

FAQ



Community Wastewater Management System petition

Why are we undertaking a petition?

In recent years, we have conducted extensive community engagement about options for the future of the CWMS. The community was clear that the assets should be retained in public ownership.

Through the engagements many of you also expressed a preference for SA Water's ownership and operation of our CWMS assets.

We have made a number of approaches to the South Australian Government on this matter over recent months. In support of these, Council has also resolved to undertake a petition to the South Australian Parliament's House of Assembly.

What would happen to my wastewater bill under SA Water ownership of the CWMS?

For the majority of properties SA Water ownership of the CWMS would result in a reduction in charges. This reflects that SA Water have larger economies of scale than council.

The impact on individual properties would vary. While Council's CWMS charge is currently set as a flat rate for all residential properties, SA Water's charges are based on the capital value of your property. Further details can be found on SA Water's [website](#).

Have other council's transferred water infrastructure to SA Water?

There are two recent examples of SA Water taking ownership of local government water assets.

Yankalilla

On 1 July 2019, SA Water assumed ownership, management and operation of the CWMS network servicing the District Council of Yankalilla region and the drinking water supply network in Wirrina.

Wirrina property owners were required to make a \$4,000 per property (\$2,000 for units) financial contribution to become SA Water customers. This one-off payment went towards upgrades to drinking water infrastructure. There was no such requirement for CWMS customers.

SA Water has maintained the existing CWMS infrastructure. Further information can be found [here](#).

Tea Tree Gully

SA Water took ownership of the existing Tea Tree Gully CWMS, including management, operation and maintenance from 1 July 2022. This occurred as result of a direction from the South Australian Government and reflected commitments made at the 2022 State Election.

All properties connected to the CWMS will be converted to a sewer system by 2028. The capital costs of this program are approximately \$350 million. In line with a State Government commitment that customers will not bear the cost of connecting, SA Water will install, own, and maintain pressure sewer infrastructure and cover the associated costs.

Further information can be found [here](#).

What are the pros and cons of SA Water ownership of CWMS assets?

Pros

SA Water's state-wide pricing would result in lower wastewater costs for most CWMS customers.

As the state's largest water utility, SA Water has considerably greater economies of scale, resources and expertise than council.

Cons

Pricing and investment decisions would be made at state level rather than locally by council.

Will infrastructure changes be required following SA Water ownership?

Should SA Water take on the ownership of the CWMS assets they would be responsible for future investment decisions. The Tea Tree Gully and Yankalilla examples (above) offer very different scenarios in this regard.

Where can I sign the Petition?

The petition is available to be signed at Council offices, libraries and community centres from 31 October 2024 to 20 January 2025. Use the map on [Your Say Onkaparinga](#) to determine the nearest location.

Why can I not sign the petition online?

The petition must comply with the House of Assembly guidelines for petitions. These provide a specific template for petitions and a requirement for petitions to be physically signed. As a result, we are unable to provide an online option to sign the petition.

What are the next steps?

In January 2025 it will be presented to a local Member of Parliament for tabling in Parliament. Should the petition be successful, we would then seek to negotiate transition arrangements for CWMS customers with SA Water and the State Government.

Whatever the outcome of this petition council continues to explore opportunities for greater efficiencies in our CWMS.

Further information

We have a dedicated project page at www.onkaparingacity.com/yoursay where you can find out more information and share your thoughts.

For further information please contact us by phone on 8384 0666 or email us at mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au