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**Total**

**Management**

**Plan**

**Customer Services Standards Plan**

**Dalby**

**Town**

**Council**

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<b>Contents</b>		<b>Page Number</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>ISSUES COVERED IN THIS PLAN</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS PLAN (CSSP)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>OTHER TOTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (TMP) ELEMENTS LINKED TO THE CSSP</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>EXTERNAL ISSUES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>STRATEGIC BASIS OF THE PLAN</b>	<b>6</b>
6.1	Action Plan CSS1	6
6.2	Action Plan CSS2	6
6.3	Action Plan CSS3	7
6.4	Action Plan CSS4	7
<b>6.0</b>	<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS</b>	<b>7</b>
6.1	Supply of Water	7
6.2	Process Issues	8
6.3	Service Standard Methodology	13
6.4	Reporting and Review	14
6.5	Management Responsibility	14
6.6	Supporting Documents	14

### **List of Appendices**

- Appendix A Water Service Connection Procedure
- Appendix B Meter Replacement Form
- Appendix C Customer Request Procedure
- Appendix D Requisition for Meter Test

## **1.0 ISSUES COVERED IN THIS PLAN**

The following issues are covered in this plan:-

1. Customer services standards
2. Levels of service
3. Process issues
4. Reporting and review
5. Management responsibilities
6. Links to other strategic documents, policies and procedures.

This plan does not cover supply of recycled water, as all current recycled customers are supplied under contract or supply agreements.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS PLAN (CSSP)**

The CSSP describes in detail the standards that Council work to in supplying water and water related services to our customers. In doing this, we are able to inform our customers what they can expect from us, what services they are paying for and gives us and our customers a standard against which our performance can be measured. The CSSP also details the options available to our customers if they are not satisfied with our performance.

By setting realistic standards, working to maintain or achieve those standards and regularly reviewing our performance, we can operate our system and plan for the future the best way to supply water to our customers. The CSSP is one of the “nuts and bolts” plans which defines the water supply goals and objectives set in the Corporate Plan.

The CSSP is also a component of our Strategic Asset Management Plan which is a mandatory requirement under the Water Act 2000.

## **3.0 LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Council currently has no defined policy on interaction with the community or community consultation. However in order to establish what our customers expect in the way of service Council’s past practices have been to:-

- review the historic performance of the scheme;
- survey the scheme customers;
- analyse trends within the scheme and the industry; and
- make an appraisal on the overall resources available to operate the scheme.

### 3.0 LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (CONT'D)

Since 1995 Council has operated a comprehensive events tracking program onto which all customer requests for service and complaints are logged. Works orders are issued, tracked and outcomes logged using the same software. All events are tied to the specific assets involved and all works performed are tied to an asset register. All events are given discrete numbers so that the cost of individual service calls or works related to a particular asset or groups of assets can be determined. Response times are also documented and can be analysed if necessary.

This “Customer Service Database” is the primary tool used for analysis and review of the standard of service provided to customers. Performance against key result areas are reported at least annually to Council.

Customers are routinely surveyed on the scheme performance with particular emphasis on response times, interruptions to service and the standard of workmanship. Typically 50-80 customers per year are selected from those who had reported some type of water supply incident to Council and asked to complete a written survey .

The results of these surveys are collated and reported to Council as part of the annual reporting process. Where there is an obvious decline in either the actual service or the perceived service supplied to customers, such a report would also recommend appropriate remedial action.

Dalby is a relatively close knit community. Elected representatives are generally well known in the community and have interactions with a significant cross section of the community on a day to day basis. In addition all Councillors as an extension of their Councillor role act as Council’s representative on a number of community based management committees which further extend the interaction with customers.

#### **4.0 OTHER TOTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (TMP) ELEMENTS LINKED TO THE CSSP**

As part of the TMP, the CSSP is subordinate to the Corporate Plan and the Water Supply Business Plan. However, all water supply Total Management Plan elements are linked directly or indirectly to the CSSP because our whole purpose for existence is to supply water services to our customers. Everything we do ultimately contributes to this.

The main subplans with linkages to the CSSP are:-

- Drinking Water Quality Plan;
- Operations Management Plan;
- Information Management Plan;
- Risk Management Plan; and
- Performance Management Plan.

