

COUNCIL POLICY



Water Supply Policy

Water Supply Policy

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Council Department	Infrastructure & Operations / Corporate Services
Contact Officer	Director-Corporate Services
Revision Required	Every 4 Years

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at four (4) yearly intervals at least, to ensure it meets all statutory requirements and the needs of council. It may also be reviewed at other times as determined by council.

Revision History

Version	Council Meeting Date	Resolution No.	Responsible Officer
1	27 April 2010	104/10	Team Leader – Technical Service (Assets)
2	28 June 2010	196/10	Director-Corporate Services

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I. Preliminary

I.1 About this Document

I.1.1 Purpose

Cowra Shire Council's adopted vision is to be:-

“A leading, innovative and creative community, proud of our place in history, offering opportunity with the best of country living.”

To support this vision, Council has adopted various local policies, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Water Management Act 2000*, that are relevant to the supply of water.

The purpose of this document is to present Council policies relating to water supply in a single document and to allow Council's customers and ratepayers to be reasonably aware of the existence of relevant regulations and local policies.

I.1.2 Title

This document is *Cowra Shire Council Water Supply Policy* ('The Water Supply Policy').

This policy was adopted by Council on 27 April 2010 and commenced on 27 April 2010. It replaces the previous policies titled 2.35.1 – 2.35.8 *Water Services* and 1.43.8 *Donations and Sponsorship – Dialysis machine*.

I.1.3 Outline

The Water Supply Policy generally covers those activities relating to the water supply system that can be done, those that cannot be done and those that require Council's approval.

I.1.4 Statutory Context

The Water Supply Policy is a local policy made under the *Local Government Act 1993* (Chapter 7, Part 3). It is a publicly-available policy document under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*.

I.1.5 Consistency

All Council's policies are required to comply with the requirements of relevant Acts and Regulations and also to be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Where a local policy is inconsistent with the *Local Government Act 1993* or the Regulations, then to the extent to which it is inconsistent, it is void.

In addition, a local policy cannot to be more onerous than the *Local Government Act 1993* or the Regulations.

1.1.6 Review of this document

This policy document will be reviewed annually as required as part of the Corporate Plan to ensure that it is up-to-date with current legislation and community expectations.

1.2 The Legislative Framework

Cowra Shire Council provides water services appropriate to the current and future needs of local communities in accordance with the relevant Acts, Regulations and standards. Some of the relevant Acts, Regulations and standards are outlined below.

1.2.1 Local Government Act 1993

The *Local Government Act 1993* outlines Council's power to do a range of functions, including those relating to water supply. This includes Council's power to:-

- construct water supply works (Chapter 6, Part 3, Division 2);
- specifies when certain approvals are required (Chapter 7, Part 1, Division 1);
- order a person to connect to the water supply system if the premises are within 225 metres of a water pipe of the Council (Chapter 7, Part 2);
- authorise an employee to enter any premises to carry out water supply work (Chapter 8, Part 2);
- transfer a return on capital invested payment (dividend) from the Water Fund to the General Fund subject to compliance with Government guidelines (Chapter 13, Part 3);
- charge for water services, in particular by the quantity of water supplied and an annual service charge (Chapter 15);
- levy water charges for vacant land within 225 metres of a water pipe of the Council (Chapter 15, Part 5, Division 2);
- exempt certain types of land from water supply charges (some types of land must be exempt, for example land owned by the Crown, not being land held under a lease for private purposes) (Chapter 15, Part 6);
- charge a fee for service (Chapter 15, Part 10, Division 2);
- prosecute for work not carried out by licensed tradespeople, interference or damage to any water supply property (including the meter) or negligently wastes or misuses water from a public water supply (Chapter 16, Part 3) .

1.2.2 Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

The *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, made under the *Local Government Act 1993*, further outlines and defines Council's powers regarding the provision of water services. This includes:-

- approvals relating to water supply work (Part 2, Division 3);
- adoption of the Building Code of Australia (Part 2);
- the power relating to orders (Part 3, Division 1);
- information to be shown on the bill (Part 5);

- water restrictions, fire hydrants and inspections (Part 6);
- work to be carried out in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage* (Schedule 1, Part 2).

1.2.3 Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005

This Regulation outlines standards of design for Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings. Provisions relating to water supply include:-

- A manufactured home estate must be connected to a mains water supply (Part 2, Division 3, Subdivision 4) and the water supply works must be installed in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Code of Practice* (Part 2, Division 4, Subdivision 3);
- No part of a dwelling site or community building within a manufactured home estate may be situated more than 90 metres from a fire hydrant (Part 2, Division 3, Subdivision 5);
- A caravan park or camping ground must be connected to a mains water supply where available, and the works must be installed in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Code of Practice* (Part 3, Division 3, Subdivision 4);
- No part of a dwelling site, camp site or community building within a caravan park or camping ground may be situated more than 90 metres from a fire hydrant (Part 3, Division 3, Subdivision 8).

1.2.4 Water Management Act 2000

The *Water Management Act 2000* is to provide for the sustainable and integrated management of the water sources of the State and regulates the extraction of water from the natural environment. The Act also contains provisions relevant to Council relating to developer contributions for water supply works (Chapter 6, Part 2, Division 5).

1.2.5 Water Act 1912

The *Water Act 1912* is to be repealed on the whole commencement of Schedule 7 of the *Water Management Act 2000*. The *Water Act 1912* currently has provisions relating to licences for water supply, including bores.

1.2.6 Public Health Act 1991

The *Public Health Act 1991* contain provisions relating to the safety of drinking water and the functions of the Chief Health Officer if there are any possible risks to health involved in the consumption of drinking water.

1.2.7 Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957

The *Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957* provides for the Secretary of the Department of Health to approve or direct a water supply authority to add fluorine to any public water supply.

