



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR SERVICE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The primary objectives of this corporate Policy are to:

- a. provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service
- b. distinguish between requests, complaints and feedback to Council
- c. provide a framework for a consistent approach to requests for service from our community
- d. establish a system of service standards and levels of service that can be measured and reported on and used as an input into the annual budget and Annual Business Plan processes to inform demand trends and expectations of our community.

2. CORPORATE COMMITMENT

- 2.1 The Corporate Governance Group and employees are committed to the provision of quality service to our customers. We aim to provide services fairly and efficiently.
- 2.2 Requests for service will be assessed in the context of the services and work provided for in the Council's Annual Business Plan and budget and against our adopted levels of service, policies or approved and documented approach. Requests for Service will be assessed against our resource capacity to respond.
- 2.3 We will monitor requests to identify ways in which we can proactively improve our services.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This Corporate Policy is applicable to all Mount Barker District Council employees.

4. DEFINITIONS

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

Complaint shall mean an expression of dissatisfaction with a service which has, or should have, been received. Our Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy states that a complaint is defined as:

- a. an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected.
- b. the lack of action on a request for service
- c. delays in the provision of a service
- d. the quality of the services provided or works carried out.

Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been delivered the Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy and the associated procedures apply.

Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with a matter as a request for service, rather than a complaint, in the first instance.

CM (Content Manager) is our Electronic Document Records Management System.

Contractors are a company or person(s) engaged by Council to provide assets, goods, works or services.

Councillor/Council Member means Elected Member

Employee is any person engaged by Council under an employment contract, volunteers, work experience persons and contractors of Council.

CRM (Customer Request Management) is our management system for Customer Requests for Service.

Elected Member means an elected member of the Council.

Request for Service shall mean an application to have Council or its representative take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service. Council also receives compliments, complaints and feedback across all areas of operations and clarification may be necessary to make the distinction for the purposes of this corporate policy.

Petition is a formal submission to the Council signed by many residents.

Volunteers and Work Experience Persons are individuals assisting Council in clearly defined, approved activities and who operate under Council supervision and direction.

Feedback shall mean - comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Our **Council** will review number of rejected requests for service in the Annual Report and use this information to inform service level discussions, budget and resource allocations as a continuous improvement opportunity.

Our **Chief Executive Officer** will ensure that there are ways for a Request for Service to be made and that they are captured in appropriate systems for their proper management.

Our **General Managers** will ensure that our response times are adhered to and that there are appropriate resources to adequately deal with Requests for Service are available in accordance with the annual budget and Annual Business Plan.

Our **Employees, Contractors, Volunteers and Work Experience Persons** will understand the policy framework that operates in relation to customer requests for service and complaints, and that requests are implemented within the stated timeframes and captured as part of Council's records management systems.

6. CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT

6.1 Reasonable Request for Service

6.1.1 In determining how to respond to a request for service we will consider:

- a. our statutory responsibilities
- b. the content of Council's decision making through our Strategic Management Plans, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget
- c. any relevant Council policies, procedures and codes
- d. adopted service levels
- e. approved service standards and response times
- f. our capacity to respond – financial and resource
- g. future works programs - for example we may have the solution to your infrastructure request programmed for renewal/replacement in the near future and it may be more appropriate to defer the remediation of your request until the renewal project is undertaken.
- h. an assessment of risk.

6.2 Making a Request for Service

6.2.1 You can make a Request for Service in several ways via:

- a. complete the online form on Council's website – contact council
<https://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/contact-us>
- b. telephone
- c. email to council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au
- d. letter
- e. visit our Council customer service desk in person

6.2.2 Our preferred method is for you to utilise our online form or email to Council (refer 6.2.1.a and 6.2.1.c) as this enables our systems to direct your enquiry straight through to the responsible officer/work area and commences the tracking process.

- 6.2.3 You will be given a CRM tracking number as a receipt of the lodgement of your request. Please keep this number for future reference.
- 6.2.4 All requests will be recorded in our records management system in such a way that the information can also be analysed for service improvement opportunities.
- 6.2.5 You can also form a Petition for service requests. We prefer that you speak with us first prior to forming a Petition so that we can understand the issue, particularly if it affects several or more persons/interested parties. Further information can be found on the Council Meetings page of Council's website – <https://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/meetings/full-council>
- 6.2.6 You can also raise your Request for Service with a Council Member. If the matter has not been raised with us previously, we will lodge your request (when we are advised by you or the Council Member) in our customer relationship management (CRM) system and it will be triaged in accordance with our adopted levels of service or service standard.
- 6.2.7 If you raise your Request for Service with a Council Member because of a perceived/actual lack of action on a previous request, the Council Member will make a senior member of our staff aware in writing via email and the circumstances of your matter will be reviewed by an appropriate staff member. You will receive an email from us as to the outcome of that review. If you remain dissatisfied with our actions, then you can lodge a complaint with us – see Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy.
<https://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au/council/governance/policiesandby-laws>

