

INDIVIDUAL METERING OF STRATA AND COMMUNITY TITLE DEVELOPMENTS

MARCH 2015

For developers, architects, hydraulic
consultants and plumbers

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INTRODUCTION

The individual metering of Strata and Community Schemes by Hunter Water is aimed at improving equity in billing for water usage in for these developments. With individual metering each owner will pay for the water they actually use rather than a percentage apportionment of the total usage based on unit entitlement.

At this time multi-level unit developments are excluded from these requirements as Hunter Water does not yet have a technical solution such as Automated Meter Reading (AMR) available to overcome the access issues. Design options are included in this document addressing the minimum requirements to allow for retro fit should this capability be available in the future.

This guide provides information to assist hydraulic engineers, architects, developers and plumbers to prepare the development for cold water metering of individual units or lots within community or strata schemes.

There are strict design requirements for the location of the water meter assemblies to ensure that the meters are located in a safe and accessible location for reading and maintenance. The installation of water meters occurs after the schemes are registered with the Land and Property Information (LPI) as part of a formal Agreement. It is therefore important that the layout and location is including in the initial design of the water service layout to ensure the requirements can be met upon application.

Addressing these requirements at the development stage will ensure that the Application and instalment of individual meters post registration of the subdivision will be streamlined and cost effective.

1 STRATA TITLE DEVELOPMENTS

Individual metering (also known as sub-metering) is available to strata title developments where the meters can be located in a possible on ground level where a meter reader can walk up and access the meters with no impediment (e.g. no security, fencing, or other obstructions). Generally this is for villa style strata developments where the services are all located on the ground floor. All meters used are mechanical therefore require manual meter reading.

The application process will not take place until after the strata scheme has been registered and the Owners Corporation formed. These requirements have been prepared to assist developers in designing the water service layout and location of meter assemblies and registration of Hunter Water by-laws with the strata scheme so that the application process can be approved with no additional costs to relocate services.

Multi-level strata developments are excluded from the individual metering process due to accessibility issues.

1.1 Water Service Design and Meter Assembly Location

1.1.1 Master Meter

Each strata title is required to have a master meter installed that services the entire development. The individual meters for the units are located downstream of the master meter and their consumption is deducted from the master consumption for billing purposes. Any residue (common area usage) is billed to the Owners Corporation.

The sizing of the master meter and associated service and backflow requirements will be in accordance with AS/NZS 3500 and managed through the hydraulic approval process.

1.1.2 Individual Meters

This is for the metering of the individual units within the strata scheme. Individual meters are located downstream of the master meter. In most cases the common area will not be individually metered.

1.1.3 Water Service Design Requirements

The water service design criteria for strata schemes is in the Appendix. As part of the application process a professionally drawn plan of the water service design layout and location of every meter assembly must be provided.

For strata developments the individual meter assemblies can be located in common areas either adjacent to the relevant lot or in a cluster for ease of access and meter reading. They must be positioned so that there are no health and safety risks or risk of damage (e.g. vehicles running them over).

Meters and meter assemblies are located above ground and easily accessible at all times. Internal meter assemblies must not be higher than 1.5 metres. The length of a Hunter Water 20mm meter is 154mm plus Hunter Water meter unions is a total of 276mm. (Therefore the overall opening dimension to be left on meter assemblies for 20mm meters is 246mm).

The meter assemblies are to be installed in an accessible location for routine reading of the meters and for maintenance purposes. Meter assemblies are

either to be located adjacent to the boundary of each lot or in an accessible common area.

Each individual service is required to have a lot and unit identification tag located above the meter; either a brass engraved plaque attached to a wall or a brass engraved disc attached to the unit's meter assembly. Discs are to be attached with a non-corrosive metal ring.

Meter assemblies are not installed behind fences, enclosed areas or confined spaces. There is to be no safety hazards (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter preventing safe access at any time. Access to the water meter for reading and maintenance is strictly enforced by Hunter Water therefore the planning and design for the location of the individual meter assemblies must take this into consideration.

1.2 Hunter Water By-Laws for Registration with the Strata Scheme

Hunter Water's by-laws which outline the responsibilities of lot owners and occupiers must be registered with the strata scheme prior to the approval of the installation of individual metering.

If it is intended that individual meters be provided for meter reading and billing of individual accounts then the by-laws should be registered as part of the subdivision registration with Land and Property Information. This will prevent any limitations on the Owners Corporation at the early stage of the subdivision and may save on costs relating to registering the by-laws. Alternatively the by-laws may be registered as part of the application process post registration of the strata scheme.

