

Customer Charter Summary (Urban)

A summary of your rights and obligations



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



**LOWER MURRAY
WATER**

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Dear Customer

About the Charter

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation 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.

Our Customer Charter 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 Committee and in conjunction with the Essential Services Commission. This brochure 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 available 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 website at www.lmw.vic.gov.au to read our complete Customer Charter, or you may contact any of our offices. The information contained in the Customer Charter and this summary brochure 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 brochure.

For language interpreter services Customers can call 13 14 50.

Customers who are deaf or have a 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

Being WaterWise can save you money and is better for the environment.

We have information available on how to conserve water in the home and garden. This is available on our website at www.lmw.vic.gov.au or contact any of our offices during business hours.

Your rights as our Customer

Guaranteed customer service levels

We endeavor to meet your expectations of our services. If we fail to meet our Guaranteed Service Levels (GSL) we will make a payment to you based on our guaranteed service standards. A list of our GSL's can be found in the full version of our Customer Charter.

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 our 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, quarterly water quality data is available on our website.

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. If the quality is found to be below the prescribed standard we 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 we institute our 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 requirements as set out in our Trade Waste Customer Charter.

Businesses discharging trade waste into our 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 of our offices.

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. We will make a public statement detailing any change in charges, prior to the change taking effect. These changes will be available on our website.

Your right to continuous service

You may call our 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.

We aim to limit unplanned interruptions which are due to a failure in our 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.

We aim 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 we are responding to a previously notified emergency.

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

We aim to clear sewer blockages in our sewer pipe, within 5 hours and contain any sewage spills within 5 hours of being notified.

We 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, we 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 our office. Once you register, 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.

We 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 on the next page, 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
- 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 our office 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, by negotiation, bill more frequently commercial customers who incur high water usage, or high trade waste or sewage disposal charges.

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:

- by electronic means, via the internet and phone (as per the remittance advice at the bottom of your account)
- by Direct Debit
- through a provider of income support eg Centrelink
- at a Post Office or licensed postal agency
- at any Lower Murray Water office
- by mail to any Lower Murray Water office.

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 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
- be confirmed in writing to you prior to or as soon as practicable after the flexible payment plan commences.

We are not required to offer a customer a flexible payment plan if the customer has, in the previous 12 months, had two flexible payment plans cancelled due to non-payment, or unless the customer provides a fair and reasonable assurance (based on the circumstances) that the customer will comply with the plan.

Payment difficulties

Lower Murray Water has a range of options to assist 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 our office if you would like to know more.

If you are having difficulty paying your account or your account is in arrears, you may request to pay your account by instalments. We will offer an instalment plan which is consistent with your capacity to pay.

We have developed a Hardship Policy to ensure an acceptable level of service is delivered with maximum respect to customers who are experiencing financial hardship.

If you are experiencing financial hardship contact our office for information on how we can assist.

A copy of our Hardship Policy can be obtained at any of our offices.

Family Violence

Family Violence is a serious issue that poses substantial risk to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Lower Murray Water, as an essential service provider, actively endorses measures to support our customers and staff experiencing family violence.

We understand the complexity of Family Violence and awareness training is provided to all of our staff with specialised training provided to our Customer Support Team.

The training is supported by Policies and Guidelines.

See our Customer Charter for the details of the support we offer our customers and staff.

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 of our offices.

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 our office. If you make advance payments your quarterly account will show the amount to which your account is in debit or credit.

Actions for non-payment

Debt recovery action

Lower Murray Water will make all reasonable efforts to help you pay your account. If you have not paid your account following the receipt of a final notice, then we 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.

We will not restrict your water supply:

- without providing to you a 7 day restriction notice
- if you need water for a life-support machine
- on a Friday or a day of or before a public holiday
- if you are a tenant and your landlord owes the amount unpaid.

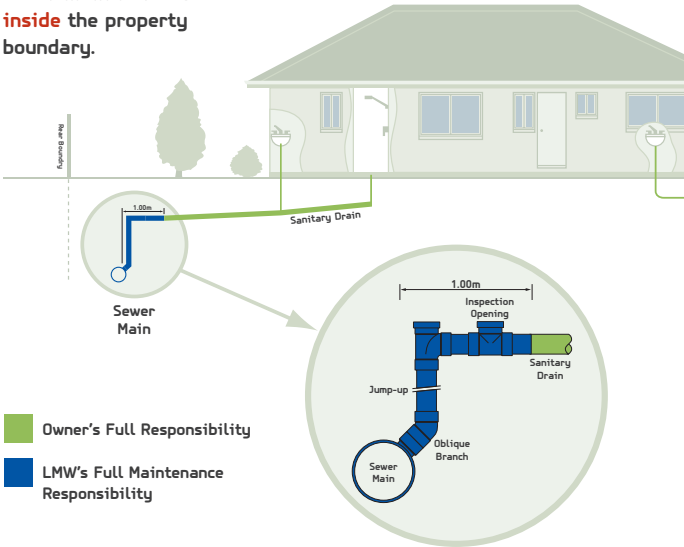
A complete list of limits on restriction can be found in the full Customer Service Charter.

