



Fact Sheet – Verifying Water Rates Charges

About Red Tape Busters

At Red Tape Busters we have a proud history of being regarded as specialist grant writers, tender writers, job application writers and we also provide specialised assistance to businesses and non profits via organisational development and support services. We have been in business now since May 2000 and have clients all over Australia and even internationally.

Possible causes of an increased water bill

There are a variety of possible causes for an increased water bill. Some of the possible factors include:-

- If your bill has been estimated in the past. For instance if for some reason, access could not be gained to the water meter or some other reason your usage might have been estimated. In estimating your bill they will rely on past usage rates and therefore the estimate could be less than or more than your actual usage for that period. Once the meter is read you will be charged for any water used in excess of the estimate.
- Does your current bill include previous short payments or were some discounts previously available which have now been removed – correctly or incorrectly?
- Has the water price per kilolitre increased? Review the last bill and this bill and compare the charges per kilolitre. You should have been advised of any increases in charges.
- Has your daily water consumption rate changed significantly? Again check your current bill and past bill to identify if there is a significant difference. If the difference is significant then consider if you have recently done more washing, more hosing, more watering the garden or

had an increase in any other water using activity which are outside the normal.

- Has Council or the Water Provider recently changed your meter? New meters are obviously more accurate than older ones.
- Is the water meter operating accurately?
- An increased water bill could certainly be the result of a leak in your pipes or a tap. These certainly need to be ruled out in your assessment of the increased charges.
- Is your house and the water fittings set up with the most efficient water usage shower roses, taps, toilet fixtures etc?

Verifying if there is a potential water leak

To test for a water leak, you should consider looking the following issues:-

- Firstly turn off all taps and water using machines and equipment and obviously don't use any water until the test is over.
- Read your water meter and write down the reading.
- Don't use any water for a period of time –and take another reading of the meter and see if there is a discrepancy. There should be no difference in the meter readings.
- A leak would signify generally a difference in the readings.

Verifying the accuracy of the meter

- Firstly undertake the water leak test and validate you have no leak.
- Ensure all taps and water using equipment is off.
- Take a reading of your water meter and write it down.
- Use a water vessel which accurately measures water volume – ie a 10litre bucket or a water can. Fill the vessel from a tap.

- Take another reading of the meter and it should have changed by 10 litres from the first reading. If it has – your meter would seem to be correct.
- If not the meter might well be faulty.

Consumption

If there appears to be no leak and the meter is correct it is likely your consumption is excessive so start a diary and monitor water usage and see if you can identify savings including changing taps and shower roses to more efficient models.

Next steps

- If you have a leak, get a qualified plumber out to assess. If the leak is within the property boundary you are probably liable for the water used (lost). However I would still write to Council/Water Provider with a copy of the plumbers report and see if they might mitigate some or all of the water charges based on the leak.
- If the leak is on the footpath – then I believe this is a Council/Water Provider issue and I would request the costs for this water be removed from your bill.
- If the water meter is faulty or appears to be faulty then contact Council/Water Provider and report it and have the matter investigated. If the meter reads above what is actually being used you should again seek to have this amount reduced from the bill. I would also be seeking a reduction from previous bills.
- If you get little satisfaction complain to your local, state or federal member of parliament, take the matter to the local media or complain to the Water Ombudsman. Remember you have to have real evidence not just a vague belief to get water charges overturned.

Disclaimer

While Red Tape Busters Pty Ltd has endeavoured to ensure that all information provided is accurate and up to date, Red Tape Busters Pty Ltd takes no responsibility for any error or omission relating to this information. Information

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contained in this Fact Sheet is drawn from a variety of sources including Government websites. Further, this information is general in nature and all circumstances are different and therefore you should seek professional assistance and advice as required. This information is current as at December 2013.

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