

As a value's led organisation, Hume Community Housing is committed to referencing any policy decision against our values.

Hume's values are:

- Determined to succeed
- Creators of connectivity
- Builders of resilience
- Champions of change

PURPOSE

To define Hume's approach to water usage charging and to explain who is responsible for payment of water usage charges in Hume managed properties. The policy aims to provide a clear, fair and transparent approach regarding water usage charges for customers living in shared meter properties and to identify any conditions that apply to ensure that:

- Appropriate water charges are applied
- Customers are aware of the allowances that are available
- Tenancies are sustainable
- Customers rights and entitlements are protected

SCOPE

This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by Hume Housing except Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Crisis Accommodation. Customers residing in SDA and Crisis Accommodation are exempt from paying water charges.

POLICY

Hume customers are responsible for the water usage charges at their property.

Hume charges water usage in accordance with Section 139 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, the Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines and this policy.

Water charges are separate from all other charges including rent.

Water usage charges encourage water conservation. Hume expects customers to conserve water wherever possible and to comply with restrictions put into place by the local water authority. Customers will be liable for breaches of water restrictions.

Customers will be charged for water usage in a manner that is fair, transparent, and consistent.

Hume will advise customers of any changes to this policy that will impact what they pay.

CALCULATING WATER USAGE CHARGES

Hume Customers pay either:

- an actual water usage charge if the property has a separate meter or;
- a weekly water usage charge based on household size if the property has a shared meter.

Hume is responsible for meeting all other costs associated with water provision, such as water connection charges, sewerage and other charges, and provision of water in common areas.

Properties with Separate Water Meters – Actual Charge

Hume will charge customers who live in properties with separate water meters the actual water usage cost, as per the individual water account or invoice received from the water authority.

In accordance with the Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines a separate water meter must be readily accessible for reading by the water authority and generate an individual water account. If an individual water meter is not read by the water authority and does not generate an individual water account, Hume will charge the Customer as if it is a shared meter dwelling.

Water charges will be added to the customer's account each water billing cycle.

For new Customers, the first water usage charge will be calculated based on the water meter reading at the beginning of the tenancy and the subsequent invoice received from the water authority.

For customers that have vacated a property during a billing period the final water charges will be calculated based on the water meter reading at the end of the tenancy and the reading on the previous invoice received from the water authority.

If a water meter reading is not available for new and vacating customers, water usage charges will be calculated on a daily rate to ensure appropriate charges are recovered.

Policy Name:	POL-83 Policy Water Usage Charges	Version:	003
Minor amendments approved by:	CEO	Effective Date:	09/12/2020
Approval Required from:	CSC	Approved Date:	11/02/2021
Last Approved by:	CSC	Review Due Date:	March 2024
Required to be updated on website:	No	Date uploaded on website:	N/A

Properties with Shared Water Meters – Weekly Charge based on Household Size

Hume will charge customers who live in properties with shared water meters a weekly water charge according to household size and Hume’s water usage matrix. The weekly water usage charges for households are available on Hume’s website.

Hume developed its water usage matrix for Customers residing in shared meter properties using water efficiency targets that have been set and published by relevant water authorities.

The weekly water usage charge is set using the following methodology:

- the total water usage charges for all Hume managed shared meter properties is determined
- 10% of the total water usage charge is deducted to allow for common area usage
- household size data is collected
- The balance of the charge (90% of water usage charges) are apportioned using the Hume matrix to determine the weekly charge for the following 12 months
- The weekly water charge methodology uses the below matrix to determine the charge.

People in the Home	Proportion based on Water Authority Efficiency Targets
1 person	1.0
2 people	1.5
3 people	1.9
4 people	2.2
5 people	2.5
6 people	2.8

- The weekly charge will be rounded to the nearest 5c
- The number of household members in each property will be reviewed weekly prior to the weekly charge being applied to water accounts
- Customers will be informed of their new water charges as a result of change in household members as part of the rent review process.

As it is not possible to determine an individual usage charge for shared meters, the water charge is considered the customer’s contribution towards water usage costs only and is not intended to reflect their individual water usage.

Water charges will be added to the customer’s account each week.

The weekly water usage charges for households will be reviewed at least annually and will be made available on Hume’s website. Customers will be provided with at least 28 days’ notice of any changes to the rates.

In setting and reviewing weekly charges Hume will ensure that the charges for all of the customers combined do not exceed the total water usage charges from the water authority.

PAYMENT OF WATER USAGE CHARGES

Properties with Shared Water Meters – Weekly Charge based on Household Size

Water usage payments must be made weekly or fortnightly in advance along with rent payments.

Properties with Separate Water Meters – Actual Charge

Hume will calculate an estimated water use at the commencement of a tenancy and customers will be encouraged to pay this rate for water in advance on a weekly/fortnightly basis with their rent payments.

