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## WATER AND SEWER POLICY

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Responsible Department</b>	<b>Prepared By</b>	<b>Date Created</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Adopted Date Resolution No.</b>
1	Engineering & Infrastructure Services				15/11/2011 Resolution No 2011/551
2	Engineering & Infrastructure Services	Manager Utilities	November 2022	3 Years	10/05/2023 Resolution No 2023/086

## **1. PURPOSE**

Narromine Shire Council (Council) provides, manages and operates water and sewerage services in accordance with State and Federal legislation.

Detailed requirements for the provision of water and sewer connections to Council's water supply and sewerage systems can be found in legislation, standards, industry codes and best practice guidelines.

## **2. POLICY AIMS**

The Aim of this policy is to:

- Make Council's requirements for Water and Sewer connections readily accessible to the public.
- Make clear to the community Council's legislative obligations in relation to Best Practice Management of Water and Sewer Service supply.
- Promote an integrated framework for dealing with applications for Water and Sewer services.
- Ensure consistency and fairness in the manner in which the Council deals with Water and Sewer customers.

## **3. POLICY STATEMENT AND PROVISIONS**

Council is responsible for providing a safe, reliable and cost-effective water and sewage supply system, which is customer focused, enhances the environment and caters for the sustainable growth of the Shire. There is a commitment to consistently meeting the requirements of the NSW Water and Sewer Best Practice guidelines. This policy provides a basis for developing the guiding principles and implementation strategies, it addresses broad issues and requirements, such as:

- Commitment by Council and its staff to the principles of Best Practice Asset Management in relation to all Council's water and sewer assets<sup>1</sup>;
- Commitment to responsible use of water, and the application of a risk-based management approach as described in Council's Drinking Water Quality Policy;
- Council's intention to adopt best-practice management and a multiple-barrier approach to Drinking Water Safety;
- Recognition and compliance with relevant State and Federal regulations and requirements;
- Communication, engagement and partnership arrangements with agencies with relevant expertise, employees, contractors, stakeholders and with water and sewage service users;
- Continuous improvement in managing water and sewage services;
- Considering the opinions and requirements of all partnership agencies, employees, other stakeholders and the wider community.

Council will ensure that all staff involved in water and sewage services will understand, implement, maintain and continuously improve management systems. Staff membership and participation in professional associations dealing with the management and operation of water and sewage services is encouraged by Council at all levels.

Council supports and promotes the responsible and sustainable use of water and sewage services by application of a management approach that consistently meets Best Practice Guidelines as well as regulatory requirements.

To achieve this Council will:

- Ensure that protection of public and environmental health is recognised as being of paramount importance;
- Maintain communication and partnerships with all relevant agencies involved in the management of water and sewer resources;
- Engage appropriate scientific expertise in developing and operating the various schemes;
- Meet the cost of providing these services by applying appropriate cost recovery practices;
- Recognise the importance of community participation in decision-making processes and the need to ensure that community expectations are met within a sustainable framework;
- Use a risk-based approach in which potential threats to water quality and the environment are identified and controlled;
- Integrate the needs and expectations of our consumers, communities and other stakeholders, regulators and employees in the planning processes;
- Establish regular monitoring of control measures and establish effective reporting mechanisms to provide relevant and timely information to Council, Regulators, the Community and key stakeholders thus promoting confidence in the water and sewer systems and their management;
- Develop and maintain appropriate contingency planning and incident-response capability to efficiently manage Council's response to drinking water quality and pollution incidents;
- Participate in setting industry regulations and guidelines, and other standards in the management of the water cycle;
- Continually improve our practices by assessing performance against corporate commitments and stakeholder expectations

#### **4. LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS**

This policy has been developed to be consistent with the following legislative requirements:

- National Water Quality Management Strategy  
<https://www.waterquality.gov.au/>
- Water Management Act, 2000  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-092>
- Local Government Act, 1993  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1993-030>
- NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2021  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2021-0460> Australian Drinking Water Guidelines  
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-drinking-water-guidelines>
- NSW Public Health Act 2010 No 127  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2010-127>
- NSW Public Health Regulation 2012  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2012-0311>
- NSW Water Management (General) Regulation 2018  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2018-0480>
- NSW Protection of Environment Operations Act 1997  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-156>
- NSW Essential Services Act 1988  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1988-041>
- SW DPE-Water Best Practice Management of Water and Sewage Services  
<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/best-practice-mgmt>

## 5. FIRE FIGHTING

Council is obliged under the provisions of the NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 Part 6 Division 2 Clause 142 to ensure that adequate water for firefighting and the means to supply it via well maintained networks. To comply with this provision the following will apply:<sup>1</sup>

