

**Customer Service
Charter 2021
POL003**



Policy No:	POL003
Policy Title:	Customer Service Charter
Section Responsible:	Governance
Minute No:	21/085
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1. INTENT

The Customer Service Charter provides the community with a guide on how service requests and complaints will be managed by Council. The document also establishes what Council expects from its customers.

2. SCOPE

The Customer Service Charter relates to the organisation as a whole, ranging from elected members, staff, volunteers, and others who may be providing goods or services to the community on behalf of Council.

3. OBJECTIVE

The Customer Service Charter provides definitions, details expectations and identifies parameters within which Council aims to respond.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

This Charter establishes the commitment of Council to its customers and how service requests and complaints will be managed.

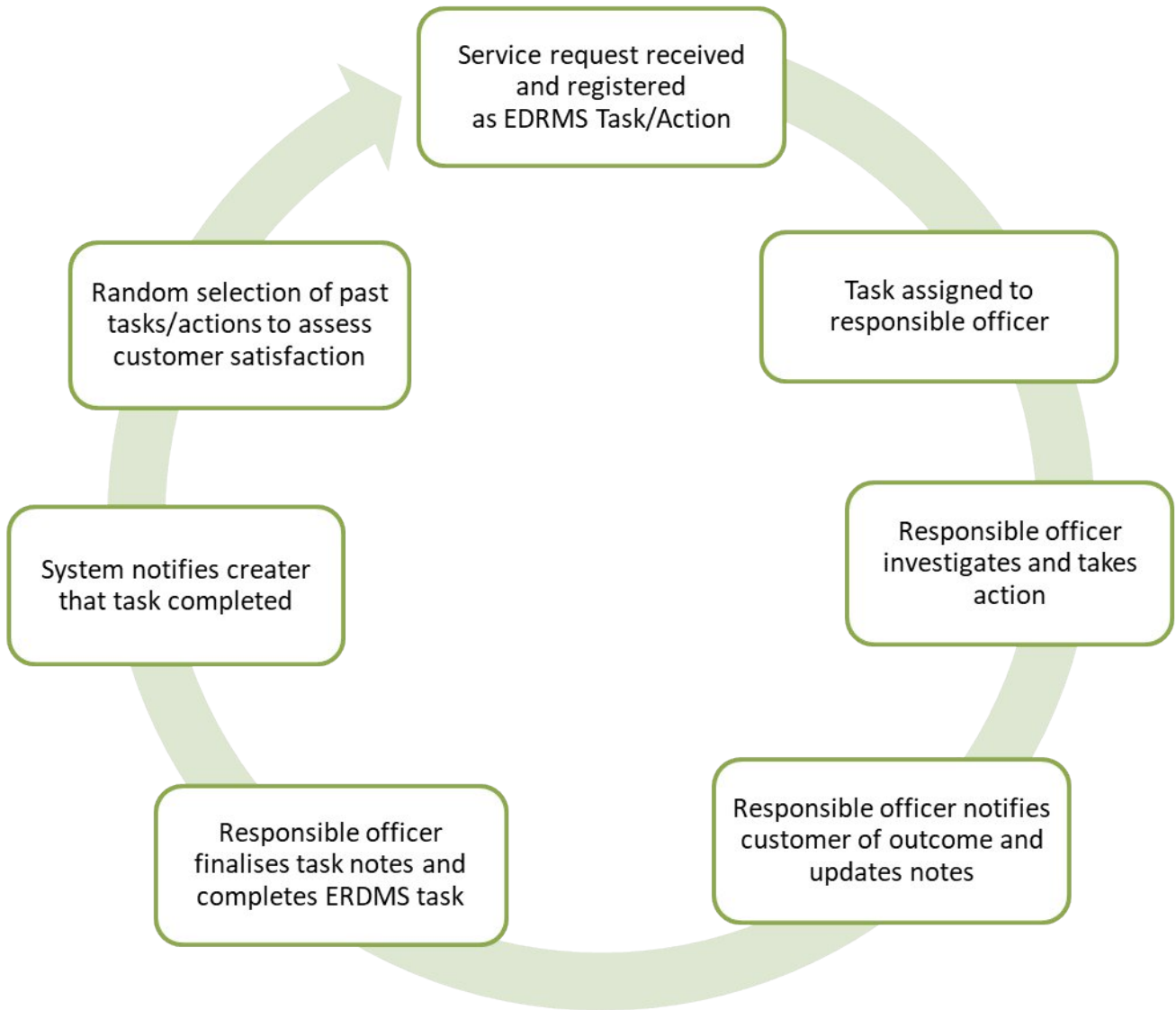
This Charter also establishes what Council expects from customers to best assist Council to manage service requests and complaints.

