

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy aims to establish an effective, accountable and transparent framework for Hume Group's approach to water usage charging, to explain who is responsible for payment of water usage charges in Hume Group managed properties and to provide a clear, fair and transparent approach regarding water usage charges for Customers living in shared meter properties.
- 1.2 This Policy identifies any conditions that apply to ensure that:
 - 1.2.1 appropriate water charges are applied;
 - 1.2.2 Customers are aware of the allowances which are available;
 - 1.2.3 tenancies are sustainable; and
 - 1.2.4 Customers rights and entitlements are protected.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by Hume Group except Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Crisis Accommodation. Customers residing in SDA and Crisis Accommodation are exempt from paying water charges.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 Customers are responsible for the water usage charges at their property and will be charged for water usage in a manner that is fair, transparent, and consistent.
- 3.2 Hume Group charges water usage in accordance with Section 139 of the [Residential Tenancies Act 2010](#), the [Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#) and this policy.
- 3.3 Water charges are separate from all other charges including rent.
- 3.4 Water usage charges encourage water conservation. Hume Group encourages Customers to conserve water wherever possible, to comply with restrictions put into place by the local water authority and to save money. Customers will be liable for breaches of water restrictions.
- 3.5 Customers will be charged for water usage in a manner that is fair, transparent, and consistent.
- 3.6 Hume Group will advise Customers of any changes to this policy that will impact what they pay.

Calculating Water Usage Charges

- 3.7 Customers pay either:
 - 3.7.1 an actual water usage charge if the property has a separate meter or;
 - 3.7.2 a weekly water usage charge based on household size if the property has a shared meter.
 - 3.8 Hume Group is responsible for meeting all other costs associated with water provision, such as water connection charges, sewerage and other charges and provision of water in common areas.
- Properties with Separate Water Meters – Actual Charge
- 3.9 Hume Group will charge Customers who live in properties with separate water meters the actual water usage cost, as per the individual water account or invoice received from the water authority.
 - 3.10 In accordance with the [Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#), a separate water meter must be readily accessible for reading by the water authority and generate an individual water account. If an individual water

meter is not read by the water authority and does not generate an individual water account, Hume Group will charge the Customer as if it is a shared meter dwelling.

- 3.11 Water charges will be added to the Customer's account each water billing cycle.
- 3.12 For new Customers, the first water usage charge will be calculated based on the water meter reading at the beginning of the tenancy and the subsequent invoice received from the water authority.
- 3.13 For Customers who have vacated a property during a billing period the final water charges will be calculated based on the water meter reading at the end of the tenancy and the reading on the previous invoice received from the water authority.
- 3.14 If a water meter reading is not available for new and vacating Customers, water usage charges will be calculated on a daily rate to ensure appropriate charges are recovered.

Properties with Shared Water Meters – Weekly Charge based on Household Size

- 3.15 Hume Group will charge Customers who live in properties with shared water meters a weekly water charge according to household size and Hume Group's water usage matrix. The weekly water usage charges for households are available on Hume Group's website.
- 3.16 Hume Group developed its water usage matrix for Customers residing in shared meter properties using water efficiency targets that have been set and published by relevant water authorities.
- 3.17 The weekly water usage charge is set using the following methodology:
 - 3.17.1 the total water usage charges for all Hume Group managed shared meter properties is determined;
 - 3.17.2 10% of the total water usage charge is deducted to allow for common area usage;
 - 3.17.3 household size data is collected;
 - 3.17.4 The balance of the charge (90% of water usage charges) are apportioned using the Hume Group water usage matrix to determine the weekly charge for the following 12 months;
 - 3.17.5 The weekly water charge methodology uses the below matrix to determine the charge.

People in the Home	Proportion based on Water Authority Efficiency Targets
1 person	1.0
2 people	1.5
3 people	1.9
4 people	2.2
5 people	2.5
6 people	2.8

- 3.17.6 The weekly charge will be rounded to the nearest 5c;
- 3.17.7 The number of household members in each property will be reviewed weekly prior to the weekly charge being applied to water accounts;
- 3.17.8 Customers will be informed of their new water charges as a result of a change in household members as part of the rent review process.
- 3.18 As it is not possible to determine an individual usage charge for shared meters, the water charge is considered the Customer's contribution towards water usage costs only and is not intended to reflect their individual water usage.
- 3.19 Water charges will be added to the Customer's account each week.

