STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS OF RETAIL WATER SUPPLY

Approved by the Rous Leadership Team: 14/01/2025

This document outlines the conditions of water supply and roles and responsibilities between Rous and the customer for the water supply connected to Rous's bulk water network.

Safety First	Together As One	Accountability	Respect Always

Principal policy

Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers

Procedure

Introduction

The Rous bulk supply network operates differently from a typical urban water supply network of reservoirs and reticulation pipes. There can be significant pressure fluctuations and more regular disruption to supply because of normal operations, maintenance, or main breaks. A higher risk of backflow exists compared to a typical urban supply provided by a local council and water pressure for firefighting purposes cannot be guaranteed.

Paramount in managing connections to the Rous supply network is maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements and ensuring the safety of all end users and consumers by ensuring the quality and safety of the water supplied for drinking purposes. Where a customer is permitted to connect to the Rous supply network, the requirements outlined in this document are mandatory for all customers.

Purpose

These conditions apply to all retail water service connections to the Rous supply network without exception and will:

a. Ensure compliance with the legislative and regulatory requirements of providing clean, safe, drinking water that protects public health for all customers.
b. Ensure the methods for the prevention of contamination of the drinking water within the supply network are known, implemented, and appropriate levels of backflow and cross connection preventions are applied for the protection of the supply network.
c. Ensure all connections to the Rous supply network are properly metered to allow accurate and timely billing of costs to customers.
d. Provide information to customers about responsibilities for the costs of connection to the Rous supply network.
e. Provide clear guidelines to assist Rous staff in making determinations relating to protecting the potable water supply network via backflow prevention.
f. Provide clear information to members of the public, plumbers, and other stakeholders about the connection, metering, selection and installation of backflow prevention devices and Rous's role in backflow prevention.

Table of Contents

Mandatory conditions of connection, metering and backflow prevention

1. Connection

1.1. Rous is responsible for undertaking the work to provide the connection to its water supply network for section 68 water supply approvals unless the conditions of approval provide otherwise. This will involve tapping the water main at an appropriate location, connecting a service pipe, and installing it to the boundary of the property.

1.2. At the boundary of the property, a digital smart water meter or another approved device and backflow prevention device (as outlined separately in this document) will be installed on the service pipe by Rous. This arrangement will be known as the “supply point”.

1.3. Rous will install a ball valve on the customer’s side of the water meter which will serve as the isolation valve for the service. It will be the responsibility of the customer to maintain this ball valve and meet any associated costs with this maintenance.

1.4. Rous may provide a pressure reducing valve on the network side of the meter that is solely for protection of Rous’s assets including the water meter and backflow prevention device (where installed).

1.5. The customer is responsible for connecting their own network of pipes, valves, tanks, and/or any other infrastructure to convey water from the supply point at the property boundary to any location within their property where water supply or storage is required. See figure 1 for detail on the above points.

1.6. Any equipment connected to the supply network must be designed and operated by the customer to minimise or prevent adverse pressure and flow effects on the Rous distribution system and other supply connections on the Rous distribution system.

1.7. All water supply works, including connections and fittings, installed from the meter through to the property connected downstream are to be carried out by a licensed plumber to the required Australian Standard.

1.8. Rous makes no guarantees about pressure or flow delivered at the supply point. It is the responsibility of the customer to make their own enquiries about the pressure and flow at the supply point and whether it is suitable for the intended purpose.

1.9. Where pressure or flow is regarded as unsuitable for particular purposes, the customer is responsible for making design amendments or modifications to their internal supply network to provide suitable pressure, flow, or volume of water for the intended use. This includes potential pressure reducing valves to manage high pressure.

1.10. Any reliance on the Rous pressure reducing valve (if installed) for protection of customer side plumbing is at the sole risk of the customer. Use of Rous’s infrastructure to manage pressure (that is using the water meter isolation valve or tap to reduce flow) is prohibited and may result in, but is not limited to, disconnection or legal proceedings.

1.11. Water supplied to any property must not be on-sold or otherwise distributed to other properties or persons.

1.12. Rous acknowledges that there are legacy connections to the Rous supply network that do not meet the requirements of these conditions. Where such connections exist, Rous will assess any requirements and responsibilities on a case-by-case basis when issues arise.

1.13. Where legacy connections do exist, any major upgrades or building works on the property will trigger a requirement on the customer to upgrade the connection to current requirements.

1.14. For developments where the water reticulation main is not yet connected to the live network the developer, with Rous approval, is responsible for installing new property service connections. The service connection is to be terminated within the property boundary with a service isolation valve.

1.15. Separately once the main becomes live and a water meter is required, the developer/owner shall make an application under section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993* for water service to Rous.

1.16. For development sites adjacent to live water reticulation mains, Rous will install the connection by initially terminating the service within the property boundary with a service isolation valve. Once a water meter is required, the builder/owner shall notify Rous to complete the installation by providing a riser and water meter. This is to minimise the likelihood of damage to the water meter during construction.

1.17. In general, developers, plumbers or any other entity will not be permitted to work on or connect to Rous's water reticulation mains. In the situation where developers need to connect (cut-in) new reticulation to Rous's main, Rous will permit the works to be done by the developer with Rous to undertake the network shutdown and supervise the cut-in.

1.18. For large developments contact Rous in the first instance.

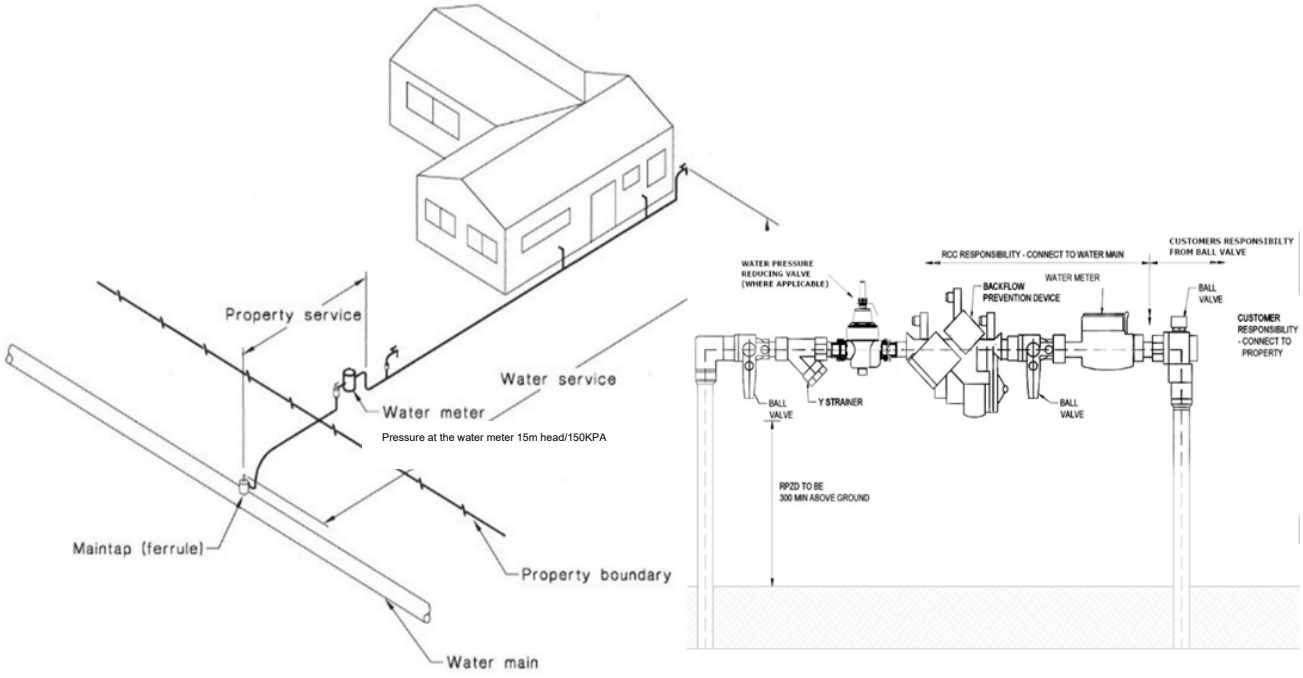


Figure 1 Example of typical connection, showing visual representation of clauses 1.1 to 1.5.

2. Metering

2.1. All properties connected to a potable (or recycled) supply network must be metered.

2.2. A separate water meter/service is required for, but not limited to residential and non-residential strata, community titles, new flats, units, cabins, villas, dual occupancy, and affordable housing projects.

2.3. For properties with only one dwelling or non-residential unit, a single metered water connection is required. For multi-unit (multiple occupancy) properties, all drinking and recycled water connections and separate units are to be separately metered.

2.4. All buildings must be designed and constructed with appropriate pipework and space for individual meters (including mixed-use developments).

2.5. Standard installation arrangements for various property types generally must be in accordance with Attachment 1. Approval is required from Rous for a connection arrangement that differs from the standard arrangement.

2.6. Meters must be readily accessible for reading, maintenance or removal and be clear of obstacles. Meters will not be permitted to be installed below ground, in locked cabinets, behind high fences, enclosed areas or confined spaces. There are to be no obstacles (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation, or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter preventing safe access at any time.

2.7. **Master/subtract arrangement**

2.10.1 If a property with three or more units has compliant plumbing, individual metering for each unit may be provided. In this scenario, a master meter at the property boundary measures the total water flow for all units, while each unit has its own subtract water meter. The sum of flow through the subtract meters must equal the total flow through the master meter.

2.10.2 Access charges are levied on all subtract meters. The master meter will have no access charge levied but will be used to capture leakage, common water uses or inappropriate fire hose usage.

2.10.3 All master meters and subtract meters will be approved by Rous and installed by a licensed plumber. All subtract meters must:

- have an individual serial number unique to that meter.
- have a weatherproof label which states the relevant unit number.
- conform to the required standards.
- have the appropriate level of backflow prevention.

2.8. New multi-level buildings

2.11.1 In all new multi-level buildings, it is mandatory to design and construct buildings with pipework and designated space for individual meters.

2.11.2 These meters should be in a utility cupboard at an accessible location on each floor level, such as the foyer area, for reading and maintenance purposes.

2.11.3 The customer is responsible for ensuring Rous always has access to the meters, including any required access to the building and lifts, such as providing access keys, cards, or codes.

