



Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District

Customer Service Charter

July 2018



Table of contents

Introduction

About this charter 4

Scope of this charter 4

Term of this charter..... 4

Our role

Our role in waterways management..... 5

Our role in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry 6

Operating context..... 7

Our regulation..... 7

Our Waterways program 8

Local environmental conditions 8

Flood protection and drainage services

Flooding and flood management 10

Our work in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry 10

The level of service we provide.....11

Summary of our levels of service.....12

Annual works planning14

Rights and responsibilities

Melbourne Water’s responsibilities..... 16

Your responsibilities..... 16

Summary of your responsibilities 17

Local councils’ responsibility 18

Information, consultation and privacy

Where to find more information	19
Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Advisory Committee	20
Consulting with our customers	20
Specific projects	20
Privacy	20

Enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution

Making an enquiry	22
By phone.....	22
In writing	22
Through social media	22
Making a complaint	22
Reviewing complaints and disputes.....	22
Seeking external resolution of disputes	23
Response times.....	23

Reporting on our performance

Assessing our performance	24
Corporate level reporting	24
Specific reporting for precept ratepayers	24
Proposed annual works program.....	24
Annual Performance Review.....	24
Quarterly bulletins.....	24
Definitions.....	25

Introduction

Building value for our customers and delivering better outcomes.

About this charter

We understand that working together with our partners, stakeholders and customers is essential to what we do. We are constantly striving to improve our relationships with, and services provided to our customers.

This Customer Service Charter ('charter') is for our work in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District. It outlines your rights and obligations as a user of our flood protection and drainage services, and sets out the minimum standards of customer service that you can expect.

Scope of this charter

Landowners in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District pay a special precept rate that funds the drainage services provided exclusively in the area. The Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District was once a swampland, which was drained in the 1800s. Purpose-built drainage infrastructure has enabled people to live and farm in the district, and helps to protect the area from floods.

This charter covers the precept ratepayers in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry who receive flood protection and drainage services from Melbourne Water.

Term of this charter

This charter started on 1 July 2014, to cover the statutory period of Melbourne Water's 2013 Water Plan for 2013-14 to 2017-18.

The Charter is currently being reviewed. An updated Charter will be prepared based on consultation with the community and other stakeholders.

This is an interim Customer Charter until the new Charter is available.

Our role

Robust and productive relationships with our customers and stakeholders are essential to our continued success.

Our role in waterways management

Melbourne Water is the designated caretaker of waterway health for the Port Phillip and Westernport region, and the regional drainage and floodplain management authority. We work on behalf of, and in close collaboration with, the people of Melbourne and surrounds. Our responsibilities include the management of more than 8,400 kilometres of rivers and creeks across the region, estuaries, wetlands, floodplains and the regional drainage system including drains, channels and retarding basins that carry stormwater to rivers and creeks or mitigate flooding.

Our Waterways and Drainage Program includes actions designed to improve the health, quality, amenity and understanding of our waterways, to manage environmental flows and water quality, provide an appropriate level of flood protection for communities, support sustainable development and involve and engage our customers.

Our activities include:

- Managing and monitoring rivers, creeks and wetlands.
- Managing the regional drainage system.
- Providing a safe level of flood protection.
- Working with community groups to improve river health.
- Managing river diversions.
- Regulating works on rivers and creeks.
- Cleaning up pollution spills under direction from EPA Victoria.
- Making sure urban development is safe and meets flood and environment standards.

Under the *Water Act (1989)*, Melbourne Water has responsibility for the bed and banks of the waterway as well as a role in managing the area of land immediately adjacent to the waterway.

Melbourne Water works closely with local councils in carrying out its role. Local councils are the local planning authority, responsible for local drains, road networks, and street and property drainage that feed into the regional drains, rivers and creeks.

Connections into Melbourne Water controlled drains and waterways require Melbourne Water approval.

Our role in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry

The Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District is a unique area within Melbourne Water’s operating region. The area is a former swamp that was drained through the mid-late 1800s and used for farming, and drains were cut through the land to help handle the flooding that was and remains an issue in the area.

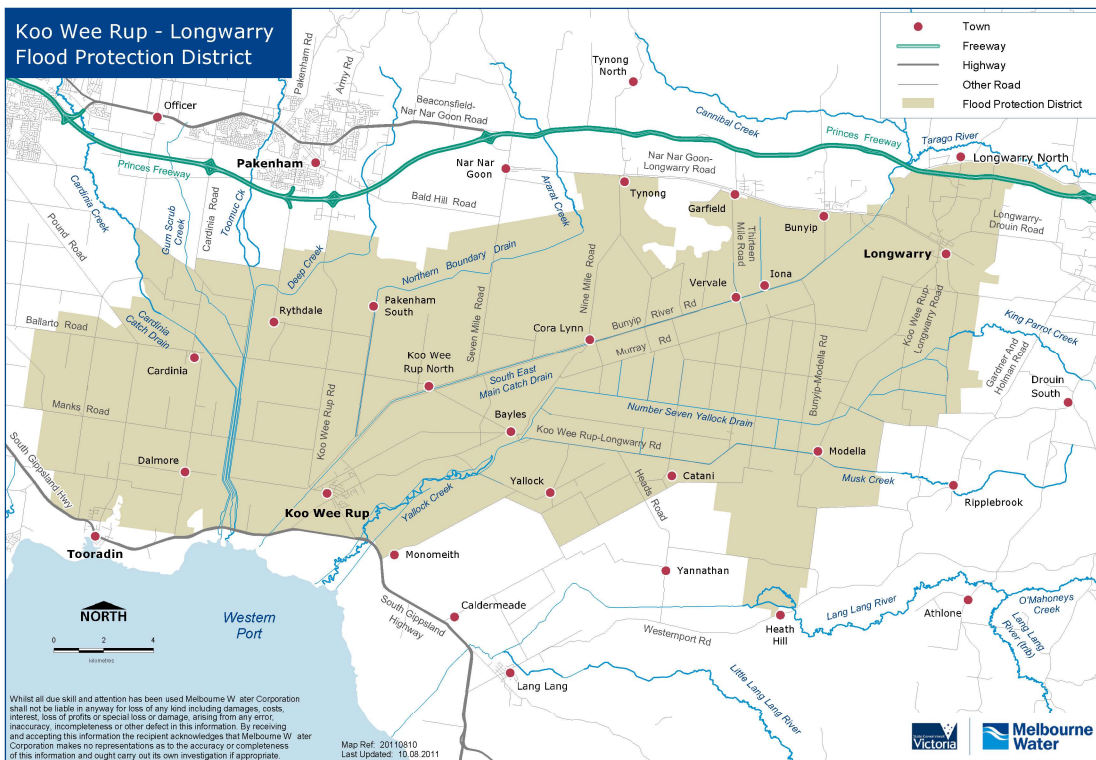
Melbourne Water is responsible for two types of drains: precept and carrier drains.

A precept drain is one that originates within the flood protection district and drains the local area. Works on precept drains are funded by the precept rate levied on ratepayers in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District.

A carrier drain originates outside the precept area, carrying water through the area and taking water from the precept drains. Works on carrier drains are part funded by the precept rate and part funded through Melbourne Water’s Water and Drainage Charge.

Melbourne Water owns and is responsible for maintaining these drains on behalf of its customers, and charges a special rate – the ‘precept rate’ - to fund drainage services across the district.

Figure 1: Map of the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District



Our customers in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District do not pay the Melbourne Water ‘Waterways and Drainage Charge’ that funds a range of programs to protect and improve the health of our rivers and creeks, and provide regional drainage services, flood protection and flood warning systems throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Operating context

Melbourne Water delivers its services in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District under a legislative, policy and strategy framework. This framework covers the following:

Figure 2: Our operating context



12118v_01

Our regulation

<p>The Water Act 1989</p>	<p>Specifies the functions that Melbourne Water must carry out for drainage systems and floodplain management.</p>
<p>Statement of Obligations 2012</p>	<p>Sets out Melbourne Water’s customer and community engagement obligations, and obligations to develop strategies that set out the responsibilities, goals, levels of service and programs of work for waterway management, flood management and drainage.</p>