- 3.20 The weekly water usage charges for households will be reviewed at least annually and will be made available on Hume Group's website. Customers will be provided with at least 28 days' notice of any changes to the rates.
- 3.21 In setting and reviewing weekly charges Hume Group will ensure that the charges for all the Customers combined do not exceed the total water usage charges from the water authority.

4 Procedure

Payment of Water Usage Charges

- 4.1 Properties with Shared Water Meters – Weekly Charge based on Household Size
- 4.2 Water usage payments must be made weekly or fortnightly in advance along with rent payments.

Properties with Separate Water Meters – Actual Charge

- 4.3 Hume Group will calculate an estimated water use at the commencement of a tenancy and Customers will be encouraged to pay this rate for water in advance on a weekly/fortnightly basis with their rent payments.
- 4.4 Customers can pay their water usage bill in a lump sum payment within 28 days of the bill issue date. Customers who pay in instalments must ensure that, if they have under-contributed, that they make a lump sum payment of the shortfall amount within 28 days of bill issue date.
- 4.5 Payments for water must be specified as water payments at the time of payment at the bank, through electronic payment including HumePay or must be made using our CentrePay code for water payments.
- 4.6 If a water charge remains unpaid for more than 28 days from the date it is charged to the Customer's account, we may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for payment of the unpaid water usage charges.

Allowances

- 4.7 Hume Group may consider granting allowances to Customers in properties with separate water meters if:
 - 4.7.1 the Customer or household member has a medical need to use 25 kilolitres of water or more above the normal use for a household of the same size (e.g. the Customer or household member is undergoing home-based dialysis);
 - 4.7.2 the local water authority does not provide an allowance for such circumstances.
- 4.8 We will not provide water allowances:
 - 4.8.1 To Customers who are temporarily away from their properties
 - 4.8.2 To households who pay a shared meter water payment
 - 4.8.3 Where a local water authority provides an allowance
- 4.9 Where a local water authority provides an allowance, Hume Group will assist the Customer to obtain an allowance from the water authority.
- 4.10 Customers who want to apply for a water usage allowance, must complete the Water Allowance Application form and provide documented evidence to support their application. We will advise the Customer of the outcome of their application in writing within 28 business days. If an exemption is granted, the exemption will be provided for a 12-month period. After the 12-month period has ended, the Customer must re-apply for an exemption. Where a Customer is approved for a water allowance, we will provide an allowance of 100 kilolitres of water per quarter.

Hardship

- 4.11 Customers having trouble paying water usage bills are encouraged to contact Hume Group's Neighbourhood Officers.

Adjustments

- 4.12 Hume Group may adjust water charges on Customer's accounts in exceptional circumstances such as burst water pipes or undetectable leaks, where the Customer is not at fault or had no way of detecting that a leak existed.
- 4.13 This will not apply if detectable leaks are not promptly reported to Hume Group.

Exemptions

- 4.14 Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Crisis Accommodation properties managed by Hume Group are exempt from water charging.
- 4.15 SDA customers do not enter into a social housing tenancy with Hume Group and instead sign an Accommodation Agreement.
- 4.16 Customers utilising Crisis Accommodation do not enter into a social housing tenancy with Hume Group when in Crisis Accommodation.
- 4.17 This exemption does not apply to Hume Group support partners who may provide Crisis Accommodation to their Customers in our properties.

Complaints and Appeals

- 4.18 Information on our complaints and appeals process is available online at humehousing.com.au or through our offices.
- 4.19 Customers can appeal decisions relating to water charging. In particular, the following appeal mechanisms exist:
- 4.19.1 Appeals to Hume Group about how we apply this policy including method of calculation of water charges and grant of a water usage allowance. For further information about appeals refer to our [Compliments, Complaints and Appeals policy](#).
- 4.19.2 Appeals to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) about how we charge shared water usage or a decision to grant a water usage allowance. The Housing Appeals Committee will not hear appeals on actual water usage charges for Customers with separate meters.
- 4.19.3 Complain directly to the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) if the water authority involved is a member of EWON (visit www.ewon.com.au for a complete list of water authority members). This would apply in the case of premises with separate water meters. Hume Group may complain directly to EWON on behalf of the Customer with their consent.
- 4.19.4 Where the water authority is not a member of EWON, Hume Group may refer the matter to the NSW Ombudsman.

