



**DUBBO
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

TECHNICAL SCHEDULE

DRC-W205

WATER METER READING

TECHNICAL SCHEDULE DRC-W206 – WATER METER REPLACEMENT

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DRC-W205: WATER METER READING

DRC-W205.1 SCOPE

This Specification applies to the reading of all residential, commercial and industrial water meters owned by the Principal within the Principal's area of operations.

The purpose of the work under this Contract is to:

- Obtain timely and accurate readings of all meters to enable the correct billing of accounts;
- Obtain correct records of all meters on the premises;
- Record the general condition of the meters;
- Investigate any unusual or incorrect readings; and
- Return of all the readings and other information to the Principal.

This Specification does not apply to the maintenance or replacement of water meters.

DRC-W205.2 WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (WHS)

All costs associated with ensuring a safe work environment for the implementation of the works shall be deemed to be included in the tender price.

The Contractor shall ensure that in the performance of the works, the Contractor's employees, sub-contractors and employees of such sub-contractors shall observe the statutory Safety Regulations and Site Conditions for Contractors.

Within 28 days of the 'Date of Acceptance' and prior to the commencement of work, the Contractor shall submit to the Principal details of the Contractor's WHS Management System including a Hazard and Risk Assessment and a Safety Plan specific to the Contract covering all of the Contractor's activities for the duration of the Contract.

DRC-W205.3 ITEMS TO BE SUPPLIED BY THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal will supply the following for the use in recording meter readings:

- Hand held electronic meter reading devices (ITRON FC300);
- Magnetic logos of the Principal for display on the Contractor's vehicles;
- Photo identification tags for meter reading personnel; and
- Sufficient quantities of customer notification cards including Self Read Cards, Access to Water Meter Cards and Water Meter Cards.

At the completion of each reading cycle and at the end the Contract, the Contractor shall return the meter reading devices to the Principal. The Contractor shall be responsible for any and all damage to the meter reading devices, notwithstanding reasonable wear and tear.

The Contractor is required to supply all other materials, tools, equipment and labour for the execution of the Contract.

The wearing of personal protection equipment is the Principal's policy and it is a condition of the Contract that all contractors and their employees comply to this policy at all times.

DRC-W205.4 METER READING ROUTES

Premises are grouped into Meter Reading Routes so that the Contractors' meter reading staff may read meters on adjacent premises on the same day, as far as possible, to minimise the distances travelled. The route numbers and approximate number of properties are shown in Appendix A.

Residential and commercial properties consist predominantly of houses or small adjacent lots and can be covered efficiently on foot. Residential areas may also have blocks of flats or home units included. Residences on small acreage lots may also be included.

DRC-W205.5 SPECIAL ROUTE CONSIDERATIONS

Special considerations may be required that may include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. **Car** - meters in rural or isolated areas, or that have other special circumstances, are sequenced in a car route. The Contractor shall provide all transport required for the meter reading staff to undertake the work.
- b. **Keys** – the Contractor will be required to use a key to access these meters.
- c. **Shops** – the Contractor will be required to co-operate with shop owners or occupiers in order to obtain readings and possibly move obstacles covering the meter. Obtaining a reading where the meter is located within shop premises may require the Contractor to read these meters during shop opening hours.
- d. **Restaurants** – the Contractor will be required to co-operate with restaurant owners or occupiers in order to obtain readings and possibly move obstacles covering the meter. The Contractor may be required to read these meters during restaurant opening hours (which may be after 5.00 pm).

The Principal reserves the right to alter Meter Reading Routes or their classification if necessary.

DRC-W205.6 QUARTERLY METER READING

The Contractor shall conduct a quarterly meter reading as per the Meter Reading Schedule and:

- Start reading meters on quarterly routes on the first business day of each meter read quarter, unless otherwise specified by the Principal being 1 September, 1 December, 1 March and 1 June.
- Send meter reading data to the Principal on the same day the meter is read, where practicable or within three (3) business days of the date nominated in the Meter Reading Schedule, if held back for quality audits and finalisation performed by the Contractor.
- Send meter reading data to the Principal within three (3) business days of the route being finalised.
- Complete all meter reads within ten (10) working days.

