



# Customer Service Charter

(Charter Number – KL-GOVTOR003)

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils are committed to providing quality service to our communities.

This Customer Service Charter outlines the standards customers can expect when contacting the Councils.

The Charter also explains what our customers can do should they feel their Council has not delivered a service to acceptable standards.

This Charter recognises that a strong customer focus is a priority for both Councils.

## 1 Our customer service promise

We are committed to serving our communities in a professional, friendly, and efficient way, striving to continuously improve our customers experience by:

- treating all customers with courtesy and respect.
- identifying ourselves in all communication.
- providing responses in a timely manner.
- adhering to statutory timeframes.
- ensuring information, resources, and services are as easily accessible as possible.
- communicating in clear plain language.
- being punctual for meetings and appointments.
- working with you to solve problems.
- respecting and protecting your personal information by adhering to all legislative privacy requirements.

## 2 How you can help us

The standards we expect from our customers are that you will:

- be always courteous and respectful.
- provide your name and contact details.
- provide accurate and complete information.
- be punctual for meetings and appointments.
- respect the rights and privacy of others.
- not engage in threatening, intimidatory, or offensive behaviour.



### 3 Our Customer Service Standards

When contacting the Councils you can expect the following response times for issue or enquiries:

Action	Our Standard
Responding to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• matters of serious public health and safety nature</li> <li>• urgent matters involving existing Council policy</li> <li>• urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature</li> </ul>	Immediately and up to 24 hours depending on the nature of the issue.
Returning your phone call	Within two (2) business days
Acknowledging any written/email requests for service or advice	Within ten (10) business days
Resolving a complaint	Provide a response/resolution to a simple complaint within ten (10) business days.  If complex investigations are required, the response may be delayed, but you will be kept informed of progress and the relevant contact officer's details.
Responding to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-urgent matters involving existing Council policy</li> <li>• non-urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature</li> <li>• matters arising from Council meetings</li> </ul>	Within ten (10) business days
Responding to other requests, applications, duties etc with timeframes listed in legislation i.e: <i>Local Government Act 1993, Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993, Food Act 2003, Building Act 2016, Monetary Penalties Enforcement Act 2005, Dog Control Act 2000</i> , etc.	Any other requests or timeframes for service that is specified by legislation or Acts will be adhered to and where timeframes are not listed, responses will be within 10 days.

## 4 Helping us help you

To assist in delivering our services we ask you to:

- phone to make an appointment for a complex enquiry, planning enquiry, building enquiry or if there is a need to see a specific Council officer.
- respect the privacy, safety, needs and rights of our staff and other customers.

### 4.1 Abusive customers

There may be occasions when:

- an issue cannot be dealt with to your satisfaction, and it is not possible for us to continue to engage with you on the matter; or
- correspondence contains personal abuse, offensive language, threats and/or defamatory and/or malicious allegations.

In these cases, the General Manager may decide to limit or cease responding to you. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing in accordance with our Difficult Customer Behaviour Policy.

Should you be personally abusive or use bad language, Council staff are authorised to terminate communication with you including:

- face to face - walking away.
- by telephone - terminating the call
- in an email – block your email address

If we feel threatened in any way by your behaviour, the Police may be notified.

## 5 Formal Complaints

We understand sometimes you may not be satisfied with the level or quality of service, the behaviour of an employee or agent, and therefore you may wish to lodge a complaint.

### 5.1 What is a customer complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that can be investigated and acted upon. This is distinct from a request for service, however a request for service may develop into a complaint where the provision or timeliness of the service is considered unsatisfactory.

Complaints do not include:

- a request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for service).
- a request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure.
- disagreement with a Council policy.



- reports of a damaged or faulty infrastructure.
- an expression of dissatisfaction with the behaviour of a Councillor.
- reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances, or unauthorised building work.
- a failure to adhere to a formal (and all inclusive) process when engaging with Council, such as a Right to Information Request, or representations under the Planning Scheme.

