



ROUS
COUNTY COUNCIL



Things you need to know: water service connection with Rous County Council

This booklet includes the terms and conditions of connecting to the Rous County Council supply, account payment information, privacy information, how to contact us and much more

What is this document about?

This document covers the terms and conditions of the services which we (Rous County Council) supply to you the customer. If you are thinking of becoming a Rous County Council customer, this document will tell you what you need to know to make an informed decision on your water supply.

It is important that you understand the terms and conditions that apply to a water supply connection with Rous County Council. Please take a few minutes to read through this document.

The first section of this document covers the terms and conditions that apply to a customer that has a water supply connection with Rous County Council. This includes our obligations and your obligations.

The second section of this document contains extras – useful information that you may need. This includes items like how to change your mailing address, how to check for water leaks, and much more. It is important that our customers are informed, and this is our way of making sure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision.

Questions? Here's how to find us

Feedback and enquiries

If you have feedback or an enquiry relating to your account, payment options, pensioner concession entitlements or require further information about the water supply, you can contact us from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday on (02) 6623 3800.

Report a fault

In the event of a burst water main near your property, water quality or water pressure problems, please contact us on (02) 6623 3800 from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Outside these hours please call the after-hours service on (02) 6626 6955.

Office hours	8.30am to 4.30pm - Monday to Friday
Postal address	PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480
Phone	(02) 6623 3800
Email	council@rous.nsw.gov.au
Website	www.rous.nsw.gov.au

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Introduction

The purpose of this document

This document is intended to set out the terms and conditions which the customer agrees to be bound by for the duration of their relationship with Rous County Council. The information contained within this document is offered to any applicant to ensure that they have available to them all information about applying for a direct connection with the Rous County Council trunk main system. This document should be read in full prior to submitting an application for: a new retail water service connection; a transfer of an existing connection, legacy or otherwise.

Definitions: what do we mean?

account assistance means options to support retail water customers to pay their water account.

backflow prevention device means a device that ensures no unintended reversal of water flow in a pipeline can occur whereby water that has already passed beyond the water meter assembly into the property owner's pipeline returns to Rous County Council's water supply main.

customer means the owner of the property that is supplied with water.

deduct meter system means a legacy system whereby a water meter is located after the primary water meter and measures water supplied to a connection that is downstream of the primary water meter. Water usage registered by the deduct water meter is deducted from the total water usage registered by the primary water meter to calculate the water usage charges for both the deduct water meter and the primary water meter.

master meter system means a legacy system whereby the meter is located at the point of connection for multiple properties to the water supply main. The master meter is upstream of all sub-meters and is used to register total water consumption.

primary water meter means the water meter through which all water for the connection flows. The total water usage registered by the primary water meter is used to calculate the water usage charges for both the deduct water meter and the primary water meter.

trunk main system means a water supply main that interconnects source(s), treatment plant(s), and reservoir(s), and/or supply areas that are normally without direct property owner connections.

Retail water service connections to bulk supply

Rous County Council is responsible for around 2000 retail water services which are directly connected to its trunk main system. The Rous County Council trunk main system operates differently from a reticulated supply that would typically be available in an urban residential area supplied by reservoirs.

Rous County Council operates the system according to the demands required by the various service areas and the trunk main system operates at significantly fluctuating pressures and flow rates than that experienced in an urban residential area supplied by reservoirs.

Water service connections to the trunk main system may also experience significant pressure differences and could experience a lack of supply during peak demand periods.

Rous County Council also varies its operating procedures from time to time due to system augmentations, variations in system demands or other changes of the network. Therefore, **Rous County Council is unable to guarantee a continued supply at a nominated pressure.**

Any connection provided to the trunk main system is at the applicant's risk in regard to the design and installation of private fire hydrants, fire sprinkler systems, fire hose reels, domestic fixtures and the like.

