

Document Type:	Council Policy	TRIM reference:	DOC/19/36175
Document Status:	Approved by Council		
Policy Owner (position):	Manager, Communications and Customer Service		
Internal endorsement required:	Not Applicable		
Final Approval by:	Council		
Date approved:	17/12/2019		
Evidence of approval:	Select approver of type a position title – Refer to Notes in TRIM		
Version Number:	1	Frequency of Review:	3 years
Review Date:	31/12/2022		
Date rescinded:	Click here to enter a date. OR <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable		
Related legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Act 1989 • Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 • Freedom of Information Act 1982 		
Related strategic documents, policies, or procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Charter • Complaint Policy • Workplace Code of Conduct • Privacy and Data Protection Policy 		

Date	Version Number	Details of Version	Modified by
27/08/2019	1	Draft	Adam Perrett

Organisational documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the policies on the Mount Alexander Shire Intranet, TRIM or the owner of the document to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

AUTHORISATIONS



For all authorisations a digital signature is required via the comments in the TRIM notes of this document number. This is also part of the document audit trail.

This document must remain in Microsoft Word format until finalised.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to high level customer service to the community and set out clear standards of service the community can expect from Council Officers. This policy will also advise on the service that can be expected from Council and the steps that can be taken if someone is not satisfied with Council decisions or actions.

This policy defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties when dealing with customers and customers complaints and sits alongside Council's Complaints Policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the Council employees (including full time, part time, casual employees, agency staff and students), contractors, volunteers and consultants of Mount Alexander Shire Council.

3. Policy

Council is committed to providing a high level of customer service to residents and visitors to our Shire.

This policy outlines our commitment to customers in accordance with our organisational values. It outlines customers' rights, the standard customers can expect when dealing with Council and how customers can provide us with feedback.

3.1. Council's commitment to customer service

"High quality customer service" is the provision of timely, effective, consistent and professional services provided by polite and helpful Officers that meet customers' expectations.

At all times Council seeks to provide a high quality service when responding to queries.

A great emphasis is placed on learning and improving how queries are handled. To achieve this, customers are encouraged to raise their issues and concerns so Council can work toward increasing customer satisfaction and continuously improve our services.

3.2. Who are Council's customers?

A customer is any person or organisation who have dealings with Council or use the services of Council. Council includes its employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers and work experience students.

3.3. Council's service standards

Council has set standards with regards to how and when queries are answered. The aim is to resolve all queries promptly, courteously and without unnecessary referrals or transfers. Enquiries are to be acknowledged as soon as possible and customers will be informed if responses will take a longer amount of time to resolve why this is so.

The below table explains the timeframe for resolution of queries raised. All queries are prioritised from the information provided to Council.

	Routine	Complicated or complex
In person	Same day If the responsible Officer is not available, the customer will be contacted by the end of the next working day	Council will inform the customer of expected response times and will keep the customer updated on the progress of their query. This initial response should meet the same timelines as 'routine' enquiries.
By telephone	Same day If the responsible Officer is not available, calls will be returned by the end of the next working day	
By email	Within 5 working days	
By letter	Within 10 working days	
By social media	Within 2 working days	

Routine matters are matters that can be responded to quickly as they are usual or regular enquiries. Many infrastructure-related requests (roads, footpaths, trees etc) which are classified non urgent are included on the Schedule of Works. Customers will be notified of the expected commencement date of the works.

Sometimes routine queries may take longer due to heavy demand on Officer resources, for example, when rates payments are due. In these situations Council will prioritise urgent matters and will systematically resolve each enquiry. At times like this, not all responses will meet our set standard. Council will let customers know if this is going to be the case.

Complicated or complex matters are matters needing further investigation as they are unusual or unique and may include the involvement of multiple business units or other agencies. These matters will take longer to determine.

Council will always strive to ensure sensitive or confidential matters are handled with thoughtfulness and in line with our Privacy and Data Protection Policy.

Social media enquiries are received via Facebook Messenger.

3.4. What customers can expect from Council staff

- A professional and informative approach by all staff

- Courteous, polite and friendly manner
- A commitment to listening and working with you to resolve issues
- Clear and concise communications
- Follow through on commitments
- Referral of requests to the appropriate person or agency if we are unable to fulfil your requirements
- An acknowledgement and respect for your time
- Ensure fair and equitable reviews and decisions
- A commitment to continuously improve how we work with you and how we work with each other within the organisation

Training in customer service is mandatory for all Council Officers. . All information held by Council is treated in the strictest confidence in line with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

3.5. Customers can help us by

- Providing accurate and timely information
- Treating Council Officers with respect
- Understanding some issues are complex and may take time to resolve
- Respecting the privacy, safety and needs of other customers

Council staff have the right to immediately terminate any conversation or interaction should customers become abusive or threatening. Staff may report such behaviour to Victoria Police.

3.6. Compliments and Complaints

We welcome feedback, and we commit to refer this this feedback to the responsible Officer.

Customers can provide compliments in person at the Civic Centre or via email, telephone, in writing or social media.

There may be times when customers are not happy with the outcome of their interaction with Council. The Complaints Policy is available on Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, which outlines what customers need to do to register a complaint and what Council do when we receive a complaint.

4. Human Rights Statement

Human Rights Statement

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006). Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. Mount Alexander Shire Council will formally involve the Workplace Consultative Committee in any workplace change that may affect employees.

Associated documents

- Customer Service Charter
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct