



# Local Government Charter

June 2018





# Foreword

## Melbourne Water

This *Local Government Charter* outlines our ongoing commitments to Local Government as we deliver highly valued water services across the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

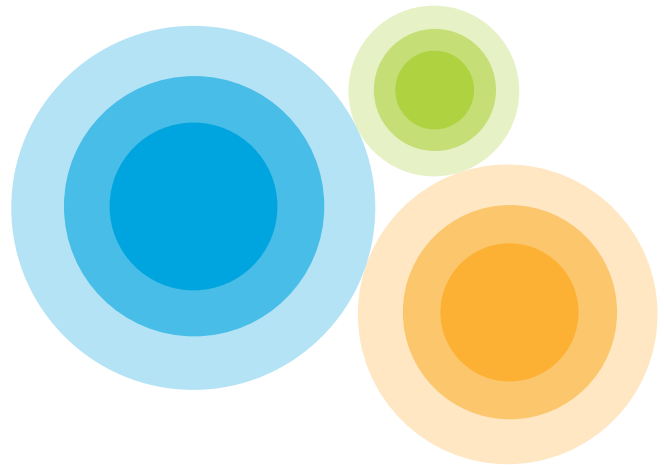
It builds on progress made under our first Charter and strengthens our commitments to be transparent and accountable. It sets out what we will work on and how we will measure and report on progress to Local Government.

We value our strong relationship with Local Government and will continue to partner and work together to enhance life and liveability across the region.

We greatly appreciate the involvement and assistance of the Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government in developing this Charter.

**Gavan O'Neill**  
General Manager  
Customer and Strategy

**Tim Wood**  
General Manager  
Waterways and Land



## Municipal Association of Victoria

Local Government and Melbourne Water have a long history of working together to deliver valued water services across the region.

This *Local Government Charter* demonstrates this strong and enduring relationship. It will continue to support responsive and accountable services to Local Government and their communities.

It will also provide new opportunities for Local Government and Melbourne Water to work together.

Melbourne Water is to be commended on how it engages with Local Government and how it has developed this Charter.

**Rob Spence**  
Chief Executive Officer

# About this Charter

Melbourne Water is committed to enhancing our relationship with Local Government, meeting our service commitments and improving how we work with, and alongside, councils.

Our Local Government Charter outlines how we will continue to engage and work with Local Government to deliver water services across the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

This Charter sets out:

- How we will work with Local Government
- What we will focus on to improve our services and relationships
- Our response timeframes to enquiries and requests from councils
- How we will monitor and review this Charter
- How to contact us or provide feedback

This Charter was developed in consultation with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Local Government. It was informed by our Local Government Charter Consultative Panel<sup>1</sup> and from key findings from our Quarterly Reputation Survey.

This Charter will not replace any existing agreements and associated reporting obligations currently in place, except where there is clear agreement by all parties to do so.

## Our customer focus

Melbourne Water is committed to putting customers at the centre of everything we do. Our success is dependent on our ability to build strong and effective relationships with our customers and stakeholders.

We will continue to build stronger relationships with Local Government with a robust approach to relationship management and transformation of our digital platforms. We will further improve our customer service to deliver real value to Local Government and the community.



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<sup>1</sup> The ten councils on the Local Government Charter Consultative Panel were: Baw Baw Shire Council; Boroondara City Council; Brimbank City Council; Knox City Council; Macedon Ranges Shire Council; Maribyrnong City Council; Mornington Peninsula Shire Council; Whittlesea City Council; Wyndham City Council; and Yarra City Council.

# Melbourne Water and Local Government delivery of water services

Melbourne Water and Local Government have a long history of working together in the Port Phillip and Westernport Region. We value our work with councils to design and deliver a range of services. Council support is essential for us to plan and deliver our works and maintenance programs.

There are 38 councils within the Port Phillip and Westernport Region. While all councils provide some common services, each is distinct with services responding to local circumstances. Councils undertake stormwater, drainage, flood and integrated water management (IWM).

