

Policy



Customer feedback, complaints and unreasonable conduct

Approved by Council: 14/12/2022

To outline our position on the handling and management of customer feedback, complaints and unreasonable conduct.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

Background

Our approach to the handling and management of feedback, complaints and unreasonable conduct is based on a range of core commitments that we make to you. These commitments govern our approach to effective complaint handling and are modelled on guidance material from the NSW Ombudsman. When you deal with us you should expect that these commitments will apply and your experience is consistent across all areas of our business.

Our commitment to You

- 1. Respectful treatment:** we are responsive and treat you with courtesy and respect.
- 2. Information and accessibility:** we make it easy for you to give us feedback.
- 3. Good communication:** we keep you informed about the status of your feedback or complaint.
- 4. Taking ownership:** we are trained and skilled to manage complaints.
- 5. Timeliness:** we will do our best to deal with complaints as soon as possible and will let you know a timeframe for finalise a complaint.
- 6. Transparency:** we will record and analyse information on our complaint handling processes to help improve our services.

Occasionally, people's frustration may result in escalated behaviour such as aggressive and abusive conduct toward our people and business. We regard this as unreasonable conduct.

Where unreasonable conduct, because of its nature or frequency, raises health, safety, resource or equity issues for the people involved in the complaint process, we will manage the conduct according to Objectives (i-iii):

- i. **Objective:** Protect the health and safety of staff who interact with people whose conduct is unreasonable.

We will prioritise the safety of our people – always.

- ii. **Objective:** Ensure equity and fairness for all complainants – regardless of their conduct, ethnic identity, national origin, religion, linguistic background, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability or other cultural or personal factors.

We will make sure that all current and potential complaints are dealt with equitably and fairly – regardless of ethnic identity, national origin, religion, linguistic background, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability or other cultural or personal factors – and resources are distributed based on the merits of a complaint, rather than a complainant's demands or conduct.

- iii. **Objective:** Effectively manage resource allocation and improve efficiency in handling complaints.

We will improve overall effectiveness and efficiency by allocating sufficient time and resources to dealing with unreasonable conduct which, if left unmanaged, can divert and place strain on limited resources.

This policy is in addition to, and does not seek to derogate from the operation of, any relevant law or Council policy. This includes:

1. a protected disclosure under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*;
2. an application for an internal review of alleged breaches of privacy under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*;
3. an application for internal review of refusals of access to or amendment of documents under the *Government Information and Public Access Act 2009*;
4. a complaint under the Code of Conduct.

Contact officer

Governance and Risk Manager.

Related documents

Policies

Code of Conduct and Procedures

Procedures

Customer feedback, complaints handling and unreasonable conduct

Legislation

Civil Liability Act 2002

Government Information and Public Access Act 2009

Local Government Act 1993

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022

Other

NSW Ombudsman – guidance for agencies – effective complaint handling.

Office use only	File no.: 172	Next review date: [2 years]	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0		11/02/2009	

2.0	To efficiently and fairly manage feedback and complaints from customers and members of the public about the level and quality of Council service.	19/12/2018	124/18
3.0	Update policy to reflect information available from the NSW Ombudsman and changes to reflect position title changes.	14/12/2022	85/22