#### **5.0 EXTERNAL ISSUES**

There are many external issues that affect our service delivery. Some we have little ability to control, yet others we are able to develop and implement strategies to lessen the effects of these. Some issues actually bring opportunities to manage our water systems better.

We believe the single most significant external issue which effects the delivery of service to our water customers is the change in the social demographics of our customer base. Whilst this change is beyond our control, we recognise that customers are better educated and informed than ever before on water related matters and service standards in general. Many of our customers have relocated for employment purposes from other parts of the country where high levels of service from the WSP is taken for granted. Council promotes the quality of the lifestyle in Dalby so that many residents see that the WSP service standards should reflect those of much larger centres. This makes it incumbent on us to set and strive for high standards of service.

National Competition Policy and COAG water reforms require us as WSP to manage our systems better, to implement pricing strategies that reflect the true cost of service provision, to be open and accountable in our operations and to manage our water resources more effectively.

Decline in the quantity and quality of our raw water resources puts constant pressure on us to meet the quality and quantity standards that we set. Such decline has been caused by many factors, most of which we have little control over.

The ability to attract and/or train quality staff affects our customer service standards, because it ultimately rests on the capabilities of the people performing the work if we are to achieve the standards we set.

## 6.0 STRATEGIC BASIS OF THE PLAN

### Key Result Area: Service Standards

**Goal:** The goal for the establishment of customer service standards is to define the standard of service which customers connected to the Dalby Water Supply can expect to receive and which the Council as the WSP shall strive to maintain.

**Objective:** To measure with a high degree of accuracy the actual level of service being achieved thereby ensuring that resources are correctly allocated.

Management Strategy	Action Plan	Performance Targets
Perform network modelling to ascertain the likely areas that may suffer from pressure or flow problems.	CSS1	All likely problem areas identified .
Perform quantitative flow /pressure testing in identified areas	CSS2	Extent of any low pressure or flow problems quantified.
Review the format of Customer surveys	CSS3	Customer participation above 50%.
Establish a formal audit process for the monitoring and reporting of performance standards	CSS4	Standardised report formats with traceable and accurate monitoring of standards.

### 6.1 Action Plan CSS1

*Perform network modelling to ascertain the likely areas that may suffer from pressure or flow problems.*

The Dalby Water Supply has been extended considerably in terms of main length since the majority on the system was designed in the late 1950s. In general terms the system performs well but there is anecdotal evidence that under some demand scenarios some customers suffer lower than desirable pressure. Despite this there are few actual customer complaints about this. The network will be computer modelled with various operational and demand scenarios. Network modelling shall be completed by the end of 2004 at a cost of about \$20,000. The Manager of Engineering Services is the officer responsible for the network modelling project.

### 6.2 Action Plan CSS2

*Perform quantitative flow/pressure testing in identified areas.*

Based on the network modeling the nature and extent of flow or pressure problems in areas identified as being deficient would be quantified. This may involve flow/pressure testing or data logging during higher demand periods. Specific customer feedback may also be used if necessary. This work would be commenced in the 2004/2005 and would initially focus on the highest priority areas.

**6.0 STRATEGIC BASIS OF THE PLAN (CONT'D)**

**6.2 Action Plan CSS2**

The work would be performed by in house staff but approximately \$5000 pa would be required for the hire of specialized equipment. The Manager of Engineering Services is the officer responsible for CSS2. It is expected that the information gathered by this action can be used to test the accuracy of the network model, the sensitivity of customer , and the reality of the current pressure standards.

**6.3 Action Plan CSS3**

*Review the customer service survey.*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Annual Costs</b>	<b>Management Responsibility</b>
Develop a written procedure for the performance of customer survey to ensure a high degree of survey consistency.	2006	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services
Review alternative survey strategies eg: Internet , leaving surveys with the customer after a service call, use of customer forums etc.	2006	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services
Trial alternative survey layouts	2006	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services

**6.4 Action Plan CSS4**

*Establish a formal audit process for the monitoring and reporting of performance standards.*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Annual Costs</b>	<b>Management Responsibility</b>
Ensure that current reports meet SAMP requirements and develop a standard template	August 2004	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services
Develop a defined procedure for the monitoring of performance standards eg: how the data is extracted and used to develop the required reports	August 2005	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services
Audit the monitoring and reporting process to ensure accuracy, completeness and “reliability”	August 2006	Internal	Manager of Engineering Services

## 7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Listed below are Council's Customer Service Standards, which are communicated to all of our customers. Council's Engineering Department process all service difficulties and system faults and is the first contact point for customer, comments, feedback or complaints.