5. PROVISIONS

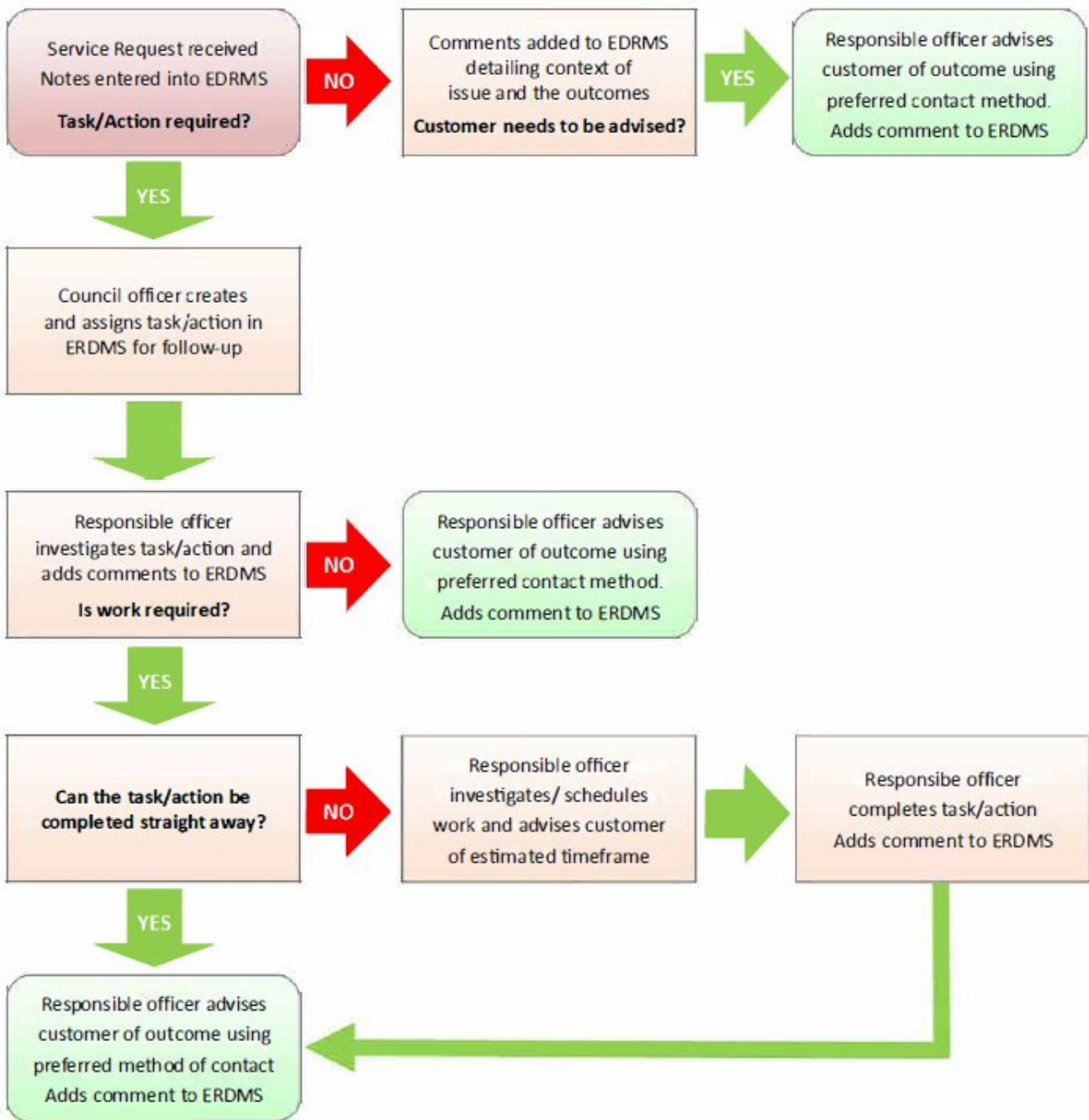
5.1 OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE

