



# Customer Service Standards

## DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>		CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER			
<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>		MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE TEAM (MANEX)			
<b>REVIEW DUE DATE:</b>		November 2025			
<b>VERSION NUMBER:</b>		5			
<b>DOCUMENT NUMBER:</b>		N/A			
<b>VERSIONS:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>RESOLUTION NO:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS:</b>	<b>AUTHOR / EDITOR:</b>	<b>APPROVED / ADOPTED BY:</b>
5	24/11/2022	9.11/22	Updated in line with the new policy template. Changes surrounding cash facilities with some now cashless. Updates to reflect changes in processes following the upgraded phone system and automated call attendant.	Personal Assistant (DCCS)	Council
4	23/05/2019	13.05/19	No significant changes.	Manager of Administration and Human Resources	Council
3	17/12/2015	5.12/15	Alterations to place emphasis on internal and external service standards being equal. Change to references for public amenities to align with inclusivity legislation. Inclusion of implementation / communication section and variation and review section to align with policy template.	Manager of Administration and Human Resources	Council

**Note:** Document Control continued at Appendix A



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General Manager (Interim)

6/12/2022

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Date

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Glen Innes Severn Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Ngorabul people as the traditional custodians of this land, their elders past, present and emerging and to Torres Strait Islander people and all First Nations people.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the standards are to:

- Provide a set of guidelines for staff to follow to ensure a high level of customer service is provided; and
- Provide uniformity on messaging from Council staff when delivering customer service (whether during work or periods of leave through an out of office message).

## APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

- All Council staff.

## OUTCOMES

These customer service standards were created for employees to follow to ensure that the quality of service to all of our customers meets or exceeds their expectations. The requirement for high standards of customer service extends equally to both external and internal customers, including all other Council employees, elected members, volunteers and contractors.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

These Standards will be communicated to all new staff as part of their induction program. Revised versions of the Standards that contain significant changes will be communicated to all relevant staff by the Chief Financial Officer / Finance Department. New versions that contain only minor or inconsequential changes will be distributed to managers for highlighting at team meetings.

Customer service is everyone's responsibility, not just those who staff the front information desk(s).

Each time we interact with an individual, answer the telephone, send an email, write a letter, or attend a meeting, we are making an impression on our customers – whether they are ratepayers, residents, visitors, people working in the Glen Innes Severn area, people working with our staff on a project, or other Council employees.

Council will continue to provide customer service training opportunities for employees so that all staff understand the value of customer service as well as the importance of following Council's approved standards.

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## POLICY STATEMENT

### Standards Covering all Customer Interactions

*Customers have a right to expect:*

- Courtesy, respect, honesty and professionalism; and
- That the Council staff member will listen to their request or question, ask for clarification if necessary, and provide complete, knowledgeable, accurate and precise information regarding their enquiry, within the staff member's capacity to do so.

*Staff members of Council have a right to expect:*

- That customers will extend mutual courtesy and respect in their dealings with Council employees.

The staff member will make a reasonable effort to provide information about the Council and, as appropriate, other outside agencies related to his / her department or section's functions.

### Telephone / Voicemail / Email

Council has implemented an automated call attendant service for its main contact number to direct customers to the area they wish to contact.

*Customers have a right to expect that:*

- Telephones will be answered promptly – where possible within four (4) rings (each department is responsible for making arrangements to ensure the telephone is answered during business hours);
  - A person, not voicemail, will answer the main number at each worksite during business hours;
  - All incoming telephone calls from external sources will be answered with a consistent greeting as agreed by the relevant Manager.
  - Staff will:
    - answer calls courteously;
    - listen to and understand the nature of requests before transferring a call; and
    - inform callers of the name of the person they are being transferred to and that person's position title or work section.
  - Calls will be answered and returned in the order received or by priority / urgency;
  - If a call is unable to be attended to immediately, the caller will be given the option to be put on hold or have their call returned at a later time;
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- If a caller is on hold for an extended period of time, periodic updates will be provided;
- If a call comes during interdepartmental telephone coverage, staff will explain that they are covering for a different department and offer to take a message or transfer the call to voicemail;
- Staff will, when transferring a call, provide the call recipient with details of the caller's name, organisation, and other relevant details;
- Staff will transfer calls using the "consult then transfer" option to transfer a call. Prior to transferring the call the staff member will ask the caller if they are happy for their call to go to the recipient's voicemail. If not, the unanswered call will be retrieved and the customer will be provided with other available options for dealing with their enquiry.
- Callers will receive acknowledgements of their voicemail messages within 24 hours on regular working days;
- Outgoing voicemail messages will be kept current and voicemail messages at answering stations will be changed on days that the Council is closed;
- Staff will give their full name; position title and organisation, when creating a voicemail message;
- Where possible, voicemail messages left on fixed line telephones and mobile phones will be consistent for both types of device;
- Where possible, voicemail messages will give at least one (1) optional telephone number to call;
- If a staff member is on leave for more than one (1) day, their calls / enquiries will be redirected to an alternative contact. This may be done by out of office email message, transfer / redirection of calls / emails, voicemail message or other appropriate means;
- If a staff member is on unplanned sick leave of more than two (2) days, his or her supervisor will organise appropriate changes to out of office email messages and voicemail messages; and
- Out of office email messages and voicemail messages left while a staff member is on leave will include an intended date of return.

