



Agriculturally rich – Naturally beautiful

COUNCIL POLICY

Customer Service Request

Policy Number:	PO075		
Strategic Plan Objective	5.3 Meet all legislative and compliance responsibilities with Council's internal controls		
Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer	Record Number:	16/14054[v5]
Responsible Officer:	Governance Officer	Minute Reference:	208/2024 (14/08/2024)
Date Adopted:	14/08/2024	Next Review Date:	August 2028

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Section 270(a1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1999 (Act) requires Yorke Peninsula Council (Council) to maintain policies, practices and procedures for dealing with any reasonable Customer Service Request or request for an improvement to a service provided by the Council.

Council welcomes Customer Service Requests and Feedback as a way of continually improving its services and programs, while meeting the needs of its customers.

This policy aims to:

- Provide guidance on what constitutes a reasonable Customer Service Request or an improvement to a service;
- Distinguish between Customer Service Requests, Complaints and Feedback and give direction on how these are managed;
- Establish a standardised process for assessing and processing Customer Service Requests;
- Use Customer Service Requests, Complaints and Feedback to directly inform service improvements.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Elected Members, Council Employees or Representatives who may be involved in receiving or processing a Customer Service Request, Complaint and/or Feedback in the course of their duties.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to Attachment 1.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to the Community and discharges obligations under many pieces of legislation. Providing services to the Community is a key component of Council's operations and requests for work to be undertaken or a service to be provided are a regular occurrence.

Council is committed to providing quality service to our Community, in a fair and efficient manner. Customer Service Requests and Complaints are monitored to continually identify opportunities for improvement.

4.1. Principles

This policy is based on five principles which inform Council's approach Customer Service Requests. They are:

- Fairness: treating customers impartially, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring transparency at all stages of the process;
- Accessibility: information about Council's services and contact options will be readily available;
- Responsiveness: providing sufficient resources and suitably trained Employees;
- Efficiency: Customer Service Requests will be dealt with as promptly as practical while adhering to Council policies, procedures and legislative requirements; and
- Liaison: between different areas of Council where the Customer Service Request overlaps functional responsibilities.

4.2. Customer Service Request or Complaint?

In addition to Customer Service Requests, Council may also receive Complaints across all areas of operation.

Where a person(s) is not satisfied with a service, action and/or decision of the Council, its Employee(s), or Representative(s), all attempts will be made to address the concerns at the appropriate officer level.

A person(s) may, however, lodge a Complaint or request an internal review of a Council decision in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy PO147, or seek other forms of resolution, such as contacting the Ombudsman, or taking legal action at any time.

Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with the matter as a Customer Service Request rather than a Complaint in the first instance.

4.3. Assessing Customer Service Requests

In assessing Customer Service Requests for Service, consideration will be given to:

- Alignment with Council's Strategic Management Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, applicable management plans and Annual Business Plan;
- Public safety and emergencies;
- Efficient use of resources, including maintaining appropriate Employee levels;
- Hazards and an assessment of risk;
- Relevant Council policies and statutory responsibilities;
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs; and
- Impact of service.

4.4. How to Make a Customer Service Request

A person can make a Customer Service Request through:

- completing the appropriate form on [Council's website](http://www.yorke.sa.gov.au) (www.yorke.sa.gov.au);
- In person at any Council office;
- By letter (PO Box 57, Maitland SA 5573);
- By email (admin@yorke.sa.gov.au);

- By telephone (08 8832 0000); or
- Via a petition to Council (in accordance with Council’s Petition Management Policy PO140).

All Customer Service Requests will be captured in Council’s records management system, in accordance with the Council’s Records Management Policy PO063.

Council records are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1991 and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the provisions of that legislation.

4.5. Managing Customer Service Requests

The circumstances for individual Customer Service Requests will vary greatly.

Requests that are determined to be a Customer Service Request will be processed in accordance with Council’s procedures and managed within available resources, as soon as reasonably practicable and/or within already established timeframes.

The procedure for managing a Customer Service Request will be explained to the person(s) initially making the request and the request will be processed as soon as reasonably possible.

Where further evaluation is required, the person(s) making the request will be informed accordingly. If a request cannot be fulfilled within a reasonable timeframe, the person(s) making the request will be provided with an explanation as to why.

On some occasions, Customer Service Requests may be scheduled to coincide with work in a particular area or season.

Requests for major works or new services will be referred to Council for consideration, as part of the next annual budget review and public consultation cycle.

4.6. Rejected Customer Service Requests

All Customer Service Requests that Council are unable to meet will be recorded and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with future Council planning processes.

5. COMPLAINTS

Complaints about this policy can be made in writing to Council’s Governance Officer. Complaints will be managed in accordance with Council’s Complaints Policy PO147.

6. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four (4) years and as necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation and relevant standards, codes, guidelines, audit findings and/or stakeholder Feedback.

7. TRAINING

Council is committed to supporting Elected Members, Employees and Representatives in complying with this policy.

Training needs will be reviewed annually, during individual performance reviews or when deemed necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation, relevant guidelines audit findings and/or stakeholder Feedback.

8. RECORDS

Records shall be maintained as required by Council’s Records Management Policy (PO063) and relevant legislation.

9. RELATED COUNCIL POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

PO014 Employee Behavioural Standards Policy

PO037 Internal Review of a Council Decision Policy

PO057 Community Engagement Policy

PO075 – Customer Service Request Policy

PO063 Records Management Policy
PO091 Risk Management Policy
PO128 Asset Management Policy
PO140 Petition Management Policy
PO147 Complaints Policy
PO162 Tree Management Policy
PO171 Public Interest Disclosure Policy
PO203 Council Members Behavioural Management Policy
PR006 Customer Service Requests Procedure
PR060 Customer Service Procedure

10. REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1999
Freedom of Information Act 1991
Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018
Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012
Ombudsman Act 1972
Local Government Association of SA Model Requests for Services Policy

10. COUNCIL DELEGATION

Any applicable delegations are available on Councils website via the Delegations register via <https://yorke.sa.gov.au/about-us/forms-plans-and-publications/registers/>

11. VERSION HISTORY

Version No	Issue Date	Description of Change
1	07/04/2003	New Policy
2	10/09/2014	Full Revision.
3	11/10/2017	Full Revision.
4	13/05/2020	Full Revision.
5	14/08/2024	Full Revision.

Definitions**ATTACHMENT 1**

Community	The people who; live, work, conduct business activities or use the facilities in public places.
Complaint	For the purpose of this policy means an expression of dissatisfaction with a service delivered by the Council, its Employees or Representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or documented. This includes dissatisfaction about a Request for Service that has been, or should have been delivered. Complaints may originate from the Community, Elected Members, Representatives or Employees.
Employee	Means a person employed directly by the Council in a full time, part time or casual capacity, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees of a labour hire company;• Apprentices or trainees;• Student or work experience placements; and• Volunteers.
Feedback	Information provided to the Council, both positive and negative, about services provided, without necessarily requiring corrective action or a formal review. This information, may influence future service reviews and delivery methods.
Representatives	Persons providing services to, or on behalf of, the Council.
Customer Service Request	Means an application to have Council or its representatives take some form of action to provide a Council service.