Our Waterways program

<p>Melbourne Water’s Waterways Operating Charter 2013/14 – 2017/18</p>	<p>Outlines Melbourne Water’s responsibilities, goals, services and work programs in managing waterways, drainage and floodplains.</p>
<p>Melbourne Water’s Waterways Communications and Engagement Strategy 2013-2018</p>	<p>Outlines Melbourne Water’s strategic intent for communication and engagement. Provides the framework for ‘how’ and ‘why’ Melbourne Water will connect with our customers and stakeholders across the Waterways and Drainage Program.</p>
<p>Melbourne Water’s Flood Management and Drainage Strategy</p>	<p>Defines five flood management objectives and outlines actions to achieve these and guide priorities and expenditure by Melbourne Water.</p>
<p>Melbourne Water’s Stormwater Strategy</p>	<p>Articulates the high level strategic direction and management approaches for Melbourne Water in managing stormwater in rural and urban areas to deliver multiple community outcomes.</p>

Local environmental conditions

Koo Wee Rup Longwarry Flood Protection District is an area of high conservation value as it provides wildlife corridors and habitat for threatened and endangered species and *ecological communities that have been recorded on the Department of the Environment (DoE) and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) database.*

Like all authorities, Melbourne Water must comply with relevant State and Commonwealth legislation when undertaking its works. There are five species and one ecological community protected under the EPBC Act: Helmeted Honeyeater, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Growling Grass Frog, Australian Grayling, Dwarf Galaxias and the Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh. This means the EPBC Act may apply to maintenance and capital improvement works conducted on Melbourne Water drains in the District and we must ensure we are complying with the Act before our work can start.

Compliance with the Act can involve seeking approvals that can have a bearing on our timeframes and the way we undertake our work. We are doing a number of things to make sure these EPBC listed species, ecological communities and other matters of national environmental significance are protected and our necessary drainage works can proceed as quickly as possible.

Figure 3: Southern Brown Bandicoot



Melbourne Water has worked through the EPBC Act requirements with the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to gain an exemption under the EPBC Act to proceed with the annual routine maintenance works without the need to seek further approval. Melbourne Water has developed an operational document, *Asset Management Procedure for Koo Wee Rup Longwarry Flood Protection District CORP AM P046*, which gives effect to the exemption to the requirement for referrals under the EPBC Act to conduct routine maintenance works across the entire District. Routine maintenance is defined as *'the maintenance of existing utility assets within the identified asset maintenance zones.'*

Activities outside routine maintenance works may still need to be referred which could include:

- Capital improvement/renewal works
- New or relocated infrastructure
- Expansion of maintenance footprint

For these activities our aim would be to minimise negative impacts on these EPBC listed species, ecological communities and other matters of national significance by:

- Carrying out desktop studies, field surveys and consultation with state and federal environment agencies and local experts to identify the areas where our works may affect EPBC listed species and other matters of national environmental significance;
- Working with the relevant agencies to ensure the necessary works are undertaken in a way that minimises impacts; and
- Making sure we have detailed field surveys and investigations completed so our works and mitigation measures meet regulators' requirements.

We are serious about the role we play in helping protect areas of high conservation value when carrying out our essential work.

Flood protection and drainage services

Providing a cost-effective service that meets or exceeds our customers' expectations.

Flooding and flood management

Flooding is natural and cannot always be prevented.

While flooding can result in damage to homes, businesses, critical infrastructure and farming (including livestock and crops), it can also have a positive effect on our natural environment. Flood events can replenish wetlands, groundwater and ecosystems, as well as disperse valuable nutrients.

Melbourne's waterways and drainage system cope well with most storms, however there are some storms of such intensity that not all stormwater can be accommodated in rivers, creeks and drains, which results in flooding. Flooding cannot be prevented entirely.

Our work in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry

In the district there are two main types of drains: precept and carrier drains.

Figure 4: Bunyip Main Carrier Drain



Figure 5: Dalmore Road Precept Drain



A precept drain is one that originates within the flood protection district and drains the local area. Works on precept drains are funded by the precept rate levied on ratepayers in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District.

A carrier drain originates outside the precept area, carrying water through the area and taking water from the precept drains. Works on carrier drains are part funded by the precept rate and part funded through Melbourne Water's Water and Drainage Charge.

We maintain the local and main carrier drains, precept drains, culverts, floodgate structures, occupational bridges, fences and flood warning systems in the area to provide an increased level of drainage and flood protection.

Each year we invest \$1.2 million to carry out annual maintenance activities, which includes:

- De-silting.
- Vegetation control.
- Erosion control.
- Bridge and structures maintenance.
- Debris removal.
- Repairs.

