



Water

Application Form for the Issue of a Water Licence

By the Essential Services Commission of SA under the Water Industry Act

May 2020

Enquiries concerning this form should be addressed to:

Essential Services Commission
GPO Box 2605
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8463 4444

Freecall: 1800 633 592 (SA and mobiles only)

E-mail: licensing@escosa.sa.gov.au

Web: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

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Glossary of terms

Commission	Essential Services Commission, established under the Essential Services Commission Act 2002
ESC Act	Essential Services Commission Act 2002
Treasurer	Treasurer for the South Australian Government
Regulator	Technical Regulator

Information for applicants before filling out this form

Purpose of this form

This form is to be completed by persons making an application to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (the **Commission**) for the issue of a licence to provide a retail service (or undertake any other activity for which a licence is required by the regulations) in the water industry in South Australia.

The Commission may consider joint applications from two or more persons who wish to hold a licence jointly. Persons making joint applications must ensure that each of the applicants completes a separate application form together with a covering letter explaining that the application is for a licence to be jointly held.

Basis for this form

Section 19(1) of the Water Industry Act 2012 (the **Act**) provides that an application for the issue of a licence must be made to the Commission in a form approved by the Commission. This is the form approved by the Commission.

Use of this form and applicant's responsibility

For the purpose of this application form, a reference to the term "Officer" include the applicant's directors and secretary, and/or other persons who make or participate in making decisions that affect a substantial part of the business of the applicant (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, General Manager etc.).

Applicants should list the information requested in the spaces provided in this form and enclose additional information when required. Applicants must take all reasonable steps to ensure the information provided in the application form is complete, true and correct and are required to make a declaration to that effect. Failure to disclose information or misrepresent any matter relevant to such information may result in a licence not being issued or in the suspension or cancellation of a licence at a later time.

Applicants are responsible for providing the Commission with current, accurate and relevant information. This will ensure that the application is processed promptly and without delay. All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. If insufficient information is provided with an application, the Commission will request additional information to be submitted before the application is considered further. This may cause delays in the assessment of the application.

Prior reading

It is essential that licence applicants read the Commission's Water Bulletin – "*Licensing Arrangements for the Water Industry*" before they fill out this form. This Bulletin is available on the Commission's website www.escosa.sa.gov.au under water/licensing. Applicants should also familiarise themselves with the regulatory obligations set out in the Act and the Water Retail Code that will apply to entities that provide retail services.

Licence conditions

Section 25 of the Act requires the Commission to impose certain conditions in licences. The Commission strongly recommends that applicants review these mandatory conditions. Applicants must be familiar with the relevant conditions and be confident that they can comply with the conditions. The Commission will have regard to the scale and nature of the operations undertaken by an applicant in imposing these conditions and will be available to consult with an applicant in this regard.

Variation of licence conditions

As part of the Commission's licensing function, it has the power to vary (or add to) conditions that are imposed on a licence it has issued. Specifically, under section 28 of the Act, the Commission has the power to vary a licence at any time, subject to statutory procedural requirements, including providing a licensee with reasonable notice of a proposed variation and allowing it the opportunity to make representations on that variation.

There is a broad range of factors that might be potential 'triggers' for the Commission to consider varying a licence, or adding new conditions. These include factors both external and internal to a licensee, and may include (without limitation):

- ▶ material changes in market operations, outcomes or structures;
- ▶ changes to applicable national or State legislation, rules or policy;
- ▶ the findings of a formal inquiry undertaken by the Commission;
- ▶ substantive changes to operations which would have a genuine connection to or impact on the operations authorised under a licence;
- ▶ an application by a licensee to vary its licence (for example, to add or remove retail operations); and
- ▶ evidence of upgrades or material changes to a licensee's business or operational practices relating to operations authorised under a licence.

In considering a potential licence variation, the Commission must consider the factors specified in section 6 of the Essential Services Commission Act 2002 (which sets out the Commission's primary statutory objective and other relevant considerations), the objects of the Act (as set out in section 3 of that Act). It will also be informed by any information submitted by a licensee to which the variation may apply, through public consultation and by engagement with regulatory agencies involved in the electricity supply industry.

