



"YOUR LOCAL WATER SUPPLIER"
AQWEST
OWNED BY THE PEOPLE OF W.A.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION INFORMATION STATEMENT

2021/2022



Version	Date	Amendment Description	Reviewer	Approver
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1. INTRODUCTION

Aqwest is the trading name of the Bunbury Water Corporation. Aqwest has been providing safe and affordable drinking water to the Bunbury community since 1906.

This Information Statement is provided by Aqwest in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Copies of this document may be obtained from the Aqwest website – www.aqwest.com.au or the Aqwest Water Services Centre, 5 Mackinnon Way, Bunbury. For any enquiries please contact (08) 9780 9500 or email aqwest@aqwest.com.au.



PURPOSE

Maximise value to the owner and customer by providing locally managed water services



VISION

To work within a changing environment as an independent, viable and competitive water utility



VALUES

Accountability
Integrity
Transparency
Respect

2. DETAILS OF LEGISLATION ADMINISTERED

Aqwest is a government trading enterprise providing water services. As such it does not administer any legislation. Legislation that enables Aqwest to function is administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, a government agency.

Enabling legislation is:

1. Water Services Act 2012 - An Act relating to the provision of water services and the regulation of water service providers, and for related purposes.
2. Water Corporations Act 1995 - An Act to establish, and to provide for the establishment of, corporations with the function of providing water services, and with functions necessary for and related to that purpose, and for connected purposes.

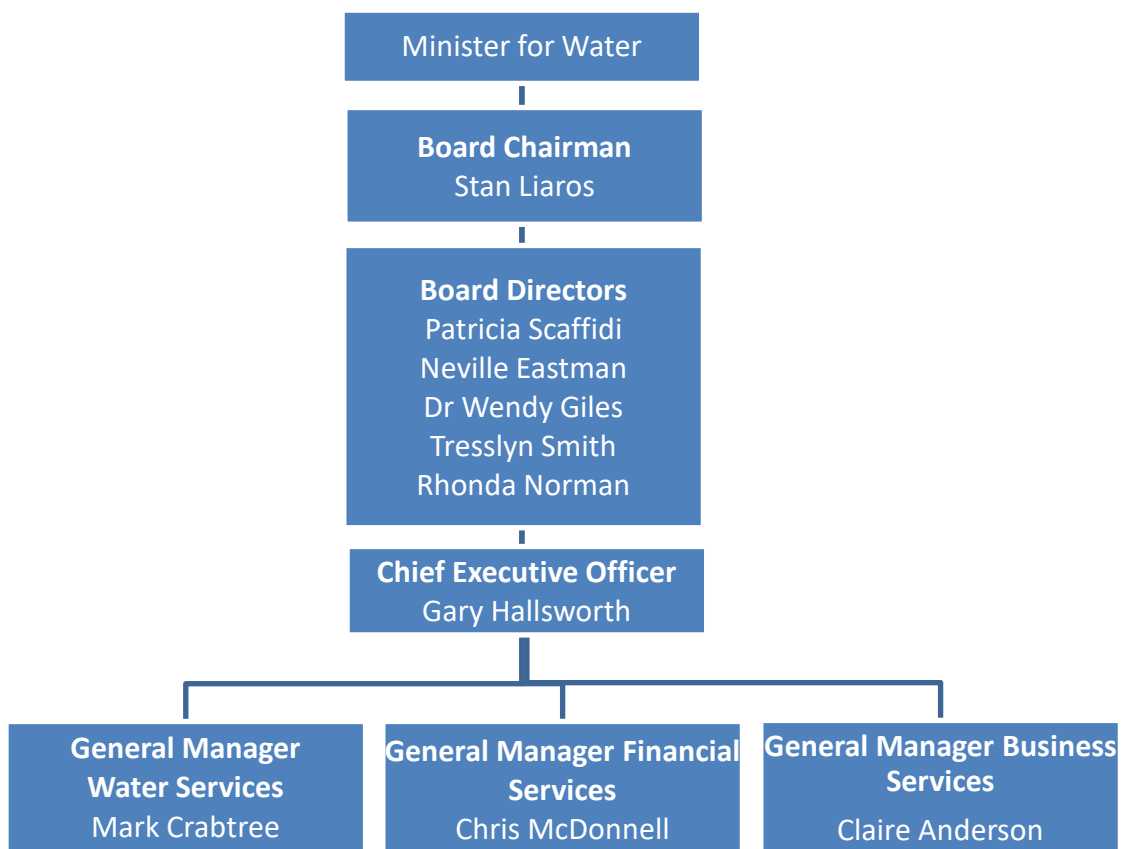
3. ORGANISATION STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