1.2.8 Residential Parks Act 1998

The *Residential Parks Act 1998* sets out the respective rights and obligations of park owners and residents, including the payment of water availability and water consumption charges (Part 4, Division 2).

1.2.9 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2004

The *2004 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* have been developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council in collaboration with the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and provides the Australian community and the water supply industry with guidance on what constitutes good quality drinking water.

1.2.10 Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500:2003: Plumbing and drainage

Australian Standard *AS/NZS 3500:2003* provides plumbing and drainage solutions that will satisfy the performance requirements outlined in the *Plumbing Code of Australia*.

However, the responsibility for regulation for on site plumbing remains with the states and territories. NSW has adopted the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*, which is based on *AS/NZS 3500*, with State variations and additional provisions.

1.2.11 Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managing Health and Environmental Risks 2006

These national guidelines, released in November 2006, outline a best practice framework for the supply, use and regulation of reclaimed water schemes.

The guidelines cover the monitoring and management of health and environmental risk, as well as communication and community consultation issues.

1.2.12 NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006

The *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006* outlines the requirements for, among other things, work on drinking water supplies and reclaimed water systems.

Provisions covered in the code include: fire service installation, backflow prevention devices, meters, multiple occupancy, rainwater harvesting installations, materials to be used and the sizing of water services.

1.2.13 NSW Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage 2007

The *Guidelines for Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage 2007* encourage continuing improvement in performance and identify 6 criteria for best-practice management of water supply and sewerage. The criteria include guidelines for strategic business planning, pricing, water conservation, drought management, performance reporting and integrated water cycle management.

1.2.14 State Environmental Planning Policies

The Minister for Planning makes SEPPs to deal with issues significant to the state and people of NSW. Many may be relevant to the provision of water services. For example, Division 24 (Clauses 124 & 127) of Part 3 of SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 contains State-wide planning controls relating to water supply systems.

1.2.15 Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

The EPA Regulation contains provisions requiring the submission of, and compliance with, a BASIX certificate, which is designed to achieve more sustainable development, including reduced consumption of mains-supplied potable water.

1.2.16 Cowra Local Environmental Plan 1990

The Cowra Local Environmental Plan 1990 has been prepared to guide planning decisions in the local government area.

The principal aims of this plan are to promote the growth, development and prosperity of the Shire of Cowra and to assist present and future residents of the Shire in their endeavours to maintain their prosperity, security and present rights.

In accordance with the LEP, Council cannot grant consent for a development unless satisfactory arrangements are made for the provision of water supply.

1.2.17 Cowra Shire Council Management Plan

Every year, Council prepares a draft Management Plan outlining Council's activities for at least the next 3 years, and the revenue policy for the next year. This includes fees and charges for all of Council's activities, including water supply. The draft Management Plan is exhibited and comments are invited from the public before being adopted.

1.2.18 Cowra Shire Council Development Servicing Plan for Water Supply Services 2008

Council has prepared a Development Servicing Plan, in accordance with State Government guidelines, which details the water supply developer charges to be levied on development areas utilising Council's water supply infrastructure.

The developer charges cover the cost of providing the water supply capacity either within Council's existing water supply system or through future capital works.

Section 64 of the *Local Government Act 1993* enables local government to levy developer charges for water supply infrastructure. This power is derived from a cross-reference in that Act to section 306 of the *Water Management Act 2000*.

1.3 Delineation of Responsibilities

1.3.1 Council's Water Supply System

Council operates and maintains all the pumps, reservoirs and equipment to deliver water to its customers. Council also manages and maintains the water pipe network up to and including the water meter on a customer's property.

1.3.2 Customer's Water Supply System

The property owner owns and is responsible for maintaining all of the pipes and fittings, including backflow prevention devices, between Council's water system and the buildings and taps on the property. This is referred to as the customer's water system.

The property owner is responsible for any damage to the water meter or damage caused by a failure in their water system.

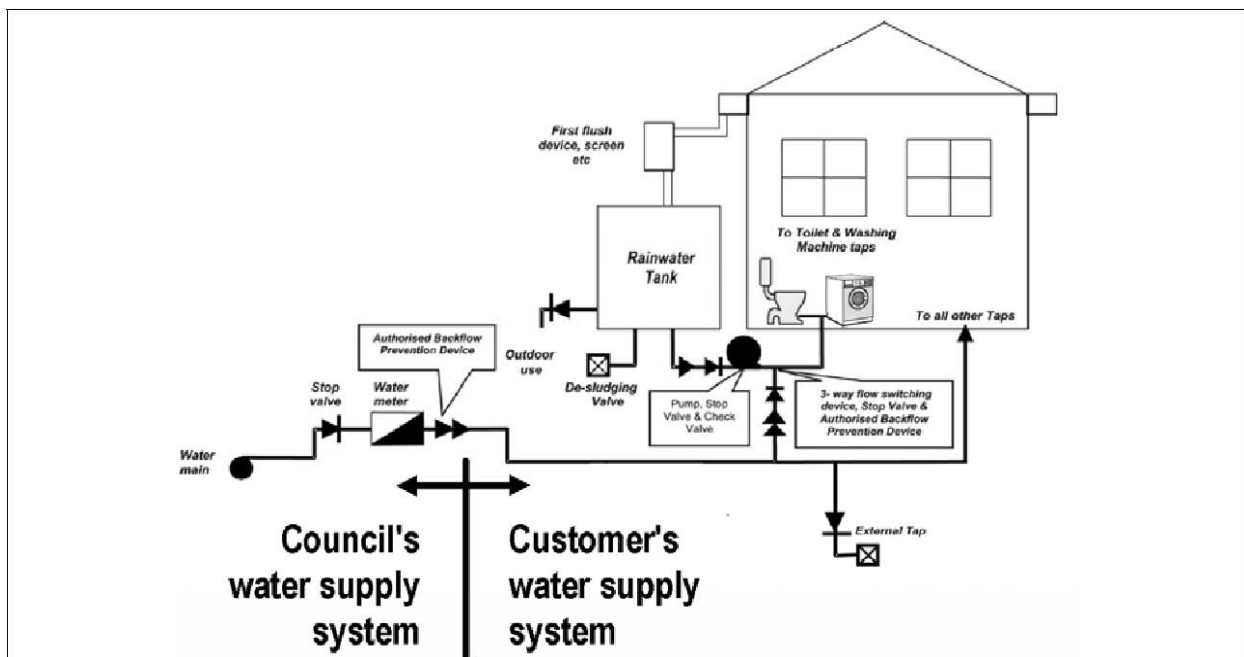


Figure 1: Diagram showing ownership and responsibility
(adapted from the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*)

