


POLICY NAME	CONCEALED WATER LEAKAGE CONCESSION POLICY, PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION FORM	
Date Adopted	28 May 2025	
Resolution Number	74/25	
Policy Custodian	Director Corporate Services	
Policy Development Officer	Manager Finance & Technology	
Review Date	3 years from resolution date	
Relevant Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> Local Government (Water Services) Regulation 1999 S28 and S29 AS 3500 - Australian Standards 3500.1: Plumbing and Drainage.	
Related Documents	Tenterfield Shire Council Fees and Charges Debt Recovery and Write-Off Policy	

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This objective is to provide guidelines for managing accounts adjustments and/or payment extensions for the payment of excessive water consumption generated directly as a result of concealed water leaks.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all water customers of Tenterfield Shire Council.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy provides some relief to excessive water bills that may arise as a direct result of concealed water leakages. It is acknowledged that some water leaks may be undetectable, and it is these concealed leaks that this policy relates to, not leaks caused by appliances which should be able to be readily detected and rectified.

The allowance provided will be the equivalent of 50% of the difference between the usage on one affected invoice and the average consumption for the corresponding period for the past two (2) years.

Council policy is to grant a “one-off” financial relief, in the form of an account adjustment and/or extended repayment period, to customers with substantially higher than usual water consumption charges and sewer discharge charges (applicable for non-residential ratepayers only) caused as a result of concealed water leaks.

Council can’t offer a concealed leakage concession if the leak was;

- on vacant land or an unoccupied property or,
- from leaking fixtures or water using appliances including, but not limited to
 - Taps,
 - Toilets ,
 - Hot water systems
 - Irrigation systems,
 - Rainwater tanks or associated valves,
 - Air conditioners,
 - Dishwasher,
 - Washing machine,
 - Fridges,
 - Water features,
 - Swimming pools or spas,
 - Water pumps,
 - No water account adjustments will be considered for a leak caused by willful, accidental or negligent damage to a water service.

You must not have received a concealed water leakage concession at this property in the past five (5) years. The customer must be the owner, part owner or the person liable for the water charge for which the application applies.

Concession is only granted where the Application Criteria are met as outlined in the Concealed Water Leakage Concession Procedure.

Council may offer a concealed leak concession if:

- The property was occupied at the time the leak occurred.
- The property is not currently under water restrictions and/or legal proceedings for the non-payment of previous water accounts.
- The concealed water leak was in a location that was not readily visible or apparent (e.g., below ground, under a concrete slab, in a wall cavity, etc.).
- The increase in water consumption due to the concealed leak must be substantial. An increase more than 100% of the normal water consumption is considered to be substantial.
- Normal consumption will be determined by historical consumption data for the occupant/s (if relevant) or alternative methods at the discretion of Council’s General Manager or nominated delegate (average water use will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).

- The Concealed Leak was repaired by a fully licensed plumber within 10 business days of an occupant/property owner or authorised representative being notified by a Council Officer of an increase in water usage.
- Where technology permits a smart meter will be installed at the applicants cost if a concealed leaked concession is approved, as per Council's list of Fees and Charges. **From July 1 2025, refer to current Fees and Charges.*

Sewer Discharge Factor and Trade Waste – Non residential

a) Water Loss not entering Council's Sewerage System

For non-residential properties where a concealed water leak has also increased sewer and trade waste usage charges, but where the water loss was not deemed to be entering Council's sewer system, the adjustment to sewer and trade waste usage charges will be 100% of the difference between the charges recorded on the water account issued immediately prior to the concealed water leak being repaired and the average of these charges (average sewer and trade waste usage will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).

b) Water Loss entering Councils Sewerage

For non-residential properties where a concealed water leak has also increased sewer and trade waste usage charges and the water loss was deemed to be entering Council's sewer system, the adjustment to sewer and trade waste usage charges will be 50% of the difference between these charges recorded on the water account issued immediately prior to the concealed water leak being repaired and the average of these charges (average sewer and trade waste usage will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).