Consultation and Confidentiality

The Commission will consult with relevant government, industry and consumer groups in the conduct of its licensing functions through a public consultation process. Consequently, applications and/or supporting information will be made available on the Commission's website and in hard copy from the Commission's office for this purpose.

If applicants believe that they are providing confidential information when completing this form they should write "this information is confidential" after any such information. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure this is clearly highlighted on the form. Applicants should also provide a 'non-confidential' version of the form capable of publication on the Commission's website.

The Commission will use information supplied in applications and in support of applications in accordance with the requirements of Part 5 of the Essential Services Commission Act 2002. Applicants claiming confidentiality are encouraged to familiarise themselves with Part 5. Applicants should note that the Commission may be required to disclose confidential information in some circumstances.

How to lodge an application

Applicants should send their completed application form electronically (preferred) or in writing.

Electronically to: licensing@escosa.sa.gov.au

In writing to: Essential Services Commission of SA
GPO Box 2605

Application fee

Applicants must also enclose an application fee¹ (set by the Treasurer) with their application. This fee must be received by the Commission in cleared funds before it can commence assessing an application.

Annual licence fee

Holding a licence incurs an annual licence fee. The licence fees² are set by the Treasurer, however, are collected by the Commission. At annual intervals, the Commission, on behalf of the Department of Treasury and Finance, will send to each licensee an invoice for the relevant annual licence fee. Licence fees are to be paid on receipt of an invoice via one of the payment options set out in the invoice.

A licence cannot be issued until the first annual licence fee has been paid.

¹ Available at <https://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/industry/water/licensing/licence-fees>

² Available at <https://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/industry/water/licensing/licence-fees>

The Applicant

Applicants must answer all questions in this section.

1.1 Identity of applicant

State the full name of the applicant. The applicant should be the person/entity that will be providing a retail service (e.g. retail or distribution operations etc). The Commission can also consider joint applications from two or more persons who wish to jointly hold the licence. Joint applicants should each complete an application form, and submit their application forms at the same time, with a covering letter explaining that a joint application is being made.

Name: **Adelaide Hills Berry Farm Pty Ltd**.....
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1.2 Legal identity of applicant

Provide information about the applicant, (i.e. whether the applicant is a natural person, proprietary limited or public company, partnership or local government body etc). If the applicant is a body corporate, please also state the jurisdiction in which the applicant is registered, and the applicant's ABN/ACN.

Adelaide Hills Berry Farm Pty Lyd ABN 33 606 546 123

Registered in the state of **South Australia**.....
.....

1.3 Address and Contact Details of applicant

Business Address:

[REDACTED].....
.....

State: **South Australia**..... Post Code: **5142**.....

Postal Address (if different to Business Address):

PO Box 99 URAIDLA.....

State: **South Australia**..... Post Code: **5142**.....

Telephone: **Office 08 8390 3369, Sam [REDACTED], Dom [REDACTED]**.....

Facsimile: **N/A**.....

E-mail: **sam@ahbf.com.au, [REDACTED]**

1.4 Contact Person on behalf of applicant

The full name, title and contact details of a person to whom the Commission can direct enquiries and correspondence about the application.

Full Name: **Dominic Virgara**.....

Title: **Finance Director**.....

Business Address:

As above

State: Post Code:

Postal Address (if different to above):

As above

State: Post Code:

Telephone:

Facsimile:

Email:

1.5 Contact person for licence fees

The full name or title of the person to whom the Commission can direct enquiries and correspondence about licence fees.

Full Name: **Dominic Virgara all as above**

Title:

Business Address:

.....

State: Post Code:

Postal Address (if different to above):

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State: Post Code:

Telephone:

Facsimile:

E-mail:

2 The Licence

Applicants must answer all questions in this section.

