Procedure 4.08.2  Water Usage Charges

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<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Assets and Operations</th>
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<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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Scope
Council provides a water supply service which is funded by users of the service through annual and usage charges. This procedure applies to customers whose properties are connected to Council’s water supply systems and details how Council determines water usage accounts.

Purpose
The purpose of this procedure is to:

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

Procedure Statement
This procedure applies to customers with properties connected to Council’s water supply systems.
## Procedure Implementation

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Water Usage</td>
<td>The owner(s) of a property is responsible for all water usage that is recorded on the water meter(s) servicing that property</td>
<td>Customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meter Readings</td>
<td>Water meter readings are accepted as the final and conclusive measurement for water used, subject to the meter not being defective, or the recorded read being proven incorrect by comparison with the current read.</td>
<td>Manager Water and Sewerage Services</td>
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| 3  | Disputed Meter Readings | At the request of the property owner or agent of premises and on the payment of a fee, Council will arrange for a water meter to be inspected and tested at a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory.  
The meter test fee payable is the fee published annually in Council’s adopted Fees and Charges.  
A water meter that registers within 3 per cent of the NATA lab result is considered an accurate measure of the water passing through it. Council will not refund any meter testing fee in this case.  
A water meter that registers more than 3 per cent of the NATA lab result will be considered to not accurately measure the quantity of water passing through it. Council will replace the meter and charge for the supply of water as follows:  
- Where the meter is reading high – charging will be calculated on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous three years. Council will refund the water meter testing fee.  
- Where the meter is reading low – charging will be calculated on the basis of the water consumption recorded for the period. Council will refund the meter testing fee. | Manager Water and Sewerage Services |
| 4  | Nil usage readings due to faulty Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) | Council reserves the right to install Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) devices on Council water meters to provide for increased access to read meters in rural areas or where access to meters is restricted by the surrounding environment. A protective casing may also be fitted to the meter to prevent the device becoming dislodged.  
AMR-fitted meters will be read and billed in accordance with the scheduled reading and billing program for the shire.  
Where a nil usage is recorded on an AMR device, Council staff will check the meter to ensure that this is not due to a fault in transmission of the reading.  
Where a nil reading is recorded due to a fault of the AMR device, and a manual reading provides for recording of water usage in that period, the manual reading shall be entered for billing purposes.  
Where a nil reading has been recorded for a period of time due solely to the fault of transmission of the read via the AMR device, Council will bill for the most recent period only. Billing in this instance will be based upon the last recorded daily average multiplied by the number of days in the current period. All other | Manager Water and Sewerage Services |
# Procedure 4.08.4 Water usage charges

**Version:** 3  
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**Next review:** November 2019

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<td>4</td>
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<td>Usage (as recorded manually by the meter itself) will be written off and deemed non-payable due to the non-issue of notices for these past periods. Council will report on nil consumption following each billing period to assist in the capture of any incorrect or faulty AMR-devices. Defective AMR devices and/or the meter they are attached to will be replaced.</td>
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## 5 Water Use Concessions (residential and non-residential)

### Undetected Leaks Concession

The property owner is responsible for all water use at a property. Council may apply a concession where a concealed leak has resulted in a significant increase in water use, subject to the following conditions:

- An application is to be made in writing.
- The application must be received by Council within 60 days of the water usage account being issued.
- The applicant must be the owner or agent of the premises for which the application applies.
- The leak must have been concealed - the occupant could not reasonably have known that a leak existed.
- The leak must have been repaired and the internal plumbing system tested by a licensed plumber.
- A copy of the licensed plumber’s invoice or account must accompany the application. The invoice or account must state the cause and 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.
- A reduction in the water component is only applicable where a leak is significant. A leak is determined to be significant if the water usage for the period is greater than 100 kilolitres and is at least 3 times greater than the average water usage of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous three years.
- A reduction in the sewer component is only applicable for non-residential customers and is not subject to the above significance condition. All other conditions must be met.

Where these conditions are met:

The water charge reduction will be calculated based on a 50/50 split between Council and the property owner for the metered amount above the average water usage of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous three years.

Any sewer usage or liquid trade waste charges reductions (where applicable) will be calculated based on the average daily consumption of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous three years.

### Pension Concession Card Holders

Where the owner is the holder of a current Pension Card and can provide supporting documentation, Council will consider a trigger...
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<td>level for leniency of usage 2 times greater than the average water usage of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous three years. The reduction for pension concession card holders will be calculated based on 75/25 between Council and the property owner for the metered amount above the average water usage of the corresponding meter reading period for the previous three years (ie the account holder will be liable for only one quarter of the charges that are above the previous 3 years average). <strong>Limitations to concessions on water usage charges</strong> A reduction shall not be granted where financial relief has been granted in the previous five years. No reduction will be provided where an account presents in arrears of more than 1 period of charges. The reduction shall only be applied to the bill immediately preceding the application for a concession and only for one bill.</td>
<td>Director Business and Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Haemodialysis Concession</td>
<td>Residents undergoing haemodialysis at home shall receive 210 kilolitres of water per annum without charge. This will be provided as an allowance of 53kL per quarter. Applicants must provide a medical certificate from the Southern NSW Local Health District confirming that a patient is undergoing haemodialysis and the address of the patient. Southern NSW Local Health District may provide Council with a list of eligible applicants on which Council may opt to provide the allowance without application from the resident. This data shall be provided to both Council Operation and Billing staff to ensure details are updated for both the safety of residents and the application of any concessions. Under circumstances where the applicant is a tenant in a property (particularly where a shared meter(s) or joint strata water account exists), documentation must be provided by the owner confirming that any allowance provided on the water usage account will be passed on to the applicant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Water Usage Accounts</td>
<td>Water usage charges payable are determined by multiplying the measured quantity of water less any approved concessions by the water usage charge in Council’s revenue policy. No allowance will be made where customers use water from a metered water supply servicing their property for the maintenance of adjacent public land. A water notice will not be issued for an account until the accumulated total exceeds $5.00, unless that account reflects a credit (in which case, a notice will be issued to provide the account holder details regarding the current balance).</td>
<td>Revenue Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Complaints and requests</td>
<td>Complaints and requests received regarding the implementation of the Water Usage Charging procedure will be recorded on council’s Customer Request Management system or records system and handled in accordance with council’s Compliments and Complaints policy</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Consultation regarding this procedure will occur on an as needs basis with Council’s Leadership Executive Group.</td>
<td>Manager Water and Sewerage Services</td>
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Legislation

In implementing this procedure Bega Valley Shire Council complies with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Governance

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