If the property that an adjustment is being provided for is not occupied by the owner then separate correspondence, including information on how to check for water leaks, will be sent to the occupant/s of the property.

Decision Making

The decision to grant a concealed leakage concession is made by the Rates Officer in consultation with the Manager Water and Waste. The decision is then authorised by the Manager Finance and Technology. The minimum charge will apply as well as an administration charge to process the application before the calculation of the actual concession.

Where an applicant does meet criteria and the concession is denied, a review of decision request can be made only once and must be made in writing to the General Manager with clear evidence for dispute. The General Manager's decision will be final.

Financial Delegation

The financial delegation **only** for the waive of bills relating to a concealed leak, being the amount of the concession.

Position	Financial delegation
Rates Officer	\$ 500
Manager Finance and Technology, in consultation with the Manager Water and Waste	\$ 501 - \$ 5,000
Director Corporate Services	In the absence of the Manager Finance and Technology
General Manager – LET Meeting	\$5,001 - \$ 10,000
Council	Amounts over \$10,001

POLICY DEFINITIONS

Concealed Water Leak	Water leaking from plumbing, on private property, that is hidden from view and generally underground. Water leaks in paddocks, yards and gardens are generally detectable by finding lush grass or saturated ground. Loss of water from faulty fixtures and fittings such as taps and toilet cisterns or appliances such as dishwashers are not considered to be concealed water leaks.
Water Account	An account issued by Council for water related usage charges. Non-Residential properties are also charged for sewer and trade waste usage charges via the Water Account where these services are applicable.

PROCEDURE

1. Application Criteria

1. The property was occupied at the time the leak occurred.
2. The property is not currently under water restrictions and/or legal proceedings for the non-payment of previous water accounts.
3. You must not have received a concealed Water Leakage Concession at this property in the past 5 years.
4. The concealed water service leak was in a location that was not readily visible or apparent (e.g. below ground, under a concrete slab, in a wall cavity, etc.).
5. The increase in water consumption due to the concealed leak must be substantial. An increase more than 100% of the normal water consumption is considered to be substantial.
6. Normal consumption will be determined by historical consumption data for the occupant/s (if relevant) or alternative methods at the discretion of Council's General Manager or nominated delegate. (Average water use will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).
7. The Concealed Leak was repaired by a fully licensed plumber within **10 business days** of an occupant/property owner or authorised representative being notified by a Council Officer of an increase in water usage. Notification may include the delivery of a 'High Water Consumption' letter to the owner of the property or verbal notification from Council Officers.
8. Applications for water account adjustment must be made using Councils' "Application for Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leak)" with a licensed plumber certifying:
 - The date the water service leak was repaired.
 - The location of the concealed water leak and the reason why the leak was not readily detectable (providing photographic evidence and Statutory Declaration to Council if requested).
 - The repair was completed to meet AS 3500 standards.
 - The entire water service at the property was inspected and meets AS 3500 standards. Specifically, this means that a pressure test was conducted on the water service with no further leaks found at the property, as per AS 3500.1 (16.3.1) "Water services shall not show any leakage when subjected to hydrostatic pressure of 1500 kPa for a period of not less than 30 minutes".
 - The likely cause of the water leak.
 - The water meter reading immediately after the repair had been completed. The application must be completed and lodged with Council within 10 business days of the repair being completed. Late applications may be accepted at the discretion of the General Manager or authorised delegate.
9. Customers must lodge a completed "Application for Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leak)" to Council within 10 business days of the repairs being completed, stating:
 - The date the occupier (or property owner/managing agent) of the property became aware, or was notified, of a possible water leak at the property.

