

Title:	Customer Service Policy
Type:	Council
Adopted:	26 June 2019
File No:	18/57089
Attachments:	Customer Service Charter - 19/27565 Our Values and Behaviours Diagram 19/19666

1. Purpose

To establish a shared set of standards that help staff deliver on Council's commitment to great customer service.

2. Rationale

We want to provide professional, effective, friendly and customer-centric service to our community and to one another. Council wants to be known for its focus on, and delivery of, great customer service.

3. Scope

The Customer Service Policy (Policy) details how Council will deliver on its commitment to provide great customer service and how it will measure its performance against that goal. This Policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers who work with us.

4. Definitions

Reference Term	Definition
Customer	Any person (internal or external), including residents, ratepayers, visitors, Councillors and Council officers, who receives Council services
Service	Provision/supply of a public need. The action of helping or delivering an action for a customer
Customer Satisfaction	The degree to which a customer would describe their experience of interacting with a service provider as positive
Resolution of Customer Request	The request for service has been actioned and completed by Council and the customer has been informed
First Point of Contact Resolution (FPOC)	Resolution of a customer enquiry at the first point within Council with which the customer makes contact. 'Resolution' is defined as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of all relevant information to the customer OR • planned action and timeframe for completion
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A quantifiable measure which we use to evaluate our performance against a given objective
Service Standard	A defined service quality for an activity or service area against which service performance can be measured
Customer Service Officer	While some positions within Council are designated with this title, all officers working for Murrindindi Shire Council perform customer service functions

5. Policy

Our Commitment to Customer Service

Council is committed to delivering great customer service. This Policy aims to put the customer at the forefront of the design of all of our systems and processes and at the centre of our organisational culture.

Our services will reflect our organisational values of Accountability, Empathy, Integrity and Professionalism. We will:

- treat all people with respect and be responsive in all our dealings with customers
- provide prompt, friendly and consistent service
- be highly-trained, customer-focussed and well-informed
- actively listen to customers and take action on their requests and when receiving feedback
- take action and deliver what we say we will do to meet our performance standards and timeframes
- achieve FPOC resolution wherever possible
- be open and honest in our communications and maintain our customers' privacy in all our dealings
- keep our customers informed in a timely manner, including if delays to completion occur.

We are committed to understanding the needs and expectations of our customers to ensure our services are targeted appropriately. We will ensure we work actively and as a team to respond to community needs by:

- actively seeking feedback and suggestions from customers about their experience of our services
- carrying out periodic surveys and talking to our community to understand better where we are doing well and what we might need to improve
- analysing the information, feedback and suggestions we receive from our customers and incorporating these into our efforts to continuously improve our services
- working as one organisation to ensure a seamless experience for our customers.

Accessing our Services

We want to provide customers with choices about how to contact Council. This ensures customers have easy access to our services and makes it simple for customers to communicate with us:

- via Council's website – lodging a request/feedback online
- by telephone
- by email
- by mail
- in person at our Customer Service Centres around the Shire
- via the 'Snap, Send, Solve' (mobile app)
- via social media

Customer Service

Council will allocate (automatically or manually) a customer request number for requests that can't be resolved immediately. We will provide that number to the customer so they can quickly and easily find out how their request is progressing.

Our Systems and Processes

In addition, to ensure customer satisfaction with our service, we will:

- create and maintain accurate customer data and use every customer interaction as an opportunity to ensure currency of data
- capture all customer requests, feedback and complaints in an approved Council database
- record and use the customer's preferred contact method to stay in touch with the customer
- keep the customer informed about the progress of their request, including any unexpected delays to timeframes for delivery:
 - in the event the request involves action from other agencies and/or is longer term in nature, the customer will be given an expected timeframe for completion and will be updated on progress (or delays) at reasonable intervals
- let the customer know when their request has been resolved
- for complex or multi-topic requests, we will allocate an individual Council officer to coordinate organisational responses to ensure a 'whole of Council' approach is taken to resolution
- communicate with customers clearly and with empathy, and abide by the Murrindindi Style Guide to ensure use of plain English and appropriate formats in written communications
- make it easy for our customers to create appointments for more complex requests (for example, for Council's planning or building services).

Our Service Standards

So that we are accountable to the community, we will set measureable timeframe and quality targets for our customer service performance. We will regularly measure our performance against our service standards and customer requests. To ensure transparency, we will report regularly to the community about our performance against our targets. Our performance targets will be listed in our Customer Service Charter.

We will also regularly review and benchmark our service levels and KPIs to ensure we are providing appropriate levels of service to our customers.

Customer Complaints

While striving to deliver great customer service is always our aim, we acknowledge we won't always get it right.

To enable us to hear and learn from customer complaints, we will maintain an efficient and responsive complaint handling system. We will encourage customer feedback, recognise a complaint when we hear one and record it in the approved database (see Murrindindi Shire Council Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy). We will receive and treat complaints positively and as an opportunity to change and improve our services.

Our expectations of Customers

We will treat all of our customers with respect. In return, we expect customers to treat Council officers with respect.

Customer Service

We expect that customers will work with us to help us resolve problems, including by providing accurate and honest information to us in requests and via feedback. We expect customers will raise issues or problem with us politely (including when making comments or requesting action from us on our social media platforms).

We will not tolerate abuse, swearing, intimidation or aggression in any form toward our staff. Staff will disconnect phone calls with customers who engage in these forms of behaviour. We may choose not to respond on social media, delete abusive posts or to bar the customer from accessing our pages. Customers who cause distress to our staff or to other customers will be asked to leave the premises. Police may be called to assist if we deem this necessary.

In the public areas of Council buildings, we expect people to respect the rights of others to enjoy that space. We ask our customers to allow others to pursue their interests freely and to show due regard to the needs, sensitivities and rights of others.

Our staff are empowered to determine whether or not behaviour is unacceptable for the purposes of the Policy.

6. Related Policies, Strategies and Legislation

Murrindindi Shire Council Privacy Policy

Murrindindi Shire Council Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy

Murrindindi Shire Council Protected Disclosure Policy

Murrindindi Shire Council Procedure for Managing Unreasonable Complaint Conduct

Local Government Act 1989

Victorian Ombudsman – Councils and Complaints: A Good Practice Guide

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

7. Council Plan

Under 'Our Promise' in the Council Plan 2017 – 2021, Council commits to improving the delivery of customer service across Council's operations and to developing a stronger customer-focused culture that makes us easier to deal with. The Council Plan also asserts that we should ensure that our culture, systems and technologies encourage and enable innovation in our business practices and service delivery.

8. Management and Review

This Policy will be reviewed in July 2022.

9. Consultation

Nil.

10. Human Rights Charter

This Policy has been developed with consideration of the requirements under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.