New retail water service connections

Approval for a new retail water service connection to Rous County Council's bulk supply system is only granted where such a connection conforms to the following:

- Connections will be metered.
- Connections are normally for domestic purposes only.
- The meter shall be located at the property boundary.
- The downstream meter connection point will represent the limit of Rous County Council's supply responsibility.
- Rous County Council will provide a backflow prevention device in a standard 20mm water service connection where the water is used solely for domestic purposes. Where the water is used for other purposes the connection will require a backflow prevention device to be fitted at the applicant's cost.
- A minimum water pressure of 200kPa at the meter.

All water supply works, including connections and fittings, installed from the meter downstream are to be carried out by a licensed plumber to the required Australian standard.

Rous will provide a ball valve on the downstream side of the meter which will become the responsibility of the property owner and is to be used as the water service isolation valve.

Applications for a retail water service connection must:

1. Be made using the Water Service Application form by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800.
2. Be made by the property owner.
3. Be accompanied by the service connection fee and other applicable fees, a list of which is available on the Rous County Council website or by calling our office.
4. Contain details of the intended water use.

The property owner is responsible for:

1. The payment for all metered water as calculated by Rous County Council and all other charges associated with the supply of water on or before the due date of the account. Note: In the event of a meter not registering, an average charge will apply.
2. The provision and maintenance of all plumbing fittings and appliances beyond the meter.
3. Providing ready access to the Rous County Council meter at all reasonable times. This includes clearing of vegetation, mulch and dirt from around the water meter.
4. Installation and maintenance of backflow prevention devices in accordance with Rous County Council's policy.

Existing retail water service connections transferred due to property sale

Approval for transferring a retail water service connection to Rous County Council's bulk supply system is only granted where such a connection conforms to the following:

- Connections will be metered.
- Connections are normally for domestic purposes only.
- The downstream meter connection point will represent the limit of Rous County Council's supply responsibility.
- Rous County Council will provide a backflow prevention device to a standard 20mm water service connection where the water is used solely for domestic purposes. Where the water is used for other purposes the connection will require a backflow prevention device to be fitted at the applicant's cost.
- A minimum water pressure of 200kPa at the meter.

In addition, Rous County Council has a number of existing legacy water connections that do not meet the current supply standards but are allowed to continue supply. Rous County Council will advise the new property owner/s (or their representative/s) of any arrangements relating to their legacy (non-standard) water connection at the time that a certificate as to rates and charges is issued (section 603 certificate under the *Local Government Act 1993*).

Note: Where the water meter is part of a deduct or master meter system any consumption discrepancy is the responsibility of all the property owners on the system.

All plumbing, including connections and fittings, installed from the meter onwards are to be carried out by a licensed plumber to the required Australian standard.

Applications for a retail water service transfer must:

1. Be made using the Water Service Application form, available by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800; and
2. Be made by the property owner; and
3. Contain details of the intended water use.

The property owner is responsible for:

1. The payment for all metered water as calculated by Rous County Council and all other charges associated with the supply of water on or before the due date of the account. Note: In the event of a meter not registering, an average charge will apply.
2. The provision and maintenance of all plumbing fittings and appliances beyond the meter.
3. Providing ready access to its meter at all reasonable times. This includes clearing of vegetation, mulch and dirt from around the water meter.
4. Installation and maintenance of backflow prevention devices in accordance with Rous County Council's policy.

Note: To check if the property you have purchased has a backflow device installed, please contact us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800.

Responsibility for repairs and maintenance

Rous County Council is responsible for repair and maintenance of all pipes and fittings from the water supply pipeline up to and including the meter. The property owner is responsible for the repair and maintenance of all pipes and fittings beyond the meter. Refer to Figure 2.1 from AS/NZS 3500.1:2003 which is provided below for your information.

