



# LACHLAN SHIRE COUNCIL

## WATER METER POLICY

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Further Information: Lachlan Shire Council ☎ 02 6895 1900 ✉ Email: <a href="mailto:council@lachlan.nsw.gov.au">council@lachlan.nsw.gov.au</a>					
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## 1. BACKGROUND

This policy outlines the responsibilities that Lachlan Shire Council (Council) and Property Owners have for the installation, maintenance and management of water meters.

Each individual property connected to Council's reticulated potable and treated water supplies, will be metered such that water demand can be measured, managed and be relied upon as a justifiable basis for water supply charges.

## 2. SCOPE

Council is responsible for the installation, maintenance, measuring of supply, and arranging accuracy testing of water meters. The water meter is the property of Council and it is the final point of Council's responsibility along the water service line. It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure the water meter is not wilfully damaged or tampered with, and to keep the area around the water meter clear from obstructions for accessibility.

Water meters measure the amount of water used. This measurement helps to accurately charge customers for the water they have used (consumed). It also helps customers to gauge their own water use.

All premises connected to Council's potable water or treated water supplies, should be fitted with their own individual water meter. Council will supply the most appropriate size of meter for each property. Residential properties will be fitted with 20mm meters, while non-residential applications may apply for larger sized installations of which will be assessed by Council.

## 3. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure water meters are functioning within standards to facilitate the correct billing of consumption to customers,
- Clearly define the responsibilities of Council and the property owner with regards to the installation, maintenance and management of water meters,
- Reference the standards for water meter installations in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, codes and standards.
- Identify the conditions that need to be met for a water meter to be replaced or tested for accuracy.

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## 4. DEFINITION/S

<i>Alteration</i>	the relocation, or raising/lowering of a water meter, or change of connection size
<i>Consumption</i>	the registered usage of water measured by the water meter
<i>Council</i>	Lachlan Shire Council
<i>Reticulation</i>	a network of pipes delivering water to the customer
<i>The property owner/customer</i>	the owner of the subject property and does not include tenants
<i>Water supply</i>	reticulated potable or treated water; does not include raw water supplies

## 5. POLICY IN BRIEF

This policy will cover the:

- Meter Installation
- Alterations
- Meter Access
- Meter Replacement
- Meter Damage
- Meter Accuracy and Meter Testing

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## 6. POLICY IN DETAIL

### 6.1 Meter Installation

Council is responsible to supply and fit a water meter assembly when installing a new connection or reconnection to Council's water supply; the cost of the meter assembly and installation is borne by the property owner as outlined in Council's Fees and Charges.

The size of the connection (and thus the size of the meter) is determined by Council, with reference to guidelines in AS/NZS 3500.1 and New South Wales Code of Practice - Plumbing and Drainage. Only water meters conforming to AS3565 or having achieved patented approval under the relevant code are to be used in Council's water service connections. In duplexes, flats/ units or strata titled properties, there may be one master meter with subtract meters servicing each of the dwellings. This is the only circumstance where subtract meters will be considered.

The subject property must meet the following conditions to be eligible for a water connection:

- The property must be situated within 225m of a water main,
- The property must have a water main adjacent to the property boundary (either directly or parallel across the street)

The water service is to be installed at a 90 degree angle from the water main and be located in a position determined by Council in accordance with existing cross road conduits, mains tapings, and the like. The water meter should be located towards the front of the property, near the left or right boundary, and within one meter of the boundary. All meters are to be installed above ground, with a minimum of 300mm clearance around each meter. In cases where the Director of Infrastructure Services determines that an above ground meter will adversely impact on the adequate function of a driveway, formed walkway, gate, fence line or other such immovable structure, the meter may be placed in a pit.

Where Council's Director of Infrastructure Services determines that it is not financially practical to install a water meter, the property owner will be subject to a non-metered charge in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges.

Domestic dwellings are to be serviced by one size water meter only, with that connection being a 20mm water connection. Non-residential applications may apply for larger sized and/or multiple water connections; however, this will be reviewed by Council to provide a determination.

Council's maintenance responsibility of a water service ceases at the outlet of a water meter or the outlet of a backflow prevention device that has been fitted to a water meter by Council staff.

### 6.2 Alteration

Any alteration to the water service connection from, and including, the water meter back to the water main, is the responsibility of Council. The water service connection and its components (water meter, ball valve, and fittings) always remain the property of Council.

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Council may consider a written request to alter the location or size of a water service connection and if approved the cost of the works will be met by the property owner in advance.

Any alteration to the water service on the property owner's side of the water meter is the responsibility of the property owner.

It is an offence under Section 636 of Local Government Act, 1993 to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters.

### 6.3 Meter Access

Meters are read by authorised contractors and/or Council employees every four months, with accounts being issued shortly after the meter reading is taken. The reading taken from the meter forms the basis for determining the water usage charges for each metered property.

If a meter cannot be accessed because of locked gates, fences, dogs or other obstructions, Council may estimate the consumption for these properties based on the average consumption of the previous three (3) billing periods or equivalent seasonal billing periods. If a meter remains inaccessible, the property owner will need to make arrangements to provide access to the meter or to enable the actual meter readings to be obtained. Should any costs be associated with this, it will be at the property owner's expense.

### 6.4 Meter Replacement

Council has a meter replacement program for 20mm meters where they are replaced once they reach their economic life, which is 15 years, or once having reached the maximum reading on the dial, whichever comes first.

Council will also arrange to replace a meter if it is found to be defective (eg. stopped registering), damaged, unreadable or if it can no longer be reasonably maintained.

Meter replacements and maintenance may only be conducted by a Council employee. The water supply may be disconnected for a few minutes whilst this work is completed.

### 6.5 Meter Damage

The property owner will be responsible for the cost to repair or replace a damaged water meter, unless the damage is the direct result of Council workmanship.

If a meter has been stolen from a property or has sustained damage that will impede the function of the meter, the property owner is required to inform Council immediately. Council will install a new meter and you will be required to pay the relevant fee for the new meter.

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## 6.6 Meter Accuracy and Meter Testing

The property owner can request that the water meter at their property be tested, if it is considered that it is not accurately recording the amount of water used on the property. Upon application and payment for a meter test, Council will remove the meter and install a new meter.

The removed meter will be sent to an independent National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) laboratory using an accredited procedure to test the meter's accuracy. Council will advise of the test results and make a written report available on request.

In accordance with the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Regulation 158, a meter registering within + or – 4% is deemed to be correctly measuring the quantity of water passing through it. Council will refund the Meter Test fee if the meter is found to be faulty by registering greater than +4% accuracy. Additionally, Council will also adjust the associated water account due to the account being overcharged – refer to Council's Undetected Water Leak and Faulty Water Meter Policy. If the meter is found to be slow or under-registering, customers will not be back-charged for the additional water used.

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Related LSC policies include:

- Undetected Water Leak and Faulty Water Meter Policy

Related Legislation includes:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- Water Act 2000
- AS/NZS 3500.1:2021 Plumbing and Drainage Water Services
- AS 3500.1.2:1998 National Plumbing and Drainage – (Water Supply) Section 5.3 (reference to proximity to other services (i.e. electrical cables, gas pipelines)
- AS 3565.4-2007 Meters for Water Supply – Cold water meters

Nothing in this policy limits any applicable legislation.

Greg Tory

GENERAL MANAGER

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