



Burke Shire Council

Reduction of Water Consumption Charges Policy

Document Control

Document Details:

Document Reference Number: FIN09

Version Number: 1

Next Scheduled Review Date:

Version History

Council Resolution	Date	Reason / Comments
	14.05.2014	Draft Policy

1. BACKGROUND

Council applies an access charge for metered water services, which includes an allocation of 900kL. Usage above 900kL attracts a tiered consumption charge (Tier 1: 900-2000kL; Tier 2: +2000kL).

2. OBJECTIVE

To outline the roles and responsibilities of Council and property owners with respect to water consumption charges caused by a leak or faulty water meters.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all property owners in the Local Government Area of the Burke Shire who receive a metered supply of water to a residential or non-residential property.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The property owner is responsible for managing their water consumption. This includes reading the water meter on a regular basis to monitor water usage and consumption patterns.
- 4.2 Council is responsible for conducting water meter readings every 3 months.
- 4.3 The property owner is responsible for repairing leaks in the pipe-carrying water from the water meter into the customer's premises, in any internal pipes or plumbing fixtures within the premises, or in any irrigation piping or garden watering systems.
- 4.4 The property owner is responsible for all charges for water passing through the meter and for maintenance and repairs of the internal water service.
- 4.5 Council acknowledges that there may be grounds for remission of water consumption charges where a concealed leak has impacted on water usage.
- 4.6 Council is responsible for repairing leaks in Council-owned water infrastructure. Council's responsibility is up to and inclusive of the water meter.
- 4.7 Council is responsible for the installation, maintenance and replacement of water meters.
- 4.8 Council acknowledges that there may be grounds for a remission of water consumption charges where a faulty meter has led to the over-assessment of the metered water consumed.
- 4.9 Council is able to recover costs (replacement or repair) for damage caused to water meters.

5. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

- 5.1 **Billing period** means the time between meter readings. It does not refer to the time when the bill was sent or when the payment was to have been received. The billing period for Burke Shire Council is quarterly, while rates are paid six monthly or twelve monthly.
- 5.2 **Concealed leak** means a leak either underground, under or within concrete or paving or underneath a structure where the occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its existence.
- 5.3 **Faulty meter** means a water meter which has been determined to give false readings in excess of 5% by a licensed plumber.
- 5.4 **Owner's side of the water meter** means, in relation to a leak, any water pipes or systems that occur after the water meter. This includes pipe carrying water from the water meter into a customer's premises, any internal water pipes or plumbing fixtures within a customer's premises, or any water irrigation piping or garden watering systems at a customer's premises.
- 5.5 **Water consumption related to a water leak** means a leak in the pipe supplying water from the meter to the property owner's premises, excluding any attachments added on to off-take water for another purpose, such as an irrigation system, and excluding the initial point of connection of any subsidiary pipe to the main water supply pipe.

6. POLICY

6.1 Concealed Leaks – conditions required for a reduction in water consumption charges

Council will consider a request from a property owner for a reduction of water consumption charges due to a leak in the following circumstances:

- 6.1.1 The leak occurs at the property, on the owner's side of the meter; and
- 6.1.2 The leak was a concealed leak; and
- 6.1.3 The property owner took all reasonable steps to ensure that the leak was located and repaired as soon as practicable:
- 6.1.3.1 after the leak was discovered or there was a decrease in water pressure; or
- 6.1.3.2 on becoming aware of an increase in water consumption that could indicate the presence of a leak; and
- 6.1.3.3 the leak was repaired by a licensed plumber; and
- 6.1.3.4 the consumption charges incurred due to the leak will cause the customer financial hardship.

6.2 Leaks – application for reduction of water consumption charges

- 6.2.1 The property owner must apply in writing for a reduction of water consumption charges due to a leak. The application must outline the location and circumstances of the leak and meet the conditions in Clause 6.1

- 6.2.2 The application must be accompanied by a report from the plumber responsible for carrying out the work, which confirms:
 - 6.2.2.1 That the leak was repaired by the licensed plumber; and
 - 6.2.2.2 The date the leak was repaired; and
 - 6.2.2.3 Details of the plumbing repairs undertaken; and
 - 6.2.2.4 That the leak was in a location and/or of a nature which contributed to it not being evident.

6.3 Faulty meters – conditions required for a reduction in water consumption charges

Council will consider a request from a property owner for a reduction of water consumption charges due to a faulty meter in the following circumstances:

- 6.3.1 The meter is determined to be faulty, giving false readings in excess of 5%

6.4 Leaks – application for reduction of water consumption charges

- 6.4.1 The property owner must apply in writing for a reduction of water consumption charges due to a faulty meter.
- 6.4.2 The application must:
 - 6.4.2.1 Include a request that the meter be checked to determine the accuracy of the meter;
 - 6.4.2.2 Include the payment of a deposit amount for the purposes of assessing the accuracy of the meter.
- 6.4.3 Upon receipt of the application, the request and the payment of the deposit, Council will do the following:
 - 6.4.3.1 Have the meter assessed for accuracy by a licensed plumber;
- 6.4.4 If the meter is found to be inaccurate by more than 5%, Council will:
 - 6.4.4.1 Replace the meter; and
 - 6.4.4.2 Provide an appropriate adjustment to the water consumption charge.
- 6.4.5 If the meter is found to be accurate within 5%, Council:
 - 6.4.5.1 Will not provide an adjustment to the water consumption charge; and
 - 6.4.5.2 Will retain the deposit.

6.5 Leaks & Faulty Meters – Assessments of Applications

In assessing each application for remission, the Chief Executive Officer will consider:

- 6.5.1 All the available facts and any extenuating circumstances; and
- 6.5.2 Whether, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, there has been substantial compliance with this policy; and
- 6.5.3 Whether, in the circumstances, payment of the full water consumption charge places the property owner at a real and significant disadvantage compared to the majority of comparable property owners.
- 6.5.4 The decision to approve a remission under this policy is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

7. Associated Documents

Application form: Reduction of Water Consumption Charges