Melbourne Water also carries out capital renewal projects on its assets in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District. Examples of our major initiatives include the \$3 million repairs to the Bunyip Main Drain Road in 2012.

The level of service we provide

We are committed to delivering an accessible and responsive service to our precept customers. The following describes our key service standards for flood protection and our works.

Properties within the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District pay a precept rate for drainage and flood protection services in the area. The flood protection level of service Melbourne Water provides is directly related to the level of funding it receives through the precept rate.

Flood protection levels of service

Storms and rain events are often expressed in terms of their average reoccurrence interval (ARI). ARI is the estimated number of years between floods of a given size, which is expressed in years.

ARI is another way of expressing the likelihood of occurrence of a flood event, or the Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP). AEP is the likelihood of a flood of a given size happening in any one year. AEP is usually expressed as a percentage. ARI and AEP are both a measure of the rarity of a rainfall event.

In Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry, Melbourne Water carries out work on its two main carrier drains (Cardinia Outfall Drain and Bunyip Main Drain) to take flows from a storm event of an intensity experienced once every 7 years (1 in 7 year ARI event) in some locations and 15 years (1 in 15 year ARI event) in other locations.

Flows from local precept drains may spill more frequently. Melbourne Water maintains these precept drains to carry flows from a storm event of an intensity experienced every 1 to 2 years (1 in 2 year ARI), before they will exceed their banks and spill onto the floodplain.

This level of service compares with other rural, flat lands where typically the main drainage systems on floodplains are capable of only carrying flows with a 1 in 1 year ARI prior to exceeding their banks and spilling onto the floodplain.

Melbourne Water reviews the performance of the drainage system within the District. The level of service outlined in this charter may change over time should investigations warrant it and after engagement with local precept ratepayers.

What is a 1 in 100 year flood event?

Understanding the chance of floods occurring is important for managing flood risk. The chance of a flood of a particular size can be estimated using statistical analysis of long-term flood records or analysis of rainfall records together with computer models.

The chance of a flood occurring of a given size is described using a method called Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP); this is usually expressed as a percentage. A flood with a 1 per cent AEP has a 1 per cent chance of occurring in any given timeframe. A 1 per cent AEP flood event can also be referred to as a 1 in 100 year ARI event.

It is possible for 1 per cent flood events to occur in consecutive time periods e.g. months or years.

Why don't 1 in 100 year floods happen every 100 years?

The term '100-year flood' can be confusing as people think that it happens only once every 100 years. The truth is a big flood can happen at any time. The term '100-year flood' is really a statistical probability, as there is a 1-in-100 chance a flood this size will happen during any year. A better term would be the '1-in-100 chance flood.' The actual number of years between floods of any given size varies.

Summary of our levels of service

Service component	Level of service
Flood protection levels of service *	
Main carrier drains	1 in 7 year ARI event 1 in 15 year ARI event
Local precept drains	1 in 2 year ARI event
Flood warning alarms	Melbourne Water operates and maintains an extensive hydrometric monitoring system for collection of rainfall and water level data in the district. Flood Watches are developed in consultation with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) based on predicted rainfall and catchment conditions. Flood Warnings are developed by Melbourne Water and issued by the BoM for the Bunyip River at Iona and Cora Lynn. Melbourne Water manages flood events by activating its Flood Response Plan.
Strategic flood mapping / mitigation	Undertake floor level related flood mapping. This information is used in the flood risk asset framework. Depending on the assessed risk, potential mitigation options may be explored.