2.1 A detailed description of the retail services for which a licence is sought

For example:

Water: drinking- residential and/or non-residential;

Water: non-drinking – residential and/or non-residential;

Sewerage: residential and/or non-residential; and

Sewerage – trade waste – non-residential.

Applicants should provide detailed information in respect of where the retail services will be provided and to whom (i.e. type and number of customers)

Water: non-drinking – residential and/or non-residential;

Potable water is provided as a "non-essential and interruptable" supply primarily for the use of home gardens. The water source is from an underground bore that has been established in the early 1900's and was used mainly for market gardening purposes right up until the present day. Water is taken from the underground source and pumped into a 100,000 gallon holding tank on Swamp Road. From there it is transferred into 2 separate holding tanks located at the highest points of the property in order for the water to be gravity fed to various households, the Uraidla Hotel and the two Summerhill Retirement Villages. The 2 holding tanks located on Days Road Uraidla have a capacity of 50,000 gallons and 20,000 gallons respectively. All three tanks are monitored by float valves ensuring they are at near capacity at all times. The Property has a 60Meg water licence in order to provide the Uraidla Township with water as well as for the use of commercial agricultural activities whic is teh priprimary use of the property.

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Connections – 71 Active connections, 7 Inactive Connections.....

There is **approximately 5km of pipeline network** throughout the system. We have spent tens of thousands of dollars to upgrade the system, repair the 3 main storage tanks, replace main submersible pump, segregate the town water from the Farm, section off the town water by sections to avoid shutting down the whole town depending on where maintenance is required, repaired many leaks in the system we inherited at property purchase, replaced many old pipes to industrial grade PVC pipes, replaced most old leaky and rusted valves as some of our ongoing maintenance program. As an example we have gone from approximately 12 or more shutdowns per year varying from 4 hours to 3 days when we first took over the property to 1 x 2 hour shutdown in the last 12 months.

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2.2 Date from which Licence is sought

If the applicant seeks to have the licence issued by a certain date, provide this date. Please note that the Commission does not undertake to issue the licence by this date. Applicants should usually allow the Commission a minimum of twelve weeks to consider an application, as a public consultation period of several weeks forms part of the Commission’s consideration of licence applications.

From the 31st December 2022 which is the expiration of the current Exemption.....
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3 Suitability of Applicant to hold a Licence

Applicants must answer all questions in this section.

3.1 Standard of honesty and integrity shown by applicant

In deciding whether the applicant is a suitable person to hold a licence, the Commission may:

- ▶ consider the applicant’s previous commercial and other dealings; and
- ▶ the standard of honesty and integrity shown in those dealings.

Please provide information that will assist the Commission in its consideration of this matter. If the applicant:

- ▶ has been found guilty of any criminal offence;
- ▶ has been successfully prosecuted under any Territory, State or Commonwealth legislation (such as the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 or the Competition and Consumer Act 2010); and/or
- ▶ has been the subject of disciplinary action.

Details of such matters must be disclosed. Failure to disclose such information or misrepresent any matter relevant to such information may result in the cancellation of a licence.

The Commission may use the service of an external expert to assist with the assessment of the applicant’s standard of honesty and integrity.

The Company and its Directors have never been found guilty of any criminal offence or even charged with any criminal offence, never been prosecuted or the subject of any disciplinary action.....

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3.2 Standard of honesty and integrity shown by officers and major shareholders (if relevant) of the applicant

Applicants should address responses to this question in the same manner as 3.1 above.

The directors are 50 plus year residents of Uraidla and feel we owe an obligation to the community to keep providing the water to the Uraidla township. It would certainly be easier for us to not have this obligation as it is secondary to our reasons for purchasing the property but we are prepared to provide it on the basis it doesn’t detract us too much from the main business at hand which is agricultural pursuits.

Dominic and Sam Virgara have been and currently are, directors of many registered operating companies including Adelaide Hills Berry Farms Pty Ltd,

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As mentioned previously we have always met our statutory obligations as and when due.....

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3.3 Names and addresses of the officers of applicant

State the names and addresses of the officers of the applicant. "Officers" of the applicant include the applicant's directors and secretary, or other persons who make or participate in making decisions that affect a substantial part of the business or operations of the applicant that will be licensed.

