

Water Leak Management Policy



Policy Type	Council Policy	Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer	Manager Water and Waste	Date Approved:	17 July 2024
Review Officer:	Director Infrastructure Services	Review Due:	30 June 2025
Author:	Manager Water and Waste	Commencement:	17 July 2024

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a uniform/transparent application of relief of larger than normal water consumptions charge due to the existence of a concealed leak.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The intent of this policy is to set out the process of providing clear and concise guidelines on seeking consideration of a rebate in respect of a water consumption charge, due to:

- an unapparent plumbing failure
- inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter

3. PRINCIPLES

Residents are responsible for managing their water consumption. This includes manually reading the water meter and carrying out overnight consumption tests on a regular basis to monitor water usage and consumption patterns if there is concern that there may be a possible leak.

Council is responsible for repairing water leaks in council-owned infrastructure up to and inclusive of the water meter.

Residents are responsible for repairing water leaks in the pipes carrying water from the water meter into the client's premises, in any internal pipes or plumbing fixtures within the premises, or in any irrigation piping or garden watering systems.

Subject to any rebate under this policy, the resident is responsible for the payment of the full water notice, including consumption related to leaks.

3.1 APPLICABILITY

Council will only consider a request for reduction of a water consumption charge due to a water leak where:

- the leak was a concealed leak; and
- the resident took all reasonable steps to ensure that the leak was repaired within thirty (30) calendar days; and
- the leak was repaired by a licensed plumber.

Council will *not* consider a rebate in the following circumstances:

- leaks and/or bursts on internal appliances, fixtures or fittings including air conditioners, dishwashers, swimming pools, hot water systems, toilet cisterns, valves, internal or external taps
- situations where the leak is visible
- leaks not repaired by a licensed plumber
- plumbing that is not compliant with government regulations
- vacant land

3.2 EXTENT OF REBATE

A reduction in water consumption charges will be granted only once per property per owner per financial year. There may be exceptional circumstances where Council will need to assess the situation individually and advise accordingly.

If the application for a rebate in water consumption charges is granted, the rebate extended to the resident shall be based on the Aqualus Water Leak Quantum Report.

i.e. Water Leak (kilolitres) Total in Period (leak start date to leak end date) x applicable tier charge rate

Consumption rate charges are determined by the Tier that the read falls under Tier 1 and Tier 2 are set by Council and reflect the water charges for volumes of water consumed.

The decision whether to use an alternative methodology and the alternative methodology to be used will be at the sole discretion of Council.

3.3 APPLYING FOR A REBATE

The resident must apply in writing for a reduction of water consumption charges due to a concealed leak using the "Application for Adjustment of Water Consumption" form as specified by Council (Attachment 1). The application must outline the location and circumstances of the concealed leak, including the conditions to be met under section 3.1 of this policy and complete all sections of the form.

The application must be made to Council for relief within thirty (30) calendar days of the water leak notice or the resident becoming aware of a possible water leak via Council notification. If the resident is unable to have the leak repaired within the thirty (30) days they should inform Council and subject to reasonable grounds this provision may be extended.

Council will only accept one application per property per financial year.

Council's minimum rebate amount is set at \$20.

The application must be accompanied by a detailed plumber's report from the licensed plumber, who carried out the repair work, certifying:

- the leak was repaired by the licensed plumber; and
- the date the leak was repaired; and

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- the details of the plumbing repairs undertaken; including:
 - that the leak was in the main water supply pipe from the meter to the premises; and
 - that the leak was in a location and/or of a nature which contributed to it not being evident.

3.4 NON-FUNCTIONING METER

Where the resident is in dispute as to the accuracy of the installed water meter:

- a) the resident shall pay for the water meter to be tested as per the charge in the Register of Fees & Charges
- b) if the water meter is found to be faulty this charge will be refunded.

Where the water meter is found to be faulty Council will replace the faulty meter.

Council may estimate the water usage during the period which the faulty water meter occurred using all reasonable information available to Council and adjust the water consumption accordingly. The estimate is based on the following:

- An average of the water consumption over a period of time; or
- An average of the water consumption for the duration of the high-water usage shown on the Automated Meter Reading (AMR); or
- If an average cannot be calculated a proportion of the annual median usage for the service area set out in the table below will be calculated and charged at the set charge per kilolitre for the corresponding billing period.

Service Area	Residential	Non-Residential
Chillagoe	216 KI	392 KI
Dimbulah	326 KI	320 KI
Kuranda	198 KI	274 KI
Mareeba	336 KI	206 KI
Mount Molloy	290 KI	158 KI

3.5 NEW DWELLING OWNERS

New property owners of sold houses that have leaks being eligible for a rebate that have had leaks and then have been sold, and the new owner receives a notice whereby a period of up to over 3 months after taking ownership will be eligible because the leak has been there for longer than thirty (30) days.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all properties connected to the Mareeba Shire Council water reticulation supply with a Council approved water meter.

5. DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

AMR shall mean automatic meter reading device(s).

Aqualus shall mean the water management software.

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Average Consumption shall mean the average of the past three years' actual water consumption during the equivalent billing period where there has been no major excess water use detected. Where there is no prior billing history available, the average Mareeba consumption will be used.

Average Minimum Rate shall mean the average daily minimum (litres per hour) during the rebate period.

Billing Period shall mean the time between meter readings and does not refer to the time when the bill was sent, or to the time of payment.

Concealed Leak shall mean a leak that has occurred in the main water supply pipe from the meter to the client's property, either underground, under or within concrete or paving or underneath a structure where the occupant was not aware of its existence and could not reasonably be expected to be aware of its existence.

Council or MSC shall mean Mareeba Shire Council.

Detected Leak shall mean a leak that has been located in the main water supply pipe from the meter to the client's property, either underground, under or within concrete or paving or underneath a structure and has been repaired by a licenced Plumber.

Leak Period shall mean from the leak start date to the leak end date.

Notification shall mean the issue date of Council's first potential water leak notice to the property owner in the relevant financial year.

Policy shall mean this "Water Leak Management" Policy.

Previous Consumption shall mean the total property consumption prior to the leak in the relevant financial year.

Rebate shall mean as defined in section 3.2 of this policy.

Rebate Period shall mean the period from notification to where the leak is fixed within 30 calendar days after notification, or the period from first notification to a maximum of 30 days thereafter.

Resident shall mean a property owner being supplied water by the council.

Residential Property shall mean properties classed as residential on Council's rating system.

Tier 1 Consumption Charge Rate shall mean the Tier 1 Consumption Charge identified within the Revenue Statement as adopted by council each financial year.

Tier 1 Threshold Limit shall mean the maximum volume on which the Tier 1 Consumption Charge rate will be applicable as identified within the Revenue Statement as adopted by council each financial year.

Tier 2 Consumption Charge Rate shall mean the Tier 2 Consumption Charge identified within the Revenue Statement as adopted by council each financial year.

6. REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Director Infrastructure Services to monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every year or as required by Council.