

Unconnected Vacant Land Availability Charges

Frequently Asked Questions



1. **What's the new charge?**

The Unconnected Vacant Land Availability Charge is a quarterly fee for property owners whose property is not currently connected to Central Tablelands Water (CTW) drinking water reticulated service area but could have a connection installed at any time. In other words, the property benefits from the availability of the water network, even if it is not yet connected.

2. **How much is it?**

The charge is \$176 per year charged at \$44 per quarter, half of the cost of a standard residential 20mm connection. It is about 48c per day or \$3.38 per week. This price will increase each financial year. For example, in 2026/27 it will be \$52.80 per quarter.

3. **Why are you charging it now?**

Unconnected vacant land within CTW's reticulated service areas benefits from the availability of water infrastructure, even where services are not connected. To ensure equitable cost recovery for maintaining and providing capability and capacity, these properties are subject to quarterly water availability charges in line with Section 552 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and associated regulations. This charge helps:

- The ongoing operation, maintenance, and renewal of existing infrastructure.
- Share costs fairly among property owners who benefit from service availability.
- Support the financial sustainability of CTW's water supply service.

CTW is committed to delivering quality, reliable and sustainability water supply, and this charge will directly contribute to this objective.

4. **How will I know if I'm going to be charged?**

CTW is writing to all customers that will be subject to the new charge and giving them notice before they receive a quarterly water availability bill in May 2026.

5. **What if someone doesn't pay?**

CTW has a debt recovery policy for unpaid water bills, including the availability charge. If a bill is unpaid, we'll send a reminder and are happy to arrange a payment plan so you can pay over time. However, if the account remains unpaid, interest will be applied at the legislated rate (currently 10.5%). If necessary, we may refer the debt to a collection agency, which will incur additional costs.

6. **What if I want a water connection?**

Great, CTW would love to provide you with safe and reliable water. Please email us to request a no-obligation quote to have a water connection to your property.

7. But I don't have a connection...

We appreciate that you don't have a connection and this charge is new. However, your land benefits from the availability of water and its value reflects that a connection could be installed. The charge is set out in Section 552 of the Local Government Act 1993. CTW hasn't charged unconnected vacant land previously, but many councils have been charging since 1993.

8. I rent this land out, can I get the tenant to pay?

Any agreement you make with your tenants, including adjustments to rent, are private matters between you and your tenant. All availability charges remain the responsibility of the property owner, regardless of any rental agreement.

9. Why do I have to pay?

Your property qualifies for the charges because it meets all the required criteria:

- a. It's located within 225m of a CTW reticulation main – a pipe that provides water.
- b. A water service connection could be practically installed to your property.
- c. Your property is privately owned and can be built upon or developed.

10. Why do some properties owners not have to pay?

Some property owners won't need to pay because their property has been assessed as impractical to service. For example, there may be excessive rock or a waterway CTW would need to cross. In other words, CTW couldn't reasonably provide them with a water service, so their property isn't benefiting from availability of the water supply network.

11. How can I pay?

Your bill will be sent by post to your registered postal address, you can pay by any of CTW's normal payment methods including BPAY, AusPost or Direct Debit, all the details are shown on the bill. You can also register for eNotices so bills are sent by email.

12. What if I have multiple adjoining lots?

If one person owns multiple adjoining lots and each lot has its own building entitlement, then each lot will be treated individually for assessment purposes. This means the unconnected vacant land charge will apply to each lot, even if the lots are being used as a single area.

13. Where can I get more information?

More information can be found on CTW's website www.ctw.nsw.gov.au, navigate to News > Announcements or you can call us on 02 6391 7200 or email us at water@ctw.nsw.gov.au.