



# **Water Meter Size Reassessment (WMSR) Policy**

<b>Date policy was adopted by Council:</b>	23 September 2015
<b>Resolution number:</b>	355/15
<b>Previous Policy review date:</b>	New
<b>Next Policy review date:</b>	2016
<b>Reference number:</b>	C15142840

## **1. Introduction**

This policy explains when Council will consider the replacement of Water Meters or water services. It applies if you have a Queanbeyan City Council water meter on your property that is 32mm or larger in size. It was introduced in August 2015 and Council will review this policy in June 2016.

The water meter size for individual properties is initially determined as part of the development approval process for a property. Over time the demand for water for some properties may change. Where this occurs it may lead to a change in demand for water generated by the property and a change to the water meter size required by that property. Where the change in use does not require submission of an application under the provisions of Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 the WMSR process enables owners to apply for a reassessment of the size of the water meter connected to their property.

Council's water pricing policy applies access fees for water and sewer based on the size of the meter required. Where a change in demand for water occurs or where water usage levels for a property have been consistently low the Water Meter Size Reassessment (WMSR) enables owners to request that Council review the water meter size that is required for the property. This ensures that the access fee charged by Council reflects the demand placed on the system by individual properties.

## **2. Purpose**

To ensure that fees and charges for water meters reflect the demand that individual properties place on the local water system.

## **3. Outcomes:**

This policy is designed to achieve the following:

- That Council has a process in place that allows property owners to review the size requirements for existing water meters.
- That the size of the water meter connected to a property reflects the current demand for water
- That access fees for water meters reflect best practice pricing practices.

## **4. Content:**

### **Water Meter Size Reassessment (WMSR)**

The WMSR recognises that the meter currently installed at some properties may not reflect their current water requirements. Where this occurs and does not trigger a requirement for the preparation of a Development Application (DA) for change of use under the provisions of Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 the WMSRs process enables owners to apply for a reassessment of the size of the water meter connected to their property. If this assessment process identifies the need for preparation of a Development Application this will be discussed with the applicant prior to determination of an assessment under the WMSR process. This ensures that the fees associated with water meter size are fairly charged to the property in accordance with Council's pricing policies.

Properties where a reassessment may result in a change in meter size are likely to be:

- Located in areas zoned industrial within the city: Where the character of the activity operating from the property has changed.
- Have a current water meter size of 32mm or larger.
- Have a service from the main to the meter of 32mm or less.
- Have consistently low quarterly water consumption levels: Low water consumption is considered to be less than the average household quarterly use for a property in Queanbeyan City which is currently 44Kls or less each quarter.

A change in meter size can only occur:

- Where the change in water meter size has no adverse impact on Council's water system or neighbouring properties.
- Where fire fighting requirements can be satisfied with a smaller water service.

### **The reassessment process**

The reassessment process includes the following steps:

#### **Desktop assessment**

A landowner may lodge a Desktop Assessment form for reassessment of the size of the water meter attached to their property. The Desktop Assessment forms and advice can be obtained from Council's website at [www.qcc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.qcc.nsw.gov.au).

The completed form will enable the Council to assess whether it is likely that the water requirements of the property may qualify the property for a reduction in water meter size. The Council will complete the Desktop Assessment within 20 working days of lodgement of the Desktop Assessment form and will notify the landowner of the outcome.

On completion of the Desktop Assessment Council will provide the landowner with the following advice:

- An assessment of the likely outcome if the landowner chose to lodge an Application.
- Advice on whether the water meter size reassessment charge for the WMSR will apply
- Advice on whether the application fee is required
- Advice on the potential need to submit a Development Application for a change of use under the provisions of Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Where advice from Council following the Desktop Assessment concludes that the property may qualify for a reduction in water meter size, on lodgement of an Application the water meter size reassessment charge will apply from the next billing quarter and the Application Fee will not be applied.

Where advice from Council following the Desktop Assessment concludes that the property may NOT qualify for a reduction in water meter size, on lodgement of an Application there will be no change in the fees and charges for that property and the Application Fee will apply.

Regardless of the result of the Desktop Assessment it is the landholders choice whether to proceed to lodgement of an Application to complete a WMSR.

#### **Lodgement of application**

Following completion of the Desktop Assessment and receipt of a response from Council the landowner can proceed to lodge an Application with Council to complete a WMSR.

On lodgement, any fee associated with the WMSR process will be charged. Fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis and are contained within Council's schedule of fees and charges.

#### **Assessment of application**

Following lodgement of an Application Council will conduct a WMSR of the water meter size. The reassessment is based on:

- Information contained in Council's property files for the property
- Water consumption history for the property
- Information contained in the application provided by the owner
- Council's Legal responsibilities under the Act
- Council's compliance responsibility
- Relevant standards and guidelines
- The likely impact on other customers
- Fire fighting requirements for the property in question
- Additional independent technical reports e.g. Hydraulic engineering

**Following lodgement of an Application:**

**Where the Desktop Assessment has indicated a likely reduction in Water Meter size** for a property the water meter size reassessment charge in accordance with the amount adopted in the Council's schedule of fees and charges will be applied to the property from the following billing quarter for the period up to the end of that financial year.

