

# COUNCIL POLICY



<b>Policy name</b>	Water Usage Charge Reduction Requests
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**Abstract**

Gunnedah Shire Council is committed to the effective and sustainable management of its town water supplies.

To encourage water conservation, high water consuming residential customers are subjected to a step price increase of at least 50% for incremental usage above 400 Kilolitres annually.

Customers experiencing difficulties following high water consumption charges as a result unidentified leaks may make special dispensation requests to Council for leniency consideration.

<b>Dates</b>	Policy or amendment approved 19 Feb 2020 Policy or amendment takes effect 19 Feb 2020 Policy is due for review (up to 4 years) 19 Feb 2024
<b>Recommended by</b>	Gunnedah Shire Council Leadership Team (21 Nov 2019)
<b>Approved by</b>	Gunnedah Shire Council, at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 19 Feb 2020. Resolution number: 21.02/20
<b>Policy Custodian</b>	Manager Water Services
<b>Relevant to</b>	Gunnedah Shire Council Staff, parties responsible for usage of water from metered connections within the Local Government Area.
<b>Superseded Policies</b>	Nil
<b>Related documents</b>	NSW Department Planning Industry and Environment – Water Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage
<b>Related legislation</b>	Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, Water Management Act 2000, Water Management (General) Regulation 2018.

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate effective guidance for The General Manager to assess water usage charge requests from customers making formal requests seeking a reduction in the charge applied as a result of unidentified leaks, or exceptional circumstances.

### 2. Scope

The Manager Water Services at Gunnedah Shire Council is responsible for maintaining the town water supplies. The Manager Water Services is responsible for assessing formal requests for special dispensation of water usage charges based specific guidelines as set out in this policy and making recommendations to the General Manager or his/her delegate.

- 2.1 The Gunnedah Shire Council Finance Team is responsible for actioning the outcome of the General Managers decision and making adjustments to Water Billing Accounts

### 3. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Definition
Act	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) Water Management Act 2000
Regulation	Best Practice Management

### 4. Policy principles

#### 4.1 Councils objective in adopting this policy is to:

Provide direction and guidelines for the General Manager or his/her delegate, to approve reductions in water and sewer charges formally requested by customers in exceptional circumstances that have resulted in higher than normal charges, without the requirement for Council reports to be prepared for individual cases. This will reduce the time consumed by Council staff preparing Council reports, and reduce the time taken by Councillors reading and considering individual cases

### 5. Policy statement

Gunnedah Shire Council is committed to managing its water supplies effectively to provide safe, high quality water that meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, consumer, and other regulatory requirements.

Water and sewage usage charges have been developed using Best Practice Management principals to provide a fair and reasonable return on investment, and maintain Council's water supply and sewerage assets in a safe and reliable condition for future generations.

Gunnedah Shire Council has adopted residential water charges with a two part tariff including a water availability charge for all properties within 225 metres of an accessible water main to encourage water conservation.

Gunnedah Shire Council has adopted non-residential water charges with a single tariff including a water availability charge based the size of the property water meter connection for all properties within 225 metres of an accessible water main.

Matters to be considered when assessing special requests for reduction include:

- The circumstances, including supporting evidence
- Measures implemented to rectify the problem, and prevent its recurrence
- Evidence of the location of the problem that demonstrates that the customer could not reasonably be expected to be aware of the problem.

Reductions for residential properties can be made to the first tier rate if the evidence of the above is provided.

Reductions to non-residential properties can be made to sewerage usage charges provided no impact is placed on the sewerage system as a result of the problem and if evidence of the above is provided. History of usage is to be used when consideration is given to reductions for non-residential sewerage usage charges.

The maximum reduction amount which can be approved by the General Manager is \$5000.00. Requests above \$5000.00 must have a report prepared for consideration by Council.

## **6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities**

Manager Water Services is responsible for gathering the information required and making a recommendation to the General Manager (or delegate) for consideration and advising the customer of the outcome of the decision.

Councils Finance Team is responsible for making approved adjustments to the customers water account.

### **6.1 Policy Custodian**

The Manager Water Services is the officer accountable for managing policy compliance and initiating the policy review process. The Manager will also have the responsibility for all aspects of policy implementation, unless appropriately delegated to another officer.

These responsibilities include being the primary contact point for advice on the policy or its implementation; establishing and maintaining Council's records in relation to the policy; proposing amendments; and managing the consultation process when the policy is due for review.

## 7. Acknowledgements

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Water Management (General) Regulation 2018

Water Management Act 2000

## 8. Version control and change history

Date	Version	Approved by & resolution no.	Amendment
9 Sep2019	Draft Version 1	[Council: Res No.]	
14 Nov 2019	Draft Version2		
27 Nov 2019	Draft Version 3		
19 Feb 2020	Final	Council Resolution 21.02/20	