CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

2024-2027

MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents

Foreword From Mayor And CEO

We are delighted to introduce the Mount Barker District Council's Customer Experience (CX) Strategy, a significant step towards enhancing the way we serve our wonderful community. We have developed this Strategy to ensure that every interaction you have with us is both meaningful and positive.

This Strategy has been shaped by your Elected Representatives, our employees, and most importantly, you - our customers. We have some big aspirations about what we want to be known for when it comes to customer experience and are excited to share and be held accountable for our vision for CX into the future.

In this Strategy, we have outlined a set of commitments that will shape our interactions with you. These include active listening, prompt and responsive service, mutual respect, transparency, consistency, and a commitment to continuous improvement. We, together with your Elected Representatives and Council's employees are committed to making meaningful changes to the way we work and to putting you - our customers - at the heart of everything we do.

As we move forward, we are excited about the positive impact we can create. Thank you for being a part of our vibrant community, and we look forward to the many opportunities that lie ahead.

Mayor David Leach

Andrew Stuart, CEO

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge that the district is part of the traditional ancestral land of the Peramangk people. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Peramangk people to this land and their ongoing custodianship. We acknowledge the wisdom of Elders both past and present for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of First Nations people across the state.

As an organisation we desire there to be healing, restoration and reconciliation and are working to build better relationships and understanding with not only the Peramangk First Peoples but extend that to all First Nations groups across South Australia.

Background and Context

What is Customer Experience?

Customer experience encompasses every interaction that customers, visitors and businesses have with Council, from navigating our website, to speaking with our customer service staff. It is the sum of every interaction and also considers customer feelings, emotions, and perceptions of Council throughout these interactions.

When using our services, we know that each of you have different expectations of us, and many different factors can result in you having either a good or not so good experience.

Your experience interacting with Council is also an important reflection of the value for money we deliver, and through every interaction we have an opportunity to strengthen your connection with, and trust in Council.

How has this Strategy been Developed

In 2020, Council endorsed our Community Plan (2020-2035) which outlines guiding themes and priority areas for the district over the next 15 years. Customer experience and resident satisfaction are two very important parts of this plan.

In 2023, we developed this Customer Experience Strategy, through consultation with Council staff, senior management, Elected Representatives, and the community, to align with the Community Plan and provide a framework for how we interact with our customers.

In developing this Strategy, we have integrated internal visioning with findings from the recent customer satisfaction survey to identify the needs and expectations of customers and how Council can best meet those needs. This Strategy also considers the growth we will see in the district over the coming years.

This Strategy will guide how we listen to, understand, and respond to the needs of our customers to make sure we deliver positive experiences to our residents, businesses and visitors to our region.

Who are our Customers?

We see our customers as being residents, businesses, visitors, NGOs, Elected Representatives, employees and other levels of government.

Mount Barker District Council is one of South Australia's fastest growing and culturally diverse regions with an expected population increase of nearly 34% to over 55,000 by 2036.

Council has goals to attract $2.8 billion in housing and major project investment by 2037 and increase growth in the number of working residents in the area. Much of this growth will come from young or established families looking for more affordable housing in a quieter environment with good transport links into Adelaide.

Resident profile 'at a glance'	
39	Median age
11,113	Number of families
31%	Less than 24 years old
18%	Greater than 65 years old
49%	Male
51%	Female
7%	Households where a non-English language is used
66%*	In the labour force

*15 years and above

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics , 2021 Census of Population and Housing, Mount Barker (LGA44550) 594.6 sq Kms

How do customers interact with us?

36,000+
Phone Calls

8,000+
Customer Requests

36,000+
Local Government Centre Visits

150,000+
Library Visits

32,000+
Emails Received

11,000+
Facebook Followers

While face to face interactions are still very common, there is an increasing demand for self-service, or digital options. We know that these interactions need to be seamless, efficient and easy to complete.

Trends and Opportunities in Customer Experience

Now is an exciting time for Local Government as access to technology means we can change how we interact with customers, to better meet their evolving needs and expectations in the digital era.

Some of the trends and opportunities that have informed this Strategy, and that we are excited about, include:

Seamless cross-channel experiences	Customers today are extremely busy and look for organisations that are easy and efficient to work with. In addition to private organisations like banks or utilities, customers also expect this ease and efficiency when they interact with public sector organisations, like councils. One way that organisations can create this ease is by ensuring a seamless cross-channel experience. This means meeting customer needs at every touchpoint and providing the same functionality and experience across channels, no matter how (and when) customers choose to interact with us. It's all about creating ways for customers to interact with us, in the way that works best for you. Important in achieving this is three elements: always available, consistent, and through the use of data, personalized. Each of these have shaped this Strategy.
Data driven	We have more access to data than ever before, a trend that is likely to continue increasing at a rapid rate. Many organisations are discovering ways to use this data to uncover customer insights and are using these insights to create better customer experiences. Being a data-led organisation can help us learn from our interactions with customers, and help us better meet your needs, quicker.
A human-centred approach	A human-centred approach accepts that people are multifaceted, complex and doing their best to adapt to unpredictable circumstances often beyond their control. It means thinking about the challenges and pressures our customers are experiencing – things like the increasing cost of living for example. In this example, by taking a human-centred approach to customer experience, we acknowledge how important value for money is, and focus on demonstrating this in every interaction, to build trust with our customers.