2.9. Existing developments

2.12.1 Individual metering for existing buildings is not mandatory. In existing buildings and multi-unit developments without subtract meters, all water use is measured by the master meter and all water use is charged to the owner (or owner's corporation). This charge is typically then apportioned by the owner to each occupier (or owners' corporation through strata levies).

2.12.2 Installation of individual meters in existing multi-unit developments must have appropriate plumbing to allow for individual metering. Installation of individual meters in existing strata buildings must be endorsed by the owners' corporation. All unit owners must understand the impact on their charges. Evidence of this endorsement must be provided to Rous.

2.12.3 Rous will review the need for individual meters in existing unmetered developments as part of the meter replacement program.

2.12.4 Any changes to private service lines or internal plumbing are the responsibility of the customer and will require appropriate approval from Rous.

2.10. Vacant lots

Rous will require vacant lots which are connected to the supply network to have a water meter installed in accordance with relevant standards.

2.11. Private water meters

2.14.1 Private water subtract meters may have been installed in existing developments to calculate water usage for each lot or occupancy. If an owner's corporation of an existing building with private meters intends to implement individual metering, new subtract meters must be installed as described in Section 2.7.

2.14.2 The installation of individual meters in existing developments must include appropriate plumbing to allow for individual metering. A signed letter from the owner's corporation shall accompany the application that all owners approve of Rous installing the master meter and subtract meters for all units.

2.14.3 Rous may also consider installing subtract meters for each dwelling, when the master meter becomes due for replacement, as per Rous's meter replacement program, to allow individual reading of meters as per the normal meter reading program (quarterly).

2.12. Smart meters

A digital smart meter or other approved device by Rous will be installed, enabling customers to better understand their water use by providing more detailed information, provide for more accurate billing and help with the early detection of leaks. A digital smart meter or other approved device by Rous will be installed, enabling customers to better understand their water use by providing more detailed accurate information.

2.13. **Easements**

2.16.1 A minimum 3-metre-wide easement, or such other size as determined by Rous, must be created/granted over any water main extension required on private land to service a Torrens Title or community title development.

2.16.2 Where legacy connections exist, the water meter may be located some distance away from the customer on a neighbouring property or road reserve. The water service beyond the meter is the sole responsibility of the customer and may not be covered by an easement or pipeline agreement.

2.14. **Fire services**

2.17.1 Fire services must be designed by a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant and certified that the design and installation complies with the relevant Australian Standards. The plumber is responsible for labelling and securing all fire services as per the relevant Australian Standards.

2.17.2 Fire hose reels shall be connected to a metered service.

2.17.3 The customer is responsible for maintaining private fire services from the meter to the property.

2.17.4 Where the fire service line(s) to serve the development is (are) greater in diameter than the water main diameter that the fire service line is connected to, then the water main shall be augmented to the same size or larger (as determined by Rous) at the developer's full cost.

2.15. **Disconnection**

Where a service or part of a service becomes disused it shall be disconnected by Rous, or a contractor approved by Rous. Only customers who are property owners and/or their representatives may apply to disconnect a water service. All costs associated with disconnection of the water service are to be borne by the applicant and paid prior to Rous undertaking disconnection works.

2.16. **Relocation**

2.19.1 Rous may at its discretion relocate a water meter into another location or pit for safety or operational reasons. In general, meter relocations are only permissible up to a distance of 600 mm. Relocations more than this may require a new connection (tapping).

2.19.2 The customer may also request to move a meter (e.g. to construct a fence or driveway). For a request to relocate a water service contact Rous.

2.19.3 The applicant is responsible for all costs to relocate the meter.

2.17. **Water meter size**

The size of a water meter for a single residential dwelling and vacant residential land is generally 20 mm. For other residential developments, the service/ meter sizing including master meters shall be determined as follows:

- for developments with less than 10 units, design by a licensed plumber or a qualified hydraulic consultant is required.
- for developments with more than 10 units design by a qualified hydraulic consultant is required.
- for non-residential developments, a qualified hydraulic consultant shall design the water meter and service size (if greater than 20 mm) and fire service (if applicable).

2.18. **Change of property use and associated meter size**

2.21.1 Upgrades to water meters associated with a change in use are addressed through the Section 68 application process. Rous may instruct a customer to obtain a hydraulic report for the purposes of increasing a meter size/s if Rous deems that the meter/s is/are undersized. Rous will review the hydraulic report to confirm the required meter size/s and where a larger meter/s is/are required, the applicant is responsible for costs to replace the meter/s and install a backflow device if required. Access charges will be changed to reflect the new meter size and a price on application applied for any master meters

2.21.2 Rous also requires a report from a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant where a customer seeks to reduce the water meter size. Where Rous accepts that the

meter size can be reduced and the current meter is 12 years or older, Rous will update the access charge and replace the meter to the assessed size as part of the meter replacement program. Where Rous accepts that the meter size can be reduced and the current meter is less than 12 years old, Rous will not immediately replace the meter to the assessed size. The access charge will be updated in Rous's rates system and the meter will be replaced as part of Rous's meter replacement program when it reaches its normal replacement age and condition.

3. Backflow prevention

Backflow prevention requirements apply to all retail water service connections to Rous's supply network without exception.

3.1 Installation

3.1.1 Rous requires a backflow prevention device to be installed on all retail water service connections to its bulk supply network. This will occur in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Plumbing Code of Australia, Australian Standards and such other legislation as may be relevant in the circumstances.

3.1.2 For water service connections up to and including 32mm, backflow prevention devices will be owned by Rous and installed integral with the meter (low hazard installation) or as a separate device before the water meter as depicted in *Figure 2* below for medium and high hazard installations.

3.1.3 For water service connections larger than 32mm, backflow prevention devices are required to be installed by the customer on the customer's side of the meter.

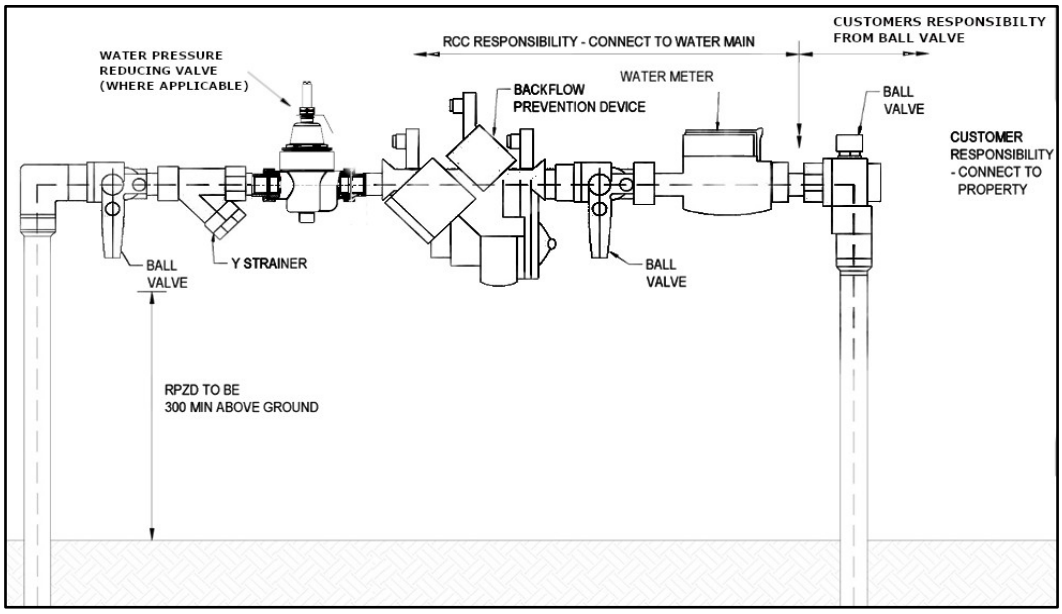


Figure 2 Typical backflow installation

3.2 Testable backflow prevention device

Properties classified with a medium to high hazard rating must have a testable backflow prevention device installed at the retail water service connection point for containment purposes or alternative solution approved by Rous, in accordance with Australian Standard 3500 Part 1: Plumbing and drainage Section 4. testable backflow prevention devices.

3.3 Non-testable backflow prevention device

Properties classified with a low hazard rating must have a non-testable backflow prevention device (as a minimum). A non-testable backflow prevention device is built into Rous supplied water meters for 20mm and 25mm water meters.

3.4 Determining hazard rating

3.4.1 Rous is responsible for determining the hazard rating on all connected properties.

3.4.2 Land Zoned 'Rural (RU1 – RU6)', 'Commercial (B1 – B8)' or 'Industrial (IN1 – IN4 & SP1 – SP3)' are, for the purpose of this document classified as medium to high hazard properties for backflow and cross contamination. These zones have been classified as medium risk of cross contamination due to the potential of hazardous chemicals, onsite sewage management systems and livestock allowed on properties due to the land zoning and must have a testable backflow prevention device installed.

3.4.3 All other Land Zones will be assessed using site specific information including but not limited to the specific hazards listed above. In the absence of any site-specific information, Rous will assign a hazard rating to a property in accordance with AS3500.1 based on Rous's assessment of the primary activities being undertaken on site. Rous may ask customers to certify their hazard rating periodically. If the customer has more site-specific information and requests a review of the hazard rating, then Rous will review the hazard and may determine that a different hazard rating is more appropriate and amend its records accordingly.

3.5 Annual testing

3.5.1 Testable backflow prevention devices up to and including 32mm will be tested annually by Rous.

3.5.2 Testable backflow prevention devices larger than 32mm installed on the customer's side of the meter must be tested annually by a qualified person with test certificate provided to Rous.

3.6 Cost

3.6.1 All costs of implementing the requirements are to be borne by customers requiring a testable backflow prevention device. This includes the cost of the device, labour charges for installation, replacement, repairs, annual testing, ongoing maintenance, and administration costs as applicable.

3.6.2 The recovery of the Rous owned testable backflow prevention device costs will be spread over the lifetime of the device (typically ten years) and will appear as a charge (backflow charge) on the customer's quarterly water account. The backflow charge is calculated by summing all testable backflow prevention device costs over a 10-year period and evenly allocating those costs to the customer's quarterly water account. CPI and/or other price fluctuations relating to the backflow charge are to be managed through adjustments to Rous's Revenue Policy (fees and charges) on an annual basis.

3.7 Rous responsibilities

3.7.1 Rous will install, maintain, service, test, repair and renew testable backflow prevention device as required up to and including 32mm in size. Devices larger than 32mm are required to be managed by the customer with Rous to undertake compliance activities as required.

