

I wish to have the fixed access charges for water and sewerage for Multi-dwelling residential categories reviewed, in particular for UnityWater, but it is likely applicable to other water providers as well.

Councils have categories for rates notices. For different types of dwellings, with multiple flats or units, the council uses a multi-dwelling category. UnityWater charges its fixed access fees based on those categories. The categories are all-encompassing and developed for the purpose of Council and how it services the community. A body corporate with 100 townhouses all with different titles, different lots, are classed as multi-residential dwellings in the same way as a duplex with two titles. According to its website, UnityWater '**charges fixed access based on the lots** whether connected, unconnected, **strata titled**, or with no meter'. It goes on to explain that means 'each unit in a residential unit complex will be charged'. My understanding of this is where there are several lot titles, one for each unit or townhouse, each lot in the complex would be charged. I don't dispute this system – it seems fair that each titled owner would be charged a fixed access fee for water and sewerage, charged for the infrastructure to their property and future upgrades and maintenance of that infrastructure.

But as we develop land to cater for higher populations and new developments expand the types of dwellings available on the market – **this type of pricing system needs to be more specific and keep up to date with the new types of dwellings.**

I own a dwelling which is classed as a 'dual lock up' or 'dual-key' dwelling. It has been developed with the intention to look and feel like a 5 bedroom home on a **single title lot**. There is a fire wall down the centre to split the home into a 3 bedroom home with a 2 bedroom granny flat and I can rent them out separately. The intention was to get more homes in the market where people can rent/buy and still have a separate location for their elderly parents or adult children to live independently. They are purpose built homes with granny flats. Unlike a duplex or other multi-residential dwelling, **the title of these homes cannot be split** and they have no body corporate. Only one owner can hold the title and via council laws an owner cannot apply to have the title split. The homes are not built in a way compatible with split title. I think this type of dwelling needs to be considered differently to those where separate titles can be held.

As the owner of a 600m² lot of land it is hard to conceive that the infrastructure to my single access property (for the purposes of water and sewerage) would cost double to install, maintain and repair compared to the 5 bedroom single dwelling next door, which looks exactly like mine without the fire wall. Even the 24-hour emergency service provided by UnityWater only extends to the single street access points for water and sewerage.

My question is what actual infrastructure or service am I paying double for? The UnityWater website states:

What does it pay for?

Properties that have been provided with access to the water supply network (connected or unconnected) pay this charge. It contributes to building, maintaining and replacing water mains, pipes, reservoirs, hydrants and other water infrastructure. These fixed access charges also contribute to the 24-hour emergency response service we provide to our customers 365 days a year.

However, I am paying the fixed access charges for both sewerage and water twice for my single title lot. So what exactly am I paying for? If the title of a lot cannot be split why would

two fixed access charges be place on that property for both water and sewerage when there is only one access point for water and sewerage (ie one set of infrastructure, one meter)? Does every property in Queensland with a granny flat or converted shed have two fixed access charges applied regardless of whether they only have the one set of infrastructure and one lot title?

I believe the way these single title properties are charged should be reviewed. Whilst I appreciate council has listed it as a multi-residential dwelling for the purposes of council's charges for service, I believe UnityWater or any water company in Queensland should be required to consider the specifics of the property title and the infrastructure supplied to that property before applying the water company's fixed service fee, in this case double its fee for exactly the same infrastructure/service as a single dwelling fee supplies. The two purposes for the charges applied by both Council and UnityWater (or any water company) are not the same purposes and to apply fixed access water and sewerage fees based solely on a council rating without further consideration given to the purpose for the collection of that fixed fee creates inconsistencies and unfairness to those of us paying those fees.