

Policy title	Customer Service Policy
Responsible manager(s)	Divisional Manager Governance & Information
Contact officer(s)	Coordinator Customer Service & Information
Directorate	Finance and Business Development
Approval date	27 June 2017
Outcome area	Innovative and Proactive Leadership
Strategy	9.2 Ensure financial sustainability and support the organisation in achieving efficient ongoing operations
Delivery Program	9.2.1 Provide effective, friendly, customer service and information
Operational Plan	

Purpose

Eurobodalla Shire Council's Customer Service policy was created to guide the development of an organisational culture focused on meeting the needs and expectations of its customers and to continuously improve its services for customers.

Policy aims

- Promote an integrated framework for providing quality customer service to the customers of Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Promote best practice customer service behaviours and attitudes by all Eurobodalla Shire Councillors, Council staff, contractors and volunteers
- Ensure transparency, consistency and fairness in the manner in which Council deals with its customers
- Make Council's policies and requirements for Customer Service readily accessible and understandable to the public.

Policy details

1	Application: This policy applies to all customers, councillors, Council staff, contractors and volunteers of Eurobodalla Shire Council.
2	Legislation: This policy ensures Eurobodalla Shire Council's compliance with <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/lga1993182/
3	Customer Service Responsibility: All Eurobodalla Shire Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers are responsible for the provision of quality customer service to the customers of EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL. They should perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner and treat members of the public fairly, respectfully and consistently, in a non-discriminatory manner and with proper regard for rights and obligations.

3.1	Each staff member is accountable for the quality of customer service delivered through their own work or the quality of output of any project or work team(s) of which they are a member.
3.2	Directors, Managers and Coordinators are responsible for developing a customer focused work ethic in their teams and empowering staff to undertake customer focused decision making.
3.3	Directors, Managers and Coordinators are responsible for working in consultation with their teams to develop and implement customer focused systems and processes that respond to and satisfy internal and external customer needs and expectations.
3.4	Staff will be provided with the appropriate tools, information and training to provide quality customer service.
4	<p>Customer Service Charter: Council staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors will strive to meet the best standards that can be practically achieved, defined in the Customer Service Charter in a professional, responsive and ethical manner. Information provided to customers should be provided promptly and in a format that is easy for the recipient to understand. Information provided should be clear, accurate, current and complete.</p>
4.1	<p>The Customer Service Charter will be published and communicated to ensure that Eurobodalla Shire Council customers are aware of the standards they can expect from the representatives of Eurobodalla Shire Council and that are expected of them.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be helpful - Assist with your enquiry courteously and professionally - Clearly and accurately explain our answers, actions, and options - Respect the privacy of customers in accordance with legislation. <p>We ask our customers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be courteous to our staff - Let us know when things change - Tell us when our service are less than satisfactory and when our service excels.
4.2	<p>The Customer Service Charter also defines the standards of response from Council. General enquiries are handled by front line staff and referred to specialist staff for other issues.</p> <p>Phone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff will identify themselves by name - If we can't help straight away we will let the customer know when we can help - Phone calls will be returned within 24 hours - When work is to be completed for a customer a reference number will be given - The After Hours Telephone Service will help with urgent enquiries. <p>Mail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We provide a response within 10 working days. <p>Email/'Your Say' on Council Website:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We acknowledge within 24 hours - We provide a response within 10 working days.
5.	<p>Complaints, service requests and feedback</p> <p>Eurobodalla Shire Council councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers recognise that effective handling of complaints, requests and feedback are the heart of good customer service.</p> <p>Responding appropriately to concerns and the information and experience gained in responding are an integral part of improving service provision as well as being key to developing and maintaining a relationship with customers.</p>
5.1	<p>Customer Service Request (CSR) system and CSR Survey System.</p> <p>The Council CSR system and CSR Survey System and process provide a system of receiving, recording, investigating, resolving, reviewing and storing service requests made by customers. The Customer Service Request Procedure provides guidance in the correct use of the CSR system for Council Officers.</p>
5.2	<p>Complaints, compliments and general feedback</p> <p>Complaints, compliments and general feedback to Eurobodalla Shire Council can be made by customers in writing via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurobodalla Shire Council website 'Have your say' - Council email - Letter. <p>The Council Records system users record, store, nominate a responsible officer and apply Council service standards to the correspondence.</p>
6	<p>Accessibility</p> <p>Eurobodalla Shire Council Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers are committed to ensuring that all customers including those with disabilities and special needs are provided quality customer service.</p>
6.1	<p>Council offices provide physical access for customers and staff with mobility restrictions by providing disabled parking, entrance ramps and ensuring entrances are clear. Access to Council information and services is also available by telephone, on the Council website and by email.</p>
7	<p>Customer Service Guide</p> <p>This document provides practical advice and tools to Council representatives to enable the delivery of quality customer service. This guide also provides advice on providing service to and communicating with people who have a disability.</p>
8	<p>Unreasonable Customer Conduct Procedure</p> <p>When customers behave unreasonably in their dealings with Council, their conduct can significantly affect the customer service provided and received. Council therefore is proactive and decisive in managing customer conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects its services to the community, and supports Councillors and staff to do the same.</p>