- Where the full reassessment determines **that a reduction in water meter size** is warranted the water meter access fee for the property for the reduced size meter as adopted in the Council's schedule of fees and charges will be applied to the property from 1st July,2016.
- Where the full reassessment determines **that no reduction in water meter size** is warranted the water meter access fee for the property for the unchanged water meter as adopted in the Council's schedule of fees and charges will be applied to the property from 1st July,2016.

**Where the Desktop Assessment has indicated that it is unlikely that the property will qualify for a change in the size of the Water Meter**, and the owner proceeds to lodge a full application for WMSR there will be no change in access fee until the full assessment has been completed.

- Where the full reassessment determines **that a reduction in water meter size** is warranted the water meter access fee for the property for the reduced size meter as adopted in the Council's schedule of fees and charges will be applied to the property from the next billing quarter.
- Where the full reassessment determines **that no reduction in water meter size** is warranted the water meter access fee for the property for the unchanged water meter as adopted in the Council's schedule of fees and charges will continue to be applied.

**Determination of reassessment**

The results of the WMSR will be provided to the applicant and recorded on Council's file for that property.

**Where the reassessment identifies that a change in water meter size is required** Council will provide to the applicant:

- An estimated time for replacement of the existing Water Meter. Where the existing meter is functional and there is no disadvantage to the property or Council replacement may be schedule as part of Council's ongoing water meter maintenance program.
- An outline of any work directly associated with replacement of the Water Meter that may be required to ensure that water can be delivered to the property and timing for completion of this work.
- An estimate of any costs to the property owner as a result of the work required.

**Where the reassessment identifies that no change in water meter size is required** Council will provide:

- A summary of the results of the reassessment completed.

Council is the owner of the Water Meter connected to the property. Any costs directly associated with a change in Water Meter size which result from a change in activity on the property by the owner will be met by the owner.

Council may however choose to meet the costs directly associated with a change in Water Meter, including the Application Fees where the property files show that the size of the water meter currently installed was not installed based on the individual property water requirements.

### **Review of the determination**

Where an owner disagrees with the WMSR determination they can submit a request in writing for a Review of Determination within 30 days of notification of the original determination.

A Review of Determination will be undertaken by a Council Director who has not previously been involved in the assessment. The Review of Determination will be undertaken within 30 days of the Review of Determination Application being lodged with the Council and the Directors Review will be final. No further representations on the matter will be entertained by the Council

### **Fees and charges**

Fees for WMSR are to be charged in accordance with this policy.

The Application Fee in 2015/16 is \$150. The water meter size reassessment charge for the WMSR where the Desktop Assessment indicates a reduction in water meter size may apply is 50% of the current water access fee applied to the property. Fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis and are contained within Council's schedule of fees and charges.

### **Review**

From time to time Council may conduct its own review of water meter size requirements where its officers become aware of changes in water usage levels for a particular property or changes in activity on the property that may impact on its water requirements. Where this occurs Council will contact the property owner to inform them that they may wish to consider applying for a change in water meter size under the WMSR policy.

## **5. Definitions**

N/A

## **6. Legislative obligations and/or relevant standards**

- NSW Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage, Guidelines 2007
- NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- NSW Local Government Act.1993
- Australian National Construction Code (NCC) May 2015

## **7. Performance Indicator(s)**

- That applications for reassessment are considered within the estimated times included in this policy.
- That the number of applications where the determination is inconsistent with the Desktop Assessment finding is less than 5% of the total number of applications assessed in a 12 month period.
- That the number of WMSR reviews of determination conducted is less than 5% of the total number of applications assessed in a 12 month period.

## **8. Supporting documentation**

- a) Desktop Assessment form
- b) WMSR Application form
- c) Review of determination form
- d) Frequently asked questions

<b>POLICY:-</b>	
<b>Policy No:</b>	
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Water Meter Size Reassessment
<b>Date Policy was adopted by Council:</b>	
<b>Resolution Number:</b>	
<b>Previous Policy Review Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Next Policy Review Date:</b>	June 2016
<b>PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:-</b>	
<b>Date Procedure/Guideline (if any) was developed:</b>	July 2015
<b>RECORDS:-</b>	
<b>Container Reference in TRIM: Policy</b>	
<b>Container Reference in TRIM: Procedure</b>	
<b>Other locations of Policy:</b>	Intranet (linked to TRIM Container)
<b>Other locations of Procedures/Guidelines:</b>	Intranet (linked to TRIM Container)
<b>DELEGATION (if any):-</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:-</b>	
<b>Draft Policy developed by:</b>	Jo Manion and Chris Duncan
<b>Committees (if any) consulted in the development of the Draft Policy:</b>	Rates and Charges Advisory Committee
<b>Responsibility for Implementation:</b>	
<b>Responsibility for Review of Policy:</b>	Jo Manion

<b>INTEGRATED PLANNING FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>Community Strategic Plan:</b>	Strategic Priority No. 1
<b>Delivery Program Title:</b>	Revenue Accounting
<b>Operational Plan:</b>	Program No. 190

<b>Senior Authorising Officer</b>	<b>Position</b> General Manager	<b>Signature/Date</b>  24 September 2015
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<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING DATE</b>	<b>RESOLUTION NUMBER</b>	<b>REPORT ITEM NUMBER</b>
<b>NEW/RECONFIRMED/ AMENDED</b>			

<b>DATE REVIEWED</b>	<b>REVIEWER POSITION</b>	<b>REVIEWER NAME</b>