Maintenance levels of service *	
Drain de-silting	<p>Monitored on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Prioritisation for de-silting work will be considered on an as needed basis. It will be considered on a risk based approach that aligns with Melbourne Water's Corporate Risk Manual including: public safety; drainage and flood protection; community asset protection; protection of human uses such as water supply and sewage transfer; protection of key biodiversity values within and along the drainage network.</p>
Weed control	Sprayed annually to reduce vegetation.
Floodgate inspections	<p>Inspected annually for routine maintenance.</p> <p>Missing or damaged floodgates and structures repaired through the annual works program.</p>
Levee banks	<p>Inspected annually for routine maintenance.</p> <p>Missing or damaged levee banks repaired through the annual works program.</p>
Bridge inspections – major roads (and over carrier drains)	<p>Inspected prior to forecast significant rain events.</p> <p>Inspected within 2 days of significant rain events.</p> <p>Debris like major trees that threatens the structural integrity of the bridge or hydraulic function of the carrier drain will be removed within 1 to 2 days after rain events.</p>
Bridge inspections – minor roads and property access	<p>Inspected within 7 days of significant rain events.</p> <p>Debris like major trees that threatens the structural integrity of the bridge or hydraulic function of the carrier drain will be removed within 1 to 2 days after rain events.</p>
Debris removal – rubbish and minor debris	Removed in line with scheduled works program.
Maintenance tracks to drains	All weather access to Melbourne Water drains will be maintained.
Grass cutting	Grasses in mowable drains and Melbourne Water's easements will be cut twice a year, on average.
* these service levels are based on annual budget in consultation with the District Advisory Committee	

Factors that can influence the level of service we provide

The level of service we provide in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry may occasionally be affected by factors outside of our control. Wherever possible, we make allowances for these factors to avoid extended delays to carrying out our works. We also work with the relevant stakeholders to minimise the impact of these factors on our works.

Factors that can influence the level of service we provide:

- Unusual or extreme weather events such as total fire ban days, high winds or flood events that pose a safety risk to our workers, contractors and customers.
- Obligations or environmental considerations under legalisation such as the EPBC Act that may require approvals to be obtained or potentially impact the works required to manage a waterway to this standard.
- Existing road or track crossings over waterways, whether legal or not, can make it difficult to regrade waterways or drains to increase capacity and can restrict flows.
- Continued access by stock may lead to erosion and degradation of the channel, affecting hydraulic capacity and performance.
- Areas of erosion and bank collapse.
- General safety concerns.
- Availability of suitable contractors for specific types of work.

Annual works planning

Melbourne Water carries out both asset renewal and routine maintenance projects in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry.

Asset renewal projects

There is no set annual budget for renewals works – these works are planned and carried out as renewal or other improvement needs are identified.

Renewals works on precept drains are paid for out of precept rates, while 50% of the cost of works on carrier drains comes is paid for out of precept rate revenue.

Maintenance projects

Melbourne Water's annual maintenance program of about \$1.2 million includes two categories of work: scheduled work and unscheduled work.

Scheduled work

Scheduled work is routine or planned maintenance that Melbourne Water has prioritised to be undertaken throughout the year.

Melbourne Water's primary consideration in preparing its annual maintenance program is to maintain the drainage and flood protection function of the precept and carrier drains. We also consider the following factors in prioritising the scheduled work planned in the annual maintenance program:

- Protecting public safety.
- Protecting community assets in townships.
- Helping support private properties and agricultural viability.
- Impact on public amenity.
- Protecting key biodiversity values within and along the drainage network.
- Impact on water quality.

Unscheduled work

- Unscheduled work is emergency or unexpected maintenance or repair work that:
- Is required following unusual or extreme weather events.
- Is requested to be undertaken by a precept ratepayer or the Advisory Committee.

Melbourne Water will accept requests to consider undertaking unscheduled work that is routine work not already planned in the annual maintenance program.

We must consider these requests carefully, as they divert resources and funds away from scheduled work planned and agreed elsewhere in the District and as outlined in our annual maintenance plan.

How to make a request for unscheduled works

Requests for unscheduled works must be made in writing. Email correspondence will be accepted as a request made in writing. All requests must detail:

- The location of the requested work.
- The nature of the problem and why the work needs to be done. This should include information on how urgent the work is.
- The drainage and flood protection outcomes the work will achieve and the beneficiaries.

Requests shall be clearly marked 'Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Works Request' and addressed to:

Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Maintenance Coordinator
Melbourne Water
PO Box 4342, Melbourne VIC 3001
Or via email to kooweerup@melbournewater.com.au

What we will consider

Melbourne Water has a capped annual budget derived through the precept rate. Due to these limited funds, Melbourne Water cannot accommodate all requests made for unscheduled works. The factors we will consider are:

- That the work is consistent with the needs of Melbourne Water's Strategic Asset Management Plan and would have a beneficial impact on the operation of the District's flood protection system.
- That the work will prevent or reduce the risk of threats and/or failure of Melbourne Water's asset.