3.7.2 Rous staff will maintain a backflow register and keep records of all property backflow hazard ratings, registration of backflow devices and annual test results.

3.7.3 Rous staff will provide information to customers regarding backflow, cross connections, and backflow prevention from time-to-time and upon request.

4. Water quality

4.1 Rous supplies water that is treated to a standard that meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, including disinfecting the water to destroy any pathogenic (disease causing) organisms that may have been present in the water source.

4.2 Depending on where a customer is connected to the Rous supply, the water may contain fluoride. Rous will not add or remove fluoride from the supply based on individual customer preferences.

4.3 Rous manages and monitors water quality within the network in accordance with our Drinking Water Management System.

5. Network management and maintenance

5.1 Rous will undertake maintenance of its bulk supply network in accordance with its own adopted practices and service levels.

5.2 Where planned maintenance requires an interruption to water supply to a property, Rous will endeavour to give 7 days' notice to customers.

5.3 Rous will endeavour to issue SMS advice for planned water interruptions where a current mobile phone number has been provided against the water account.

5.4 Notice of water supply interruption will not occur for unplanned works such as pipeline breaks or emergency works.

5.5 Rous is not responsible for any damage caused to internal plumbing because of a water supply interruption, whether planned or unplanned.

6. Fees and charges

6.1 Upon connection of a property to the Rous supply network, an account will be established in the names of the customer who is a property owner.

6.2 Each quarter, or as otherwise determined or required, Rous will issue an account to the account holder for payment of all charges associated with the connection and/or consumption of water for that quarter. The charge for the installation of master meters will be based on a price on application and will be invoiced in addition to the total fee payable stated in the Water Services Application.

6.3 The applicable fees and charges for water connections are outlined in Rous's Statement of Revenue Policy (fees and charges).

6.4 The nominated account holder is responsible for all water use recorded through the water meter including unaccounted for water use (i.e. leaks).

6.5 The nominated account holder is responsible to pay the account by the nominated due date on the account.

6.6 Rous may disconnect or restrict the water supply to the property if an account is not paid by the due date, or arrangements for payment of the account beyond the due date are not met or made.

6.7 Customers experiencing difficulty or hardship in paying water accounts are to contact Rous to discuss their circumstances. Rous financial assistance programs include the Retail Water Account Assistance Policy and the Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy.

6.8 **Inaccessible water meters**
Where a water meter is inaccessible for reading, Rous will send a warning letter to the customer stating that the meter is inaccessible and was unable to be read. If the meter is unable to be read the subsequent billing quarter, additional charges may apply as per Rous's fees and charges.

6.9 **Damaged water meters**
The customer is responsible for protection of the water meter from damage. Where Rous meters are damaged, these will be repaired by Rous and an invoice for the costs incurred will be issued to the customer. If Rous is repeatedly called out to a property to repair a damaged meter, the customer will be invoiced the cost for Rous's meter protection cage to be installed over the meter in addition to meter repair costs.

7. Maintenance responsibilities

7.1 **Rous's responsibilities**

7.1.1. Rous is responsible for the water service from the water main up to and including the water meter [and any smart metering devices]. The water meter remains Rous's asset and Rous is responsible for the water service from the water main to the outlet of the meter (Figure 1 – typical connection).

7.1.2. The master meter [and smart meter reading devices] are the property of Rous for maintenance and replacement. Some subtract meters may remain the property of the owner where prior agreement exists.

7.1.3. The provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* provide Rous with the power of entry to land required for pipeline breaks and maintenance, maintaining easements, meter reading, pipeline inspections, pipeline investigations and other necessary works. Rous will give notice to customers of an intention to enter the

property, however, this may not occur for meter reading, or unplanned emergency works such as pipeline breaks.

7.1.4. Only Rous staff or approved contractors may work on Rous infrastructure. Misuse or tampering of Rous infrastructure, including meters and valves, may result in additional fees and charges.

7.1.5. Rous will manage its meter fleet through an ongoing meter replacement process to replace old and faulty meters.

7.1.6. **Water pressure**

7.1.6.1. Rous's supply network has not been designed for a specific level of fire-fighting capability. Rous endeavours to maintain a minimum pressure of 15m head /150 KPA (refer to figure 3) at the water meter during peak instantaneous demand for new (from July 2025) but not legacy connections.

7.1.6.2. Water supply pressures vary all the time from changes in system demand, main breaks, operational changes, and water usage within the property. Rous also undertakes pressure and leakage management programs that may result in a temporary reduction in water supply flow and pressure.

7.1.6.3. The customer is responsible for managing pressures on their side of the meter. This may require the installation of a pressure reducing valve to protect the customer's internal plumbing or fixtures from excessive pressures. Use of Rous's infrastructure to manage pressure (that is using the water meter isolation valve or tap to reduce flow) is prohibited and may result in disconnection or legal proceedings.

7.1.6.4. Rous may provide a pressure reducing valve that is solely for protection of Rous assets. Any reliance on the Rous pressure reducing valve for protection of customer side plumbing is at the sole risk of the customer.

7.1.6.5. The equipment connected to the supply network must be arranged and operated to minimise or prevent adverse pressure and flow effects on the distribution system and other water supply connections.

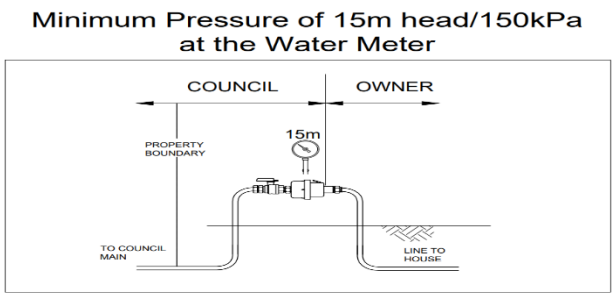


Figure 3: minimum pressure of 15m at the water meter

7.2 Customer's responsibilities

7.2.1 Customers are responsible for payment for all metered water as calculated by Rous and all other charges associated with the supply of water on or before the due date of the account. Failure to comply with Rous's policies or to pay water rates or charges may result in Rous taking action to restrict the supply of water to a premises or to disconnect the property from its supply network. Disconnection or restricting the supply of water does not affect the liability of the rateable person to pay the outstanding rates or charges. Restricting the supply of water to a premises or disconnection from Rous's supply network will be undertaken in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

7.2.2 Pipes and fittings between a master meter and any sub-meters are the property of the building owner. Customers are responsible for all internal pipes and fittings from the outlet (property side) of the water meter (Figure 1).

7.2.3 Rous has the legal right to enter property without notice for the purposes of accessing the water meter (e.g. for meter reading, testing and inspection). Customers have a responsibility to ensure Rous's meter readers have reasonable access to the water meter on their property. Customers should consider this when determining the position of plants, fences, gates, and other barriers to ensure the meter can still be accessed by Rous. Where a water meter is inaccessible for reading, Rous will send a warning letter to the customer stating that the meter is inaccessible and was unable to be read.

7.2.4 Any suspected meter inaccuracies must be reported to Rous by the customer as soon as practicable. Rous will consider any water billing anomalies.

7.2.5 Rous shall not be responsible for water leaks in private pipework, fittings, or fixtures. Any resulting costs because of excess water use or from the water leak in private property pipework, fittings, or fixtures are the customer's responsibility and shall be paid for by the customer.

7.2.6 The customer is responsible for protection of the water meter from damage.

7.2.7 It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that their systems continue to meet the required codes and always operate effectively.

7.3 Testing of water meters

Rous will test the condition and accuracy of the water meter on the premises, if requested by an owner or occupier of the premises and on payment of a fee. If the meter is found to be inaccurate, Rous may charge for the water supplied on the basis of daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year or as the Rous and consumer may agree. A meter is taken to correctly measure the water passing through it if it registers less than 3% more or less than the correct quantity. If the meter is found to be defective, the meter will be replaced, and the meter testing charge will be reimbursed.

Definitions

Australian Standards means:

AS/NZS 3500:1, namely the current version of the Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard for Plumbing and Drainage. AS/NZS 3500:1 refers to Part 1 (Water Services) of this standard.

AS/NZS 2845:1, namely the current version of the Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard for Water Supply. AS/NZS 2845:1 refers to Part 1 (Backflow Prevention Devices) of this standard.

Backflow means the unintended reversal of flow in a water pipeline whereby water that has already passed beyond the meter assembly into the customer's pipeline system returns to the Rous's supply network.

Backflow Prevention Device means a mechanical device that will prevent the reverse flow of water from a potentially polluted source into a potable water supply network.

Community Title Complex a complex of properties that share common property, registered under a deposited plan. The common property may be vacant or have shared facilities.

Council means Rous County Council, being the organisation responsible for the supply of bulk drinking water to the Ballina, Byron, Lismore, and Richmond Valley local government areas.

Customer means the owner of the property that has a direct retail water service connection with Rous. In the instance of a body corporate or multiple owners, the Owners Corporation, or joint owners, through a letter of authority, shall be regarded as the Customer in any connection.

Cross-connection means any connection or arrangement between the potable water supply network connected to water main or any fixture, which may under certain conditions enable water unsuitable for drinking or other substances to enter the potable water supply.

Hazard Ratings (as defined in AS/NZS 3500:1) means:

- High Hazard – any condition, device, or practice which in connection with the water supply network has the potential to cause death.
- Medium Hazard – any condition, device, or practice which in connection with the water supply network could endanger death.
- Low Hazard – any condition, device, or practice that in connection with the drinking water supply network constitutes a nuisance but does not endanger health or cause injury.

Land Zone means the land zone classification as determined by Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley councils and their relevant Local Environmental Plans, as determined by the NSW State Government.

Legacy Connection means a connection to the Rous supply network that existed prior to these conditions of connection being implemented (from July 2025)and that does not meet the requirements herein.

Local Government Act means the Local Government Act NSW (1993) and its associated regulations and any subsequent revisions or amendments.

Master Meter the first and main meter on a property where multiple tenancies share a common connection. This type of meter must have a sub meter. All water goes through the master meter before the sub meters.

Multi-level Building any building that has 2 levels or more, but is not a house, townhouse, or terrace house.

Plumbing Code of Australia means the technical provisions for the design, construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, and maintenance of water services, sanitary, plumbing and drainage systems.

Potable Water means drinking quality water.

Qualified Person means a licensed plumber who has undertaken accredited backflow training from a registered training organisation in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 (NSW*).