6.3 Processing a Request for Service

- 6.3.1 We aim to manage requests efficiently and effectively.
- 6.3.2 Our staff are provided with a level of authority to advise applicants of the likely timeframe to complete the action required.
- 6.3.3 Most Requests for Service have a defined service level, service standard or established guidelines for response. Where further evaluation is necessary before committing Council to undertake the work, you will be informed accordingly. If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe you will be advised, including an explanation of why this is the case.
- 6.3.4 Where an applicant is not satisfied with the Council's response, you can lodge a complaint against the decision under Council's Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy.

6.4 Timeframes for Response

- 6.4.1 The timeframes for different request types vary greatly.

- 6.4.2 In most cases, requests will be actioned within our adopted service levels or agreed service standards and you will be advised.
- 6.4.3 We will respond to telephone messages within 24 hours (or next business day) regardless of whether the query has been resolved (refer Customer Service Standards).
- 6.4.4 We will acknowledge a customer request within two (2) business days.
- 6.4.5 We will respond within ten [10] business days advising of Council's intentions/scheduled timeframe regarding your request.
- 6.4.6 These timeframes are for services where we have an adopted service level or service standard. They are not applicable to statutory timeframes which are legislated.

6.5 Rejected Requests

- 6.5.1 All requests that are unable to be actioned (for example due to budgetary or resource constraints) will be recorded and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with the preparation of an Annual Business Plan and associated annual budget setting process.
- 6.5.2 We will present the elected members via a formal Council report on the number and nature of requests, including the percentage of rejected and unactioned requests, at least once a year in the Annual Report.

6.6 Privacy and document controls

- 6.6.1 All documents including Requests for Service lodged with Council are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the provisions of that legislation. You will be consulted with if a Freedom of Information application involves documents that are capturing matters of your personal affairs (as defined by the FOI Act).

7. TRAINING / EDUCATION

All employees will be trained to manage requests for service.

8. REVIEW

This Corporate Policy will be reviewed every three years; or earlier in the event of changes to legislation or related Policies and Procedures; or if deemed necessary by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.

9. ACCESS TO THE CORPORATE POLICY

The Corporate Policy is available to staff via the Policies section of the Intranet, and on Council's website under Policies and By-Laws.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this corporate Policy, please contact:

Title: Manager, Library and Customer Service

Address: PO Box 54, Mount Barker
South Australia, SA, 5251

Telephone: 08 8391 7200

Email: council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au

REFERENCE NUMBER	DOC/21/103915
PREVIOUS DOCUMENT NUMBER:	13/119548
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT:	Manager Library and Customer Service General Manager Community Services
APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:	Local Government Act 1999 (SA) Local Government (General Regulations) 2013– Schedule 2A Fair Work Act 1994 (SA) Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) and Regulations Ombudsman Act 1972 (SA) Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012 Water Industry Act 2012 Public Interest Disclosure Act Freedom of Information Act
MOUNT BARKER 2035 – DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN:	Leadership and Good Governance Delivery Guideline 1 LGG Strategy 1.5 Demonstrate accountability through clear, relevant and easily accessible policies, corporate reporting and legislative compliance.
RELATED POLICIES / CORPORATE POLICIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliments and Compliments and Complaints Handling Policy• Unreasonable Complainants Policy• Internal Review of a Council Decision Policy/Procedure• Fraud, Corruption, Misconduct and Maladministration Prevention Policy• Code of Conduct for Council Members• Employee Code of Conduct
SUPPORTING PROCEDURES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliments and Complaints Handling Procedure• Request for Service Procedure• Employee Conduct Complaint Resolution Procedure (external complaints only)• Licensed Water Retail Operations Enquiry, Complaint and Dispute Resolution Procedure• Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018 Procedure• Protocol – Ombudsman Enquiry Procedure• NSW Ombudsman – Managing unreasonable conduct by a complainant Guidelines 2021
PREVIOUS CORPORATE POLICY DATE:	20 August 2012

ENDORSED BY CORPORATE GOVERNANCE GROUP	25 August 2021
APPROVED BY CEO:	
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	25 February 2024

DOCUMENT HISTORY:			
DOCUMENT VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR (PERSON TO WHOM CHANGES ARE TO BE RECOMMENDED)	NATURE OF CHANGE
VERSION 1.0	25 August 2021	Risk & Governance Officer	Complete Review
DOCUMENT LOCATION:	Council website 27 August 2021 Available for inspection, downloading or printing from our website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au		