The Hunter Water by-laws are attached in the Appendix.

1.3 Application for Individual Meters (sub-meters) for installation

The application for individual meters for installation must be made by the Owners Corporation and can be made as soon as the subdivision is registered.

The installation of the individual meters must be endorsed at a General Meeting which minutes the action to endorse the application.

The following information is to be supplied by the Owners Corporation:

1. Completed Application form by authorised representative.
2. Copy of the plan of the water service layout and meter assembly locations which complies with the design layout.
3. Copy of General Meeting minutes with endorsement.
4. Copy of the strata roll with ownership and mailing address details for each lot.
5. Copy of Hunter Water by-laws if registered (if not they will have to be registered prior to approval with a copy provided to Hunter Water).
6. Application fees will be payable as well as meter installation fees per lot.

1.4 Hunter Water Standard Agreement

Hunter Water requires the authorised person(s) on behalf of the Owners Corporation to sign a standard Agreement which outlines the terms and conditions of the individual metering which is binding on both parties.

This is a standard document template and will not be individually be modified on a case-by-case basis. The content may be modified from time to time by Hunter Water to reflect changes in policy, legislation and terminology/definitions.

This document will be executed by both parties (Hunter Water and Owners Corporation) as part of the application approval process. The Owners Corporation must affix their seal when authorised. It will be enforceable once all conditions have been met and individual billing and metering of the individual lots has commenced.

Note that the Agreement is between Hunter Water and the Owners Corporation not the individual lot owners. If a breach occurs with an individual lot owners it will be a matter for the Owners Corporation to resolve. If it cannot be resolved in accordance with the terms and conditions then the Agreement may be terminated and billing of usage will revert to the Owners Corporation account for the entire scheme.

1.5 Staged Developments

If the earlier stages of a strata scheme have individual meters then all stages that follow must also have individual meters.

As soon as any new stage is developed and registered the Owners Corporation must make application and pay the relevant fees. The design layout and location of the meter assemblies must also comply with the requirements and if this cannot be met the entire subdivision will be able to be separately metered and billed.

In most cases the original Agreement will be provide coverage to future stages.

1.6 Design Requirements for Multi-Level Developments

Hunter Water is unable to provide individual metering of multi-level developments as there is no technical solution enabling automated meter reading (AMR). Developers may design water services to meet requirements should this capability become available at a future point.

Vertical developments (multi-level buildings) are excluded from this policy due to the unavailability of an automated meter reading (AMR) solution at this time. If an AMR solution was implemented at a later date the minimum design requirements would be in accordance with the Water Services Association of Australia's WSA 10-2011 Sub-Metering Code of Practice (available for a fee at www.wsaa.asn.au).

2 COMMUNITY TITLE DEVELOPMENTS

Individual metering (also known as sub-metering) is available to community title developments that have a single point of connection to Hunter Water's water and sewerage system.

Some community title developments will have water and sewer mains within the development which have been designed in accordance with Hunter Water's requirements. The lots within these developments will have individual direct connections to the water and sewer mains. This guideline does not apply to these developments.

These requirements have been prepared to assist developers in designing the water service layout and location of meter assemblies and registration of Hunter Water by-laws with the Community Management Statement so that the application process can be approved with no additional costs to relocate services.

The application process will not take place until after the community scheme has been registered and the buildings have been constructed on each lot in the development ready for occupation. The Community Association must also have formed.

Staged community developments are excluded from individual metering. All stages must be subdivided and all buildings constructed for occupation prior to submitting an application.

2.1 Water Service Design and Meter Assembly Location

2.1.1 Master Meter

Each community title development that has a single point of connection to the water supply system is required to have a master meter installed that services the entire development. The individual meters for the units are located downstream of the master meter and their consumption is deducted from the master consumption for billing purposes. Any residue (common area usage) is billed to the Community Association.

The sizing of the master meter and associated service requirements will be in accordance with AS/NZS 3500 and managed through the hydraulic approval process.

2.1.2 Individual Meters

This guideline is for the metering of the individual units within the community scheme. Individual meters are located downstream of the master meter. In most cases the common area will not be individually metered.

2.1.3 Water Service Design Requirements

The water service design criteria is in the Appendix. As part of the application process a professionally drawn plan of the water service design layout and location of every meter assembly must be provided.

For community developments the individual meter assemblies will be located within the individual lots for ease of access and meter reading. Meter assemblies are not installed behind fences, enclosed areas or confined spaces. There is to be no safety hazards (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter preventing safe access at any time. Access to the water meter for reading and maintenance is strictly enforced by Hunter Water therefore the planning and design for the location of

the individual meter assemblies must take this into consideration.