The following diagrams help to describe the processes for most service requests and the actions to be taken within the processes.

5.1.1 Our customer service loop model



5.1.2 Our 'customer service flowchart' model



5.2 COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

5.2.1 Council's commitment to you as our customer

- Comply with the adopted Code of Conduct.
- Be appropriately dressed and, where necessary, we will wear a name badge.
- Show awareness of our diverse cultural and age demographic backgrounds.
- Take steps to adapt to any language or other communication difficulties that may be evident.
- Give priority to issues that are deemed essential, such as a circumstance where there is a high risk-rating or where an essential service requires immediate attention.
- Manage service requests in a standard manner unless there is a reason for actioning it as a priority.
- Committed to providing you with prompt and accurate service and/or information.
- Listen to you attentively and deal with you in a fair, honest, professional, helpful and courteous manner.
- Aim to resolve routine enquiries at the initial point of contact, where this is not possible we will connect you with the person who can assist, if the person is unavailable their supervisor or a manager may be able to assist you.
- Strive to improve our customer service by seeking feedback and benchmark our performance using various methods.
- Ensure that any complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Complaints Management Procedure and also the Australian/New Zealand Standard 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations.
- Include customer service as an essential part of all employee position descriptions.

5.2.2 Council's expectations of you as our customer

- Interact with Councillors and staff with courtesy and respect.
- Interact with any person authorised to act for Council, such as the member of a Committee, a volunteer or a contractor, with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the privacy, safety and needs of persons representing Council and other community members during any interactions with the organisation.
- Understand that some issues may take time to resolve.
- Contact Council to make an appointment to speak to an officer about a complex matter so that information can be collated to better address your enquiry.
- Preferred connection with Council is in person, telephone or email, however you can engage with us by submitting a customer service request form, by written correspondence or using the contact feature on our website. Prolonged interaction on specific issues using social media platforms is discouraged.
- Provide accurate and complete information when requested to do so.

5.2.3 Council will not accept

- Rude, angry, harassing, threatening or abusive behaviours – where this is evident you will be advised that the behaviour is not acceptable and, if it continues, the interaction will be immediately terminated.
- Unreasonable demands that cannot be satisfied – this significantly reduces the time available to assist other customers. Should the conduct continue, Council may action its Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Policy.

5.2.4 Council will accept

- A thank you or a compliment which will be forwarded to relevant Councillors or members of staff.
- Suggestions on how we can improve.

5.2.5 What you can expect when dealing with us in specific instances

In person

- Attend to your enquiry as soon as possible.
- Greet you with a smile, be respectful and assist you with your enquiry or issue.
- Listen to what you have to say.
- Endeavour to resolve your issue in the first instance. Where this is not possible, we will connect you with the appropriate person either by making an appointment or in another suitable way.

By telephone

- Promptly answer all incoming telephone calls during working hours.
- Listen to what you have to say.
- Try to resolve your issue in the first instance. Where this is not possible, we will connect you with the appropriate person either by making an appointment or in another suitable way such as lodging a service request on your behalf.
- Where you need to speak to another person, we will place you on hold and transfer your call. If the officer is unavailable, we will ask if you wish to leave a voice mail message on their telephone extension. Alternatively, with your permission, we will enter your details and your request into our request system and provide you with a reference number. To submit a customer request, your full name, details of your preferred contact method also an accurate and complete description of the issue are required.
- When making a telephone call to you, we will identify who we are and the reason for our call.
- Provide an after-hours service on the main number of Council 02 6959 5510. This will advise you of numbers to call if you have an emergency or you can leave a voice message which will be actioned on the next business day.

