

## 1. Policy Statement

This Policy is to facilitate an effective and efficient means for Council to provide relief to ratepayers by partially remitting water consumption charges in cases of financial hardship resulting from an undetectable water leak which has occurred on a ratepayer's property.

## 2. Scope

This Policy outlines the principles and guidelines which Council will use when applying relief to ratepayers who experience an undetectable water leak on their property which results in an increase in their water consumption charges.

Council recognises Water Leak Relief in terms of the Hardship provision of the Local Government Regulation 2012. Relief may only be provided if a water leak causes water consumption to increase by over 50 kilolitres above normal consumption, as indicated in Section 5.4 of the Financial Hardship Policy;

## 3. Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or his delegated representative is granted authority to approve or refuse an application in accordance with the criteria set out in this Policy.

## 4. Definitions

- **Kilolitre** means 1,000 Litres.
- **Compelling Reasons** which prevent the repair of a water leak or the submission of a water leak relief application within the time frame stipulated are;
  - Medical reasons where medical evidence can be produced to state illness, which either housebound or hospitalised the applicant. Such evidence is to be supported by a statutory declaration declaring that the applicant had no one during the period that could act for them or conduct their business affairs;
  - Infirmary of the ratepayer which prevented them from discovering a leak or making an application within the specified timeframe;
  - Natural disaster, such as extensive flooding, which disrupted normal business and prevented normal action from being taken;
  - Absence from the property for reasons such as overseas holiday where ratepayers were not aware of a leak and were not capable of submitting an application within the specified timeframes; and
  - Any other reason having circumstances 'so exceptional' as to render it a "compelling reason" as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

## 5. Policy

### *Criteria for granting relief as a result of a water leak*

The eligibility of a ratepayer, as defined in this Policy, to receive water leak relief from Council will be determined in terms of the following criteria:



- The ratepayer applying for relief from water consumption charges must be responsible for the payment of the water consumption charges;
- The water leak that was repaired must have resulted from a break or other fault in a fixture, fitting, pipe or other plumbing within a premises that was not reasonably foreseeable or detectable resulting in unintentional loss of water within the premises;

### *Relief Calculation*

The amount of the relief will be calculated on the volume of water lost using the methods below;

- Water leak relief of 50% may be applied to the difference between the water consumption of the applicable billing period and the water consumed during the same billing period in the immediately preceding financial year, which is indicative of the ratepayer's normal consumption, multiplied by the current water tariff;
- In the case of an eligible pensioner, who is the holder of a valid Pensioner Concession Card, or a not-for-profit and/or charitable organisation, relief of 100% may be applied to the difference between the water consumption for the applicable billing period and the water consumed during the same billing period in the immediately preceding financial year, which is indicative of the ratepayer's normal consumption, multiplied by the current water tariff;
- Water leak relief is available to commercial or industrial ratepayers as defined by Council's current commercial or industrial General Rating Categories under the same eligibility criteria as for other ratepayers;
- Relief is capped at \$500 per property to limit Council's financial commitment to a reasonable level and if the ratepayer has not received water leak relief in the past three years;

### *Qualifying Conditions*

To be granted water leak relief under this policy the water leak must have been repaired and the following conditions met;

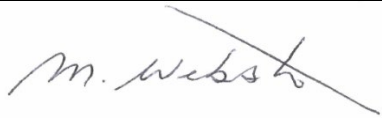
- A ratepayer must have a water leak repaired by a registered plumber, or must have the repair sited and confirmed by a registered plumber, within 14 working days of the ratepayer becoming aware of the leak, or of being advised by Council of a potential water leak, whichever occurs sooner, unless there are compelling reasons why this timeframe cannot be achieved;
- Ratepayers must apply to Council for water leak relief by completing Council's prescribed application form, within 60 days of having the leak repaired or from the date of the Council letter advising them of high water consumption which could indicate a leak, unless there are compelling reasons why this timeframe cannot be achieved. The application must be accompanied by either an account from a Registered Plumber providing details of the water leak that was repaired, or by a letter from a Registered Plumber providing details of the water leak that was repaired and confirming that the leak has been repaired correctly; and

## **6. Legal Parameters**

- Local Government Regulation 2012; and
- *Local Government Act 2009*.

## 7. Associated Documents

- 2023-2024 Revenue Statement;
- Financial Hardship Policy;
- Water Leak Relief Operational Procedure; and
- Water Leak Relief Application Form.

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND STATUS					
Action	Name		Position	Signed	Date
Approved by Council	Michelle Webster		A/CEO		30/05/2023
Policy Version	4	Initial Version Adopted	18/02/2014	Current Version Adopted	30/05/2023
Maintained By	Corporate and Financial Services			Next Review Date	31/05/2024
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