



Water



Electricity

Fact Sheet



District Council of Coober Pedy – Compliance review outcomes

The District Council of Coober Pedy (DCCP) has completed the compliance requirements specified in the Essential Services Commission's (**Commission**) [Compliance Review Report](#), published February 2021.

Since the report was published, the DCCP has actively engaged with the Commission to achieve compliance with the listed requirements.

The Commission will continue to monitor the DCCP regarding its ongoing compliance with the regulatory requirements associated with its water and electricity licences.

Background

The District Council of Coober Pedy (DCCP) has an electricity and a water licence issued by the Commission. In 2018-19, the Commission commenced compliance action in relation to the DCCP's compliance with its water and electricity licences, legislation and codes. The Commission found areas of non-compliance and required the DCCP to review, amend and implement revised compliance systems, processes, controls and documentation.

In February 2021, the Commission published a [Compliance Review Report](#) evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the DCCP's updated compliance systems, processes, controls and documentation. The report identified issues required to be remediated for the DCCP to demonstrate compliance with its water and electricity licences and their associated legislation and codes.

Key themes identified in the report included that the DCCP staff training and contingency plans for staff turnover required improvement and further communication material (such as brochures, guides or fact sheets) was required to be developed and made accessible to customers.

Regulatory outcomes








As the relevant licensing authority, and consistent with its general powers and functions under the Essential Services Commission Act 2002, the Commission has compliance and enforcement powers in relation to the performance of licensees.










The Commission has closely monitored the DCCP's progress in responding to the requirements and has evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of the DCCP's revised compliance systems, processes, controls and documentation.

Since the report was published, the DCCP has actively engaged with the Commission to achieve compliance with the listed requirements, and in doing so has helped to create a culture of improved customer communication. This improved culture has made a start towards ensuring that the DCCP staff are adequately trained and that contingency plans are in place in the event of staff turnover.

Table 1 and 2 below provide a summary of the issues identified through the review, which the DCCP was required to address to ensure compliance with its licence conditions, legislation and codes. The Commission is satisfied that the DCCP has taken sufficient action to remediate the compliance issues identified in the report.

Table 1: Summary of compliance review outcomes

#	Compliance Issue	Action Required	Action Taken	Status
3.1	Restrictions and Disconnections	DCCP ceased disconnections and restrictions for customers' failure to pay an invoice.	DCCP stopped all disconnections and restrictions as advised, this was not to be completed until the Debt Recovery Policy was approved	 Completed 15 Nov 21
3.1	Restrictions and Disconnections	Develop additional communication materials for customers on disconnections and restrictions – hard copy and website.	Council have created communication material to outline the disconnection process to customers, they have also created internal procedures to ensure consistency across the process	 Completed 2 Aug 22
3.2	Staff training and contingency plans for staff turnover	Implement Training Manuals for staff.	DCCP have created a number of procedures for daily tasks which detail the requirements of administrative tasks to ensure that staff training and contingency plans for staff leaving are considered.	 Completed 23 Mar 22
3.3	Communication material and customer engagement	<p>Develop additional communication materials for customers on disconnections and restrictions – hard copy and website.</p> <p>Information must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardship and Debt Recovery Policies - Bill Payments and Meter Readings - Outages, faults, and emergencies - Products, plans, and pricing - RAES scheme and government concessions 	Council created separate brochures for both water and electricity customers, which outline all of the required dot points. These were comprehensive and have been sent to all customers.	 Completed 17 Feb 22
4.1	Hardship Policy	Website updated to display the policy in a prominent location.	DCCP Website was updated to show Hardship policy – this is now listed under ‘payments’ on the council services tab.	 Completed 01 Mar 21
4.2	Customer Charter	Website updated to display the policy in a prominent location.	DCCP Website was updated to show Hardship policy – this is now listed under in the ‘water services’ section under council services	 Completed 01 Mar 21
4.3.1	Billing – tax invoices	A new lodged bill with a 24/7 system fault number and next meter read provided to the Commission.	The tax invoices were updated to include previous payments and next meter reading information.	 Completed 23 Feb 21

