

WATER SERVICE CONNECTION POLICY

Responsible Department: Infrastructure Delivery
Responsible Section: Water Services
Responsible Officer: Manger Water Services

Objective

To ensure that all connections to Council’s Water System conform to requirements established in this Policy and that the property owner’s responsibilities in relation to the connection are clearly defined.

This Policy outlines the responsibilities of both consumers and Council regarding the following:

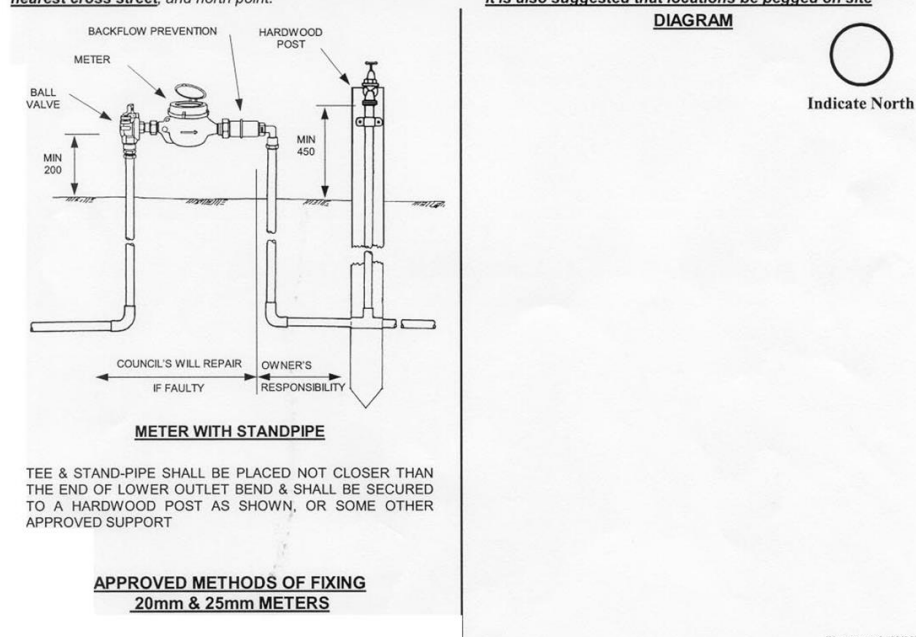
- Infrastructure that connects a property with potable water from Council’s main;
- Installation, testing, and alteration of Water Meters; and
- Property owner’s and consumers responsibilities and liabilities regarding access to Council’s water service.

Introduction

Council’s Water Supply System transports potable water to registered water users. The integrity of the system enables Council to manage its legislated responsibilities.

Council's maintenance responsibility of a water service ceases at the outlet of a water meter or flow restricting device that has been fitted to a water meter by Council staff. The property owner is responsible for testable backflow prevention devices which do not form part of the meter.

*Draw locality and block diagram showing **desired location** of meter, and **distance from side boundary** (see paragraph 5), above, **nearest cross street**, and north point. **It is also suggested that locations be pegged on site***



Policy

1. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Potable Water Service	The cold potable water supply pipeline from the water main to and including the water meter, automatic meter reading device, backflow prevention assembly and flow restricting advice where fitted.
Fire Service	A water service dedicated only to service fire hydrants, fire hose reels, fire service fitting, including water storages, installed solely for firefighting in and around a building or property. Under certain conditions part of a fire sprinkler system may be included. A fire service that can be used for other purposes is deemed to be a water service and shall be fitted with a water meter, automatic meter reading device and when deemed appropriate a backflow prevention assembly.
Water Meter	Automated devices that measure a property's consumption of potable water through Council's water service.
Property Owner	The person(s) or entity's name on the title of a property who is liable to pay Council for all rates and charges including water rates.
Consumer	The person(s) or entity who are the user of water provided through Council's water network to a property at which they are the primary resident of and who are responsible for payment (either directly to Council or indirectly to Council via the property owner or a real estate agent) for rates incurred through water usage.

2. Water Connections

2.1. Water connections to properties are to be either:

- (a) a potable water service; or
- (b) a fire service.

- 2.2. Combined water services, for both fire service and potable water service, are not permissible.
- 2.3. The size of fire services and potable water services (expressed in millimetres diameter) are to be determined entirely by the customer and standard plumbing specifications for service sizes.
- 2.4. Council will install potable water services and fire services following pre-payment of the appropriate charge (as established by the Fees and Charges within Council's current Operational Plan).
- 2.5. All potable water services) will be metered. The size of the meter will be the same as the water connection pipe.
- 2.6. Water connections (including fittings, valves, and water meters) remain the property of Council , excluding backflow prevention devices that form part of the customers responsibility.
- 2.7. Council will maintain and repair all pipe work and fittings up to and including the water supply meter, automatic meter reading device, and or flow restricting device.
- 2.8. Council may replace the water connection pipe and the water meter from time to time with no additional charge to the customer.

3. Fire Services

- 3.1. Fire services can only be used for firefighting.
- 3.2. Fire Services may be tagged in the field by Council to indicate they are fire services.
- 3.3. Council can provide a fire service to a property upon the submission and subsequent approval of a Water Service Application Form.
- 3.4. Bonafide Fire Service will not attract a usage charge.