Aqwest is owned by the Western Australian Government and is accountable to the Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth the Hon Dave Kelly MLA, for the delivery of services.

The Board responds to the Minister for Water and has the legislative authority to perform the functions of the organisation. It is ultimately responsible for legal compliance, corporate governance and risk management. The Board also provides the strategic direction and guidance to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Management.

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Board of Directors, with the concurrence of the Minister for Water.

The organisational structure consists of three streams – Water Services, Financial Services and Business Services. Each is headed by a General Manager who reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer.



Aqwest provides drinking water to more than 20,000 properties in the City of Bunbury and surrounding areas and is committed to providing sustainable, high-quality drinking water that consistently meets or exceeds customers' expectations.

4. DECISION- MAKING FUNCTIONS AND THEIR AFFECT ON THE PUBLIC

Aqwest is required to make decisions that can have an impact on the provision of water services to the community.

The key roles of the Board are:

- To provide leadership and direction necessary to ensure the organisation achieves excellence in the provision of services to its customers
- Complete regulatory and statutory compliance
- Operate in a responsible and ethical manner, both within the spirit of any relevant legislation and within the community it serves

The Board may delegate the performance of any of its functions to an Officer, in accordance with Section 35 of the *Water Corporations Act 1995*. These delegations are reviewed annually.

Aqwest has policies and procedures that guide and direct its business processes. Copies of policies that affect the public are available on the Aqwest website – www.aqwest.com.au.

4.3 SCOPE OF DECISION MAKING

Aqwest has an operating licence to provide potable water services to the Greater Bunbury Region. Aqwest also has approval to develop water resource recovery activities, but these have not yet been completed or licensed.

There following subsidiary legislation provide additional standards Aqwest must meet in delivering water services. These limit the amount of discretion it has in decision making:

- Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020
- Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018
- Water Services (Water Corporations Charges) Regulations 2014
- Water Services Regulations 2013

4.4 MECHANISMS FOR DECISION MAKING

Where decisions may be made, decision makers within Aqwest are guided by:

- Minister expectations and directives
- Risk and compliance implications
- Published purpose, vision, and values statements
- Published policy and procedure statements
- Approved internal policies and procedures

4.5 DECISIONS UNDER THE WATER SERVICES ACT 2012

Matters where Aqwest may make decisions that affect the public in provision of water services is covered by the Water Services Act 2012 and subsidiary legislation. They include:

- Application of non-standard terms and conditions of service (*only available in restricted circumstances*).
- Development and building control and infrastructure contributions
- Protection of works, fittings, and fixtures
- Water supply connections, disconnections, and fire hydrants
- Enforcement of offences against the Water Services Regulations
- Provision of water services works
- Entry for performance of functions
- Billing and payment for water services
- Restricting the flow of water
- Response to faults, emergencies, and interruptions
- Complaint handling
- Information and communication services
- Supply of water to persons with special requirements or needs.

