

Lower Murray Water

CUSTOMER CHARTER SUMMARY (URBAN)

A summary of your rights
and obligations



*'Meeting our
customers' needs,
now and into
the future.'*

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Make every drop count!

DEAR CUSTOMER

About The Charter

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Authority delivers clean, fresh drinking water to your taps and takes away wastewater, treating it and then returning it safely to the environment. We are constantly reviewing and improving our service to customers and aim to deliver good quality, efficient service at a fair price.

Lower Murray Water has in place a Customer Charter which is designed to improve our services to you, our customer, and gives specific information about standards that we aim to meet for the service delivery of water and sewage disposal. We also want to advise you of your responsibilities in assisting us to deliver our services effectively.

The Customer Charter was developed with significant input from our Customer Consultative Committees and in conjunction with the Essential Services Commission. This leaflet summarises the Customer Charter and provides simple, clear guidelines as to your rights and obligations as a customer of Lower Murray Water.

For More Information

We have a wide range of information about our work and the water and sewerage industry, including our Customer Charter. If you would like to know more you may wish to visit our web site at www.lmw.vic.gov.au to read our complete Customer Charter, or you may contact us at any of our offices. The information contained in the Customer Charter and this summary leaflet will be made available in languages other than English if requested.

Contact Us

All office contact details can be found on the back cover of this booklet.

For language interpreter services Customers can call 13 14 50.

Customers who are deaf or have hearing impairment or a speech/communication impairment may contact Lower Murray Water by calling through the National Relay Service (NRS) using modem or textphone (TTY) by dialling 133 677 and quoting 03 5051 3400.

Wise Use Of Water

Using water wisely can save money and the environment. By making 'Every Drop Count' and a little common sense around the home, is all it takes.

Cont'd...

Lower Murray Water has information available on how to conserve water in the home and garden. You can gain access to this information by logging onto our web site at www.lmw.vic.gov.au or call into any of our offices during business hours.

YOUR RIGHTS AS OUR CUSTOMER

Your Right To Water Services

Lower Murray Water aims to supply you with water that is clear, free from objectionable odour and taste and complies with health related parameters of the Safe Drinking Water Act 2003 guidelines, except in circumstances beyond Lower Murray Water's control, or when the supply is not intended for human consumption. Recycled water will meet the guidelines appropriate for its use.

Monitoring Water Quality

Lower Murray Water conducts a Water Quality Monitoring Program and report the results as per the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act 2003. In addition Lower Murray Water issues public notices regarding water quality monitoring in all local press on a quarterly basis. These results are also placed on our Web site.

Testing Your Water Quality

Upon your request, Lower Murray Water will test the adequacy of water quality at the meter connected to your property. These tests may involve some expense to you. However, if the quality is found to be below the prescribed standard Lower Murray Water will pay for the cost of the test and rectify the sub-standard quality subject to or except:

- When the problem stems from a maintenance problem that is your responsibility.
- When the water supply has been restricted.
- When Lower Murray Water institutes its Drought Management Procedures.
- In an Emergency.

Your Right To Sewerage Services

Lower Murray Water will provide you with sewerage services in accordance with the Customer Service Code and take reasonable care to operate the sewerage collection and transfer system so that odours are not prevalent.

Your Right To Trade Waste Services

Liquid waste discharged from factories and commercial businesses is known as trade waste. You may make use of Lower Murray Water's Sewerage Services for the discharge of Trade Waste which complies with Lower Murray Water's Trade Waste requirements.

Businesses discharging trade waste into the Lower Murray Water's sewers are required to enter into a Trade Waste Agreement.

This agreement is designed to protect public health, the sewers, the operation of our sewage plants and the environment. Further information may be obtained from any Lower Murray Water Office.

Your Right To Be Notified On Price Changes

Lower Murray Water will notify you as soon as possible of any changes to usage prices and/or service charges. Lower Murray Water will make a public statement detailing any change in charges, prior to the change taking effect. These changes will be available on the Lower Murray Water web site.

Your Right To Continuous Service

You may ring a 24 hour telephone contact service every day of the year to deal with Water, Sewerage and Trade Waste emergencies. This emergency number is a free call on 1800 808 830. All interruptions and emergencies will be restored as quickly as possible.

What Is An Interruption?

When referred to in this brochure, an interruption is:

- for water supply, a total loss of water supply to your property.
- for sewerage service, an inability to dispose of sewage through the sewer pipes on your property into Lower Murray Water's sewerage system.