### 7.1 Supply of Water

With regards to the supply of water, these are the standards to which we operate:-

When we have to do maintenance, repairs, expanding our network or connecting new customers, sometimes we will have to interrupt the supply of water. In this situation we undertake that:-

- customers shall receive at least 24 hours notice of the interruption to supply; and
- not more than 10% of events will involve supply interruptions longer than 5 hours.

Sometimes we have to make urgent repairs, our system may have been damaged by accident or there may be power interruptions which prevent us pumping water. In these circumstances we undertake:-

- 95% of unscheduled interruptions to supply will be resolved within 4 hours; and
- in the event of a supply incident or interruption being reported, work will commence or contact be made with the relevant customer/s within one hour of it being reported in 95% of occasions.

Providing drinking water standard supply at a usable pressure is complex and technically demanding. However, in terms of pressure and water quality these are the minimum standards you can expect from us:-

- 95% of samples will comply with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for potable water in every respect in terms of physical, chemical and microbiological quality; and
- on 95% of occasions, the static pressure at the residential customer's boundary shall not be less than 16 m head under normal operating conditions.

By operating our system in this manner we expect to receive:-

- less than 11 water quality complaints per 1000 connections in any one year; and
- less than 11 pressure related complaints per 1000 connections in any one year.

## **7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)**

### **7.1 Supply of Water (Cont'd)**

In terms of long term reliability of supply we expect:-

- a supply of up to an average of 2,350 litres per connection per day for 1 week and 1500 litres per connection per day for an indefinite period without the need to enact supply restrictions beyond those routinely in place for demand management purposes shall be available;
- the number of main breakages shall be less than 10 per 1000 connections in any one year;
- the number of water service repairs shall be less than 80 per 1000 connections in any one year; and
- the amount of unaccounted for water shall not exceed 15% in any one year when comparing treated water flows and aggregated customer meter usage including accounted for non-revenue water.
- 

### **7.2 Process Issues**

In terms of how we deal with our customer on administrative and service issues, these are the standards to which we operate:-

#### Service Connections

Council's Building Department is the first contact point for water service enquiries. Refer to Water Service Connection Procedure attached at Appendix A.

#### *20 or 25 mm services*

Upon receipt of the prescribed fee (which is set by Council and shown in Council's fees and charges) and fully completed water service application form, we will connect to the customer's property standard 20 or 25 mm services within 10 working days, weather permitting.

#### *32mm or larger services*

These services are subject to quotation and sometimes require more detailed design work. Upon an enquiry for such a service and the finalisation of the customers needs, we will provide a customer with a documented quotation for the provision of the service and an estimate for construction time within 15 working days. Upon the receipt of payment and fully completed water service application, we will provide the service within the estimated construction time weather permitting.

## **7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)**

### **7.2 Process Issues (Cont'd)**

#### Billing

This section describes how we bill customers for the services we provide:-

- meters are read and the previous reading is subtracted from the current reading to determine the kilolitres used;
- meters are read as close as possible to the same date in each six month period;
- the time between the meter being read and the account being issued varies, depending on whether the reading is one of the first read or the last read. The time varies from two to eight weeks;
- water will be charged as per its scheduled fees and charges; and
- accounts are issued at the beginning of March and September each year.

The account contains the following information:-

- Owners Name
- Owners Postal Address
- Property Address
- Property Number
- Previous Reading date and amount
- Current Reading date and amount
- Total Usage
- KI used at 40c tariff and \$ amount
- KI used at 90c tariff and \$ amount
- Total amount due for payment
- Message advising GST is not applicable.

Accounts found to have been incorrectly charged under or over are amended and re-issued immediately. The appropriated journals are also completed.

At the time of transfer of ownership of a property a pro-rata account is calculated, the relevant solicitor is notified through the rates search and a relevant adjustment is made at settlement in favour of the purchaser.

Any adjustment made on rental properties when a tenant vacates is the responsibility of the agent. However, if the agent were to request a meter reading, Council provides that service.

The relevant contact for volumetric water enquiries is the Rates Section (07) 4660 6143.

