



WATER USAGE CHARGES FOR CONCEALED LEAKAGE POLICY

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1	Engineering & Infrastructure Services	Manager Utilities	January 2023	4 Years	21 June 2023 2023/105

1. PURPOSE

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.

2. POLICY AIMS

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 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.
- Provide a standard approach in dealing with requests for financial relief when water is lost due to a concealed leak.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Council is responsible for providing a safe, reliable and cost-effective water supply system, which is customer focused, enhances the environment and caters for the sustainable growth of the Shire.

- Under the terms of this policy The property owner is responsible for managing their water consumption at their property. This includes checking the water meter to monitor water usage and consumption patterns.
- 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.
- Council will contact property owners when a leak greater than 50 litres per hour is detected via Council's Smart Meter System. Such notification is provided as an added service and should be acted upon. If such notification is not acted upon in a reasonable time by the property owner they may be ruled ineligible for financial relief. <https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/policies>

4. LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS

This policy has been developed to be consistent with the following legislative requirements:

- National Water Quality Management Strategy
<https://www.waterquality.gov.au/>
- Water Management Act, 2000
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-092>
- Local Government Act, 1993
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1993-030>
- Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-drinking-water-guidelines>
- NSW Public Health Act 2010 No 127
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2010-127>
- NSW Public Health Regulation 2012
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2012-0311>
- NSW Water Management (General) Regulation 2018
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2018-0480>
- Plumbing Code of Australia
<https://ablis.business.gov.au/service/ag/the-plumbing-code-of-australia-pca-/31066>
- Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2011-059>
- Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 3500.1:

5. POLICY SCOPE IN RELATION TO WATER USAGE CHARGES

This policy applies to all new and existing Residential Properties connected to or wishing to connect to Council's water supply systems. The following clauses/ rules will apply in determination of eligibility for fee relief.

- 1) 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.
- 2) The applicant must be the owner/s of the property for which the application applies.
- 3) The property to which the application applies must be the owner/s sole place of residency.
- 4) The property for which the application applies must be land categorised as Residential for rating purposes in accordance with section 516 Local Government Act.
- 5) The leak must be repaired within 30 days of notification by Council. The notification is usually delivered by letter, email or phone call advising of the increased consumption. In the absence of advice from Council, the leak must be repaired within 30 days of the issues date of the water account containing the increased water consumption charges due to concealed leak.
- 6) The application is to be made on the appropriate form and the following supporting documentation must accompany the application.
 - a) 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.
or
 - b) If the works have been completed by a property owner, a Statutory Declaration needs to be submitted addressing the detail mentioned above.
- 7) 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 General Manager.
- 8) 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 or 1.5 times greater than the previous 2 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. Damp walls, lush grass or damp soil does not constitute being concealed from view. Running toilets, leaking taps, faulty air conditioner pumps and unmonitored or automated sprinkler systems (as examples only) are not concealed water leaks.
- 9) Where the application meets the criteria specified, the water usage concession will be charged at the relevant charge per kilolitre. A maximum reduction of \$2,500 will apply.

10) Only one application per property will be accepted within a 5 year period regardless of whether the property ownership has changed.

11) The determination of the application will be made by The General Manager or Delegated Officer

6. SEWER USAGE & LIQUID TRADE WASTE CHARGES (Non-Residential and Business Properties)

The property for which the application applies must be land categorised as either Residential or Business for rating purposes in accordance with section 516 or 518 Local Government Act.

- a) In accordance with clause 4) 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 1), 2), 5), 6), 7), 8), 9), 10), 11) & 12) above apply to any application under this part.

7. COUNCIL'S MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Council's maintenance responsibility for a water service ceases at the outlet of the water meter (last union downstream of the water meter body), for details please refer to the diagram below.

Diagram 1

