

1 Policy History

Revision No.	Council Meeting Date	Minute No.	Adoption Date
1	14/01/2003	25	14/01/2003
2	11/03/2003	248	11/03/2003
3	08/03/2005	70	08/03/2005
4	11/05/2010	0142	11/05/2010
5	10/03/2020	20/065	17/04/2020
6	09/07/2024	24/182	08/08/2024

2 Policy Objective

- To provide guidance for staff and Councillors in dealing with customers.
- To ensure that all customers are treated in the same manner.
- To ensure Council resources are used in the best available way.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Service Commitment

3.1.1 Council staff and Councillors shall strive to meet the needs of our customers in a professional and ethical manner with courteous and efficient service. Staff and Councillors shall:

- treat all customers with respect and courtesy
- listen to what customers have to say
- respond to customer enquiries promptly and efficiently
- act with integrity and honesty when liaising with customers
- consult customers about service needs
- ensure customer enquiries/requests are clearly understood

3.2 Standards of Service

3.2.1 Council staff shall strive to respond to correspondence received from customers (written or emailed) within five (5) days. An acknowledgement letter may be sent where investigations are such that more than 5 business days is required to enact a response.

3.2.2 Telephone calls to Council shall be answered as quickly and efficiently as possible.

- 3.2.3 Council staff shall answer incoming calls by clearly stating their name. Unanswered calls shall divert to another member of staff or to voice mail.
- 3.2.4 Staff making outgoing calls shall identify themselves by name and council/division/branch, as appropriate, and shall clearly outline the purpose of the call.
- 3.2.5 Reception area and customer service centre staff shall greet customers as quickly as possible and in a professional and helpful manner.
- 3.2.6 Staff required to visit a customer external to Council facilities shall attempt to contact the customer first and make an appointment. At the beginning of a Council visit, staff shall clearly identify themselves and the purpose of the visit.
- 3.2.7 Council staff are to wear appropriate name badges to identify themselves when dealing with the public.

3.3 Customers Who Cannot Be Satisfied

- 3.3.1 Customers who cannot be satisfied are people who are not satisfied with Council responses to their enquiries and continue to maintain or assert that the Council is either unable to, or unwilling to assist them further and disagree with the action Council has taken in relation to their complaint or concern.
- 3.3.2 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer cannot be satisfied and all appropriate avenues of internal review or appeal have been exhausted and the customer continues to write, telephone and/or visit Council the following actions may be taken:
 - a) the General Manager may write to the customer restating Council's position on the matter if necessary and advising that if the customer continues to contact Council regarding the matter Council may:
 - i) not accept any further phone calls from the customer
 - ii) not grant any further interviews
 - iii) require all further communication to be put in writing
 - iv) continue to receive, read and file correspondence but only acknowledge or otherwise respond to it if:
 - the customer provides significant new information relating to their complaint or concern; or
 - the customer raises new issues which in the General Manager's opinion, warrant fresh action
 - b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any correspondence issued in accordance with clause 3.3.2 (a)

- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action
- d) if the customer continues to contact Council after being advised of Council's proposed course of action, the General Manager may, after considering any representations from the customer, advise the customer that any or all of points i) - iv) above will now apply

3.4 Customers Who Make Unreasonable Demands

3.4.1 Customers who make unreasonable demands are those people whose demands on Council start to significantly and unreasonably divert Council's resources away from other functions or create an inequitable allocation of resources to other customers. Such demands may result from the amount of information requested, the nature or scale of services sought or the number of approaches seeking information, assistance or service.

3.4.2 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer is making unreasonable demands on Council and the customer continues to write, telephone and/or visit the agency the following actions may be taken:

- a) the General Manager may write to the customer advising them of Council's concern and requesting that they limit and focus their requests and that if the customer continues to place unreasonable demands on the organisation the Council may:
 - i) not respond to any future correspondence and only take action where, in the opinion of the General Manager the correspondence raises specific, substantial and serious issues; or
 - ii) only respond to a certain number of requests in a given period
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any correspondence issued in accordance with clause 3.4.2 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action
- d) if the customer continues to contact Council after being advised of Council's proposed course of action, the General Manager may, after considering any representations from the customer, advise the customer that either or both of points i) - ii) above will now apply

3.5 Customers Who Raise Numerous Generalised and Repeated Demands

3.5.1 If in the opinion of the General Manager customers are making numerous generalised and repeated demands that are difficult for staff to understand the following actions may be taken:

- a) the General Manager may notify the customer that:

- i) only the Public Officer will deal with them in future
 - ii) they must make an appointment with the public officer or have an agreed monthly meeting at a set time; or
 - iii) all future contact with Council must be in writing
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any notification issued in accordance with clause 3.5.1 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action

3.6 Customers Who Constantly Raise The Same Issue With Different Staff

3.6.1 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer is constantly raising the same issues with different staff the following actions may be taken:

- a) the General Manager may notify the customer that:
 - i) only the Public Officer will deal with them in future
 - ii) they must make an appointment with the Public Officer or have an agreed monthly meeting at a set time; or
 - iii) all future contact with Council must be in writing
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any notification issued in accordance with clause 3.6.1 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action

3.7 Customers Who Are Rude, Abusive or Aggressive, or exhibits signs of mental health distress or substance abuse

3.7.1 Rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour may include rude or otherwise vulgar noises, expressions or gestures, verbal abuse of either a personal or general nature, threatening or offensive behaviour, physical violence against property or physical violence against a person.