- 3.5. Regardless of an Annual Fire Certificate issued to a fire service, Council may deem the service to be a potable water service and apply the appropriate water services charges, if:
- (a) Registration indicates that the fire service is being used for purposes other than genuine firefighting, system checking or fire drills; and
 - (b) Council has notified the property owner in writing of the intention to deem the service a water service.

4. Connecting to Council's Water Supply System

- 4.1. Connection to Council's Water Supply System will be approved and provided by Council, subject to the following conditions:
- (a) The application is made on the appropriate form and submitted to Council;
 - (b) The appropriate payment is made in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges (as established within Council's current Operational Plan); and
 - (c) The property owner has received advice from a licensed plumber regarding the recommended connection size and water pressure needs of the site, to ensure that the internal design of the plumbing (beyond the meter) is in accordance with AS3500.
 - (d) The property owner has appropriate development consent to have water supplied to the property.
- 4.2. Installation of connections will be completed as follows:
- (a) All new 20mm and 25mm potable water services will include an inbuilt back flow prevention device to prevent backflow into Council's water supply system.
 - (b) Potable water Service Connections larger than 25mm may require a testable backflow prevention device to be fitted with the type of device depending on the hazard rating of the property use as defined in the Narrabri Shire Council Backflow Prevention Device Policy.
 - (c) Where a testable backflow prevention device is required in accordance with Narrabri Shire Council Backflow Prevention Device Policy, Customers are responsible for arranging the installation and maintenance of the backflow prevention devices. Backflow prevention devices must be installed:
 - (i) By authorised persons, who are accredited to carry out the installation in accordance with AS/NZS 3500:1; and
 - (ii) On the property owner's side of the meter prior to the water supply to the property being turned on.
- 4.3. Water supply may be disconnected for a short period of time (less than four hours) whilst performing works on the property's water connection.
- 4.4. Testing of testable back flow prevention devices must:
- (a) Be carried out at the cost of the property owner, unless the tests have been requested by Council for tests additional to compliance requirements, in which case Council will be responsible for the cost of testing; and
 - (b) Be carried out by authorised persons, who are accredited to carry out testing procedures according to AS/NZS 3500:1 and AS/NZS 2845.1.
- 4.5. Council will endeavour to provide a service connection point at the location recommended by the licensed plumber however; Council reserves the right to determine the location of the service connection point.
- 4.6. The location of the connection point will be agreed prior to any internal plumbing occurring.
- 4.7. Council will not turn the water supply on from the main until all the requirements of this policy are met.
- 4.8. It is illegal for any person, other than Council, to turn the water on at the main.

5. Installation of Water Meters

- 5.1. Only water meters conforming to AS/NZS 3565 or having achieved patented approval under the relevant code are to be used in Council's water service connections
- 5.2. Council will supply and fit a water meter assembly and automatic meter reading device when installing a water supply connection to a property.
- 5.3. The size of the connection and the meter are to be determined by the customer and in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.
- 5.4. If an above ground water meter will adversely impact on the function of a driveway, formed walkway, gate, fence line or other such immovable structure or fixture the meter may be placed in a below ground pit.
- 5.5. The cost of the meter assembly, automatic meter reading device and associated installation works is borne by the property owner as determined by Council's current Fees and Charges (outlined in Council's Operational Plan).
- 5.6. Council will maintain ownership over a property's water meter(s).
- 5.7. Meters will be replaced as soon as possible after having passed their design life volumes, or as deemed necessary by Council.
- 5.8. Individual meters located just inside the property boundary are required on all Strata or Community Title units.
- 5.9. Property owners can collect a free frost cover (from Council's Administration building in Narrabri) to prevent damage to the water meter from frost. Property owners can place the protective covers over water meters themselves without tools or equipment.
- 5.10. In duplexes, flats or strata titled properties, there may be only one meter servicing all of the dwellings or one for each building. Additional meters water meters under Council's responsibility may be requested for a property by written request to, and approval by, Council, by application from the property owner or Owner's Corporation as appropriate.
- 5.11. If a property's meter is not able to be accessed at all times, Council may:
 - (a) Refuse to provide emergency repair services; or
 - (a) Undertake the relocation of the connection to a more accessible location, at the expense of the property owner.

6. Alteration of Water Meters

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. Any alteration to the water service on the property owner's side of the water meter is the responsibility of the owner of the connected property.
- 6.3. It is an offence under section 636 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters.
- 6.4. Sale of new or used Council meters to the public is prohibited.

7. Testing of Water Meters

- 7.1. Water meters will be tested for accuracy by an independent laboratory upon payment of the relevant fee (as set by Council's current Fees and Charges with the Operational Plan).
- 7.2. Any fees paid to Council for the testing of a water meter will be reimbursed if the water meter is proven to be faulty or inaccurate.

- 7.3. A water meter is considered to be faulty or inaccurate if the margin of error is greater than $\pm 3\%$.
- 7.4. Council reserves the right to average a customer's water billing account from previous consumption figures where a water meter or automated meter reading device malfunctions or to estimate an account based on related available information.