Lower Murray Water aims to limit unplanned interruptions which are due to a failure in its water system to a maximum of 5 per year per property and to a maximum of 3 per year per property in respect to our sewer system.

Lower Murray Water aims to attend to water main bursts and leaks, sewer spills and blockages within 1 hour of being notified

Note: In some areas attendance at an interruption within 1 hour of being notified may not be possible if Lower Murray Water is responding to a previously notified emergency.

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Where there is a burst or leak which affects your property, Lower Murray Water aims to restore an interruption to your water service within 5 hours of being notified.

Lower Murray Water also aims to clear sewer blockages in Lower Murray Water's sewer pipe, within 5 hours and contain any sewage spills within 5 hours of being notified.

Lower Murray Water will minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to services by restoring service as soon as possible and providing information regarding the interruption on the 24 hour telephone contact service (1800 808 830).

In the event of planned/unplanned interruptions to your water service, Lower Murray Water will provide an emergency supply of water for drinking purposes upon your request.

Your Right to Register Health or Special Needs

If you rely on water for a life support machine, please contact us. Once you register with us we will contact you and give you 4 business days notice prior to any planned interruption to your water supply. Lower Murray Water will assist you in organising alternative arrangements during planned interruptions, if requested.

Lower Murray Water will contact customers registered as soon as possible in the event of an unplanned interruption.

LOWER MURRAY WATER'S POWERS

Under the Water Act 1989 Lower Murray Water have powers to require property owners to correct faults in their plumbing, remove trees and contribute to the cost of works we may undertake. These powers are listed in the complete Customer Charter.

CHARGES AND BILLING

What Your Bill Contains

You can expect to receive accounts that are legible and clear. Accounts will be itemised and include information as detailed below, where applicable:

- details of quarterly service charges for water and sewerage;
- the date and result of the current meter reading, or if the reading is an estimation, a clear statement that the reading is an estimation.

- the volume of water and the usage period for which you are being charged;
- the amount you are required to pay and the due date by which you are required to pay it; and
- the ways in which you can pay the account and information about help which may be available if you are experiencing difficulties in paying.

As the owner of a residential property you are responsible for any fixed service charges and water usage if the property is not tenanted.

Residential tenants are responsible for water usage where the water supplied has been separately metered and your landlord has informed us that you are a tenant.

Note: Tenants only pay usage charges. Landlords are responsible for service charges.

When You Will Be Billed

Accounts are rendered on a quarterly basis in July, October January and April, except where a Customer vacates during a billing cycle.

Lower Murray Water may, on request, bill commercial customers with high water usage, or high trade waste or sewage disposal more frequently.

When Payment Is Due

Customers must pay the amount set out in an account within 28 days of receiving the account, unless an alternative payment arrangement is made or a dispute over payment is currently being investigated.

How Payment Can Be Made

You may pay an account by any of the following methods:

- At a Post Office or licensed postal agency.
- At any Lower Murray Water office.
- At selected Newsagents registered as a BillExpress participant.
- By mail to any Lower Murray Water office.
- By Direct Debit.
- At www.postbillpay.com.au or telephone on 13 18 16.
- BPay.
- At the Service ATM at most Coles Supermarkets.
- Through a provider of income support eg. Centrelink.

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Flexible Payment Plans

Lower Murray Water will make flexible payment plans available to you in accordance with your capacity to pay. Flexible payment plans offered by Lower Murray Water will:

- state how the amount of payments has been calculated;
- state the period over which you will pay the agreed amounts;
- specify the amount to be paid;
- be able to be renegotiated at your request if there is a demonstrated change in circumstances; and
- be confirmed in writing to you prior to or as soon as practicable after the flexible payment plan commences.

Lower Murray Water may not offer you a flexible payment plan if you have, in the previous 12 months, had 2 flexible payment plans cancelled due to non-payment unless you can provide reasonable assurance to Lower Murray Water that you will comply with the plan.

Payment Difficulties

Lower Murray Water has a range of options to assist you if you are experiencing hardship in paying your account. You may obtain information on these options, and where eligible, be considered for such assistance. Please contact us if you would like to know more.

If you are having difficulty paying your account or your account is in arrears, you may inform Lower Murray Water that you wish to pay your account by instalments. Lower Murray Water will offer an instalment plan which is consistent with your capacity to pay.