4.6 DECISIONS UNDER THE WATER CORPORATIONS ACT 1995

Matters where Aqwest may make decisions that affect the public in the management of business interests covered by the Water Corporations Act 1995 and directives from various agencies. They include:

- Staffing
- Strategic planning and reporting
- Financial planning
- Contracting

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OF FUNCTIONS

Aqwest has a number of Committees including a Board Sub-Committee (Audit and Risk Management Committee), Board appointed Committees and internal Committees. The Committees comprise of Board members and relevant officers. Members of the public are not appointed to these Committees. Committees can invite guests to attend these meetings on occasion.

Members of the public are eligible to apply for appointment to the Board of Aqwest. Information on how to take advantage of this opportunity is on our website (www.aqwest.com.au).

Aqwest runs an annual Customer Survey that all existing customers are encouraged to participate in. The survey provides insights into customer perception, experience and satisfaction with Aqwest services.

Where Aqwest plans to undertake major or general works, it will prepare plans, publish and provide notice of the plans as required by Part 6 of the *Water Services Act 2012*. Relevant works will be published on the website and affected owners and occupiers will be notified as required. Any objections and submissions received during the advertisement period will be considered and plans amended as appropriate.

6. DOCUMENTS HELD BY THE AGENCY

6.1 PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- Aqwest Annual Report
- Aqwest Policies
- Aqwest Water Quality Report
- Aqwest Quarterly Report
- Aqwest Code of Conduct
- Aqwest Statement of Corporate Intent
- Aqwest FOI Information Statement
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Plans and details of major and general works

These documents are available on the Aqwest website – www.aqwest.com.au. Requests for hard copies of this information may be lodged via the following methods:

- By post – Aqwest, PO Box 400, Bunbury WA 6231
- By email – aqwest@aqwest.com.au
- In person – 5 Mackinnon Way, Bunbury

6.2 DETAILS OF OTHER AGENCY DOCUMENTS

- Correspondence
- Files
- Drawings
- Maps
- Reports to/from External Bodies
- Internal Procedures Manuals
- Internal Operational Manuals
- Internal Maintenance Manuals
- Licences
- Legal Agreements
- Contracts

6.3 DOCUMENT FORMAT AND STORAGE

All records are registered within the records database with appropriate security designations as necessary. Where possible this information is held electronically (in native application source files) to aid document control processes such as revision and approval, and efficient information retrieval.

Sensitive information is stored securely and access restricted. Physical information, dependent upon the Record Type, may be stored in the Strong Room, or the Archives Storage area.

6.4 INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION

All Aqwest files are classified via the use of a customised Thesaurus containing Functional and Administrative Keywords, and associated Activity/Subject Descriptors. These files are uniquely identified by a single alpha character (to identify the Record Type), followed by a sequential number generated by the Content Manager database.

All other records are created according to Record Type with associated unique alpha characters and sequential numbers. These records are titled via free text in order to reflect the specific title.

6.5 PERSONAL INFORMATION

External Contacts

Minimal personal information relating to external contacts is held by Aqwest.

From a Correspondence perspective, names and addresses are retained within the records database to enable record searching via contact. This information is not divulged to external commercial enterprises.

From an accounts perspective, names, addresses and pensioner/concession eligibility status is retained within the Authority financial database to enable appropriate billing processes. These details are updated as necessary upon receipt of authorised Change of Name/Address Notification forms. This information is not divulged to external commercial enterprises. Occasionally this information may be shared reciprocally with other Government Agencies (e.g. Water Corporation), with similar core business activities.

Financial information is gathered from customers seeking Hardship Utility Grants Scheme (HUGS) and stored in HPRM, while this information is not shared with an external agency the latest account for the customer is sent to Department of Child Protection as evidence of the debt.

From an Accounts Payable perspective, names, addresses and financial institution details are retained within the Authority financial database to enable appropriate payment and/or funds transfer for debtors and creditors (including contractors). These details are updated as necessary upon receipt of authorised Change of Name/Address Notification forms. This information is not divulged to external commercial enterprises.

Internal Contacts

From a Human Resources perspective, considerable personal information is retained about employees. This includes name, address, financial institution details, superannuation details, next of kin, psychometric evaluations and medical information. These details are updated as necessary upon request from the employee. This information is not divulged externally unless associated with Insurance or staff profiling processes.

