



ROTTNEST IS

Water Services Customer Manual

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Rottnest Island Authority
Water Services Licence WL10

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rottnest Island Authority – Mission

Increase the number and diversity of visitors by providing products, services and experiences that reflect, sustain and preserve the Island's unique location, environment and cultural heritage.

1.2 The Water Customer Services Manual

This Water Customer Services Manual (**Manual**) sets out the principal terms and conditions upon which the Rottnest Island Authority (**RIA**) provides water services to its customers in accordance with the licence issued to RIA by the Economic Regulation Authority (**ERA**) under the *Water Services Licensing Act 1995*.

The Manual informs RIA's customers of their rights in accordance with the provisions of the licence, including service interruptions, levels of service, and complaint procedures.

A copy of the operating licence is available on request from RIA or from the ERA.

Drinking Water Quality Reports, the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018 and other water related documents are available to customers on RIA's website www.ria.wa.gov.au.

This manual is to be referred to in conjunction with customers' leases, licences or concession agreements with RIA.

1.3 References

The Manual has been compiled with reference to the directions of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), which reviews public health issues within Australia, the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011, the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Services Standards) 2018 and associated regulations and relevant industry codes.

1.4 Customers

RIA customers can be divided into three main groups:

- **Visitors** – receive water services but are not charged directly.
- **Residents** – are employees of RIA and Island businesses that receive water services. Residents are charged an annual water supply fee which is usually fixed and based on the size of the property. This fee is invoiced quarterly.
- **Lessees** – are commercial business operators on Rottneest Island who are provided with water services to their commercial premises and are charged for water services and usage by consumption (metered). This is invoiced monthly.

1.5 Commitment to Service and Supply

RIA will provide its service in a manner that is professional, courteous, and prompt.

RIA will supply water that is safe for visitors, businesses and residents to use and that complies with the directions on drinking water quality and that consistently meets National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) standards, the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council's (NRMMC) developed Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, consumer and other regulatory requirements.

2. Information about Connections

The Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018 (**Code of Conduct**) requires RIA to provide information to water services customers regarding the connections on Rottnest Island. As detailed in Section 2.1 below, RIA provides the following services to customers on Rottnest Island:

- water supply services and;
- sewerage services.

As the licensee (under Section 21 of the *Water Services Act 2012*) RIA is responsible for providing these services in accordance with the Water Services Operating Licence regulated by the ERA.

RIA may refuse to provide or suspend the provision of a water service to a person entitled to the service under this Act for as long as the person refuses to comply with any of the terms and conditions prescribed by RIA.

Any customer requiring a new water connection must apply to RIA using a Development Application, specifying full details of the connection and capacity requested. The Development Application form and information on the process and information required to be submitted can be found on RIA's website www.ria.wa.gov.au.

There is no fee for submission of a Development Application however customers may be responsible for all or part of the costs of any new connection and any ongoing consumption costs.

In accordance with Clause 8 of the 2018 Code of Conduct, a standard supply connection will be completed by RIA before the end of the period of 10 business days starting on the day on which both of the following have been complied with:

- a) the customer has done, or complied with, all the things that the customer must do and comply with before a standard supply connection is made; and

b) all fees that apply in relation to the standard supply connection have been paid to RIA.

The above provision does not apply to non-standard supply connections.

2.1 Services provided

Water

RIA will provide customers with water services where possible.

Water quality

Supplying safe, high-quality drinking water to customers is of the highest priority. RIA has an extensive drinking water quality monitoring program to confirm the safety of the water provided.

RIA will:

- supply water that is safe for all customers to drink and to use;
- provide customers with information on water quality to assist in the selection of commercial and household appliances;
- continuously monitor and assess the quality of drinking water supplied;
- endeavour to provide customers with a response, within two hours where practicable or at an agreed time, to any reports of poor water quality; and
- advise customers of any need to make alternative arrangements for drinking water, in the event that the water quality deteriorates or safe drinking water is not available.

