



Hon Glenn Butcher MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing
Minister for Water

Our ref: CTS 02897/22

24 March 2022

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to e-petition no. 3640-21, received by the House on 22 February 2022 and referred to me for response, in relation to concealed water leaks.

To assist readers of this response, I would like to provide some context to the matter being petitioned:

- Under the SEQ Customer Water and Wastewater Code (the Code), the region's water service providers must have a concealed leaks policy.
- The region's water service providers are either the relevant councils, or council owned providers. In this instance, Redlands City Council (RCC) is the water service provider.
- It is then up to each provider to determine the level of rebate to provide to customers under their concealed leaks policy. That is, the amount of the remission in the policy is not mandated by the Code. Rather, it is determined by the water service provider and can therefore be modified by them.

As noted, concealed leaks policies are the responsibility of each water service provider. This is because concealed leaks occur within the boundaries of the ratepayer's property, or local networks, rather than on state government owned water infrastructure. In addition to this, ratepayers are customers of the relevant water service provider (in this case, RCC) and not customers of Seqwater.

While RCC has a policy that provides a concealed leak remission on its water consumption charge component, I am advised that RCC's policy does not provide for any waiving or discounting of bulk water charges at all. For example, it does not provide any such discount for pensioners or other concession card holders. In contrast, other water service providers including the Gold Coast City Council, Urban Utilities and Unitywater, do provide additional assistance.

Like other water service providers, it is open to RCC to resolve the issue raised in its petition, by amending its concealed leaks policy. The policy is the responsibility of RCC, and it can therefore decide to change it to increase the amount of financial relief it provides in cases of concealed leaks. This is not a decision the state government can make.

I would also like to clarify another matter raised in the petition. The petition states that the State Bulk Water charge is 83.7 per cent of the water bill for a customer of RCC. I am advised by my department that the correct figure is actually 31 per cent of a typical water bill for customers of RCC.

Depending on where this claim has been repeated, this may mean that RCC's evaluation of potentially providing a remission on bulk water charges costs significantly less than initially anticipated.

I provide you this response for tabling in accordance with Standing Order 125(3).

Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Ms Frances Stewart, Chief of Staff on (07) 3035 6170 or email regionaldevelopment@ministerial.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Butcher', with a small flourish at the end.

GLENN BUTCHER MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing
Minister for Water