Minimum flow rate during restriction

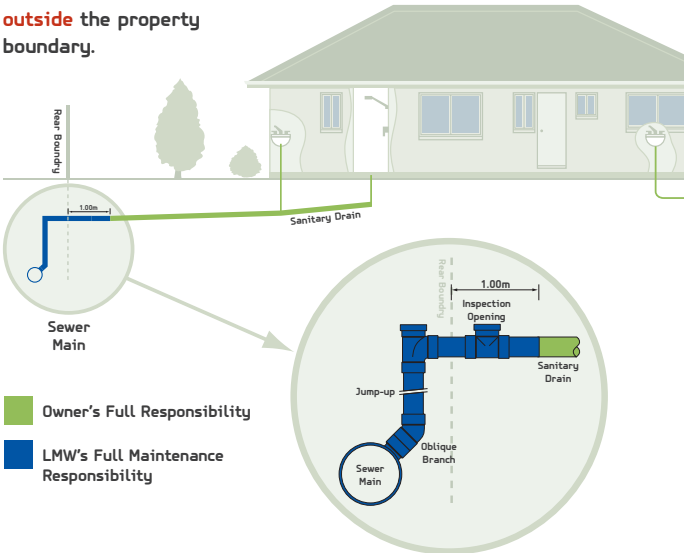
The restricted flow rate will be no less than 2 litres per minute measured at the tap closest to the water meter. If the restricted flow rate is likely to cause a health hazard, contact our office.

Sewer and water maintenance

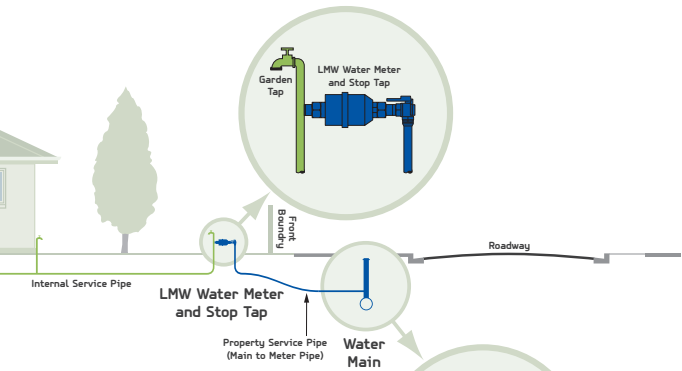
Sewer maintenance responsibilities where sewer main is located **inside** the property boundary.



Sewer maintenance responsibilities where sewer main is located **outside** the property boundary.



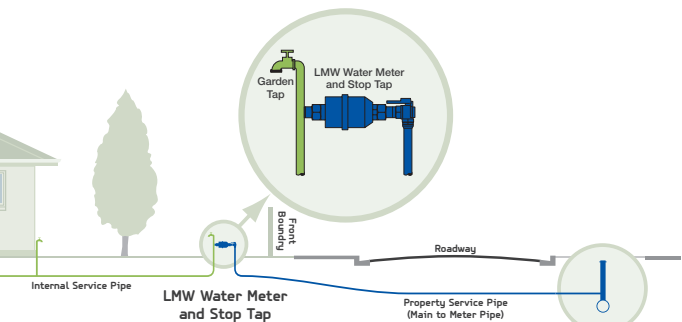
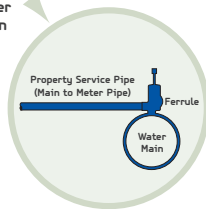
Responsibilities diagram



Water main on property side of road.

 Owner's Full Responsibility

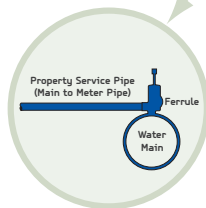
 LMW's Full Maintenance Responsibility
(Providing meter is within 2 metres of property boundary)



Water main on opposite side of road.

 Owner's Full Responsibility

 LMW's Full Maintenance Responsibility
(Providing meter is within 2 metres of property boundary)



Restoring supply

Lower Murray Water will reinstate the 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 received before 12 noon, supply will be restored on the same day. Where payments are received after 12 noon, supply will be restored on the next business day.