Retail Water Service Connection(s) means all water connections to Rous's supply network other than connections to another local council.

Riser the pipe that comes out of the ground to connect the meter to the private water service and Rous's water main.

Service Pipe means the pipe that connects to the Rous water main and is installed from the water main through to the boundary of the property that is to be supplied with water.

Subtract (sub meter) a water meter that is located after the master meter and measures water supplied to a connection that is downstream of the master meter. Water usage registered by the sub meter is deducted from the total water usage registered by the master meter to calculate the water usage charges for both the sub meter and the master meter. Also termed deduct meter.

Supply Point means the point at the boundary of the property being supplied with water where the water meter, ball valve and backflow prevention device are installed.

Testable Backflow Prevention Device means any backflow device that is provided with test taps for the purpose of testing its operation, and a registered break tank, or a registered air gap.

Torrens Title Lot a type of property that registered under a deposited plan. A Torrens Title Lot can have a home or a business building on it.

Valve a device that allows control of the flow of water.

Water Meter means a device installed by Rous to measure the quantity of water supplied to a customer.

Contact officer
Infrastructure Program Manager

Related documents

Policies
Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customer
Debt management and financial hardship Policy - [TO BE UPDATED]
Retail Water Customer Account Assistance Policy - [TO BE UPDATED]
The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011)
Fluoridation policy

Procedures
Not applicable

Legislation
Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)
Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)

Other
Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
Plumbing Code of Australia

File No.:		Next review date: April 2026	
Version	Purpose and description	Date approved by Council	Resolution No
1.0	Updated to clarify and standardise metering arrangements for retail customers		

Attachment 1 – Standard meter arrangements

All properties and units in a multi-unit development must be metered. A single meter for a dual occupancy development (including granny flats) is only acceptable if you do not wish to subdivide the lot or separately monitor the water use. The following diagrams show the accepted (standard) meter installation and associated water billing arrangements. These apply to residential and non-residential developments.

Where practical, adequate separation between power and water services should be provided (e.g. these services are provided on opposite sides of the property).

You must request approval from Rous if you wish to install a non-standard meter arrangement.

You must include the reason that a standard installation is not practical and a plan of the proposed installation with the *Water Service Application.*

Contact Rous for advice and requirements for meter arrangements for other types of development including multi-level developments.

Meter access and ownership

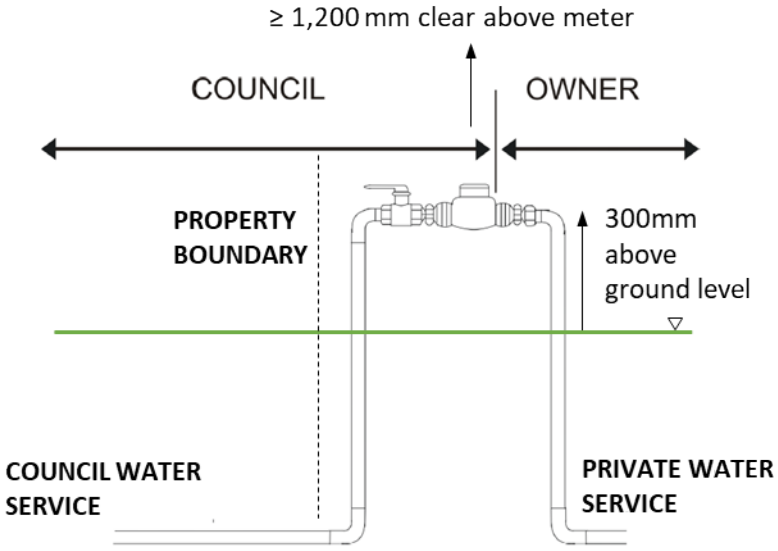


Figure 1: Meter access requirements and ownership

Single developments

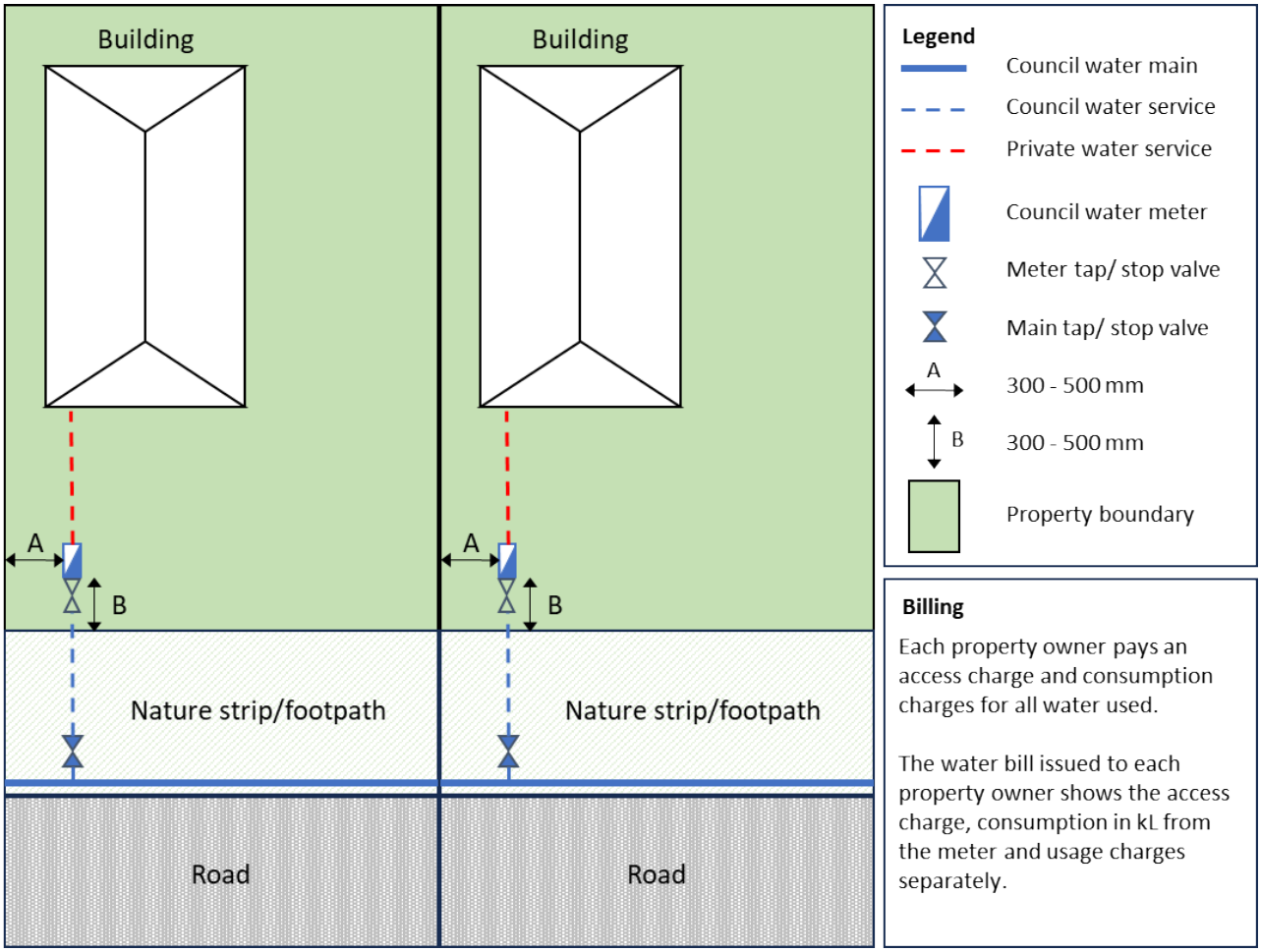
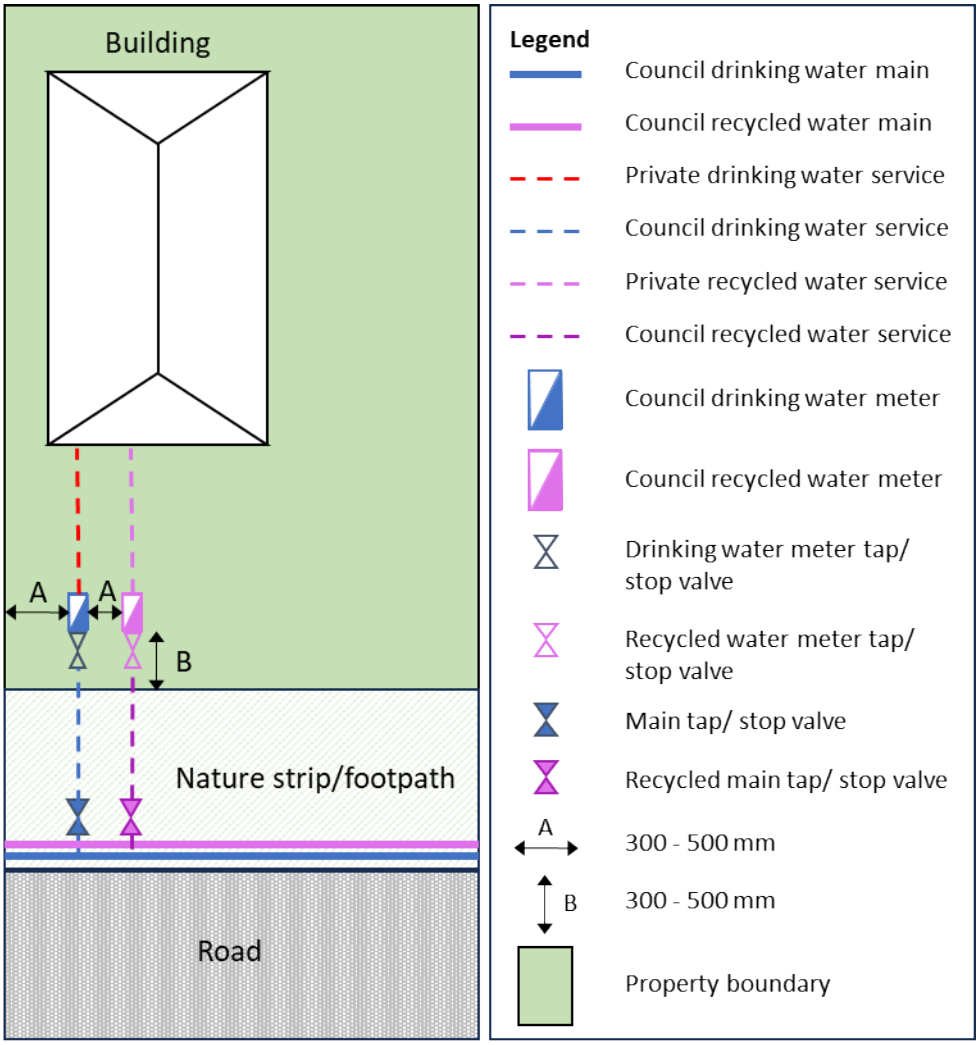


Figure 2: Standard meter arrangement: single development

Dual reticulation



Billing

The property owner pays an access charge and consumption charges for all water used.

