



Customer Service Charter

Kentish Council is committed to providing quality service to our community. We are continually striving to improve our level of service through employee training, new technology and consultation.

Our Customer Service Charter sets out the service standards that a customer can expect from us. It also explains what our customers can do if we have not delivered a service to that standard. It provides Council officers with clear standards to adhere to, recognising that a strong customer focus is integral to our work.

Our customers are any person or organisation to whom we provide a service.

1 Our Commitment

We are committed to engaging with our community and delivering customer focused services that:

- Treat all customers courteously and with respect;
- Assist all customers as promptly, completely, and accurately as possible;
- Take into account our customer's needs and preferences as expressed through consultation and feedback;
- Ensures information, resources and services are accessible to all;
- Are guided by our organisation's values: leadership, community participation, lifestyle and environment, employee management, asset management, regional cooperation;
- Are delivered by skilled, motivated and courteous employees; and
- Are in accordance with our Public Information Protection Policy, respect and protect your personal information, and adhere to all legislative privacy requirements.

2 What You Can Expect From Us

At all times we will:

- Greet you in a polite and friendly manner;
- Identify ourselves in all communication with you;
- Answer and return phone calls promptly;
- Serve you promptly at the front counter;
- Listen and respond to your concerns within service standards;
- Provide you with necessary and relevant information;
- Be positive and receptive to new ideas;

- Communicate clearly, and in plain language;
- Be punctual for meetings and appointments; and
- Work with you to solve problems and refer you to an appropriate organisation if we are unable to meet your request.

3 Our Customer Service Standards

You can expect the following response times for your issue or enquiry:

| Action | Our Standard |
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| Respond to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters of serious public health and safety nature; • Urgent matters involving existing Council policy; and • Urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature. | Immediately and up to 24 hours depending on the nature of the issue. |
| Return your phone call | Within three (3) business days |
| Reply to written/email/social media general requests for service or advice | Within 10 business days |
| Resolve a complaint | Acknowledged within five (5) business days and then every effort is made to resolve the complaint and provide a response within 20 business days. If complex investigations are required, the response we provide you with may be delayed, but you will be kept informed of our progress and the relevant contact officer's details. |
| Respond to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-urgent matters involving existing Council policy; • Non-urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature; and • Matters arising from Council meetings. | Within 10 business days |

| Action | Our Standard |
|--|---|
| Respond to other requests, applications, duties etc with timeframes listed in legislation ie: <i>Local Government Act 1993, Planning Scheme 2013, Food Act 2003, Building Act 2000, 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 etc 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:

- Treat our employees with courtesy and respect;
- Provide accurate and complete information so we can respond appropriately to your enquiry;
- Phone to make an appointment for a complex enquiry, planning enquiry, building enquiry or a need to see a specific officer;
- Respect the privacy, safety, needs and rights of our other customers;
- Work with us to solve problems; and
- Provide us with feedback so that we may deliver better services.

4.1 Abusive customers

There may be occasions when:

- A customer's issue cannot be dealt with to their satisfaction and it is not possible for us to continue to respond; or
- Correspondence contains personal abuse or offensive language.

In these cases, the General Manager may decide to limit or cease responses to the person. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing.

Should you be personally abusive or use bad language, we may terminate communication with you. If face to face, we may walk away. If by telephone, we may terminate the call. If in email, your address may be blocked. If we feel threatened by your inappropriate language or behaviour, the Police may be notified.

5 Formal Complaints

We understand that you may not be satisfied with a level or quality of service, a behaviour of an employee or agent, and 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; or
- Reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances or unauthorised building work.

Many of these issues may be considered as 'complaints' by a customer as they are unhappy 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 organisational life for a Council due to the nature of the services provided and are dealt with separately to complaints.

5.2 Complaints management

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

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 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 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 the majority of complaints received, 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 complaint, there are a number of organisations which can review actions and decisions taken by us. These include:

- The Ombudsman
- The Director of Local Government

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

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 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 at:

www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au

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

Contact details:

Enquiries: Monday to Friday 9.00am-4.45pm (excluding public holidays)

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

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Street Address: NAB House, Level 6, 86 Collin St, Hobart 7000; or
45 Cameron St, Launceston 7250

Postal: GPO Box 960 Hobart 7001

5.3.2 Director of Local Government

Complaints regarding Council, Councillors, or the General Manager failing to comply with the requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993* (or any other) can be given to the Director of Local Government.

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

Contact details:

Division: Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Phone: (03) 6232 7022

Email: lgd@dpac.tas.gov.au

Fax: (03) 6173 0257

Street: Level 5, 15 Murray Street, Hobart Tas 7000

Postal: GPO Box 123, 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, email or via our website.

The General Manager provides our elected members 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 to lodge a complaint:

- In person by visiting our Council Offices at 69 High Street, Sheffield during the hours of 8:00am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday;
- By phoning (03) 6491 0200 - Office hours apply however an after-hours Emergency Service is provided;
- By post to Kentish Council, PO Box 63, SHEFFIELD TAS 7306;
- By email to council@kentish.tas.gov.au ;
- Via the internet by visiting the Council website at www.kentish.tas.gov.au; or
- Via Social Media: www.facebook.com/kentishcouncil (Facebook).

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| APPROVED BY COUNCIL: | 17 December 2019 | Minute: 7.4.5 |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: | 18 December 2019 | |
| ADMINISTERED BY: | General Manager and Team Leader Customer Service & Business Support | |