- The date a licensed plumber was engaged to locate and repair the leak.
 - The applicant understands and accepts that no further requests for account adjustment will be considered for the property for a minimum period of five (5) years.
 - The applicant grants permission for Council Officers to conduct an inspection of the property to verify that the water service leak was of a concealed nature and that repairs meet required standards (if Council requests such an inspection).
10. If the application is not approved, the property owner (or authorised representative) will be advised in writing and granted 10 business days from the date of this advice to either pay the Water Account in full or enter into a suitable payment arrangement with Council.
 11. The applicant has one right of review of the decision. The request to review the decision must be made to the General Manager within 5 business days of the notice that the application is not approved.
 12. If the application is approved, the property owner (or authorised representative) will be advised in writing that payment of the adjusted Water Account is required in full within 10 business days of the date of this advice.
 13. No water account adjustment will be considered if the "Application for Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leak)" or any other required documentation is found to be incomplete or false.
 14. No water account adjustment will be considered for leaking fixtures or water using appliances including, but not limited to the following:
 - Taps,
 - Toilets,
 - Hot water systems (including solar),
 - Irrigation systems,
 - Rainwater tanks or associated valves,
 - Air conditioners,
 - Dishwashers,
 - Washing machines,
 - Fridges,
 - Water features,
 - Swimming pools or spas,
 - Water pumps.
 15. No water account adjustments will be considered for a leak caused by wilful, accidental, or negligent damage to a water service.
 16. Council will not reimburse or make any contribution towards associated plumbing costs for either the location or repair of a concealed water service leak.
 17. Full discretionary decision-making authority to approve a water account adjustment which does not meet the requirements of this procedure remains with the General Manager noting that the threshold at which a request for approval needs to be referred to Council.

Adjustment Guidelines – providing application criteria has been met

Calculation of Concession – Water Consumption only Residential and Non-Residential:

Determine Average Water Use (KL)

Average water usage will be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods). E.g., 250 KL + 230KL = 480KL /2 =240KL

2. SDF and Trade Waste – Non-residential

Water Loss not entering Council's Sewerage System

For non-residential properties where a concealed water leak has also increased sewer and trade waste usage charges, but where the water loss was not deemed to be entering Council's sewer system, the adjustment to sewer and trade waste usage charges will be 100% of the difference between the charges recorded on the water account issued immediately prior to the concealed water leak being repaired and the average of these charges (average sewer and trade waste usage will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).

3. Water Loss entering Councils Sewerage

For non-residential properties where a concealed water leak has also increased sewer and trade waste usage charges and the water loss was deemed to be entering Council's sewer system, the adjustment to sewer and trade waste usage charges will be 50% of the difference between these charges recorded on the water account issued immediately prior to the concealed water leak being repaired and the average of these charges (average sewer and trade waste usage will generally be determined using two (2) previous equivalent billing periods).

If the property that an adjustment is being provided for is not occupied by the owner then separate correspondence, including information on how to check for water leaks, will be sent to the occupant/s of the property.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION

This information is voluntarily required to process your request and will not be used for any other purpose without seeking your consent, or as required by law. Your information may comprise part of a public register related to this purpose.

Your application will be retained in Council's Records Management System and disposed of in accordance with the Local Government Disposal Authority. Your personal information can be accessed and corrected at any time by contacting this Council.

To the General Manager, Tenterfield Shire Council

APPLICATION FOR WATER ACCOUNT ADJUSTMENT



(Concealed Leak)

Local Government Act 1993, Section 539

Local Government (Water Services) Regulations 1999, Section 28

Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 (Part 6)

PO Box 214, TENTERFIELD NSW 2372 247 Rouse Street, TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

EMAIL: council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

PHONE: 02 6736 6000 **WEBSITE:** www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au **ABN:** 85 010 810 083

1. Applicant Details (being a Property Owner or Authorised Representative)

It is important that Council is able to contact you if more information is required. Please give as much detail as possible.