## Meetings

*Customers have a right to expect that:*

- Where possible, they will be given a minimum of two (2) days advance notice of meetings;
  - Meeting notifications contain accurate information (date, time, place, point of contact, telephone number and directions);
  - They will be informed of scheduled changes or cancellations prior to the meeting;
  - Agendas will be available and distributed in advance of meetings;
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- Meetings will start on time and end on time;
- Meetings will be organised, run efficiently (proper equipment and handouts), and conducted in a professional manner;
- Security will be provided at meetings involving sensitive issues as determined by the department head and / or facilitator; and
- Meeting notices will be removed after a meeting has been completed and the venue returned to a clean and neat state.

## **Public Amenities**

*Customers have a right to expect:*

- Properly maintained facilities, which are sanitary, completely operational, fully stocked and supplied, accessible, adequate to needs, and inclusive to people who have a disability;\*
- Appropriate and timely responses to identified problems at a facility; and
- Hours of regular operation will be posted and observed.

*\* Note: Disability accessible public amenities are available within the Local Government Area; however, not all amenities are presently deemed “accessible”.*

## **Money / Currency Transactions**

*Customers have a right to expect:*

- User-friendly accounts / statements;
- Some Council premises are able to accept daily monetary transactions;
- Financial transactions are recorded accurately;
- That accounts may be paid by, cheque, credit card, BPay, Postbillpay, direct deposit or cash where it is available\*; and
- A receipt or verification of transaction will be provided.

*\*Council’s Town Hall Office and Glen Innes Landfill facilities have become cashless, and other sites may become cashless. Australia Post outlets accept cash for certain types of payments for those customers who wish to pay with cash and are unable to do so at Council premises.*

## **Written Correspondence**

(Including letters, memoranda and emails)

***Refer also to the Glen Innes Severn Council Correspondence Guidelines***

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*Customers have a right to expect:*

- Written correspondence formatted to Council's standards;
- That information regarding their enquiries is complete, accurate and precise;
- A timely response to their request or an interim communication explaining the delay. A timely response for internal email is within 2 (two) business days and for letters and external business email, within five (5) business days;
- All emails will contain a signature block including: the staff member's name, title, department, Glen Innes Severn Council, address, telephone number and email address; and
- Emails sent to a large group of external recipients will be blind carbon copied to maintain confidentiality.

**In Person***Customers have a right to expect:*

- A timely and courteous acknowledgement, such as eye contact (where culturally appropriate) or a positive indication that the staff member is aware of their presence, especially if the staff member is on the telephone or with another customer;
- That if there is a person at a counter and the phone rings, the staff member will excuse him / herself, answer the telephone, ask the caller if they prefer to be put on hold or have their call returned, and then continue to assist the initial customer; and
- That each main information counter will be staffed during business hours or, if staff members are unavailable, there will be signage referring them to the appropriate department.

**In Person Contacts with Field Personnel***Customers have a right to expect:*

- That when a resident approaches a Council employee who is doing work in the field, whenever possible, the staff member will attempt to answer the question if it pertains to the employee's duties and is not of a private or confidential nature. If the employee cannot answer the question and it is related to their duties, the staff member will offer the option to the resident of contacting the supervisor; and
  - If a question pertains to an area outside of the employee's scope of duties or department, the employee will explain it is outside of the scope of their duties and will provide the resident with a "helpful numbers to call card". This will provide the resident with the correct information they need to contact the department that can answer their question.
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## LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### Relevant Council Policies and Procedures include:

- Complaints Policy;
- Customer Requests and Complaint Procedure;
- Glen Innes Severn Council Correspondence Guidelines;
- Unreasonable Complaints Policy; and
- Unreasonable Complaints Guidelines.

## VARIATION AND REVIEW

The Customer Service Standards will be reviewed every three (3) years, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Policy does not expire on the review date, but will continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.

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**Appendix A****Document Control Continued**

<b>PREVIOUS VERSIONS:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>RESOLUTION NO:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS:</b>	<b>AUTHOR / EDITOR:</b>	<b>REVIEW / SIGN OFF:</b>
2	20/12/2012	8.12/12	Standard telephone greeting and voicemail message was amended. Supervisors are required to organise changes to out of office email messages and voicemails for staff on unexpected leave of more than two (2) days. Out of office email messages and voicemail messages to include intended date of return.	Manager of Administration and Human Resources	Council
1	27/08/2009	11.08/09	New document	Manager of Administration and Human Resources	Council