



Water Usage Charges Policy NSW (Version 1.0)

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1. Introduction

This document details Community Housing Limited's (CHL) policy regarding the calculation and allocation of charges to NSW tenants for water usage. The 'NSW Water Usage Charges FAQ' fact sheet provides further information to support this policy.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- identify the circumstances under which NSW tenants will be required to pay for their water usage
- explain how CHL calculates NSW tenant water charges
- detail any exemptions or allowances
- detail arrangements for handling payment difficulties
- describe the process for handling complaints and appeals regarding water charges.

3. Principles

In accordance with the provisions of the *NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (RTA)*, CHL will apply water usage charges to its tenants in NSW.

3.1. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Separate water meter	a water meter which measures the volume of water provided to an individual tenant's property.
Shared meter	a water meter which measures the volume of water provided to a multi-dwelling property. This may also include space outside of the dwelling such as common areas.
Water usage charge	any water cost a tenant can reasonably be expected to pay. Such as, a lease or rooming accommodation agreement that states where usage can be determined, water is to be paid by a tenant.

3.2. TENANTS WHO WILL BE CHARGED FOR WATER USAGE

CHL requires NSW tenants living in properties owned or managed by CHL to pay for their water usage. NSW tenants will be provided information regarding water usage at the start of their tenancy.

3.3. CALCULATION OF WATER USAGE CHARGES

NSW tenants will pay either an actual water charge or a percentage water charge based on the type of water meter at the property they rent through CHL.

Properties with separate water meters

For NSW tenants living in properties with separate water meters, CHL will charge their actual water usage.

On receipt of water bills from water authorities, CHL will process the bills and send to applicable NSW tenants:

- A Tax Invoice
- a copy of the billing information from the water authority

Reminders will be sent to NSW tenants who do not pay for their water by the due date, including details of further actions which may be taken should the invoice not be paid.

Properties with shared water meters

For NSW tenants living in properties with shared water meters, CHL will calculate water usage charges as a percentage of their total rent. This will be stated in their rent review letter or as part of initial assessment at beginning of tenancy. NSW Tenants will be charged up to 5.1 % of their total rent, capped at \$10.30 per household per week.

- On a quarterly basis applicable NSW tenants will be sent a statement detailing payments to date.

Reminders will be sent to NSW tenants who do not pay for their water by due date, including details of further actions which may be taken should the invoice not be paid.

Review of water usage charges

CHL will regularly review its accounts to ensure it does not collect more from NSW tenants than it pays for in the water bills it receives from the water authority in NSW.

A reconciliation will be performed every 6 months, prior to rent reviews, to ensure the percentage charge to NSW tenants accurately reflects the amount paid to the water authorities by CHL.

NSW tenants will be notified of any changes to the percentage they are required to pay if the charges have been insufficient to meet the cost.

Should any overcharging be identified, CHL will correct with a credit note to the tenant.

Common area water usage

CHL will pay all water charges for common area water usage, water connection and sewerage. In properties with a shared water meter, CHL will ensure that a portion of the water bill (appropriate to the property size and amenities) is allocated for the common area usage.

3.4. ALLOWANCES AND EXEMPTIONS

NSW tenants on kidney dialysis may be able to apply for an allowance directly from the local water authority, Housing Officers will support tenants with allowance applications to local water authorities.

There is no exemption from water usage charges for tenants temporarily away from their dwelling.

3.5. PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES

CHL will assist tenants who are experiencing financial hardship in accordance with CHL's Hardship Policy.

3.6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

In the first instance, NSW tenants are encouraged to speak to their housing services officer to try to resolve any concerns they may have regarding their water usage. If a NSW tenant believes CHL has made an incorrect decision in relation to their percentage water charge or allowance, they may appeal the decision.

If a tenant is not satisfied with the outcome of the CHL appeal process, they can then appeal to the NSW Housing Appeal Committee. CHL will assist customers to use external avenues of appeal at all times.

Please refer to CHL's Customer Feedback Policy and Appeals Policy for further information.

4. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, CHL policy and procedures

4.1. EXTERNAL LEGISLATION AND FRAMEWORKS

NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines
NSW Community Housing Rent Policy
NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010

4.2. CHL RELATED POLICIES AND PROCESSES

NSW Water Usage Charges FAQ
CHL Rent Setting Policy
CHL Hardship Policy
CHL Customer Feedback Policy
CHL Appeals Policy

5. Monitoring and review

This document should be periodically reviewed and revised. Revisions should be made as and when required. The period between reviews must not exceed two years.

Review history

Document reference	Date and version	Reason for review	Review frequency	Owner	Approver
POLHOUAUSNSWWAT202201	Version 1.0, November 2022	New document	Every two years	National Operations Manager	Managing Director National Operations Manager

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