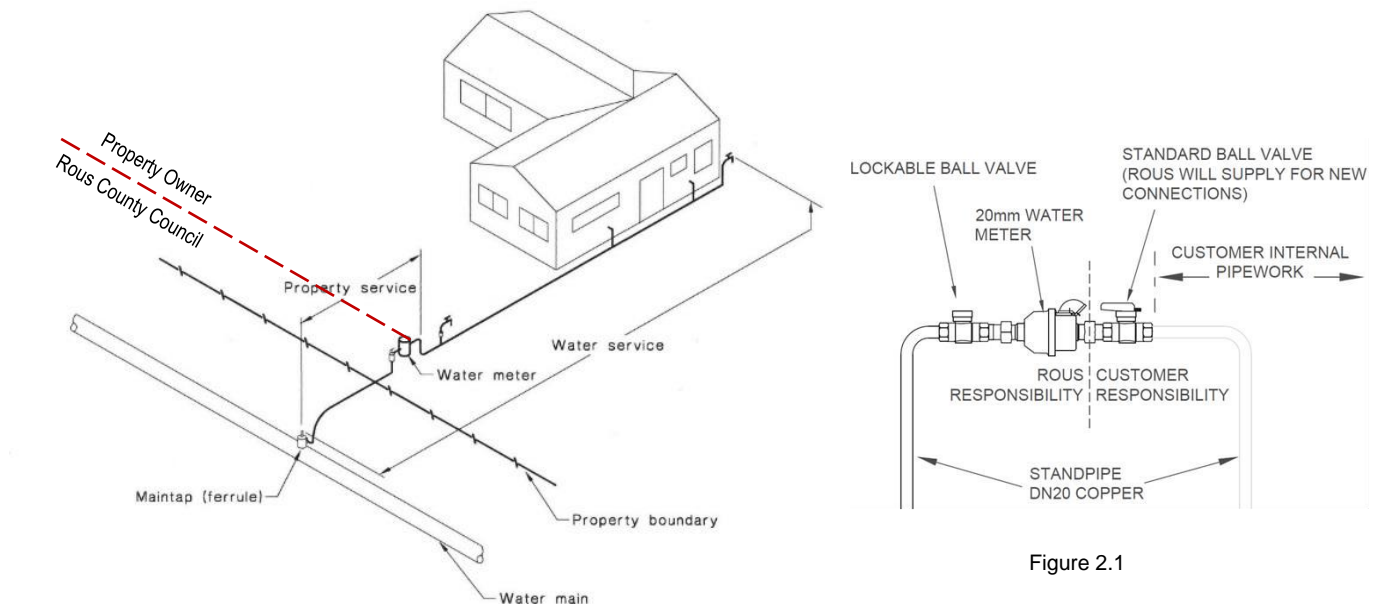


Figure 2.1

Where legacy connections exist, the water meter may be located some distance away from the customer on a neighbouring property or road reserve. The water service beyond the meter is the sole responsibility of the property owner and may not be covered by an easement or pipeline agreement.

Water leaks

Rous County Council is responsible for leaks which occur in the water supply pipelines before the water meter. Any leak located in the water service after the water meter is the responsibility of the property owner. The property owner may choose to advise Rous County Council of any located leak in the event the property owner will require account assistance.

If you locate or suspect a leak before or at the water meter (i.e., a leak within the Rous County Council trunk main system, contact Rous County Council on (02) 6623 3800 from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday to report the issue. Outside these hours please call the after-hours service on (02) 6626 6955.

Service interruptions

Where possible, Rous County Council will give notice to property owners of an intention to interrupt or limit the supply of services. This will not occur for unplanned works such as pipeline breaks.

Rous County Council may temporarily disrupt supply for the purpose of repair or maintenance but is not responsible for any damage arising from an interruption.

It is recommended that a small amount of drinking water is stored and available for use in the unlikely event of unplanned interruptions to water supply.

