

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER PROCEDURE

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Services

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Corporate Services Manager

ASSOCIATED POLICY: LG41 Customer Service Charter Policy

PROCEDURE INFORMATION: Adopted 20 April 2022

Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

The Customer Service Procedure outlines what is required of Council and its officers in respect to providing good customer service.

The Customer Service Procedure sits alongside Council's Customer Service Charter to form our Customer Service Policy LG41. Together these documents are in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

2. WHO IS A CUSTOMER

A customer is any person or organisation having dealings with the Break O'Day Council.

3. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Officers should strive to meet the stated response times, however there may be times where extenuating circumstances may mean this is not possible.

These circumstances could be:

- In times of emergencies;
- Limited resources (eg: staff on leave);
- A complicated request or situation.

Should there be a significant delay in Council being able to respond within expected parameters all effort will be made to inform the customer, this of course is not always possible in emergency situations.

4. COMPLAINTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

What is a complaint?

A complaint arises through dissatisfaction with a decision, level or quality of service, or behaviour of an employee, councillor or representative of Council, which can be investigated and acted upon.

What is not a complaint?

- A request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for service);

- A request for information or explanation of a policy or procedure;
- Disagreement with a policy or procedure of Council;
- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure;
- Reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances or unauthorised building work.

Many of these issues may be considered as 'complaints' by a customer as they are unhappy about the situation and want something to be done. The actions we take to resolve many of these perceived 'complaints' are an everyday part of organisational life for a Council due to the nature of the services provided and are dealt with separately to complaints.

Procedure

A complaint can be lodged verbally by phone or in person: in writing via letter, email or through our website.

Complaints are normally dealt with by the manager of the relevant area, who will try to settle the issue as quickly as possible. Whilst most complaints can be resolved quickly, there are times when detailed investigation is required. If it will take time, we will keep the customer informed of the progress of the complaint. If the complaint is of a particularly serious or complex matter or remains unresolved, then a complaint should be made in writing to the General Manager.

Abusive Customers

Interactions with members of the community, where personal abuse or vulgar language is used, may be terminated immediately by an officer. If on a telephone, the officer will advise they are terminating the call and hang up. If face to face, the officer will walk away. If the abuse is contained in an email, the address may be blocked.

On occasion a customer may feel their issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily and it is not possible for Council officers to continue to respond; or correspondence contains personal abuse or vulgar language. In these instances, Council may decide to limit or cease responses to that person. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing to the person.

Should a staff member feel threatened by abusive language or behaviour of a customer, the matter may be referred to the police.

5. EXPECTED RESPONSE TIMEFRAMES

Officers will endeavour to meet the following timeframes for dealing with a complaint/request:

- Urgent matters – within ten (10) working days.
- Non urgent matters that are not considered to be complex or where the complaint is to be investigated under an internal review mechanism – within thirty (30) days.
- Complex matters or where the complaint is to be investigated under an external review mechanism – within forty five (45) days.

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

SERVICE	OUR STANDARD
Answering your telephone call	Within three (3) rings where possible
Returning your call	Within one to two (1-2) working days
General requests/correspondence	Respond within ten (10) working days
Keeping the customer informed	Council will use social media to advise of any delay in our service commitment within one (1) working day
Job Applications	All applications for advertised positions of Council will be acknowledged within three (3) working days of the closing date for applications and unsuccessful applicants advised as soon as a decision has been finalised
Planning & building enquiries	By phone and email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General enquiries within five (5) working days • Technical enquiries within ten (10) working days
Missed visits	Home/site visits are generally pre-arranged. We will leave information and with contact details if we call to your residence and you are not at home – 100% of the time
Urgent Requests Eg: Dogs, Drainage, Roads & Footpaths	We will respond as soon as possible based on the urgency of the matter.
Environmental health – food and water quality complaint	Within five (5) working days
Safety matter that places any member of the community at risk	Immediate
Noise complaint	Within five (5) working days
Waste collection (wheelie bins missed)	Acknowledge & commence investigation within two (2) working days, advise proposed response/resolution within 4 working days
Dumped rubbish on Council land	Within five (5) working days

If Council is unable to provide the service required, we will endeavour to refer the customer to an appropriate service provider.	100% of the time
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7. REVIEW PROCESS

Internal Review

Break O'Day Council has a Decision Review Procedure that outlines what a customer can do if they disagree with a Council decision.

External Review

If all avenues within Council have been exhausted and the customer feels that their complaint has not been dealt with in an appropriate manner they can contact an external organisation who may be able to assist. These include:

- The Ombudsman
- The Director of Local Government.
- Integrity Commission