#### Metering

All customers are metered. As part of the connection to the customer's premises, Council provides and installs a meter. Meters are normally installed just inside the customer's front boundary, but occasionally meter locations have to be arranged with the customer. In any event, the customer must provide access at all reasonable times for maintenance and reading.

## **7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)**

## 7.2 Process Issues (Cont'd)

### Metering (Cont'd)

Where a customer has conditions that are unusual in nature or size, the customer will be required to contribute to the cost of purchasing the necessary equipment. We then maintain that meter for as long as it is required. Customers with meters larger than 25mm may be required to pay a meter rental fee as set by Council which covers the cost of the maintenance of the larger meter. The level of meter discrepancy is maintained at plus or minus 5% of the actual flow. We replace our meters every 10 years or sooner if the meter develops a fault. We will bill the customer for repairs if the customer damages our meter. Likewise, we will prosecute any person found to be tampering with a meter in order to affect the accuracy of the reading.

If a customer disputes the accuracy of their water meter, a test can be requested upon the payment of a fee (meter test request form attached). If the test proves the meter is registering more than 5% above, then the meter is changed, the test fee is refunded and if an account has been issued, it is written off.

Meters are changed every 10 years or if at the time of reading it is suspected the meter is faulty or has stopped registering. (Meter replacement form attached as Appendix C).

The relevant contact for meter problems and testing is the Rates Section (07) 4660 6143.

All water recorded through the meter is the owner's responsibility.

### Accounting

This section explains how our customers can pay their accounts. Account enquiries are the responsibility of the Rates Section (07) 4660 6143.

Payment is due a clear thirty days from the issue date of the account. Payment can be made as follows:-

- through any branch of the Commonwealth Bank;
- by mail;
- telephone payment (credit cards only);
- payment at Council's office;
- Eftpos;
- direct deposit;
- Bill pay; and
- via the Internet.

Non payment of volumetric water accounts is handled as part of the debt recovery for rates.

## 7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)

### 7.2 Process Issues (Cont'd)

### Customer Consultation

Apart from the feedback provided by customers to Councillors and staff in the course of our normal day to day business operations, one of our main sources of customer feedback is through customer surveys. Generally routine surveys are performed annually but if there has been a particular problem identified or we have undertaken a major works program, we will survey affected customers at other times. Usually a snapshot of around 80 customers is sourced from the customer service database and once checked for address accuracy etc., the customers are sent survey forms and post paid envelopes. Participation is voluntary. Customers are asked specific questions but are also asked to comment on any issue they may wish to bring to Councils attention. The customer snapshot can be based on a chronological period or on a particular service type eg. blocked house drain. The results of the surveys are tabulated and reported to Council for consideration and action if required.

Council enjoys a good working relationship with the local media and actively pursues opportunities to inform customers of major projects, works or events. Local journalists attend every Council meeting.

Being a relatively small and close knit community, Councillors regularly interact with a broad cross section of customers through their involvement in community groups. Such interaction is ideal in that Councillors are in a good position to consult with and receive feedback from customers first hand.

Council does not routinely operate customer focus groups for water service issues but would do so if it was considered as the most appropriate way to receive customer feedback on a particular issue or issues.

We produce an Annual Report where we publish the results of all the reviews we undertake as part of our business. The report is formulated by appropriate officers with responsibility for the various areas of our business and summarises our water operation for the year. This includes assessment of how we perform against our service standards, results of customer surveys and how we are addressing the issues that we face in doing our business. This report is subject to review by Council, the regulator (DNRM), our auditors and interested members of the public. This report is available from Council and will be available on Council's web site [www.dalby.qld.gov.au](http://www.dalby.qld.gov.au).

The procedures that are followed if a customer has a service request is shown at Appendix D. Generally Council's Engineering Department is the point of contact if a customer has a service difficulty or problem with their water supply. This department can be contacted 24 hours per day on 46606170.

## **7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)**

### **7.2 Process Issues (Cont'd)**

#### Complaints

We see complaints by our customers as opportunities to review the standard of service being provided to our customers. If a customer is unsatisfied with their bill or fees, it should be referred to the Rates Section. However, if the complaint is in regards to any other issue, Council's Engineering Services Department is the section to contact either by phone, in person or in writing. It is our intention to resolve most instances where a customer is dissatisfied quickly and without further customer recourse being necessary. We will also follow up with a customer any complaint made in this manner within one working day. Generally we are prepared to act on a complaint from any person that accesses our supply ie. any customer; however where a complaint is about a specific property we will normally only deal with the matter if the complaint is lodged by the registered owner or the owners authorised agent.