The water bill issued to the property owner shows the two access charges, consumption in kL from each meter and usage charges separately.

Figure 3: Standard meter arrangement: dual reticulation

Dual occupancies

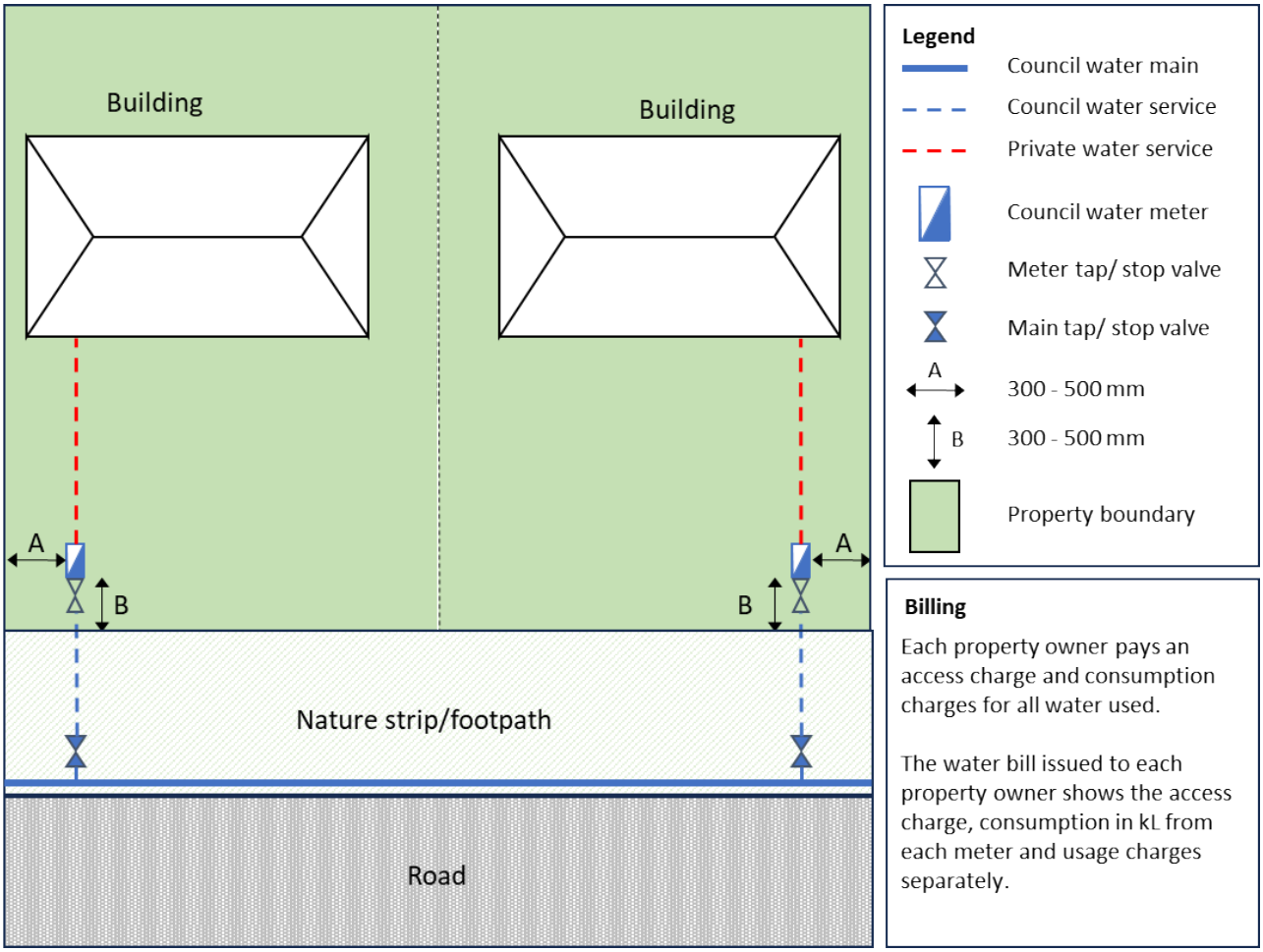


Figure 4: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy subdivision (2 meters and 2 connections)

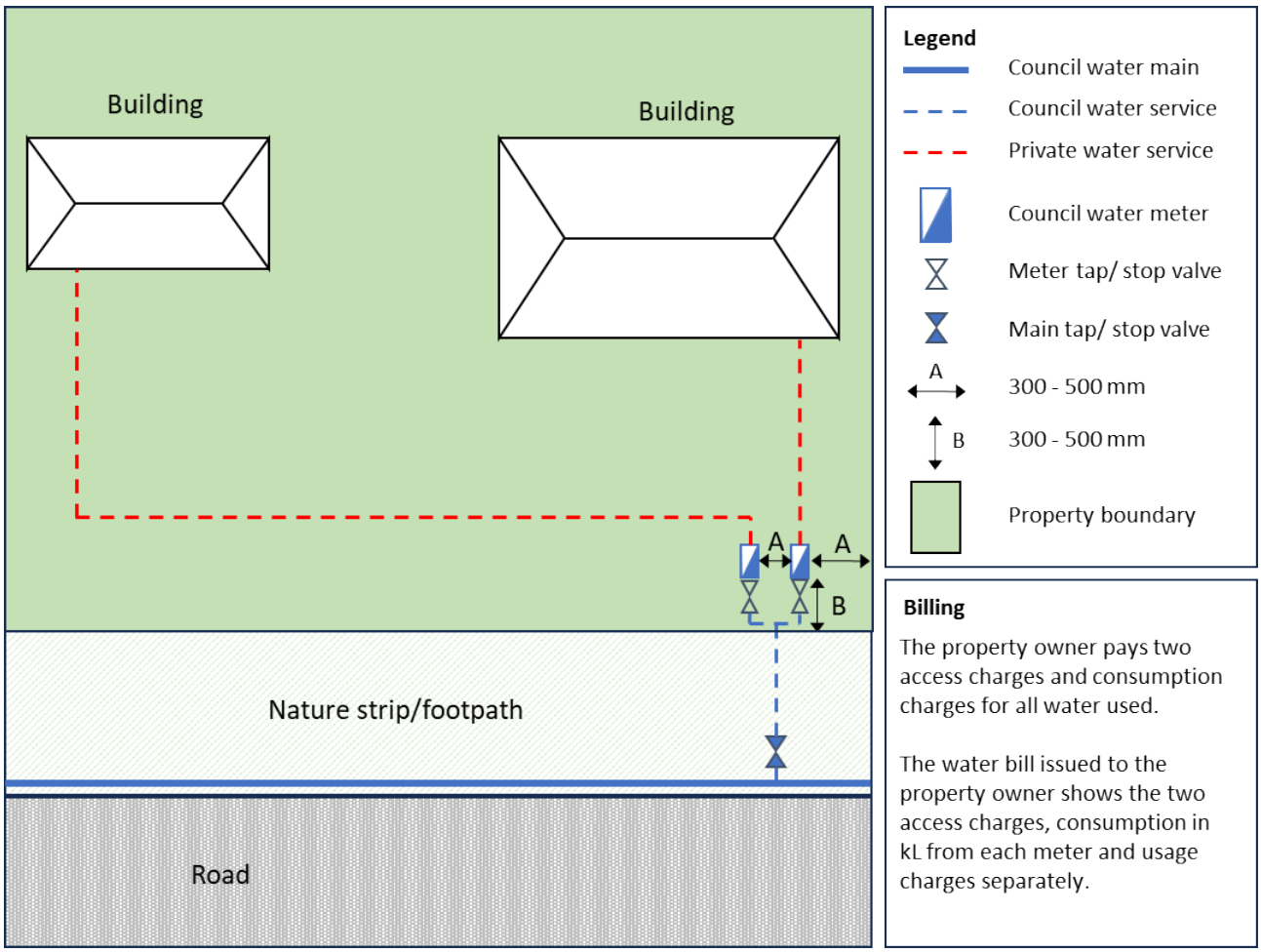


Figure 5: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy with no subdivision e.g. a secondary dwelling, separate water use (2 meters and 1 connection)

