

# Assistance for Undetected Water Leaks Policy

## 4.19

### Purpose

Provide a consistent and clear approach to how Riverina Water can financially support customers who have been impacted by undetected leaks.

### Policy Statement

Riverina Water is not responsible for plumbing beyond the water meter. However, where possible, Council tries to support those customers who may have been impacted by an undetected leak at their property.

Undetected leaks are typically discovered due to an unexplained increase in usage in the next quarterly billing cycle. This policy details the process and criteria to be eligible for assistance with a water account.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Maintain a consistent outcome for all Riverina Water customers
- Provide members of the public with the criteria that must be met when applying for assistance following an undetected leak

### Scope

This policy is relevant to all Riverina Water County Council customers who own a residential or commercial property within our supply area.

### Definitions

- **Undetected Leak:** An undetected leak is where there is no ongoing visible sign of water loss, and both the fault and/or loss could not have been reasonably identified prior to Riverina Water issuing you an account.
- **Licensed Plumber:** Any individual wishing to perform any type of commercial, industrial or residential draining, plumbing, or gas fitting work in New South Wales must

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possess a plumbing licence issued by New South Wales Fair Trading. NSW plumbing licences are limited to water, sanitary and sewerage plumbing only.

- **Similar consumption:** Comparing a customer's water consumption with previous quarters and/or the same period in previous years.
- **Assistance:** A reduction in an eligible customer's bill when it is recalculated following an undetected water leak.

## Principles

Applications for assistance following an undetected leak are to be submitted via the undetected leak assistance form on Riverina Water's website or by requesting a hard copy from Riverina Water.

Applicants will only be considered if the undetected leak assistance form is completed in full, all required information is enclosed and the request meets the eligibility criteria.

To be eligible for assistance, applications must meet and address all the criteria as outlined on the undetected leak assistance form.

Riverina Water customers are required to provide evidence from a licensed plumber once the leak has been repaired (copy of tax invoice will suffice).

Riverina Water will not accept applications for assistance when the high consumption is caused due to a leak that can be reasonably be discovered, is a known issue or due to faulty plumbing fixtures.

Further information on eligibility and ineligibility is as follows:

### Applications must meet the following criteria:

- The fault must be repaired by a licensed plumber
- The application for assistance must be submitted within 30 days of the due date shown on your bill
- No previous assistance for an undetected leak has been granted to the owner/s of the property within the last three years

### Applications may be denied in instances where:

- Water is found seeping, spraying, pooling, bubbling, running, flowing, gushing etc.
- There is dampness on the surface, in walls or floors

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- There is additional or unusual growth of grass or vegetation
- The loss of water was the result of faulty plumbing fixtures (eg taps, toilet cisterns, hot water services, cattle troughs, sprinkler or irrigation systems)
- The property is connected via a non-standard water service
- The leak is due to a known or recurring issue
- The fault was repaired by someone other than a licensed plumber

Consideration may be given to applicants with exceptional circumstances.

#### Types of assistance

Riverina Water provides two types of standard assistance depending on the size of the undetected leak. This is typically referring to the meter read and subsequent bill.

<b>Eligible leak size</b>	<b>Assistance provided</b>
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Less than 200kl	Customer charged at same time last year, or if not possible or appropriate, a suitable estimated amount.
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Greater than 200kl	Provide a 50% rebate on the consumption, less the average usage over the previous 5 quarters. Total rebate will not exceed \$2000. A suitable estimated amount may be used if previous consumption is not appropriate.
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In cases where there has been substantial water loss between the time of the meter reading or a customer has identified the leak outside of the billing cycle, applications should include an image of the water meter so this usage can be factored into any rebate.

From time to time, extremely high water bills or genuinely exceptional circumstances may arise, in which case the matter may be referred to the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Board to determine reasonable support beyond the scope of the above.

#### Assessment

Applications will be assessed within 10 business days; excluding those that may have exceptional circumstances or are awaiting further information, in which instance customers will be advised regularly of any update.

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Customers who are dissatisfied with an assessment may provide, in writing via email or letter, further information for consideration. Reviews will be completed by the Director Corporate Services, and/or the Chief Executive Officer as required. The outcome of any review is final.

#### Reporting

Riverina Water will report the total amount of assistance provided to customers to the Board at the conclusion of each financial year.

### **Non-Compliance**

Non-compliance with the adopted policy may be considered a breach under Council's Code of Conduct. As such, any suspected or known non-compliance will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Customers found to be dishonest in an application for an undetected leak may have future applications denied.

<b>Policy number</b>	<b>4.19</b>
Responsible area	Corporate Services
Approved by	Riverina Water Board – Res 25/071
Approval date	26 June 2025
Legislation or related strategy	N/A
Documents associated with this policy	Adopted Fees & Charges
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#### **Data and document control**

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Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative or other changes, therefore this document is uncontrolled when printed.

## **END OF POLICY STATEMENT**