Right of entry to land

The provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* provide Rous County Council with the power of entry to land. Entry to land is required for pipeline breaks and maintenance, maintaining easements, meter reading, pipeline inspections, pipeline investigations, and other necessary works. Rous County Council will give notice to property owners of an intention to enter the property, however, this may not occur for meter reading, or unplanned works such as pipeline breaks.

Withdrawal of service

Water meters are the property of Rous County Council. The property owner is responsible for any damage, interference or neglect which causes the meter to malfunction. Rous County Council does not accept responsibility for loss of water, or resultant cost, on the property owner's side of the meter. Wilful damage of Rous County Council's infrastructure may lead to withdrawal of service.

Water charges and issuing of accounts

Rous County Council reads your water meter and issues your water account every three months.

If Rous County Council replaces the water meter that supplies your property during the quarter, a water account will be issued after the water meter is replaced, therefore, you may receive two water accounts during the one quarter. The first water account issued will be for water consumption and facility charges up to the date the water meter was replaced and the second water account issued will be for the water consumption and facility charges on the new water meter for the balance of the quarter.

All water used is charged for at a set rate per kilolitre, and a facility charge is also payable each quarter. A copy of Rous County Council's Fees and Charges is available on the Rous County Council website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone.

The rate per kilolitre and the facility charge are reviewed annually. If an increase is to occur, it takes effect with the first water account issued after 1 October.

Your water account contains the following information:

- water meter number
- previous and current water meter readings
- account period to which it applies
- total amount due
- usage and facility charge
- other fees and charges payable
- date payment is due
- your postal address and property number
- address of the property at which the charges in the account have been incurred
- options for method of payment
- a comparison of your water usage where available
- contact telephone numbers for account enquiries.

If you do not nominate a postal or email address, the account will be sent to the property to which the water supply is provided; or your last known postal address.

Interest on outstanding accounts is calculated daily and if a customer's payment is not honoured for any reason, Rous County Council reserves the right to pass on any costs incurred. For example, where there is a dishonour fee charged by a financial institution. All fees and charges for water supplied must be paid by the property owner within 30 days of the account being issued.

Disconnections or restricting services

Please be aware that Rous County Council may disconnect or restrict the water supply to the property if an account is not paid or arrangements for payment of the account are not met or made. The water supply may also be restricted or disconnected when backflow prevention obligations are not complied with. Further information is available on the Rous County Council website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone.

If the water service is no longer required by the property owner, a disconnection from the service may be approved provided that Rous County Council is first notified of the intention and the prescribed disconnection fee is paid. Reconnection is subject to compliance with the applicable terms and conditions for the connection and payment of the applicable reconnection fee. Reconnection to the Rous County Council network may not always be possible once disconnection has occurred. A copy of Rous County Council's Fees and Charges is available on the Rous County Council website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone.

Change to property ownership

The property owner is responsible for notifying Rous County Council of an intention to sell the property in advance of the actual sale or transfer of ownership.

Collection and use of personal information

Information such as your name, postal or email address and water meter reading are required by Rous County Council in order to calculate your water charges, issue your water account and for other purposes related to Rous County Council's activities including the assessment of water saving initiatives. Rous County Council collects this information in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* under which you have rights of access and correction. Any request for your information received from a third party must be in writing and accompanied by a signed authorisation from you prior to access being granted. The only exception to this, is information that can be de-identified or pooled, and that is to be used for a purpose consistent with the activities undertaken by Rous County Council. Rous County Council agrees to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the personal information collected by it is stored securely. You may access or correct your personal information by contacting Rous County Council by telephone on (02) 6623 3800 or by writing to: General Manager, Rous County Council, PO Box 230, LISMORE, NSW, 2480.

Frequently asked questions

What payment methods can I use to pay my water account?

The following payment methods are available:



Hassle free, automatic account payment. Pay your full account on the due date or make regular fixed payments. Go to www.rous.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 6623 3800 for further details about direct debit.



Telephone and Internet Banking – BPAY. Contact your bank or financial institution to make this payment from your savings or cheque account. Go to www.bpay.com.au for further details.