The Contractor must identify any non-residential properties that cannot be accessed during the normal business hours for reading purposes and shall:

- Update the Meter Reading Schedule with the appropriate access comments for the property;
- Re-allocate reading resources to assure the meter is read at the appropriate time;
- Instruct the meter reader to visit the non-residential property at the appropriate time; and
- Discuss any ongoing issues at progress meetings with the Principal.

DRC-W205.7 METER ACCESS

The Contractor is legally entitled to enter all premises for the recording of consumption and the Contractor shall make a reasonable effort to obtain actual readings of all meters.

Access to a property must be by an appropriate route such as driveway or path where these exist.

The Contractor shall allow customers reasonable time to answer door knocks or to restrain dogs.

Whilst meters are required to be accessible for reading, it is recognised that some meters may not be readily accessible. This could be due to meters being located inside residential and business premises, access obstructed by locked gates or other obstacles, dogs or other reasons.

When the Contractor arrives at a commercial premises before 9.00 am and the premises are closed, the Contractor **must** return to the premises to attempt a reading after 9.00 am.

Where the Contractor is required to move obstacles, in order to access the meter, this must be only be done if it safe to do so.

In the event that a meter cannot be accessed and the premises are unattended, the Contractor shall leave a Meter Access Card. It is the Contractor's responsibility to negotiate with the resident an appropriate time to access and read the meter.

If a customer refuses access, the Contractor shall not pursue the matter verbally or otherwise. Refusal of access shall be reported to the Principal.

Readings shall be carried out in such a manner as to avoid nuisance and/or damage to the property. The Contractor will be held entirely responsible for any damage to property, including meters, caused by the meter reading operations.

When leaving premises, any gates and doors are to be left as they were found on arrival (ie closed or open).

DRC-W205.8 WATER METER READING PROCEDURE

The Contractor shall implement procedures to achieve accurate meter reading on the first visit to each property in a meter reading cycle.

The Contractor shall locate the water meter at the property and verify that the water meter number matches the number provided by the Principal for that property. Record the information pertaining to house number, meter position or special reading instructions in the electronic meter reading device.

To ensure reading efficiency, the Contractor will be required to verify and record the following data:

- Read and follow any warning notes or special instructions applicable to each meter.
- Property address – where a lot number is indicated and a new house number has been allocated, the new house number shall be recorded.
- Meter location – where the location notes are incorrect, the correct meter location and relevant notes including grid location shall be recorded. The Contractor must ensure that all meter location details are entered into the system rather than maintaining personal notes on the meter location.
- Meter size and number of dials – where the size of the meter or the number of dials is incorrect, the correct meter size and number of dials shall be recorded.
- Warning note – where the warning notes are incorrect, the correct warning notes shall be recorded.
- Meter serial number – where the serial number is incorrect the correct serial number on the meter shall be recorded. This may have potentially occurred for example, when the water meter for the property had been previously replaced.
- Confirm and record the water meter reading - ensure that Meter Reading Data is entered into the meter reading device at the time the Meter Reader is at the property.
- Record details of any abnormal condition of meters including damaged, stopped, dirty dials, broken or opaque glass or missing meters.
- Record details of any circumstances where a meter cannot be read including reasons for a meter reading being unobtainable or if the meter cannot be located.
- Record details of why access to a meter is considered difficult or unsafe. Leave the appropriate Customer Notification Card:
 - Access to Water Meter – could not obtain access
 - Water Meter – permit easy access.
- If the meter reading at an occupied residence indicates zero consumption, undertake a Tap Test. A Tap Test is performed by turning on the water tap next to the water meter. If the dial does not turn whilst the tap is turned on, the meter is not working (or has been bypassed). Record this in the meter reading device notes field. If a tap is not present, record this in the meter reading device notes field.
- Record all suspected cases of meter tampering.
- Record details where meters have been placed in the wrong Route Number.
- Leave a self-read card at the property where the meter cannot be read. Record that a card has been left on the meter reading device.
- Replace any covers and leave the site in a tidy condition.
- Monitor reading performance during the read cycle to identify potential issues and take appropriate action to ensure timely and accurate Meter Reading Data is received by the Principal. Record or inform the Principal that a re-read has been attempted at a property where a self-read card was left.
- Provide correct and validated Meter Reading Data and other information to the Principal within the scheduled timeframe as per drC-W205.1. This will be done by returning the meter reading devices for downloading or downloading through a modem link to the Principal's computers

DRC-W205.9 FIRE SERVICE METERS (RED TAG)

A meter with a red tag indicates a fire service supply to the property and such meters will be read by the Contractor. The meter serial number should be entered into the handheld device in the notes field along with the term 'FIRE' Service.

