



**LACHLAN SHIRE
COUNCIL**

Wiradjuri Country

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Further Information: Lachlan Shire Council ☎ 02 6895 1900 ✉ Email:
council@lachlan.nsw.gov.au

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Version:
2.0

Commencement Date:
February 2005

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TRIM No.
D19/13886

Introduction

Lachlan Shire Council is committed to providing high levels of customer service. To emphasise this commitment, Council has created a Customer Service Charter, which details our service commitment to our customers. This Charter will be regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of our customers.

Our Commitment to Customer Service

Lachlan Shire Council is committed to providing efficient, responsive and friendly service that is value for money for everyone that lives, works or visits the Lachlan Shire. We will work in partnership with the community to deliver excellent customer service through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement

Lachlan Shire Councils Customer Service Charter outlines our commitment to providing quality services and gives our customers standards by which our performance can be measured. It provides staff with clear standards to aim for, making our focus on our customers our main priority

Vision

For the Lachlan Shire to be a resilient community providing economic and social growth, through evolving agricultural, business and mineral activities.

With this vision in mind, Council is committed to providing timely, efficient and consistent quality services, provided by experienced, knowledgeable and helpful officers that meet our customer's expectations.

Mission

To engage the community, providing and delivering progressive services, which are accessible to all, whilst implementing a long-term strategic plan leading to the social and economic benefit of the community.

Council expects that all staff, whether they are at the counter, working in an office, driving a truck or mowing a park, to be committed to pursuing excellence in their role and be proud and responsible representatives of the Council.

Our customer service promise

Lachlan Shire Council promises to provide a customer friendly organisation, committed to providing service excellence to our community. We will project positive attitudes, a focus on solutions and demonstrate a committed can do approach.

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We will work to understand and respond to the needs of our customers both now, and into the future, and provide opportunities for community engagement. We will continuously improve our service by proactively welcoming suggestions and seeking feedback from the community, actively measuring and communicating our performance against these commitments.

Service standards you can expect

Our Customer Service Charter is our firm statement of commitment to our customers. Service Standards help to define how we will undertake those activities involving customer relationships, in line with Community Vision and our Customer Service Charter.

Customer service standards

1. In all dealings with customers, staff will...

- Take personal ownership for customer satisfaction;
- Treat customers courteously and with respect;
- Act in a professional and helpful manner;
- Provide accurate, relevant and timely information;
- Seek to resolve request/enquiries at the first point of contact;
- Focus on solutions for customers with a “can do” approach.

2. When customers' telephone, we will...

- Answer calls within three (3) rings or as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- Greet customers politely with a smile in our voice;
- Deal with the call, redirect the call (endeavouring not to transfer the call more than once) or take a message as appropriate;
- Provide customers with an opportunity to leave a voice message when calls cannot be answered personally;
- Return phone calls immediately where possible, but not exceeding two (2) business day.

3. When customers visit us. We will...

- Attend the customer service counter promptly;
- Acknowledge people if there is a queue and apologise if they have to be kept waiting;
- Give courteous welcome and offer assistance;

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- Meet customers within five (5) minutes of the appointed time (if a prior appointment has been made), or provide customers with an estimated wait time should they be seeking a meeting with a staff member that has not been prearranged;
- Listen carefully to customer needs by asking pertinent questions, taking notes and confirming details;
- Ensure all customer service officers are professionally attired and identified by name badges and/or personal introduction, and our customer service areas are clean, tidy and aesthetically pleasing while also being functional.

4. When customers write to us, we will...

- Respond to letters, emails and faxes within ten (10) business days of receipt if no previously nominated timeframe;
- If a full reply is not possible initially, forward an acknowledgement which will indicate when a reply can be expected and the name of the officer to contact regarding any queries;
- Deal with all correspondence as promptly as possible and write in clear, concise language that is easily understood.

Customer Service Requests

Council responds to service request relating to activities that are the responsibility of Council, such as road maintenance, tree clearance and town maintenance. Service requests relating to public safety will be dealt with immediately

All service requests will be investigated within the set time frames. (Attachment A). Actions will be determined by the priority of the request, Councils works schedules and available resources.

When handling requests for service by telephone or personally, we will...