Many of these issues may be considered as 'complaints' by a customer as they are dissatisfied 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 Council due to the nature of the services provided and therefore these are dealt with separately and not as formal complaints.

## 5.2 Complaints management

A complaint may be lodged by phone, in person, in writing, by email or via the Councils websites.

Complaints are 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 investigations may be required. If it is going to take some time to resolve, we will keep you informed of the progress.

If the complaint is of a particularly serious or complex matter or remains unresolved, then it should be made in writing addressed to the General Manager.

Further details on how we deal with complaints is outlined in our Handling Customer Complaints Procedure, which is available on our website or by contacting us.

## 5.3 External review

We are confident that we can resolve most complaints, however we understand that we may not be able to satisfy every customer on every occasion.

Sometimes we will have to make difficult and complex decisions involving many people, and individual customers may not get the outcome they want.

If a complaint remains unresolved or you are dissatisfied with our process in dealing with your matter, there are external bodies which can review actions and decisions taken by us. These include the:

- Ombudsman
- Director of Local Government
- Integrity Commission

You are entitled to refer a complaint directly to any these bodies at any time, however we encourage you to allow us to review/investigate your matter in the first instance.



### **5.3.1 The Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman is an officer responsible to Parliament for investigating complaints made about administrative actions (or inactions) of Tasmanian Government Departments, most Government Statutory Authorities and Local Government.

You can make your complaint by phone or in person at the office of Ombudsman Tasmania, or you can use the online complaint form available for completion or download from:

[www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au)

The Ombudsman will not accept a complaint if the issue dates back further than two years.

Contact details:

Phone: 1800 001 170 (free call from a landline nationally)

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au)

Postal: GPO Box 960 Hobart, Tas, 7001

### **5.3.2 Director of Local Government**

Complaints regarding Council, Councillors, or the General Manager failing to comply with their statutory requirements under the Local Government Act 1993 can be directed to the Director of Local Government.

A complaint in this form is preferred to be in writing and must identify the complainant, the person against whom the complaint is being made, and the grounds upon which the complaint is based.

Contact details:

Phone: (03) 6232 7022

Email: [lqd@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lqd@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Postal: GPO Box 123, Hobart, Tas, 7001

### **5.3.3 The Integrity Commission**

Complaints regarding allegations of inappropriate/corrupt conduct can be made to the Commission.

Phone: 1300 720 289

Email: [contact@integrity.tas.gov.au](mailto:contact@integrity.tas.gov.au)

Postal: GPO Box 822, Hobart Tas 7001.

## **6 Evaluating & Improving Our Performance**

We use customer satisfaction surveys and community engagement to collect feedback from customers. We welcome feedback at any time. Your feedback helps us to monitor and improve our services. You can contact us in person, by phone, by email or via our website.



The General Manager will provide the Councils with a report at least once a year of the number and nature of complaints received in accordance with section 339F(5) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## 7 How You Can Contact Us

You can contact us to make an enquiry, make a customer service request or lodge a complaint:

- In person by visiting our Council Offices at:
  - Kentish: 69 High Street, Sheffield
  - Latrobe: 170 Gilbert Street, Latrobe
- By phoning:
  - Kentish: (03) 6491 0200
  - Latrobe: (03) 6426 4444
- By post:
  - Kentish: PO Box 63, Sheffield, Tas, 7306
  - Latrobe: PO Box 63, Latrobe, Tas, 7307
- By email:
  - Kentish: [council@kentish.tas.gov.au](mailto:council@kentish.tas.gov.au)
  - Latrobe: [council@latrobe.tas.gov.au](mailto:council@latrobe.tas.gov.au)
- Via website:
  - Kentish: [www.kentish.tas.gov.au](http://www.kentish.tas.gov.au)
  - Latrobe: [www.latrobe.tas.gov.au](http://www.latrobe.tas.gov.au)

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ADMINISTERED BY:	General Manager	

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance in terms of community needs and expectations and Council goals, targets, budget and statutory requirements.