Melbourne Water’s vision is ‘to enhance life and liveability’. We have provided safe, secure and affordable water services to Melbourne for over 125 years. We treat and supply drinking and recycled water, remove and treat most of Melbourne’s sewage, manage waterways and oversee major drainage systems across the region. We are involved in land use planning to make sure new developments protect and enhance nearby waterways.

Together, Melbourne Water and Local Government will respond to the challenges of a growing city, increasing urbanisation, climate change, evolving customer expectations, and a changing economy. For Melbourne to remain one of the world’s most liveable cities, we need to continue to work together to deliver highly valued water services across the region.

## Our customer services

The diagram below demonstrates our core services and key activities where we have the most interaction with the Local Government sector.

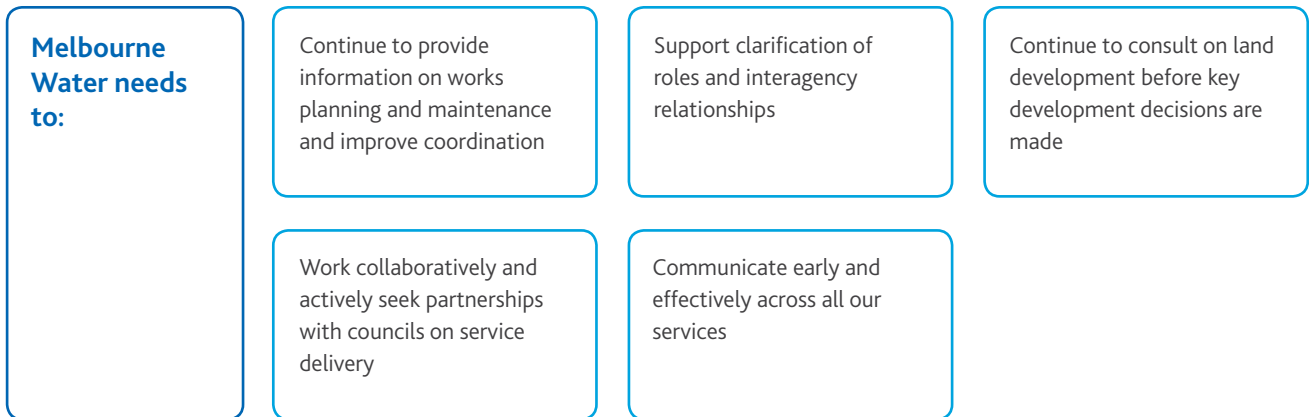
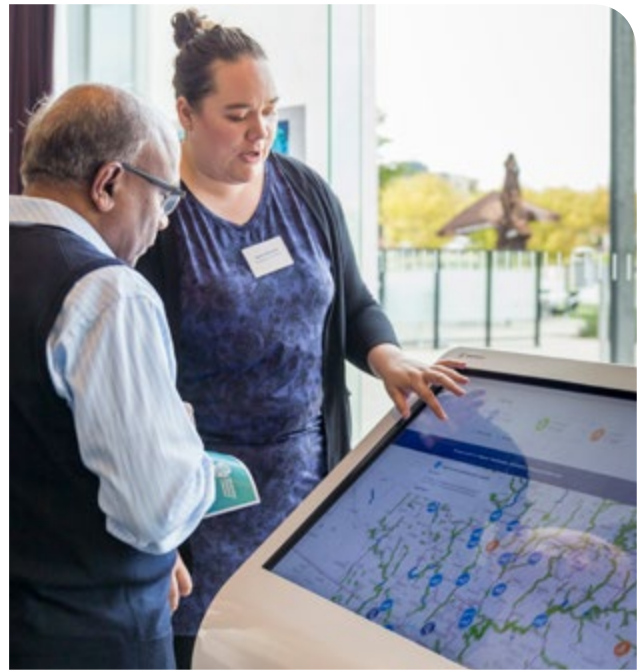
SERVICES	Drinking water supply	Sewerage and recycled water management	Stormwater and drainage management	Waterways management
<b>KEY ACTIVITIES</b>				
Land development			●	●
Land management, leases and licences	●	●	●	●
Environmental water management and diversions				●
Incident response		●	●	●
Incentives program			●	●



# Melbourne Water's commitment to Local Government

The relationship between Melbourne Water and Local Government relies on effective communication and collaboration. In our second Charter, we have set out what we will work on to further improve our relationship and performance.