Full Name: **Saverio Virgara**.....
Date of Birth: **[REDACTED]**.....
Office Held: **Director**.....
Business Address:
[REDACTED].....
State: **SA**..... Post Code: **5142**.....

Full Name: **Dominic Virgara**.....
Date of Birth: **[REDACTED]**.....
Office Held: **Director**.....
Business Address:
[REDACTED].....
State: **SA**..... Post Code: **5142**.....

Full Name:
Date of Birth:
Office Held:
Business Address:
.....
State: Post Code:

(attach additional pages if necessary)

3.4 Names and addresses of major shareholders of applicant (not relevant for local council applicants)

State the full names and addresses of the major shareholders of the applicant.

Full Name: **As Above**.....
Date of Birth (if applicable):.....
Office Held:
Business Address:
.....

State: Post Code:

Full Name:

Date of Birth (if applicable):.....

Office Held:

Business Address:
.....

State: Post Code:

Full Name:

Date of Birth (if applicable):.....

Office Held:

Business Address:
.....

State: Post Code:

(attach additional pages if necessary)

3.5 Details of the group members (not relevant for local council applicants)

This is information about entities controlled by the applicant, or by the ultimate parent entity of the applicant (if applicable).

N/A The Applicant being Adelaide Hills Berry Farms Pty Ltd does not control any other entites

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3.6 Additional information

Please answer the following questions.

- ▶ Is the applicant a resident of, or does it have permanent establishment in, Australia? If the answer to this question is "no", please provide further details.

Yes the applicant is an Australian Private Company with an ABN and controlled by the Corporations Act

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- ▶ Is the applicant under external administration (as defined in the Corporations Act 2001) or under a similar form of administration under any laws applicable to it in any jurisdiction? If the answer to this question is "yes", please provide further details.

N/A.....

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- ▶ Is the applicant immune from suit in respect of the obligations under the Water Industry Act 2012? If the answer to this question is "yes", please provide further details.

No.....

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- ▶ Is the applicant capable of being sued in its own name in a court of Australia? If the answer to this question is "no", please provide further details

Yes.....

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3.7 Financial resources available to the applicant

Provide information about the financial resources available to the applicant which provides sufficient evidence of the current and ongoing financial capacity of the applicant to effectively provide the relevant retail services (e.g. bank guarantees, credit history and business continuity arrangements).

If the applicant is a company, please enclose a copy of the audited (and Board approved) profit and loss statement and balance sheet for the previous two financial years, including the director's report and the audit opinion. If the applicant is a subsidiary company, please also provide a copy of the audited profit and loss statement and balance sheet of the applicant's parent company for the previous two financial years.

If an applicant is a local council, please enclose a copy of the audited profit and loss statement and balance sheet for the previous two financial years.

Applicants should also submit copies of business plans which detail the strategic direction of the applicant, including its objectives, identified opportunities in the market place and forecast results.

Please see attached Company Financials and Bank Statement as at 31/07/2022.....

Please note that whilst the Financials show Deficiency of Liabilities over Assets of [REDACTED] you will note that there is [REDACTED] of that being Directors Loans which is funds Sam and Dom have provided from personal and other business sources to fund the building of the capital intensive berry growing infrastructure including construction of half hectare greenhouse, construction of approx. 2km of tunnel houses and growing tables including fertigation, irrigation, and computer systems to run the growing of Strawberries and Raspberries, land and asset purchase etc.....

You will note that from a standing start, sales are approaching [REDACTED] annually while capital expenditure is decreasing. We are expecting that a profit will be generated in the not too distant future.....

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3.8 Human resources available to the applicant

Provide information about the human resources available to the applicant, for example, the number of employees and the experience of these employees in providing the services for which the licence is sought. If the applicant will employ contractor/s to assist with the licensed operations, please provide the name of that contractor/s, and details about the experience of the contractor/s in such operations and details of the processes in place to ensure the contractor/s will comply with the regulatory obligations imposed by the licence.

