

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Customer Service Policy</b>
<b>Type of policy:</b>	Council
<b>Adopted:</b>	
<b>Record No:</b>	23/67440
<b>Attachments:</b>	"Click here to insert references to any attachments"

## Acknowledgement of Country

*Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.*

*We pay our respects to First Nations leaders and elders, past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.*

*We commit to working in collaboration with traditional owners of this land in a spirit of reconciliation and partnership.*

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standard approach to managing contact and interaction with customers.

### 2. Rationale

To ensure that all customers are treated in a consistent, professional, and ethical manner and receive courteous and efficient service.

### 3. Scope

The Customer Service Policy (Policy) details how Council will deliver on its commitment to provide high standards of 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
<b>Customer</b>	Any person (internal or external), including residents, ratepayers, visitors, Councillors and Council officers, who receive Council services
<b>Service</b>	Provision/supply of a public need. The action of helping or delivering an action for a customer
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	The degree to which a customer would describe their experience of interacting with a service provider as positive
<b>Resolution of Customer Request</b>	The request for service has been actioned and completed by Council and the customer has been informed
<b>First Point of Contact Resolution (FPOC)</b>	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"><li>• provision of all relevant information to the customer OR</li><li>• planned action and timeframe for completion</li></ul>

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<b>Key Performance Indicator (KPI)</b>	A quantifiable measure which we use to evaluate our performance against a given objective
<b>Service Standard</b>	A defined service quality for an activity or service area against which service performance can be measured
<b>Customer Service Officer</b>	While some positions within Council are designated with this title, all officers working for Murrindindi Shire Council perform customer service functions

## 5. Policy

### 5.1 Our commitment to Customer Service

Council strives to deliver high standards of customer service. This policy details how Council delivers on its commitment to customer service through performance targets and measures, coupled with clear and consistent communications.

This policy, in conjunction with the following Council documents, forms Council's Customer Service Framework:

1. Customer Service Charter
2. Customer Service Procedures
3. Complaints Process

Council's commitment to customer service includes an effective complaint handling system. It is recognised that this is one method of measuring customer satisfaction and to provide a useful source of information and feedback for continual improvement of our services.

We acknowledge the diversity of our communities and understand that members of the community have individual needs and we aim to offer quality service by recognising this diversity and ensuring individual needs are met.

We will provide clear and logical means for customers to access services, facilities and information including assistance where necessary to lodge requests or provide feedback.

Council recognises that our customers may wish to contact us in a variety of ways, and we are committed to providing choice about how customers can access our services.

### 5.2 Standards of Service

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
- maintain the highest levels of privacy, confidentiality and act consistently with current Local, State and Commonwealth legislation

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- 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 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.

### 5.3 Understanding Customer Need and Expectation

Council is committed to better understanding the needs and expectations of our customers. and will enhance this understanding by:

1. conducting periodic community surveys to gather feedback regarding council's services
2. providing opportunities for direct customer feedback after interacting with council
3. involving the community in dialogue about providing services and planning for the future
4. maintaining a complaint handling framework to identify, respond to and rectify service failures (refer to Murrindindi Shire Council Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy)
5. establishing and reporting on customer service key performance indicators and targets to measure and monitor customer service performance.

### 5.4 Accessing our Services

Council will make it easy and convenient for customers to contact us.

- via Council's website – lodging request/feedback online
- via Councils engagement platform, The Loop, 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

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.

### 5.5 Systems and Procedures

To enable a high level of customer service and customer satisfaction, we will:

- create and maintain accurate customer data and use every customer interaction as an opportunity to ensure accuracy of data
- capture all customer requests, feedback and complaints in an approved Council database
- record and use the customer's preferred contact method to communicate with the customer
- keep the customer informed on 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
- allocate an individual Council officer to coordinate organisational responses to ensure a 'whole of Council' approach is taken to resolution in complex or multi-topic requests
- communicate with customers clearly and with empathy, and adhere to 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).

### 5.6 Our expectations of Customers

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

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 problems with us politely (including when making comments or requesting action from us on our social media platforms).

We are committed to protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff in accordance with current OHS legislation. Therefore, 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.

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

## 6. Related Policies, Strategies and Legislation

*Local Government Act 2020*

Victorian Ombudsman – Councils and Complaints: A Good Practice Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Murrindindi Shire Council Procedure for Managing Unreasonable Complaint Conduct

## 7. Council Plan

Council Plan 2021-2025 – 5. Transparency. Inclusion and Accountability

The review of this policy is consistent with Goal 5.1 “*put the customer first in everything we do*” of the Council Plan 2021-2025

## 8. Management and Review

This Policy will be reviewed in October 2026 by Manager Customer Experience.

## 9. Consultation

No community consultation was required for the review of this policy.

## 10. Human Rights Charter

This policy has been developed with consideration of the requirements under the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#).

## 11. Gender Impact Assessment

This policy has been developed/reviewed with consideration of the criteria which inspires equality under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.