

# Policy

## Concealed Water Leak Allowance

|                                    |  |                          |                       |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Responsible Manager (Title)        | Finance and Supply   |                          |                       |
| Adopted by Council                 | Date: 28/04/2020   | Minute Number: 6c.20.037 |                       |
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| Document(s) this policy Supersedes | V4.0 – 28/06/2016 – 15.062/16                                      |                          |                       |
| Community Plan Linkage             | 5 Leadership   |                          |                       |
|                                    | 5.2 We will have an effective and efficient organisation           |                          |                       |
|                                    | 5.2.1 Operates in a financially responsible and sustainable manner |                          |                       |

### 1. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the General Manager, staff and the public regarding the responsibilities of water consumption and necessity of early detection of water leaks.

### 2. Definitions

**Concealed Leak** - water escaping from a private water service that is hidden from view and defined as occurring within pipeline breaks or connections in the ground, under slabs or within walls and is not clearly visible to the owner. (It does not involve leakage from an appliance, fixture, water pump, hot water system or the like). Lush grass or damp soil does not constitute being concealed from view.

**Private Water Service** - relates to all water service pipes, including recycled water service pipes, fixtures and fittings on the customer's side of the meter (outlet side), or 1 metre inside the property boundary for unmetered properties (excluding separate fire services).

**Customer** - the owner/ratepayer of the property or an applicant on behalf of the owner who has previously given proof to Council of their agency agreement or power of attorney, etc.

**Residential Customer** - the category for rating purposes is residential and the residential water consumption tariff applies.

### 3. Background/legislative requirements

Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines

### 4. Policy statement

- 4.1 The allowance is a concession and applies to all customer types and will be property based. Only one application will be accepted as a result of a concealed leak at the same property and by the same owner regardless of whether it is a related event or separate concealed leak within a 5 year period. If a customer moves to another property or owns more than one property, the allowance will be given once on each property within a 5 year period.
- 4.2 The customer is responsible for the maintenance and repair of their private water service.
- 4.3 Clarence Valley Council grants an allowance for water lost through a concealed or hidden leak in the private water service of customers. The allowance will be granted provided that:
- The customer was unaware of the leak and the leak was concealed from view,
  - The leak was not due to the neglect of obvious defects in the private water service,
  - The private water service is repaired and a report from the plumber submitted to Council confirming the repairs are in accordance with the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 No. 59 Section 6 Part 2 Division 1 which states:  
  
*6 Plumbing and drainage work to be carried out only by authorised persons*  
  
*A person must not do any kind of plumbing and drainage work unless the person:*  
  
*(a) holds an endorsed contractor licence or a supervisor certificate in force under the Home Building Act 1989 authorising the holder to do that kind of work, or*  
*(b) does the work under the immediate supervision of the holder of such a licence or certificate, or*  
*(c) holds a tradesperson certificate in force under the Home Building Act 1989 authorising the holder to do that work under supervision and does that work under the general supervision of the holder of a licence or certificate referred to in paragraph (a)*
- 4.4 The allowance will apply to the potable (drinking water) service and/or recycle water service to a maximum of 450 kilolitres for each water service. The allowance will be calculated on the average daily consumption during the meter reading period where the leak occurred on the basis of the consumption of the previous 4 full reading periods where normal average consumption has occurred (excludes nil consumption periods and replaced meter periods) both priority placed on the previous corresponding period where possible. If the concealed leak allowance is granted for residential customers and the stepped tariff has not applied in previous consumption periods for residential customers, the calculated charge will not include the stepped tariff.
- 4.5 Where a customer is unaware of a leaking water service, on either a potable (drinking water) or recycled water service, and the leak is not due to neglect and was concealed from view, an allowance will be granted for the period of the leak i.e. granted on the current quarter if the leak was

detected in that quarter or for the previous quarter (if it can be determined a leak had occurred) and the current quarter up to the date of repair.

- 4.6 The allowance is to include the consumption period that the leak was first identified and also include the consumption period up until a reading is taken by Council as part of the quarterly reading process after the leak was repaired. If the leak is identified and repaired within the same consumption period, the allowance will only apply to this period.
- 4.7 A sewer usage charge is levied on Commercial/Industrial properties that have a water meter and are liable for a percentage discharge factor of water discharged into the sewerage system. The allowance given for sewer usage is in addition to any allowance given for water usage. Where sewer usage is involved, no maximum allowance will apply and the calculation will be based on the revised daily average calculation for the amendment period. The allowance will be granted for the period of the leak i.e. granted on the current quarter if the leak was detected in that quarter or for the previous quarter (if it can be determined a leak had occurred) and the current quarter up to the date of repair.
- 4.8 A liquid trade waste charge is levied on Commercial/Industrial properties that have a water meter and are liable for a percentage discharge factor of water discharged into the sewerage system. The allowance given for liquid trade waste usage is in addition to any allowance given for water usage. Where liquid trade usage is involved, no maximum allowance will apply and the calculation will be based on the revised daily average calculation for the amendment period. The allowance will be granted for the period of the leak i.e. granted on the current quarter if the leak was detected in that quarter or for the previous quarter (if it can be determined a leak had occurred) and the current quarter up to the date of repair.
- 4.9 A property served by a common meter i.e. strata block will attract the one allowance for the strata of a maximum 450 kilolitres only within a 5 year period.
- 4.10 A property served by a rural shared private water line agreement will attract the one allowance of a maximum of 450 kilolitres on the master meter and apportioned to the shared services if the leak has occurred in the master supply line.
- 4.11 The customer may claim an allowance for a concealed leak detected and repaired within an earlier period. The allowance will be granted provided the above conditions are met and a written statement has been provided by the plumber who affected the repairs stating the date repairs were carried out and confirming this was during or immediately preceding the period of the claimed leak. For old claims one allowance will be granted, subject to the conditions outlined, to a maximum of one in a 5 year period.

## **5. Implementation**

- 5.1 Claims for concealed water leak allowance must be submitted and the customer is required to advise:
- how they became aware of the leak,
  - the date they became aware of the leak and
  - the details of the repair via a plumber's statement (as detailed below).

- 5.2 Before the allowance is granted, as per Clause 4.3 of this policy the leak must be repaired by a licensed plumber or under the supervision of a licenced plumber, who must also provide a written report on the leak stating:
- the date the leak was detected,
  - where the leak was situated,
  - where the water was escaping,
  - the date the leak was repaired,
  - the meter reading at the time the leak was repaired (if available),
  - possible cause and
  - copy of plumber's invoice.
- 5.3 If the homeowner on a rural property carries out their own repairs, (which is not recommended by Council) this work must be signed off by a licenced plumber. The plumber's report is to contain the information as above at 5.2 and confirm the repairs are in accordance with Clause 6 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011.
- 5.4 A reply to the customer must be confirmed in writing to ensure the customer is aware of their responsibility to cover further costs associated with leaks to their property.
- 5.5 Ratepayers not considered eligible for a concealed or hidden leak allowance will be liable for all consumption of water that has passed through the meter.

## **6. Appeal/objections process**

NIL

## **7. Related Documents**

NIL