

WATER USAGE FACT SHEET

Who pays for water consumption?

All UnitingSA Housing tenants pay for water consumption, even if there is not a separate water meter connected to their property.

How is UnitingSA Housing reducing household water consumption?

Many of UnitingSA Housing's properties have had common garden areas upgraded with more drought tolerant planting, to reduce water use and support the majority of tenants who already try hard to limit their water usage.

Where possible, UnitingSA Housing installs dual flush toilet cisterns, as well as plumbed-in rainwater tanks (i.e. in new housing developments and when refurbishment of existing properties).

Are there any water remissions (concessions) available?

The Government of South Australia's **Water Rates Remission Scheme** is available to UnitingSA Housing tenants. The scheme provides financial assistance to reduce the water use charges payable by eligible households. Remissions are available to people who hold a Centrelink Health Care Card and receive the following Centrelink payments: Newstart allowance, Sickness allowance, Widow allowance, Youth allowance, Partner allowance, Parenting Payment Partnered, Bereavement allowance, Special benefit, Exceptional Circumstances payments, Community Development Employment Project (CDEP), New Enterprise Incentive Scheme, ABSTUDY and Austudy.

For more information or to apply for concessions:

- Call the Government of South Australia's Concessions Hotline: **1800 307 758** (freecall)
- Use the text telephone service which is available for people with hearing or speech impairments: **8226 6789**
- Email your enquiries to **concessions@dcsi.sa.gov.au**
- Apply online at **www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/concessions**

How are water bills charged?

UnitingSA Housing is billed by SA Water for water supply and water usage. Tenants are charged directly by UnitingSA Housing.

Where UnitingSA Housing owns all properties within a group, individual flow meters have been installed to measure each household's water use. UnitingSA Housing pays the basic rate charged by SA Water and the remaining amount is charged to the tenants.

If you live in a property that does not have individual meters, UnitingSA Housing pays the basic rate of water use, with other water use charges to be shared equally between all tenants at the site. This is considered the most accurate method for charging for water.

How do I pay my water bill?

Tenants will receive a letter from UnitingSA Housing indicating the amount due for water use consumption. All tenants have 28 days to pay their water bills. If you are unable to pay your bill in a lump sum, payment arrangements can be made by contacting UnitingSA Housing.

You can also pay water bills in advance by paying a little extra with your rent. However, please be aware that if you fall into rent arrears, any credit will be applied to your rent first.

If you fail to pay your bill you will incur a debt. Refusal to pay water bills and/or rent is a breach of your Conditions of Tenancy.

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How often will I be billed?

UnitingSA Housing receives bills on a quarterly basis from SA Water. The timing of bills is determined by when SA Water read the meters. Tenants who are concerned about the accuracy of their water meter reading or their water bill are encouraged to contact UnitingSA Housing.

What happens to my bill when I vacate or change my tenancy?

When a tenant vacates a property, the Property Manager will do a meter reading at the final inspection. The vacating tenant will be charged on a pro rata calculation of their usage, which is determined by how many days the property was occupied by them in the water charge period.

New tenants will be charged by the same pro rata calculation determined by the date they moved into the property and the days within the water charge period.



What do I do if I suspect my water meter is damaged or faulty?

You are required to contact UnitingSA Housing immediately if your water meter has been stolen or if any damage to the water meter or pipes have occurred. Unreported leakages resulting in high water bills will be the responsibility of the tenant and not UnitingSA Housing.

If you believe the water meter on your house or on your site (if your home is connected to a shared meter) is faulty, you can request that the meter be tested. UnitingSA Housing will arrange with SA Water for a test to take place.

If UnitingSA Housing has evidence that a water meter on a separately metered property has been damaged or stolen (through deliberate or careless action) by a tenant, members of the tenant's household, or by tenants' visitors, the cost of repairs or replacement may be charged to the tenant.