DRC-W205.10 COMMENT CODES

To ensure reading efficiency, the Contractor will be responsible for identifying any abnormal conditions of a meter which may result in the meter being replaced or further action being required by the Principal.

The Contractor will ensure the following codes are used after conducting a visual inspection of the meter:

- a) Damaged meter
- b) Dirty dial
- c) Incorrect meter
- d) Meter leaking
- e) Meter missing
- f) Meter not connected
- g) Meter not located
- h) Not accessible
- i) Stopped meter
- j) Vacant land
- k) Vacant premises
- l) Card left – access to water meter
- m) Card left – water meter permit easy access
- n) Self-read card – customer to read own water meter
- o) Construction site
- p) Dogs
- q) Vandalism
- r) Flooded
- s) Suspected tampering – notify Principal immediately

Record any other comments in the notes field of the meter reading device.

The Principal will consider the incorrect use of the above comment codes as Fictitious Meter Reading Data.

DRC-W205.11 FICTITIOUS METER READING DATA

Fictitious Meter Reading Data refers to recording an inflated figure by simply increasing the previous reading by an incremental allocation (or close to it).

The Contractor must provide a process for prevention and management of fictitious meter reading data by the meter reader.

If the Principal has reasonable evidence that the Contractor has supplied Fictitious Meter Reading Data, the Principal may:

- Direct the Contractor to remove the meter reader/staff member from this Contract; and
- Recover from the Contractor all costs incurred by the Principal to identify, adjust and deal with customer enquiries or any loss of revenue.

The Principal will consider systematic or persistent Fictitious Meter Reading Data as a significant breach of the Contract.

Penalty: \$50.00 per meter read that has been proven to be fictitious.

DRC-W205.12 HIGH/LOW WATER USAGE ALERT REQUIREMENTS

In the event the Contractor is alerted to an unusual consumption from the system (outside of the predetermined parameters for a high or low reading), the Contractor will at that time:

- Re-read the meter and re-enter the meter reading;
- Provide the meter serial number; and
- Provide an appropriate comment code or freeform comment as to the situation on the Property to enable the Principal to take appropriate action.

DRC-W205.13 "SKIPPED READ" IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Contractor will be required to provide the Principal with a plan on how the Contractor intends to assist in reducing the number of skipped meter reads over the term of the Contract. The plan will describe the Contractor's intended actions for reporting to the Principal. The Contractor will be required to keep this plan up to date and discuss progress at progress meetings.

DRC-W205.14 SELF-READ CARD PROCESS

The Principal requires every effort from the Contractor to read the Meter, however a self-read card must be left at a Property as required under the self-read card process

If a meter in a Quarterly, Priority or Special Route cannot be read due to access issues the Contractor must leave a self-reading card at the Property (preferably in person to a Customer, or in a letterbox, or under a door).

A self-read card requests the customer to write the serial number and the water meter reading on the self-read card and return it to Council. As per drC-W205.3, the Principal will provide Self-Read Cards which:

- Contain contact numbers for Customer to contact the Principal;
- Contain the postal address for the Principal; and
- Are pre-paid reply post.

DRC-W205.15 QUALIFICATIONS

The Contractor shall ensure that the reading of water meters and all associated activities are carried out and supervised by suitably experienced and acceptably qualified or accredited personnel.

The Contractor shall ensure the staff performance is constantly monitored, evaluated and developed to achieve accurate meter readings.

DRC-W205.16 CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

The Principal is committed to developing and maintaining positive, effective relationships with Customers, local communities and other key stakeholders. The services may involve customer contact and at times, has a significant impact on customers. The Contractor represents the face of the Principal to the public and must:

- Exhibit behaviours that reflect the Principal's values and key communication messages
- Respect customers and provide them with a high standard of service.

The Contractor shall:

- Have a clear customer focus when carrying out the Services within private properties and public area.
- Shall communicate with Customers in a timely, courteous and informative manner.
- Complete the meter reading process in a customer friendly manner that results in minimal inconvenience or impact on the customers.
- Take into account any special requirements a customer may have when planning and carrying out the services within a property.
- Meet any commitment which the Contractor makes to the customer with respect to the services.
- Minimise disruption to property, security arrangements and access.

