



WATER LEAK RELIEF POLICY

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 ratepayers 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.

3. Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer 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

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Kilolitre	1,000 Litres
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5. Policy

5.1. 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:

- 5.1.1** The ratepayer applying for relief from water consumption charges must be responsible for the payment of the water consumption charges.
- 5.1.2** 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.
- 5.1.3** As Water Leak Relief is permitted in terms of the 'Hardship' provision of the Local Government Act, relief may only be provided if a water leak causes water consumption to increase by over 50 kilolitres above normal consumptions as indicated in section 5.1.4.
- 5.1.4** Where the criteria in section 5.1.3 applies, 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.
- 5.1.5** In the case of an eligible pensioner, who is the holder of a valid Pensioner Concession Card or a Not-For-Profit/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. Relief is capped as per 5.1.7
- 5.1.6** 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.

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- 5.1.7** Relief be capped at \$500 per property to limit Council's financial commitment to a reasonable level and the ratepayer has not received Water Leak Relief in the past 3 years.
- 5.1.8** 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 fourteen (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, to limit the loss of this precious commodity due to a water leak.
- 5.1.9** Ratepayers must apply to Council for water leak relief by completing Council's prescribed application form, within sixty (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.
- 5.1.10** 'Compelling reasons' indicated in section 5.1.8 and 5.1.9 of this Policy shall exclude circumstances where ratepayers are unable to contact a plumber, or experience a delay in receiving the plumbers account, or have failed to advise Council of a change of address thus delaying the receipt of a high consumption letter, or where a ratepayer's Property Agent did not advise them about a potential water leak.

The following common circumstances are considered to be 'compelling reasons' which prevent the repair of a water leak or the submission of a water leak relief application within the time frame stipulated in the Policy:

- 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 with 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.
- Any other reason having circumstances 'so exceptional' as to render it a "compelling reason" as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

5.2. Administrative Procedure

- 5.2.1.** If Council staff become aware of a potential water leak before the ratepayer, a letter be sent to the ratepayer concerned within ten (10) working days:
- Advising them of the existence of a potential water leak;
 - Requesting that they investigate the possibility of a leak and, if the leak is confirmed, they have it repaired, and;
 - Offering assistance, on completion of an application by the ratepayer, by way of a partial remission of the water charges resulting from the leak.
- 5.2.2.** If the ratepayer becomes aware of the water leak before Council, and contacts Council to discuss it, the same advice/assistance be offered as noted in 5.2.1 above.
- 5.2.3.** A ratepayer who has experienced a water leak be made aware of the possibility of submitting a Water Leak Relief Application Form to Council for assistance.
- 5.2.4.** The Water Leak Relief Application Form be completed by the ratepayer and returned to Council within sixty (60) days from the date on which the ratepayer has the leak repaired, together with an account or a letter from a registered plumber, confirming that a water leak did occur and have been repaired and giving details of the water leak.

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5.3. The quantum of water leak relief to be provided

Provided the ratepayer takes prompt action and has the water leak repaired within fourteen (14) working days of becoming aware of it, or of being advised by Council of a potential water leak, whichever occurred sooner, and applied to Council on the prescribed application form, Council may write-off 50%, or 100% in the case of eligible pensioners or Not-For-Profit/Charitable Organisations, of the difference between the water consumption charges 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 up to \$500 maximum relief.

An example to illustrate this as follows:


Leak consumption for the half-year ended 31 December 2017	=	500 KL
Less: Normal consumption for half-year ended 31 December 2016	=	<u>200 KL</u>
	=	300 KL
50% of Increase in Water Consumption as a result of water leak	=	150 KL
Relief to be provided = 150 Kilolitres x \$1.03 per Kilolitre	=	\$ 126.00

6. Legal Parameters

Local Government Regulation 2012

7. Associated Documents

2017-2018 Revenue Statement
Water Leak Relief Application Form

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND STATUS						
Action		Name		Position	Signed	Date
Approved by Council		J. Stewart		A/CEO		07/08/18
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