	The Unreasonable Customer Conduct Procedure provides guidance to Eurobodalla Shire Council representatives in the behaviour that can be expected from customers and how to deal with unreasonable customer conduct.
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Implementation

	Requirements	Responsibility
1.	Other Council documents: This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the Council's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer Service Charter - Complaints, Service Requests and Feedback Policy - Unreasonable Customer Conduct (UCC) Procedure - Customer Service Request Procedure - Customer Service Guide. 	Council officers
2	Training Council is committed to ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training in the application of this policy and the Customer Service Charter. This policy will be published on the Council website. Council Staff Customer Service Induction sessions will address this policy, the Customer Service Charter and Customer Service Guide.	Directors, Managers and Coordinators
3	Staff Responsibilities All Eurobodalla Shire Council Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented appropriately within their work area.	Eurobodalla Shire Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers
4	Concerns Public concerns communicated to Council in relation to this policy will be recorded on Council's records system and handled in accordance with Council's Customer Service or Complaints policy. These records will be used to determine any follow-up actions and analyse the history of reported public concerns.	Council officers
5	Consultation Any consultation deemed necessary will occur as required with key stakeholders, which may include (but not be limited to) the community, other agencies, statutory and industry bodies. Public submissions regarding this policy are invited for consideration during the exhibition period.	As applicable

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years. It may also be reviewed and updated as necessary if legislation requires it; or when Council's related policies, functions, structure or activities change; or when technological advances or new systems change the way that Council manages Customer Service.

The policy may be revoked at the expiration of twelve months after the declaration of the poll for the next general NSW local government election, unless Council updates or revokes it sooner.

Note: *The next general local government election is expected to be held in September 2020.*

Reviews of the effectiveness of this policy could include the following:

Performance indicator	Data source(s)
Delivery Program/ Operational Plan outcomes achieved	Council reporting
Concerns or complaints registered	Council records
Customer Service Request survey responses	Surveys conducted every 2 months of 5% of CSRs submitted in the previous 2 months. Surveys are of the timeliness of communication and quality of information provided to the customer
Internal or external review	Audit
Systematic external customer service evaluation and benchmarking	Mystery Shopper Program reports and benchmarking

Definitions

Term	Definition
Customer	A purchaser or user of products or services of Council. This may include external customers such as ratepayers, residents, organisations, constituents, stake holders, businesses, government agencies, contractors, consultants, and internal customers – Councillors and other staff members.
Customer Service	The identifiable, but sometimes intangible, series of activities undertaken by Council designed to provide a product or function and enhance the level of customer satisfaction.
Standards	A set of instructions or guide for performing operations or functions to ensure uniform methods, processes, practices and outcomes.
Concern / Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction with a decision, the quality or timeliness of a service provided, or the behaviour of employees, contractors or volunteers. A concern/ complaint may relate to a specific incident or issue involving Council, or to matters of a more philosophical or general nature regarding Council’s processes or procedures.
CSR	Customer Service Request – Council’s customer request management system.
Feedback	Positive or negative information about a customer’s reactions to a product, or a person's performance of a task which is used as a basis for continuous improvement and positive reinforcement.

Governance

This policy should be read in conjunction with any related legislation, policies, procedures, codes of practice, and guidelines.

Related legislation and policies

Name	Link
Customer Service Charter	www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/22111/ESc-SC-web-version.pdf
Unreasonable Customer Conduct Procedure	www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/council/council-policies
Statement of business ethics	www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/council/our-vision-and-values/our-business-ethics
Local Government Act 1993	www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+30+1993+cd+0+N
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIPPA)	www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/133
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A04426
Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002	www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2002/71

Related external references

Name	Link
Office of Local Government	www.olg.nsw.gov.au
Ombudsman NSW	www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Supporting documents

Name	Link
Customer Service Guide	
Customer Service Request Procedure	

Change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Min No	File No	Change
1	24 Nov 2009	Council	09/369	E09.3418 E06.0378	Policy adopted.
2	10 Sep 2013	Council	13/272	E13.7095 E06.0378	Reviewed and updated at start of new Council term.
3	25 Jun 2017	Council	17/214	E16.0297 E06.0378	Reviewed and updated at start of new Council term. Report GMR17/021

Internal use

Responsible officer	Divisional Manager, Governance & Administrative Services		Approved by	Council	
Minute	17/214	Report	GMR17/021	Effective date	27 June 2017
File	E06.0378	Review date	Sep 2020	Pages	6