

COUNCIL POLICY



Policy name	Customer Service
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Abstract

This Policy details Gunnedah Shire Council's commitment to delivering customer service experiences that meet the needs and expectations of our customers and enhances Council's ability to continuously improve service provision.

Dates	Policy or amendment approved 19 June 2024 Policy or amendment takes effect 24 July 2024 Policy is due for review (up to 4 years) 19 June 2028
Endorsed by	Executive Leadership Team at its meeting held 30 May 2024.
Approved by	Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 19 June 2024. Resolution number: 8.6/24
Policy Custodian	Manager Customer and Information Services
Relevant to	All Council officials.
Superseded Policies	Customer Service Policy approved by Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 21 Feb 2018 Resolution number: 11.02/18
Related documents	Customer Service Charter Customer Service Standards Management Directive Complaints Policy
Related legislation	Local Government Act 1993 Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

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1. Purpose

This Policy details Gunnedah Shire Council's commitment to delivering customer service experiences that meet the needs and expectations of our customers and enhances Council's ability to continuously improve service provision.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers acting in a role as a Council employee.

3. Definitions

Customer	Any person or organisation that has dealings with or uses the services of Council.
Customer Service Request	A request for service or information not resolved at first point of contact, which is recorded in Council's customer request system.

4. Policy principles

Gunnedah Shire Council is committed to an organisational culture that values customer service and recognises that a strong customer focus is a vital part of our work.

We are committed to:

- Making genuine engagement with our customers a priority;
- Taking an integrated approach to customer service delivery supported by clear, consistent frameworks and processes that supports our ability to provide quality customer service;
- Making sure dealings with our customers are transparent, equitable and consistent, and that we are accountable for the level of service delivered;
- Making it easier for people to do business with Council; and
- Making it easier to build professional relationships built on trust, respect and finding solutions.

5. Policy statement

5.1 Council's Responsibilities

At all times we will:

- Treat customers with courtesy, fairness and respect;
- Listen and respond to your requests within service standards;
- Work with you to find solutions;
- Communicate with you clearly, using plain language;
- Provide you with accurate, relevant and complete information;
- Act on our commitments in a timely and efficient manner; and
- Value your privacy by treating all personal information confidentially.

5.2 Customer's Responsibilities

We ask our customers to:

- Provide us with accurate and complete details so that we can respond to your enquiry;
- Let us know when your circumstances change;
- Work with us to resolve your concerns or problem;
- Treat Council staff with courtesy and respect; and
- Provide feedback so that we can work to improve our services.

5.3 Customer Service Standards

Council's Customer Service Standards have been developed in accordance with this Policy, providing a consistent approach to the way we deliver service to our customers.

Requested Service	Our Standard
Customer Service Requests	Acknowledgment of request sent within two working days via email, letter, or other means as agreed by the customer; and Provide a response within 10 working days or provide regular, proactive updates - if the request cannot be completed within 10 working days - to ensure customer is kept well-informed.
Other requests received by email or letter	Other requests will be managed as per timeframes stated within relevant legislation. Where timeframes are not specified, responses to be provided within 10 working days via email, letter, or other means as agreed by the customer.
Telephone calls and voice mail messages	Provide a response within two working days via return phone call, or other means as agreed by the customer.
Complaints	Managed in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy.

The Customer Service Standards clearly define what you can expect when dealing with Council via the following contact mediums.

- Face-to-face

- Telephone
- Letter, email
- Council's online customer portals on Council's website
- Meetings

Council's Customer Service Standards provide a measurable benchmark for customer service provided by Council staff.

Council's Customer Service Standards will be reviewed at least annually to ensure the customer service provided by Council is meeting the needs and expectations of our customers.

5.4 Customer Service Charter

The Customer Service Charter is a summary of Council's Customer Service Standards.

5.5 Customer Service Monitoring

Customer Service monitoring will be conducted by the Manager of Customer and Information Services to ensure organisation-wide compliance with the customer service standards.

The Customer Request Management System will be utilised to receive, record, investigate, resolve, review and store service requests made by customers.

Customer request statistics will be collated and presented to the Executive Leadership Team monthly to ensure compliance with Council's commitment to delivering high-quality customer service.

Customer Service levels will also be monitored through feedback mechanisms such as surveys.

5.6 Training

Customer service training is included as a module in Council's Staff Induction training and on-boarding systems.

Opportunities for revision training are available upon request to Council's Corporate Training section.

5.7 Provision for special circumstances

Under special circumstances, the General Manager may approve temporary changes to Customer Service Standards detailed in clause 5.3. Details of the changes should be documented, containing sufficient details on the reasons for the change, the expected duration for the change; and require clear communications to affected stakeholders.

6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities

Staff

Staff are responsible for ensuring they adhere to the Customer Service Standards and must aim to provide positive, consistent and high-quality customer service.

Managers

Managers are responsible for monitoring the level of customer service provided by their staff. Managers are also responsible for modelling positive and consistent customer service based on the Customer Service Standards.

Directors and Executive Manager

Directors and the Executive Manager are responsible for customer service standards and the implementation of this Policy within their department.

General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring organisation-wide compliance with this Policy.

6.1 Policy Custodian

Manager Customer and Information Services

6.2 Responsibility: Responsible Officer

Manager Customer and Information Services

7. Acknowledgements

8. Version Control and Change History

Date	Version	Approved by and resolution no.	Amendment
23 May 2013	1	Circulate to Manex	
21 Dec 2017	2	Draft policy review circulated to SMG endorsement.	Adjustments to language and approach made to align policy with Council's vision and commitment to community engagement.
21 Feb 2018	2.1	Amended policy for Council endorsement	Minor amendments have been made to the original policy to reflect organisational changes, and in accordance with Council's ongoing commitment to customer service, complaints processing and community engagement.
21 Feb 2018	2.1	Council 21 Feb 2018	

		Resolution 11.02/18	
19 June 2024	3	Ordinary Meeting 19 June 2024 Resolution 8.6/24	Policy reviewed and amendments made to include inclusion of "Provision for special circumstances" statement and updated "Customer Service Standards".