By written correspondence, customer request form, email, fax or from our website

Attend to your written enquiry, but only where you have provided sufficient contact information such as your name, postal or residential address, telephone number, fax number or email address.

- Written correspondence to be sent or delivered to:
Narrandera Shire Council, 141 East Street, NARRANDERA NSW 2700.
- Emails sent to council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au.
- Faxes sent to 02 6959 1884.
- Where necessary, an acknowledgement or a reply from Council will be sent to the customer. Noting that not all requests require an acknowledgement, the Customer Service Officer who monitors these communication channels will use established processes and precedents to determine whether an email response or a response on letterhead is required.
- The Customer Service Officer will action your request to the appropriate officer and, where a response is deemed necessary, the officer responsible will deal with your matter in accordance with the appropriate timeframe. If the matter is not able to be resolved within the relevant timeframe, the officer will provide you with an interim response.
- We aim to respond to you in writing by using clear and concise language that is easily understood.
- We will clearly identify in any communication who you can contact for additional information.

5.3 SERVICE REQUEST TIMEFRAMES

5.3.1 In general

A service request is broadly for information, works, goods, services, or actions to be managed by Council.

You can assist us when making a request by being clear and concise with your request and prepared to supply relevant information such as:

- Details of exactly what you are seeking.
- A reference number if you have spoken to Council previously on the matter.
- Background to the issue.
- The outcome you hope to achieve.
- Your contact details.
- Having a note pad and pen so you can record any relevant information.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge your service request within three working days by email or written correspondence where this is necessary.
- Respond to written correspondence, email, fax or customer request form within 10 working days of receipt.
- Return telephone calls within 24 hours of receipt and during normal working hours.
- Try to resolve your enquiry at first contact or let you know the course of action proposed to be taken.
- Give at least 24 hours warning notice if we need to carry out repair works in your street that will affect your property (other than emergencies).

5.3.2 Planning and Development requests and enquiry timeframes

We aim to:

- Acknowledge your service request or enquiry within three working days.
- Respond to telephone calls, written correspondence, or a service request within 10 working days of receipt.

5.3.3 Development Applications timeframes

We aim to:

- Provide pre-lodgement meetings.
- Accept applications only if they contain all the required information.
- Assess complying development applications within 10 working days.
- Assess development applications within 21 working days.
- Assess integrated development applications within 40 working days.

5.3.4 Compliance timeframes

We aim to:

- Respond immediately to urgent reports, such as aggressive animals.
- Respond within three working days to other compliance matters relating to companion animals or environmental matters.

5.3.5 Open Spaces and Recreation timeframes

We aim to:

- Provide clean and safe environments for recreation use.
- Provide clean and safe amenities for community use and signage with a telephone number to call if amenities are not clean.
- Confirm bookings for the use of ovals, parks, open space areas and Council-managed swimming pools within seven working days from the date of receipt of the completed booking advice.

5.3.6 Water and Sewer timeframes

We aim to:

- Respond to water and sewer matters in accordance with the following timeframes, and under normal operating conditions, from the time of notification by telephoning 02 6959 5510 during normal business hours or by contacting the after-hours emergency telephone number 0417 023 015:
 - Water main break or service interruption 2 hours
 - Water service or water meter issues 24 hours
 - Water quality issues 24 hours
 - Water service location or network enquiries 48 hours
 - Sewer blockage or service interruption 2 hours
 - Sewer service location or network enquiries 48 hours

5.3.7 Road Infrastructure timeframes

We aim to:

- Respond to any road infrastructure issues within 14 days of receipt of the report, either by rectifying the issue or advising of an expected timeframe for an assessment, remediation if possible or the completion of works:
 - Sealed Roads
 - Gravel Roads
 - Potholes
 - Signage
 - Stormwater or Drainage
 - Footpaths or Cycleways.

