

Intent

The Water Usage Concession Policy sets out the process for customers who wish to apply for a water usage concession if any of the following events occur:

1. a concealed leak
2. inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter

Scope

This Policy applies to Tablelands Regional Council area and all ratepayers receiving water consumption charges.

Background & Supporting Information

To protect the community's health and safety, most plumbing work undertaken in Queensland is regulated and requires a Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) licensed plumber or drainer to undertake the work.

Policy Statement

1. Concealed leaks

Where it is clearly established that:

- 1.1 the water consumption charge levied was a consequence of abnormally high water consumption which is due to a concealed leak on the owner's side of the water meter.
- 1.2 when the owner of the property became aware of the unusually high water consumption on the property, all reasonable steps were taken to locate and have the leak repaired by a licenced plumber without delay.

The Council may provide a concession to the water consumption charges as outlined in this Policy.

2. Application for concession

- 2.1 An owner must apply to the Council for a concession for a concealed leak within 90 days of the issue date of the relevant water consumption charge.
- 2.2 An application must:
 - a. satisfy the Council that one of the criteria outlined in section 120 of the Local Government Regulation is met
 - b. be fully completed using an Application for Adjustment of Water Consumption Form available on council's website

- c. include information on the nature of the concealed leak and provide evidence demonstrating that it has occurred and has been repaired. Evidence in the following form is required:
 - i. an invoice from a QBCC licenced plumber demonstrating that a concealed leak has been repaired
 - ii. proof of payment of the invoice from the QBCC licenced plumber for the concealed leak repairs by either a:
 - iii. Receipt from the QBCC licenced plumber matching the invoice number and invoice amount, or
 - iv. A copy of a bank statement showing payment of the invoice amount to the QBCC licenced plumber.
- 2.3 Where there has been a change of ownership, an application may only be approved for the party who can provide evidence that they incurred the cost to repair the leak and paid the water account for that period.
- 2.4 An authorised officer will consider all applications made and may provide a concession where application conditions are met.
- 2.5 An authorised officer may approve applications where there are minor inconsistencies with the provisions of this Policy.

3. Concession

- 3.1 The concession, if approved, is calculated to be up to 20% of the consumption incurred during the reading period where the leak consumption was recorded. The concession provided must not exceed the average consumption determined for the property following the method outlined below in section 4.2 c. The maximum concession that can be applied is a 20% reduction on the water consumption charged for the billing period the leak occurred.
- 3.2 An owner is eligible for a maximum of one concession per property in a five-year period.
- 3.3 Concessions will be applied to the billing period in which the leak occurred, which may span more than one billing period. Approved concessions that span more than one billing period will be considered as one concession application.
- 3.4 To avoid interest being applied on overdue charges, all rates and charges are to be paid by the due date. Any concessions applied will be adjusted at the time of approval which may fall outside of the due date. In this case a credit for the concession will be applied to the property's rate and charges balance.

4. Inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter

- 4.1 Where the owner of a property is concerned about the accuracy of the installed water meter, the owner may request that the meter be tested by Council at the owner's expense, with the charge for this test as per Council's current Fees & Charges Schedule.
- 4.2 If the test determines that the meter is not functioning correctly:
 - a. the testing charge will be refunded
 - b. Council will replace the faulty meter at no cost to the owner

- c. An authorised officer will estimate the water usage during the period which the faulty reading occurred using all reasonable information available to Council and adjust the water consumption accordingly. The estimate may be based on either of the following:
 - i. An average of the water consumption over a reasonable period of time
 - ii. Deemed water as per the table below
 - iii. An estimate as determined by Council if an average cannot be calculated.
- 4.3 A meter is deemed to be accurate if the reading is within 5% (+ or -) of the actual quantity of water passing through it.

An authorised officer may at any time disconnect any water meter for the purposes of maintenance or determining its accuracy.

5. Meter not able to be read

- 5.1 If a water meter is unable to be read for reasons such as access limitations or meter faults, water usage will be estimated. The estimate may be based on either of the following:
- a. An average of the water consumption over a period of time
 - b. Deemed water as per the table below
 - c. An estimate as determined by an authorised officer if an average cannot be calculated.

6. Charges based on deemed usage

Annual deemed usage will be based on the following table:

Description	Kilolitres
Each flat or unit comprising a multiple dwelling or block of units	210
Each business premise, office, shop (up to a gross floor area of 2,000m ² exclusive of a butcher shop contained therein), hair dressing establishment, depot, workshop, theatre, cold store, baker, engineering works, tyre re-treading or fitting establishment, church, public hall, community group, sporting club, Masonic temple or education centre and each residence, unit or flat combined with any of the above uses	210
Each café, butcher shop, shop (with a gross floor area more than 2,000m ² and less than 3,000m ²), garage/service station, carwash, police station, police cells, post office, ambulance centre, fire station, army depot, medical centre, veterinary establishment, squash court centre, bowling club, kennel, racecourse or courthouse	500
Each residence, unit or flat combined with any of the above uses	210
Each restaurant, childcare/kindergarten centre or farm	700
Each boarding house, lodging house or hostel	750
Each peanut processing plant	1,600
Each hotel or sporting club with sporting fields	3,000

Context

Alignment to Risk Register

This policy mitigates the following corporate risks:

- COR6 – Ineffective corporate and operational planning
- COR7 – Inability to effectively engage with the community – poor communication and engagement
- COR9 – Lack of capacity, skills or capabilities to meet emerging needs and impacts service delivery
- COR15 – Infrastructure planning and delivery fail to meet community and service standards
- COR18 – Fluctuating demand for services not typically delivered by council.

Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- Local Government Regulation 2012
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*

Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Revenue Policy
- Water Usage Concession for Not For Profit Recreation and Sporting Clubs
- Online form application for water usage concession

Corporate Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following Corporate Plan 2025– 30 themes:

- Asset & Infrastructure Management
- Community Wellbeing
- Our Environment Our Economy
- Governance & Financial Sustainability

Human Rights Commitment

Tablelands Regional Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, TRC will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights.

Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of this policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the policy.

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

Adopted By	Council	Responsible Officer	Manager Finance
Adopted Date	26 June 2025	Review Date	30 June 2026
Version	11	This policy repeals any previous versions.	