

Policy title	Water Usage Charging
Responsible manager(s)	Chief Financial Officer
Contact officer(s)	Revenue Manager
Directorate	General Manager
Approval date	22 November 2022
Outcome area	5 Our engaged community with progressive leadership
Strategy	5.3 Work together to achieve our collective vision
Delivery Program	5.3.1 Provide strong corporate and financial management that is ethical, fair transparent and accountable
Operational Plan	5.3.1.2 Collect rates and charges

Purpose

Eurobodalla Shire Council provides a metered water supply service to the community, which is funded by users of the service through annual and usage charges. This policy applies to all owners of properties that are connected to Council’s water supply systems, and explains how Council determines water usage accounts.

Policy aim

The policy aims to:

- Confirm who is responsible for the payment of water usage charges.
- Explain how water usage accounts are calculated.
- Explain Council’s procedure for dealing with disputed water meter readings.
- Provide concessions for public hospitals, home haemodialysis patients and where a concealed leak has resulted in a significant increase in a customer’s water use.
- Promote an integrated framework for determining water supply usage accounts.
- Ensure consistency and fairness in the way Council deals with water supply customers.
- Comply with legislative requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993*.
- Ensure Council's policies and requirements for water supply and usage charging are readily accessible and understandable to the public.

Policy statement

1	Application This policy applies to metered water usage by all properties connected to Eurobodalla Shire Council’s water supply systems.
2	Legislation Eurobodalla Shire Council complies with the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and the <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2021</i> .
3	Responsibility for water usage The owner of a property is responsible for all water usage that is recorded on the water meter/s servicing that property.
4	Meter readings Water meter readings are accepted as final and conclusive as measurement for water, subject to the meter not being defective (see 6. Disputed meter readings).

5	<p>Water usage accounts</p> <p>Water usage charges payable are determined by multiplying the measured quantity of water used, less any approved concessions, by the water usage charge listed in Council's Revenue Policy (published annually as part of the Operational Plan).</p> <p>Usage accounts are issued three times per year in August, December and April. A minimum charge of \$10 per usage account shall be applied.</p> <p>No allowance will be made where customers use water from the metered water supply servicing their property for the maintenance of adjacent public land.</p>
6	<p>Disputed meter readings</p> <p>Council will arrange for a water meter to be inspected and tested at the request of the owner or occupier of premises and on the payment of a meter test fee.</p> <p>The meter test fee is published annually in Council's Fees and Charges, as part of the Operational Plan.</p> <p>A water meter is taken to correctly measure the quantity of water passing through it when a meter test registers below 4 per cent variance from the correct quantity (i.e. the reading may be up to 4 per cent less or more than the actual quantity).</p> <p>If an inspection and test reveals a water meter is incorrectly measuring the quantity of water passing through it, Council may charge for the supply of water as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) where the meter is reading <i>in favour of Council</i>: on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year, in which case Council will refund the meter testing fee; or b) where the meter is reading <i>in favour of the customer</i>: on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year, in which case Council will refund the meter testing fee; or c) where the meter is reading <i>in favour of the customer</i>: the water consumption recorded for the period, in which case Council will not refund the meter testing fee. <p>Defective meters shall be replaced at Council's expense.</p>
7	<p>Undetected leaks concession</p> <p>Whilst the property owner is responsible for all water usage at their property, Council may apply a concession where a concealed leak has resulted in a significant increase in water use, subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) An application is to be made on the appropriate form. b) The application must be received by Council within 60 days of the water usage account being issued. c) The applicant must be the owner or agent of the premises for which the application applies. d) The leak must have been concealed - the occupant could not reasonably have known that a leak existed (e.g. below ground leaks, or leaks under buildings). e) The leak must have been repaired and the internal plumbing system tested at a minimum test pressure of 1500KPa. f) A copy of the licenced plumber's invoice or account should accompany the application. The invoice should state the location of the leak, the repairs that were necessary and a statement that the internal plumbing system has been tested and that the entire system is in good condition.

	<p>g) The leak must have been significant. A leak is determined to be significant if the water usage for the period is greater than 50 kilolitres and is at least 1.5 times greater than the average water usage of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous 3 years.</p> <p>h) The maximum reduction shall be 1,000 kilolitres.</p> <p>i) A reduction will not be granted if relief has been granted in the previous 3 years.</p>
8	<p>Haemodialysis concession Residents undergoing haemodialysis at home shall receive 20 kilolitres of water per billing period without charge. Applicants must provide a medical certificate from the Southern NSW Local Health District confirming the patient’s address and that they are undergoing haemodialysis.</p>
9	<p>Commercial concession Eligible businesses shall receive 50% of water in excess of 10 kilolitres per day average water consumption without charge. Eligible businesses include those businesses that can demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that they compete in external markets, ie it is difficult to pass on high input costs, and • that they have already taken steps to improve their water efficiency. <p>Eligibility for the commercial concession will be determined by following Council’s Commercial Water Supply Concessions Code of Practice.</p>
10	<p>Public Hospital concession A public hospital shall be supplied free of charge with 300 litres per day for each person resident in the hospital.</p>

Implementation

	Requirements	Responsibility
1	<p>Staff Under supervision, applicable Council staff will be responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented appropriately within their work area, after they have received relevant training to do so.</p>	Council Officers
2	<p>Concerns Concerns received regarding this policy will be recorded on Council’s customer service request (CSR) or records system and handled in accordance with Council’s Customer Service policy. They will be used to analyse the history of issues and help determine follow up actions.</p>	Council Officers
3	<p>Consultation Consultation regarding this policy will occur as relevant with key stakeholders and may include legislative bodies, other agencies, relevant legislation, industry guidelines, and public comment. Public submissions regarding this policy are invited for consideration during the policy exhibition period.</p>	As required

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years. It may also be reviewed and updated as necessary if legislation requires it; or when Council’s related policies, functions, structure or activities change; or when technological advances or new systems change the way that Council manages water usage charging.

The policy may be revoked at the expiration of twelve months after the declaration of the poll for the next general NSW local government election, unless Council updates or revokes it sooner.

Reviews of the effectiveness of this policy could include the following:

Performance indicator	Data source(s)
Customer Concerns, Customer Feedback Survey Responses	Council records
Internal or external audit	Audit

Governance

This policy should be read in conjunction with any related legislation, codes of practice, relevant internal policies, and guidelines.

Related legislation and policies

Name	Link
Local Government Act 1993	www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/lga1993182/
Local Government (General) Regulation 2021	http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/lgr2021328/

Change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Minute No	File No	Change
1	2006	Council	06/26		'Water supply and charging' Policy Commenced policy.
2	22 Sep 2009	Council	09/291	E09.3418	Policy reviewed and adopted.
3	10 Sep 2013	Council	13/272	E13.7095 E05.9513	Reviewed and updated. Policy Name changed.
4	10 Feb 2015	Council	15/17	E05.9513	Reviewed, reformatted. Updated meter variance allowance to 4% as per change in regulation.
5	8 Aug 2017	Council	17/259	E16.0297 E05.9513	Reviewed. Pressure test KPa increase from 800 to 1500 as per AS3500.
6	22 Nov 2022	Council	22/313	S004-T00060	Reviewed and updated (start of new Council term) Report

Internal use

Responsible officer		Director Corporate and Commercial Services		Approved by	Council
Min no	22/313	Report no	GMR22/111	Effective date	22 Nov 2022
File no	S004-T00060	Review date	22 Nov 2022	Pages	4