5.4 MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

It is important that we continue to monitor our customer service actions by measuring our performance over a period of time, however initially as an organisation we aim to:

- Answer most telephone calls within five rings.
- Limit the number of times a caller is placed on hold to one instance, with a maximum of two instances.
- Attend to most personal enquiries within five minutes.
- Maintain and improve on existing service standards, such as monitoring the number of complaints made against staff or by maintaining the currency of information contained within the Council website.
- Measure levels of satisfaction through community surveys and other community consultation sessions such as developing integrated planning documents.

5.5 MANAGING YOUR COMPLAINTS

Council has a Complaints Management Policy which is available on Council's website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au.

Council is committed to referring to AS/NZS 10002:2014 – Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (and its amendments) for guidance on how to plan, design, develop, operate, maintain, and improve an effective and efficient complaints-handling process. The information obtained through the complaints-handling process can lead to improvements in products, services, and processes and where the complaints are handled properly, can improve the reputation of the organisation.

Council also has a dedicated policy for the management of complainants that affect the health, safety and security of our staff or affect our ability to allocate resources fairly. The Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Policy is available from Council's website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au.

5.6 PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Requests for information are dealt with in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

5.7 HOW YOU CAN CONTACT US

You can contact Council's Administration Centre in the following ways:

- Personally, or by correspondence:
Narrandera Shire Council
141 East Street
Narrandera NSW 2700
- Email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
- Fax: 02 6959 1884
- Telephone: 02 6959 5510 between the hours of 8.15am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday. If you telephone after-hours, a message will direct you to the relevant contact number.

5.8 DEFINITIONS

- **Customer:** individuals and organisations to whom Council provides information, works, goods or services.
- **Customer service:** the interaction that occurs between the customer and Council.
- **Service request:** a request for information, approval, works, goods, services, or actions to be supplied or managed by Council.
- **Complaint:** an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Council, its staff or about its works, goods, and services.

- **Resolution:** providing the customer with an outcome such as the provision of information (if able to be released) or the actioning or completion of works or services requested (if able to be actioned or completed). There will always be degrees of resolution, however Council will attempt to resolve issues as thoroughly as it can.

5.9 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Elected members, staff, volunteers, and others who may be providing goods or services on behalf of Council have a responsibility to deliver quality customer service.

- **Mayor:** to lead Councillors in their understanding of and compliance with this Charter.
- **Councillors:** to comply with this Charter.
- **General Manager:** to lead staff in their understanding of and compliance of this Charter.
- **Deputy General Managers:** to implement and comply with this Charter.
- **Managers:** to communicate this Charter to reports and comply with the Charter.
- **Staff:** to comply with this Charter.
- **Volunteers and others providing goods or services on behalf of Council:** to comply with this Charter.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*

7. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Australian & New Zealand Standard AS/NZ 10002:2014 - Guidelines for complaint management in organizations
- POL060 Complaints Management Policy
- POL054 Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Policy
- NSW Ombudsman publication titled - Managing unreasonable conduct by a complainant – workbook 2020 which contains:
 - Approach and framework
 - Strategies for persons dealing with the unreasonable conduct
 - Communication
 - Management responsibilities and providing support
 - Restricting and controlling access

8. VARIATION

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy in accordance with legislation, regulation, and award changes, where applicable. Council may also make changes to this policy and the relevant procedures from time-to-time to improve the effectiveness of its operation.

9. PREVIOUS VERSIONS

Reference to a superseded policy number and/or name is also considered a reference to the new policy number. This policy was previously named:

- CS110 Customer Service Charter

POLICY HISTORY

Responsible Officer	Governance and Engagement Manager		
Approved by	General Manager		
Approval Date	21 June 2021		
GM Signature <i>(Authorised staff to insert signature)</i>			
Next Review	1 June 2024		
Version Number	Endorsed by ELT	Endorsed by Council	Date signed by GM
1 Adopted	12/09/2014	18/02/2014	18/02/2014
2 Reviewed	23/02/2021	20/04/2021	21/06/2021

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10. Acknowledgement of Training Received

I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read and understood a copy of Council's Customer Service Charter.	
Employee Name	
Position Title	
Signature	
Date	