

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Policy Number:	3.2.6
Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved:	December 2023
Date of Next Review:	December 2024
Applicable to Unit(s):	Organisation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Regulatory Services
Related Policies:	Nil
Related Documents:	Access and Inclusion Plan Community Engagement Strategy Complaint Handling Framework Council Plan 2021-2025 Customer Service Commitment Customer Service Strategy Wellington 2030 Strategic Vision
Statutory Reference:	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i>

OVERVIEW

This policy is intended to provide a framework for the continued development of a strong customer service ethos within the Wellington Shire Council. It believes that excellent customer service involves sharing knowledge and information in an appropriate and timely manner.

Wellington Shire Council acknowledges that customer service is a key priority and a core value of the organisation, recognising that it impacts on every element of the organisation and that it is the responsibility of all staff.

This policy applies to all Council staff, Councillors, volunteers, and contactors.

PURPOSE

This policy has been created to ensure a consistent approach to customer service throughout Wellington Shire Council. This policy will be used as a training tool and a standard by which staff will deliver internal and external customer service.

Council's commitment to customer service includes an effective request and complaint handling system. It is recognised that this is one method of measuring customer and client satisfaction to provide a useful source of information and feedback for continual improvement of our services.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Formally recognise the importance of our customers and community members and the possible impacts that Council staff can have on their perception of the effectiveness and value of Council at any point of contact.
- Provide Council staff with information and guidance regarding our approach to customer contact including focus on a 'customer centric' culture across all areas of the organisation, equitable access and inclusion for people with special needs and the establishment of reportable service levels for consistent customer contact across all channels.
- Improve customer and community access to routine, publicly available information and services through continuous improvement of our processes and systems.
- Support the implementation of new information systems and processes that permit consistent and relevant data capturing which will enable access to information to facilitate best practice customer service.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

In support of this policy, the Wellington Shire Council has developed a four-year organisation wide Customer Service Strategy. The strategy consists of three main themes, strategic objectives and an action plan which align with the Wellington Shire Council Plan and Wellington Excellence Principles.

The objectives of the strategy are:

- Outline our commitment to customer service and excellence
- Provide a consistent and coordinated approach in responding to customer enquiries and complaints
- Develop a set of customer focused principles and action plans
- Develop and assist all staff with customer focused procedures, resources and support tools
- Improve our accountability through regular reporting and monitoring of our services

CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENT

To support Wellington Shire's commitment to service excellence, the following response times have been developed and promoted on Council's web site and in brochures available at all service centres.

- Returning a telephone call – within one business day
- Responding to general written communication including emails and Customer Action Requests – initial response within ten business days
- Emergency or urgent matters - any contact that is urgent or an emergency would be responded to immediately
- Missed visits – officers will leave a business card acknowledging the visit
- Service Centre visits – our staff will endeavour to acknowledge all customers within one minute of their arrival.

Exclusions or exemptions – where separate statutory timeframes are set for certain correspondence or application, an alternative timeframe may exist - i.e. Planning Permit Applications

COMPLAINTS

The right of citizens to lodge a complaint about our service is fundamental to Wellington Shire Council's overall strategy to promote the rights of citizens who use the services we provide. The Complaint Management Framework can be located www.wellington.vic.gov.au.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Wellington Shire Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* and referred to in Council's Human Rights Policy. The Human Rights Checklist has been completed and this policy accords with Council's policy commitment to uphold human rights principles.

This policy is approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 18 December 2023.



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DAVID MORCOM
Chief Executive Officer

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	MAJOR / MINOR UPDATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Minor update	Updated Responsible Officer title Removed legislative reference – <i>State Government Record Act</i> Minor formatting and grammar
1.1	December 2023	Minor update	Date of Next Review updated to: December 2024. Minor formatting changes.