DRC-W205.17 PERSONNEL CONDUCT

The Contractor is responsible for the proper conduct of personnel engaged during the Contract, inclusive of personnel provided by a sub-contractor or agency hire provider.

If the Principal considers that any personnel to be guilty of misconduct or unsuitable to be engaged during the contract term the Principal may:

- Direct the Contractor to stop employing any personnel; and
- May prohibit the personnel from performing the Contract services.

The Contractor must:

- Comply immediately with the Principal's direction; and
- Not allow those personnel to perform the services again without the written consent from the Principal.

DRC-W205.18 INCIDENT NOTIFICATION AND INVESTIGATION

The Contractor shall:

- Notify the Principal immediately of any incident or foreseeable event likely to affect the Contractor's ability to meet the performance requirements and obligations contained in this Contract.
- Advise the Principal of the actions taken to overcome the issue and any issues arising from the incident and provide regular progress reports.
- Investigate all incidents and ensure that investigations are performed by suitably qualified and competent personnel.
- Notify the Principal of the investigation and engage the Principal in investigations if required.
- Provide a report to the Principal within 48 hours of the incident outlining:
 - The cause of the incident;
 - Proposed actions and timeline for completion;
 - Investigation details; and
 - Improvement actions taken or planned and timeline for completion to prevent the incident from reoccurring.

DRC-W205.19 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The Contractor shall be the point of contact for all customer or resident queries and complaints associated with works carried out under this Contract. Queries and complaints shall be resolved promptly by the Contractor and as a minimum:

- The Contractor shall respond to the customer within 24 hours of receiving a complaint/query.
- The Contractor shall resolve all complaints within five (5) working days.
- Where a complaint cannot be resolved within five working days, the Contractor shall notify the Principal of the issue, progress and expected date of resolution.
- If a complaint cannot be resolved within seven working days, the Principal may without any further notice undertake to resolve the complaint at the Contractor's cost.

The Contractor must notify the Principal if any customer complaints are received by the Contractor. Notification must be received by the Principal as soon as practicable, no later than the close of business (5.00 pm) on the day of receipt of the complaint. Wherever possible the Principal wishes to be notified by the Contractor prior to receiving complaints directly from a customer.

The Contractor shall keep a record of all customer contact relating to complaints, queries and out of hours access including date/time, name/address of contact, method of contact, issue raised and actions taken.

DRC-W205.20 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

The Contractor is entirely responsible for any damage caused to any property, including any existing utility services by its operations. The Contractor shall immediately carry out or arrange for any repairs and pay for the full cost of such repairs and any associated damages.

Damage shall not be caused in order to obtain access to a property. Access to a property must be by an appropriate route such as a driveway or path where these exist.

Where the safety and access to an existing utility service is likely to be endangered, the Contractor shall request the attendance of an officer of the utility concerned, to advise on precautions to be taken, and shall take such actions as may be recommended by that officer.

DRC-W205.21 DEALING WITH DOGS

Dogs can inflict serious injury and, in some cases, death. This procedure details the general procedure when dealing with dogs.

Dogs tend to be protective of both people and property and may turn savage when confronted.

Where dogs are present on private property, the Contractor shall arrange for the dog owner to restrain the dog. This shall comprise of having the dog tied or put in an area from which it cannot escape whilst works are carried out. Do not accept the owner's advice that "it will be okay".

Where the dog owner is not present to be able to restrain the dog on private property, the Contractor shall leave a Customer Notification Card and defer works until the owner is available. If a suitable time cannot be arranged with the dog owner, the Contractor shall refer the matter to the Principal for direction.

Where the owner/controller of the dog is available but is unwilling or unable to control the dog, or the dog is uncontrolled on public property, the Contractor shall report this to the Principal who will arrange for the Principal's Animal and Ranger Services to assist.

DRC-W205.22 FUTURE INITIATIVES - AUTOMATIC METER READING (AMR)

During the term of Contract, the Principal may install meters that are to be read with an Automatic Meter Reading handheld device. The Principal will discuss these initiatives with the Contractor at the appropriate time.