Customers should:

- be aware that certain appliances may be unsuitable or not perform efficiently with some types of water. When purchasing a water using appliance, such as a dishwasher or hot water system, the customer should check with the retailer that it is suitable for the water quality and pressure in the location;

- Maintain the water infrastructure within their premises in good condition; and
- ensure all internal plumbing is maintained in good order and in compliance with best plumbing standards.

Wastewater

Everything that is poured down the sink or drains or put down the toilets goes through the wastewater system. This waste travels to the treatment plant where it is processed prior to recycling it to the environment for reuse in a sustainable manner.

RIA will:

- remove wastewater from premises and treat it, to protect public health and the environment;
- collect, treat and dispose of sewerage and wastewater discharge from each customer's premises or public amenities through the Island's sewer system; and
- routinely monitor the quality of treated wastewater before it passes back to the environment.

The customer should:

- not dispose of foreign objects, other than toilet paper in the toilet, into the wastewater system through toilets, sinks, baths and showers as they block the wastewater system;
- dispose of commercial and business waste appropriately; and
- keep storm water and sewerage drains clean and free from debris at all times.

Drainage

RIA will:

- provide and maintain a drainage system to accommodate storm water runoff and minimise the risk of flooding, including the use of road and street drains, soak wells and open grate drainage systems; and
- engage experts in this field as required to improve drainage services.

The customer should:

- keep rubbish and foreign objects (e.g. litter, cleaning products, nappies, food scraps, cooking oil and grease, medicines, chemicals) away from and out of the drainage system, incl. storm water drains;
- use commercial drainage systems at commercial premises (i.e. grease traps) and keep them clean and in good condition; and
- engage appropriately qualified commercial cleaning and waste collection companies to remove waste from the premises (i.e. oil/grease removal).

3. Billing and Payment Information

The following information outlines the billing practices and how customers can manage and pay accounts.

3.1 Billing

RIA will:

- provide accounts for water consumption charges (including wastewater) on a regular basis (monthly for commercial tenants, quarterly for residential tenants) at the last notified postal or email address;
- provide accounts for service charges (for water and wastewater) on a regular basis (monthly for commercial tenants, quarterly for residential tenants) at the last notified postal or email address; and
- on request by a customer, where a meter is fitted provide a meter reading and bill to determine outstanding charges for a period that is not the same as the usual billing cycle.

The customer should:

- provide at least three (3) business days' notice of an intention to change address, to ensure water usage costs are not incurred after premises have been vacated; and
- promptly provide RIA or its agent with the details of any change of postal or email address.

3.2 Pricing, Fees and Consumption Charges

Consumption will be determined by a reading of the meter placed at supply addresses. Where no meter is fitted, RIA will determine a fixed annual water services supply charge based on the size of the premises.

Prices for RIA's water services are provided in the Schedule of Utility Tariffs, Fees and Charges, which is available on request from RIA's Property Manager. RIA determines the water services supply fees and charges (including wastewater), which are reviewed annually.

Fees are determined by RIA with reference to the cost of providing each water service.

3.3 Estimations

RIA may calculate water consumption charges based on an estimate of usage where:

- a) no water meter is fitted;
- b) a water meter is shown by test to be recording inaccurately;
- c) a water meter ceases to register; or
- d) access to the water meter is prevented.

This estimate will be based on:

- a) the amount of water used during the same period in the previous year; or
- b) the average usage of comparable customers (based on number of occupants and property size) if there is no prior billing history.

Where a bill is estimated RIA will:

- notify the customer
- state on the bill that the amount was based on an estimate
- state the reason for the estimate on the bill
- make any necessary adjustments to the next bill to consider the extent to which the estimate was not reasonable having regard to a subsequent and accurate meter reading.

3.4 Review of a Bill

Bills may be reviewed at the customer's request in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct. After conducting a review of a bill, if RIA is satisfied that the bill is correct, RIA may:

- request payment of any unpaid amount within a reasonable specified period;
- conduct a meter registration test if the customer considers that the meter is not accurately measuring water passing through it. The test will be conducted within 10 business days of receiving the customer's request and payment of the meter test fee, or at an agreed day and time; and
- provide the customer with information concerning the process and operation of both RIA's internal and external complaints handling process, which includes the customer's right to refer any complaint to the Energy and Water Service Ombudsman.