- Complete a Customer Request (CRM), by entering the details into our Customer Request Management software;
- Where possible relay the allocated request number to the customer to enable them to follow up on their request if needed;
- Ensure the request is referred to the appropriate officer/department for action;
- Ensure all requests are processed in accordance within time frames and documented procedures.
- When staff are announcing telephone calls, the expectation exists that if the individual staff member is able to answer the telephone at the time, they are able to talk to the customer and not expect a message to be taken on their behalf by the staff member announcing the call

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Internal customer service

Regardless of where a staff member works within Council, everyone has a customer and everyone is a customer. Whether the service is provided internally to a direct team member, another department, to Councillors or externally to the community, we all provide a customer service.

As such, we recognise and value the importance of all our customers and will endeavour to deliver excellent service to both our external and internal customers. We acknowledge that the same principles of quality service for our external customers apply to every member of staff as internal customers, we train and monitor staff customer service delivery provided to each other

All employees will work in partnership with each other to fulfil customer service obligations with the same Service Standards, regardless of whether the customer is a colleague or external customer. Each has a responsibility to ensure that a positive and effective internal customer culture exists.

Quality internal customer service should be managed using the following core set of assumptions

- Courtesy - can be demonstrated through a helpful and pleasant manner and listening carefully to requests and clarifying our understanding;
- Respect - valuing the feelings, opinions and views of all staff and respecting constructive feedback;
- Maturity - demonstrating a mature and professional approach to our work in a genuine and friendly manner;
- Confidence – doing our job thoroughly and organising our work and systems so that they, and we, are reliable
- Accuracy – developed by implementing and adhering to checking and monitoring processes.

Helping us to help you

Our expectations of the customer

To help us to meet these commitments, we ask our customers to...

- Treat Council officers with respect and courtesy;
- Not answer or conduct conversations on mobile phones whilst dealing with our staff;
- Respect the privacy, safety and needs of other customers;
- Telephone to make an appointment for a complex enquiry or if there is a need to see a specific officers;

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- Telephone the officer nominated in any correspondence sent to the customer and quote the reference details noted on the letter;
- Provide your current contact details and advise us if they change;
- Work with us to solve problems;
- Provide us with feedback so we know how we are performing and where necessary, can continue to improve our service

Handling difficult situations or abusive customers

Abusive behaviour is displayed when customers shout, use bullying behaviour, use abusive or obscene language or make threats to Council staff

- Staff are not expected to tolerate abusive behaviour;
- Staff may terminate communication immediately if abusive behaviour occurs. If face-to-face, the officer may walk away. If by telephone, the officer may terminate the call. If by email, the address may be blocked or not responded to;
- The General Manager may decide to limit or cease responses to any person who is abusive and/or derogative in his/her communication with Council or who fails to accept that Council has done all that it can to assist. A Decision of this nature will be communicated in writing to the person;
- If an officer feels threatened by the language or behaviour of the customer, the Police may be notified.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a decision, level or quality of service, or behaviour of an employee or agent, which can be investigated and acted upon. Lachlan Shire Council acknowledges the individual's right to make a complaint if it is considered Council has been remiss in its service provision or actions.

What is not a complaint?

- A request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for service);
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure;
- Disagreement with a policy of Council;
- An expression concerning the general direction and performance of Council or its Councillors;
- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure;
- Reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances, unauthorised building works or similar issues that fall into the regulatory aspect of our service.

Many of the issues mentioned above are called "complaints" when customer contacts us. They are called complaints because a customer is unhappy about a situation and wants something done.

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The actions we take to resolve many “complaints” are often an everyday part of the services we provide and will be dealt with apart from the formal complaints management process.

For more information about complaints and the complaints handling process please refer to the “Complaints Policy” (CSG049)

Reporting

A range of performance indicators relating to customer service and service delivery will be used within Council. These will be regularly monitored and reported to gauge our level of performance and to assess opportunities for improvement.

Results of Council’s performance measures will be reported to Councillors on a monthly basis. The reporting format will include how performance has been measured and whether standards have been achieved. Where Service Standards have not been met, we will identify how it is intended to meet those standards in the future.

Future Development

Council is committed to implementing information and corporate systems to track customer requests and provided the ability to measure customer service standards.

The Customer Service Charter and the Service Standards contained in this document will be reviewed at least every four (4) years. Performance management targets will be reviewed and developed in accordance with the implementation of appropriate systems.

Contact us

If you would like to suggest ways in which we can serve you, better you can:

- Contact our Customer Service Team on 02 6895 1900
- Emails council@lachlan.nsw.gov.au
- Write to the:
General Manager
Lachlan Shire Council
PO Box 216
CONDOBOLIN NSW 2877

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