OUR VISION

To be known for creating positive customer experiences that leave our community feeling understood, valued, respected and clear on the outcome.

To deliver on this vision, we commit to the following…

1. We will listen and seek to understand, with an open mind

2. We will treat customers with respect, and expect the same in return

3. We will acknowledge, own, and provide closure on every request

6. We will provide opportunities for feedback, and identify areas for improvement

5. We will provide a range of opportunities to interact with us, to support the diverse needs of our community

4. We will provide consistent, honest, timely and relevant information

CX Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities for the term of this plan	
Technology for consistency and accessibility	Integrated information systems and technology will mean we can provide customers with an experience that is simple, seamless, and easy to navigate.
Customer intelligence to shape decisions	Customer insights and data will help us continue to improve. This means using existing data better and collecting new data to improve the customer experience.
Customer focused culture	Ensuring that customer focus is embedded in our culture will be important in reaching our vision.

Implementation Plan

Technology for consistency and accessibility		
Action	**Timeframe**	**Area(s) Responsible**
Improve the workflows, functionality, reporting and overall performance of the Customer Request Management system.	2023/24 + ongoing	Customer Service & ICT as lead with whole of organisation input/participation through an ongoing CRM Working Group
Maximise opportunities to improve/modernise call centre functionality through the upcoming organisation-wide phone system renewal process.	2024/25	ICT with support from Customer Service
Ensure that a Customer Experience lens is applied to the Digital Readiness Project, with the Vision and Commitments within this strategy being key drivers for any possible system changes/improvements/replacements.	2024/25	ICT with support from Customer Service
Monitor the Local Government sector for advancements in Customer Relationship Systems, and if/where viable bring a proposal to Council through annual budget processes.	Term of the Strategy	Customer Service / ICT
Ensure that a Customer Experience lens is applied to the Council Website Review, with the Vision and Commitments within this strategy being key drivers for future website design/redevelopment/improvement.	2024/25	Communications / Customer Service
Customer intelligence to shape decisions		
Action	**Timeframe**	**Area(s) Responsible**
Provide more regular and proactive performance reporting of key Customer Experience metrics to management/leadership & Council.	2023/24	Customer Service
Investigate Customer feedback/satisfaction systems, and where viable bring a proposal to Council through annual budget processes.	2024/25	Customer Service

Action	Timeframe	Area(s) Responsible
Renew and update the current organisational 'knowledge base' so that it becomes a more comprehensive 'source of truth' for the organisation, and facilitates early resolution of enquiries for customers.	2024/25	Customer Service / CX Steering Group with whole of organisation input/participation
Commit to an annual Community Scorecard Process to measure overall satisfaction in key service delivery areas (including any progress/improvement made), and to identify any emerging issues in the community.	Annually for the term of the Strategy	Customer Service

Customer focused culture		
Action	**Timeframe**	**Area(s) Responsible**
Embed the CX Vision and Commitments through training, induction and performance review processes, and intentional improvement initiatives.	Term of the Strategy	Customer Service / CX Steering Group / People & Culture, with leadership from CGG, Managers & Team Leaders
Monitor key Customer Experience metrics (call volumes, enquiry types/volumes, CRM volumes, A/H callout rates etc.) and regularly review resourcing of frontline teams to ensure the organisation is well placed to respond to customers.	Term of the Strategy	Managers & Team Leaders
Review, update/create and endorse a set of defined Customer Service standards for the organisation to ensure consistency in service delivery, inclusive of a process that holds staff accountable to these standards.	2024/25	Customer Service / CX Steering Group / People & Culture, with leadership from CGG, Managers & Team Leaders

Measurement and evaluation of the CX Strategy and Implementation Plan

A cross-organisational CX steering group chaired by the Manager Customer Experience will be established and will meet regularly to monitor the progress of the CX Implementation Plan.

A progress report will be provided annually to Senior Management and Council.

A review will be triggered 6 months before the completion of this Strategy (December 2027).

This Strategy is intended to be a 'live' document and as such the Implementation Plan and actions/projects within may be reviewed and updated/altered throughout the 3 year term.