

## CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

### ***INTENT***

Cook Shire Council's Customer Service Policy states our commitment to our customers. It mandates how we will provide quality customer service, and affirms our responsibility to the community to deliver services in a professional, efficient and cost effective manner. This policy applies to all officers, elected members and customers of Council.

### ***SCOPE***

This policy applies to all officers and elected members.

### ***DEFINITIONS***

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Customer:</b>	<p>Our Customers are people we serve or interact with on a day to day basis including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents, clients, voters, members of the business community, sporting and community groups</li> <li>• Councillors, as elected representatives of the community</li> <li>• Government Departments and Non-Government Organisations</li> <li>• Visitors to the Cook Shire</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Request:</b>	A customer request is a request for service, action and/or information received in person, via telephone, email, fax, webchat, social media or written correspondence.

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TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Service Request:</b>	A Service Request is the term used to identify customer requests that are logged in Council's Customer Request Management System (CRM'S). Service Requests are registered into the CRM system to help manage and action customer requests. The definition of a Service Request can be found in the CRM Procedure Manual.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

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This Policy has been developed to set the standard for Council's commitment to the customer and explains what customers can do if we have not delivered a service to that standard. It also provides Council officers with clear benchmarks to adhere to.

It applies to all interactions between staff and customers of Cook Shire Council. It deals with expected standards of service when responding to customers in person, via telephone, email, social media or written correspondence in a manner consistent with Council's purpose of delivering our service promise, while pursuing a high level of customer service and community focus that is integral to our work.

### **Our Commitment to our Customers**

We are committed to providing an excellent customer experience and aim to deliver on the reasonable service expectations of our customers.

To guide customers and the organisation in dealing with Customer Requests to ensure the highest possible level of service and commitment is achieved, by establishing standardized responses to requests from external customers and service requests made by elected representatives on behalf of external customers. Ensuring that customers and staff understand the level of service expected when handling Customer Requests and providing transparency and accountability in service provision.

### **What you can expect from Cook Shire Council**

We will

- greet you in a polite and professional manner and identify ourselves
- Serve you promptly at the front counter Answer and return phone calls promptly
- Treat you courteously and with respect
- Provide you with necessary and relevant information
- Value your privacy by treating all personal information confidentially
- Work with you to solve problems and refer you to an appropriate organization if we are unable to meet your request

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- Be punctual for meetings and appointments
- Act on our commitments in a timely manner
- Ensure information, resources and services are available to everyone
- act on commitments as quickly as possible
- give clear and accurate information
- keep our wait times to a minimum
- respect and protect your privacy by treating all information provided as confidential, subject to legislative requirement
- deliver services of a standard that reflect the high quality of service appropriate from council by skilled, motivated and courteous staff.
- Work with you to continuously improve and provide the best advice and service
- Provide service with a smile

### Our Standards of Service

In serving our customers we have set the following service standards:

SERVICE	STANDARD
<b>Frontline Service</b>	
Face to face customer service:	Customer to be acknowledged as soon as possible and, where possible, greeted before arrival at front counter
Answer telephone calls:	Within 5 rings
Return phone messages:	1 working day
Acknowledge email received	Automatic reply
Reply to email enquiries if response is required:	Up to 10 working days
Respond to general correspondence:	Up to 10 working days
Respond to enquiries made via social media and Council's website:	3 working days
Notification if we are unable to keep a commitment:	As soon as possible
Respond to general request for service (CRM's):	Up to 5 working days
Missed visits – we will leave a visit card with contact details if you are not home:	100%

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SERVICE	STANDARD
<b>Animals</b>	
Respond to urgent incidents:	Immediate dependent on staff availability
Respond to routine incidents:	5 working days
<b>Development Applications</b>	
Respond to Development Applications Planning, Building, Plumbing Determination	Up to 10 business days As per statutory timeframes
<b>Environmental Health</b>	
First response on receiving Application for food business license	Up to 10 business days
Respond to complaints - Noise, environmental, dust, odour	Respond 5 business days Close out 10 business days
Inspect registered food services	Annually or as necessary
<b>Local Laws</b>	
Permit Applications – market stall, signs etc.	Up to 10 business days
Complaints re overgrown allotments, Wharf/pontoon/boat ramp	Respond 5 business days Close out 10 business days
<b>Biosecurity</b>	
Weeds, spray unit hire, complaints	Up to 10 business days
<b>Finance</b>	
Payment of creditor accounts:	Within agreed trading terms
Processing rates searches:	Within agreed timeframes as per the Fees and Charges Schedule
Statutory requirements, e.g. completion of annual financial statements and audit:	Within statutory timeframes
Adoption of annual budget and 10 year financial forecast:	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June each financial year
Issue half yearly rates notices:	September and March each year

