



## GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL Water Meter Policy

<b>RESOLUTION NUMBER:</b>	<b>36.08/20</b>	<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>27 August 2020</b>
	20.07/15		23 July 2015
	22.11/12		22 November 2012
	18.12/10		16 December 2010

### INTRODUCTION

Water meters measure the amount of water used. This measurement helps to accurately charge customers for the water they have used. It also helps customers to gauge their water use.

Most houses have their own meter. This is usually located towards the front of the property, near the left or right boundary.

Council owns the water meter, but it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that it is not damaged and accessible for each building.

Council installs water meters for domestic supply pursuant to the:

- *Local Government Act 1993;*
  - S59A states that a council is the owner of all works of water supply, sewerage and stormwater drainage installed in or on land by the council (whether or not the land is owned by the council). This provides that Council is the owner of water infrastructure up to and including the water meter.
  - S193 provides that an authorised employee may enter, without notice, any premises to read a water meter.
  - S634 provides that a Council staff member may alter or remove a water meter without requiring a (plumbing) licence.
  - S152 provides that each premises must have an individual water meter unless the multiple premises are occupied by a single household or firm operating a place of business.

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- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005;*
  - S144 provides that a water supply may be restricted or cut off in certain circumstances, including for the non-payment of charges.
  - S155 provides that a meter tested to be accurate within 4% of the correct quantity is taken to correctly measure the water passing through it.
- *Water Act 2012;*
- *Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2012;*
- AS 3500.1.2.1998 (Water Supply) Section 5.3 (reference to proximity to other services (i.e. electrical cables, gas pipelines));
- AS 3565 Meters for Water Supply – Cold Water Meters

Under Sections 191, 191A, or 192 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*, Council has powers of entry to private property to carry out water supply work such as meter reading, repairs and maintenance.

## **AIMS OF POLICY**

The aim of the policy is to set out both Council's responsibility and Property Owners role in relation to the connection and maintenance of water meters.

Each individual property connected to Council's reticulated potable water supply, will be metered such that water demand can be measured, managed and relied upon as justifiable basis for water supply charges and to provide further information for residents with regard to their responsibility for water meter maintenance and fees.

## **Installation**

Council is responsible to supply and fit a water meter assembly when installing a connection to Council's water supply, the cost of the meter assembly and installation is borne by the property owner as outlined in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

The size of the connection (and thus the size of the meter) is determined by Council, with reference to guidelines in AS 3500 New South Wales Code of Practice – Plumbing and Drainage.

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Generally, the water service is to be located in a position determined by Council in accordance with existing cross road conduits, mains tapplings etc.

Water meters are to be installed, maintained and replaced only by Council staff (staff or contractors). The water supply may be disconnected for a few minutes whilst carrying out this work. Meters will be replaced as soon as practicable once the meter reads 90% of its highest possible value, once an age of 12 years is reached or if it is apparent that the meter may not be reading accurately (within 4%).

Only water meters conforming to AS3565 or having achieved patented approval under the relevant code are to be used in Council's water service connections.

Council's maintenance responsibility of a water service ceases at the outlet of a water meter.

### **Alteration**

Any alteration to the water service connection from, and including, the water meter back to the water main, is the responsibility of Council. The water service connection and its components (water meter, ball valve and fittings) always remain the property of Council. Council may consider a written request to alter the location or size of a water service connection and if approved the cost of the work will be met by the property owner in advance.

Any alteration to the water service on the property owner's side of the water meter is the responsibility of the owner of the connected property.

It is an offence under Section 636 of *Local Government Act 1993* to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters.

### **Damage**

The property owner will be responsible for the cost to repair or replace a damaged water meter, unless the damage is the direct result of Council workmanship.

The possibility of household water meter breakage occurs with the onset of frosty conditions. Ice can swell and burst water meters, resulting in pipe damage and loss of water supply. For new houses and developments, property owners will be gifted a meter box by Glen Innes Severn Council. A fee will be incurred if a meter box is not located on a property or needs replacing.

Meter covers must be able to be easily removed and replaced by Council meter reading staff. If meter covers are not able to be removed and replaced with little effort Council may charge a fee to install a new meter box.

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## Accuracy

Meters will be tested for accuracy by an independent laboratory on payment of the appropriate fees (and its clearance) for a meter test (refer to current year fees and charges). Payment of the meter test fee will be reimbursed if the meter is proven faulty or inaccurate (i.e. reads outside plus or minus 4%).

Sale or gifting of new or used Council meters to the public is prohibited. Removed meters will be destroyed and the metal material recycled.

Council reserves the right to average customer's water billing account from previous consumption figures where a water meter malfunctions or to estimate an account based on related available information.

## Access

Meters are to be made easily accessible to Council staff for reading and maintenance purposes. An administration fee may be payable if Council staff are not able to access a water meter on the first attempt.

## Concessions

Concession applies to a leakage of water only. Concessions for theft of water etc are not covered by this policy. To be eligible for a concession, a ratepayer must be able to:

- Show that their water consumption during the quarter has increased by at least twenty percent (20%) on their average quarterly water consumption over the past two years.
- If a concession is granted to a ratepayer, the concession will be a once off reduction and will apply to the relevant billing period only (or to two consecutive billing periods if it is reasonable that a single leakage incident may have occurred undetected for part of both periods).
- The concession will be calculated based on average water consumption over the past two (2) years.
- A concession will not be granted for amounts less than \$50.00.
- On receipt of the concession the ratepayer must acknowledge that they have received the concession and are responsible for all metered water consumption in the following eight (8) quarterly reading periods.
- Residents may access this concession only once in any two (2) year period.

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**IMPLEMENTATION/ COMMUNICATION**

This Policy will be communicated to all new Integrated Water Services (IWS) employees that are affected by it as part of their induction. Revised versions of the Policy will be communicated for highlighting at the IWS team meeting by the Manager Integrated Water Services.

**VARIATION AND REVIEW**

This Water Meter Policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council.

The term of this policy does not expire on the review date, but shall continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.



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General Manager

9/2/20.  
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Date

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