

Frequently asked questions

About us

We are South Australia's leading provider of water and sewerage services for around 1.7 million people. For more than 160 years we have been working together with South Australians to ensure a reliable supply of safe, clean water, and a dependable sewerage system.

What is being delivered for Community Wastewater Management System customers?

The Tea Tree Gully Sustainable Sewers Program will transition all properties connected to the Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) to a modern sewer system that delivers nationally accepted levels of service for its customers.

We have worked with the City of Tea Tree Gully and used customer feedback to guide the planning and prioritisation process for our staged approach to transition customers to our sewer network. This has informed how the program will minimise impacts and increase benefits for the community.

How much will it cost?

An initial \$65 million was committed during our current regulatory period (2020-24) to transfer customers from the CWMS to our sewer network.

Detailed costings for later stages beyond 2024 are being developed and will be informed by what we learn during the earlier stages of this complex project.

CWMS customers will not bear the cost of connecting to SA Water. We will install, own and maintain both pressure sewer and gravity sewer infrastructure and cover the costs associated with these options including reinstating your property as closely as we can to its original state.

When will I be connected?

CWMS customers will be transitioned in stages, with prioritisation based on a range of criteria including condition assessment of the existing CWMS and community feedback. As a result, we have identified three separate stages for implementation of the upgrades. Overall program stages can be found [here](#).

As we approach your delivery stage, we will contact you to arrange a time to visit your property.

How will my property be serviced by SA Water?

There are several possible options available for mains infrastructure and on-property plumbing to connect CWMS customers to SA Water sewer. Each option is dependent on several criteria to ensure acceptable levels of service are achieved and maintained for each property.

As such, no single option is applicable to all properties and there may be situations where different properties in the same street are either served by gravity sewer or pressure sewer, depending on the topography of the area.

What is a pressure sewer system?

Where a standard gravity-fed connection cannot effectively remove sewage, customers will have their property serviced by a pressure sewer system.

This system is commonly used in the eastern states and is already used by some of our customers where the topography of the area makes it the best solution. These systems are currently used in parts of Osborne, Outer Harbor, Crafers, Stirling, Aldgate, Bridgewater, Old Noarlunga, Victor Harbor, Chiton and Naracoorte.

A pressure sewer system requires the installation of an underground retention tank and pump on your property. Used water from the house gravitates to the tank and is then pumped into our sewer main. The pipework is often installed using directional drilling (underground boring) and can navigate through difficult terrain and sensitive areas to ensure minimal impact to the environment and your property.

Can the pressure sewer be located where my existing septic tank is?

This is not possible as your septic tank will remain operational until the final step of connecting you to a modern sewer system.

This process requires capping the existing CWMS outlet on your property, disconnecting you from this system.

Who will pay for maintenance and electricity for the pressure sewer option?

In line with the State Government commitment that customers will not bear the cost of connecting to SA Water, we will install, own, and maintain pressure sewer infrastructure and cover the associated costs.

This includes covering the cost of electricity consumed by pumps operating pressure sewer systems. The pumps are very efficient and only use around \$20.00 of electricity each year. We will cover this cost and you will see \$5.00 removed from your water bill each quarter.

How will you get power to my pressure sewer tank?

When supplying power to your new pressure tank, your safety is our number one concern. To ensure your safety, we cannot run wiring in your roof cavity due to extreme roof temperatures, vermin and dampness that can damage the conduit and wiring.

To ensure the wiring conduit remains as hidden as possible, we can run it underground or under the eaves. This will ensure ongoing reliability for your new sewage system. We will discuss these options with you before installation.

Will you need to work on my electrical switchboard?

Yes, we require your electrical switchboard to be compliant to the AS3000 electrical standard and Section 60 of the Electricity Act 1996 so we can safely connect your pressure sewer system to the electrical network. If your switchboard does not meet this standard, we will discuss options with you to ensure it meets the appropriate safety standards.

Where will the new pipe work on my property be placed?

In most cases, a new sewer main will be laid in the road servicing your property. A connection will be trenched from the main in the street to your property's boundary and an inspection point (IP) will be installed. For pressure sewer connections, a boundary box housing a non-return valve will also be installed.

Gravity connections will involve installation of on-property pipe work from a location near your septic tank to a connection to the new sewer main at your property boundary.

Pressure sewer connections will involve installation of on-property pipe work from a location near your septic tank to the new pressure sewer holding tank and out to the new sewer main.

We will also install an IP near the septic tank location for future maintenance purposes. This IP will dictate your responsibility from SA Water.

We will discuss the layout of the pipework with you prior to construction to ensure it meets your expectations.

What will be the impacts to my property during construction?

Before we begin any work, we will meet with you and our delivery partner to provide a plan of the pipe route and discuss the scope of works required, including how we will reinstate the work area as close as practicable to previous condition.

