

# Downsize, Disconnect or Nominal Sizing of Water Meter Services

For more information contact  
Shoalhaven Water

**City Administration Centre**  
Bridge Road (PO Box 42)  
Nowra NSW Australia 2541  
P: 1300 293 111

[water@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au](mailto:water@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.shoalwater.nsw.gov.au](http://www.shoalwater.nsw.gov.au)

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## 1 Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Council Policy is to provide guidance to customers on making an application to downsize, upsize, disconnect or nominal sizing of water meter service connections and the process involved.

## 2 Objectives

### 2.1 Statement

The introduction of Best Practice Pricing (2003) contains as a key element of the pricing structure for the Water and Wastewater Availability Charge, a cost based on the size of the water meter service connection.

Customers have the option of being able to downsize the water meter service connection in order to reduce the price impact of availability charges. There may also be a future need to upsize connections which have previously been approved for downsize. The downsize of the water meter service connection is not an automatic option and must be considered in light of the need to provide appropriate water supply services to the premises.

### 2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all service connections.

## 3 Definitions

Term	Meaning
<i>Engineer</i>	Person with appropriate qualifications in the Engineering field and eligible for membership with the Institute of Engineers Australia.
<i>Certificate of Compliance</i>	Statement from the Water Supply Authority certifying that all Water and Sewerage requirements for a development have been fully satisfied under the Water Management Act.
<i>Nominally Sized Meter</i>	Where a water meter's physical size is not used for billing purposes. E.g., a 25mm water meter is installed at a property, but the owner is charged for a 20mm service. This billing method is used instead of physically replacing a meter with one of a smaller size.
<i>Shoalhaven City Council (Council)</i>	The organisation responsible for the delivery of services in the Shoalhaven City local government area.
<i>Shoalhaven Water</i>	Shoalhaven Water is Council's water utility.
<i>Single Dwelling</i>	A property of not more than 1 building e.g., does not contain dual occupancy, strata or granny flat.

## 4 Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Provisions

#### 4.1.1 Application Requirements

Applications must be:

- Submitted using the applicable application form
- Signed by the property owner or Secretary of the Body Corporate if Strata
- Accompanied by a Consulting Engineers or Hydraulic Report and other supporting documentation as required by Council (the costs incurred in providing the supporting documentation will be at the applicant's expense)

#### 4.1.2 Engineer's Report

The submission of an application and any recommendation contained within the accompanying Consulting or Hydraulics Engineers Report does not place any obligation on Council to approve an application. All applications are subject to assessment by Shoalhaven Water and Councils Planning & Development Group. All applications are subject to final determination and approval by the Director, Shoalhaven Water or delegate.

#### 4.1.3 Approval Considerations

The determination and approval by Council of an application and the final nomination of the appropriate size of the water meter service connection will be based on but not necessarily limited to;

- The effect a downsize will have on the quality and quantity of water pressure and flow.
- Development Conditions applicable to the premises.
- The effect of downsize on backflow prevention devices,
- The need to provide adequate function of fire support systems e.g., hose reel or hydrant etc, and conform with the relevant Building Code of Australia and NSW Plumbing and drainage codes
- The nature of the premises and likely impact for onsite residents i.e., units, caravan parks etc, and
- Fire and Rescue NSW requirements.

The Engineer's report is to address the issues indicated above.

There is no limit to which an application for downsize of water meter service connection can be rendered for assessment. The determination of an appropriate downsize however will be approved based on the request by the customer but also on the requirements of Shoalhaven Water in providing adequate and appropriate water services together with the requirements of any approved Development Application or meeting various compliance requirements.

All applications for water meter service connections will be effective and adjustments undertaken from the issue date of the next water account following the submission of the application subject to the application being completed in all respects and accepted for determination. Availability charges at the

higher rate will however continue to be levied until approval is granted. Adjustments to availability charges will be undertaken only once approval is given.

Applications involving single dwellings with a metered service of 25mm and where that service is not supporting a fire support system do not require the rendition of a Consulting or Hydraulic Engineer's Report.

#### 4.1.4 Nominally sized meters for billing purposes

Nominal sizing of meters will be conducted in the same fashion as downsizing. It is important that Council ensure compliance with the various building codes and firefighting requirements. Nominal sizing where fire services are involved will be limited to the level of connection needed for the property; were a fire service not installed. Nominal sizing of meters for other reasons (exceptional one-off) will require substantiation and will be considered on the merit.

Council will reserve the right to review the status of properties approved for nominal sizing.

The approved nominal sizing of meters will be contained and highlighted within Council's water billing system.

#### 4.1.5 Costs

The responsibility for costs in respect of the policy are as follows:

- Costs to undertake disconnection or nominal sizing of meters will be borne by Council,
- Costs to undertake the downsize or subsequent upsize of meters will at the applicant's expense,
- The costs to supply and undertake the necessary works will be provided as an estimate on application and will be payable before works are commenced. In the estimate of costs Council will allow for a credit based on the difference in the price of the current connected meter size against that of the new meter size. Council will reserve the right to re-use the replaced meter as required.
- Costs to provide Consulting Engineer's or Hydraulic reports or other supporting documentation in respect of disconnection, nominal sizing, downsizing or upsizing, will be the responsibility of applicants.

## 4.2 Implementation

The Water Business Services Department of Shoalhaven Water has responsibility for implementing this policy.

## 5 Related Legislation, Policies or Procedures

Local Government Act 1993

## 6 Risk Assessment

Risk Category	Comments and risk mitigation
Operational	<p>A lack of clear policy can lead to inconsistent service delivery, inefficiencies, and increased administrative burdens. Staff may struggle to interpret vague policies leading to diminished service delivery. In particular, the burden of ensuring proper and adequate delivery of water to all connected properties in the local government area lies with Shoalhaven Water.</p> <p>Strong policy statements ensure proper service delivery to the high standards we expect to deliver.</p>
Strategic	<p>Shoalhaven Water is widely acknowledged as a leader in our industry. Our long-term goals are to maintain this leadership position and continue to be recognised for our service standards.</p> <p>The development and maintenance of service-oriented policies help to meet these goals.</p>
Reputational	<p>As an industry leader, Shoalhaven Water takes its responsibility for the fair delivery of water across the local government area as a prime consideration. A thorough policy for the provision of appropriately sized water meters reinforces our position as a leader in the industry and within our community.</p> <p>Management of our brand is an important area of our overall business, and a robust policy ensures a uniform approach to our customer base, projecting high level customer service standards.</p>
Social / Economic	<p>Our customer base is at risk from externalities such as economic downturns, change in interest rates or government policy direction above local government.</p> <p>A consistent policy position in this area ensures we are able to fairly spread the cost of providing our services to the broader community.</p>

## 7 Monitoring and Review

In accordance with S 165(4) of the Local Government Act 1993, this policy will be reviewed within one year of the election of every new Council.

## 8 Ownership and Approval

### 8.1 Public Policy

Responsibility	Responsible Owner
Directorate	Shoalhaven Water – Water Business Services Department – Water Revenue Unit
Endorsement	Director Shoalhaven Water
Approval/Adoption	Council