

# Is your water bill higher than normal?

Your guide to common causes, leak checks, and how Council can help

## WHY IS MY WATER BILL HIGHER THAN EXPECTED?

If your water bill is higher than usual, there are several potential explanations. A range of everyday factors can influence your usage, and in some cases, the bill may reflect an estimate rather than an actual reading. Some common reasons include:



### ESTIMATED READINGS

If your meter could not be accessed, your usage may have been estimated based on past data. If previous bills underestimated your actual usage, your current bill may be higher to reconcile the difference.

### LEAKS

Even small, undetected leaks (like a dripping tap or leaking toilet) can add up over time.

### LONGER BILLING PERIODS

Occasionally, the number of days in a billing cycle may vary slightly.

### HIGHER USAGE

Hot weather, garden watering, visitors, or extra laundry can increase consumption.

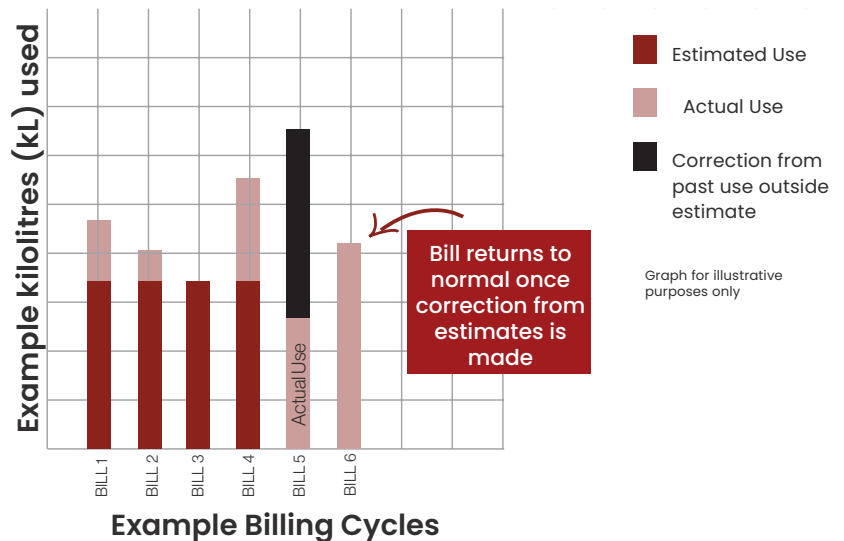
## WHAT IS AN ESTIMATED METER READ?

Sometimes we are unable to access your water meter, this can happen if there are locked gates, unrestrained dogs, or heavy vegetation blocking the area. In these cases, we may issue an estimated meter read, where your water usage is calculated based on your past consumption history. While this allows billing to continue, it may not accurately reflect your actual usage, which can result in an inaccurate bill.

### Estimated meter reads may occur when:

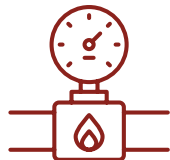
- The meter is behind a locked gate
- There are unrestrained dogs on the property
- The meter is blocked by overgrown bushes or garden beds
- The meter is damaged or unreadable

If your meter has been estimated in previous billing periods, there may be a significant difference between the estimated and actual usage once a proper read is completed, this can result in a higher than expected bill to account for the water actually used.



## HOW TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

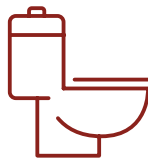
If your water bill seems unusually high, another caused can be a hidden leak on your property. There are some simple steps you can take to check for leaks yourself before calling a plumber.



### AT THE METER

1. Turn off all taps and appliances.
2. Record your meter reading.
3. Wait at least an hour without using water.
4. Recheck the meter

**IF THE METER HAS CHANGED YOU MAY HAVE A LEAK**



### IN THE TOILET

1. Put a few drops of food colouring in the cistern.
2. Wait at least 10 minutes without flushing

**IF COLOUR APPEARS IN THE BOWL, YOU HAVE A LEAK.**



### AROUND THE PROPERTY

#### Check:

- Taps
- Irrigation systems
- Fridge connections
- Hot water systems
- Tank backflow valves



## Join our pet friendly Meter Reads Club!

Do you have a dog, locked gate or tricky access?

Join our SMS alert list and we'll send you a text before we come to read your meter, so your pet stays safe and your bill stays accurate.

Scan to sign up



OR

Visit our website

OR

Phone our Customer Service Team on 02 6778 6300

### STILL NOT ADDING UP? WE CAN INVESTIGATE

If your water bill seems unusually high and you're still not sure why, we can help by conducting a thorough bill investigation.

Here's what we'll do:

- Review your meter reading history and compare previous usage
- Check for estimated reads that may have affected your bill
- Arrange a site inspection, where a staff member will attend your property to assess your meter and check for any signs of issues

Please note, as investigations can be extensive and require on site coordination and history checks, they can take some time to conduct.



#### STEP 1 Review History

We review your meter reading history to spot unusual usage patterns.



#### STEP 2 Check for Estimated Reads

We identify if any estimated reads have affected your bill.



#### STEP 3 Property Inspection

We may visit your property to check your meter and look for any issues. Meter testing is also available upon request; however, please note that this service incurs a cost.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT & HARDSHIP POLICY

We understand that managing bills isn't always easy, especially if a bill is higher than expected. If you're experiencing financial hardship, we're here to help. We offer:

- Payment plans
- Support under our Hardship Policy
- Confidential assistance tailored to your circumstances

Contact our team on 02 6778 6300 to discuss your options or visit our website at [www.uralla.nsw.gov.au](http://www.uralla.nsw.gov.au) for the policy and application form.

### NEED HELP OR MORE INFORMATION?

If you have questions about your water bill or meter reading, or if you suspect a leak at the meter or a public area, don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Our team is here to assist you with investigations, provide advice on leak detection, and help you understand your bill.

We also recognise that unexpected water bills can be difficult. If you're experiencing financial hardship, please contact us to discuss payment options and support under our Hardship Policy.



#### Contact Us

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