The 2 directors have extensive HR experience. No other contractors are required other than licenced plumber and electricians from time to time.

Dominic who is a qualified CPA was Managing Director of Labour Hire and HR Company Techforce Personnel Pty Ltd for the past 30 year so has extensive HR experience.

Sam is a qualified wine maker and grape grower for over 30 years employing and managing many staff
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3.9 Technical resources available to the applicant

Applicants are asked to provide details about the availability of technical resources to be used in carrying out the services for which a licence is sought. The information should include details about the technically qualified staff available to the applicant and (if relevant) of experience gained in similar operations.

Applicants must also provide sufficient details of the systems and processes to be used to market and/or communicate with customers, to provide bills, to follow up payments and process customer move-ins and move-outs and deal with customer enquiries and complaints.

The two directors are hands on experienced professional in agriculture and attend to any repairs, maintenance, upgrades themselves. We contract technical resources as required and below is a list of the main registered contractors used in the past:

Keith White Plumbing

Virgara Electrical and Refridgeration

Cribb Engineering

Ben Wye Engineering

Coulter Design

AAA Asphalt

Dial – before Dig

We use the latest MYOB Accounting Software for provide invoices and manage accounts, we use Microsoft Outlook for immediate communication with and all communication including in-coming and out-going residents or users of the water supply system. Those that do not have email we communicate by letter and telephone.
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3.10 Contracts

Applicants must provide reasonable evidence that they are able to meet reasonably foreseeable obligations under contracts for the sale and supply of water or the sale or supply of sewerage services (or both) as the case may be. Such contracts would include contracts whereby the applicant is reliant on a supply of water or specific sewerage service from a third party which is intends to on sell to its customers.

As we own the pumping systems, water pipe system, land on which the water supply is drawn from and a 65 Meg Water Licence we are able to meet our water supply obligations barring any uncontrollable event

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3.11 Suitable and appropriate infrastructure

The Commission may not issue a licence unless it is satisfied that the infrastructure to be used in connection with the relevant service is appropriate for the purposes for which it will be used. Applicants are therefore asked to provide a detailed description of the infrastructure that will be utilised by the applicant in providing the retail services for which the licence is sought and verify that the infrastructure has been (or will be) developed in accordance with relevant Australian Industry Codes and Australian Standards with reference to technical specifications or reports.

If an applicant does not own the infrastructure to be used in delivering the relevant retail services, the applicant must provide information regarding the appropriateness of that infrastructure and of the binding arrangements that are (or will be) in place with the owner of the infrastructure in regards to the use of the infrastructure.

The applicant owns all the infrastructure including Bore Pumps, 3 x 100,000 litres water storage tanks, all pipelines to transport the water.

Over the past 5 years we have made major upgrades to the system by upgrading pipes to the latest PVC pipes, replaced many wheel valves, separated the town water system from the Berry Farm irrigation system so we don't need to close the whole system down for maintenance.

Further the water system itself has been segregated so that not all residents are affected if maintenance is required to parts of the system. There are 5 separate controlled sections now

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3.12 Risk management

Provide confirmation and reasonable evidence that the applicant’s management has identified the risks associated with the retail services it intends to provide and has established, utilises and relies upon risk management systems and processes which are adequate, accurate and current to address those risks. A copy of the applicant’s risk management strategy should be submitted.

See attached Document

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3.13 Licences held by the applicant in other Australian jurisdictions

If the applicant holds, or has previously held, a retail services licence or equivalent in other Australian jurisdictions please provide details. If a licence previously held has been suspended or cancelled, please provide details.

The applicant has previously held an Exemption for the licence it now seeks for the past 7 years

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3.14 Previous unsuccessful licence applications in other Australian jurisdictions

Please state whether the applicant has applied for a water retail licence or equivalent in another Australian jurisdiction and not been issued with a licence, and provide relevant details.