Customers can pay their water usage bill in a lump sum payment within 28 days of the bill issue date. Customers who pay in instalments must ensure that, if they have under-contributed, that they make a lump sum payment of the shortfall amount within 28 days of bill issue date.

Payments for water must be specified as water payments at the time of payment at the bank or must be made using our Centrepay code for water payments.

If a water charge remains unpaid for more than 28 days from the date it is charged to the customer’s account, we may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for payment of the unpaid water usage charges.

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ALLOWANCES

We may consider granting allowances to customers in properties with separate water meters if:

- the customer or household member has a medical need to use 25 kilolitres of water or more above the normal use for a household of the same size (e.g. the customer or household member is undergoing home-based dialysis); and
- the local water authority does not provide an allowance for such circumstances.

We will not provide water allowances:

- To customers who are temporarily away from their properties
- To households who pay a shared meter water payment
- Where a local water authority provides an allowance

Where a local water authority provides an allowance, we will assist the customer to obtain an allowance form the water authority.

Customers who want to apply for a water usage allowance, must complete the Water Allowance Application form and provide documented evidence to support their application. We will advise the customer of the outcome of their application in writing within 28 business days. If an exemption is granted, the exemption will be provided for a 12-month period. After the 12-month period has ended, the customer must re-apply for an exemption. Where a customer is approved for a water allowance, we will provide an allowance of 100 kilolitres of water per quarter.

HARDSHIP

Customers having trouble paying water usage bill are encouraged to contact Hume's Customer Account Officers.

ADJUSTMENTS

Hume may adjust water charges on customer's accounts in exceptional circumstances such as burst water pipes or undetectable leaks, where the customer is not at fault or had no way of detecting that a leak existed.

This will not apply if detectable leaks are not promptly reported to Hume.

EXEMPTIONS

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Crisis Accommodation properties managed by Hume are exempt from water charging.

- SDA is specialised long-term housing for people living with a disability. Customers do not enter into a social housing tenancy with Hume and instead sign an Accommodation Agreement.
- Crisis Accommodation is defined as short term accommodation (usually 3 months or less) for people experiencing homelessness or people at risk of homelessness. Usually customers do not enter into a social housing tenancy with Hume when in crisis accommodation.

This exemption does not apply to Hume support partners who may provide crisis accommodation to their customers in our properties.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Information on our complaints and appeals process is available online at humehousing.com.au or through our offices.

Customers can appeal decisions relating to water charging. In particular, the following appeal mechanisms exist:

- Appeals to Hume about how we apply this policy including method of calculation of water charges and grant of a water usage allowance. For further information about appeals refer to our Appeals policy.
- Appeals to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) about how we charge shared water usage or a decision to grant a water usage allowance.

The Housing Appeals Committee will not hear appeals on actual water usage charges for customers with separate meters.

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Community Housing al número 02-9722-4300.	Community Housing 02 9722 4300 . ڤولڤوف جينته
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TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

English	Arabic
If you need an interpreter to assist with this policy, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) for free on 131 450. Ask them to call Hume Community Housing on 02 9722 4300.	إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم للمساعدة في فهم هذه السياسة، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة التحريرية والشفوية (TIS National) مجاناً على الرقم 131 450. واطلب منهم الاتصال بـ Hume Community Housing على الرقم 02 9722 4300.
Chinese	Vietnamese
如果您需要口译员协助翻译本政策，请拨打口笔译服务 (TIS National) 的免费电话131 450。请口译员致电02 9722 4300 联系Hume社区住房。	Nếu quý vị cần một thông dịch viên để hỗ trợ về chính sách này, vui lòng gọi đến Dịch vụ Thông dịch và Phiên dịch (TIS National) miễn phí theo số 131 450. Yêu cầu họ gọi cho Công ty Nhà ở Cộng đồng Hume (Hume Community Housing) theo số 02 9722 4300.
Spanish	Assyrian
Si necesita la ayuda de un intérprete para entender esta política, contacte con el Translating and Interpreting Service o Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación (TIS National) llamando gratuitamente al 131 450. Pídale que llamen a Hume	<p> ܟܝܢ ܫܘܚܘܠܟܝܢ ܠܨܝܒܘܢ ܬܘܫܝܘܬܝܢ ܠܠܫܝܠܘܬܝܢ ܠܘܫܘܠܝܢ ܟܝܢ ܕܘܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܟܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) ڤولڤوف جينته 131 450 . ܟܝܢ ܕܘܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ Hume (ܟܝܢ ܕܘܠܘܩܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܠܝܢ) </p>

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact the National Relay Service (NRS) on:

TTY: 133 677
 Then ask for 133 464
 Voice: 1300 555 727

If you or your guardian needs support to understand this document, please let us know. We can work with you to communicate using a method that best suits you, including interpreter services, sign language, visual aids, or assistive technology

Summary of Changes

Version Nr.	Date:	Details of Changes:
003	9/12/2020	Complete review and significant changes to policy for shared meters

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