- Council must install hydrants in its water mains at such convenient distances, and at such places, as may be necessary for the ready supply of water to extinguish fires. This subclause does not apply to a water main that is less than 100 millimeters in diameter.
- Council must maintain the hydrants in effective working order.
- Council may, at the request and expense of the owner or occupier of a building, install a hydrant (to be used only for extinguishing fires) in or in the vicinity of the building. If such a hydrant is installed, Council must ensure that it is maintained in effective working order.
- Council may remove a hydrant from any of its water mains if satisfied on reasonable grounds that the hydrant is no longer needed.
- Council must at all times keep charged with water all its pipes to which hydrants are connected unless prevented from doing so—
  - (a) by drought or other unavoidable cause or accident, or
  - (b) while necessary repairs to the pipe or hydrant are being carried out.
- Only persons or organisations authorised to do so by Council may take water without charge for the purpose of extinguishing fires.
- A person must not <sup>2</sup>
  - (a) "install or maintain a fire-fighting service that does not comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia or relevant Australian Standards, or
  - (b) "fail to comply with any direction given by a water supply authority (Council) as to the way in which the person must comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia in relation to a fire-fighting service"
- A person must not use a fire-fighting service otherwise than for the following purposes<sup>2</sup>
  - (a) "the purpose of controlling or extinguishing a fire",
  - (b) "some other purpose approved by the relevant water supply authority".

## 6. PROVISIONS RELATING TO WATER SERVICE CONNECTIONS

Connections to the Drinking Water System are subject to the owner(s) of the land agreeing to the following:

- Making full payment of all Access and Consumption charges determined in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges as stated and determined by Council's Statement of Revenue Policy which is included in Council's Annual Operational Plan link below;  
<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/integrated-planning-and-reporting>
- Providing and installing compliant and approved backflow devices where required.

For further information in relation to Council Water Service Connections including Fees and Charges please refer to Council's Water Connections and Backflow Prevention Policy.

<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/policies>

1 NSW Local Government General Regulation 2021 Clause\_142

2 NSW Local Government Water Management (General) Regulation 2018-Clause\_125

## **7. WATER CONSERVATION AND RESTRICTIONS**

The NSW Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 Sub-Division 5 Clause 141 mandates that "Council as the Water Authority may Restrict the use of water during periods of shortage

- (1) If a water supply authority considers it necessary to do so in order to conserve supplies of water in time of drought or other emergency, it may, by a notice under this clause, regulate or restrict any of the following—
  - (a) the purposes for which water may be used,
  - (b) the times when water may be used,
  - (c) the quantities of water that may be used,
  - (d) the means or methods by which water may be used.
- (2) A notice made by a water supply authority under this clause—
  - (a) may apply to the whole of its area of operations or to such part of that area as is specified in the notice, and
  - (b) has affect despite the provisions of any contract relating to the supply of water by the water supply authority.
- (3) A notice made by a water supply authority under this clause—
  - (a) is to be published in a newspaper circulating in its area of operations, and
  - (b) takes effect on the date specified in the notice (being a date that is not earlier than the date on which the notice is published).
- (4) A person must not use water contrary to a notice under this clause.  
Maximum penalty—20 penalty units.
- (5) Nothing in this clause authorises the use of water contrary to any restriction or requirement imposed under the Essential Services Act 1988.

## **8. SPECIAL WATER METER READINGS**

Special water meter readings can be requested upon application and payment of the appropriate fee. Council takes no responsibility for the calculation of water, sewer and trade waste usage charges if a water meter reading has not been applied for when a property is in the process of selling.

## **9. CONCEALED AND UNDETECTED WATER LEAKS**

The property owner is responsible for all water that passes through their water meter. As a consequence, concealed water leaks can result in significant increases in their water charges.

A property owner can apply, on the appropriate form (available from Council's website) <https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/forms> or on request from Narromine Shire Council Customer Service and Payments Centre, for a reduction in their water usage charges due to a concealed or undetectable water leak.

The rules governing this area are covered in Councils Water Usage Charges Concealed Leakage Policy that can be found on Council's website.