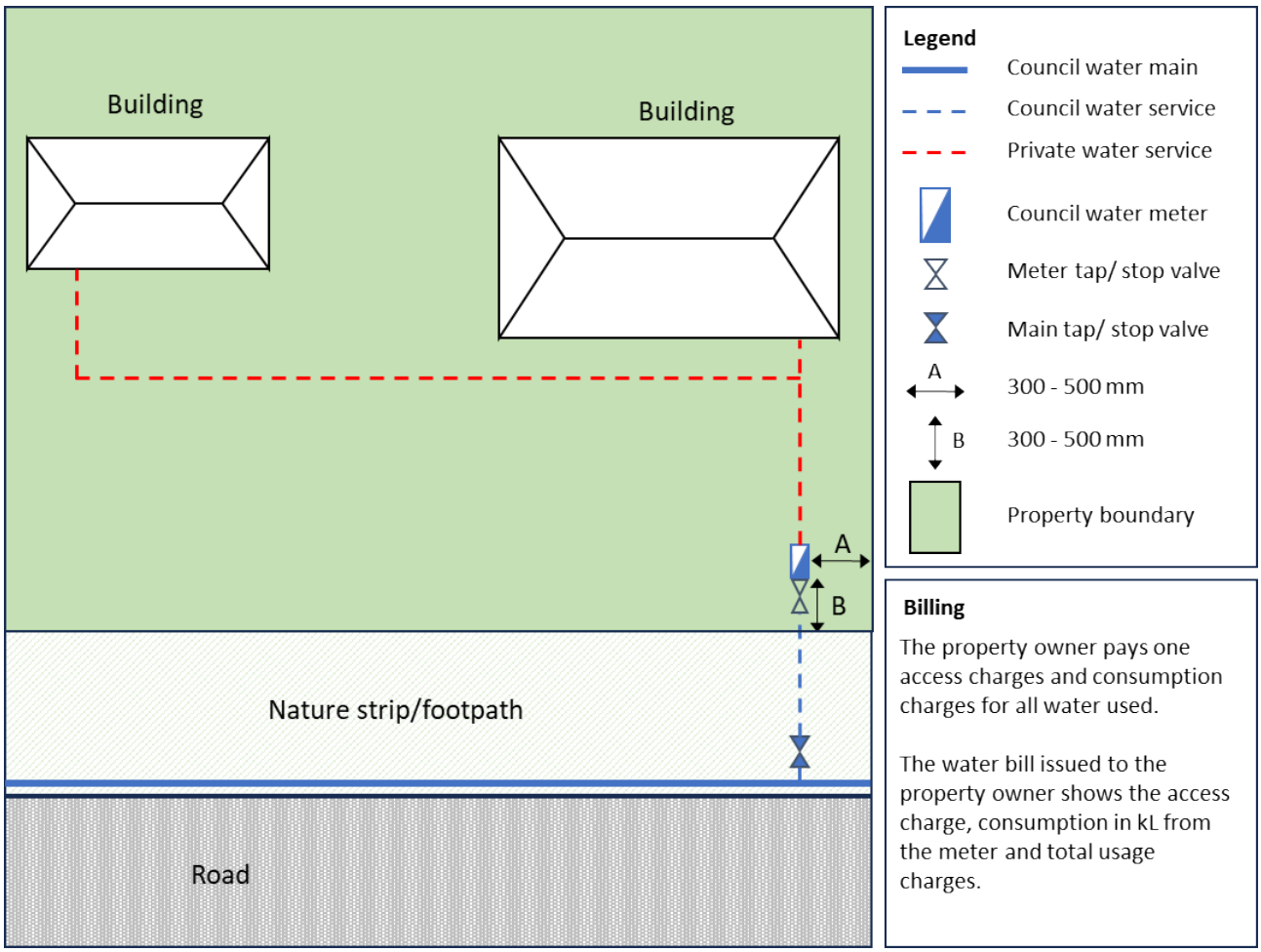


Figure 6: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy with no subdivision e.g. a secondary dwelling, combined water use (1 meter and 1 connection)

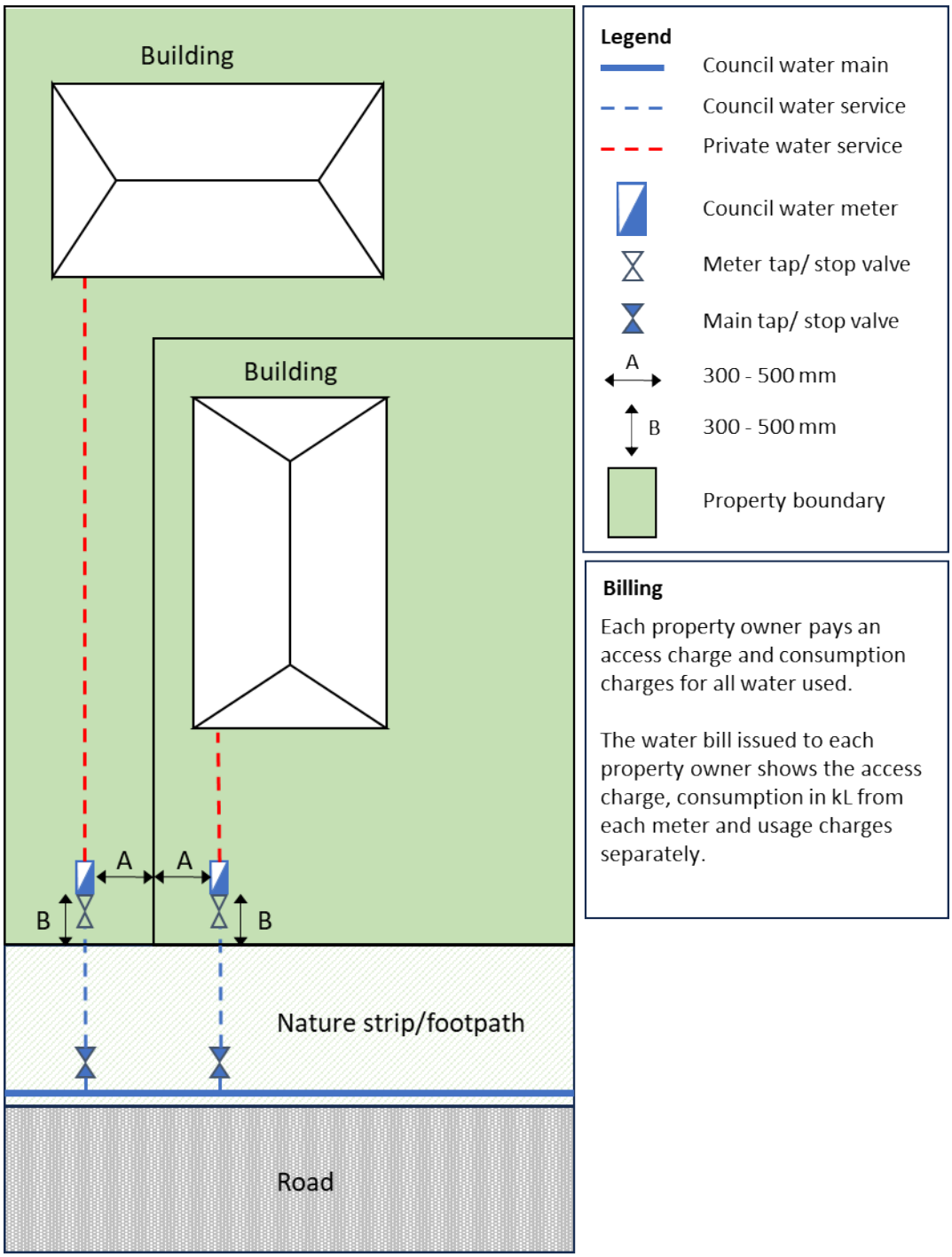


Figure 7: Standard meter arrangement: Battle-axe block (2 meters and 2 connections)

Multi-unit developments

Separate metering for each unit is to be provided either adjacent to each unit or at the street boundary connected directly to the water main via a manifold connection. All properties with common (shared) water use will require a master meter in addition to the individual (private or subtract) meters for each unit.

A water main extension is required for more than 8 lots.

Each meter must be labelled as shown in Figure 8. The label or tag must be fixed to the pipework adjacent to the meter or attached to the meter and have the unit number and meter number displayed in permanent ink.

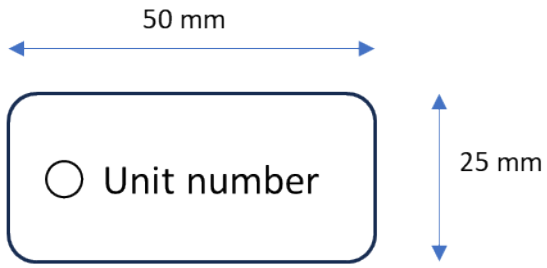


Figure 8: Label requirements for multiple meters

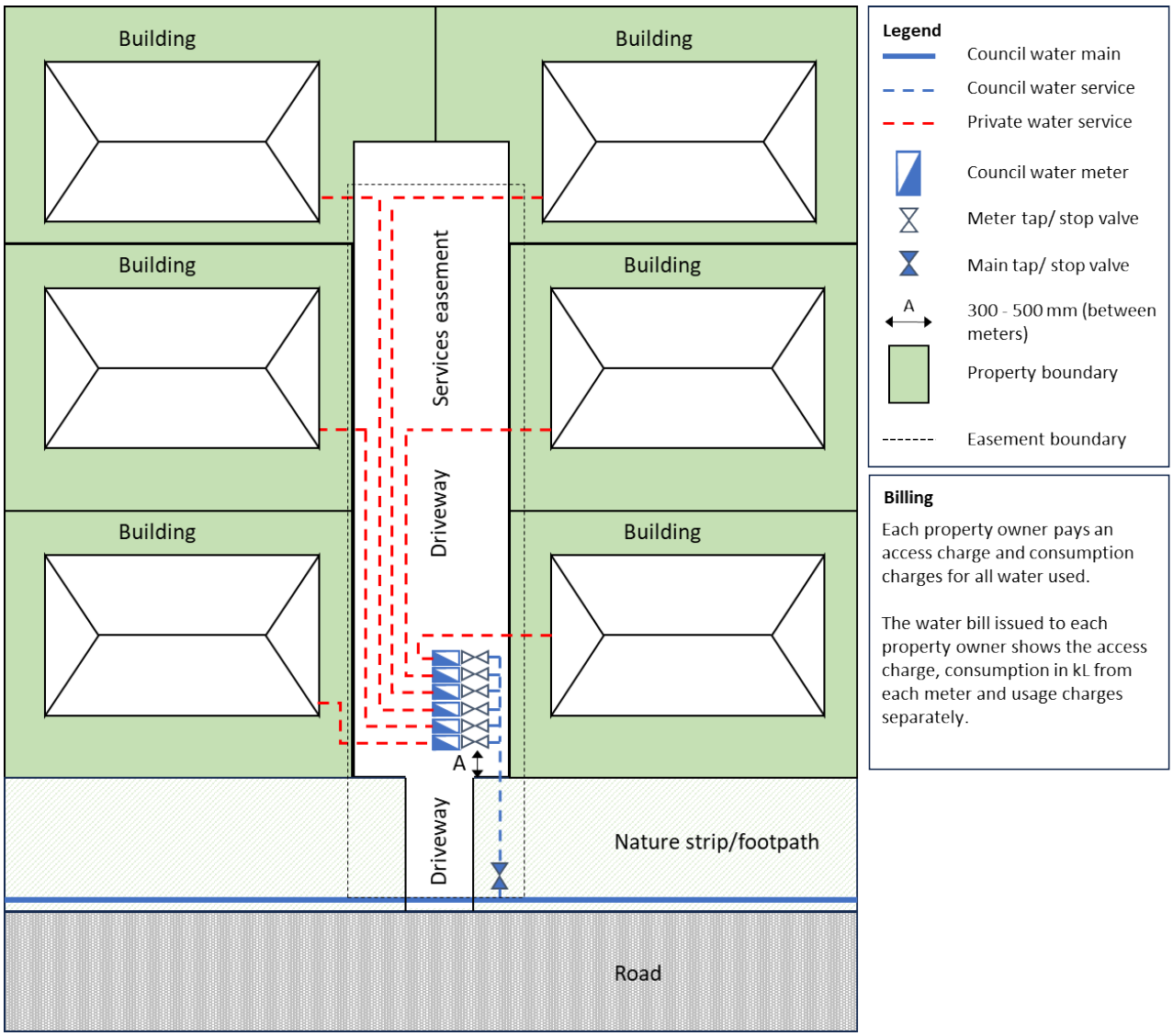


Figure 9: Standard meter arrangement: 3 – 8 lots with cul-de-sac right-of-way and services easement (1 meter for each connection)