In the event that the issue is not resolved to the customers satisfaction at this level, the customer should lodge a formal complaint in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and giving as much information on the matter as possible. In most circumstances, the matter will then be decided by Council. Whilst resolution may not always be able to be achieved quickly, we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and any immediate outcomes within 30 days of it being received. Sometimes Council Officers may contact the customer for more information in the interim.

#### Dispute Resolution

In the event that a customer can not adequately find redress through the processes above, the customer has the right to refer the matter to the Ombudsman and we recognise and respect that right. We will fully cooperate with the Ombudsman and will abide by any decision made in the matter.

### **7.3 Service Standard Methodology**

Our service standards have been generally based on the historical performance of the scheme, reflecting what the latest trends are and consideration of the overall capacity of the infrastructure and the financial resources we have.

We have operated a comprehensive customer request and asset tracking system which links requests to assets and can be used to compile scheme performance summaries. The information from this system (CSD) has been used to set realistic standards for main breakages, water service repairs, response times and water quality and quantity complaints. We believe these standards reflect the minimum levels that could be considered to be satisfactory for our system and we would expect to better them in most circumstances.

## **7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS (CONT'D)**

### **7.3 Service Standard Methodology (Cont'd)**

Each year we formally survey between 50 and 100 customers on issues such as response times, the standard of the work performed, amount of notice given, water quality etc., and also request general feedback. These surveys support our current standards as suitable.

### **7.4 Reporting and Review**

Our annual report is the main mechanism we use to report to elected members and to the public. The report details how we performed against the standards we set. These reports are sent to the regulator and available to customers. At intervals determined by the regulator, our system is independently audited and reported on.

Our monthly reports compare on a limited basis our performance compared to the service standards, and also serve to report on any trends in our scheme performance.