Where the customer has been overcharged, the customer must be informed by RIA and the procedures set out in the Code of Conduct for repaying the money will be complied with.

RIA will:

- advise a customer if an overcharge has occurred within 15 business days of becoming aware of the overcharging;
- provide the customer with the options on how to have the overcharged amount either credited to their account, or refunded, at the customer's request; and
- provide the refunds of any overcharged amount within 15 days of the customer's lodged request.

If RIA has undercharged the customer, the undercharged amount may be recovered from the customer in accordance with the Code of Conduct .

RIA will:

- only recover the amount undercharged for a service provided in the 12 months prior (or pro rata) to the date of which the customer is notified the undercharging has occurred;

- list the amount undercharged in a special bill or as a separate item in the next bill, together with an explanation of that amount;
- not charge a late payment fee or bill interest on any undercharged amount; and
- offer the customer the opportunity to pay this amount in instalments, interest free, over the same period of time during which the customer was undercharged.

3.5 Discount for leaks

Where a water leak has affected the volume of water consumption recorded and billed, customers can apply to RIA for an allowance to offset a portion of the water wasted.

Applications must be made in writing to RIA's Property Manager and the following eligibility criteria apply:

- Leak repairs must have been carried out prior to applying for the allowance;
- A licensed plumbing contractor must have carried out the repairs and a certificate of compliance from the plumbing contractor must be provided with the application;
- Tenants who have constructed their own premises including the water infrastructure within the premises will not be eligible to apply for an allowance for water leaks occurring as a result of a fault to such water infrastructure; and
- Tenants charged an annual fixed water charge (i.e. with no meter fitted) are not eligible to apply for an allowance.

Allowances will not be granted where:

- a leak is visible or readily detectable;
- for leaks and/or bursts that occur on internal or external taps, internal appliances, fixtures or fittings including dishwashers, hot water systems, toilet cisterns and valves;
- when the leak on the internal plumbing is not repaired (or verified) by a licensed plumber;

- for plumbing that is not compliant with government regulations; or
- for vacant or unattended premises that are not inspected and maintained regularly.

Leak allowances will only cover a portion of the total water use, as determined by RIA.

3.6 Payment for Water Services

The customer will be given at least fourteen (14) days to pay a bill. The payment methods offered include:

- a) in person at the Property Management offices (see contacts page 1);
- b) by credit card electronically/by telephone; or
- c) by electronic funds transfer (EFT).

RIA will accept payment in advance from a customer on a customer's request. The amount paid in advance will not attract interest on the account.

3.7 Late Payment Fee and Other Charges

RIA may charge the customer a late payment fee if a bill is not paid on or before the due date specified.

3.8 Payment Difficulties – Hardship

RIA can make special financial arrangements to assist a customer experiencing difficulties in payment of water services accounts.

To seek information on the options, customers may call RIA's Property Manager (see contacts page 1).

4. Water Services Rights and Obligations

4.1 Customer Rights to Water Quality

RIA will:

- Provide potable water to meet the criteria for quality and safety in accordance with the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council; and
- respond to reports of poor water quality by investigating the matter and advising the customer of the outcome within a reasonable time period or such time period as is agreed with the customer.

Any customer who experiences a significant change in the usual water quality is required to advise RIA immediately.

RIA will investigate and advise any action taken, within a reasonable time period.

4.2 Customer Rights to Consultation and Information

RIA is committed to involving its customers on issues relating to its programs and services for water on Rottnest Island.

RIA will publish and make available at its premises information on matters relating to its water supply services and other aspects such as charging and complaints handling. Information regarding these matters can be obtained from RIA's Fremantle office or RIA's website www.ria.wa.gov.au.