Notifications

Melbourne Water will provide notification to the requesting landowner within 10 working days of receiving the request.

Dispute resolution

In the event of protracted negotiations between a requesting landowner and Melbourne Water, Melbourne Water may seek the advice of the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Advisory Committee to resolve the request.

Rights and responsibilities

Valuing our work in waterways, drainage systems and floodplains and your role in protecting and improving them.

We all have a role in helping alleviate the impacts of flooding in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry.

Melbourne Water’s responsibilities

Melbourne Water is responsible for the bed and banks of the waterway, as well as managing the area of land immediate adjacent to the waterways.

Melbourne Water will manage its assets and develop and implement plans and processes to ensure that our services are provided on a reliable basis. We aim to meet or exceed customer expectations in delivering the services we provide in Koo Wee Rup, as outlined in this charter.

Your responsibilities

Landowners are responsible for providing stormwater drainage within their property boundaries and connections to the district drainage systems. The property maintenance of private drains is important to ensure that localised flooding is minimised on your land and neighbouring properties during rainfall.

We rely on your cooperation to improve our service in the District in the following ways.

Figure 6: Private drain intersecting a Precept Drain



Summary of your responsibilities

Your responsibilities	
Maintaining your drains	<p>You are responsible for the maintenance of any coverings, bridges or similar structures within your property that cover or cross our stormwater drains, pipes or culverts, unless they are owned by Melbourne Water.</p> <p>You are responsible for providing stormwater drainage within your property boundaries and connections to the district drainage system. The management and regular maintenance of private drains is the responsibility of the landholder. As a landholder, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any works carried out on your property do not negatively impact on your neighbours by changing the flow of water across property boundaries; • Contact the relevant authority, usually Melbourne Water or council, if you are planning to undertake works on any drains on your property.
Maintaining safe access	<p>When we need access to your property, that you help us maintain safe access for our staff.</p>
Notifying us of damages	<p>Advise us immediately if damage occurs to any of our drains or other assets on your property, or report deliberate damage or suspected improper activity relating to our assets, by contacting us.</p> <p>You must ensure that water discharged into Melbourne Water drains is not polluted.</p> <p>The cost of repair of damage to Melbourne Water assets by a precept ratepayer is the responsibility of the precept ratepayer.</p>
Seeking approvals for works	<p>You must obtain our consent before you undertake building, landscaping or other construction work that is over, or adjacent to our drains or other assets which may damage, interfere with or obstruct access.</p> <p>Approvals for building, landscaping or other construction work that involves building over, or adjacent to, our drains or other assets are to be requested from us in advance of any activity being undertaken on the property.</p>
Making payments	<p>You are responsible for paying the Melbourne Water precept rate as part of your retail water account by the date specified, unless you have made other payment arrangements through your retail water provider.</p> <p>If you are experiencing financial hardship you should contact your retail water provider who will provide you with information about arrangements available to assist you.</p>
Working with our people	<p>When interacting with our staff, that you treat them with courtesy and respect.</p>
Notifying us of issues	<p>Melbourne Water conducts annual weed spraying which involve the use of herbicides. Customers who have concerns relating to the sensitivity of herbicides next to their property are required to contact us to register as a sensitive user.</p>

Local councils' responsibility

Melbourne Water works closely with local councils in carrying out its role. Councils are the local planning authority, responsible for local drains, road networks, and street and property drainage that feed into the regional drains, rivers and creeks.

Local councils are responsible for all local drainage matters. Local drainage refers to drainage assets with a catchment area of approximately 200 hectares or less in a rural setting. If you have local drainage issues or are proposing to conduct local drainage works you will be required to coordinate with your council.

Applications and approvals for all minor drainage works not located on or impacting a Melbourne Water asset, need to be sought through council. Localised farm drains are the responsibility of the individual landowner and council.

Information, consultation and privacy

Ensuring that the our customers are aware of our role and can take full advantage of the services we provide

Where to find more information

We are focused on listening and responding to our customers' needs and expectations, delivering on our promises and working together to build awareness and mutual understanding.

We provide our customers with multiple ways of getting in contact with us and obtaining more information on our work in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District.