Meters and meter assemblies are located above ground and easily accessible at all times. Internal meter assemblies must not be higher than 1.5 metres. The length of a Hunter Water 20mm meter is 154mm plus Hunter Water meter unions is a total of 276mm. (Therefore the overall opening dimension to be left on meter assemblies for 20mm meters is 246mm).

The meter assemblies are to be installed in an accessible location for routine reading of the meters and for maintenance purposes. Meter assemblies are either to be located adjacent to the boundary of each lot or in an accessible common area.

Each individual service is required to have a lot and unit identification tag located above the meter; either a brass engraved plaque attached to a wall or a brass engraved disc attached to the unit's meter assembly. Discs are to be attached with a non-corrosive metal ring.

2.2 Hunter Water By-Laws for Registration with the Community Scheme

Hunter Water's by-laws which outline the responsibilities of lot owners and occupiers must be registered with the Community Management Statement for the community scheme prior to the approval of the installation of individual metering.

If it is intended that individual meters be provided for meter reading and billing of individual accounts then the by-laws should be registered as part of the subdivision registration with Land and Property Information. This will prevent any limitations on the Community Association at the early stage of the subdivision and may save on costs relating to registering the by-laws in the future. Alternatively the by-laws may be registered with the Community Management Statement as part of the application process post registration of the community scheme.

The Hunter Water by-laws for community title developments are attached in the Appendix.

2.3 Application for Individual Meters (sub-meters) for installation

The application for individual meters for installation must be made by the Community Association and can be made as soon as the subdivision is registered.

The installation of the individual meters must be endorsed at a General Meeting which minutes the action to endorse the application.

The following information is to be supplied by the Community Association:

1. Completed Application form by an authorised representative.
2. Copy of the plan of the water service layout and meter assembly locations which complies with the design layout.
3. Copy of General Meeting minutes with endorsement.
4. Copy of the strata roll with ownership and mailing address details for each lot.
5. Copy of Hunter Water by-laws if registered with the Community Management Statement (if not they will have to be registered prior to approval with a copy provided to Hunter Water).
6. Application fees will be payable as well as meter installation fees per lot.

2.4 Hunter Water Standard Agreement

Hunter Water requires the authorised person(s) on behalf of the Community Association to sign a standard Agreement which outlines the terms and conditions of the individual metering which is binding on both parties.

This is a standard document template and will not be individually be modified on a case-by-case basis. The content may be modified from time to time by Hunter Water to reflect changes in policy, legislation and terminology/definitions.

This document will be executed by both parties (Hunter Water and Community Association) as part of the application approval process. The common seal of the Community Association will need to be stamped on the Agreement. It will be enforceable once all conditions have been met and individual billing and metering of the individual lots has commenced.

Note that the Agreement is between Hunter Water and the Community Association not the individual lot owners. If a breach occurs with an individual lot owners it will be a matter for the Community Association to resolve. If it cannot be resolved in accordance with the terms and conditions then the Agreement may be terminated and billing of usage will revert to the Community Association account for the entire scheme.

2.5 Staged Subdivisions

An application for individual metering and billing of accounts for community title developments will be assessed only when the development is complete and buildings on each lot have been constructed ready for occupation.

For the period up until the development and constructed lots are complete, Hunter Water will bill the Community Association one bill with charges based on the number of completed dwellings and consumption of the main (master) meter.

Prior to all of the stages and construction being complete, Hunter Water will bill each owner the relevant service charges and bill all usage to the Community Association.

APPENDIX

Hunter Water By-Laws – Strata Scheme Development

1. In this By-Law the following provisions apply:

Accessible means the unfettered and unencumbered ability of Hunter Water to access the Master meter and the Sub meters for reading and recording purposes.

Automated Meter Reading means the system to be developed by Hunter Water for implementation in the future as another means of reading meters.

Common Property has the same meaning as in the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* (NSW).

Hunter Water means Hunter Water Corporation, a public authority within the meaning given to that term in the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* (NSW) and a state owned corporation within the meaning given to that term in the *State Owned Corporations Act 1991* (NSW) its successors and assigns.

Hunter Water Design Criteria means the Hunter Water design criteria as varied from time to time.

Lot has the same meaning as in the [Strata Schemes \(Freehold Development\) Act 1973](#) (NSW).

Occupier means any person in lawful occupation of the Lot.

