



# Water Charges

## About Water Charges

This Policy applies to all Housing Plus properties except crisis accommodation.

### Housing Plus will:

- + Charge clients for water usage in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the relevant Ministerial Guidelines for Water Charging on Community Housing.
- + Charge clients for water usage in a manner which is fair and consistent.
- + Advise clients of any change to this policy.

## Properties with Separate Water Meters

Housing Plus will charge clients who live in properties with separate water meters for the actual water usage as per the invoice received from the Council. In accordance with the ministerial guidelines, a separate water meter must be readily accessible for reading by the water authority and generate an individual water account.

If a water meter is not accessible for reading by the Council and does not generate an individual water account, Housing Plus will

charge the clients as if it is a shared meter dwelling.

Housing Plus will calculate an estimated water use at the commencement of a tenancy and clients will be required to pay this rate for water in advance on a weekly/ fortnightly basis with their rent payments. Water charges will be added to the clients account each water billing cycle. Water charges will be calculated on a daily rate for clients that have vacated a property during a billing period to ensure appropriate charges are recovered.

## Properties with Shared Water Meters

Housing Plus will use the quantity of bedrooms calculation for charging clients for water usage in properties with shared water meters where Housing Plus pays a water usage account.

The quantity of bedrooms calculation calculates all bedrooms within a shared meter facility and apportion costs respectively.

## Other Water Usage Facilities

Housing Plus has other water usage facilities within its portfolio, these include shared laundry facilities. For these facilities the using clients will be apportioned an equal share of the water use charges only, based on a simple equation calculation.

## Common Area Water Usage

Housing Plus will pay the water usage for all common areas. In properties with a shared water meter, Housing Plus will ensure that 20% of the water usage bill is allocated against the common area usage.

**Looking for more info?**

- Contact your local Housing Plus office
- Visit [housingplus.com.au](http://housingplus.com.au)
- Call us on 1800 603 300



## Payment of Water Usage Charges

Any payments for water must be specified as water payments. If a water charge remains unpaid for more than 21 days from the date it is charged to the clients account, Housing Plus may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to recover the unpaid water usage charges.

## Allowances

Housing Plus may consider granting allowances to clients with separate water meters if:

- + The client or a household member is on a home based dialysis.
- + The client of a household member has a medical condition or disability that requires them to use significantly more water than usual.

In order to be considered for a water usage allowance, clients must complete the Water Allowance Application Form, the client must also provide documented medical evidence to support their application. Allowances will be credited to the clients account at the end of each quarterly billing cycle.

There are no exemptions or allowances for clients who are temporarily away from their properties.

## Transfers and Terminations

Clients that transfer to another Housing Plus property or terminate their tenancy and move away from Housing Plus will be charged for water usage up to the end of the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

## Hardship

Hardship refers to a situation where a person is unable, reasonably, because of illness, unemployment (recent) or other reasonable cause, to pay for their rent, water and other living expenses in full when they become due, this may be short term or

long term.

Financial Assistance and a payment plan may be available to clients who are suffering hardship.

## Complaints and Appeals

Clients can appeal decisions relating to Water Charging in Community Housing, please refer to complaints and appeals fact sheet.

- + In particular the following appeal mechanisms exist -
- + Appeal to Housing Plus via the Complaints and Appeals process.
- + Appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) for any issue related to the application of the water charging method on properties with shared meters.
- + Appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee regarding decisions to grant a water usage allowance.

The Housing Appeals Committee will not hear appeals relating to the actual water usage charges for clients in properties with separate water meters.

Concerns about the fairness and transparency of this policy in relation to compliance with the Regulatory Code can be referred to the National Regulatory System for Community Housing

<http://www.nrsch.gov.au/>

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