Meters

Why you have a meter

The supply of water to your property by Lower Murray Water must be measured by a water meter we supply. 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 our office of the reading. If you refuse or fail to read your meter when requested to do so, we may make an estimate of the probable reading based on historical data relevant to your property, but may exercise our right to require you to provide access.

We 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 the following reasons:

- meter reading
- an emergency.

If we need 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 7.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Exceptions to these times include by mutual agreement or in the case of an emergency.

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.

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, which includes all fittings up to and including the primary meter assembly, provided that the primary meter is not located more than two metres inside the property boundary and is unobstructed or if no meter is installed, the property boundary. This is the area shown in **dark blue** on the diagram on pages 8 & 9.

We 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.

We will not accept maintenance responsibility for property service pipes, which includes all fittings up to and including the primary meter assembly, where any damage is proven to have been caused by willful acts of negligence or as a result of vehicular or mechanical damage.

If the meter assembly is installed external to the property and in an area open to the public it is the customer's responsibility to maintain meter boxes and appropriate covering of the meter to ensure safety and secure access.

Where a primary meter is installed servicing secondary meters to multiple properties, we are responsible for maintenance (repairs and/or replacement) of the property service pipe, which includes all fittings up to and including the primary meter assembly provided that the primary meter is not located more than 2 metres inside the property boundary and is unobstructed or if no meter is installed, to the property boundary. This is the area shown in **dark blue** on the diagram on pages 8 & 9.

The customer is responsible for maintenance to all plumbing pipes and fixtures serving the customer's property beyond our maintenance responsibility this being the area shown in **green** on the diagram on pages 8 & 9.

To find out more about water service responsibilities contact any of our offices or visit our website.

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, we will pay the plumber reasonable costs, which will normally be the standard service charge. This payment is subject to the plumber notifying our office 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, the Oblique Branch and a prescribed section of drain which connects the serviced property to the sewer main as described below. This prescribed section of drain is also depicted in **dark blue** on the diagram on pages 8 & 9.

- a) Where the sewer main is located outside the boundary of the serviced property, we are responsible for all pipes and fittings:
 - i) from the sewer main up to and including the inspection opening, but not more than 1 metre inside the boundary of the serviced property; or
 - ii) up to 1 metre inside the serviced property boundary if no inspection opening is installed.
- b) Where the sewer main is located within the boundary of the relevant serviced property, we are responsible for all pipes and fittings:
 - i) from the sewer main up to and including the inspection opening; or

- ii) if no inspection opening is installed up to 1 metre from the side of the sewer main facing the centre of the relevant serviced property.

The property owners Plumber must immediately notify Lower Murray Water if the issue is determined to be associated with the section of drain that we are responsible for maintaining.

The customer is responsible for maintenance to all plumbing pipes and fixtures serving the customer's property beyond our maintenance responsibility this being the area shown in **green** on the diagram on pages 8 & 9.

Water at an adequate flow rate

Under normal operating conditions your water supplied from a water main or recycled 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 our Bulk Entitlement,
 - peak summer demand,
 - when water restrictions are applied.
- when the section of the property service pipe which is your responsibility to maintain is damaged or in poor condition. (Contact 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 our control
- if we have restricted supply via the installation of a restrictive meter
- if recycled water is reduced due to shortage or is reduced in accordance with our 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 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 on our website
- your billing history, including water usage, charges and payments - restrictions may apply to provision of information (see the Customer Charter 'Billing History' for more information)
- current lists of offices and contact telephone numbers;
- water conservation information for inside and outside your home
- 24 hour emergency telephone number and language interpreter/Tele Typewriter services

Privacy

Lower Murray Water values and protects your privacy by complying with privacy principles as prescribed by the *Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014*. More information on our obligations and your rights in regard to privacy is available in our Privacy Charter.

Enquiries, complaints and disputes

How to raise issues with Lower Murray Water

You can contact any of our offices directly by telephone. Staff at any of our 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 email information about your concern, and we 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.

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 of our 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

For further information please contact us

03 5051 3400

contactus@lmw.vic.gov.au

www.lmw.vic.gov.au



**24 hour emergency service for
urban and irrigation water, sewerage,
trade waste and farm drainage**

1800 808 830

Mildura (Head Office)

T 03 5051 3400

741-759 Fourteenth Street, Mildura Victoria 3500
PO Box 1438, Mildura Victoria 3502

Swan Hill (Area Office)

T 03 5036 2150

73 Beveridge Street, Swan Hill Victoria 3585
PO Box 1447, Swan Hill Victoria 3585

Kerang (Area Office)

T 03 5450 3960

56 Wellington Street, Kerang Victoria 3579
PO Box 547, Kerang Victoria 3579



**LOWER MURRAY
WATER**