

Aboriginal Lands Trust
Policy & Guideline Series

For further information contact:

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or

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Policy and Guidelines Water Charges on the ALT Estate



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Department of
Indigenous Affairs



DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Policy and Guidelines

Water Charges on the ALT Estate

Aboriginal Lands Trust WA

Over-arching policy

The Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) meets its statutory obligations as a government land holder, except where those obligations are passed to a third party by way of a formal lease or tenancy arrangement.

Introduction

The ALT has a responsibility for the management of its estate and to provide guidance for the payment of water charges in relation to its land. Much of the estate is leased or occupied by Indigenous communities and organisations and many, close to town, are serviced by the Water Corporation. Any service provided by the Water Corporation comes at a cost and it has not always been clear in the past as to whom should meet these costs.

The ALT has therefore developed the following policy and guidelines in relation to water charges on its land.

What water charges apply to the ALT estate?

Annual Service Charges

An annual service charge is paid on all residential properties that have access to Water Corporation services, including properties that are vacant land. The charge is determined by the service the property has access to - water, sewerage or a combination of these.

Water

An annual water charge is applied to all properties that have access to a Water Corporation main.

Sewerage (where applicable)

An annual service charge is applied to all properties that have access to a Water Corporation sewerage main. This charge is based on the property's gross rental value, which is supplied by the Valuer General's Office.

Water Usage Charges

Meters are generally read three times a year. A different class of water use charges applies to different towns across Western Australia, depending on the cost of the local water scheme. Usage is based on a tiered pricing structure where the price per kilolitre increases with the more water used.

Who pays Water Corporation ANNUAL charges on ALT land?

Under the provisions of the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*, payment of water charges is the responsibility of the landowner. However, in keeping with legal advice from the State Solicitors

Office, the ALT itself is not liable for payment of fixed water charges. This is the responsibility of any leaseholder or occupier of the land. The Water Corporation therefore will raise ANNUAL charges to the leaseholder/occupier which are to be paid by them. The ALT is not liable and will not pay any annual charges under any circumstances.

Who pays water USAGE charges on ALT land?

Occupiers or leaseholders on ALT land pay Water Corporation issued accounts for water usage. The ALT will not pay for usage of water on its land, unless special circumstances apply.

Special Circumstances for Assistance with water usage payments

In some cases, communities are in debt to the Water Corporation because water usage charges have not been paid. In these cases, the ALT may consider assisting Aboriginal communities and organisations to reduce current debt it has with the Corporation, where it can be clearly demonstrated that a suitable repayment arrangement has been maintained with the Corporation and that reasonable steps have been taken to avoid a re-occurrence of the debt.

Other factors that need to be considered before applying for this assistance include:

- Any repayment arrangement with the Water Corporation should have been maintained for at least 12 months minimum
- Any payment granted by the ALT will be a "one off" only and will be dependant on available funding at the time
- Any payment granted by the ALT will be a maximum of \$500 per house, or \$10,000 per community, whichever is the lesser; and
- Any payment granted by the ALT will be for water usage only, and not for any interest charges

There is an internal process that needs to be followed to apply for special circumstances payments. To apply, you will need to contact the local DIA office, or the Land Branch in Perth.

QUERIES

Any queries about payment of the Water Corporation water charges on ALT land should be directed to the Department of Indigenous Affairs' Senior Asset Officer on telephone 9235 8000, or dial the **Easy Call Line - 1300 651 077** from anywhere within Western Australia to be automatically be connected to your regional DIA office for the cost of a local call.