Owner means the registered proprietor for the time being of any Lot, their successors and assigns.

Owners Corporation means a corporation constituted under section 11 of the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* (NSW).

Sub meter means the sub meter installed for each Lot to record the amount of water used by each Owner or Occupier.

2. All Owners and Occupiers of Lots must:

- (a) ensure all water connections (including the water meter assembly) are approved by Hunter Water and are installed in accordance with Hunter Water Design Criteria and ensure that all water connections including the water meter assembly are repaired and maintained at the sole expense of the Owner as required by Hunter Water (acting reasonably) from time to time;
- (b) modify the water meter assembly when necessary or required to do so by Hunter Water to comply with Hunter Water Design Criteria;
- (c) ensure the water meter assembly is situated as close as possible to the street boundary of the Lot or in an accessible location on the Common Property and is Accessible at all times;
- (d) ensure that the water meter assembly is not installed behind fences or in an enclosed area or confined space;
- (e) ensure that the position of the water meter assembly minimises the risk of harm to Hunter Water employees/contractors. This includes the hazards such as pets, overgrown vegetation or any other obstruction in the vicinity of the water meter which would prevent safe access to the meter for reading and maintenance;
- (f) pay any account raised by Hunter Water from a reading of the Sub meter, in accordance with Hunter Water's Customer Contract;
- (g) comply with any request by Hunter Water to upgrade the water meter assembly to enable Hunter Water to implement Automated Meter Reading, promptly when requested to do so;
- (h) when requested to do so by either the Owners Corporation or Hunter Water, promptly provide access to any water meter or associated water equipment situated within the Lot to Hunter Water's authorised personnel or personnel authorised by the Owners Corporation to allow those personnel to read any water meter, inspect all water connections including the water meter assembly and, if reasonably required by Hunter Water and subject to the Owner's

obligations under paragraph (a) above carry out repair and maintenance work upon those items.

3. Either the Owners Corporation or Hunter Water may give a notice to the Owner or Occupier of a Lot requiring the Owner or Occupier to comply with the terms of this by-law. If any Owner or Occupier fails to comply with any requirement relating to access to the Lot or any part of the Lot or repair and maintenance of the Hunter Water meter, the meter assembly or any water equipment within a reasonable time after receipt of a notice requiring compliance, the Owners Corporation or Hunter Water may take such steps as may be reasonable to secure such access or to carry out the relevant repair and maintenance at the expense of the Owner or Occupier of the Lot.

Design Criteria – Strata Scheme Development

Prior to Hunter Water installing Sub meters, the following criteria will need to be met:

- (a) The internal water service and each meter assembly are to be installed by a Plumber who is licensed by NSW Fair Trading.
- (b) All work on the internal water service and meter assemblies are to comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia and AS/NZ 3500.
- (c) Each individual service is required to have a lot and unit identification tag located above the meter; either a brass engraved plaque attached to a wall or a brass engraved disc attached to the unit's meter assembly. Discs are to be attached with a non-corrosive metal ring to the meter control valve.
- (d) Meters and meter assemblies are located above ground and easily accessible at all times. **Internal meter assemblies must not be higher than 1.5 metres.**
- (e) The meter assemblies are installed in an accessible location for routine reading of the sub meters and for maintenance purposes. Meter assemblies are to be located adjacent to the boundary of each lot where possible or in an accessible location on common property. Meter assemblies are not to be installed behind fences, within enclosed areas or confined spaces. There are to be no safety hazards (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter which prevents safe access at any time.
- (f) The overall opening dimension on meter assemblies must match the standard length of an approved spacer for either a 20mm or 25mm meter, depending on the service requirements of the property. Approved spacers are available at most plumbing supply firms for purchase.
- (g) If the complex has special security requirements these requirements must be provided prior to entering into an agreement with Hunter Water.

Once all requirements have been met, a Hunter Water representative will inspect the property to confirm these details. If this inspection identifies any non-compliance, these issues will need to be resolved before proceeding with an agreement to provide services.

Please note additional fees will be payable for any subsequent inspections.

Hunter Water By-Laws – Community Development

1. In this By-Law the following provisions apply:

Accessible means the unfettered and unencumbered ability of Hunter Water to access the Master meter and the Sub meters for reading and recording purposes.

Automated Meter Reading means the system to be developed by Hunter Water for implementation in the future as another means of reading meters.

Community Association means a corporation constituted under section 25 of the *Community Land Development Act 1989* (NSW) and is established under Section 5 of the *Community Land Management Act 1989* (NSW).