N/A none previously applied for or rejected

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3.15 Licences held by associates of the applicant

If an associate of the applicant (within the meaning of the Corporations Act) holds a water retail licence in South Australia or in other Australian jurisdictions, please provide details.

N/A

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3.16 Compliance plan

Applicants are required to submit a copy of their Compliance Plan which details what compliance systems the applicant has (or will have) in place and a description of how these systems will ensure compliance with the applicable regulatory obligations imposed by a licence and the Water Retail Code. The Commission expects that a Compliance Program will, as a minimum, document:

- ▶ the obligations that will apply to the applicant;
- ▶ the processes that are (or will be) in place to ensure the applicant’s compliance with obligations;
- ▶ details on how compliance is monitored;
- ▶ details of how non-compliance will be reported and rectified; and
- ▶ details of any internal audit programs in place that review (or will review) the effectiveness of the Compliance Program from time to time.

3.17 Additional information

The Commission encourages applicants to provide any additional information they consider would be of assistance in supporting the application. Please provide below.

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4 Factors specified in the Essential Services Commission Act 2002

In considering a licence application, the Commission must have as its primary objective the protection of the long term interests of consumers with respect to the price, quality and reliability of essential services, and must also have regard to the need to:

- (a) promote competitive and fair market conduct;
- (b) prevent misuse of monopoly or market power;
- (c) facilitate entry into relevant markets;
- (d) promote economic efficiency;
- (e) ensure consumers benefit from competition and efficiency;
- (f) facilitate maintenance of the financial viability of regulated industries and the incentive for long term investment;
- (g) promote consistency in regulation with other jurisdictions.

If the applicant believes that information about their application would assist the Commission in its consideration of these factors, the applicant should provide such information below.

The applicant believes it is a good corporate citizen in that it provides yearly major sponsorship to the local sporting communities: Uraidla Football Club, Uraidla Netball Club, Summertown Netball Club, Community Interest Group -Imagine Uraidla.

Further to this the applicant supplies free of charge, back up water and pipes to the Uraidla Oval and Community Grounds, Uraidla Primary School, made land available along Swamp Road for the community to plant Sunflowers for the beautification of Uraidla Township, made available grounds for large community events to name a few.

The applicant is guided by SA Water rates for setting water rates ie same as DESPITE the fact ours is only a very small system with a small number of residents to spread the costs over.

The applicant has not increased the water rates since inception, that is no increase in 7 years despite electricity, labour, materials costs going up a great deal over that time.....

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5 Application Fees

Applicants for a licence must pay the Commission an application fee which is fixed by the Treasurer. Please enclose this fee with the application. An application cannot be considered until this fee has been received.

6 Declaration

All information in this application for the issue of a licence to authorise the provision of retail services in the water industry in South Australia must be verified by a Statutory Declaration of the applicant, in accordance with the provisions of the Oaths Act 1936 (SA)³, stating that the information contained in the application is true and correct to the best of the applicant's knowledge, information and belief.

In conjunction with this declaration, evidence of the relevant authority of the declarant to sign on behalf of the applicant must also be provided to the Commission.⁴

Statutory Declaration

I Dominic Virgara.....

of [REDACTED].....

do solemnly and sincerely declare that the information contained in this Application for the issue of a licence to authorise the provision of retail services in the water industry in South Australia is true and correct to the best of my knowledge information and belief.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1936.

Date2/09/2022.....

Signature

(Where the applicant is a body corporate, the declaration must be made by a person authorised by body corporate to sign on its behalf)

Declared at Piccadilly this 7th day of Sept 2022

Before me: J.P.

(Signature of Justice of the Peace or other person authorised under the Oaths Act 1936)

Brian George, J.P.

No 33230

³ Or equivalent legislation in other Australian jurisdictions.

⁴ The Commission will accept a copy of a Board or Council minute (or circulating resolution) giving approval for the declarant to sign on behalf of the applicant as evidence of the relevant authority.



The Essential Services Commission
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GPO Box 2605 Adelaide SA 5001
T 08 8463 4444

E escosa@escosa.sa.gov.au | W www.escosa.sa.gov.au