<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/policies>

## **10. DISCONNECTION OR RESTRICTING OF WATER SUPPLY FOR NON-PAYMENT**

- (1) The council may cut off or restrict the supply of water to premises:
- (a) if any water meter used to measure that supply is out of repair or, in the opinion of the council, incorrectly registers the supply of water, or
  - (b) if any rates or charges in respect of the water supplied to the premises are unpaid, or
  - (c) if, in the opinion of the council, that action is necessary because of unusual drought or other unavoidable cause or any accident, or
  - (d) if the owner or occupier or person requiring a supply of water fails to comply with a lawful order or requirement of the council as to installing water meters or instruments for measuring the quantity of water supplied, or
  - (e) if the owner or occupier or person requiring a supply of water fails to comply with a lawful order or requirement of the council to repair or alter water connections, pipes, fittings or fixtures connected to the council's water supply system, or
  - (f) if the occupier of the premises contravenes a provision of Division 3 of this Part or fails to comply with any council order or public notice requiring consumers of water to economise its use in time of drought or scarcity of supply, or
  - (g) if the owner or occupier of the premises fails to comply with a requirement of a council order to remove, replace, alter, extend, repair or stop using a water pipe, fitting or fixture.
- (2) The cutting off of the supply of water under this clause for non-payment of rates or charges does not affect the liability of the rateable person to pay those rates or charges.
- (3) If the council cuts off the supply of water to premises because:
- (a) there is no water meter installed on the premises, or
  - (b) the water meter on the premises registers incorrectly, or
  - (c) water rates or charges for the premises are unpaid,
- the council may refuse to supply water to those premises until a water meter is installed on the premises, the water meter registers correctly or the water rates or charges are paid (as the case may require).

## **11. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE**

This Policy shall apply to writing off of charges in accordance with clause 131(4) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* as follows:

- (a) if there is an error in the assessment, or
- (b) if the amount is not lawfully recoverable, or
- (c) as a result of a decision of a court, or
- (d) if the Council or General Manager believes on reasonable grounds that an attempt to recover the amount would not be cost effective.

The writing off of any charges shall be at the cost of the General Fund (Reserve) to the Water and Sewerage Fund Reserve.

## **12. COUNCIL STANDPIPES**

Bulk water is available for purchase from Council standpipes in Narromine and Trangie. To access the water standpipe, customers are required to complete an application form providing personal and vehicular details. Upon payment of a refundable deposit, customers are issued with an Avdata key to the standpipe. Customer information is provided to Avdata who will issue an account for the water taken by the customer.

### **13. WATER CARTING**

Council does not undertake deliveries of Drinking Water or Non-Drinking Water for the use of consumers. Drinking Water should only be carted by licensed Water Carters who comply with NSW Public Health Regulation 2012: Part 5 Safety Measures for Drinking Water; Division 2 Section 34C.

The price per kilolitre is set annually in Council's Fees & Charges as part of the adoption of the Operational Plan. <https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/fees-and-charges>

### **14. POLICY PROVISIONS FOR SEWER**

Council will apply the provisions of Section 552 of the *Local Government Act* whereby any land situated within 225 metres of a Council Water Main and/or 75 metres from any sewer of Council, may be liable for water and/or sewerage rates as set unless: -

- specific exemptions are granted by Council
- the land is non-rateable
- the land lies in the R5 (Large Lot Residential) zone or the RU1 (Primary Production) and the ratepayers have requested, by majority, not to be connected to the water supply or sewerage service.

Except where the land is actually connected to the water or sewerage system. Any connections made outside the R1 (Residential), R5 (Large Lot Residential), RU5 (Village), IN1 (General Industrial), B2 (Local Centre) which have been exempted as in (a) (b) and (c) above, will be charged as follows:

- Developer contributions will be charged in accordance with Council's Developer Servicing Plan and the relevant fees and charges;
- Full cost of extending the Council main to the point of supply; and
- Cost of normal connection from Council main to property.

For further Information on Council's Water and Sewer financial management systems please refer to the following Integrated Planning and Reporting Documents:

- Council's Long-Term Financial Plan;
- Council's Statement of Revenue Policy;
- Council's Fees and Charges;
- Council's Water and Sewer Asset Management Plans

For full details on Council's Plans, Fees and Charges in relation to Water services including connection fees can be found on Council's Website by following the links below.

<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/integrated-planning-and-reporting>

<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/fees-and-charges>

Council is responsible for providing a minimum 150mm sewer connection from Council's sewer main to the property boundary. Council's maintenance responsibility includes this section of the sewer connection and up to the base of the boundary inspection shaft. Where a new sewer junction is required to be cut into an existing main, the work shall be carried out by Council following payment of a connection fee as published in Council's Fees and Charges. No work is to commence until the connection fee has been paid in full.

Where the sewer service connection is constructed in accordance with Council's Water and Sewer Design and Construction Specification, Council will maintain the service connection from the sewer main to the base of the boundary inspection shaft.

