

Central Tablelands *Water*



Issuing Certificates

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| Policy Title: | Issuing Certificates | |
| Responsible Officer: | Director Finance and Corporate Services | |
| Adopted: | Date: 12.10.2016 | Minute Number: 16/079 |
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Introduction

Central Tablelands Water (CTW) needs to have in place a system for the issue of Certificates that reduces the risk of error that could lead to the potential of a professional liability claim. The process must have built in safeguards and checks, and if done properly, will not only protect CTW from potential liability claims, but will also be an effective tool for improving the overall quality and production of Certificates.

CTW has a duty of care where problems are caused by erroneous and misleading Certificates. Ignoring these types of issues, or failing to have a review process in place will mean that Council will not be able to adequately defend an appeal against the rejection of an Application or the defence of an incorrect Certificate.

This Manual specifically addresses the potential risk of liability associated with the issuing Certificates and determining Applications.

Approach

The approach for Certificates within this manual covers the following stages:

- 1.** Establishing the Context
Identifying all types of Certificates issued by CTW
- 2.** Process for Issuing Section 603 Certificates – Flowchart
Flowchart
- 3.** Process for Issuing Special Water Meter Readings – Flowchart
Flowchart
- 4.** Procedural Steps and Risk Assessment
Identifying, analysing and Evaluating the Risks associated with each stage of the procedure of Issuing Certificates and Special Water Meter Readings
- 5.** Determining Risk Treatment/ Controls for Risk Exposure
By implementing steps in the current process to prevent the identified risks

Context for Issuing Certificates

CTW issues certificates for a number of purposes and in doing so, must meet relevant regulatory requirements.

Definition of a Certificate

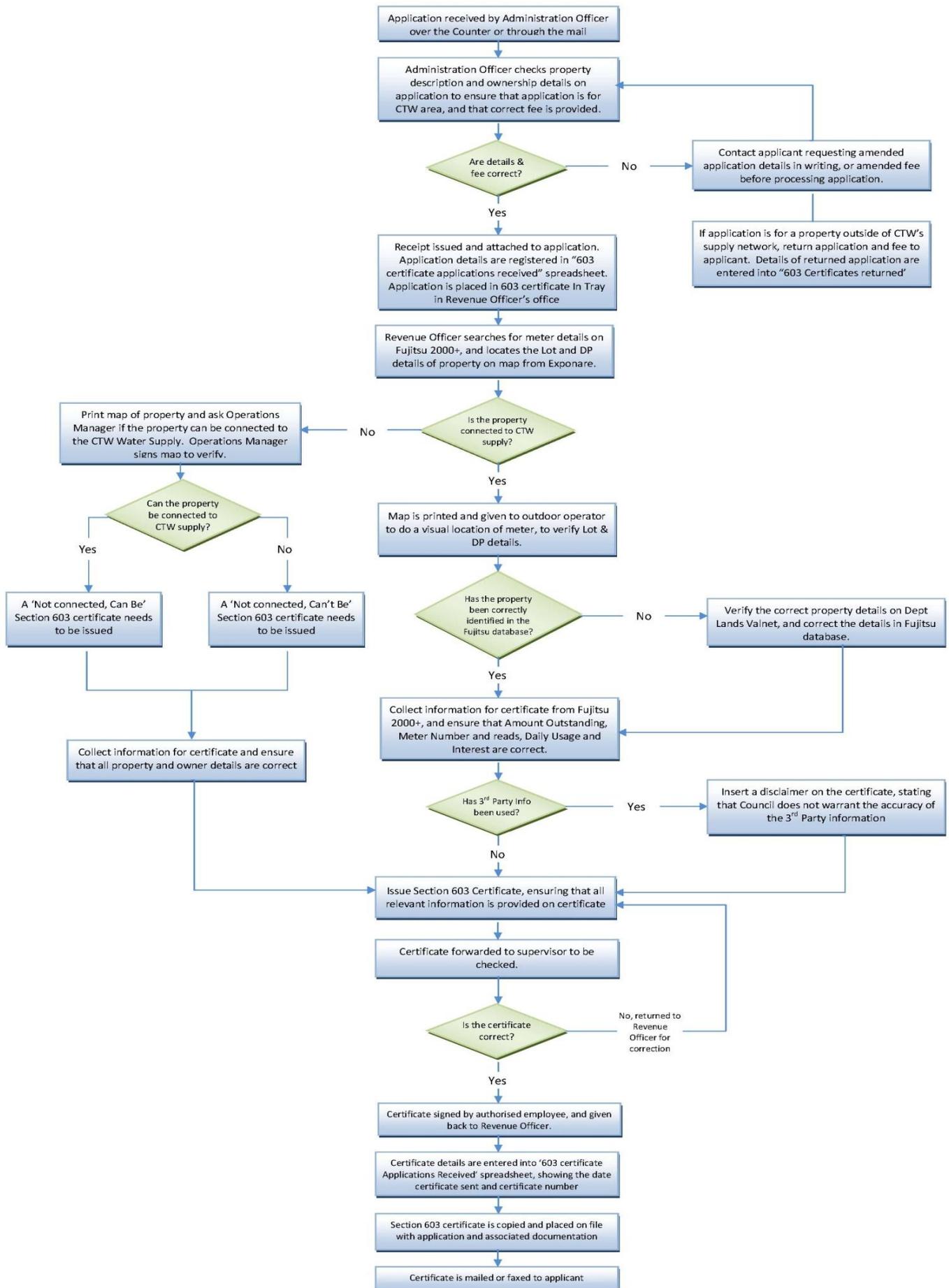
For the purpose of this Manual, a certificate is defined as a document requested by a customer for information, which is extracted from records kept by CTW. This may include third party information held by Council.