5 Responsibilities

5.1

Role or responsibility	Position or delegation level
Developing the process for this policy	General Manager Housing & Impact
Ensuring policy aligns with compliance obligations	Manager, Risk and Compliance
Approving Policy	Board
Implementation	All employees
Policy review	General Manager Housing & Impact

Reporting

- 5.2 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 5.3 Employees must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in SDM.

6 Definitions

Accommodation Agreement means the agreement entered into between the participant and Hume Group setting out the responsibilities of both parties

Crisis Accommodation means short term accommodation (usually 3 months or less) for people experiencing homelessness or people at risk of homelessness.

Customer means a person who has signed a residential tenancy agreement to reside in a Hume managed property.

Hume means Hume Community Housing Association Company Limited.

Hume Group means the corporate structure that includes Hume and Subsidiaries as created from time to time.

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) means specialised long-term housing for people living with a disability

Subsidiary means a company in which Hume is the sole member or owns all or at least a majority of the shares.

7 Related Legislation and Documents

[Residential Tenancies Act 2010](#)

[Residential Tenancies Regulations 2019](#)

[Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines 2021](#)

[Delegations of Authority Policy](#)

[Water Allowance Application form](#)

8 Feedback and questions

8.1 Customers can provide feedback at any time by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 1800 004 300.

8.2 Hume employees may provide feedback about this document by emailing feedback@humehousing.com.au.

8.3 Translation and Interpreting Service

English	Arabic
If you need an interpreter to assist with this policy, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) for free on 131 450. Ask them to call Hume Community Housing on 1800 004 300.	إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم للمساعدة في فهم هذه السياسة، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة التحريرية والشفوية (TIS National) مجانًا على الرقم 131 450. واطلب منهم الاتصال بحومينج المجتمع على الرقم 1800 004 300.
Chinese	Vietnamese
如果您需要口译员协助翻译本政策，请拨打口笔译服务（TIS National）的免费电话131 450。请口译员致电1800 004 300联系Hume社区住房。	Nếu quý vị cần một thông dịch viên để hỗ trợ về chính sách này, vui lòng gọi đến Dịch vụ Thông dịch và Phiên dịch (TIS National) miễn phí theo số 131 450. Yêu cầu họ gọi cho Công ty Nhà ở Cộng đồng Hume (Hume Community Housing) theo số 1800 004 300
Spanish	Assyrian

<p>Si necesita la ayuda de un intérprete para entender esta política, contacte con el Translating and Interpreting Service o Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación (TIS National) llamando gratuitamente al 131 450. Pídale que llamen a Hume Community Housing al número 1800 004 300</p>	<p>بى سېمپلەن لىيە مۇنداق خىزمەت ئۈچۈن قىزىقىشقا كىرىشكەن بولسىڭىز، تىل تەرجىمە ۋە يېزىق تەرجىمە خىزمىتىگە (TIS) قىلىپ مەسلىھەت بېرىشكە كەڭەش قىلىشقا بولىدۇ. (National) 131 450 نىڭ قىزىقىشقا كىرىشكەن بولسىڭىز، ئۇلارنىڭ ئارقىلىق، 1800 004 300 نىڭ قىزىقىشقا كىرىشكەن بولسىڭىز، ئۇلارنىڭ ئارقىلىق (Hume Community Housing) قىلىپ مەسلىھەت بېرىشكە كەڭەش قىلىشقا بولىدۇ.</p>
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8.4 If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact the National Relay Service (NRS) on:

8.5
8.6 TTY: 133 677

8.7 Then ask for 133 464

8.8 Voice: 1300 555 727

8.9
8.10 If you or your guardian needs support to understand this document, please let us know. We can work with you to communicate using a method that best suits you, including interpreter services, sign language, visual aids, or assistive technology.

9 Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Board
Minor Amendments Approval Authority	CEO
Policy Owner	General Manager Housing & Impact
Next Review Date	01/09/2027
Policy History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Board – 27/04 2021
Amendment Authority and Date	V003 – Board – 27/04/2021
Notes	<p>V003 - Effective date of was 09/12/2020 - Complete review and significant changes to policy for shared meters</p> <p>V0004 – Updated formatting into the new template and has incorporated Humepay and introduced electronic payments such as Humepay and has included alternative ways for Hume or the customer to complain about services by a water authority, directly to the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) or where the water authority is not a member of EWON, to the NSW Ombudsman. No other material changes have been made.</p>

