

Hi, my name is xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx and I own the property at xx xxxxxx xxxxxxxx Lithgow.

This letter is regarding a large loss of water which overlapped two reading periods.

#### Summary:

There is normally no water consumption at all.

Water is turned off at the meter as plumbing replacement is in progress and there is an open pipe at the rear of the house.

This is a rental property and I have taken the opportunity between tenants to do renovation work on the occasions that I am in town between working assignments in various parts of Australia.

While I was working away, a large loss of water occurred after the supply line from the street main to my meter was replaced and the Council workmen didn't turn the meter back off after flushing at the front yard tap.

#### In detail:

The loss occurred immediately after the replacement of the supply line from the Council Street Main to the meter.

The meter is normally turned off, however the workmen apparently inadvertently left the meter on after flushing the line via the tap in the front yard.

I am only rarely in town as I work away on Construction Projects, Power Stations, and Mining & Industrial Shutdowns.

The property is under renovation and the water has been turned off for a long period of time due to some of the plumbing being replaced.

You will see that there was no water use for a long time since the Smart meter was installed in 2021.

You are welcome to refer the attached bill from March 2023 and see the reading remained at 1Kl.

Likewise, the October 2023 bill shows the previous reading done in June 2023 remained at 1Kl, i.e. zero consumption.

However as mentioned, when the supply line was replaced, the meter was left on after workmen flushed the line.

As I was working away, the first I became aware of a large volume of water flow was when I received the attached October bill via email. It showed a flow of 268 Kl had occurred.

I immediately contacted a friend, xxxxxx xxxxxxxx, who had been mowing my lawns when needed, to attend the property and check the meter.

Will confirmed that the meter was on and it was moving, but that the escape of water was not immediately obvious as it was flowing from open plumbing at the rear of the house to under the house

Will mentioned the fresh bitumen patch covering the excavation from the supply line replacement and confirmed that it wasn't like that before.

I asked Will to turn off the meter immediately and he did so.

I was able to attend a few weeks before Christmas and continued my plumbing replacement.

I am replacing all of the remaining galvanised steel pipe with new copper pipe that I have in stock.

When this old galvanised steel pipe line has been fully excavated I will remove it and replace it with copper.

I have already purchased a new front standpipe, standpipe stake, front and back taps, along with fittings to complete the work, some of the plumbing on the property has already been upgraded.

I am a competent engineering tradesman and I do a lot of plumbing and leak testing on industrial water circuits.

However, I am currently working at the BHP Olympic Dam Mine in SA, so it will be a while before I am back in Lithgow to complete the remaining renovation work and plumbing replacement.

Receipts for materials purchased are at my XXXXX residence. The xxxxxxxxxx grounds are now being maintained by XXXXXXXXXXXX, pending my return to Lithgow.

The January 2024 bill shows the last of the leakage before the water was turned off in December, another 73 Kl, and the subsequent bills confirm no flow as the meter remains off.

Contact with Council:

Over the time since the water loss occurred I have been in conversation with Council on several occasions.

At my first contact I was advised that this had been recorded as a case, and to retain receipts as evidence that plumbing work had been done.

In my next conversation with Council, I was told they had no record of this but that the matter would not go further as a plumbing upgrade was underway.

In the last conversation with Council at the beginning of June I was told there was no record of previous contact, but that the matter would not be proceeding to Debt Recovery.

Then my son in Adelaide opened a letter dated 7th June from Debt Recovery addressed to my Adelaide address requesting payment.

The issue is that I did not consume the water, and the wastage was caused by Council Workmen not turning the meter back off after replacing the supply line and flushing.

Conclusion:

Under the circumstances that I did not use the water, and that the loss was caused by Council workmen, I request that the water usage charges be waived in their entirety.

The January 2024 bill shows the last of the leakage before the water was turned off in December, another 73 Kl, and the subsequent bills confirm no flow as the meter remains off.

I understand to have the charges waived, the matter may need go before a Council meeting. If so then I am fine with that.

If I am in town on the day of that meeting I look forward to attending.

Thanks,