What Certificates are issued by CTW?

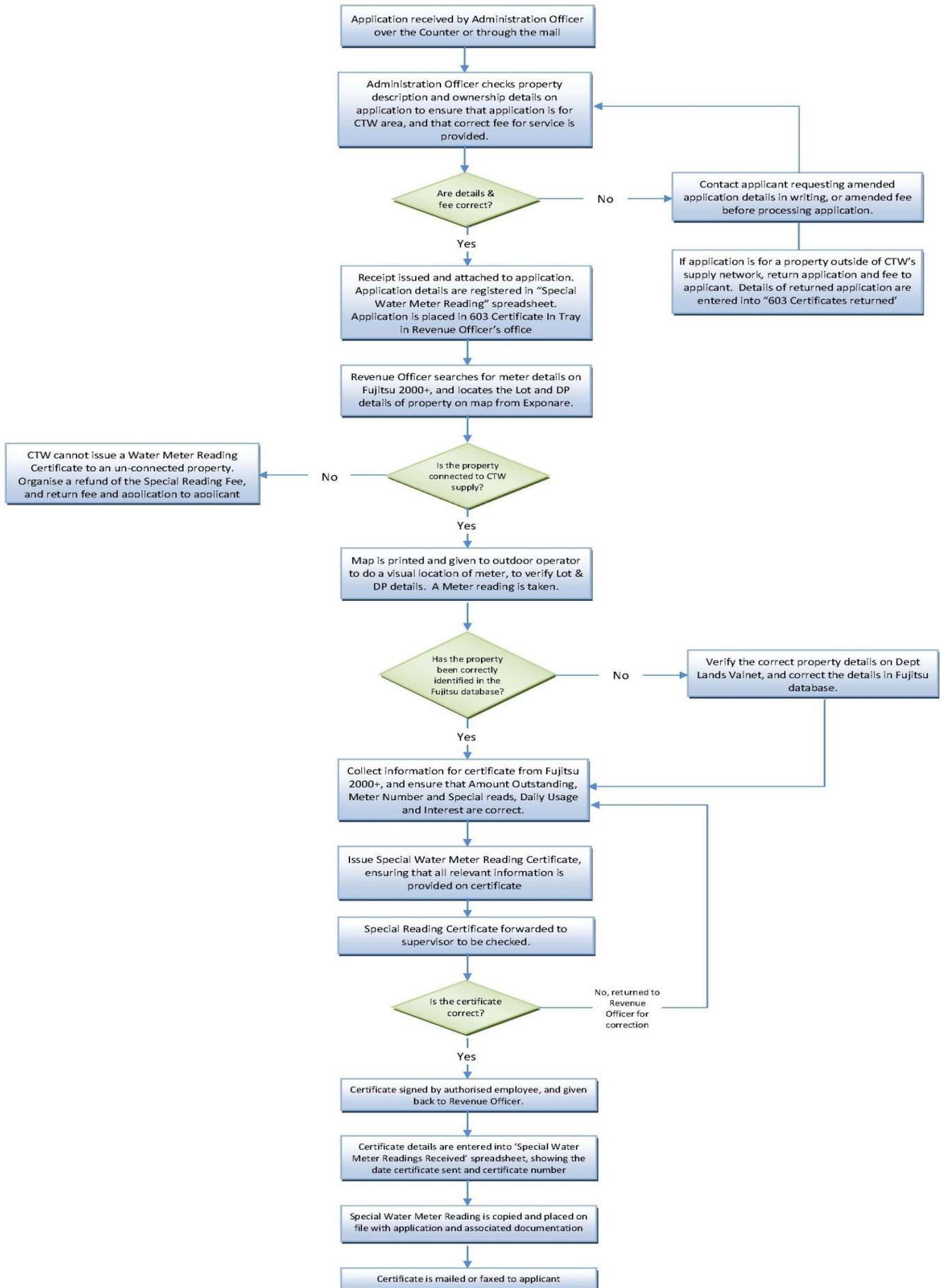
As CTW is a Water Authority, not a multi-purpose Council. The only certificates that CTW issues are:

- ✓ **Section 603** of the Local Government Act 1993. These are used for rating purposes, showing any water charges outstanding, previous and current water meter reads, meter details.
- ✓ **Special Water Meter Readings.** These are issued on request, and include an up to date water meter reading, showing any water usage charges outstanding.