APPENDIX A – METER READING ROUTES

Table 1 Meter Reading Routes

ROUTE	ROUTE DESCRIPTION	Number of water meters *
2	C - Bligh/Cobra to Darling street	464
5	C - Darling/Cobra to Railway Line	627
7	S - Cobra/Boundary/Fitzroy streets	1194
8	S - Macquarie/Margaret/Boundary streets	811
9	S - Fitzroy/Boundary/Cobra streets	1108
14	N - Erskine to River streets	778
17	E - Wheelers to Sheraton Road	615
20	E - Eastridge Estate	1496
22	E - Orana Heights	793
23	SE - Keswick Estate	380
24	E - Windsor Parade to Sheraton Road	654
25	W - West Off Thompson Street	586
26	W - Victoria to Thompson	264
27	W - North to Macquarie River	263
28	W - North to Depot Road	216
29	W - West off Baird Drive	522
30	W - East Street to Golf Course	470
31	SE - Avian and Holmwood Estates	676
33	W - Airport Area	59
36	N - North Industrial	196
37	E - Yarrawonga and Sheraton Meadows	615
40	W - Grangewood Estate	245
41	W - Chapmans/Joira roads	77
42	W - Delroy Gardens	299
43	W - Delroy Park North	222
45	SE - Southlakes Estate	124
64	Remote Read-Ballimore/Wongarbon	16
65	Remote Read Cyble Meters	164
90	Blueridge and Jaymark estates	133
93	Ballimore Village	58
94	Brocklehurst Village	111
95	Wongarbon Village	241
97	Firgrove Estate	187
98	Richmond Estate	125
	Total	14789*

* Approximate numbers as at December 2013

APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE CARDS

Meter Access

TO THE RESIDENT

Address:

Today, Council’s water meter reader could not access the water meter on your property because of:-

- Locked Premises
- Dogs
- Other Reason

It would be appreciated if, within the next three days, you would record the meter reading in the space provided below and return this card or phone Council on (02) 6801 4000 with the reading.

Owner’s name:

Meter Serial No:

Date Read:

(Please read your water meter and write down the BLACK numbers only in the space provided).

 dubbo.nsw.gov.au
 council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au
 (02) 6801 4000


- Cnr Church and Darling Street, Dubbo
- Cnr Nanima Crescent and Warne Street, Wellington



Self Read Cards

[Blank area for self-read cards]





.....
of the Technical Services Division called today on:

_____ / _____ / _____


To

.....

.....

 dubbo.nsw.gov.au
 council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au
 (02) 6801 4000


- Cnr Church and Darling Street, Dubbo
- Cnr Nanima Crescent and Warne Street, Wellington



Water Meters

Water meters are an important part of Council's water supply infrastructure. There are over 12,000 water meters in Council's water meter fleet. Meters accurately record the water consumed by each property. This enables billing by Council for the water consumed and permits Council to account for all the water supplied to the community.

Access to meters

Meters are read four times each year and you can assist Council by regularly trimming shrubs from around the meter, so as to permit ready access by the water meter reader.

Under Sections 191, 191A or 192 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council has powers of entry to private property to carry out water supply work such as meter reading. It would be appreciated if you could assist with providing access.

If your meter is in a locked area or, if there is a dog in the yard when the meter reader calls, you may receive a card in your letterbox asking you to self-read your water meter. The card gives instructions on how to do this and doubles as a reply paid letter, which may be posted back to Council without a postage stamp. If you receive one of these cards and you have any questions, please contact Council's Customer Service Centre on (02) 6801 4000.

It is an offence under Section 636 of Local Government Act 1993 to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters. If you believe that your meter has been tampered with, please contact Council's Customer Service Centre on (02) 6801 4000 as soon as possible.

Council sometimes installs tamper evident devices on water meters. These are modern plastic devices that replace the seals used in the past. If one is fitted to your meter, you do not have to do anything.

If you damage your meter or the pipes connected to it contact Council as soon as possible.

Entry to private property

Under Sections 191, 191A and 192 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council has a right of entry to private property for the purpose of carrying out necessary maintenance activities. Council will first take reasonable steps to contact the property owner. If the owner cannot be contacted, Council may enter the property and carry out the necessary work. In such cases, Council will place a card in your letterbox advising that Council has entered your property. If you receive such a card and have any questions about why Council needed to enter your property or the work undertaken there, please contact Council.

Dubbo Regional Council has awarded a two-year contract for the quarterly reading of Dubbo residents' water meters to Skilltech Consulting Service commencing this month for the latest quarter's reading.