Online

Customers can obtain more information on our work in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District:

Through our website at www.melbournewater.com.au/kooweerup

Through Facebook at www.facebook.com/melbournewater

Follow us @MelbourneWater or visit Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MelbourneWater>

Interpreter and TTY services

Melbourne Water provides an interpreter service for people of non-English speaking backgrounds and a service for the hearing impaired.

For translating and interpreting service (TIS), please call 131 450

For hearing or speech impairment services, please call:

TTY/voice calls: 133 677

Speak and listen: 1300 555 727

Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Advisory Committee

The Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Advisory Committee is a representative, ratepayer-based forum made up of members of the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District to Melbourne Water.

The Advisory Committee is not a decision making body. It plays an important role in making recommendations to Melbourne Water on a range of matters relevant to ratepayers and residents living in the area. Melbourne Water will consult the Advisory Committee on the following:

- The proposed annual maintenance and renewals plan, including the prioritisation of works.
- The suitability of requests for unscheduled works that exceed the level of service specified in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District Customer Service Charter.
- Other works that Melbourne Water proposes to undertake in the District.

The Advisory Committee is convened by Melbourne Water and is made up of members of the local community, stakeholder interest groups and representatives from local council. It meets every three months.

As a group that represents ratepayer interests, customers can contact members of the Advisory Committee for more information on our work in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry. Melbourne Water publishes details on the Advisory Committee, including its members and activities, on its website.

Consulting with our customers

We aim to continually improve our consultation with the community. We evaluate our programs and provide training to our people involved in planning and delivering community consultation.

Specific projects

Melbourne Water develops communication and engagement plans for our major projects, including major renewal projects in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry. In designing our work, we commit to:

- Designing engagement programs and communication activities that reach the broadest customer base.
- Communicating openly the action taken to deliver on commitments and how customer and stakeholder feedback has shaped our program activities.
- Designing engagement programs that provide an early opportunity for customers, stakeholders and the community to influence decisions associated with our work.

Privacy

We only collect and handle personal information in order to carry out our functions and activities. We are dedicated to protecting the privacy of the personal information we collect from our customers.

The Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) requires that we collect and handle personal information in a responsible manner. Melbourne Water's Privacy Policy (2011) summarises our approach to maintaining information privacy. It also summarises how we will comply with our obligations under the Act.

For further information about our Privacy Policy, please visit our website or contact us at:

Privacy Officer
Melbourne Water
PO Box 4342, Melbourne VIC 3001
Telephone 131 722
Email privacy@melbournewater.com.au

Enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution

Providing opportunities to improve our service through your feedback.

Making an enquiry

We are committed to providing multiple opportunities for providing feedback on our service. You can contact us in a number of ways, during business hours or after hours.

By phone

For general enquiries or to report an issue with our assets, contact us on 131 722.

Overseas callers can reach us on +61 3 9679 7100.

In writing

You can write to us at: PO Box 4342, Melbourne VIC 3001.

Through social media

We have a number of online and social media contact channels for our customers. You can make enquiries or complaints:

Through our website at www.melbournewater.com.au

Through Facebook at www.facebook.com/melbournewater

Through Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MelbourneWater>

Making a complaint

Melbourne Water seeks to provide excellent service. It is our aim to resolve concerns as soon as possible and to provide a robust and transparent complaints handling process.

Complaints will be accepted verbally to our Inquiry Centre on 131 722 and in writing through a variety of channels such as face to face, telephone, email, website feedback submission, social media sources, letter or fax.

Complainant's details will be dealt with in confidence and in accordance with the privacy legislation and any other Acts pertaining to how information should be handled by Melbourne Water. Details of the complainant will only be known by those directly concerned in resolution.

Reviewing complaints and disputes

Customers can request an internal review of our response if they are not satisfied with the response provided. A senior representative of the organisation (a direct report to a General Manager) will review the complaint, complaint handling and response provided to the complainant.

Seeking external resolution of disputes

Where resolution of the complaint cannot be agreed, our customers can seek external resolution.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) provides a service that can help you resolve common neighbourhood disputes involving fences, trees, animals, noise and drainage issues. This free and confidential service is funded by the Victorian Government.

To contact the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV), call 1800 658 528 or visit the DSCV website: www.reachingagreement.disputes.vic.gov.au for more information.

If you are unable to resolve your dispute via the DSCV, you may contact the **Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV)**, an industry funded free to the public complaint resolution service. EWOV has the power to investigate and resolve disputes between Victorian electricity, gas and water customers and their service providers.