2. What services are provided

2.1 Water supply services

2.1.1 Supply of Drinking Water

Cowra Shire Council will supply a customer with drinking water to meet a customer's reasonable needs except:-

- in the case of planned or unplanned interruptions;
- in the case of drought or major operational difficulty;
- where Council is entitled to restrict or discontinue supply; or
- in the case of events beyond Council's reasonable control.

2.1.2 All Water Through an Independent House Service Pipe

Where a property has a direct street frontage to Council's water supply system, each connection from Council's water supply system to the customer's water supply system shall be by an independent house service pipe (refer *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 clause 152*).

2.1.3 All Water Connections to be Metered

All water services, including services to Council facilities and installations, within the control of Cowra Shire Council water supply system are to be individually supplied and metered in an approved manner in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006* and *AS 3500*.

It is an offence under the *Local Government Act 1993* to remove or tamper or interfere with the installed meter. Any person found removing or tampering or interfering with the meter may be subject to legal action.

2.1.4 Cutting off or Restricting Water Supply

Council may cut off or restrict the supply of water to premises (refer *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 clause 144*):-

- if any water meter used to measure that supply is out of repair or, in the opinion of Council, incorrectly registers the supply of water, or is not installed to the requirements of Council, or
- if any water supply charges in respect of the premises are unpaid, or
- if the water supply customer fails to comply with a lawful order or requirement of Council to repair or alter water connections, pipes, fittings or fixtures connected to Council's water supply system, or to remove, replace, alter, extend, repair or stop using a water pipe, fitting or fixture.

2.1.5 Drinking Water Quality

The drinking water supplied by Cowra Shire Council will comply with the health, taste and odour related guidelines provided in the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2004*,

developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council in collaboration with the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council.

2.1.6 Drinking Water Pressure

Cowra Shire Council will use its best endeavours to ensure that the drinking water supplied to a customer's property is at a minimum pressure of 150 kilopascals (15 metres head of water) at the point of connection to Council's water supply main, under normal operating conditions.

A number of designated low water pressure areas have been identified in various locations due to the ground elevation of the affected properties. In these locations property owners may be required to install and maintain approved private booster pump arrangements.

2.1.7 Supply of Reclaimed Water

Council does not provide a service to supply reclaimed water in the water supply system.

2.1.8 Life Support / Dialysis

If a customer requires a water supply to operate a life support machine Council should be notified.

Council will include the customer on a list of critical customers and ensure all practical steps are taken to provide an uninterrupted water service.

Advance notification of any planned interruption to the water supply service will be provided.

In addition, Council will make best endeavours to contact the customer as soon as possible in the event of any unplanned interruption and make alternative arrangements for your supply.

For customers on a dialysis machine, Council has also agreed to a reduction in the usage component of their water bill (refer to Section 3.2.4).

2.1.9 Fire Hydrants and other fittings

Cowra Shire Council installs and maintains hydrants in its water mains at convenient distances and places for the ready supply of water to extinguish fires and for operational purposes. Hydrants are installed in accordance with the Australian Standard 2419.

The only people approved to access or operate fire hydrants are members of the NSW and Rural Fire Brigades and Council's water supply staff. Council's water supply staff are the only persons approved to access or operate all other water supply fittings, including stop valves.

2.2 Factors affecting water supply service and infrastructure

2.2.1 Repairs and Maintenance

If Cowra Shire Council undertakes any work on or adjacent to a customer's property, Council will leave the affected area and immediate surrounds as near as possible to the state which existed prior to the works being undertaken, unless Council has agreed to a different arrangement with the customer.

2.2.2 Unplanned Interruptions

If there is an unplanned interruption to the water supply service, Cowra Shire Council will minimise the inconvenience by:-

- restoring the service as quickly as possible;
- providing as much information as practicable with available resources, such as how long the interruption is likely to last, based on the best information available at the time;
- flushing the water supply system to reduce the impacts of possible discoloured water caused by such events.

2.2.3 Planned Interruptions

Cowra Shire Council may need to arrange planned interruptions to water supply services to allow for regular maintenance of the water supply system.

Council will use its best endeavours to inform customers of the expected time and duration of any planned interruption, prior to the work being undertaken, in accordance with Council's target levels of service (refer to Section 2.3).

2.2.4 Restrictions during Drought or Emergency Situations

Cowra Shire Council may interrupt, limit or place restrictions on the supply of water including:-

- the purposes for which the water can be used, or
- the times when the water can be used, or
- the methods by which the water can be used, or
- the quantities of the water that can be used.

These restrictions may be applied if there is a drought, or if the available stored water, or the available capacity of supply, is so limited as to make extraordinary measures necessary in the general interest of water consumers. These restrictions will be made in accordance with Council's Drought Management Plan.

If restrictions are to be applied, Council will publish a notice in a newspaper circulating within Council's area.

2.2.5 Restrictions during Major Operational Difficulties

Cowra Shire Council may need to shut down a water supply source in the event that a major operational difficulty occurs. If customer demands for water are high at the time of such an event, Council may interrupt, limit or place restrictions on the supply or use of the water supply until such time as the operational difficulty is over.

