

Water Usage

What is new?

Community Housing Providers can now charge for water usage under recent changes to the Residential Tenancies Act 2012 (ss139).

Bridge Housing has developed a Water Charging Policy which meets the requirements of the Act and Ministerial Guidelines.

All water charges have been implemented in line with Bridge Housing's Water Charging Policy.

How does this affect you?

How you pay for water depends on whether you are living in a property with a separate water meter (i.e. a house) or in a property with a shared water meter (i.e. in a block of units).

Please note some unit blocks have separate water meters.

Tenants in Properties with a Shared Water Meter OR Unreadable Water Meter

From **4 August 2014**, tenants in capital properties with a **shared or unreadable water meter** pay a levy of 3% of their total household rent as a contribution for water usage. Water usage contributions are capped at a **maximum of \$6.50** per household per week.

Example

Mr & Mrs Jones pay \$180 for their weekly rent.

Their water usage contribution will be calculated at 3% on \$180.

$$\$180 \times 3\% = \$5.40$$

This means that Mr & Mrs Jones will now pay a total of \$185.40 for their rent and water contribution.

Tenants in Properties with Separate Water Meters

Tenants in properties with a separate water meter are billed for the actual water usage on a quarterly basis.

Tenants in Affordable Housing Properties

The water charging policy also applies to tenants in Affordable Housing properties. The only difference is that the cap rate of \$6.50 **does not** apply in Affordable Housing properties with a shared water meter.

How can I pay for Water usage Charges?

Each tenant has a water charging account attached to their tenancy.

It is advisable that tenants pay an amount each week or fortnight for their water usage, along with their regular rent payments. However, for tenants with individual meters, you will be charged and may pay for water usage in a lump sum each quarter.

If a water charge remains unpaid for more than 21 days from the date it is charged, Bridge Housing may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to recover the unpaid water charges.

Are there any allowances?

Bridge Housing will consider granting allowances to tenants with **separate water meters** if:

- The tenant or household member is on a home based dialysis machine and/or
- The tenant or household member has a medical condition or disability that requires them to use significantly more water than usual.

All applications for water charging allowances must be submitted in writing, together with documented medical evidence to support your claim.

Please note the above allowances may only be claimed by tenants in a property with a separate water meter.

What if I am not happy with the Water Charging Policy?

Tenants cannot appeal the decision to charge for water usage in community housing properties.

However, tenants in a property with a shared water meter can appeal if you think that your water charges have not been assessed properly in accordance with the Water Charging Policy

All appeals can be lodged using our Appeal Process, which is available on our website.

Tenants in a property with a separate water meter cannot appeal their actual water usage charges

More Information

If you have any queries about water charges then please call your Housing Manager on **8324 0800**.

For more information please refer to:

- Bridge Housing Water Charging Policy, available on our website
www.bridgehousing.org.au
- For appeals to the Housing Appeals Committee, call 1800 629 794 or visit their website
www.hac.gov.au