

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q1. What is a smart water meter?

Smart water meters are digital devices that use sensors to measure water flow and communication technology to transmit water use data to Council. The data can then be analysed to monitor usage patterns, detect leaks, and optimise water distribution.

### Q2. Why is Council introducing smart meters?

Council is introducing smart water meters to improve its water management capabilities. Smart meters can enable early leak detection and improve water conservation through real-time monitoring, reduce operational costs, and enable proactive management of water infrastructure.

### Q3. Will I be charged money for the smart meter rollout?

No, there are no direct or indirect costs to residents. The meter replacement program is joint funded by Parkes Shire Council and the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water.

### Q4. Who will receive smart meters?

Council is installing smart meters at nearly 500 residential and commercial premises in Peak Hill.

### Q5. When is the rollout happening?

Council began replacing water meters in June and anticipates finishing the rollout in September.

### Q6. Is anything required of property owners during the rollout?

Council staff will require adequate access to water meters. This includes ensuring that Council staff do not encounter aggressive household pets while visiting premises. In instances where meters are not easily accessible to Council staff, contact with the property owner will be initiated to resolve any issues.

Prior to installation, the Council worker will confirm that water isn't flowing through your meter. If water is flowing, the worker will knock on your door and discuss the prospects of changing the meter then or arranging a time suitable for all parties.

### Q7. How long will technicians be at my property?

The process of replacing water meters is relatively quick, usually taking around 15 minutes.

### Q8. What should I expect during installation?

If vegetation is restricting access to your water meter, Council may prune it, as necessary. Water to your property will be shut off while the meter is being replaced. The old water meter will then be removed by Council staff.

After the smart meter has been installed, there may be a build-up of air in your water pipes. This will result in a spluttering effect when you first turn on your taps but should cease after 60 seconds. You may also observe some initial discoloration in your water from rust or dirt built up in the pipes. This will subside after running your taps for 60 seconds.



**Q9. Will water rate charges change following the rollout?**

No, the water rates structure will remain the same following the rollout of smart water meters.

**Q10. How will data from smart water meters be collected? Who will have access to my data?**

Data from smart water meters will be transmitted to Council every hour. Access to this data will be restricted to authorised Council personnel. In time, Peak Hill residents will have access their household water consumption data through an online portal.

**Q11. Are there privacy concerns associated with smart water meters?**

Privacy protections are in place to safeguard consumer data collected by smart water meters. This may includes encrypting data and storing it on a protected server.

**Q12. Can I access data captured by my smart water meter?**

Customers won't have immediate access to their water usage data. However, in the near- term, they will be able to monitor their water consumption in real time through a customer portal. The portal is set to be introduced as part of Stage 2 of this project, scheduled for the 2024-25 financial year.