

Community Requests, Complaints & Feedback Policy

As required by section 270 of the Act

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to comply with Council's legislative requirements,¹ and provide guidance on timely, fair and transparent management of reasonable requests for service, complaints, feedback and review of decisions by Council.
- 1.2. Interacting with, and providing services to, the community is a key component of Council operations.² Council encourages community feedback (both positive and negative) to assist in the constant improvement of Council's services and operations.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all employees who may be involved in receiving, processing, managing, considering or determining reasonable requests for service, complaints, feedback and review of decisions in the course of their official functions and duties. Council Members who may receive such requests, complaints, feedback and review of decisions from the community must refer to the appropriate employee to process, manage, consider and determine.
- 2.2. This policy does not apply to other Council processes or matters outside Council's jurisdiction. Such requests, complaints, feedback and review of decisions from the community will be redirected where applicable.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Act** means *Local Government Act 1999*;
- 3.1. **business day** means a day that is not a Saturday, a Sunday or a public holiday;
- 3.1. **community** means any person who lives, works, pays rates, conducts private or government business, visits, utilises services, facilities and public space within the Council area (may also be referred to as a stakeholder);
- 3.2. **complainant** means the person making the complaint;
- 3.2. **complaint** means an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by Council, or its representative, that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected;
- 3.3. **Council** means Adelaide Plains Council;
- 3.4. **Council Member** means a member of Council elected in accordance with the Act;
- 3.5. **Customer Request Management System (CRMS)** means the system used to manage workflow and processes for community requests for service across Council;
- 3.6. **Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)** means a system used to manage records across Council;
- 3.7. **employee** means any person carrying out duties or performing tasks for and on behalf of Council, whether they are paid or unpaid, including staff, contractors, consultants, trainees, volunteers, students and any other person who has access to Council's electronic systems and services in a full-time, part-time or casual capacity;
- 3.8. **feedback** means comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods;
- 3.9. **request for service** means an application to have Council or its representatives take some form of action to provide or improve a Council Service;
- 3.10. **review of decision** means a process in which Council can reconsider/review the decision-making process and all the evidence relied on to make a decision, including new evidence if relevant;
- 3.11. **unreasonable** means an idea, attitude or action that is not guided by, or based upon, reason, good sense or sound judgment. Unreasonable behaviour that is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived, lacking in substance or has no reasonable prospect of success will not be considered by Council.

¹ Section 270 of the Act.

² Section 6(b) and 8 of the Act.

4. Council's Core Values

Our approach to interacting with the community is underpinned by Council's core values:

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|  Honesty and Integrity |  Innovative and Open-minded |  Leadership and Diplomacy |  Professionalism |  Respect |  Teamwork |
| Building trust and loyalty with the community and within Council. | Being proactive in continually improving our services. | By acting strategically and effectively managing our relationships. | Through commitment, quality and timeliness of work delivered. | For others, acting with humility and empathy. | Through unity, cooperation and support. |

5. Requests for Service³

5.1. Council can receive requests for service from the community in the following ways:

- (a) Council Members;⁴
- (b) *Request for Service Form* on Council's website—www.apc.sa.gov.au;
- (c) Email: info@apc.sa.gov.au;
- (d) Telephone: (08) 8527 0200;
- (e) Mail: PO Box 18, Mallala SA 5502;
- (f) In Person:
 - Principal Office—2a Wasley Road, Mallala SA 5002;
 - Two Wells Service Centre—69 Old Port Wakefield Road, Two Wells SA 5501;
- (g) Petition to Council;
- (h) My Local Services application; and
- (i) Social Media communication.⁵

Council will not accept other third party or subscription-based applications, including Snap Send Solve for request for service.

5.2. For most requests for service; contact names, addresses or phone numbers are required.⁶ Council may not accept or investigate anonymous requests for service; our ability to process such requests depends on the nature of the information provided and the severity of the situation or the service requested.

5.3. Council will, within 2 business days, *acknowledge* receipt of the request in writing, and include a CRMS reference number, excluding anonymous requests.⁷

5.4. Council will provide an update on all requests for service, excluding anonymous requests, (if required) within 10 business days, advising of Council's *intentions* with regard to the request.

5.5. In determining how to respond to a request for service, Council will consider: Council's Strategic Management Plans, Asset Plans, Annual Budget, Business Plan, the resources required, associated risk, and any legislative obligations.

³ Refer to Council's **Requests for Service Procedure** for more information.

⁴ Council Members must forward all written requests for service to info@apc.sa.gov.au for the requests to be created within EDRMS, and be assigned to an actioning officer. Verbal requests received by Council Members should be discussed with the CEO (or nominated delegate) for further action.

⁵ Refer to Council's **Social Media Policy** for more information.

⁶ Council's **Information Management Policy** and **Privacy Policy** provides further information on how we collect, use and store personal information.

⁷ If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent the acknowledgement of receipt within that time, the actioning officer will acknowledge receipt as soon as possible and include an explanation of why the acknowledgement was not sent within the time frame.

