

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain who is responsible for payment of water charges for Evolve Housing Vic Limited (EHVL) and the entities described in clause 3 of this policy (collectively referred to as “the Company”) properties and how the Company assesses and applies those water charges.

POLICY REFERENCE	VHS026
POLICY OWNER	Group General Manager Resident Services
APPROVED BY	Group Executive Team
APPROVAL DATE	September 2025
REVIEW DATE	September 2028

1. SCOPE

This policy covers properties owned or managed by the Company as social or affordable housing. It applies to Tenants occupying those properties under any form of residency agreement, including a Residential Tenancy Agreement or an occupancy agreement.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

All Tenants are responsible for water usage charges at their Property. The Company may charge all Tenants for water usage in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* and this policy.

Water charges are separate from all other charges including rent. The charge for water is levied each quarter and is due when billed. The amount may be paid by instalments at the same time as rental payments.

Tenants are required to pay for their actual water usage (unless section 3.2 below applies). The Company determines whether to charge on the basis of actual usage or not depending on whether:

- the Property in which the Tenant lives is separately metered; and
- the local water authority provides the Company with sufficient usage information to determine the Tenant’s actual water usage.

2.1 Water charging to dwellings with separate meters

The Company generally charges Tenants residing in homes that have a separate water meter for water based on their actual water usage.

2.2 Calculating water usage charges for properties with a shared meter

Section 52 of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) states a renter is liable for water charges only if the premises are separately metered, and the charge is based solely on the amount of water supplied during the renter’s occupation. If a property does not have a separate water meter, the rental provider must pay all water usage and service charges.

2.3 Tenant is temporarily away from their Property

There is no exemption from water usage charges for Tenants temporarily away from their dwelling.

For Properties fitted with separate water meters, the water meter reading will reflect an absence from the Property. The water usage bill relating to that period will be lower as no usage will have occurred during that time.

2.4 Reviewing water usage charges / Part billing

A Tenant’s water charge may need adjustment in the following cases:

- New residency arrangements
- Tenants transferring
- Tenants obtaining succession of tenancy or residency

Water charge amount before	-	Tenant's water usage amount from latest bill	=	Difference credited or debited to Tenant's actual water usage
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2.5 Exemptions

Crisis accommodation properties managed by the Company are exempt from water charging in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (Vic). Crisis accommodation is defined as short term accommodation (usually 3 months or less) for people experiencing homelessness or people at risk of homelessness, people escaping family violence or people experiencing some other emergency. Usually clients do not enter into a social housing tenancy with the Company when in crisis accommodation.

This does not apply to the Company support partners who may provide crisis accommodation to their clients.

2.6 Legislation and compliance

Where Residential Tenancy Agreements are in place, the Company applies water usage charges in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act* and associated regulations.

Some Tenants may occupy properties owned or managed by the Company under occupancy (or similar) agreements. In these circumstances, depending on the form and terms of the agreement, the *Residential Tenancies Act* will not apply.

2.7 Appeals and reviews of decisions

If a Tenant is not satisfied with the service provided by the Company, they can make a Complaint by completing the relevant form available from the Company website or contacting the Company.

If a Tenant does not agree with a decision the Company has made, the Tenant should first discuss their concerns with a Housing Manager. If the Tenant continues to be dissatisfied after speaking with a Housing Manager, they have the right to lodge an Appeal which will be assessed in accordance with the Company Appeals Policy.

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

Company
Evolve Housing Vic Limited
EchoRealty Vic Limited
Evolve Playford Limited
Evolve Rosanna Limited
Evolve Sunshine Limited

4. DEFINITIONS

- Appeal – a disagreement by a Resident or Applicant with a decision made by the Company that affects their application for housing, or their tenancy, and which the Resident or Applicant has requested be reviewed.
- Complaint- an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard or type of service provided by the

Company, which is made by an external person or organisation (Complainant), and where the Complainant had expected or is requesting a different outcome or result.

- Property – the property or residential premises described in the Residential Tenancy Agreement between the Landlord and the Tenant.
- Resident – a person who resides on a permanent basis in a property which is owned or managed by the Company under a Residential Tenancy Agreement (includes a Tenant)
- Residential Tenancy Agreement (or Tenancy Agreement) – a written agreement between a Landlord and a Tenant, which governs the terms on which that Tenant occupies the property described in the Agreement.
- Tenant – a person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with the Company and who has certain rights and obligations under that Agreement.

5. RELATED RESOURCES

- EHVL Absence from a Property Policy
- EHVL Appeals Policy
- EHVL Complaints Management Policy
- EHVL Terminating a Tenancy Policy
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (Vic).

This policy is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of the Company. Any approvals required under this policy will be granted in accordance with the Evolve Housing group Delegations of Authority Policy. If you have any specific questions regarding this policy, please contact Evolve on 1800 693 865 or email your enquiry to myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au.

6. VERSION CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Policy Reviewer	Key Changes
1/03/2022	GAL	Policy adopted
16/9/2025	MJ	Updated legislation & removed charging without a separate meter