3.7.2 If in the opinion of any staff member rude, abusive or aggressive comments or statements are made in telephone conversations or interviews, the staff member may:

- a) warn the caller that if the behaviour continues the conversation or interview will be terminated
- b) terminate the conversation or interview if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues after a warning has been given.

- 3.7.3 Where a conversation or interview is terminated in accordance with clause 3.7.2, the staff member must notify the General Manager or the relevant Director of the details as soon as possible.
- 3.7.4 If in the opinion of the General Manager any correspondence to Council contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to the sender and not otherwise acted upon.
- 3.7.4. To ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all, customers exhibiting erratic behavior or extreme emotional stress, which may be attributable to a mental health condition or substance abuse, may be asked to leave the building and/or the Police may be asked to intervene.

3.8 General

- 3.8.1 In all of the situations referred to in this policy, adequate documentary records must be made and maintained on the appropriate Council file.
- 3.8.2 Where the General Manager determines to limit a customer's access to Council in any of the ways specified in this policy, the General Manager must advise the Council as soon as possible of the relevant circumstances and the action taken and forward such advice, where appropriate, to the ICAC, Department of Local Government and the NSW Ombudsman for information.

4 Definitions

None

5 Exceptions

None

6 Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

7 Related Documents

Customer Service Charter (Attached)
Emergency Response Procedures – WHS-FO-105

8 Directorate

Sustainable Development

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We are committed to working in partnership with the community, to deliver excellent service standards through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement.

We will ensure that all our customers will be provided with an efficient, friendly and responsive service within an appropriate timeframe.

We guarantee your confidentiality is a priority and no personal information, verbal or written, will be disclosed to the public, without your consent.

WHEN A CUSTOMER VISITS OR TELEPHONES COUNCIL

- We will attend to the counter and answer the telephone promptly, courteously and deal with an enquiry directly without unnecessary referrals or transfers.
- If we cannot deal with the enquiry we will forward your request to the appropriate department and a telephone call will be returned at the first opportunity.
- A Duty Planner and Building Surveyor is available each day by appointment to answer any in depth Development or Building enquiries.
- If Council is not the current service provider for the nature of your enquiry, we will endeavor to direct our customers to the relevant provider.

CUSTOMER REQUEST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CRM)

- Record all works or services requests from customers into CRM for actioning and resolving with the relevant department.
- For works or services requests, we will provide the CRM identification number to the Customer for future reference.
- Following the day of the CRM requests, they are actioned within Council's standard timeframe and we strive to ensure;

Phone Call

Answered within 1 working day

Written Acknowledgement or Response

Answered within 5 working days

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

- Providing us with accurate and complete details when you contact us
- Respecting the privacy and rights of other customers
- Treating our employees with respect and courtesy
- Phoning ahead to make an appointment for complex enquiries or the need to see a specific officer
- Having a note pad and pen or device by the phone to records any details

- Quoting any reference numbers that may be applicable to your enquiry
- If you wish to make a complaint about a service, please speak to a Customer Service Officer, or alternatively ask to speak to Council's Public Officer relating to personnel.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY

MAYOR – Exercise policy making functions, presides at meetings of council and carries out civic and ceremonial functions.

COUNCILLORS – Represent the interests of residents and ratepayers as a member of the governing body of council.

GENERAL MANAGER – Responsible for efficient operation of council (day to day management) and carry out council decisions.

ACCESSIBILITY

Griffith City Council is contactable by:

In person at the Customer Service Centre - From 8:15am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday

1 Benerembah Street, Griffith

By Phone on 1300 176 077 from 8:15 am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

By Email admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au

Via Website www.griffith.nsw.gov.au



<https://www.facebook.com/griffithcitycouncil>

Emergency After Hours Contact on (02) 6964 0886

Water & Sewer Emergencies/Odour Complaints After Hours on (02) 6962 8105

Animal Hotline (dog attacks, stock on the road etc.) After Hours on 0408 210 196

All fire emergencies please call - 000

OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE

Community Directory - with Information on Community Services, Groups and Organisations is available on our [Website](#).

JP Services – JPs are available Monday to Friday within Council's business hours.