

1. Policy intent

While it is the property owner's responsibility to monitor and maintain water infrastructure beyond the water meter or point of supply, it is acknowledged that at times concealed leaks can occur. The Water Usage Concession Policy sets out the process for applying a water usage concession if any, following the occurrence of one of the following:

- 1.1 a concealed leak
- 1.2 inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter
- 1.3 disputed deemed usage.

2. Scope

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

3. Background/supporting information

- 3.1 Application for Adjustment of Water Consumption Form
- 3.2 Plumber's Statement for Repairs to a Concealed Leak
- 3.3 Water Meter Test.

4. Policy statement

4.1 Concealed leaks

Where it is clearly established that:

- 4.1.1 the quantum of the water consumption charge levied was a consequence of abnormally high water consumption which, upon investigation, was found to be due to a concealed leak on the owner's side of the water meter
- 4.1.2 when the owner of the relevant property became aware of the unusually high water consumption on the property, all reasonable steps were taken to locate and repair the leak without delay
- 4.1.3 the repair was carried out promptly by a licensed plumber,

the Council provide a concession to the water consumption charges levied only after these charges have been paid and where the water consumption charge for the rating period exceeds \$20.00.

4.2 Application for concession

- 4.2.1 An owner must apply to the Council for relief under subsection (4.1) within 90 days of the issue date of the relevant water consumption charge and provide evidence that the repair work was carried out by a licensed plumber.
- 4.2.2 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 or a Statutory Declaration
 - c. include information on the nature of the concealed leak and evidence demonstrating that it has occurred and has been repaired. Evidence in the following form is acceptable:
 - i. a completed Plumber's Statement for Repairs to a Concealed Leak describing the nature of the leak and confirming the leak has now been repaired by the plumber.
 - ii. an invoice demonstrating that the concealed leak has been repaired.
- 4.2.3 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.
- 4.2.4 An authorised officer will consider all applications made and can provide a concession where application conditions are met.
- 4.2.5 An authorised officer may approve applications where there are minor inconsistencies with the provisions of this Policy.

4.3 Concession

- 4.3.1 The concession, if approved, is calculated as 50% of the water usage charged in the rating period for which the concession has been applied for.
- 4.3.2 An owner is eligible for a maximum of two concessions per property in a five year period.
- 4.3.3 Concessions will be applied to the billing period in which the leak occurred, which may span more than one billing period.

4.4 Inaccurately registering or non-functioning water meter

- 4.4.1 Where the owner of the relevant property is concerned regarding 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.
- 4.4.2 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 the 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 period of time
 - ii. Deemed water as per the table below
 - iii. An estimate as determined by council if an average cannot be calculated.
- 4.4.3 A meter is deemed to be accurate if the reading is within 5% (+ or -) of the actual quantity of water passing through it.
- 4.4.4 An authorised officer may at any time disconnect any water meter for the purposes of maintenance or determining its accuracy.

- 4.4.5 If a water meter is unable to be read for reasons such as access limitations or meter faults, water usage will be estimated after all reasonable attempts have failed to obtain a meter reading. The estimate may be based on either of the following:
- i. An average of the water consumption over a period of time
 - ii. Deemed water as per the table below
 - iii. An estimate as determined by an authorised officer if an average cannot be calculated.

4.5 Charges based on deemed usage

- 4.5.1 Where the deemed usage quantity is disputed by the owner of the property, the owner is given the option of installing a water meter at the owner's cost with future charges being based on the actual usage as recorded by the meter. For the rating period where the deemed water volume has been disputed and the concession is approved, a concession of no more than one quarter of the deemed usage will be applied.
- 4.5.2 Where properties are un-metered, the annual consumption charge shall be based on the deemed usage as follows:

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 court house	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 hotel or sporting club with sporting fields	3,000

5. Responsibility

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

6. Review

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

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended/repealed by resolution of the Council.

This Policy repeals the former Tablelands Regional Council Policy titled Water Usage Concession Policy adopted 30 June 2022.