

Title	Customer Service Policy
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Disclaimer

*Please note that this policy may not be current as Snowy Valleys Council (Council) regularly reviews and updates its policies and procedures. The latest controlled version can be found in Council's Records Management System or contact Council's Coordinator Governance and Risk on policy@snowyvalleys.nsw.gov.au for a hard copy of the latest version. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.***

Where there is a delegation identified in this policy, the reader will need to confirm if an alternative delegation exists in the Delegations Register. To the extent that there is any conflict perceived between the delegation/s identified in this policy and of those contained in the Delegations Register, then the delegation/s in the Delegations Register takes precedence. The General Manager will, if necessary, be the sole arbiter in resolving any issues of conflict.

1 PURPOSE

Snowy Valleys Council (Council) strives to deliver standards of customer service at the highest level and this is reflected in our *Community Strategic Plan* and our *Organisational Values*. This policy details how Council delivers on the commitment to customer service and how we measure our performance. This policy and the *Customer Service Charter* form part of the Customer Service Framework.

Council's role is to provide a consistent level of professional services in a timely manner. The standards contained in this policy are minimum acceptable standards for the provision of the customer service that incorporate Council's values. This policy also outlines arrangements associated with our customers who are not satisfied with Council's service and a process for staff who deal with customers who behave inappropriately.

2 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all customers, Councillors, Council officials, contractors and volunteers of Council.

The main objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure we deliver the service as outlined in the *Customer Service Charter*
- Provide customers with a choice as to how they provide feedback to Council about service provisions
- Provide a structure around responding to, recording, reporting and using feedback to improve customer service
- Outline customer rights and responsibilities.

In order to meet the customer service commitment, Council will ensure that all staff have access to a range of training and material to support their service delivery.

3 DEFINITIONS

Customer – Any member of the public as well as internal customers. An internal customer is any person who is employed by the Council, but also includes any contractors, volunteers, trainees, work experience students and consultants undertaking work for, or on behalf of the Council whether they are working in a full time, part time or casual capacity.

CRM – Customer Request Management, the request for a provision of service where a staff member creates a customer referral (known as a CRM request)

ECM - Electronic Records Management

Business Day – means a day when the Council is normally open for business. Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction with the Council's policies, procedures, charges, agents or quality of service.

4 CONTENT

4.1 OUR COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

Council staff will work with and communicate with customers in accordance with our *Organisational Values* and with the following principles in mind:

OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES



- **Accountability** – we are responsible for our actions and commitments to customers, both internal and external, and continually look for ways to enhance the quality of service we provide.
- **Communication** – we talk to our customers about their individual service needs and listen to what they say. We respond to our customers within the defined response times and keep customers informed of the progress of their requests. If we cannot help for any reason, we will tell them why.
- **Integrity** – we action in an open, honest and fair manner with our customers and treat customers with respect and courtesy. Staff shall comply with Council's *Code of Conduct* in their dealings with customers and in particular conduct their exchanges with regard to the Codes key principles. Decisions and advice should be premised on relevant legislation and Council's administrative policies and procedures.
- **Professionalism** – we act in a professional manner at all times in dealing with our customers.
- **Teamwork** – we work together to achieve the right outcome. We will share information with colleagues where a referral to another staff member is required to fully answer the enquiry and to avoid asking the customer the same questions.

4.2 STANDARDS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Council recognises that our Customers may wish to contact Council in a variety of ways and we are committed to providing choice about how customers can access Council services. By establishing and communicating Customer service standards, customer expectations can be effectively managed and performance of service areas can be monitored. Council's Service Standards are:

By Phone:

- Answer your call within five (5) rings
- Aim to resolve your queries on the first phone call
- Respond to your phone messages promptly usually within one (1) business day
- Direct you to the correct person or department the first time
- Get back to you with information or updates on your query in a timely manner.

In Person

- Provide you with professional and efficient service at all times
- Listen carefully and identify your needs
- Provide answers and solutions to your enquiries without delay

- Accept responsibility to ensure timely processing of your requests.
- Provide a welcoming environment for you to conduct your business

Emails, Letters and Faxes

- Acknowledge receipt of your correspondence as soon as it has been received
- Respond in plain English
- Be comprehensive in explaining the Council's position on all issues raised
- Reply promptly in line with our service level commitment
- Provide you with a contact name and phone number of the person dealing with your request.

Website and Social Media

- Use plain English
- Provide up to date and accurate information
- Endeavour to make it user friendly.

Our performance is measured against key performance indicators and reported in the *Annual Report*

4.3 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

To help improve our services Council encourages customer feedback in the form of complaints, compliments and suggestions. There is a Customer Feedback Form which can be used to document such feedback. This feedback to Council can be made by customers via:-

- In Person Tumbarumba Office: Bridge Street, Tumbarumba
Tumut Office: 76 Capper St, Tumut
- Via Post Tumbarumba Office: PO Box 61, Tumbarumba, NSW 2653
Tumut Office: 76 Capper St, Tumut, NSW 2720
- Via Email info@svc.nsw.gov.au
- Online www.snowyvalleys.nsw.gov.au/Contact-Us
- Telephone 1300 275 782

4.4 CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES

Council requires that customers assist Council staff in our service delivery by behaving in a fair and reasonable manner:

- Treating staff with courtesy and respect
- Respecting the rights of other customers
- Being honest and accurate in information sought and supplied to Council
- Working with us to resolve problems
- Providing Council with feedback
- Respecting our community

At times some members of the public may act inappropriately toward Council staff or may make onerous demands on Council resources. Staff guidelines have been developed to enable staff to deal effectively with customers in such situations.

4.5 WHERE SERVICES CANNOT BE MET

When a member of the public is not happy with the level of service provided by the Council, that person has a right to make a formal complaint. Complaints from the public made to or about Council will be handled as per the *Complaints Management Policy*. Complaints from internal customers can be made as per the *Grievance Procedure*.

4.6 CUSTOMERS WHO CONSTANTLY RAISE THE SAME ISSUE WITH DIFFERENT STAFF

As per the *Complaints Management Policy*, there is a process for managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct (UCC). UCC is any behaviour by a current or former Complainant which, because of its nature or frequency raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for our organisation, our staff, other service users and complainants or the Complainant himself/herself.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES /ACCOUNTABILITIES

All Snowy Valleys Council customers, Councillors, Council officials, contractors and volunteers will be responsible for following this policy.

General Manager

- Endorsement of this policy and the consideration of resources towards its implementation

Directors

- Oversee the implementation of this policy within their Directorate to ensure consistency, fairness and equity

Division Managers

- Implementation of this policy within their division
- Monitoring of compliance with this policy
- Consider and make recommendations to the relevant Director in relation to this policy

People Culture and Governance

- Ensure this policy is communicated to all staff and is implemented fairly and equitably

6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Nil

7 RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct SVC-RP-STY-001
Customer Service Charter
Complaints Management Policy SVC-COR-PO-037

8 RELATED FORMS

Customer Feedback Form SVC-COR-F-035

9 SUPERSEDING POLICY / PROCEDURE NUMBER AND TITLE

Quality Customer Service GOV.13 (former Tumut Council policy)
Customer Service Policy TSC-COR-PO-083 (former Tumbarumba policy)

10 REVISION HISTORY

Date	Version Number	Activity log	Resolution Number	Resolution date
05.01.2018	0	New		
18.04.2019	1	Adopted by Council	M78/19	18/04/2019

11 CONTACT OFFICER

Position: Coordinator of Customer Service

Section: Customer Service