Providing Information About Concessions

If you hold a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, or similar, you may be eligible for Government funded concessions on some charges. For details of eligibility, contact any Lower Murray Water Office.

Organising For You To Make Advance Payments

We can design an advance payment scheme for you if you prefer not to pay your account in a lump sum. For information about this service, please contact us. If you make advance payments your quarterly account will show the amount to which your account is in debit or credit.

ACTIONS FOR NON-PAYMENTS

Debt Recovery Action

Lower Murray Water will make all reasonable efforts to help you pay your account. However, if you have not paid your account following the receipt of a final notice, then Lower Murray Water may take legal action or restrict your water supply.

Limits On Restriction

Limits on restriction are imposed by the Customer Service code including those listed below.

Lower Murray Water will not restrict your water supply:

- without providing to you a 48 hour restriction notice;
- if you need water for a life-support machine;
- on a Friday or a day of or before a public holiday; or
- if you are a tenant and your landlord owes the amount unpaid.

A complete list of limits on restriction can be found in the full Customer Service Charter.

Minimum Flow Rate During Restriction

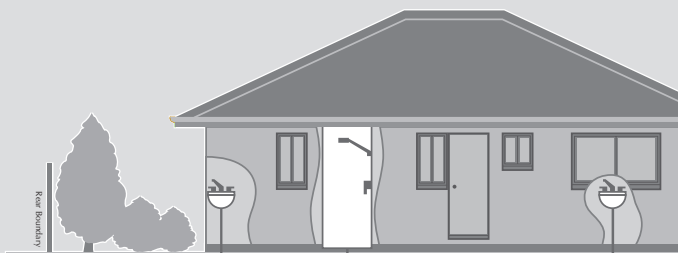
The restricted flow rate will be no less than 2 litres per minute measured at the tap closest to the water meter. If the restricted flow rate is likely to cause a health hazard, call us at any of our offices.

Restoring Supply

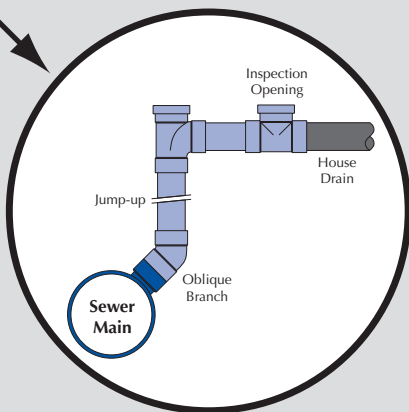
Lower Murray Water will reinstate its supply of restricted services on the payment of all outstanding fees and charges, or in extenuating circumstances by the establishment of a mutually agreeable arrangement for the payment of outstanding amounts.

Where payments for reinstatement of restricted supply are receipted before 12 noon, supply will be restored on the same day. Where payments are receipted after 12 noon, supply will be restored on the next business day.

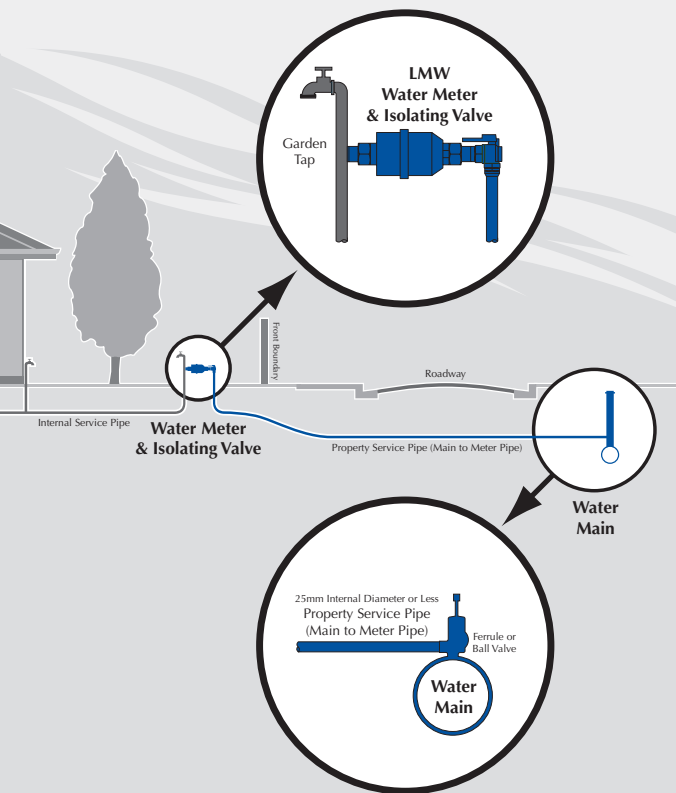
SEWER AND WATER MAINT






Sewer
Main



MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES



-  **Area of Consideration for Reimbursement**
-  **Owner's Full Responsibility**
-  **LMW's Full Maintenance Responsibility**