#	Compliance Issue	Action Required	Action Taken	Status
4.3.1	Billing – tax invoices	Investigate options for providing details of previous payments made by customers towards bills.	Council's billing software provider implemented the required changes to billing notices to show balance and transaction history between each quarterly notice.	 Completed 20 Jul 22
4.3.2	Reminder Notices – 'yellow letter'	Reminder notice includes information on unpaid invoices and flexible payment options.	Reminder notices have been updated to include detailed customer information and meets the requirements of the DCCP licence and Water Retail Code.	 Completed 25 Jan 22
4.3.5	Disconnection Notices – 'green letter'	Letter revised and amended checklist approved by the Commission.	A revised version of notice was provided and is consistent with the requirements of the DCCP licence and Water Retail Code.	 Completed 5 Jul 22
4.3.6	Estimated Bills	Formalise the current process for estimating bills based on DCCP's approved policy.	DCCP have created a formal procedure for averaging accounts rather than estimating bills.	 Completed 24 Nov 21
4.5	Debt Recovery Policy	DCCP provided the draft Debt Recovery Policy to the Commission for review.	<p>The Commission reviewed and provided feedback for the Debt Recovery Policy to ensure all consumer protections outlined in the licence conditions were in place. This policy has been published on the DCCP website.</p> <p>The Commission advised DCCP they had met the conditions to recommence disconnections of electricity and restrictions of water on 11 July 2022 once policy was in place</p>	 Completed 11 Jul 22
4.6	Communication material	Develop a Fact Sheet on options for hardship, payment difficulties and the provision of payment options based on the hardship and debt management policies.	Council created separate brochures for both water and electricity customers, which outlined hardship and payment difficulties.	 Completed 17 Feb 22
4.7	Customer Complaints Policy	Customer Complaints Policy available on the website.	DCCP Website was updated to show Customer Complaints policy – this is listed in council documents under the policy tab.	 Completed 01 Mar 21
4.9	Staff training and procedures checklists	Develop checklists and procedures guides to mitigate risks from staff turnover. Document is being finalised by DCCP.	DCCP have created a number of procedures for daily tasks which detail the requirements of administrative tasks to ensure that staff training and contingency plans for staff leaving are considered.	 Completed 23 Mar 22
4.10	Standard terms and contract - Electricity	Approved standard contract available on the website.	The Standard terms and conditions contract was approved by the Commission originally in 2019 and was published in the	 Completed 21 July 22






#	Compliance Issue	Action Required	Action Taken	Status
			Government Gazette on 7 Feb 2019. This was published on the DCCP website. A revised contract was approved by the Commission on 10 Jun 2022 and this was published on the DCCP website and in the Government Gazette on 21 July 2022	
4.10	Standard terms and contract - Water	Approved standard contract available on the website.	The standard water contract for water was approved by the Commission on 10 Jun 2022 and this was published on the DCCP website and in the Government Gazette on 21 July 2022	 Completed 21 July 22

Table 2: Summary of compliance review outcomes - ongoing requirements

	Compliance Issue	Action Required	Action Taken	Status
3.4	Annual Compliance Reporting	Annual Compliance Report completed correctly.	The 2020-21 annual compliance reports were lodged with all the required information provided within correct time frames.	 Ongoing
4.8	Energy and Water Ombudsman Scheme (EWOSA)	DCCP to maintain its membership to the Scheme to allow for an independent external process to assist in the resolution of customer complaints.	DCCP have been a member of EWOSA since 7 Mar 2019 and have continued to maintain their membership	 Ongoing
4.12.1	Safety, Reliability, Maintenance, And Technical Management Plan (SRMTMP)	DCCP to ensure that the SRMTMP is updated and forwarded to the Office of Technical Regulator (OTR) within the correct timeframes to ensure continual compliance with licence conditions.	Information from the OTR indicates that DCCP is up to date with their SRMTMP	 Ongoing
4.12.1	Switching Manual	Ensure that its switching manual is current and forwarded to the OTR within the correct timeframes to ensure continual compliance with licence conditions.	Information from the OTR indicates that DCCP is up to date with their Switching Manual	 Ongoing

For further information, please refer to the [Compliance Review Report](#), available on the Commission's website at: www.escosa.sa.gov.au/projects-and-publications/projects/corporate/coober-pedy-compliance-review.