Mr ☐ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Dr ☐ Other:

Given name/s and/or Surname

Company/organisation

Postal address

Suburb or town

State

Postcode

Contact daytime telephone Email Address

Property address for which a Water Account adjustment is requested

Water meter number

Date noticed/advised

Date plumber engaged

2. Terms and Conditions (Important Information)

This application will only be considered under the following Terms and Conditions:

- The property was occupied at the time the leak occurred.
- The property is not currently under water restriction for the non-payment of previous water accounts.
- An increase in water usage (on average) of at least 100% caused by a concealed water leak in a plumbed water pipe.
- The concealed leak was repaired by a **fully licensed plumber within 15 business days** of an occupant/property owner or authorised representative being notified by Council of an increase in water usage. Notification may include the delivery of a 'High Water Consumption Letter' to the property address or verbal notification from Council Officers.
- This application must be completed and lodged to Council **within 10 business days of the repair being completed.**

- If this application is approved no further water account adjustments due to concealed water leaks will be considered for the above-mentioned property for a minimum period of 5 years.
- If this application is approved the water account credit adjustment will be calculated as per Council Concealed Water Leakage Policy
- If this Application is not approved, the property owner (or authorised representative) will be advised in writing and granted 10 business days from the date of this advice to either pay the Water Account in full or enter into a suitable payment arrangement with Council.
- If this Application is approved, the property owner (or authorised representative) will be advised (in writing) that payment of the adjusted water account is required in full within 10 business days of the date of this advice.

Please Note: *No water account adjustments will be considered for leaking fixtures or water using appliances.*

3. Privacy and Personal Information Protection Notice

- This information is voluntarily required to process your request and will not be used for any other purpose without seeking your consent, or as required by law
- Your information may comprise part of a public register related to this purpose
- Your application will be retained in Council's Records Management System and disposed of in accordance with the Local Government Disposal Authority
- Your personal information can be accessed and corrected at any time by contacting this Council.

4. Applicant's Declaration

I declare that I have **read and accept the Terms and Conditions** (see Section 2 on the previous page) of this application and confirm all particulars supplied in this application are correct. I understand that inaccurate or false statements may cause my application to be delayed or rescinded and I give consent for Council to conduct an inspection of the above-mentioned property to verify the details of this application should Council request such an inspection.

Signature/s:

..... **Date:** /
 /

5. Leak Repair Details

This Section to be completed by Licensed Plumber repairing concealed water pipe leak

Date Leak Repaired:...../...../.....Did plumbing comply with AS 3500 prior to leak?
c Yes c No

Photographic evidence of leak PRIOR to repair may be required.

Service leak from: c Pipe c Valve c Fitting c Other (e.g. appliance)

Leak _____ **location:** _____

Leaking water drained to: c Ground c Sewer c Stormwater c Other: _____

Was the leak readily visible or apparent to the occupant? c Yes c No

Cause of leak: c Wear c Break c Tree Root c Other (e.g. faulty) _____

Water meter reading immediately after repairs complete (for all properties):

c c c c (KL) (BLACK NUMBERS ONLY)

What repairs did you make? c Cut out and install new pipe c Install / Repair fitting type: _____

c Other repairs (provide details – attach additional paperwork if additional space required) _____

Do you certify that the repairs you have made comply with Australian Standard 3500.1? c Yes c No

Do you certify that you have inspected, and pressure tested the entire water service at this property as per Australian Standard 3500.1 requirements? c Yes c No

6. Licensed Plumber Declaration

I understand that the repairs made to the water service may be subject to verification by Tenterfield Shire Council.

I certify that the information provided in this application is complete, truthful and correct.

Licensed Plumber Name

Current License Number

Plumbing Business Name

ABN

Signature/s: **Date:**/...../.....

For further information in regard to this application please see Council's 'Water Account Adjustment (Concealed Leaks) Policy' found on Council's website www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/policies or contact Council on 02 6736 6000 during business hours.

VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Previous Versions	Date of Adoption by Council	Resolution #	Author/Editor	Summary of Changes
V1.0	28/11/2018			Original Policy
V2.0	21/12/2022	248/22		
V3.0	28/05/2025	74/25	Acting Manager Finance & Technology	Substantive updates from the original policy