Community Property means the lot shown in a Community Plan as community property.

Hunter Water means Hunter Water Corporation, a public authority within the meaning given to that term in the *Community Land Management Act 1989* (NSW) and a state owned corporation within the meaning given to that term in the *State Owned Corporations Act 1991* (NSW) its successors and assigns.

Hunter Water Design Criteria means the Hunter Water design criteria as varied from time to time.

Lot means a lot within the Community Parcel other than Association Property.

Occupier means any person in lawful occupation of the Lot.

Owner means the registered proprietor for the time being of any Lot, their successors and assigns.

Sub meter means the sub meter installed on each Lot by Hunter Water to record the amount of water used by each Owner.

2. All Owners and Occupiers of Lots must:

- (a) ensure all water and sewer connections including the water meter assembly on their Lot are approved by Hunter Water and are made in accordance with Hunter Water Design Criteria and ensure that all water and sewer connections including the water meter assembly on their lot are repaired and maintained at the sole expense of the Owner as required by Hunter Water (acting reasonably) from time to time;
- (b) install and/or modify the water meter assembly which complies with Hunter Water Design Criteria and is situated as close as possible to the street boundary of the Lot to provide unfettered access by foot from the internal access ways within the Association Property by Hunter Water Employees/ Contractors;
- (c) ensure that the water meter assembly is not installed behind fences or in an enclosed area or confined space;
- (d) ensure that the position of the water meter assembly minimises the risk of harm to Hunter Water employees/contractors. This includes the hazards such as gardens, overgrown vegetation or any other obstruction in the vicinity of the water meter which would prevent safe access to the meter for reading and maintenance;
- (e) pay any account raised by Hunter Water from a reading of the Sub meter installed on the Owner's Lot, in accordance with Hunter Water's Customer Contract;
- (f) comply with any request by Hunter Water to upgrade the water meter assembly to enable Hunter Water to implement Automated Meter Reading, promptly when requested to do so;

- (g) when requested to do so by either the Community Association or Hunter Water, promptly provide access to any water meter or associated water or sewer equipment situated within the lot to Hunter Water's authorised personnel or personnel authorised by the Community Association to allow those personnel to read any water meter, inspect all water and sewer connections including the water meter assembly and, if reasonably required by Hunter Water and subject to the Owner's obligations under paragraph (a) above carry out repair and maintenance work upon those items.

Either the Community Association or Hunter Water may give a notice to the Owner or Occupier of a lot requiring that the Owner or Occupier to comply with the terms of this by-law. If any Owner or Occupier fails to comply with any requirement of this by-law relating to access to the lot or any part of the lot or repair and maintenance of the Hunter Water meter, the meter assembly or any water or sewer equipment within a reasonable time after receipt of a notice requiring compliance, the Community Association or Hunter Water may take such steps as may be reasonable to secure such access or to carry out the relevant repair and maintenance at the expense of the proprietor or occupier of the lot.

Hunter Water Design Criteria – Community Development

Prior to Hunter Water installing sub meters, the following criteria will need to be met:

- (a) The internal water service and each meter assembly are to be installed by a Plumber who is licensed by NSW Fair Trading.
- (b) All work on the internal water service and meter assemblies are to comply with the Plumbing Code of Australia and AS/NZS 3500.
- (c) Each individual service is required to have a lot and unit identification tag located above the meter; either a brass engraved plaque attached to a wall or a brass engraved disc attached to the unit's meter assembly. Discs are to be attached with a non-corrosive metal ring to the meter control valve.
- (d) Meters and meter assemblies are located above ground and easily accessible at all times. **Internal meter assemblies must not be higher than 1.5 metres.**
- (e) The meter assemblies are installed in an accessible location for routine reading of the sub meters and for maintenance purposes. Meter assemblies are to be located adjacent to the boundary of each lot. Meter assemblies are not to be installed behind fences, in enclosed areas or confined spaces. There is to be no safety hazards (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter preventing safe access at any time.
- (f) The overall opening dimension on meter assemblies must match the standard length of an approved spacer for either a 20mm or 25mm meter, depending on the service requirements of the property. Approved spacers are available at most plumbing supply firms for purchase.
- (g) If the complex has special security requirements these requirements must be provided prior to entering into an agreement with Hunter Water.

Once all criteria requirements have been met, a Hunter Water representative will inspect the property to confirm these details. If this inspection identifies any of these conditions to be non-compliant, these issues will need to be resolved and before proceeding with an agreement to provide services.

Please note additional fees will be required to be paid prior to proceeding with a second inspection.