
Policy Title:	Partial Relief from Water Charges
Policy No:	211
Policy Subject:	Partial Relief from Payment of Water Consumption Charges
Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Fees & Charges
Responsible Officer:	Director of Corporate Services
Authorised by:	North Burnett Regional Council
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Authorities:	

INTRODUCTION:

This policy outlines Council's procedure in the Partial Relief, from the Payment of Water Consumption Charges

OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this policy is to establish guidelines for Partial Relief from the Payment of Water Consumption Charge

PRINCIPLES:

The **North Burnett Regional Council** policy regarding Application for Partial Relief for Water Consumption is as follows:

Property owners may apply for partial relief from water consumption charges in situations where water has been lost through an unapparent plumbing failure. Partial relief from payment of water consumption charges will only be granted if the Council is satisfied that:

- the water consumed was the result of an unapparent plumbing failure;
- as soon as the applicant was aware of an increase in water consumption, steps were taken to find the cause and a licenced plumber carried out repairs promptly;
- evidence is provided that usage has been monitored at least monthly if relief has previously been applied for.

Scenario 1: A rate payer attends the council and says that they had a break in one of their water lines and that a plumber has fixed it but they had lost a lot of water due to the amount of time it took to find the busted hose and get it fixed.

Council then looks at the last two years water consumption and takes an average. The average is then taken from the recent reading. Council then allows 75% of the difference as a refund.

Scenario 2: An application is given to the rate payer who comes in and complains about the amount of water they have been billed for and assures us that no way could they use that amount of water.

Council goes to the premises and check that the meter has been read correctly. If so we then ask the rate payer to check that their toilets, taps etc are not leaking, ask that they check the grounds for green patches where there may be a leak. We also ask that they take daily readings to see how much water they actually use per day to assess if the water meter is faulty. If it is determined that the meter is faulty, a new meter is connected and the same refund method is applied as for a leaky pipe.

Scenario 3: A rate payer comes into the office and complains about the high water reading and wants a refund.

Council goes to the premises and check that the meter has been read correctly. If so we then ask the rate payer to check that their toilets, taps etc are not leaking, ask that they check the grounds for green patches where there may be a leak. We also ask that they take daily readings to see how much water they actually use per day to assess if the water meter is faulty.

If it is determined that the meter is not faulty and maybe the tap had been left on over night or the toilet leaking etc. it is explained that all avenues have been checked and we are of the opinion that the meter is not faulty, we cannot give them any relief from the payment of water rates. To make application for partial relief you need to:

1. Complete and sign an application form and collect the following documents from the plumber:
 - a statement from the licenced plumber describing the repair work and certifying that loss was due to an unapparent plumbing failure; and
 - a copy of the plumber's bill for the work.
2. Lodge the application, the plumber's documents and documentation of readings (if relief has been applied for previously) with Council before the due date for payment of your water consumption notice to avoid interest accrual.

The amount of water you have consumed over the previous four readings is compared with your consumption during the period of the unapparent plumbing failure. These readings are averaged out and you will be charged at 75% of the charges for water lost as a result.

An Excel spreadsheet is used for all Calculations for Partial Relief from Payment of Water Consumption Charges.