CTW's Process for Issuing Section 603 Certificates



CTW's Process for Issuing Special Water Meter Readings



Procedural Steps and Risk Assessment

Procedure for the Issuing of Certificates, and the Risk Assessment - including identifying, analysing and Evaluating the Risks - associated with each stage.

Request for a Certificate &/or Special water meter reading received and registered

Applications for Certificates are received by mail or fax only. Applications must be made either on a CTW application form, or a generic form issued by the solicitor which shows: The property owners name, Property address and Lot & DP details *as a minimum*.

Applications sent by mail are collected by the Administration Officer daily. The Administration Officer checks that the application is for a property in CTW's supply network. If not, the application and fee is returned to the applicant advising that the property is not part our CTW's supply network.

The application fee is receipted, and a copy of the receipt attached to the application form. The application is then registered in the 'Section 603 certificate/Water Meter Reading applications received' Spreadsheet, and placed in the Section 603 certificate in tray located in the Revenue Officer's office.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The application is misplaced*
 The application is sent to the wrong area

Property is Identified

The Revenue Officer checks that all relevant information is enclosed on the application, and searches the Fujitsu 2000+ database to establish that the property is connected to the CTW water supply.

The Revenue Officer requests that a field operator checks and verifies that the meter details are correct, and that the meter is situated on the property on the application. *(CTW cannot authenticate the information contained in Fujitsu 2000+ database. Until such time that all meter details have been verified and cross checked with the database, a field officer is required to sight the property and confirm meter details)* The Revenue Officer prints a map of the property from Exponare, and asks a field operator to locate the meter. The map is signed.

If the property is not connected to the CTW supply network, the Revenue Officer confirms with the Operations Manager if the property can or cannot be connected, and the appropriate information is conveyed on the Section 603 Certificate.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified*
 The wrong information is entered by staff
 The incorrect information contained in Fujitsu 2000+ is used in error

Information is Collected for Certificate

Once the property has been correctly identified by checks with Fujitsu 2000+, and a visual inspection of the meter, the Revenue Officer completes a Section 603 certificate information slip. This slip is attached to the bottom of the application form, and allows the officer to note all of the account information for inclusion on the Section 603 Certificate. The information to be included is as follows:

- Account Number
- Meter number
- Current Reading and Date
- Previous reading and Date
- Average Daily Usage
- Year to Date Consumption
- Date interest has been charged to

- Account Due Date
- Availability Charge per Quarter
- Tariff number
- Amount Owing
- If there is a tariff Step for excess Water Usage

The Revenue Officer ensures that all information is included and correct, and issues a Section 603 certificate. A unique certificate number is created.

When a request is received for a Special Water Meter Reading, a Special Water Meter Reading Information slip is attached to the application, with the information to be included as follows:

- Account Number
- Meter number
- Special Reading and Date
- Previous reading and Date
- Charge per Kilotitre

The Revenue Officer ensures that all information is included and correct, and issues a Special Water Meter Reading Certificate. A unique certificate number is created.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified*
 The wrong information is entered by Council
 Erroneous data is supplied by a third party
 The application is misplaced
 Information is left off the Certificate

Third Party information

Third party Information is any information that is sourced from an external authority or organisation. For example, mapping information from RFS, RTA, Heritage Council, EPA, Airports etc.

CTW will rarely have any need to request data from an external source, other than the Department of Lands information obtained from their Valnet service. When using this service, it is a reference check to ensure that the Lot and DP information match the ownership and address details. This is not considered to be third party.

When Third Party information is obtained and used to issue a certificate, a disclaimer must be placed on the certificate, with wording as follows:

“This certificate contains information provided to Central Tablelands Water (CTW) by third parties and is as current as the latest information available to CTW at the time of production of this document. CTW does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within the information provided by third parties and has not independently verified the information. Please contact CTW should you wish to obtain a listing of the information provided by third parties that have been relied upon in the production of this certificate.”

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified, and irrelevant information is disclosed*
 Erroneous data supplied by third party
 The wrong information is entered by Council
 Information is left off the Certificate

Information entered on the Certificate is checked

Once the Section 603 certificate or Special Water Meter Reading has been issued, all relevant documentation is attached to the certificate including location maps, special readings and third party information.

The Certificate is forwarded to a supervisor, and all information included in the certificate is checked for its accuracy. If errors are found, the certificate is given back to the Revenue officer, changes made, and again given to a supervisor for scrutiny.