4.3 Customer Rights to Assistance, Redress and Compensation

If RIA's activities cause damage to property or disruption to water supply, where RIA is notified of this damage or disruption, RIA will deal with the matter in a fair, prompt and business-like manner.

4.4 Enquiries, Suggestions, Complaints and Disputes

RIA values enquiries and suggestions on ways it can improve its services.

A hard copy of this Manual can be obtained from RIA's Property Manager (see contact details on page 1).

General information on the supply of water services and the Code of Conduct is available on RIA's website at <http://www.ria.wa.gov.au/policy-and-reports/sustainability/environmental-sustainability/utility-reports/water-reports>

4.4.1 Enquiries Procedure

RIA will:

- respond to any general written (including email), telephone and in-person enquiries within 10 business days of RIA receiving the enquiry;
- aim to answer telephone calls to the RIA emergency number promptly and provide advice of what action is to be taken and timing within one (1) hour of the call;
- provide a detailed response within 15 business days if the enquiry requires further investigation; and
- maintain a 24-hour emergency contact service for urgent events related to water services, such as wastewater overflows, burst water mains or safety/security concerns.

4.4.2 Complaints Procedure

RIA is committed to handling utility complaints, disputes and enquires in a courteous, efficient and compliant manner.

The complaints and dispute resolution process is designed in line with the Code of Conduct.

Customer complaints can be made in writing (including by email) to RIA's Property Manager (see contact details on page 1).

- RIA will aim to acknowledge written queries or complaints by a customer within 10 business days and respond to queries or complaints requiring further investigation within 15 business days.
- Information provided by the customer will be used to help resolve the complaint.
- The customer will be provided with confirmation of the outcome of the complaint and an explanation of the reasons behind the outcome.
- If the customer is not satisfied with a decision made, the customer may request that the matter is escalated to the Executive Director of RIA. The Executive Director will investigate the complaint, assess the appropriateness of RIA's response and either confirm or amend RIA's response.
- Once RIA considers the customer complaint to be resolved RIA will:
 - advise the customer accordingly; and
 - inform the customer of the right to apply to the water services ombudsman to review the complaint.

The contact details for the water services ombudsman are:

Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia
Level 2, Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
Perth WA 6000

PO Box Z5386
St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6831

E: energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au

P: 08 9220 7588 Free Call: 1800 754 004*

**Calls made from mobile phones will be charged at the applicable rate*

The *Water Services Act 2012* introduced the State's first water services ombudsman to resolve disputes between customers and water services providers. The scheme is funded by industry at a low cost to water utilities and is free for customers to use. The Ombudsman has statutory powers to make binding determinations about a complaint or a dispute.

4.5 Discharge of Unauthorised Substances

It is the responsibility of all customers to ensure that unauthorised substances are not discharged into the Rottnest Island sewers.

Certain waste products are not suitable for disposal in RIA's waste water system because of their nature and ability to pollute. Specialised disposal procedures are essential for the disposal of substances such as:

- Cooking oil and grease;
- Chemicals, e.g. Paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvent, acids, alkalis; laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons, pesticides, polishes, cleaning products;
- Food scraps;
- Newspaper, plastics;
- Unused medicines;
- Other products including such items as disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, cotton buds, toilet deodorant, razors;
- Syringes.

5. Maintenance and Management of Water Services

5.1 Entry to Customer's Property

There may be circumstances where RIA and/or its contractor may require entry to a premises to carry out investigations and/or work on the water supply system.

RIA will endeavor to have such entry during business hours, except in cases of emergency.

Planned interruption to water supply

RIA will make every effort to minimise the interruption to the Island water supply, but on occasion an interruption to the supply may be necessary to carry out planned maintenance on the water services . Customers who will be affected by a planned service interruption will be given notice in writing, not less than 48 hours in advance, unless not reasonably practicable, at the earliest practicable time before the service interruption.

Where entry to premises is required, customers who will be affected not less than 48 hours in advance, unless not reasonably practicable, notice of entry to premises will be given, and that notice will be given in writing and set out the purpose of the entry, unless the occupier agrees otherwise.