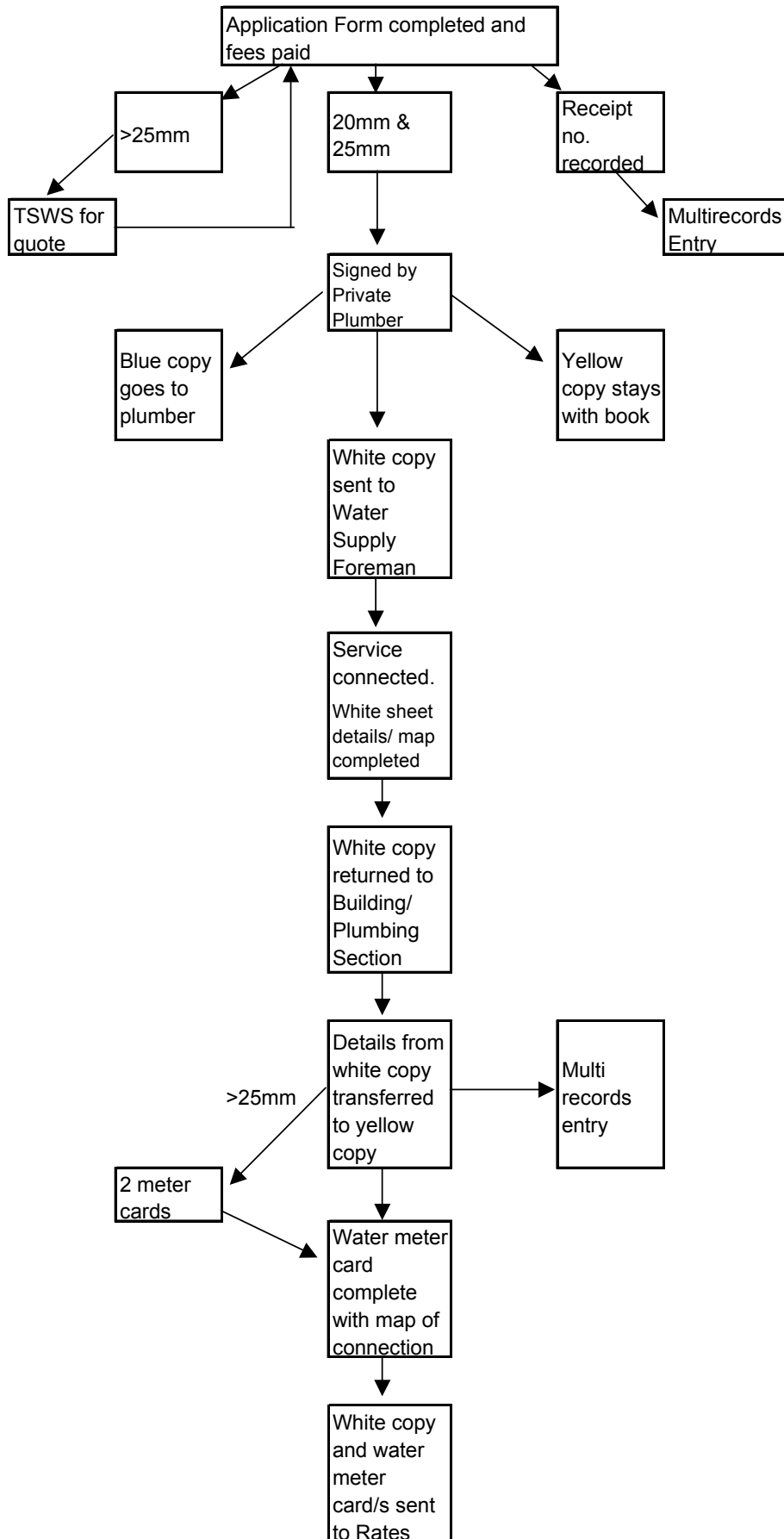
### **7.5 Management Responsibility**

The Manager of Engineering Services has the ultimate responsibility for the monitoring, review and reporting of our customer service standards. Following consultation with community and elected representatives and considering scheme performance, the Manager of Engineering Services is also responsible for the setting of customer service standards.

### **7.6 Supporting Documentation**

- Dalby Town Council Corporate Plan
- Customer satisfaction Survey Reports
- Water Supply Annual Reports
- Dalby Water and Wastewater SAMP

**Appendix A - Water Service Connection Procedure**



**Appendix B - Meter Replacement Form**

DALBY TOWN COUNCIL  
**REQUEST FOR WATER METER REPAIR ETC**      **5451**

Name and Address ..... Property No. ....  
 Meter No. .... Meter Size ..... Year .....  
 Remarks .....  
 Date ..... Signed .....  
(Meter Reader)

**TO: FOREMAN, WATER SUPPLY**  
 Please arrange for the above to be carried out.

Date ..... Signed .....  
(Town Engineer)

**TO: TOWN ENGINEER**

The above repairs, etc. were completed on ..... by .....

New meter No. .... Reading ..... has been installed

Memo No. .... is attached.

Date ..... Signed .....  
(Water Foreman)

Date ..... Signed .....  
(Town Engineer)

**TO: METER READER**

**Adjustments have been made to the meter book where necessary.**

Date ..... Signed .....  
(Meter Reader)