When the supervisor is happy that all information is accurate, and all information is included on the certificate, the certificate is signed by and authorised employee and returned to the Revenue Officer.

The Revenue Officer enters the certificate details into the '603 Certificate Applications/Special Water Meter Reading Certificate Received' spreadsheet, showing the date and certificate number.

The certificate is then copied, and placed on file with the application and associated documentation. A soft copy of the certificate is also saved on the CTW server. The certificate is mailed or faxed to the applicant.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Information is not checked or verified*
Data is left off the certificate
Erroneous data supplied by third party
No duplicate kept

Risk Treatment / Control of Risk Exposure

Determining Risk Treatment/Controls for Risk Exposure – by implementing steps in the current process to prevent the identified risks

Request for a Certificate &/or Special water meter reading received and registered

Potential Risk Exposure: *The application is misplaced*

Control: One central processing area allows all applications to be received through the administration officer, who receipts, registers and distributes the certificate applications.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The application is sent to the wrong area*

Control: One central processing area allows all applications to be received through the administration officer, who receipts, registers and distributes the certificate applications. The applications are placed in the Revenue Officer's Section 603 certificate In tray .

Property is Identified

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified*

Control: Each property must be uniquely identified in Fujitsu 2000+ database. When checking the Lot No., DP or Strata Plan No., the correct property must be identified and related to the information supplied with the application form.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong information is entered by staff*

Control: All information entered by staff from a third parties records, must be critically reviewed and further validation sought by Council if considered necessary.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The incorrect information contained in Fujitsu 2000+ is used in error*

Control: CTW cannot authenticate the information contained in Fujitsu 2000+ database. Until such time that all meter details have been verified and cross checked with the database, a field officer is required to sight the property and confirm that the meter details are those for the property information supplied with the application form.

Information is Collected for Certificate

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified*

Control: Each property must be uniquely identified in Fujitsu 2000+ database. When checking the Lot No., DP or Strata Plan No., the correct property must be identified and related to the information supplied with the application form.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong information is entered by Staff*

Control: All information entered by staff from a third parties records, must be critically reviewed and further validation sought by Council if considered necessary.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Erroneous data is supplied by a third party*

Control: To the extent that is appropriate and permitted by legislation, a disclaimer must be recorded on the Certificate when information has been supplied by a third party. It should indicate that, if information as supplied is vital for the end use, then it should be verified by the applicant from the third party.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The application is misplaced*

Control: One central processing area allows all applications to be received through the administration officer, who receipts, registers and distributes the certificate applications. The Revenue Officer is the only staff member responsible for the issuing of certificates, eliminating the risk of the application being misplaced.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Information is left off the Certificate*

Control: Certificates are checked by a supervisor prior to the certificates being issued.

Third Party information

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong property is identified, and irrelevant information is disclosed*

Control: Each property must be uniquely identified in Fujitsu 2000+ database. When checking the Lot No., DP or Strata Plan No., the correct property must be identified and related to the information supplied with the application form.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Erroneous data supplied by third party*

Control: To the extent that is appropriate and permitted by legislation, a disclaimer must be recorded on the Certificate when information has been supplied by a third party. It should indicate that, if information as supplied is vital for the end use, then it should be verified by the applicant from the third party.

Potential Risk Exposure: *The wrong information is entered by staff*

Control: All information entered by staff from a third parties records, must be critically reviewed and further validation sought by Council if considered necessary.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Information is left off the Certificate*

Control: Certificates are checked by a supervisor prior to the certificates being issued.

Information entered on the Certificate is checked

Potential Risk Exposure: *Information is not checked or verified*

Control: Certificates are checked by a supervisor prior to the certificates being issued.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Data is left off the certificate*

Control: Certificates are checked by a supervisor prior to the certificates being issued.

Potential Risk Exposure: *Erroneous data supplied by third party*

Control: To the extent that is appropriate and permitted by legislation, a disclaimer must be recorded on the Certificate when information has

been supplied by a third party. It should indicate that, if information as supplied is vital for the end use, then it should be verified by the applicant from the third party.

Potential Risk Exposure: *No duplicate kept*

Control: Certificates are copied, and placed on file with the application and associated documentation

Policy Statement

PURPOSE

Central Tablelands Water recognises as a Member Council of Statewide Mutual its obligation to put in place systems and procedures to support the issue of Certificates to minimise its risks arising from the possibility of errors or incorrect information thus reducing the potential of a professional liability claim being made against it.

POLICY STATEMENT

Central Tablelands Water at all times will endeavour to process certificates to comply with Legislative requirements and in accordance with the procedures indentified in the Issuing Certificates procedures Manual and associated flow charts.

Due care will be taken at all times to ensure that all certificates are professionally, timely and accurately processed.