

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Q&A

MANAGING YOUR WATER ACCOUNT

If you have questions about managing your water account, chances are they have been asked before. The answers to some of our most commonly asked questions may be just what you are looking for.



Will I receive a water account, even if I don't use very much water?

No, Singleton Council does not issue a Water Usage Account for consumption amounts less than \$5.00. For any account under \$5.00, the amount will carry over to the next Water Account and will appear as arrears.

In this instance, this amount showing as arrears does not accrue interest charges.

Why am I being charged for water on my empty block of land?

All properties in Singleton that have sewer and/or water available will be charged a fixed rate for this service regardless of being connected. This ensures that services are maintained until the property owner connects

or develops. Then charges for actual usage will occur.

I lost my water account, can I get a copy?

Yes, if you are the property owner, Council is able to reprint an exact replica of your water usage account. Contact Council's Customer Service Centre and we can email or post you a copy. Fees and charges do apply.

Or consider receiving your account electronically to ensure you always have a copy for your records.

How often will I receive a water account?

A water account is issued from Council three times a year, each one covering four months. Your residential water account shows your usage charges. Water accounts are only issued to those properties that are connected to the town water supply. The three water billing cycle meter reads are generally April/May, August/September and January/February.

This provides property owners with regular feedback on water usage and costs. Vacant land owners do not receive a water account, fixed water and sewer access charges are issued on the annual rates and charges notice.

How do I change my billing address?

Council has one addressing database for both rates and water accounts, so you only need to advise us once of a change of address.

All change of address requests must be in writing. You can complete a [Request for Change of Address](#) online at

www.singleton.nsw.gov.au or in person at Council's Customer Service Centre or Visitor Information and Enterprise Centre or by email.

I am a tenant in a rental property; what charges am I liable for?

What and how you pay will depend on the lease arrangement with your real estate agent or landlord. The lease arrangement will set out what your responsibilities and obligations are in respect of water, sewer and trade waste charges where applicable. Council will not discuss monies with a tenant.

How can I pay my water account?

There are several ways to pay your account, your payment options are:

1. Electronically by direct debit, internet banking, Bpay and Bpay view,
2. By mail or over the phone with a credit card, or
3. In person at Australia Post or Council's Customer Service Centre during business hours or Council's Visitor Information and Enterprise Centre seven days a week,

Visit the [Pay My Rates](#) page on Council's website www.singleton.nsw.gov.au for further details.

Is all water used charged at the same rate?

Water usage charges are based on volume used and is charged per kilolitre (kL) of water, or 1000 litres and is based on the reading of the property's water meter.

In 2008/2009 Council adopted a tiered usage scheme dependant upon the volume of water used. Once the threshold of 450kL is reached a higher usage charge is applied.

Each year from 1 July, fees and charges are set by Council. Water and Sewer Access Charges and Water Usage Charges are available in Council's adopted [Operational Plan](#) annually.

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What if I have a higher than expected consumption?

It is unlikely for a water meter to over record the amount of water used. Water meters are tested before leaving the factory and are precision instruments approved to meet strict performance criteria.

If you feel that your water account is higher than normal this will usually be due to a change in consumption rather than due to a fault on the meter. For example:

- Extra use of a hose or sprinkler will alter your water account considerably - using a hose for an hour is the equivalent to 3 days consumption for the average person.
- A slow leak from toilet cisterns will use up significantly more water than usual.
- Guests will use additional water.
- Overflow pipes can waste a lot of water and it may not always be obvious
- A single dripping tap can waste at least 1500 litres of water a year (one drip per second). Check your taps and make sure they are shut off securely, and change washers if necessary.



Council recommends checking at least two years consumption to avoid any changes of use that are not related to a meter problem, such as higher use in summer and check for water leaks.

If you feel your consumption pattern has not changed and you have checked and not identified any water leaks you can apply



for a meter accuracy test. Charges apply for this test and must be paid prior to service.

Further information is available on section 5.2 Concessions and Rebates of the [Water Supply Services Policy](#) or [Water and Sewer Group Customer Service Plan](#).

What do I do if I detect a water leak on my property?

Contact a licensed plumber to repair the leak immediately, then contact Council as we may be able to provide some financial assistance on your last account. More information on the Undetected Concealed Leak Concession can be found in section 5.2 Concessions and Rebates of the [Water Supply Services Policy](#) or [Water and Sewer Group Customer Service Plan](#).

I am a pensioner, am I eligible for a discount?

Yes, you may be. Council provides a pensioner concession relating to the rates and charges to eligible pensioners, including water and sewer charges. You are eligible if you are the owner and occupier of a property and hold a Pensioner Concession Card or Veteran Affairs Gold Card, embossed with TPI or EDA.

Other terms and conditions apply. Refer to [Council's Pensioner Concession Policy](#) for full eligibility criteria and application requirements.



I am receiving a pensioner concession and my circumstances have changed, what should I do?

It is important customers receiving a pensioner concession contact Council if there is a change in circumstances, such as:

- you buy a property to occupy as your permanent residence
- you move or change your mailing address
- you are away for a long period of time
- your personal circumstances change through divorce, separation or death of a spouse.

What if I am having financial problems?

Council recognises that some customers may experience genuine financial hardship affecting their ability to meet the payment terms for their water accounts. Customers can apply for assistance through [Council's Hardship Policy](#). Details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found in the policy.

For further information, contact Council's Senior Revenue Officer.

What if my payment is late?

If your payment is not made in full by the due date, you have to pay interest on the amount owing. The interest charge is simple interest calculated daily. Please ensure your payment reaches us by the payment date shown on your notice.

What is the debt recovery process for unpaid water accounts?

Council's water usage and non-residential sewer charges are overdue when not paid by the due dates. Interest will accrue on these charges from this date.

Council may take recovery action within 10 days of the accounts becoming overdue, unless the property owner enters into a payment arrangement.



The normal process for debt recovery is:

1. Water account issued with 21 day payment terms
2. Overdue notice is issued
3. Notice of Intent to take legal action is issued (Letter of Demand)
4. Legal action commences.

Further information can be found in [Council's Debt Recovery Policy](#).

RELATED INFORMATION

- [Your Water Service and Meter - Q&A](#)
- [Water Leaks, Faults and Emergencies Fact Sheet](#)
- [Water and Sewer Group - Customer Service Plan](#)
- [Water Supply Services Policy](#)
- [Hardship Policy](#)
- [Pensioner Concession Policy](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on managing your water account contact Council on:

T. 02 6578 7290

E. council@singleton.nsw.gov.au

W. www.singleton.nsw.gov.au

