

Water Charging

Purpose

This policy explains how Bridge Housing calculates and applies water charges.

Scope

This policy applies to all social housing tenancies owned or managed by Bridge Housing Limited and any of its related entities (we, our, us).. There are a small number of exceptions including those living in crisis or transitional accommodation and those not eligible to be charged for water usage in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act (2010).

Policy Overview

Our water charging policy has been developed to align with the [NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#) and to ensure that tenants are charged for water usage in a fair and transparent way.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide this policy:

- We apply a weekly, flat rate water charge, based on the number of people living in your household
- We will charge for water usage weekly in advance along with rent charges
- Water charging rates will be applied weekly to assist tenants meet these costs through regular small payments
- Our water usage charge is equal to or less than the actual or estimated water usage charges for your property (i.e. based on the meter reading)
- We set the water usage rates for tenants living in both metered and non- metered properties.

Water Charging Method

We apply a weekly water usage charge based on a flat rate per household size. That means the amount a tenant is charged changes based on the number of people living in the property.

Please note the water charging rates may be reviewed and adjusted annually to align with changes in the consumer price index.

The table below sets out the water usage rates including the maximum payable.

Household Size	Water Charge per week
1 Person	\$5.00
2 People	\$7.00
3 People	\$9.00
4 People (MAX)	\$10.50

Advising tenants of water charges

We will advise tenants of the water charging rates at the start of their tenancy. After this, tenants will be advised of any change to the rate as part of the bi-annual Rent Review or when there is a change in approved household members. Tenants must advise of any changes to their household in line with our [Changes to a Household Policy](#).

Payment of Water Charges

Tenants can pay their water charge in multiple ways, just like rent payments.

The charge accrues weekly, and can be paid through Centrepay, EFTPOS terminals or bank transfer. We recommend tenants pay their water charges fortnightly with their rent.

Annual Review of Water Charges

Our water charging policy commits to a minimum review of tenant charges annually to ensure charges are equal to or less than actual water usage for the properties.

Water accounts will be reviewed in accordance with [NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#).

In the case of any overpayment, a refund will be issued to the tenant as either credit on their rent or non-rent account.

Tenants Moving Properties or Ending Their Tenancy

If a tenant is transferring to another property or ending their tenancy, we will charge for water usage up to the end of the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Water and the Environment

We are committed to managing water use wisely in our homes. Water usage will be monitored on a regular basis to avoid waste and excess use. Our commitment includes responding promptly to repair requests to fix leaking taps and pipes.

We encourage our tenants to be mindful of water usage and report any leaks to our repairs team.

In addition, our tenants are required to comply with any water restrictions put into place by the local water authority.

What if I am having trouble paying my water charges?

If you are concerned about your rent or water charges or are struggling to make payments, please call us on **02 8324 0800**.

We can talk to you about repayment plans and/or recommend specialist support. We partner with financial support services who can provide you with support and assist you to better manage your money.

Appeals and Complaints

Tenants can appeal decisions relating to water charging in community housing but cannot appeal the decision to charge for water usage based on a flat rate charge.

Appeals and complaints about water charges can be lodged over the phone, mail, in person or via online form on our website www.bridgehousing.org.au

If you have any queries about water charges or would like to appeal a charge made to your account, the first step is to contact your Housing Manager on **02 8324 0800**.

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service we have provided or does not agree with a decision we have made, they can ask for a formal review. Our [Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy](#) outlines the many ways for tenants to make an appeal. This policy, and a helpful information brochure, is available from our office or they can be downloaded from our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.

If a tenant is unhappy with the outcome of the appeal, they can lodge a second level appeal with the Housing Appeals Committee. The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of Community Housing organisations and Housing NSW. For information on the Housing Appeals Committee call 1800 629 794 or go to www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

Related Documents and Resources

Type	Title
Legislation	NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010
Guidelines	NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines
Policy	Changes to a Household Policy
Policy	Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy

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