

# Policy

## Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leak)

2022



### INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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Further Document Information and Relationships	
<b>Related Legislation*</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
<b>Related Policies</b>	Debt Recovery Policy Hardship Policy Complaint Handling Policy
<b>Related Documents</b>	Liverpool Plains Shire Council – Fees & Charges AS3500 - Australian & New Zealand Standards 3500.1: Plumbing and Drainage

*\*Note: Any reference to Legislation will be updated in the Policy as required. See website <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/> for current Acts, Regulations and Environmental Planning Instruments.*

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## 1. Purpose

This Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leak) Policy (“this Policy”) is to grant a “one-off” financial relief, in the form of an account adjustment and/or extended repayment period, to customers with substantially higher than usual water consumption charges and sewer discharge charges caused as a result of a concealed water leak.

Once water has passed through any water meter it becomes the responsibility of the property owner. There is no provision in the Local Government Act 1993 to reduce water accounts due to leaks in private plumbing.

This Policy is not intended to provide full compensation to customers for water leaks but is a means of good public relations and providing some assistance where high usage accounts have been incurred through concealed leaks.

## 2. Commencement

This Policy is effective from the date of resolution by Council and shall remain in force until repealed by resolution of Council.

## 3. Scope and Application

This Policy applies to all owners of occupied properties connected to Council’s water service.

## 4. Definitions and Interpretation

In this Policy, the following terms shall be interpreted to have the following meanings:

Term	Definition
Concealed water leak	water leak that is not readily visible or apparent and involves a leakage in pipelines which is hidden from view and generally underground, for example under a concrete slab. Water leaks in paddocks, yards and gardens are generally detectable by finding lush grass or saturated ground and thus not a concealed water leak
Corresponding water billing periods	the same quarter water meter reading each year for the prior two years
Council	means Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Occupied property	means a property with a structure on which any person, including an owner, operator, or tenant, lives, sleeps, cooks, or engages in business activity
Water account	an account issued by Council for water usage charges. Non-residential properties are also charged for sewer discharge charges, via the water account where these services are applicable
Water usage	water used measured by passing through the water meter

Water usage charge	charged as per the Fees and Charges for the relevant tariff
Water restriction device	a device installed on the water meter to limit the amount of water going through the meter

## 5. Policy Statement

The owner's water account, of an occupied property, to be adjusted to a maximum of 50% of water usage associated with the concealed leak and 100% of any additional sewer discharge charge based on the average usage over the corresponding water billing periods for the previous two year.

The limit of account adjustment for each rateable property is one adjustment in every five years.

## 6. Policy Principles

6.1 The water account is at least double the normal usage based on the average of the corresponding water billing periods.

6.2 The property was occupied during the quarter the leak occurred.

6.3 The water leak was not caused by wilful, accidental or negligent damage to the water service.

6.4 The property does not currently have a water restriction device installed and/or legal proceedings for the non-payment of previous water accounts.

6.5 The concealed water leak was not readily visible or apparent and involves a leakage in pipelines which are undetected, for example below ground or under a concrete slab.

6.6 A concealed water leak does not include leaking fixtures or water using appliances including taps, toilets, hot water systems, irrigation systems, rainwater tanks or associated valves, evaporative coolers, dishwashers, washing machines, fridges, water features, swimming pools or spas.

6.7 The concealed leak was repaired by a fully licensed plumber within 21 days of an occupant/property owner or authorised representative being issued the substantially higher water account or other notification in writing from Council of a suspected water leak.

6.8 For non-residential properties where a concealed water leak has also increased sewer discharge charges and the water loss was not deemed to be entering Council's sewer system.

6.9 A completed 'Application for Water Account Adjustment form' submitted by the owner to Council within 14 days of the repair with a certification by the licensed plumber stating:

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- 6.9.1 the date the water leak was repaired,
  - 6.9.2 the location of the concealed water leak,
  - 6.9.3 reason why the leak was not readily detectable (photographic evidence to Council if requested),
  - 6.9.4 that the repair completed meets the AS 3500 standard, and
  - 6.9.5 the water meter reading immediately after the repair was completed.

6.10 Council will not reimburse or make any contribution towards associated plumbing costs for either locating a leak or repair of a concealed water leak.

## **7. How the account will be adjusted**

7.1 On receipt of an 'Application for Water Account Adjustment form', the form will be checked for completeness and applicability to this Policy. If the form has not been completed correctly or does not meet the requirements of this Policy the owner will be notified in writing and provided 21 days to make payment of the water account.

7.2 Once approved in accordance with this Policy, the adjustment will be calculated as follows:

7.2.1 The usage in kilolitres is calculate as 50% of the difference between the meter reading specified after the leak was fixed (from 6.9.5 above) less the previous reading as specified on the water account being adjusted, and

7.2.2 Multiplied by the relevant dollars per kilolitre of either the first or second step rate.

7.2.3 The sewer discharge adjustment to be calculated as 100% of usage above the average of the corresponding water billing periods if the leak was not deemed to be entering Council's sewer system.

7.2.4 An updated water account to be issued and the owner will be provided 21 days to make payment of the adjusted water account.