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) ACCESS APPLICATIONS

Aqwest aims to make information available promptly, for the least possible cost. Therefore, wherever possible, documents will be provided outside the Freedom of Information (FOI) process. If information is not publicly available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides the right to apply for documents held by the agency and to enable the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

An application made under the FOI Act for access to documents, amendment of personal information or review of a decision have to:

- Be in writing;
- Give enough information so that the documents requested may be identified;
- Give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- Be lodged at Aqwest with any application fee payable.

Applications may be lodged either:

- By post, addressed to Chief Executive Officer, Aqwest, PO Box 400, Bunbury WA 6231;
- By email to aqwest@aqwest.com.au, or
- In person at 5 MacKinnon Way, Bunbury

For any enquiries regarding the Freedom of Information application process, please contact (08) 9780 9500 or email aqwest@aqwest.com.au.

Applications will be acknowledged in writing. A written notice of decision will be provided within 45 days.

7.1 FEES AND CHARGES

With the exception of the Application Fee for Non-Personal information, all charges are discretionary. Details of Fees and Charges as prescribed in the *Freedom of Information (Charges) Regulations 2019* are as follows:

Application Fee (Non-personal information)	\$30.00
Charge for time taken by staff dealing with the application (per hour or pro rata for a part of an hour)	\$30.00
Charge for access time supervised staff (per hour, or pro rata for a part of an hour) + the actual additional cost to Aqwest of any special arrangements (e.g. hire of facilities or equipment)	\$30.00
Charges for photocopying (per hour or pro rata for a part of an hour of staff time); and Per copy	\$30.00 0.20c
Charge for time taken by staff transcribing information from a tape or other device (per hour, or pro rata for a part of an hour)	\$30.00
Charge for duplicating a tape, film or computer information	Actual Cost
Charge for delivery, packaging and postage	Actual Cost

An estimate of charges will be provided if the cost is expected to exceed \$25.00. For impecunious applicants or those issued with prescribed pensioner concession cards, any charges payable are reduced by 25%.

7.2 DEPOSITS

An advance deposit may be required in respect of the estimated charges	25%
Further advance deposit may be required to meet the charges for dealing with the application	25%

7.3 ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, a copy of a document, a copy of an audio or video tape, a computer disk, a transcript of a recorded, shorthand or encoded document from which words can be reproduced.

7.4 NOTICE OF DECISION

As soon as possible but in any case within 45 days a notice of decision will be provided which will include details such as:

- The date the decision was made
- The name and the designation of the officer who made the decision
- If access is refused, the reasons for claiming the document is exempt; and
- Information on the rights of review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

7.5 REFUSAL OF ACCESS

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision by Aqwest are entitled to request an internal review. Applications for internal review should be made in writing to Aqwest within 30 days of receiving the original notice of decision. You will be notified of the outcome of the internal review within 15 days.

If you disagree with the result of the internal review, you can then apply to the Information Commissioner for an external review. The external review application should be made within 60 days after receiving the written notice of the internal review decision.

7.6 RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS

Aqwest's General Manager Business Services assumes the dual roles of FOI Coordinator and FOI Decision Maker and is authorised to perform those functions in accordance with the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Aqwest's Chief Executive Officer assumes the role of FOI Review Officer and is authorised to perform these functions in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

8. AMENDING PERSONAL INFORMATION

If Aqwest holds your personal information on record, which you believe may be inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading, you can apply for the information to be amended.

Applications should be made in writing:

- Change Your Details form on the Aqwest website – www.aqwest.com.au/forms/change-your-details
- By post, addressed to Chief Executive Officer, Aqwest, PO Box 400, Bunbury WA 6231;
- By email to aqwest@aqwest.com.au, or

Any enquiries can be directed to the Customer Service Team on (08) 9780 9500