Councils are continuing to look for Melbourne Water to be responsive and easy to deal with, to improve transparency on decision-making and demonstrate innovation.



# How we will work

A strong relationship with Local Government is critical to what we do and the water services that we provide. Underpinning our working relationship with Local Government is Melbourne Water's ongoing commitment to four key principles: Responsiveness, Innovation, Transparency, and Easy to Deal With.

## Responsiveness – we will:

- Respond to your enquiries and keep you informed on progress (see "Response timeframes"):
  - This includes a timely acknowledgement of receipt of any query or request or other contact and a demonstrated commitment to resolving that query or request
- Seek to resolve issues in the first instance or as quickly as possible
- Proactively communicate and work collaboratively to address any issues in response to community and media enquiries
- Use your feedback to continually improve our services and relationships

## Innovation – we will:

- Provide leadership, share data and technical expertise on drainage and waterway management, whole-of-catchment flood mapping and planning, IWM and climate change adaptation
- Partner to deliver innovative solutions in urban water management, such as stormwater capture and urban cooling
- Provide information online about Melbourne Water's assets, land, works and priorities by council:  
**[melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/whats-going-your-council](http://melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/whats-going-your-council)**
- Provide guidance and support to help inform your decisions, such as advice on preparing business cases for Melbourne Water assisted projects

## Transparency – we will:

- Provide information and advice in a consistent and timely manner
- Make consistent decisions and be more transparent about the decision-making process and the reasons for our decisions
- Engage in timely, meaningful, well-targeted consultation and collaboration to inform our activities and programs and achieve better outcomes

## Easy to deal with – we will:

- Facilitate strategic and operational meetings to discuss respective activities, works programs and maintenance schedules and resolve any issues
- Provide a list online of key contacts throughout the business who can assist with specialist advice and support:  
**[melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/council-key-contacts](http://melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/council-key-contacts)**
- Respect each other's knowledge and expertise related to stormwater, drainage, waterway and other assets, and existing relationships with stakeholders, including the community
- Further develop the role of Relationship Managers to actively build relationships with Local Government
- Improve internal information sharing on Local Government issues as part of succession planning and staff handovers

## Elster Creek Catchment Flood Management Action Plan

Melbourne Water, together with the Cities of Port Phillip, Kingston, Glen Eira and Bayside, are working with local communities to implement a joint action plan for the Elster Creek catchment that aims at reducing flood risks and building community resilience. This is an exemplar project where Melbourne Water

and councils have adopted a whole-of-catchment approach in managing flood risks regardless of administrative boundaries. Implementation of the action plan will provide optimal social, environmental and economic benefits to the community and improve collaborative inter-agency relationships

# What we will work on

Melbourne Water will work across five key themes in implementing this Charter. Selected performance measures will help us track and better report on progress with implementing this Charter.

## Coordination of works programs and maintenance activities – we will:

- Provide online information and schedules on our works programs and activities
- Undertake strategic and operational planning meetings with councils
- Improve coordination of maintenance activities, by establishing agreed works planning commitments, sharing knowledge and best practice to obtain better outcomes

### Performance measures:

- At least 15 strategic planning meetings held with councils per year
- At least 10 work planning commitments agreed with councils per year

## Clarification of roles and relationships – we will:

- Actively participate in, and support, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's review of Melbourne Urban Stormwater Institutional Arrangements (i.e. the 60 hectare review)
- Actively participate in other reviews and processes to clarify roles and relationships

