



LATE ITEMS BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

To be held on

Wednesday, 27 November 2019
4pm

at

Armidale Council Chambers

Members

Councillor Simon Murray (Mayor)
Councillor Libby Martin (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Peter Bailey
Councillor Jon Galletly
Councillor Diane Gray
Councillor Andrew Murat
Councillor Debra O'Brien
Councillor Margaret O'Connor
Councillor Dorothy Robinson
Councillor Ian Tiley
Councillor Bradley Widders

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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Item:	10.3	Ref: AINT/2019/27271
Title:	FOR DECISION: Water Access Card Fee	Container: ARC18/2703
Author:	Scot MacDonald, General Manager - Businesses	
Attachments:	Nil	

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the proposed new Water Access Card Administration Fee of \$100.

Context

The proposed Fee was publicly exhibited in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

Council received seven submissions all objecting to the proposed Water Access Card Fee. This represents approximately 0.1 of 1% of our residents outside the networked system. All opposed the \$100 fee based on cost and hardship.

It is recommended Council proceed with the Water Access Card fee of \$100 for ARC LGA residents not connected to the potable water network system. The fee of \$100 is calculated at cost recovery and enables Council to provide this service to applicable ratepayers.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval to introduce an administration fee for a proposed Water Access Card (WAC).

Proposal, Research and Analysis

Council is now providing access to potable water at water filling stations located at the Armidale Arboretum (New England Highway, Armidale) and McKie Parkway (opposite Moredun Street in Guyra).

The intent of the water filling stations is to provide access to potable water for Armidale Regional Council residents on rural properties that meet the following criteria:

- Within the Armidale Regional Council LGA
- Not connected to the potable water reticulation network
- The property has an approved, occupied, residential dwelling

Under the current arrangements purchasing of water at the filling stations is via a credit card swipe that allows the sale of water to anyone with a functioning credit card.

Since becoming operational there is evidence that customers other than those that meet the above criteria are purchasing water at the filling stations. There is also evidence that water transporters are purchasing water from the site and carting water out of the LGA. Council has taken action to prevent abuse of this service, however it remain vulnerable to misuse.

In order to ensure water is responsibly sourced from the filling stations, Council officers have investigated options to address access with card reader technology suppliers.

Following these investigations an option to provide an account card to preregistered card users (using an application form) was agreed as the best way to address access and maintain control over the use of the water as per current water restrictions.

The proposal to use a WAC is based on the following:

- Users must pre-register via an application form (copy attached)
- An upfront non-refundable fee of \$100 to obtain a WAC will be charged to cover the cost of the card, administration fees to process the application, costs to monitor usage per card and the transaction fee charged by the service provider for each transaction (currently proposed at \$0.22 per transaction)
- When completing the application residents will be required to prepay for water they plan to take from the filling station up to 8,000 litres per month.
- Prepaid water charges will be levied at the current rate being charged at the water filling stations i.e. \$3.90 per kilolitre
- The card provider has stated the card use can be limited to 8,000 litres per month and once the limit is reached further transactions would not be allowed until the card is reactivated – by way of a further prepaid amount.
- Reactivation of the card following a “top up” payment can be managed remotely by Council personnel.

Impact

The proposed administration fee is considered reasonable and is less than the current water access fee of \$225.00 per annum for Armidale and Guyra residents on the water network.

The introduction of the Water Access Card system or similar controls is a necessary step in the management of water resources and to assist in the regulation of volumes of water removed at water filling stations.

Only customers that have pre registered and approved water access cards will be able to remove water from the water filling stations.

Credit card access at the filling station will be disabled once the WAC system is operational.

Summary

The new fee will commence once Council adopts the recommendation.