

What is sub-metering?

Sub-meters are individual water meters attached to units or lots in a multi-unit development. Sub-meters differ from master meters, which measure the supply of water to a complex as a whole.

A sub-metering system allows individual units to track and pay for the water they use ([s195, Act](#)).

This is in contrast to multi-unit developments with only one master meter with the overall bill divided between the respective units or lots according to lot entitlement ([s196, Act](#)).

Why is sub-metering useful?

Benefits of Retrofit Water Sub-Metering

- **Water Conservation:** Implementing sub-meters increases awareness of water usage, encouraging residents to conserve water and reduce overall consumption.
- **Equitable Bills:** Individual metering ensures that owners are billed according to their actual water usage, promoting fairness and transparency within the body corporate.
- **Leak Detection:** sub-metering allows for the early detection of leaks within individual units, preventing water wastage and potential damage.
- **Better Insights:** Owners gain insights such as average monthly usage/spend, and communities can monitor common water usage to better identify possible leaks.
- **Landlords:** May recoup water usage charges provided the premises are water efficient and the tenancy agreement states so. For more information visit [RTA \(QLD\)](#) or [Fair Trading \(NSW\)](#).

Is sub-metering mandatory in new developments?

Yes it is. On 1 January 2008 the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code made it compulsory for all new residential multi-unit developments and some nonresidential premises to have sub-meters installed. The situation is similar in other states.

Is sub-metering mandatory in existing developments?

While existing developments are exempt from these conditions, the body corporate can elect to sub-meter all units at its own cost. Many communities are choosing to implement water sub-metering due to the rising utility costs and the obvious benefits for occupiers and investors.

Does every unit require a meter?

Yes. It is not possible to have some units with individual water meter readings, and other units in the same complex being billed on the contribution schedule lot entitlement method.

What are the retrofit sub-metering options?

- If meters can be installed or upgraded to meet the metering technical specifications, owners can be billed directly by the **water service provider**.
- If a water provider solution is unfeasible due to cost or complexity, **private sub-meters** can be a cost-effective means to facilitate equitable bills for owners.

What are the billing arrangements for private sub-metering?

Water service providers offer alternative billing arrangements for community titles scheme (CTS) properties to ensure billing equity and parity. If not already billed in bulk, the BC will enter an arrangement to receive an account for the total water supplied to scheme land. This allows the BC to engage an external company for meter reading and billing services.

What changes for Owners?

Owners will receive two separate bills:

- one from their water provider for **fixed access charges**, with any applicable concessions, and
- one from their billing agent on behalf of the Body Corporate for measured **water consumption charges**. If wastewater is charged by volume, this will also be included.

Pricing is as published by the water provider.

What remains the same for Owners and body corporate?

Owners remain liable for their water charges. A reminder will be issued. Accounts that remain overdue may be referred to a debt recovery specialist with the cost of recovery added to the owner's account.

The BC retains its powers of recovery under the Act., as does the water service provider under relevant legislation. If the agreement is breached, the water provider may revert to the former billing arrangement.

Entering a new billing arrangement

Once sub-meters are installed, the BC will supply a certified copy of the EGM resolution to change from lot contribution to BC all consumption billing with their application to the water provider. Once processed, the BC will notify the billing agent, who will request the meter details for services to begin.

What are the setup costs?

Setup costs comprise the supply and installation of water sub-meters by a licensed plumber.

What are the ongoing costs?

Ongoing costs comprise service fees for meter reading and billing administration, which include leak alerts and BC reporting.

What are the funding options?

There are generally three funding options - sinking fund, special levy or finance.

Who owns and is responsible for the maintenance of the sub-meters?

Sub-meters are owned and maintained by the body corporate. This is essential to ensure compliance with Australian standards and the terms of the agreement.

Technical considerations

Specialised meters can overcome access issues and infrastructure unsuited to conventional meters. They are also often purpose-designed for low-cost maintenance and simple, economical compliance. e.g. Long battery life, extended warranty and modular design with replaceable measuring capsules for improved sustainability.

How are retrofitted sub-meters read if they are located inside units?

Sub-meters are pre-equipped with an AMR (automated meter reading) module for walk or drive-by readings or an AMI (advanced metering infrastructure) system for data transmission to the utility.

When do owners receive their first individual account?

The new billing arrangement usually begins on the first scheduled meter reading after the sub-meters are installed, with the first individual bill issued about two months later.

Billing schedules may be offset, to allow time for owner payments to be recovered to the BC account prior to the bulk bill falling due.

What are the bill delivery and payment options?

Bills are issued quarterly by email or post, and there are 7 convenient payment options. You can set up a direct debit when you receive your first bill. All invoice, payment and usage information is available via MyAccount.

Leak alerts

The Owner, BC and building manager are notified when a sub-meter detects a leak so it can be promptly taken care of.

Research insights and anticipated impact

- While fixed charges remain the same, residential sub-metering with equitable bills puts owners back in control of their water consumption costs.
- The largest residential study found that individual meters with equitable bills results in an average sustained reduction of 22% in water consumption.
- There is a disparity between perceived and actual water use behaviour. Usage data encourages water conservation, and small changes add up quickly.
- Larger households are more efficient per person than smaller households as they benefit from efficiencies like combined loads of washing.
- Around 1 in 7 homes have a water leak, so prompt alerts can help protect your property and your pocket.