter is:

- found to be faulty (if it is registering outside the prescribed margin and unable to be repaired), or
- is part of a meter replacement program.

21.4.3 What if a customer damages the water meter?

If a customer damages the water meter, the customer must report it to the service provider, who is able to recover the reasonable cost of repairing the damage.⁴⁷

22 How to save water

Customers can find out how to save water by asking their service provider. The service provider must provide information free-of-charge on water conservation and sustainable use.

23 Relevant laws—including water legislation

Not all aspects of an SEQ service provider's rights, powers or obligations are regulated by this Code. The SEQ service providers are subject to a range of State and Commonwealth regulations, including the following:

- *Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997*
- *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 2009* and *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*
- *Water Act 2000*
- *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*
- *National Measurement Act 1960* (Cwth).

24 Further information

24.1 Enquiries

Service providers must:

- provide the following information during their business hours through an **enquiry facility**:
 - account information
 - account payment options
 - fees and charges
 - concession entitlements offered by State and local governments
 - information for small customers who are having payment difficulties including the service provider's hardship policy
 - dispute resolution process including the service provider's complaints and disputes policy
 - information about, and contact details for EWOQ.

All information must be provided in the appropriate format to customers with hearing or interpretation needs.

24.2 Fees for information and advice

Unless otherwise stated in this Code, the service provider must not charge a fee for providing information or advice required under this Code.

⁴⁷ See section 40 of the Water Supply Act.

25 Glossary

account —printed or written statement of fees and charges for services provided to a small customer's property and includes a rate notice, over a billing period

authorised person—a person appointed by an SEQ service provider under section 45 of the Water Supply Act to perform particular duties and functions. A withdrawn council may appoint an authorised person under section 202 of the Local Government Act

available in relation to whether a connection to a water or sewerage service is to be provided by an SEQ service provider—that the SEQ service provider is or would be obliged under the water legislation to connect the property to the relevant service.

billing period—period of time during which the water service provider measures the volume of water supplied to the property for the purpose of charging for the water as well as fixed access charges for water and sewerage services

Centrepay—facility that allows Centrelink customers to have automatic deductions taken from Centrelink entitlements and allocated for utility charges

Code—Customer Water and Wastewater Code made under section 93 of the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*

connection area is an area in which an SEQ service provider guarantees to provide connections that comply with its connection criteria to its water service or wastewater service (see section 99BO(1)(f)(i) of the DR Act)

connections policy—an SEQ service provider's policy about connections, disconnections and alterations to its infrastructure (see section 99BO(1)(f) of the DR Act)

distributor-retailer—see section 5.1

DR Act—the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution Retail and Restructuring) Act 2009*

electronic address—email, internet address or mobile phone number supplied by a small customer to an SEQ service provider

enquiry facility—telephone call centre and may also include an online information facility or an over-the-counter information service

EWO Act—the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*

EWOQ—the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

financial hardship for a small customer—a customer who has the intention but not the capacity to pay their account within the timeframe required due to financial disadvantage that is of an ongoing nature.

fixed access charge—a charge for access to a water or sewerage service

hardship policy—section 18.2

independent tester—a person appointed as a water utility meter verifier under section 18RA of the *National Measurement Act 1960* (Cwlth).

interruption—any temporary unavailability of a water or sewerage service to a small customer (see section 10).

kilolitre—1000 litres

kL—kilolitre

Local Government Act—the *Local Government Act 2009*, including any regulations made under the Act

metered standpipe—pipes that are used to obtain water directly from hydrants for approved activities such as construction, concrete sawing, dust suppression and water carting

nominated person may include an agent, a tenant or occupier of the small customer's property

payment difficulties for a small customer—a customer who needs more time to pay the account because of short-term or temporary financial difficulties

payment plan—payment plan under section 18.3

prescribed interest rate—the rate of interest that a local government may charge for late payment of rates and charges (see section 133 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*)

prescribed margin—maximum permissible error for water meters under Schedule 1, part 2, division 11 to the *National Trade Measurement Regulation 2009* (Cwth)

prescribed minimum flow rate—flow rate on the property will be at least 10 litres per minute at the tap nearest to the water meter.

planned interruption—scheduled interruption to a service to a customer which is caused by an SEQ service provider to allow routine maintenance or augmentation to be carried out

refund includes the payment of a credit, cheque or electronic funds transfer

registered medical specialist is a medical practitioner who is registered for a specialty with the Medical Board of Australia and appears on the Specialist Register maintained by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

relevant service—see section 6

SEQ region—means the region as defined in section 341 of the *Water Act*

SEQ—South East Queensland

service standards are performance targets set by an SEQ service provider under section 10.1

SEQ service provider—see section 5

small customer—see section 3

special needs property—see section 4

supply restriction notice—see section 12.1

Water Act—the *Water Act 2000*.

water entity function is a function or obligation that is performed or required to be performed by an SEQ service provider under this Code

water legislation—any of the following: the *DR Act*; the *Water Act*; the *Water Supply Act* and any regulation, order, directive or statutory instrument made under any of those Acts

Water Supply Act—means the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*

withdrawn council—see section 5.2

Figure 1: Distributor-retailer and withdrawn council boundaries