### Performance measures:

- General Manager Integrated Planning actively involved in the DELWP steering committee
- Actively participate in bimonthly meetings of the DELWP working group on the review of Melbourne Urban Stormwater Institutional Arrangements



## Collaboration and partnership on design and delivery of services – we will:

- Partner and work with councils on flood mapping and mitigation programs
- Participate in IWM metropolitan forums and work with other agencies and councils on IWM projects
- Lead and partner with councils on improving waterway management

### Performance measures:

- 100% increase in number of catchments that are flood mapped by Melbourne Water or in partnership with others to improve understanding of current and future risks by 2021 (versus 2015/16 baseline) [Regional Flood Management Strategy target]
- Waterways that have undergone active management will be maintained or improved against an established baseline by 2021 [Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan target]

Note: flood mapping will be: completed for the whole of the catchment; completed to agreed standards; delivered for priority catchments; and made publicly available.

## Consultation on land use planning and development – we will:

- Meet and consult with councils to discuss key land use planning and land development decisions before they are made
- Lead preparation of Development Services Schemes to master plan drainage infrastructure for new urban developments
- Actively partner and work with other agencies and councils on planning for sea level rise and climate change adaptation activities

### Performance measures:

- Statutory planning referral response times
- Development Services Schemes prepared per year
- Land area consent for Statement of Compliance

## Communication and engagement – we will:

- Continue to improve the way in which we communicate and engage with Local Government and use traditional and digital platforms
- Enhance our reporting on progress against the Charter and performance measures

### Performance measures:

- Six-monthly reporting on progress against the Charter and performance measures
- Quarterly newsletters on programs and projects of interest to Local Government



# Response timeframes

We are committed to communicating in a timely manner and being as responsive as possible to issues and concerns raised by councils. For general enquiries and requests, we will respond in the timeframes set out below.

## Response timeframe for general enquiries

Response types	Time
Telephone messages (i.e. callbacks)	Close of business the following business day
Email or written correspondence acknowledgment* and receipt	2 Business Days
Updates on progress / investigation	3 Business Days, or as mutually agreed
Dispute / complaints resolution	10 Business Days, or as mutually agreed

\* With initial consideration of issues, next steps and response timeframes

Some matters are governed by statutory response timeframes and we will strive to meet those timeframes in each case. More complex requests or investigations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

# Managing differences

We will work cooperatively and constructively with Local Government to implement this Charter.

In the event of any dispute or complaint, we will in the first instance seek to resolve any differences with the relevant council to ensure they are provided with the service consistent with this Charter.

Following initial correspondence and discussions, we will meet with the council and work towards an agreed resolution.

If council is still dissatisfied, we will escalate the complaint and review the resolution you were offered. This may involve escalation to a more senior member of staff or the appointment of a case manager to oversee a review of the dispute and develop an agreed course of action.

# Monitoring and review

We will continue to improve our systems to better monitor and report on our performance.

We will report every six months on our performance against the Charter principles, themes and performance measures.

This information will be available on our website:

**[melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government](http://melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government)**

This Charter will be reviewed every two years, in consultation with Local Government, to evaluate its effectiveness and discuss Local Government priority issues.



## Contact information



**Phone** 131 722

**Email** [local.government@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:local.government@melbournewater.com.au)

**Online** [melbournewater.com.au/about-us/contact-us](http://melbournewater.com.au/about-us/contact-us)

**Mail** Customer Service Centre  
Melbourne Water  
PO Box 4342  
Melbourne 3001

Our Relationship Managers are our main point of contact for councils. To contact your Relationship Manager, please call 131 722 or access details on "contacts by council" at our website:

**[melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/council-key-contacts](http://melbournewater.com.au/about-us/our-customers/local-government/council-key-contacts)**

We understand the value and importance of personal relationships between councils and Melbourne Water, and encourage continuation of such arrangements on a day to day basis.





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