



Gunnedah
Shire Council

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

DRAFT POLICY – CUSTOMER SERVICE

The draft Customer Service Policy has been placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days until 19 July 2024.

If you have feedback on a draft plan, policy or item on exhibition, please submit it via one of the methods below:

- Email council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au with the name of the plan, policy or item in the subject line. Please include your name and contact details.
- Complete an online form on Council's website: www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au.
- Post your submission to Gunnedah Shire Council, PO Box 63, Gunnedah 2380 or hand it over the counter at Council's Administration Building at 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah.

Please be aware that if you make a submission, other people may have access to your comments. This may be as a result of a report to a Council meeting or as part of an application under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. Further details are available on request from Council.

For more information, speak to our Customer Service team.

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 21 Feb 2018 Policy or amendment takes effect 21 Feb 2018 Policy is due for review (up to 4 years) 21 Feb 2022
Endorsed by	<u>Executive Management Team (EMT) Executive Leadership Team at its meeting held 30 May 2023</u>
Approved by	<u>Gunnedah Shire Council, at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 21 February 2018. Resolution number: 11.02/18</u>
Policy Custodian	<u>Manager Communications and Cultural Services</u> <u>Manager Customer and Information Services</u>
Relevant to	All <u>Staff</u> <u>Council officials</u> .
Superseded Policies	<u>Customer Service Policy approved by Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 21 Feb 2018 Resolution number: 11.02/18</u>
Related documents	Customer Service Charter Customer Service Standards <u>Management Directive</u> Complaints Policy
Related legislation	The Local Government Act 1993 The Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 <u>2021</u>

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1. Purpose

The ~~is~~ 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

~~The policy applies all Council officers and customers of Council.~~ 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 <u>or uses the services of</u> Council.
<u>Customer Service Request</u>	<u>A request for service or information not resolved at first point of contact, which is recorded in Council's customer request system.</u>

4. Policy principles

Gunnedah Shire Council is committed to ~~nurturing~~ 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 ~~Customer Service~~ Policy, providing a ~~standardised~~consistent approach to the way we ~~provide~~deliver service to our customers.

Requested Service	Our Standard
Customer Service Requests	Acknowledgment of request sent within two working days via email, letter, <u>or other means as agreed by the customer;</u> <u>and</u> 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.
Reply to written/email/social media general requests <u>Other requests received by email or letter</u>	<u>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.</u>
Return Telephone calls and voice mail messages	<u>Provide a response within two working days via return phone call, or other means as agreed by the customer.</u>

<p>Complaint Resolutions</p>	<p>Acknowledge complaint within two working days via email, letter, or other means, as agreed by the customer.</p> <p>All complaints will be addressed within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint via email or letter, except where further information is waiting to be received.</p> <p>In the instance where further information is required, the complainant will be advised of the progress of the complaint within 10 working days and the complaint will be addressed within 20 working days.</p> <p>The customer will be provided regular, proactive updates during the assessment period to ensure customer is well-informed. Managed in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy.</p>
<p>Other request, applications, duties, etc. within timeframes listed in legislation e.g. <i>Local Government Act 1993, Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Government Information (Public Access) Act (NSW)</i></p>	<p>Any other requests or timeframes for service that is specified by legislation or Acts etc. will be adhered to, and where timeframes are not listed, responses will be sent within 10 working days.</p>

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, fax
- [Online 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 Senior Management Executive Leadership Team](#) ~~on a monthly basis~~ 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 Customer Service Pulse Checks 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 [Human Resources Team 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

All Staff

~~All s~~Staff are responsible for ensuring they adhere to the Customer Service Standards ~~at all times~~ 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 ~~GSC~~ Customer Service Standards.

Directors and Executive Manager

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

The General Manager

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

6.1 Policy Custodian

Director Corporate and Cultural Services Manager Customer and Information Services

6.2 Responsibility: Responsible Officer

Manager Communications and Cultural Services Manager Customer and Information Services

7. Acknowledgements

1. ~~Wollongong City Council Customer Service Policy (2014)~~
2. ~~Eurobodalla Shire Council Customer Service Policy (2017)~~
3. ~~Devonport Customer Service Charter (2017)~~

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 February 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 February 2018	2.1	Council 21 Feb 2018 Resolution 11.02/18	