METERS

Why You Have A Meter

The supply of water to your property by Lower Murray Water must be measured by a water meter supplied by Lower Murray Water. Your usage shown on the account is calculated by reading the property's water meter.

Ensuring Access

You must ensure that your meter is readily accessible for reading and maintenance.

If Lower Murray Water is unable to gain access to read your meter, you will be requested to read your meter and advise Lower Murray Water of the reading. If you refuse or fail to read your meter when requested to do so, Lower Murray Water may make an estimate of the probable reading based on historical data relevant to your property, but may exercise its right to require you to provide access.

Lower Murray Water will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that you have an actual meter reading every billing cycle or otherwise at least once every 12 months.

Testing Your Meter

You may request that we test your meter if you think it is reading inaccurately. You must initially pay the cost of the test.

If the meter is found to be inaccurate, as per the standards specified in the Customer Charter, Lower Murray Water will replace it and refund the cost of the test.

We will also refund or credit any amount you were overcharged as well as providing the meter test results within 5 business days.

Estimated Meter Readings

If a meter is found to be inoperative, an account for water usage may be estimated, based on historic consumption. If the meter is inoperative due to normal wear and tear, i.e. not due to wilful damage caused by the Customer. Lower Murray Water will replace the meter at no expense to you.

ENTRY ON TO YOUR PROPERTY

Your Rights And Obligations Concerning Entry To Your Land

The Water Act 1989 requires you to allow the entry, without notice, of any Lower Murray Water Employee or Contractor onto your property for any of the following reasons:

- Meter reading or replacement.
- Trade Waste inspections or sampling.
- Surveying.
- Restricting or reinstating supply.
- Lower Murray Water has reasonable grounds to believe that you are acting illegally.
- An emergency.

If Lower Murray Water needs to enter your property to carry out works or for reasons other than those listed above, we aim to give you 7 days notice, unless you agree to a shorter period of notice. Please note that works may commence on or after the date given in the notice.

Times Of Entry

Lower Murray Water employees or contractors will not enter your property except between the hours of 7.30am and 6.00pm unless you provide consent, except in the case of an emergency or Lower Murray Water has reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of the Water Act 1989.

For trade waste inspections, we can enter your property at any reasonable time.

Informing Lower Murray Water Of Dangers

You are requested to inform Lower Murray Water Employees and Contractors of anything on the property that may be dangerous, for example a guard dog, or hazardous situation.

Identification

Our employees wear the Lower Murray Water uniform, with monogrammed lettering visible. Employees will identify themselves by name and produce appropriate identification upon request.

LOWER MURRAY WATER'S WORKS

Right To Be Informed Of Works

Some interruptions are necessary to allow the installation of new services or to carry out maintenance works. We try to organise these planned interruptions to occur at times that will cause least disruption for the majority of customers.

If an interruption is planned, we will inform you when the interruption will occur, and how long it is likely to last for at least 2 business days in advance.

Right To Have Your Property Or Street Restored

Where works are undertaken on your property, Lower Murray Water will aim to minimise damage, reduce inconvenience and restore your property. Employees or Contractors will only stay on your property as long as is reasonably necessary.

Safety Fencing And Lighting

Any works we carry out will be properly fenced and lit so that they do not constitute a hazard. This will be carried out in accordance with the Vic Roads Roadwork Signing Code of Practice and the Occupational Health & Safety regulations or other required safety standards.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAINTENANCE

Water Supply - Who Is Responsible?

Lower Murray Water is responsible for maintenance (repairs and/or replacement) of the property service pipe (including galvanised iron service pipes) 25mm internal diameter or less which includes all fixtures and fittings up to and including the meter assembly or if no meter is installed, the property boundary. This is the area shown as dark blue on the diagram on pages 10 & 11.

Lower Murray Water will only accept responsibility of the above property service pipe maintenance for a maximum of 60 metres, provided that the service pipe is in a road reserve.