**TO: REVENUE OFFICER**

**Adjustments have been made to the property records.**

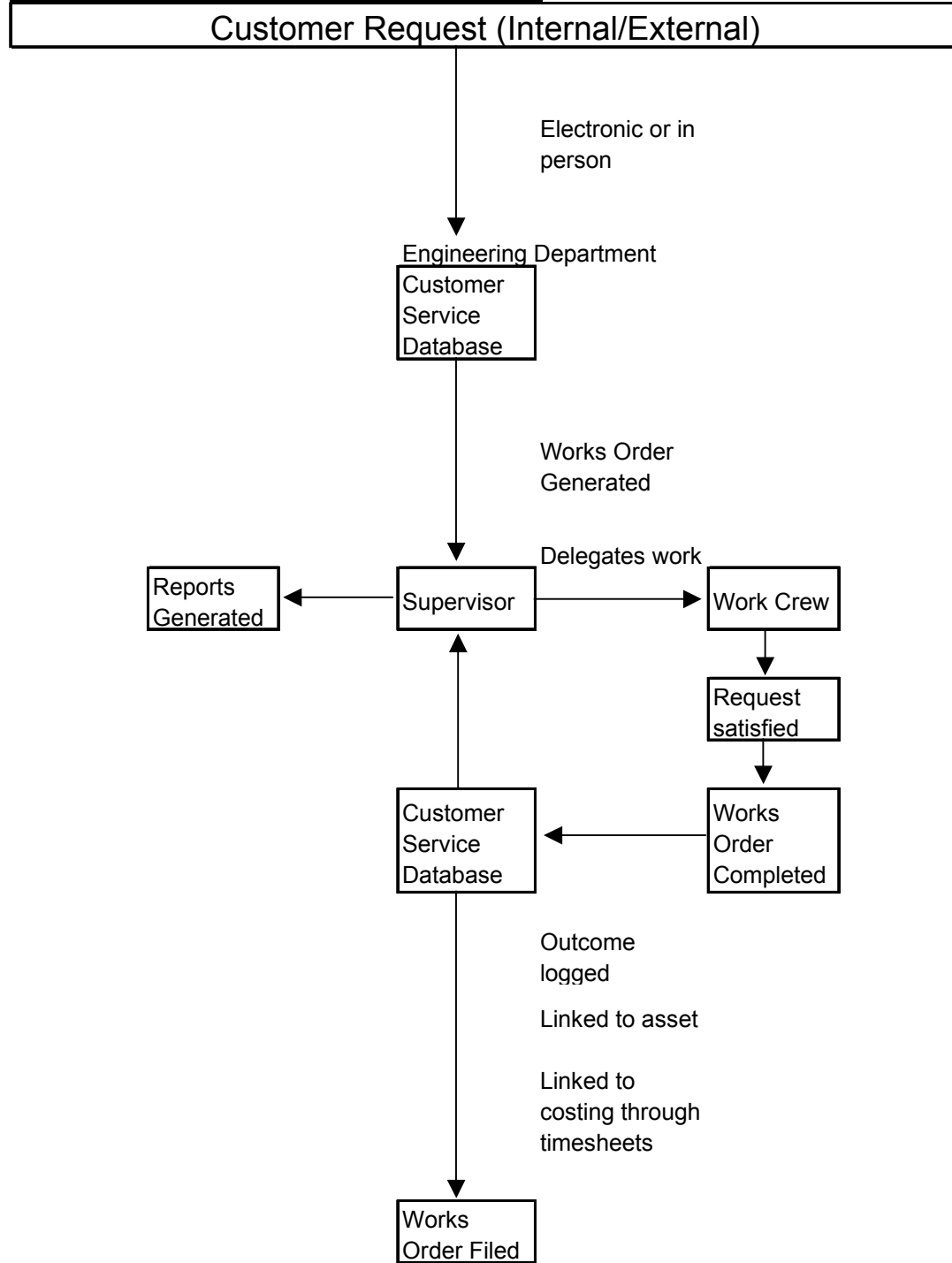
Date ..... Signed .....  
(Revenue Officer)

**TO: RECORDS**

**Memo placed on Property File**

Batch No. .... Data Works No. ....

Appendix C - Customer Request Procedure



**Appendix D - Requisition for Meter Test**



**DALBY TOWN COUNCIL**

107 Drayton Street, Dalby Qld 4405

PO Box 551

Phone (07) 46 606143 Fax (07) 46 606199

**REQUISITION FOR METER TEST**

FULL NAME OF OWNER/OCCUPIER .....

ADDRESS OF PREMISES WHERE TEST IS REQUIRED

No.....Street, Dalby.

To the Chief Executive Officer,

I/We make application for a test of the water meter at the abovementioned premises. A test fee of \$40.00 for a 20mm or 25mm, or cost price for a 30mm, 40mm, 50mm, 80mm and 100mm meter is tendered herewith. This amount is to be refunded should the test show that the meter registers in excess of an amount 5% greater than the correct amount.

DATE ..... SIGNATURE .....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received _____	Property No. _____
Fee Paid _____	Meter No. _____
Receipt No. _____	Date Meter Read _____
Date Required _____	Reading _____
Issuing Officer _____	Consumption _____

TEST FEE REFUNDED/RETAINED

METER TEST REPORT

The test was conducted by connecting the Council's test meter in series with your service meter and the passing of 100 gallons/1,000 litres through both meters, using the test meter to record the actual water quantity.

Details of the test:-

Reading of consumers meter at finish of test \_\_\_\_\_

Reading of consumers meter at start of test \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Gallons/Litres \_\_\_\_\_

Representing \_\_\_\_\_% under/over registration in favour of consumer.

Date of Test \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person carrying out test \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_