EWOV contact details

Freecall: 1800 500 509
 Freefax: 1800 500 549
 Interpreter: 131 450
 NRS: 133 677
 Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Postal address:

Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Ltd
 GPO Box 469 Melbourne 3001

Response times

Melbourne Water will respond to your enquiries as promptly as possible. We aim to meet the following response times.

Response times	
Written and online correspondence	Within 10 working days of receipt
Social media enquiries	Within 3 working days of receipt
Verbal enquiries	Within 3 working days of being placed

If we need additional time to resolve your enquiry, we will contact you to keep you informed of the additional time required and the reasons for the delay.

Reporting on our performance

Providing information to our customers on how we are performing.

Assessing our performance

Melbourne Water's Waterways Communication and Engagement Strategy sets out a number of targets for organisational performance in how we work with our customers. Importantly, we want customer and stakeholder feedback to inform our activities and to maintain at least 70 per cent satisfaction rating with our waterways.

Melbourne Water will track its performance in customer service in Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry through two key ways:

- Regularly at the conclusion of interactions with individual precept ratepayers.
- Through an independently conducted survey of randomly selected precept ratepayers.

Our performance will be publicly reported in our Annual Performance Review for the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection District, outlined below.

Corporate level reporting

Melbourne Water's performance in providing flood protection and drainage services to our precept ratepayers in Koo Wee Rup is reported each year in our Annual Report. Our customers can view the Annual Report at www.melbournewater.com.au/publications

Specific reporting for precept ratepayers

Melbourne Water is committed to providing information to its precept ratepayers on its performance. All reporting will be published on www.melbournewater.com.au/kooweerup.

Proposed annual works program

In June each year, Melbourne Water will present its proposed annual works program to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee members will have the opportunity to comment on how the proposed works satisfies Melbourne Water's primary obligation to providing drainage and flood protection works that meet the carrying capability of the precept and carrier drains as outlined in the flood protection levels of service summary in this document.

In July each year, Melbourne Water will publish a high level summary of its agreed annual work program.

Annual Performance Review

In July each year, Melbourne Water will publicly report on its assessment of its performance against the levels of service specified in this charter. This public report will also track our performance in customer service.

Quarterly bulletins

Melbourne Water will produce and distribute an update for precept ratepayers, once a quarter following Advisory Committee meetings. These updates will provide information on the work of the Advisory Committee and any proposed changes to Melbourne Water's work program.

Definitions

Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)	AEP is the likelihood of a flood of a given size happening in any one year. AEP is usually expressed as a percentage. A measure of the rarity of a rainfall event.
Average Reoccurrence Interval (ARI)	ARI is the estimated number of years between floods of a given size which is expressed in years. ARI is another way of expressing the likelihood of occurrence of a flood event (see AEP). A measure of the rarity of a rainfall event.
Carrier drain	A drain that originates outside the precept area, carrying water through the area and taking water from the precept drains.
Complaint	A written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, or proposed action, or a failure to act by Melbourne Water, its employees or contractors. This includes failure by Melbourne Water to observe its published policies, practices or procedures.
Customer	A customer is any individual or group who receives service(s) from us. Our customers include the metropolitan retail water businesses, other water authorities, land developers and businesses that divert river water. The 1.8 million households who receive waterways and drainage services are also our customers.
EWOV	Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria an alternative dispute resolution scheme. It is not a government body, but a not-for-profit company. It receives, investigates and resolves customer complaints about electricity, natural gas, bottled gas (LPG) and water companies operating in Victoria.
Floodplain	A floodplain is an area of low-lying land adjacent to a waterway. It is normally dry, but is subject to flooding during periods of high rainfall.
Personal information	Information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), that is recorded in any form and whether true or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can be reasonably ascertained, from the information or opinion but does not include personal health information.
Precept drain	A drain that originates within the flood protection district and drains the local area.
Stormwater	Rainfall that runs off roofs, roads and other surfaces where it flows into gutters, streams, rivers and creeks, and eventually into the bays. This water can carry contaminants such as plastic bags, detergents, nutrients and heavy metals.
Victoria Ombudsman	The Victorian Ombudsman is an independent officer for the Victorian Parliament who investigates complaints about state government departments, most statutory authorities and local government.