Entry meaning:

- Entry to premise for routine inspection or maintenance which is likely to cause disruption to the occupants of a place.
- Entry to a place for the purpose of doing works.

Unplanned interruption to services

RIA aims to:

- Minimise the occurrence and impact to customers' properties from water flooding resulting from bursts and leaks in the water mains and wastewater overflows resulting from the water systems or activities performed;
- Respond to urgent water faults (as deemed urgent by RIA or RIA's agents) within two hours or at an agreed time.

In cases of emergency, notice of entry to attend to the emergency is not required and may therefore not be provided. Should this be necessary, RIA and/or its contractor will respect customers' premises and will remain in the premises for the minimum time required. The customer, if present, will be informed of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated length of time for the work to be completed.

As soon as practicable after the event, notice in writing of the entry, the works carried out and any further relevant intention of RIA will be given to the customer.

Entry to the customer's premises

RIA and/or its contractor may need to enter premises to carry out inspections, routine maintenance and repair work on the water services system. RIA will aim to have this attended to during business hours except in an emergency.

RIA aims to:

- Provide advance notice, of at least 48 hours, of all planned work that may require entry to the property (except meter reading and maintenance);
- Inform the customer of work being undertaken.

5.2 Rectifying Defective Work

If RIA becomes aware of any defective or improper work forming part of the water services infrastructure and fittings within a leased premises, it may serve a notice requiring the customer to remedy any such defect or improper work within a specified time frame.

If the terms of the notice are not followed, RIA or its contractor may enter the premises to remedy the defective or improper work. This action, if taken, will be charged to the customer.

5.3 Water Restrictions

During conditions or circumstances that necessitate restrictions on water use on Rottneest Island, RIA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that sufficient water will be available to meet essential demand.

Customers will be advised in writing of any water restrictions imposed by RIA, including the restriction details, period of restriction and any penalties associated with breach of the restrictions.

Reasons that may cause RIA to apply restrictions include:

- Supply limitations;
- Drought or anticipated approach of a drought requiring RIA to protect the Island's water resources;
- Compliance with terms and conditions of special agreements;
- Where continuity of supply needs to be upgraded and or maintained;
- When an issue with system capacity or asset performance is experienced.

5.4 Maintenance

Standard water service connections to a premises, including the water meter remain the property and responsibility of RIA and will be maintained by RIA or its agents.

Faults with the water supply service connection (meter, joints or pipe work) involving significant water service outage or possible damage to property must be reported immediately to RIA's maintenance and services contractor (see contact details on page 1).

The maintenance and services contractor will endeavour to attend a premises where an urgent fault has been reported and to repair the fault within two (2) hours or within an agreed time of receiving the fault report. Less urgent repairs will be carried out by a date arranged between the customer and RIA or its agent.

5.5 Water Meters

A water meter will be installed where practicable as part of a water service connection and will remain the property of RIA.

If a customer suspects that a water meter at its premises is faulty, the customer must report this to RIA's Property Manager and RIA will arrange for the meter to be tested. A fee applies for this service, which is payable by the customer and refundable if the test results fall outside the Australian Standard AS 3565.1-2010 accuracy of:

- Water meter >25 mm in size – accuracy range + or – 5%
- All other water meters – accuracy range of +5% to 10%

Consumption charges will be adjusted where an error in accuracy is proven.

The customer must ensure the water meter is accessible to RIA or its contractor, or to make suitable alternative arrangements with either party.

The customer is responsible for any damage to the water meter, unless such damage is caused by RIA or its agent.

5.6 Disconnection

RIA may disconnect a potable water supply service in the case of emergency.

The customer will be given information regarding the nature of the emergency and an estimate of when the water supply will be restored.

5.7 Re-Connection

In the case of a disconnection having occurred, RIA will reinstate the supply of water services as soon as practicably possible after the emergency has been resolved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'J' followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that tapers to the right.

Jason Banks

Executive Director

Rottnest Island Authority



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NOTE: Information contained in this publication is subject to change.