2.2.6 Pipelines and Easements

The location and protection of water supply infrastructure remains the responsibility of the person and/or organisation undertaking any excavation or associated works. The "PPP" approach of "Plan, Pot-Hole and Protect" must be applied at all times when works are undertaken in the zone of influence associated with any water supply infrastructure.

Council is a member of 'Dial Before You Dig' and upon request will provide plan details and/or onsite locations to assist with the location of water supply infrastructure including buried pipelines and associated fittings.

However, any damage and/or subsequent failure of these assets due to excavation or other site works will be rectified by Council and the cost of such rectification works will be charged to those identified responsible for such damage and/or failure.

2.2.7 Catchment Areas, Pumping Stations and Reservoirs

Public access to water supply sites and infrastructure including; river intakes, pumping stations, water treatment plants and reservoirs will be restricted and strictly controlled at all times.

In general, it will not be permissible to install other equipment and/or infrastructure inside, attached or upon water supply infrastructure (eg. communication antennas and/or transmitters on reservoirs will not be permitted).

2.3 Water supply levels of service

2.3.1 Council's targeted levels of service

The target levels of service for the Cowra Shire Council water supply system are summarised in the table below. These levels of service are targets that Cowra Shire

Council aims to achieve. They are not intended to form a formal customer contract.

Description	Unit	Target Levels of Service
AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY		
Normal quantity available		
Design Domestic Peak Day	litres/tenement/day	5,000L
Domestic Annual Demand	kL/tenement/year	410kL
Total Annual Average Consumption	ML/year	3,200ML
Peak Consumption of the water treatment plant	ML/day	32ML
Pressure		
Minimum pressure when conveying 0.15L/s/tenement	metres head	15 (99% of time)
Minimum pressure	metres head	12
Maximum pressure	metres head	90m (town & villages)
Fire fighting		
Compliance with Building Code of Australia	service area	100% (current approx. 98%)
Consumption Restrictions in Droughts		As per Drought Management Plan
SUPPLY INTERRUPTIONS TO CONSUMERS		
Planned:		
- Notice given to domestic customers	hours	24
- Notice given to commercial customers	Working days	8
- Number of interruptions	no./year/customer	1
Unplanned:		
- Maximum duration	hours	8
- Maximum number /year/customer	number/year	3
RESPONSE TIMES (95 percentile)		
Defined as time to have staff on site to investigate the problem or answer inquiries plus extra for travel times outside town area.)		
Cowra	in business hours	1
	after business hours	2
Villages	in business hours	2
	after business hours	4
Rural	in business hours	4
MINOR PROBLEMS AND GENERAL INQUIRIES		
Oral inquiry	working days	2
Written inquiry	working days	Max. 9
WATER QUALITY	Microbiological, physical and chemical water quality	Comply with the 2004 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

3. Water Tariff and Billing

3.1 The Water Supply Tariff

3.1.1 Tariff Structure

Council's water supply tariff has the following attributes:-

Unconnected:

- That all properties within 225m of a water main and to which a water service can be provided will be levied the water supply "Availability Charge";

Connected:

- The tariff applies to all customers irrespective of their end use of the water;
- The tariff has two parts, an annual "Access Charge" and a consumption "Usage Charge";
- For residential consumers, the tariff is an "inclining block tariff", with a first-step Tier 1 Usage Charge for consumption up to a "usage threshold" and a second-step Tier 2 Usage Charge for greater usage;
- For non-residential consumers, the tariff has one step only;
- The Access Charge is dependent on the customer's meter size, being reflective of the customer's demands on the system. The Access Charge is proportional to the square of the size of the customer's water meter;
- The Usage Charge is applied to the amount of water measured through the water meter.

3.1.2 Water Supply Charges

The water supply charges that apply, access and usage, are determined each year in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

3.1.3 Fire Service Charges

Water consumption through fire services will be charged at the customer's standard Usage Charge. Water consumed through a fire service that is used to extinguish a fire will not be charged to the consumer. Evidence from the NSW Fire Brigade is required to verify the water usage used to extinguish a fire.

All fire services will be charged an Access Charge based on the size of the service equivalent to the meter access charge for industrial consumers.

Mains that service fire hydrant or sprinkler systems will be installed with a metered bypass around a check valve in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006* and *AS 3500*.

Council notes however that there are some existing fire services that are not in this layout.

Council will work with property owners whose fire services do not comply with the standard, with the view to installing a standard meter layout at the owner's cost.

3.1.4 Water Consumption

The annual water consumption for a property is taken to be the meter readings taken during that year and not necessarily to the water consumed during that year. This allows for variations in the meter reading cycle.

3.2 Concessions, Rebates and Variations

3.2.1 Community Service Obligations

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, Cowra Shire Council has resolved to provide a Community Service Obligation (CSO) to the following properties by refunding the water supply Access Charge (Usage Charges still apply when water is consumed):-

- Cowra Showground
- Cowra Hospital

3.2.2 Industry Incentive

Cowra Shire Council does provide an industry incentive to approved properties by refunding the water supply Access Charge (Usage Charges still apply when water is consumed). Currently the approved properties are:-

- Windsor Farm Foods
- Cowra Abattoirs

3.2.3 Pensioner Rebate

In accordance with Section 575 the *Local Government Act 1993*, Cowra Shire Council provides eligible pensioners with a reduction for water supply charges. The rebate is as per management plan for the current year.

The definition of an “eligible pensioner” is prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*.

3.2.4 Halls in Villages

Council will grant a rebate of 50% of water access charges each year to Trusts managing public property and public halls in villages serviced by its water supply systems, subject to a request for such funding being received from the organisation within six months of the beginning of each financial year ie. Prior to the end of December each year, funded from the water function, conditional upon the Council in whose area it is located matching that rebate each year.