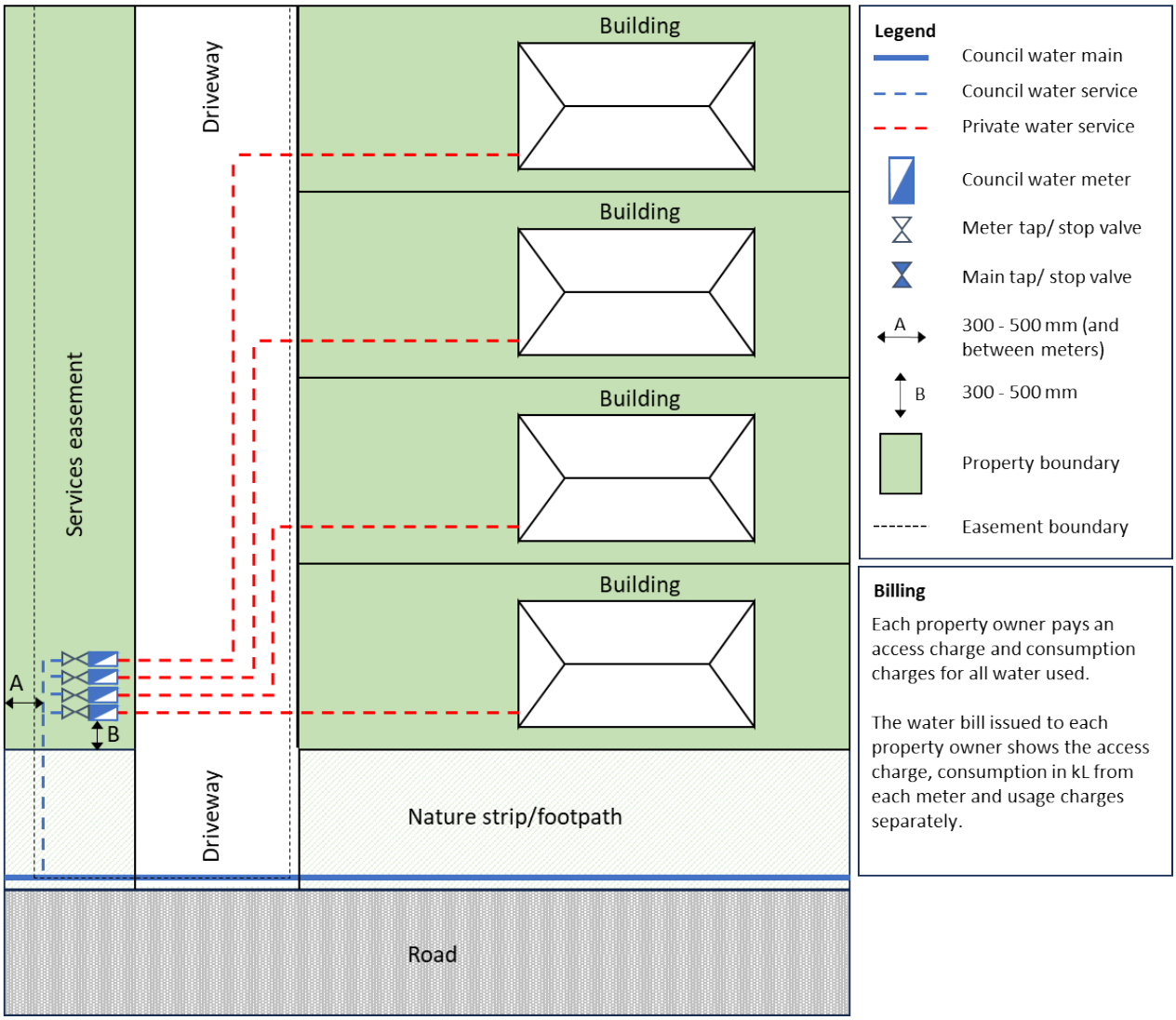
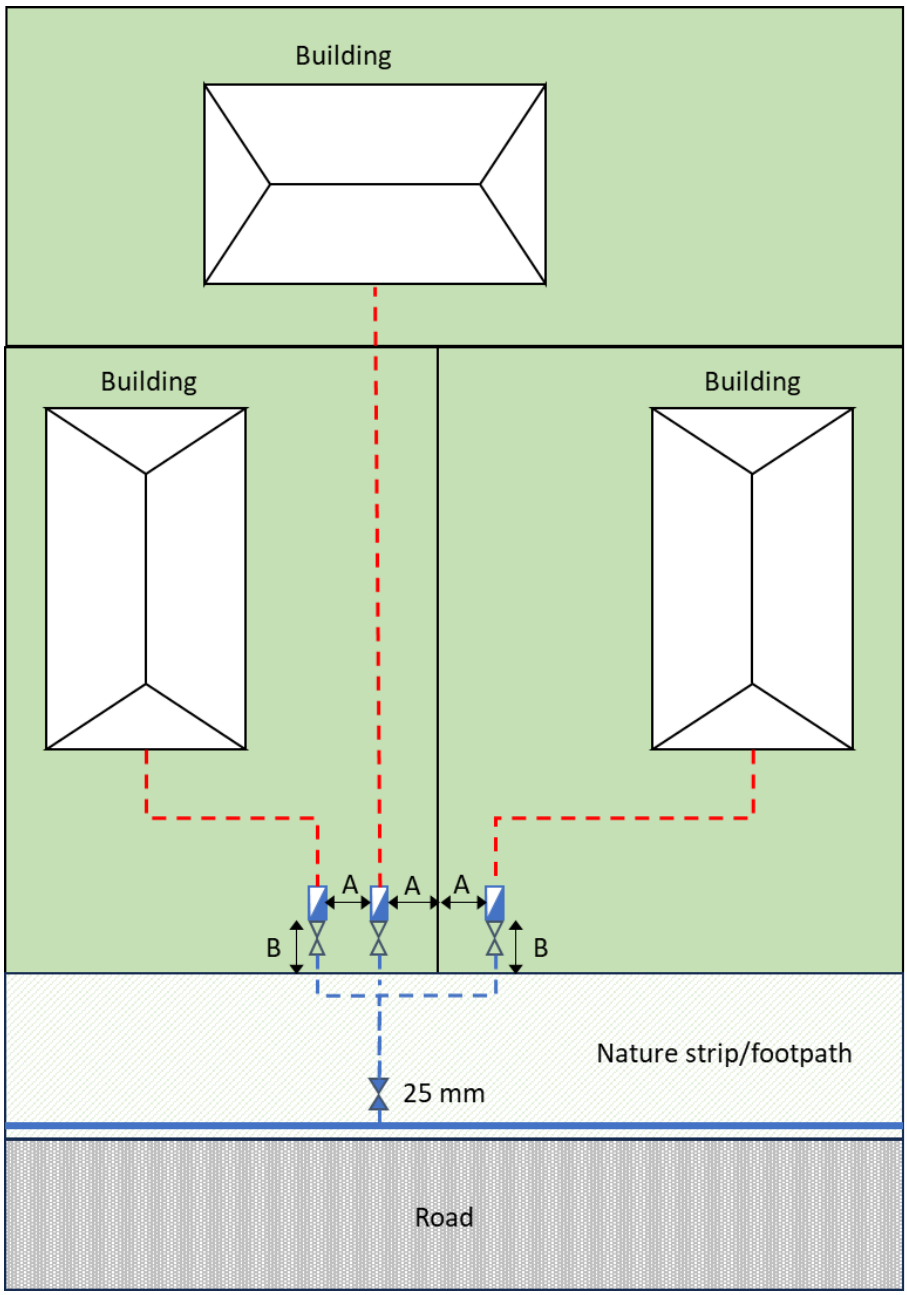


Figure 10: Standard meter arrangement: 3 – 8 lots with straight right-of-way and services easement (1 meter for each connection)



Legend

- Council water main
- Council water service
- Private water service
- Council water meter
- Meter tap/ stop valve
- Main tap/ stop valve
- A — 300 - 500 mm
- B — 300 - 500 mm
- Property boundary

Billing

Each property owner pays an access charge and consumption charges for all water used.

The water bill issued to each property owner shows the access charge, consumption in kL from each meter and usage charges separately.