Post your cheque made payable to Rous County Council to PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480 or present your water account at the Rous County Council office to pay in person by cheque, EFTPOS, Visa* or Mastercard* (*credit card surcharge applies).



Pay in-store at Australia Post, online at www.postbillpay.com.au, by phone on 13 18 16 or via the AusPost app.

I am having difficulty paying my water account, what assistance is available?

Rous County Council understands that from time to time our retail customers may experience difficulties paying their water account. We have a range of account assistance options to support retail water customers to pay their account. Information on these options is available on the Rous County Council website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800. When calling please ask to speak with a representative from our Water Billing team.

Are any concessions available for pensioners?

Yes. Retail water customers that hold a current Centrelink Concession Card, a Department of Veteran's Affairs Concession Card, a letter from the Department of Veteran's Affairs, or are in receipt of another concession as outlined in the *Social Security Act 1991* may be eligible for a government funded pensioner concession. You must apply to Rous County Council for the concession and establish your eligibility.

If you are eligible, Rous County Council will ensure that the concession is granted from the commencement of the next quarterly charging period after which your application for a concession was lodged.

Application forms are available on Rous County Council's website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800. When calling please ask to speak with a representative from our Water Billing team.

Is assistance provided for customers that require water dependent medical equipment?

Yes. If you require a water supply to operate home based haemodialysis or other water dependent health care equipment you may be eligible for an annual allowance.

Rous County Council will endeavour to safeguard your consistent water supply by contacting you in advance of any planned interruption or as soon as possible in the event of an unplanned interruption.

Information on the annual allowance is available on Rous County Council's website or by visiting our office or contacting us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800. When calling please ask to speak with a representative from our Water Billing team.

How do I read my water meter?

A water meter measures the volume of water that passes through it. Every property has its own water meter, usually located in line with the front boundary of the property.

There are two types of water meters in use:

- Water meters which are manually read. The water meter reader physically sights the water meter reading.
- Water meters which are remotely read. The water meter has a cyble unit attached to the top which transmits the reading by radio frequency to the water meter reader's handheld reading device. These water meters can also be manually read.

To read your meter, record the numbers from left to right. The black numbers register kilolitres (a kilolitre is a thousand litres). Only this measurement is used to calculate your water account. The red numbers register hundreds of litres, tens of litres, and litres. An example of the meter dials is shown below:

0	0	1	3	7	4	6	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Water account reading 137 kilolitres

How do I check for water leaks?

Leaks can occur in household water pipes, fittings and appliances. They are not always visible, so the best method of detection is to read your water meter regularly. If your consumption increases dramatically for no obvious reason, there could be a hidden leak.

Turn off every tap in the house and check the reading of your water meter. Do not use any water (including the toilet) for at least 1 hour or overnight and check the meter before and after. If the reading has increased without using any water in and around the house, you have a leak.

Check the toilet system by putting a drop of food colouring into the cistern. If the colour appears in the toilet bowl before flushing, you have a leak.

If you locate or suspect a leak in the installed plumbing after the water meter, contact your plumber for advice on repairs. You may also advise Rous County Council of the suspected leak, if you may require account assistance due to the water leak.

If you locate or suspect a leak before or at the water meter (i.e. a leak within the Rous County Council trunk main system, contact Rous County Council on (02) 6623 3800 from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday to report the issue. Outside these hours please call the after-hours service on (02) 6626 6955.

How do I notify Council of my new mailing address?

On the back page of your water account there is a Change of Mailing Address Request form. To notify Council of a change in mailing address, complete this form and return it to our office or complete the online Change of Mailing Address Request form available at www.rous.nsw.gov.au

If you have any questions you can visit our office or contact us by telephone on (02) 6623 3800. When calling please ask to speak with a representative from our Water Billing team.

Does Council email water accounts?