3.2.5 Charitable Institutions & Churches

Church and charitable institutions properties which are not residences or rent return properties, are eligible for a rebate of 75% of annual access charges, subject to a request for such funding being received from the organisation within six months of the beginning of each financial year ie prior to the end of December each year, with all usage charges to be payable at commercial tariffs, and all rebates and concessions will be financed from Water function income.

3.2.6 Non Profit Sporting Groups

Non-profit sporting groups within Cowra Shire are eligible for a refund of half the charges for their usage of up to 10000 kL per annum, subject to a request for such funding being received from the organisation within six months of the beginning of each financial year ie. Prior to the end of December each year, on the basis that such consumers are charged at commercial tariffs. Further, such groups located outside the Shire will be charged at the rural tariff, but are required to seek dollar-for-dollar assistance from their Shire Council to assist at same levels as apply to Cowra Shire properties.

3.2.7 Dialysis Customers

Council will provide a rebate of an equivalent volume of water for customers within the supply system that use a dialysis machine on their property. The equivalent volume will be determined by Council on a case by case basis, subject to documentation of the volume of water used by the dialysis machine.

3.2.8 Education tariff

Education institutions serviced by the Cowra water supply system will be charged a special tariff as set out in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

3.2.9 Variations for Excessive Consumption

As a fundamental principle, the property owner is responsible for the payment of all water consumption registering on their water meter except in the following circumstances:

3.2.9.1 Defective Service

Council will consider varying, on a case-by-case basis, water consumption charges for residential services where:-

- The water service is constructed of material approved by Council for domestic use, and
- A defect in the service has occurred which is not readily visible or apparent, and
- Council is satisfied that there has been immediate and effective action to make repairs, and
- A copy of the invoice for repairs is provided to Council. The invoice must:-

- (a) Be from a licensed plumber;
- (b) Show the address where the work was carried out;
- (c) Detail the nature and location of repairs, including the type of the pipe material and length replaced;
- (d) Include a statement that the defect was not readily visible or apparent.

Council will not consider a variation for an unforeseen leak for fire services, properties serviced with 'rural poly' lines, designated private lines or commercial/industrial premises.

When a variation to an account is approved, the account will be recalculated as the higher of the following:

- half the charges incurred during the period or
- the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous three years.

Subsequent bills in the financial year will take into account the adjusted amount rather than the metered amount (for example, for calculation of any Tier 2 Usage Charges).

Any claims for subsequent leaks must demonstrate that sufficient work has been done to maintain the entire system and include an inspection report by a plumber, supported by a Statutory Declaration, advising that the entire service is in good condition and does not require replacement.

3.2.9.2 Defective Meters

A Defective Meter is one, which when tested by Cowra Shire Council shows a variation of plus or minus 2% as per Australian Standard AS 3565.1 – 2004. Water meters showing a variance outside that range will be removed and Council may charge for the supply of water on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous three years. Where a meter is under recording, Council will not seek to recover water charges.

3.3 Billing

3.3.1 Your Account

Cowra Shire Council will issue a water account outlining the water supplied and its Usage Charge and the water service Access Charge.

3.3.2 Changes to Water Prices

The water Usage Charge and Access Charge is set each financial year in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*

Because the reading of water meters is staggered throughout the year, the actual water consumption for each financial year is taken as the pro-rata consumption between the meter readings that fall on either side of the end of the financial year.

3.3.3 Overdue Accounts

Cowra Shire Council charges interest on overdue accounts at a rate set each year in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The interest accrues on a daily basis and the total amount is due and payable.

Council will take action to recover overdue accounts, including using external debt collection agencies and legal action.

3.3.4 Financial Hardship

Payment arrangements may be made where financial difficulties are being experienced. Payment arrangements should be finalised where possible prior to the next water account being levied so the problem is not compounded.

3.3.5 Cutting off or Restricting Supply

In accordance with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, Council may cut off or restrict the supply of water to premises:-

- if any water meter used to measure that supply is out of repair or, in the opinion of Council, incorrectly registers the supply of water, or
- if any rates or charges in respect of the water supplied to the premises are unpaid.

If Council cuts off the supply of water to premises, 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 the outstanding charges are paid.

Council may charge a fee, as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan, for:-

- the disconnection of the water supply;
- the reconnection of the water supply.

3.3.6 Additional Meter Readings

Council may arrange for an additional water meter reading and estimated bill outside the normal billing cycle after a request by the customer and the payment of the appropriate fee, as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

4. Water Conservation and Demand Management

4.1 The Wise Use of Water

4.1.1 Council's integrated approach

Cowra Shire Council encourages the wise use of water.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, owners, occupiers or managers must take any reasonable action to prevent waste and misuse of water.

Cowra Shire Council has developed a separate Demand Management Plan, which aims to reduce water consumption through the more efficient use of water and a reduction in water wastage.

4.2 Water Conservation Measures

Due to the limited capacity of both the water supply and raw water supply schemes to meet the demand of users on an “unrestricted basis”, Water Conservation Measures are in place.

These measures will assist individual customers to reduce and better manage their water use into the long term thereby reducing capital and operating costs of Council and delivering significant environmental and social benefits to the community.

The Water Conservation Measures applicable to the usage of water supply and reclaimed water supply are as per Annexure A of Drought Management Plan, October 2008 (Policy 2.59).

4.3 Water Loss Management

4.3.1 What is Water Loss?

Cowra Shire Council is committed to minimising water loss in the water supply system.

Water loss is the amount of water that Council supplies into the system that is not accounted for in the sum of individual customer meter readings.

Water losses could include:-

- Leaks in the water system;
- Unmetered water use, for example for fire fighting or mains flushing;
- Unauthorised water use, for example theft and illegal connections;
- Under-registration of customer meters;
- Errors in the water system meters.

4.3.2 Leak Reduction Program

Cowra Shire Council regularly checks reservoir zones in the water supply system to determine if major leaks are occurring.