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SERVICE	STANDARD
<b>Governance</b>	
Council meeting agenda availability:	As required by Local Government regulations
Complaints management process:	Acknowledgement of the complaint to be issued within 5 working days of receipt Complaint resolution to be achieved within 15 working days of receipt of original complaint. Timeframe may be extended for complaints of a complex nature with written advice to complainant.
<b>Human Resources</b>	
Acknowledgement receipt of all job applications:	Standard acknowledgement is issued to all candidates by HR – 1 to 5 days after position closes
Response to outcome of all applicants:	Position to be filled and all applicants to be notified with 4-6 weeks of closing date
<b>Libraries</b>	
Process new memberships:	On the spot
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
Requests for infrastructure works	Response within 10 business days
Requests for emergency response, broken pipes, damaged roads etc.	Response within 24 hours
<b>Waste</b>	
Garbage collection - (household) 1 bin	Weekly as per timetable Cook Shire Website

### Hours of Operation

Telephone, face to face and other Customer Service functions will be available during advertised hours of operation. An 'After-Hours' emergency service will be provided to enable Customers to contact Council outside normal business hours.

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## Requests that are Unreasonable or Abusive

Council is committed to treating all customers equally and fairly. Council also reserves the right to terminate or restrict communication channels with unreasonable customers.

We identify three main types of ‘unreasonable’ customer:

- Those who become physically or verbally aggressive.
- Those that make substantial and unreasonable demands on the workload and resources of Council.
- Those whose aim is to annoy, harass, humiliate and irritate.

For guidelines to determine what is ‘unreasonable’ and how to manage this type of customer, refer to the Customer Complaints Handling Policy.

## Complaint Handling

Cook Shire Council understands that you may be dissatisfied with a level or quality of service, or the behaviour of an employee or agent.

Complaints are different from requests for service. Many issues raised with Council are often referred to as ‘complaints’ when a customer contacts us. The actions we take to resolve many such ‘complaints’ are ‘requests for service’ and are an everyday part of Council’s role. These will be dealt with separately to the formal complaints management process.

A complaint may be lodged verbally by phone, in person or in writing via a letter, form or email, or via our website.

Complaints are dealt with by the Managers of the relevant area, who will try to resolve the complaint 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 you informed of the progress of your 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 Chief Executive Officer.

Further details on how Council deal with complaints is outlined in our Complaints Management Process Policy

## Help us to help you

To assist in delivering our services we ask customers to

- Provide accurate and complete information so we can respond appropriately to your enquiry
- Respect the privacy safety needs and rights of other customers
- Respect the community in which we live

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- Work with us to solve problems
- Treat our council officers with courtesy and respect
- Provide us with feedback so we can deliver better services

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>Managers</b>	Are responsible for the management of their teams, the performance of their teams and the customer service delivery from their teams.
<b>Directors</b>	Directors are responsible for executive oversight of this policy and their management teams and subsequent teams to ensure exceptional customer service is delivered to the Cook Shire community.
<b>All employees</b>	All employees and Councillors are responsible for the delivery of exceptional customer service to the Cook Shire community and adherence to this policy and expected timeframes to the best of their ability.

## **REFERENCES, LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES**

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- D16/3425 Code of Conduct
- D13/8175 Complaint Management Process Policy
- D19/15062 Complaint Management Process Policy - Appendix A - Complaint Process
- D19/22087 Customer Service Charter

## **IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to employees at a Council all staff meeting and distributed to all staff via email.

A copy of the policy will be available on the Intranet.

A copy will be available via the controlled document register.

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## **APPROVED BY**

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Council Resolution 2019/19

## **REVIEW**

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<b>SPONSOR:</b>	Director Organisational Business Services
<b>OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW:</b>	Human Resource and Business Services Manager
<b>ADOPTION DATE:</b>	August 2019 – Council Resolution 2019/198
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	August 2022

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***THIS POLICY IS TO REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL OTHERWISE DETERMINED BY COUNCIL***

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## **AMENDMENT HISTORY**

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<b>VERSION</b>	<b>AMENDMENT DETAILS</b>	<b>AMENDMENT DATE</b>	<b>APPROVAL</b>
V1	New Policy	August 2019	Council Resolution 2019/198

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