

012	Complaints Handling	V1 Current
-----	---------------------	------------

STATEMENT

Council recognises and acknowledges the importance of providing impartial, equitable and timely complaint resolution to the community, its residents and stakeholders.

PURPOSE

The intent of the Policy is to provide the guiding document for Council and the City with regards to complaints management in order to most effectively meet their service provision obligations to the community, its residents and stakeholders.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Employees of the City of Busselton.

POLICY CONTENT

The City of Busselton regards the provision of excellent complaint resolution services as a core strategic responsibility. In development of this policy, the Council has considered community feedback and expectations, relevant internal and external processes, organisational risks and officer recommendations. In addition, this policy takes into consideration the existing City of Busselton Code of Conduct and Customer Service Policy, which broadly outlines responsible behaviour for all City Officers.

This policy applies directly to the delivery of services as documented in the City of Busselton Customer Service Charter. This policy is to ensure that everyone within the organisation understands the duties and responsibilities applicable at all levels.

The City of Busselton Complaint Handling Policy is our commitment to the community to address their complaints in a manner that is:

- Customer focused;
- Responsive and empathetic;
- Objective and fair;
- Confidential;
- Accountable and transparent;
- Outcome focused;
- Free of reprisals
- Accessible for review and improvement.

Complaint Definition

The City of Busselton recognises a complaint to be:

Any expression of dissatisfaction with a level of service, repeated lack of promised service or response, or the conduct and/or behaviour of any person employed by the City of Busselton, which is not anonymous, made to the City of Busselton through its Councillor, Chief Executive Officer or any of its employees in writing or verbally, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

A complaint is therefore not:

- A request for service;
- A request for information;
- A request for an explanation of a policy or procedure;
- The lodging of an appeal in accordance with a standard procedure or policy;
- A freedom of information enquiry;

- *An allegation of a breach of the law by a third party;*
- *An expression of dissatisfaction with a decision.*

Responsibilities:

Councillors will:

- Ensure guidelines for complaint handling service delivery as stated in this policy and the Customer Service Charter are current and relevant and that these guidelines continue to be customer and outcome focused;
- Review this policy on a periodic basis as required by changing community needs;
- Identify performance indicators for expected complaint resolutions, including expected levels of compliance and reporting requirements;
- Support the CEO and Executives in the provision of excellent complaint resolution services;

CEO and Executives will:

- Endorse and support all standards documented in this policy;
- Promote a positive attitude complaint and complainant handling;
- Endorse and support an organisational complaint handling procedure which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Processes to capture complaints;
 - Investigation methods and results;
 - Guidelines for resolution decisions;
 - Training requirements;
- Contribute to the regular periodic review of this policy by:
 - Engaging in regular community consultation to ensure current and future customer needs adequately addressed;
 - Identifying opportunities for improvements to complaint handling procedures;
- Support Managers and other staff in the provision of customer-focused complaint resolution;
- Establish mechanisms to monitor compliance with this policy;
- Establish processes to deal with failure to meet endorsed standards;
- Report to Council on performance indicators for Complaint resolution.

Managers will:

- Optimize and support complaint handling and resolution mechanisms in place to comply with this policy;
- Ensure officers under direct and indirect supervision are aware of and are following guidelines detailed in this policy and related procedures.
- Ensure new employees are made aware of the complaint policy and procedure and their requirements.

- Ensure ongoing training to foster and develop conflict resolution and other customer service related skills;
- Implement endorsed procedures to deal with failure to meet the standards of this policy;
- Report to the CEO and Executives on performance indicators for complaint resolution.

All Employees will:

- Comply with this policy and associated procedures;
- Actively support others in compliance with this policy and associated procedures;
- Undertake training and performance management as required to maintain an appropriate level of skill in conflict resolution and other customer service related skills;
- Report to Managers as required on performance indicators for complaint handling responsibilities.
- Support complainants through the complaints process as required:
- Seek and report on customer feedback, positive and negative, during the course of customer interaction.

Procedures:

Procedures developed for complaint handling will:

- Provide for various methods by which complaints can be lodged, taking into account complainants with disabilities, language issues and literacy issues.
- Include links to the Customer Service Charter agreed levels of service provision that incorporate appropriate timeframes and communication requirements.
- Be customer and outcome focused.
- Adhere to the standardised definition of 'complaint' as stated in the Policy.
- Give means to ensure as many true complaints are captured as is reasonably practical, including relevant documentation, investigation outcomes and resolutions.
- Outline a centralised complaint register format.
- Develop clear responsibilities for all officers across all levels within the organisation as set out in the Policy.
- Develop clear and accessible guidelines for appropriate complaint resolution.
- ~~Develop clear and accessible guidelines for dealing with vexatious and / or malicious complainant.~~
- Comply with the State Records Act 2000.
- Provide clear guidelines for staff training requirements including:
 - New staff inductions;
 - Complaint handling training;
 - Conflict Resolution.

- Periodic refresher courses;
- Provide guidelines to senior officers delegated to review all complaints, investigations and their resolutions on a regular basis with the goal of identifying trends and issues and providing guidance for service delivery.

Policy Background

Policy Reference No. – 012

Owner Unit – Corporate Services

Originator – Customer Service Coordinator

Policy Approved by – Council

Date Approved – 24 April 2012

Review Frequency – As required

Related documents – Customer Service Policy and Customer Service Charter

History

Council Resolution	Date	Information
C1204/104	24 April, 2012	Date of Implementation Version 1