Council uses its computerised Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor flows and reservoir levels in the water supply system. This information is used to target site investigations and leakage surveys where required.

Council encourages residents to report any leaks in its water system.

4.3.3 Pressure Reduction Program

Cowra Shire Council reduces excessive pressure in the system by appropriate reservoir zonings and by installing pressure reducing valves at strategic locations if required.

This reduces the quantity of water lost through leaks and also extends the life of watermains.

4.3.4 Watermain Renewals Program

Cowra Shire Council minimises the number of watermain breaks and water losses by a variety of ways including an active watermain renewals program to replace watermains that are in an ageing or poor performing condition.

4.3.5 Meter Replacement Program

Cowra Shire Council has a meter replacement program to replace meters that are ageing or no longer reading accurately. The replacement of meters occurs after analysis of Council's entire fleet of meters and is not based of customer requests.

Council will replace the meter at no cost to the customer under this program and will endeavour to notify the customer at the time of replacement.

4.4 Rainwater Tanks

4.4.1 Introduction

Cowra Shire Council encourages the installation of rainwater tanks retrofitted to homes or as a requirement of BASIX, noting that:-

- Rainwater is a valuable natural resource that should be collected for household use;
- Rainwater collection systems also assist to reduce some of the negative impacts associated with stormwater run-off particularly in urban areas;
- The use of a rainwater collection system is a way of conserving potable water supplies, as it can provide a water source for a range of household tasks, including toilet flushing, laundry and external uses such as garden watering, topping up swimming pools and car washing;
- Using rainwater will reduce water bills and reduce community infrastructure costs;
- Using rainwater can also aid self-sufficiency, providing a back-up supply in case of water restrictions caused by drought, peak supply shortage, or water quality problems;

- The NSW Department of Health advise that while Council's water supply remains the most reliable source of good quality drinking water "NSW Health supports the use of rainwater tanks for non-drinking uses, such as toilet flushing, washing clothes or in water heating systems";
- Should consumers wish to use rainwater for all domestic purposes, it is important that the advice contained in NSW Health Guidelines is considered in such situations;
- With respect to the long term impact of rainwater on domestic plumbing and hot water services, the NSW Code of Practice for Plumbing and Drainage (3rd Edition 2006) notes that "If rainwater is used in a hot water system then the system manufacturer can advise whether the sacrificial anode will need to be changed".

4.5 Greywater Reuse

4.5.1 Owner's Responsibility

The property owner is responsible for the impacts of using greywater on their premises. It is their responsibility to meet the performance standards for greywater reuse including that any adverse impacts on the amenity of their property and the surrounding lands are minimised.

Cowra Shire Council recognises the value of the manual collection and re-use of greywater (for example, by means of a bucket or similar receptacle).

4.5.2 Council Approval

If customers wish to install and operate a system for diverting greywater generated on their residential premises then the prior approval of Council is required.

However, in accordance with the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*, domestic greywater diversion may be carried out without the prior approval of Council if:-

- it is carried out in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*, and
- a sewage management facility is not installed on the premises concerned, and
- the following performance standards are achieved:-
 - the prevention of the spread of disease by micro-organisms;
 - the prevention of the spread of foul odours;
 - the prevention of contamination of water;
 - the prevention of degradation of soil and vegetation;
 - the discouragement of insects and vermin;
 - ensuring that persons do not come into contact with untreated sewage or effluent (whether treated or not) in their ordinary activities on the premises concerned;
 - the minimisation of any adverse impacts on the amenity of the premises concerned and surrounding lands.

4.6 Raw Water

Cowra Shire Council operates a raw water supply system within designated areas of the Cowra township. This supply is extracted from the Lachlan River and does not undergo standard treatment. It may be mixed with backwash water from the water filtration plant.

4.6.1 Aims

Cowra Shire Council aims to:-

- Ensure integrated and sustainable water resources management through fit for purpose resource substitution, reducing non-essential uses of potable water;
- Ensure optimum utilisation of the raw water system;
- Ensure safe and effective utilisation of raw water;
- Respond to current regulatory reforms, legislative requirements and state-wide changes in water management practice, environmental sustainability challenges and stakeholder objectives which ensure optimal water usage and maximum environmental benefit.

4.6.2 Permissible Uses

Permissible uses for Raw Water Supply have been determined by Council in accordance with NSW Health Department requirements,

Raw water use has been approved for the following non-potable purposes only:-

- Irrigation of sporting fields, parks, open spaces and garden areas;
- Toilet flushing;
- Vehicle washing and similar outdoor uses (e.g. washing paths and walls);
- Water bodies for passive recreation activities not involving primary & secondary water contact;
- Ornamental water bodies;
- Dust suppression during construction activities.

4.6.3 Non-permissible Uses

The use of raw water is not permitted for the following purposes:-

- Drinking, cooking or kitchen purposes;
- Bath, showers, hand basins or personal washing;
- Laundry clothes washing;
- Primary and secondary water contact recreation (for example, swimming pools, playing under sprinklers);
- Irrigation of crops for human consumption which are neither processed or cooked.

The use of raw water is subject to the same restrictions as potable water that may be imposed from time to time.

4.6.4 Specific Approvals for Non-permissible Uses

Some additional uses, listed below, may be approved subject to satisfactory system design and performance, which meets the approval from NSW Health and the aims of this policy as detailed in Clause 4.8.1 above.

Additional uses may include:-

- Laundry clothes washing;
- Swimming Pool top-up;
- Fish cleaning tables;
- Boat washing.

4.6.5 Section 68 Approvals

All Section 68 applications which include proposals for dual plumbing arrangements and use of alternate water sources are to be referred to the Director – Cowra Operations for concurrence, prior to the issuing of the approval.

4.6.6 Raw Water Meter

The cost of installing the reclaimed water meter is the User/Owner's responsibility.