8. Property Owner's Responsibility and Liability

- 8.1. It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that:
- (a) The potable water service connection and the water meter, automated meter reading devices and backflow prevention assembly are adequately protected at all times;
 - (b) The Water Meter is readily accessible and readable at all times, in particular for meter reading and emergency repair purposes.
- 8.2. The property owner is liable to:
- (a) Engage a licensed plumber to repair or replace any pipe work that is not the responsibility of Council as outlined in the diagram above; and
 - (b) Reimburse Council for any costs incurred from:
 - (i) The property owner (or residents) damaging the water supply meter and associated pipe work and fittings owned by Council;
 - (ii) Council having to relocate a water meter that is not readily accessible; or
 - (iii) Council having to clear above ground obstructions located above a water meter on private property.
- 8.3. Council may recover from the property owner any costs arising as a result of clause 8.2 of this Policy.
- 8.4. Council may provide a new connection point due to damage causes (other than as a result of human interference from the property owner (or residents), however the property owner will be required to adjust the pipework on the property side of the meter at their own cost.
- 8.5. Where a property owner is seeking financial assistance (in the form of a rebate) for an undetected leak on their property, the following conditions will apply:
- (c) The application must be for a residential property;
 - (d) The request must be in writing;
 - (e) The property owner must provide a statement signed by a licenced plumber who repaired the leak clearly showing why the leak was undetected by the resident of the property;
 - (f) The request must be made within 30 days of receipt of the water account or detection of the leak, whichever occurs first; and
 - (g) The leak must be repaired by a licenced plumber in accordance with AS/NZS 3500 at the property owner's cost within a reasonable timeframe from the date that the leak was discovered.

9. Damage Incurred by Town Water Supply

- 9.1. Council will take the following steps to assist residents who have articles of their laundry damaged by iron (rust) in the towns water supply.
- (a) Provide information in the form of this policy on Council's website.
 - (b) Provide a reasonable quantity of a commercial rust remover (and user instructions) to residents to remove rust stains from clothes. The product will be offered/provided when the resident brings the issue to the attention of Council staff.
 - (c) Residents will be offered one or both of the following:
 - (i) Citric Based Remover; or
 - (ii) Chemical Based Remover.

- 9.2. Council will not replace any items that are damaged as a result of Rust stains, however where a resident within 100m radius of planned work (that involves a shutdown to replace or install a water main) is not informed (as defined below) of the planned work, Council will reimburse dry cleaner expenses (up to the limit listed in Council Fees and Charges, \$50 per household at the time of drafting this policy) for any fabric item stained by rusty water, provided:
- The damage occurred within 24 hours of the commencement of the planned work; and
 - The resident/visitor has first tried the commercial rust removers provided by Council; and
 - The damaged item has been identified by Council staff before it is dry cleaned.

10. Power to Enter Lands

- 10.1. Pursuant to Chapter 8 Part 2 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), Council has the power to enter private property to perform its duties, including:
- Installation of water services;
 - Carry out maintenance, repairs, and upgrades to Council's water supply network; and
 - Read water meters.
- 10.2. Where access to private property is required, Council will take reasonable steps to contact the property owner to notify their intention to enter lands. Notification may include:
- A card in the property owners letterbox (or other appropriate visible location if a letterbox is not available) advising that Council intends to enter the land for works.
- 10.3. If the property owner cannot be contacted, Council may enter the property to perform its duties. In such cases, Council will place a card in the property's letterbox (or other appropriate visible location if a letterbox is not available) advising that Council has entered the land for works.

11. Review

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of an Ordinary Council Election or from time-to-time on an as-needs basis.

References

- *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW).
- *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW).
- *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011* (NSW).
- *Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2017* (NSW).
- AS/NZS 3500 – Water Supply Standards.
- AS/NZS 3565 – Meters for Water Supply – Cold Water Meters.
- AS/NZS 2845 – Mechanical Backflow Prevention Device.
- NSW Plumbing Codes.
- Narrabri Shire Council's Backflow Prevention Policy.

History

Minute Number	Meeting Date	Description of Change
753/2009	October 20,2009	Water Meter Policy - Adopted
26/2012	February 21, 2012	Water Meter Policy - Reviewed
607/2013	September 3, 2013	Water Meter Policy - Reviewed
853/2009	December 2009	Undetected Water Leak Policy - Adopted
26/2012	February 21, 2012	Undetected Water Leak Policy - Reviewed
607/2013	September 3, 2013	Undetected Water Leak Policy - Reviewed
164/2017	August 15, 2017	Undetected Water Leak Policy - Reviewed
637/2000	December 19, 2000	Water Service Connection Policy - Adopted
26/2012	February 21, 2012	Water Service Connection Policy Reviewed
607/2013	September 3, 2013	Water Service Connection Policy Reviewed
	February, 2018	Water Service Connection Policy Reviewed
	September 2, 2021	Water Service Connection Policy Rebranded
336/2022	October 18, 2022	Endorsed for Public Exhibition (merged with Council's Water Meter Policy and Undetected Water Leak Policy)
362/2022	November 22, 2022	Adopted