Where a parent meter is installed servicing child meters to multiple properties, Lower Murray Water is responsible for maintenance (repairs and/or replacement) of the property service pipe (including galvanised iron service pipes) 25mm internal diameter or less which includes all fixtures and fittings up to and including the parent meter assembly only.

To find out more about water service responsibilities where a service pipe is greater than 25mm internal diameter contact any Lower Murray Water office.

Clearance Of Sewer Blockages

It is your responsibility to engage the services of a registered plumber to rectify sewer blockages which may occur within the House Connection Drain or House Connection Branch.

If a blockage in your House Connection Drain or House Connection Branch is found by your plumber to be due to a failure in Lower Murray Water's area of sewerage responsibility, Lower Murray Water will pay the plumber reasonable costs, which will normally be the standard service charge. This payment is subject to the plumber lodging a signed Blockage Notice with Lower Murray Water prior to the commencement of works or on the first business day following a weekend or public holiday.

Sewerage Service - Who Is Responsible?

Lower Murray Water is responsible for the maintenance (repairs and/or replacement) of the sewer main and Oblique Branch (OB) joint or maintenance hole connection point which connects your house to Lower Murray Water's sewerage system. This is the area shown as dark blue on the diagram on pages 10 & 11.

You are responsible for maintenance to all plumbing pipes and fixtures on or serving your property, from the Oblique Branch (OB) joint or maintenance hole connection point. Note that this connection could be on public or private land outside your property boundary and may, in some instances, include a combined drain.

Financial Reimbursement Scheme... Reducing Costs

For each separate repair and/or replacement carried out between the Oblique Branch (OB) joint or maintenance hole connection point and the commencement of your House Connection Drain (as determined by Lower Murray Water), that exceeds \$500 in relation to a single maintenance event, Lower Murray Water may pay costs in excess of \$500 (see conditions). This area is shown as light blue on the diagram on pages 10 & 11.

These Conditions Apply...

Financial assistance will only be considered if your plumber has obtained a Financial Reimbursement Scheme Job Number from Lower Murray Water. This number is essential and must be attached to your plumber's final account when presented to Lower Murray Water for assessment.

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If you need to authorise a plumber to conduct emergency maintenance works out of hours which may become eligible for our financial assistance, it is essential that prior to commencing works your plumber contacts our 24 Hour Emergency Service on 1800 808 830 to register work details. Your plumber must then, as early as possible on the next business day, obtain a Financial Reimbursement Job Number from Lower Murray Water in order that the works may be assessed, and eligibility for reimbursement of costs may be determined.

If the necessary works are covered by a current Plumbing Industry Commission Mandatory Compliance Certificate, the plumber who provided the certificate is responsible for workmanship for a period of six years, thus financial assistance may not be offered.

Assistance will not cover costs incurred where buildings or structures have been placed over Lower Murray Water assets.

Please also note:

Only Lower Murray Water or its Contractors are legally permitted to work in the areas shown as dark blue on the diagram on pages 10 & 11.

Your plumber remains totally responsible for appropriate insurance and for carrying out work in a safe manner.

All plumbing works on pipes or fixtures connected to Lower Murray Water's water or sewerage system which are your maintenance responsibility, must in accordance with the Act, be conducted by a licensed Plumber, or as may occasionally occur in specialised circumstances, by Lower Murray Water or its Contractors.

Water at an Adequate Flow Rate

Under normal operating conditions your water supplied from a water main or recycle water main owned by Lower Murray Water can be expected at an adequate flow rate.

We aim to supply water and recycled water at or above the following flow rates:

Diameter of the meter (mm)	20	25	32	40	50
Minimum Flow Rate (Litres/Minute)*	20	35	60	90	160

*As measured by Lower Murray Water or a Licensed Plumber, on the downstream side of the outlet of the water meter or at the nearest tap to the meter assembly.

These flow rates are not applicable to fire services.

The above flow rates may not be achieved in the following situations:

- If there is a planned or an unplanned interruption to your water supply.
- If there is a water shortage due to:
 - a drought which causes restriction of the amount of water available to Lower Murray Water in its Bulk Entitlement,
 - peak summer demand,
 - any other unavoidable cause.
 - when water restrictions are applied by Lower Murray Water due to high temperature.
- When the section of the property service pipe which is your responsibility to maintain is damaged or in poor condition. (Contact us at any office if you are unsure which sections of your service pipes you are responsible for maintaining).
- If you are supplied by a private main.
- Where conditions exist which are beyond the control of Lower Murray Water.
- If Lower Murray Water has restricted supply via the installation of a restrictive meter.
- If recycled water is reduced due to shortage or is reduced in accordance with Lower Murray Water's permitted use rules.
- Where you have agreed via a written agreement to accept a lesser flow rate.