The applicable cost is outlined each year in Council's the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

4.6.7 Raw Water Tariff

The structure of the raw water tariff matches that of the potable water tariff (refer Section 0 The Water Supply Tariff).

Similarly, the raw water charges that apply are determined each year in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

4.6.8 Billing

Users of raw water will be required to pay the raw water bill under the same terms and conditions as the potable water bill, (refer Section 3.3).

5. New Connections, Metering and Development Issues

5.1 New Connections

5.1.1 Water services installation

Before connecting to Council's water supply system, an application must be made on the appropriate form.

A connection may not be made in any way to Council's water supply system without the written approval of Council.

All applications will require the payment of appropriate fees and charges prior to the connection being made. The fee and charges are either or both of: a tapping and service connection fee and of a capital contributions charge. The charges for connection to the Cowra water supply system are specified in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan. The type and location of the connection to Council's water supply system is at the sole discretion of Council.

The minimum water service size is 20mm.

Unless an alternative is approved by Council, connection pipework from Council's water supply system to the meter assembly must be in copper pipe Type A to AS 1432 (copper alloy fittings to AS 3688).

All pipes, valves, devices, and fittings connected to Council's water supply system are to be rated for a safe working pressure of at least 1200 kPa (120 metres pressure head) and shall be fit for the purpose in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.

5.1.2 Water meter installation

The location of the water meter is at the sole discretion of Council.

The water meter must be accessible at all times to Council's meter readers. Wall recesses and/or fence setbacks must be provided to facilitate Council's access to water meters.

Council may enter your land to effect any necessary alterations, repairs to or replacement of the water service or water meter.

Only Council may install water meters that measure the water supplied from Council's water supply system.

5.1.3 Large water services

All applications for services larger than 25 mm are to include:-

- Hydraulic calculations that address flow, pressure and velocity requirements of AS3500.

- A plan, to a scale of not less than 1:100 that clearly indicates the position of the water meter on the property, the type of materials and nominal size of all water service pipes, the position of all stop valves, stop taps, backflow prevention devices and other valves, any water storage to be provided, including air gap requirements, overflow pipe arrangement and any booster pumps.
- Complete details of any fire service, booster pump or irrigation system installed.

5.1.4 Capital Contribution

For each new connection per allotment a capital contribution charge (DSP) (refer to 5.3.1) will be levied at the time of application as stated in Council's Management Plan current at the time of connection. The cost of the physical connection and Access Charge is in addition to the capital contribution charge. This clause to take effect from 1 January 2010.

5.1.5 Strata and multi residential developments

All individual strata properties are to be provided with a separate external (ie. located at the property boundary) or internal water meter to register water usage for each unit.

The location of internal water meters will be in foyer areas, secure and accessible for meter reading. A remote reading display facility shall be provided by the property owner at a central location easily accessible by Council water meter readers.

5.1.6 Non connection to Council's water supply system

Should a water service connection to Council's water supply system not be required due to the property not being developed (ie vacant land) or the use of alternative onsite water supply sources, which meet all statutory and guideline requirements including those of NSW Department of Health and NSW Fire Brigades, the property would then only be levied the Water Availability Charge for the land use.

The application of the water "Access Charge" is on the basis that fire fighting coverage and protection is still available and provided by Council's hydrants within the street frontage to the property.

Should a water supply service connection be required in the future then applicable water supply capital and distribution charges would be required to be paid and assessed on water availability and infrastructure capacity.

5.1.7 Connections in rural areas

The following conditions are imposed on connections to Council's water supply system in non-urban areas:-

- Connections on land zoned rural or rural residential will be made adjacent to the water main;

- On-site storage with a minimum capacity of 25 kilolitres must be provided by the property owner. No intermediate connections are allowed. The water level in the storage is to be controlled by a ball valve. A minimum air gap of 100mm must be maintained between the inlet and the overflow of the storage;
- The service may be governed by a flow control, nominally set to a limit of 13 litres per minute;
- A pressure reducing valve (PRV) may need to be fitted to the service. The purchase and maintenance of the PRV is the responsibility of the property owner;
- Where the private installation is required to cross over any privately owned land, a copy of that owner's written permission must be submitted for Council's record;
- Where the private installation is required to be placed in, or across, a road or rail reserve the Authority responsible is to be consulted and any conditions complied with. Council is to be provided with the Authority's written permission.

5.1.8 Fire services

Generally, Council's water mains will only be located on public road, public reserve, and pathway or water supply reserves. A property owner will normally be required to install a private water hydrant (or hydrants) wherever an existing or proposed development is out of the reach of a street hydrant on Council's water supply reticulation.

Where fire service coverage from a fire hydrant in accordance with AS 2419 is not practical either a private fire service or a tank storage alternative acceptable to Council, NSW Fire Brigades and/or NSW Rural Fire Service will be required.

All proposed fire services need to be submitted to Council after they have been certified by a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant and either the NSW Fire Brigades or NSW Rural Fire Service as relevant.

All fire hose reels shall be connected to a metered service (refer to the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*). Where this is not currently the case, Council will work with these property owners with the view to installing a complying connection, at the owner's cost.

5.1.9 Water pressure certificate

Council can provide a water pressure certificate for the hydraulic design of fire service installations, after receipt of the nominated flow rate and the payment of the appropriate fee, as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

5.1.10 Cross-connection control

Property owners may need to install a backflow prevention device as part of their connection to Council's water supply system.

All new connections where the processes carried out on the property could endanger health or potentially cause death must have a backflow prevention device installed in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006* and AS 3500.

Council may require existing premises connected to Council's water supply system to be provided with a backflow prevention device for containment at the property boundary.

The device shall be installed on the customer's side of the water meter with no connections between the water meter and the device. On a separate hydrant and sprinkler fire service on a non-residential property, the device shall be installed close to where the water service crosses the property boundary, prior to any booster assembly.