Note the following will apply where construction has not been in accordance with Council's Water and Sewer Design and Construction Specifications:

- Where Council's sewer is located within the property being served, Council will maintain to the collar of the branch junction with the main.
- Where Council's sewer is located outside the property being served, Council will maintain to the nearest downstream collar from property boundary.

## 15. PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED SUBSTANCES AND WASTE

Substances prohibited from being discharged into sewerage systems unless they are specifically approved under section 68 of the NSW Local Government Act are listed in the Table 1 below.

Table 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organochlorine weedicides, fungicides, pesticides, herbicides and substances of a similar nature and/or wastes arising from the preparation of these substances</li><li>• organophosphorus pesticides and/or waste arising from the preparation of these substances</li><li>• per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)</li><li>• any substances liable to produce noxious or poisonous vapours in the sewerage system</li><li>• organic solvents and mineral oil<sup>#</sup></li><li>• any flammable or explosive substance<sup>#</sup></li><li>• discharges from 'Bulk Fuel Depots'</li><li>• discharges from chemicals and/or oil storage areas</li><li>• natural or synthetic resins, plastic monomers, synthetic adhesives, rubber and plastic emulsions</li><li>• roof, rain, surface, seepage or ground water, unless specifically permitted (clause 137A of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005)</li><li>• solid matter<sup>#</sup></li><li>• disposable products including wet wipes, cleaning wipes, colostomy bags, cat litter and other products marketed as flushable</li><li>• any substance assessed as not suitable to be discharged into the sewerage system</li><li>• liquid waste that contains pollutants at concentrations which inhibit the sewage treatment process – refer to Australian Sewage Quality Management Guidelines, June 2012, WSA</li><li>• any other substances listed in a relevant regulation</li></ul>
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*# In excess of the approved limit*

## 16. OTHER SUBSTANCES/DISCHARGES EITHER PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED

- Stormwater
- Contaminated groundwater
- Landfill leachate
- Discharge from float tanks
- Discharge from new service station forecourts and other refuelling points
- Discharge of liquid waste arising from liquefaction and/or pulverisation of solid waste by physical or chemical processes (e.g. garbage grinders/in-sink aerators, macerators, alkaline hydrolysis)
- Discharge from solid food waste processing units (digesters/composters, etc.)
- Use of additives in pre-treatment systems

For further details on limitations and restrictions applicable to all the above discharges, refer to Council's Liquid Trade Waste Policy and or to Chapter 3 of the *NSW Liquid Trade Waste Management Guidelines, 2021*

<https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/policies>

[https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/147088/trade-waste-management-guidelines.pdf](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/147088/trade-waste-management-guidelines.pdf)

## **17. SEWERAGE AND LIQUID TRADE WASTE FEES AND CHARGES**

Best practice sewerage pricing involves a uniform annual sewerage bill for residential customers. Best practice guidelines for non-residential customers involve an appropriate sewer access charge based on water meter connection size. Sewer and trade waste consumption and access charges are determined on an annual basis and are displayed in Council's Draft Operational Plan for comment prior to adoption. Ratepayers are encouraged to participate in this process.

Council provides sewerage and liquid trade waste services on a commercial basis to non-residential dischargers, with full cost recovery through sewerage and liquid trade waste fees and charges. Council implements best practice pricing for non-residential sewerage and liquid trade waste services to ensure that dischargers bear a fair share of the cost of providing sewerage services and to facilitate appropriate pre-treatment, waste minimisation and water conservation.

The current sewerage and liquid trade waste fees and charges are provided on Council's website <https://www.narromine.nsw.gov.au/council/fees-and-charges>

Council's liquid trade waste fees and charges may include:

- general fees and charges (application fee, annual liquid trade waste fee, inspection and/or re-inspection fees and renewal fee)
- category specific charges (trade waste usage charges for Charging Category 2 discharges, excess mass charges for Charging Category 3 discharges, charges for Charging Category 2S discharges and non-compliance charges)
- other charges related to the nature of waste (e.g. charges for the discharge of stormwater from large areas)

Detailed description of the liquid trade waste fees and charges and the methodology of calculating them are provided in Appendix D of Council's Liquid Trade Waste Policy.

## **18. POWERS OF ENTRY**

Section 191 and 191A of the *Local Government Act, 1993* allows Council employees (or other person) authorised by a council to enter any premises to carry out water supply work, sewerage work or stormwater drainage work on or under the premises. Entry may only be made at any reasonable hour in the daytime or at any hour during which business is in progress or is usually carried out on the premises.

## **19. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless substantial changes to legislation or regulations occur.

## **PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

Council will meet its obligations under this Policy that are consistent with the National Water Quality Management Strategy, Australian Standards and Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. This is to effectively manage risks to public and environmental health.