Yes. If you would like to opt in, please email council@rous.nsw.gov.au using the subject: EMAIL OPT IN. Be sure to include:

- Address of property supplied with water
- Water meter number
- Water account property number (top right-hand corner of your water account)
- Email address for the delivery of your water account

Terms and Conditions – Delivery of water account by email

1. The delivery of a water account by email is a Designated commercial electronic message as per the Spam Act 2003 (Cth).
2. You agree to receive your water account by email to the nominated email address and understand that by doing so a paper water account will not be sent.
3. You confirm you are the registered owner of the property.
4. All future water accounts will be in the form of a PDF attachment to an email sent to the email address nominated by you.
5. If you own more than one property, you must register separately for each property.
6. You acknowledge that you are responsible for regularly checking your nominated email address for water accounts including retaining the water account information yourself electronically or by printing it.
7. Emails rely on independent telecommunication networks; you agree that water accounts are deemed served when it reaches your internet service provider, whether or not you have opened or read the email.
8. An 'out of office' notification will not be considered an undeliverable notice.
9. Should Council receive an electronic "delivery failure" notification from your email address, your request for email delivery will be cancelled and a paper water account will be posted to the last advised postal address.
10. If you change your email address, it is your responsibility to notify Council within fourteen days by emailing council@rous.nsw.gov.au
11. You acknowledge that you can opt out of receiving your water account by email at any time by calling Council's office on 02 6623 3800 or emailing council@rous.nsw.gov.au

Note:

- The terms and conditions should be read before emailing Council to opt in.
- Council will never send you an alert notification with a link asking you to confirm or verify information.
- There is no charge to receive your water account by email.

Are SMS and email alert notifications available?

Yes. If you provide your mobile number or email address to Council, we will use those details to issue an alert notification when necessary, unless you opt out.

An SMS or email alert notification may be issued if your water account is overdue for payment, or to request that you contact us about your water account. We may also issue alerts from time to time to advise you of other important factual information, such as planned water outages.

Alert notifications will only be issued to property owners, not tenants or managing agents.

To opt out, at any time, call us on 02 6623 3800 or email council@rous.nsw.gov.au using ALERT OPT OUT as the subject. Be sure to include in the email:

- address of property supplied with water
- water meter number
- water account property number

Note:

- Council will never send you an alert notification with a link asking you to confirm or verify information.
- There is no charge to issue an alert notification.

What can I do to save water?

Remember that every drop counts!

Use these ten tips to become more water efficient:

1. Check your water usage. Using your last water bill to check your average daily household use. Are you using more than 180 litres per person? It might be time to look at some home water efficiency projects.
2. Check your home's fittings and fixtures - are they water efficient? Check your taps, showerheads, toilets and appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers.
3. Time your shower. How long do you really take? If you are taking a long shower, reduce your shower by 1 minute each week until you are down to a 4-minute shower.
4. Use the half-flush button on your toilet.
5. Don't let the tap run when you are brushing your teeth or shaving.
6. Half fill the sink to rinse dishes or clean fruit and vegetables.
7. Select local species for your garden and use a good layer of mulch to reduce evaporation.
8. Be aware of water restrictions in your local area, including voluntary water conservation measures.
9. Check your home for leaks regularly and fix them as soon as possible.
10. Install a rainwater tank as an alternative water supply for outdoor use, toilet flushing and clothes-washing.

Does Council provide water saving initiatives?

Yes. Rous County Council is committed to providing high quality potable water and working with the community to reduce the demand for potable water in our community.

For information about water saving initiatives, contact us on telephone (02) 6623 3800 or visit Rous County Council's website.





*Rous County Council Administration Centre
218-232 Molesworth Street, Lismore*

Office hours	8.30am to 4.30pm - Monday to Friday
Postal address	PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480
Phone	(02) 6623 3800
Email	council@rous.nsw.gov.au
Website	www.rous.nsw.gov.au