

MEDIA RELEASE

STANDPIPE WATER SUPPLY FEES RISE TO COVER COSTS

Water supply fees will be increased at Mid Murray Council standpipes to ensure the facilities can be used sustainably into the future.

The Council has 15 standpipes across its district that provide non-potable water to the community for residential and livestock use. However, frequent vandalism, misuse and water theft have prompted the changes to the way the standpipes are managed.

A review of standpipe operations and water usage identified a significant discrepancy of about 8,000 kilolitres between the SA Water meter readings at the pipes and the records of customers' water use. This cost Council approximately \$40,000 in lost revenue.

From 1 January 2024, standpipe water supply charges will increase from \$5/KL to \$7.50/KL. Users will need to pay in advance when obtaining a standpipe key from a Council office. Those obtaining a key from an agent will be invoiced a minimum charge of \$22.50.

Mid Murray Council Mayor Simone Bailey says the changes will help cover some of the ongoing costs of providing the standpipes and maintenance from subsequent damage.

"Our standpipes provide an important water access point for our community, particularly in times of need such as during recent drought and the flood," Mayor Bailey said.

"Council has recognised the importance of these facilities and invested \$120,000 recently to upgrade eight of the standpipes. Council has also provided open and free access during the COVID19 pandemic and, more recently, during and after the floods in flood-affected areas.

"Unfortunately, over recent years there has been frequent vandalism, including damage to the standpipes, and water theft. Council can't continue to subsidise the supply of water through its standpipes and repair the vandalism.

"It's disappointing that the actions of a few users have now resulted in this change, but we need to be sustainable and this increase in fees after several years with no increase will ensure Council can recover some of those costs."

Council will also be further considering the ongoing sustainability of the water standpipes in the future as part of its commitment to the long-term sustainability of the business as it continues to review all of its operations.

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