CONSULTATION, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

Surveying Customers

A representative range of customers are surveyed at least annually regarding our performance and service standards. The results are published and placed on our web site. This helps us assess our level of customer service and identify areas which may require improvement.

Requests For Information

Lower Murray Water responds to requests for information and will provide quickly the following information at no cost to you:

- copies of the Customer Charter;
- the results of the annual customer survey showing customer satisfaction index;
- the results of water quality testing which are published quarterly in all local press;
- your billing history, including water usage, charges and payments;
- current lists of offices and contact telephone numbers;
- water conservation information for inside and outside your home;

Cont'd...

- 24 hour emergency telephone number and language interpreter/Tele Typewriter services.
- We provide a wide range of information and educational material which is available at any Lower Murray Water office or by logging onto our web site at **www.lmw.vic.gov.au**

Privacy

Lower Murray Water values and protects your privacy by complying with privacy principles as prescribed by the Information Privacy Act 2000. For more detail on Lower Murray Water's obligations and your rights in regard to privacy, please request a copy of our privacy document titled 'Safeguarding our Customers Privacy'.

ENQUIRIES, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

How To Raise Issues With Lower Murray Water

You can contact us directly in person or by telephoning any of our four area offices located at Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill and Kerang. Staff at any of these offices will do their best to resolve your issue. If they are unable to do so, the matter will be passed on to a more senior officer until resolved.

You may wish to post or fax information about your concern, and Lower Murray Water will respond in writing within 10 business days. You can also email your concern to **lmw@lmw.vic.gov.au**. Again, Lower Murray Water will respond in writing within 10 business days.

Complaint Resolution

If you have raised an issue with Lower Murray Water, and we have been unable to resolve your issue, you may then choose to call the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) on freecall 1800 500 509.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman is not an advocate for either the customer or Lower Murray Water, but has the power to investigate and resolve disputes between customers and Lower Murray Water, fairly and independently. Resolution is reached based on the information provided by both parties and is binding on us.

The Energy and Water ombudsman will not accept complaints if you have not approached Lower Murray Water first.

The services of the Energy and Water Ombudsman are free and available to all Lower Murray Water customers.

INTERPRETER SERVICE

For interpreter service call the number below.

Per avvalervi di un interprete, telefonate
al numero indicato in basso.

Tercümanlık servisi için aşağıdaki telefon
numarasını arayınız.

Kung nangangailangan ng interpreter,
tumawag lamang sa numerong nasa ibaba.

Fetu'utaki ki he fika telefoni 'i lalo ki he
potungaue fakatonulea.

Za usluge tumača molimo nazovite donji broj.

Για υπηρεσία διερμηνέων, παρακαλώ
τηλεφωνήστε στον κατωτέρω αριθμό.

13 14 50

CONTACT DETAILS

**24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE FOR URBAN
WATER, SEWERAGE AND TRADE WASTE**

1800 808 830

For further information about any of the information in this brochure, please contact us at any one of our offices.



Mildura (Head Office)

741-759 Fourteenth Street
Mildura 3500
PO Box 1438 Mildura 3502
AUSDOC DX 50023
Telephone (03) 5051 3400
Facsimile (03) 5051 3480

Swan Hill (Area Office)

73 Beveridge Street Swan Hill 3585
PO Box 1447 Swan Hill 3585
AUSDOC DX 30164
Telephone (03) 5036 2150
Facsimile (03) 5036 2180

Robinvale (Area Office)

37 Moore Street Robinvale 3549
PO Box 600 Robinvale 3549
Telephone (03) 5026 1300
Facsimile (03) 5026 1106

Kerang (Area Office)

56 Wellington Street Kerang 3579
PO Box 547 Kerang 3579
AUSDOC DX 57908
Telephone (03) 5450 3960
Facsimile (03) 5450 3967

visit www.lmw.vic.gov.au



References to legal rights and responsibilities relate to the provisions of the Water Act 1989. The details in this brochure are current at 1 July, 2005 but are subject to change without notice.

Our Water
Our Future



Printed on
recycled paper