

WATER SYSTEMIC ISSUES INVESTIGATIONS - CLOSED

1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (in date order closed)

Scheme Participant and Issue Number	Issue	Date closed	No. of EWOV cases	No. of affected customers	Action taken to redress the issue	Regulator advised	EWOV's view of appropriate redress
SI/2015/17 Water corporation	EWOV identified via case handling, an instance where billing from a water corporation included a Sewage Disposal Charge (SDC) that was billed for a period different to the Water Consumption Charge. It appears that this may be a broader issue, specifically when the customer is billed by a shared meter. Although it did not create a financial impact, it had the potential to cause confusion.	16 October 2015	1	8,000	The water corporation identified that the 8,000 affected sites were billed via a shared meter, which was fixed between July and September 2015, and confirmed in the bills sent at the end of September 2015 that the billing period for usage and sewage disposal charge were showing the same date	No	EWOV believes the water corporation took appropriate steps to resolve this matter.
SI/2015/52 Water corporation	A water corporation advised that bills for rural customers were issued two weeks late, with the original due date due to a mailing house error. Customers received SMS to advise them of the issue, however, many paid by the due date regardless.	16 October 2015	0	4,442	The water corporation advised that the mailing house implemented changes to prevent similar issues recurring. No EWOV complaints were received and very few issues were raised internally with the water corporation.	No	EWOV believes the water corporation took appropriate steps to resolve this matter.

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SI/2015/45 Water corporation	EWOV identified via case handling, an instance where a water corporation did not follow the correct procedure under the <i>Water Act</i> (sections 144 and 260) in registering/declaring a property to be a serviced property. Specifically, it did not take out a notice in a local newspaper.	16 October 2015	1	Unknown	The water corporation made changes to its processes, and now puts an advertisement in the relevant local newspaper/s in line with the requirements of the <i>Water Act</i> .	No	EWOV believes the water corporation took appropriate steps to resolve this matter.
SI/2015/59 Water corporation	EWOV was alerted by the water corporation that it had inadvertently direct debited 470 customers twice for the same invoice.	18 January 2016	0	470	The water corporation contacted all affected customers to advise them of the issue. It also processed the refunds immediately and advised that it would reimburse customers for any dishonour or account overdraw fees.	No	EWOV believes the water corporation took appropriate steps to resolve this matter.
SI/2016/20 Water corporation	EWOV identified via case handling an instance of a customer who had received a letter that required him to replace his standard water meter with a digital water meter with remote reading capabilities, as he had received several estimated bills.	26 May 2016	1	Unknown	The compulsory digital water meter replacement program – which required customers to pay for these meters – started in September 2014 and ended in February 2016. Additionally, for ongoing meter access issues, the water corporation provides customers with three	No	EWOV believes that the cessation of the program and the alternative options to obtain meter reads appropriately redressed the issue.

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					options to provide meter reads.		
SI/2016/18 Water corporation	EWOV identified through cases received, media and notification from the Essential Services Commission (ESC) that a water corporation had experienced a spike in billing and high bill enquiries and complaints.	16 June 2016	207	Approximately 5,000	<p>The water corporation implemented changes to the way it handles customer enquiries and complaints about high bills by creating a specialised team to work through a resolution.</p> <p>The new specialised team combines the leak allowance/unexplained high bill team and the hardship team.</p> <p>Additionally, the water corporation tailored its assistance for customers who have special circumstances and has changed its leak allowance/unexplained high bill process so it now calls customers about the outcome of their application, rather than just sending an outcome letter.</p>	No	EWOV believes that the water corporation took reasonable steps to help resolve high bill enquiries and complaints, and to identify hardship customers.
SI/2016/30 Water	The water corporation self-reported this systemic issue to	30 June 2016	0	13,250	All affected customers have had their GSLs applied. The	No	EWOV believes that the water corporation took appropriate

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corporation	<p>EWOV. Under the water corporation's Customer Charter, customers who are unreasonably impacted by a failure of its water or sewer system are entitled to a guaranteed service level (GSL) rebate approved by the ESC. Rebates are normally applied to the water account automatically and customers do not need to apply for a rebate in order to be eligible.</p> <p>However, due to system issues since September 2014, approximately 13,250 rebates had not been applied to eligible customer accounts (up to November 2015).</p> <p>The system issue was resolved and the water corporation has completed the backlog of rebates to customer accounts.</p>				<p>water corporation and its third-party data provider have implemented system fixes to ensure that the outage/off-supply data is accurate and correct.</p> <p>Some more customer accounts will need to have manual GSL rebates applied in the July-September 2016 quarter due to residual data issues that were recently resolved. The water corporation has included an explanatory letter and apology with bills to all affected customers. The water corporation received a small number of enquiries.</p> <p>If customers enquired about the GSL payment they actually ended up receiving the payment.</p>		steps in pro-actively reporting the issue and redressing customers who had a delay with receiving their GSL payment.
SI/2016/19 Water	EWOV identified via case handling two instances of	30 June 2016	2	Unknown	Due to system issues, there were some accuracy errors	No	EWOV believes that the water corporation took appropriate

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corporation	customers complaining about estimated final water information statements when properties were sold. One of the complaints also highlighted an issue with these statements when customers were on instalment payment plans.				<p>with outstanding balances being displayed on the Water Information Statements and Rate Settlement Statements. Primarily, the problems related to customers who paid via an instalment payment arrangement. In most instances, these unexplained debts were written off when the water corporation could not explain the account balance.</p> <p>The issue also related to customers/conveyancers who did not request special meter reads at the date of property settlement and therefore received an estimated meter read.</p> <p>The water corporation a new communications process to notify customers that a special meter read needs to be requested in order to obtain the most accurate Water Information Statement and Rate Settlement Statement.</p>		action to fix the process issue that caused some customers to be dissatisfied about the final billing when selling/buying a property and redressed affected customers by writing off the debts.

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SI/2015/49 Water corporation	The water corporation notified EWOV that it had identified an issue where a group of customers had not been billed ongoing water and sewerage service charges, when they should have. From July 2015, future billing will contain these charges, and if the customer owned the property, only nine months' worth of backbilling will apply.	30 June 2016	6	2,850	The water corporation waived backbilling charges greater than nine months (even though it's allowed to backbill 12 months) for customers who were undercharged and owned the property for the whole duration. Additionally, for customers who complained about the backbilling, the water corporation reduced the backbilled charges.	No	EWOV believes that the water corporation took appropriate steps to pro-actively resolve the issue with customers and backbilled customers for less time than what is allowed under the <i>Water Customer Service Code</i> .
SI/2015/50 Water corporation	The water corporation notified EWOV that it had identified an issue where a group of customers had been billed water and sewerage service charges in error. The water corporation confirmed that all impacted customers were issued with a credit.	30 June 2016	0	250	The water corporation refunded affected customers who had been overcharged. Also, it communicated with affected customers and provided a letter of explanation.	Yes	EWOV believes that the water corporation took appropriate steps to communicate with affected customers and offered various ways for the refund to be paid to customers.