

COUNCIL MEETING MIN NO
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Objective

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for processing and assessing requests for a reduction in water usage and sewer usage charges due to a concealed water leak.

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Provide some financial relief to property owners when water is lost due to a concealed leak, whilst demonstrating to property owners that they have a responsibility for maintaining their private water infrastructure and services.
2. Provide a standard approach in dealing with requests for financial relief when water is lost due to a concealed leak.

Legislative requirements

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Related policies and plans

- Hardship Provision – Rates and Charges Policy
- Debt Management and Recovery Policy

Policy

Principles

- a) The property owner is responsible for managing their water consumption at their property. This includes registering for “YourWater” to monitor daily water usage and leak alerts or regularly checking the water meter to monitor water usage and consumption patterns.
- b) The property owner is responsible for maintaining and repairing any water infrastructure including internal pipes or fixtures and irrigation systems in a timely manner to conserve water and reduce potential costs.
- c) Council may try to contact the property owner in regards to the leak. Such notification is provided as an added service and should not be relied on.

Water usage charges – (residential properties)

- a) A property owner is responsible for all water usage that is recorded on the water meter/s located on their property, notwithstanding there is a leak, which includes a concealed leak.
- b) The determination of the application will be made by Manager Revenue & Property.
- c) The application is to be made on the appropriate form and adequate supporting documentation must accompany the application.

- d) The property for which the application applies must be land categorised as *Residential* for rating purposes in accordance with section 516 Local Government Act.
- e) The applicant must be the owner/s of the property for which the application applies.
- f) The application must be received by Council within 30 days of the issue of the water usage account. Applications may be accepted after 30 days in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Manager - Revenue & Property.
- g) The leakage must have been significant and concealed. Significant leakage is determined if the water usage for the period in question is greater than 150 kilolitres and is 1.5 times greater than the previous 3 years daily average usage. Concealed leakage is defined as being hidden from view and occurring within pipeline breaks or connections in the ground, under slabs or within walls and is clearly not visible by the owner or occupier.

- h) The submission of a copy of the licensed plumber's invoice or account should accompany the application outlining the cost of the repairs that were necessary, the location of the leak and the nature of the repairs. If the works have been completed by a property owner, a Statutory Declaration needs to be submitted addressing the detail mentioned above.
- i) Where the application meets the criteria specified, the water usage which is greater than 1.5 times the previous 3 years daily average water usage, will be charged at 2 times the rate of the raw water usage charge for the relevant financial year. A maximum reduction of \$2,500, being the amount that was raised initially to the amount raised based upon the raw water charge, applies.
- j) Only one application will be accepted as a result of an undetectable leak at the same property and by the same owner/s, regardless of whether it is a related event or a separate undetectable leakage. The adjustment process is considered an educational activity and the property owner, by receiving an adjustment the first time, should then be aware to check for leaks regularly and maintain plumbing at the property.
- k) Applicants will be advised in writing of the decision within 30 days of receipt of the application.
- l) ** The leak must be repaired within 30 days of notification by Council. This notification may be received via text, email or letter advising of increased consumption. In the absence of advice from Council or leak alert from 'YourWater', the leak must be repaired within 30 days of the issue date of the water account containing the increased water consumption charges due to concealed leak.

Sewer usage and liquid trade waste charges – (non-residential properties)

- a) In accordance with clause d) above, non-residential properties are ineligible for reduction in water usage charges under this policy.
- b) Where a non-residential property, subject to sewer usage charges based on water consumption, experiences a concealed leak which has not discharged to the sewer system, sewer usage and liquid trade waste charges will not apply in relation to the quantity of water estimated to be the subject of the leak.
- c) Clauses a), b), c), e), f), g), h) K) & L) above apply to any application under this part.

VARIATION

Council reserves the right to vary the terms and conditions of this policy, subject to a report to Council.