All backflow prevention devices are the responsibility of the property owner.

All backflow prevention devices must be registered with Council.

All backflow prevention devices must be tested on an annual basis with a "Backflow Prevention Inspection Testing and Maintenance Report" submitted to Council.

If Council determines that the backflow prevention device is unsatisfactory the property owner will be required to repair, maintain, test or replace the backflow prevention device, at their expense.

Backflow prevention devices may reduce the pressure and flow rate of the water supply to the premises. It is the owner's responsibility to undertake, at their cost, any works on the premises necessary to provide adequate water flow rate and pressure for their needs.

5.1.11 Multiple occupancy

All properties proposed for multiple occupancy, including multi-storey developments and cluster housing, shall have their water system designed and installed so that each occupancy has its own individual isolation valve and provision for an individual meter located in a position determined by Council (refer to the *NSW Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage 2006*).

Council will work with property owners that are not individually metered with the view to installing an individually metered connection, at the owner's cost. This may include the use of cost-effective technology such as "smart water meters" that allow remote meter reading.

Where developments are staged developments, Council may reduce the water Access Charge each year to the equivalent of the rate for the size of the service required for that stage of the development that has Council approval.

5.1.12 Easements

The location of water mains that will become part of Council's water system on private property is to be avoided. Where a water main cannot be located in a

dedicated public road reserve or access way, it may be located within an appropriately sized and registered easement, subject to Council's approval.

Where it is necessary, water mains are to be located in an easement in favour of Council and be of minimum width three metres. Unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary the water main shall be located in the centre of the easement.

A Registered Surveyor shall survey easements and certify the location of pipelines within the easements.

5.1.13 Private water hydrants

Where a property owner is to install private water hydrants within their internal water system, they are the responsibility of the owner.

5.1.14 Private water meters

Council may permit the use of privately owned meters within a private water system if they are of an authorised design and type.

If approved for use in a property owner's water system, Council may sell in-house water meters for a price set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

Council may undertake to read private water meters for an appropriate fee as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

5.2 Meter Issues

5.2.1 Meter security

The owner of premises on which there is located a water meter connected to Council's water supply system must, if required by Council to do so, protect the meter by enclosing it in a box constructed of metal, wood or other strong durable material and fitted with a lock and key approved by Council.

The owner of such premises must, if Council so requires, deposit with Council the key to the water meter or, if it is enclosed in a meter-box, the key to the box immediately after the meter or box is installed.

If the property owner wishes to have a lockable meter valve installed, Council will carry out this work after the payment of a fee to be determined upon application.

5.2.2 Meter testing

If a property owner considers that Council's water meter is not accurately recording water passing through it, they may request that Council test the meter after the payment of the appropriate fee, as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

If the test shows that the meter is over recording by more than three per cent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, Council will:-

- repair or replace the meter,
- refund any charge paid by you for the test, and
- adjust the latest account on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous three years.

If the test shows that the meter is under recording, by more than three per cent of the actual quantity of water passing through it, Council may:-

- repair or replace the meter, and
- adjust the latest account on the basis of a daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous three years.

5.2.3 Meter replacements

Council actively monitors the accuracy of its water meters and through its water meter replacement program targets inaccurate meters.

Council will replace the meter at no cost to you if the meter:-

- is found to be defective,
- can no longer be reasonably maintained, or
- is replaced as part of a meter replacement program.

Council will attempt to notify you at the time of replacement and advise you that a new meter has been installed. A mutually acceptable time will be negotiated with commercial customers for the replacement of meters.

5.2.4 Meter relocation

All water service and water meter relocations are at the owner's expense.

5.2.5 Upsizing/downsizing meters

The sizing of water meters is based on hydraulic considerations and Council's adopted standards.

If a property owner wishes to change the size of the installed water meter, they will need to apply to Council and pay any applicable fee, as set each year by Council in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

The application will need to be accompanied by hydraulic calculations signed off by a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant.

The cost of changing the water meter will be at the owner's expense.

Council is not obliged to approve an application to change the size of the water meter.

5.3 Development Issues

5.3.1 Headworks & distribution charges

Council has adopted a Development Servicing Plan [DSP] in accordance with Section 64 of the Local Government Act 1994 which details the water supply headworks and distribution charges to be levied upon development areas utilising Council's water supply infrastructure.

The headworks and distribution charges cover the cost of providing the water supply capacity either within Council's existing water supply system or through future capital works.

The DSP charges for various areas serviced by the Cowra water supply system are specified in the Revenue Policy of the Management Plan.

5.3.2 Augmentation of water supply system

Where a development is required by condition of development consent to augment water supply infrastructure the following conditions will apply:-

- The design of the augmentation works required shall be based upon guidelines contained within the NSW DPWS design manual and the AusSpec Design Specification;
- Where the infrastructure is included in Council's Section 64 Water Developer Servicing Plan, the work may be completed by the developer if approved by council and offset against the contribution for that development. Council may elect to undertake the work, in which case, the full contribution is required;
- Where Council undertakes the work, the contribution required will be calculated by Council and paid by the developer prior to the work proceeding. Where Council approves the developer to undertake the work and an offset against contribution is agreed, the design and the value of the work shall be approved by Council and agreed upon prior to the work commencing;
- Failure by the developer and/or consultant to obtain prior written design approval and cost agreement from Council will result in a nil offset being applied to the work;
- Where a developer requires water supply to their development prior to Council's timeframe as per DSP/Strategic Business Plan and subject to Council approval, the developer is liable for the full cost of required infrastructure as determined by council and or as per the DSP/Strategic Plan.

6. Drought Management

Cowra Shire Council adopted a Drought Management Plan in October 2008 (Policy 2.59 *Drought Management Plan*). This is a separate policy document that identifies Council's response to the potential or actual scarcity of water supply in Council's system.