

Water Charging

Purpose

Bridge Housing's water charging policy has been developed to align with the [NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#) and to ensure that tenants are charged for water usage in a fair and transparent way.

Scope

This policy is for all Bridge Housing social housing tenants. There are a small number of exceptions including those living in crisis or transitional accommodation and those not eligible to be charged for water usage in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act (2010).

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide this policy:

- Bridge Housing applies a weekly, flat rate water charge, based on the number of people living in your household
- Bridge Housing will charge for water usage weekly in advance along with rent charges
- Water charging rates will be applied weekly to assist tenants meet these costs through regular small payments
- Bridge Housing's water usage charge is equal to or less than the actual or estimated water usage charges for your property (i.e. based on the meter reading)
- Bridge Housing set the water usage rates for tenants living in both metered and non-metered properties.

Water Charging Method

Bridge Housing applies a weekly water usage charge based on a flat rate per household size. That means the amount a tenant is charged changes based on the number of people living in the property.

Please note the water charging rates may be reviewed and adjusted annually to align with changes in the consumer price index.

The table below sets out the water usage rates including the maximum payable.

Household Size	Water Charge per Week
1 Person	\$5.00
2 People	\$7.00
3 People	\$9.00
4 People (MAX)	\$10.50

Advising tenants of water charges

Bridge Housing will advise tenants of the water charging rates at the start of their tenancy. After this, tenants will be advised of any change to the rate as part of the bi-annual Rent Review or when there is a change in approved household members. Tenants must advise of any changes to their household in line with [Bridge Housing's Changes to a Household Policy](#).

Payment of Water Charges

Tenants can pay their water charge in multiple ways, just like rent payments.

The charge accrues weekly, and can be paid through Centrepay, EFTPOS terminals or bank transfer. Bridge Housing recommends tenants pay their water charges fortnightly with their rent.

Annual Review of Water Charges

Bridge Housing's water charging policy commits to a minimum review of tenant charges annually to ensure charges are equal to or less than actual water usage for the properties.

Water accounts will be reviewed in accordance with [NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines](#).

In the case of any overpayment, a refund will be issued to the tenant as either credit on their rent or non-rent account.

Tenants Moving Properties or Exiting Bridge Housing

If a tenant is transferring to another property or ending their tenancy, Bridge Housing will charge for water usage up to the end of the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Water and the Environment

Bridge Housing is committed to managing water use wisely in our homes. Water usage will be monitored on a regular basis to avoid waste and excess use. Our commitment includes responding promptly to repair requests to fix leaking taps and pipes.

We encourage our tenants to be mindful of water usage and report any leaks to our repairs team.

In addition, Bridge Housing tenants are required to comply with any water restrictions put into place by the local water authority.

What if I am having trouble paying my water charges?

If you are concerned about your rent or water charges or are struggling to make payments, please call us on **8324 0800** and speak to your Housing Manager.

We can talk to you about repayment plans and/or recommend specialist support. Bridge Housing partners with financial support services who can provide you support and assist you to better manage your money.

Appeals and Complaints

Tenants can appeal decisions relating to water charging in community housing but cannot appeal the decision to charge for water usage based on a flat rate charge.

Appeals and complaints about water charges can be lodged over the phone, mail, in person or via online form on our website www.BridgeHousing.org.au

If you have any queries about water charges or would like to appeal a charge made to your account, the first step is to contact your Housing Manager on **8324 0800**.

If you are unhappy with their decision, you can lodge a first-tier appeal. Their decision will be reviewed by a manager and confirmed back to you in writing.

If you are not satisfied with Bridge Housing's decision, you are entitled to lodge a second level appeal to the **Housing Appeals Committee (HAC)**. The HAC is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of community organisations and Housing NSW. This includes decisions in relation to the way Bridge Housing has calculated and applied its water usage contribution charges.

For more information on the Housing Appeals Committee call 1800 629 794 or go to www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

Further information on making an appeal is contained in the Bridge Housing [Compliments, Complaints & Appeals Policy](#).

Related Documents

- Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- NSW Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines 2021