Construction will involve access to your property, some amount of digging and any work associated with installing the new plumbing. We will also temporarily disconnect your sewer service, at a time agreed with you, when we transfer you to the new network.

What will happen to my septic tank?

To comply with the SA Health On-Site Wastewater Systems Code, we will decommission your septic tank by pumping it out, disinfecting it and backfilling with clean fill. Your septic tank and any associated existing CWMS infrastructure will not be removed as part of the program.

Will you re-use existing CWMS infrastructure on or near my property?

We have not identified any CWMS infrastructure that is compliant with SA Water's engineering standards and, as such, it is unlikely to be reused.

To achieve appropriate levels of service, it is essential that all new infrastructure is installed as part of the program in accordance with the appropriate engineering standards.

Will you need to obtain easements for new sewer main pipes?

The requirement for SA Water easements on individual properties will be assessed as the program progresses.

Our preference is to locate sewer main pipes in roads, however, where there is a need to run pipes through private properties, they will be located in easements.

SA Water will retain ownership of new on-property plumbing and this will be covered by an encumbrance that will be recorded against your property. An encumbrance indicates there is sewer infrastructure on your land owned by SA Water and needs to be protected.

What else will I need to understand during construction?

The property owner will be required to provide access for our contractor and support construction activities by ensuring the work areas are safe and clear of obstructions, including long grass, vehicles, pot plants and other items. We will require access to the outside areas of your property and expect to complete the works on your property within two weeks, between the hours of 7am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

In most cases, you won't need to be present during construction activities, however you can contact us directly if you have any specific requirements or considerations (e.g. locked gates or pets).

If your property is leased, you will need to advise tenants of the construction works and their responsibility to allow access for SA Water and contractors.

What if I want to re-locate the installed pipe work?

If you want to relocate any part of the plumbing that is owned by SA Water, you will need to seek our approval. All work will need to be completed by an authorised contractor, with costs covered by you. The customer will be responsible for any other costs of repair or replacement of the constructed pipe work that result from damage caused by the customer, contractors, invitees, visitors, and other persons.

I am building a new house/subdividing, do I need to install a new septic tank?

If you plan to develop your property before it is due for transition as part of the program, the City of Tea Tree Gully will provide advice on sewage management for your property as part of your new development application.

SA Water will not be covering the cost of new CWMS infrastructure or septic tanks but can advise developers of whether the planned transition of properties to mains sewer will align with their development timeframes.

Council have previously advised that it may be possible for CWMS customers to reuse existing septic tanks for new developments.

Developers and residents can also call our stakeholder engagement team on 1800 657 337 to obtain a better understanding of the overall program timelines.

Building with CWMS/septic tanks – what else do I need to know?

If your property is scheduled to connect to the modern sewer system but you intend to build before the scheduled time, you will need a septic tank connected to the CWMS your property already abuts.

To minimise future impacts to your development and/or property please ensure the following when planning your connection to the CWMS:

- Install a septic tank in the front yard of the property.
- Locate septic tanks a minimum of 2.5 metres away from side and one metre from front boundary.
- If the septic cannot be located at the front of the property, side access entry width of 1.5 metres is required to enable service personnel access to the rear yard for maintenance and construction.
- We recommend constructing side access to your property with something that can be lifted and re-laid e.g. pavers.

What are the benefits of being an SA Water wastewater customer?

The benefits of being our customer include:

- state-wide sewerage pricing, consistent with other SA Water customers across the state, plus a commitment to keep prices as low and stable as possible
- a reliable service that meets or exceeds all relevant public health and other regulatory requirements
- ongoing upgrades and maintenance to our network as a part of our standard program
- a 24/7 customer care response in the event of temporary service impacts
- access to support in the event you need help managing your bill payments.

How are SA Water sewerage charges set?

Sewerage charges are based on a minimum charge per quarter or a rate in the dollar applied against the capital value of your property (whichever is greater). The capital value of your property is set annually by the Valuer-General.

To work out your sewerage charge, divide your property value by 1000. Then multiply that number by the rate that applies to you (using the rates below). To calculate an annual charge, multiply by four.

Why is the sewerage charge based on property value?

Sewerage charges are designed to recover the cost of delivering sewerage services – including the infrastructure and operations needed to collect, transport, treat, recycle, and dispose of wastewater. Further information can be found on our website.

Charging based on property values is considered the most practical and equitable way of sharing the cost of providing this service across the community.

When will further information be available for my area?

We will continue to keep you informed through this process and assist you when the time comes to transition your property from the CWMS to our new sewer system. This will involve meeting with you at your property, providing a plan of the pipe route and discussing the scope of works required.

If you would like to discuss the program with us or want to register to stay in touch with progress, please subscribe to our email list or call our stakeholder engagement team on **1800 657 337**.