Figure 11: Standard meter arrangement: 3 lots with 3 meters and 1 connection

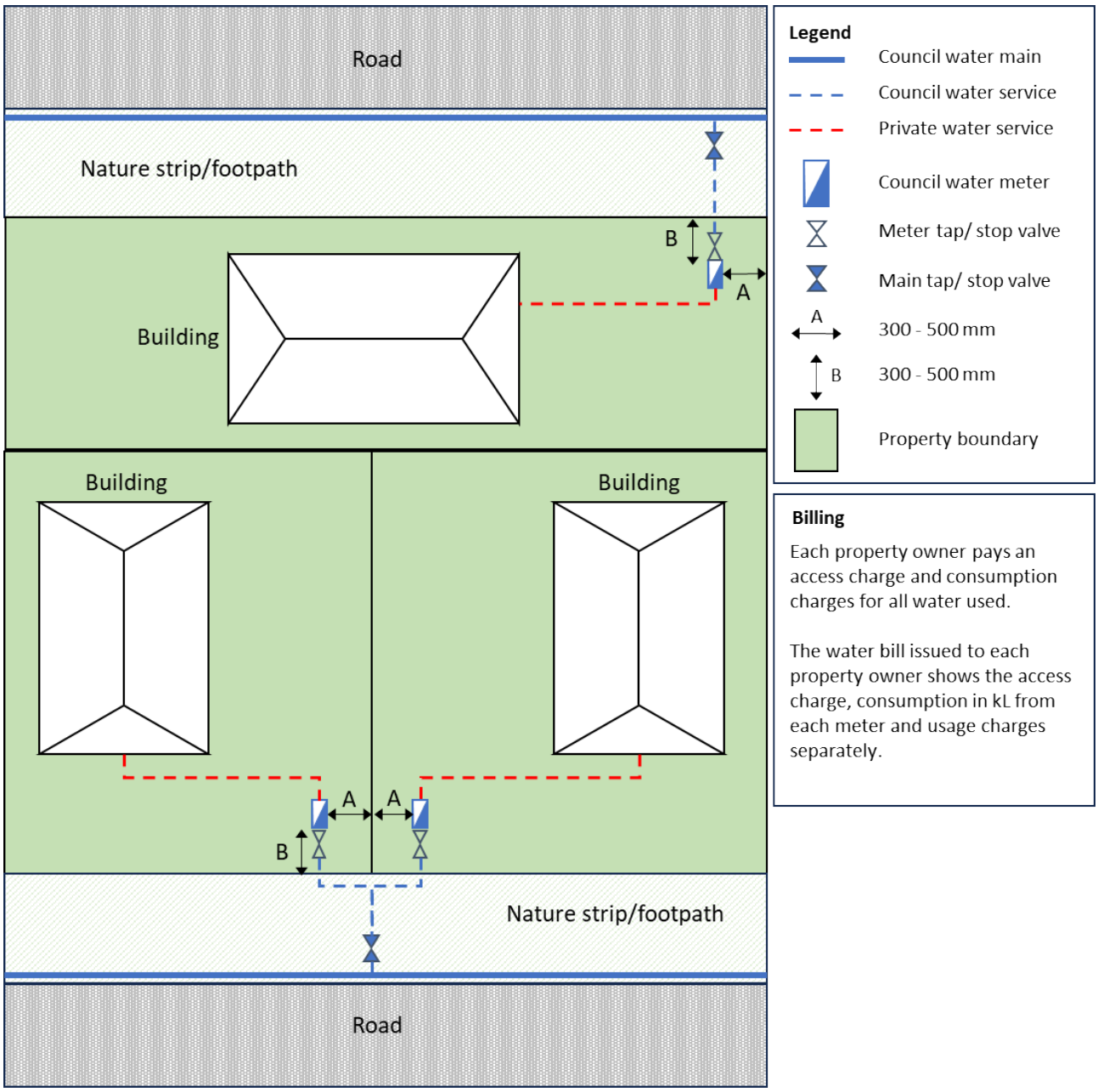


Figure 12: Standard meter arrangement: 3 lots with 3 meters and 2 connections

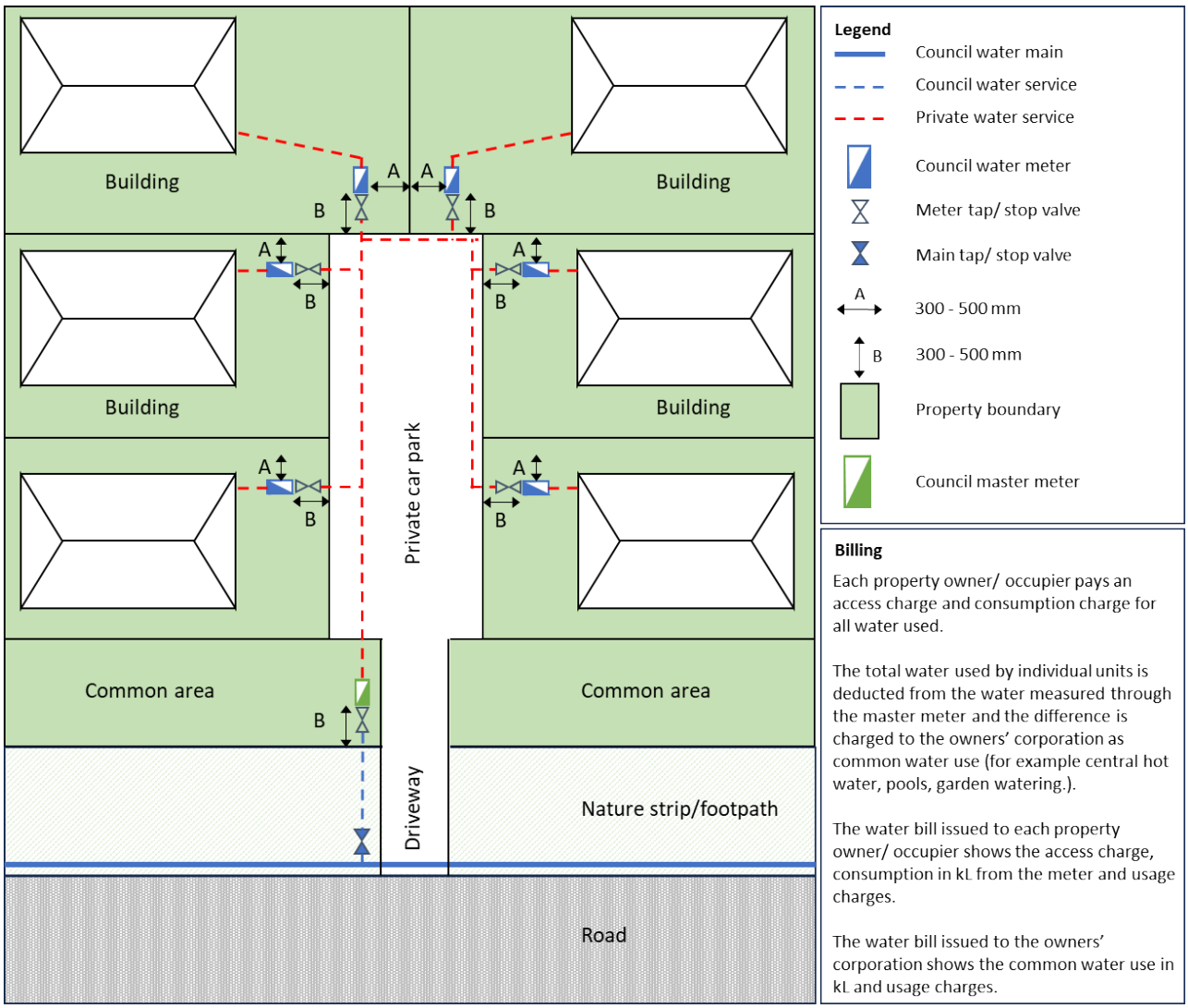


Figure 13: Standard meter arrangement: 4 or more lots (strata complex)

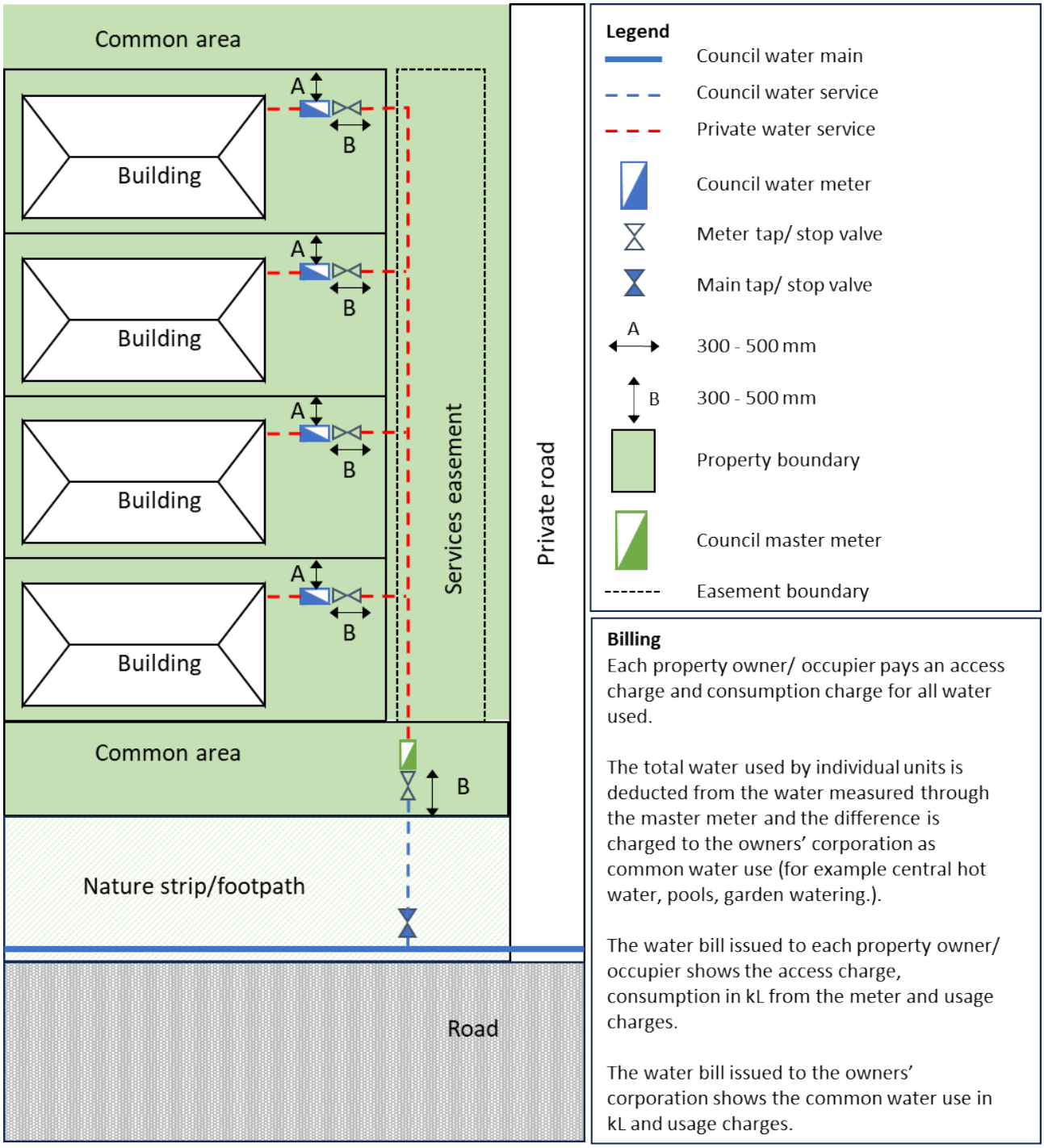


Figure 14: Standard meter arrangement: 4 or more lots (community title)