6. Feedback⁸

6.1. Council can receive feedback from the community in the following ways:

- (a) Council Members;⁹
- (b) *Complaints & Feedback Form* on Council's website: www.apc.sa.gov.au;
- (c) Email: info@apc.sa.gov.au;
- (d) Telephone: (08) 8527 0200;
- (e) Mail: PO Box 18, Mallala SA 5502;
- (f) In Person:
 - Principal Office–2a Wasley Road, Mallala SA 5502;
 - Two Wells Service Centre–69 Old Port Wakefield Road, Two Wells SA 5501;
- (g) Petition to Council;
- (h) My Local Services application; and
- (i) Social Media communication.¹⁰

Council will not accept other third party or subscription-based applications, including Snap Send Solve for feedback.

6.2. Council will, within 2 business days, *acknowledge* receipt of feedback in writing, excluding anonymous feedback.¹¹

6.3. At intervals determined by feedback received, the data on such feedback may be reported to Council's Executive Management Team to ensure that needs of the community are identified and considered.

7. Complaint Process

Complaints may vary greatly in their level of complexity and seriousness. Wherever possible, complaints will be resolved when first reported, but, if necessary, will be escalated as necessary:

- (a) Immediate response to resolve the complaint;
- (b) Complaint escalated to a more senior employee;¹²
- (c) Internal review of a Council decision by statutory process.

7.1. Complaints¹³

7.1.1. Council can receive complaints from the community in the following ways:

- (a) Council Members;¹⁴
- (b) *Complaints & Feedback Form* on Council's website – www.apc.sa.gov.au;
- (c) Email: info@apc.sa.gov.au;
- (d) Telephone: (08) 8527 0200;
- (e) Mail: PO Box 18, Mallala SA 5502;
- (f) In Person:
 - Principal Office–2a Wasley Road, Mallala SA 5502;
 - Two Wells Service Centre–69 Old Port Wakefield Road, Two Wells SA 5501;
- (g) Petition to Council;
- (h) My Local Services application; and
- (i) Social Media communication.¹⁵

⁸ Refer to Council's *Complaints & Feedback Procedure* for more information.

⁹ Council Members refer to footnote 4 for action upon receiving feedback.

¹⁰ Refer to Council's *Social Media Policy* for more information.

¹¹ Refer to footnote 7.

¹² This may occur, for example, where an employee has been involved in the matter that is the subject of the complaint, where the complaint is about an issue that requires a decision to be made at a more senior level, or where a complaint concerns a matter that ranges across more than one Council work area.

¹³ Refer to Council's *Complaints & Feedback Procedure* for more information.

¹⁴ Council Members refer to footnote 4 for action upon receiving complaints.

¹⁵ Refer to Council's *Social Media Policy* for more information.

Council will not accept other third party or subscription-based applications, including Snap Send Solve for complaints.

- 7.1.2. Council will, within 2 business days, *acknowledge* receipt of a complaint in writing, and include a CRMS reference number, excluding anonymous complaints.¹⁶
- 7.1.3. In determining how to respond to a complaint, Council will consider: Council's Strategic Management Plans, Asset Plans and Annual Budget and Business Plan; the resources required; associated risk; and legislative obligations.
- 7.1.4. Council will provide an update to a complainant, excluding anonymous complainants, (if required) within 10 business days, advising of Council's *intentions* with regard to the complaint.
- 7.1.5. When advising a complainant of the outcome of an investigation of a complaint (if required), Council will provide information about alternative remedies, including any rights of appeal and the right to make a complaint to an external agency.
- 7.1.6. Council will treat all complaints received seriously and endeavor to be consistent, fair, and amicable in facilitating an outcome to community complaints. Outcomes will be proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances and will be determined in accordance with Council's supporting processes. If Council deems a complainant's conduct is unreasonable, Council may limit or cease communication and take reasonable action as required.

7.2. Internal Review of Decision¹⁷

- 7.2.1. Where Council is unable to satisfactorily address a complaint, a complainant may exercise their right to request an internal review of Council's decision. This process is established by legislation and enables Council to reconsider a decision made. It is generally a *last resort* in the complaint process, but may also be used in situations which are not able to be resolved by other means, such as a complaint about a decision of the CEO.
- 7.2.2. Council is unable to accept or investigate anonymous requests for review of decision.
- 7.2.3. Council will within 2 business days, *acknowledge* receipt of the application for review of decision in writing.
- 7.2.4. Council will ensure that a review of decision is completed within 21 business days. However, in some circumstances, the review process may take longer than 21 business days, applicants will be notified if this is the case.

8. References

Local Government Act 1999

9. Records management

All documents relating to this policy will be registered in Council's Record Management System and remain confidential where identified.

10. Document review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with Council's *Policy Review Schedule* to ensure legislative compliance and its continued relevance to Council's needs, activities and programs.

¹⁶ Refer to footnote 7.

¹⁷ Refer to Council's *Review of Decision Procedure* for more information.

11. Further information

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| Public Access: | Members of the public may inspect this policy (or any other related documents) free of charge at: Council's website: www.apc.sa.gov.au ; or Council's Principal Office: 2a Wasleys Rd, Mallala SA 5502. <i>A copy of this policy may be obtained on payment of a fee.¹⁸</i> |
| Queries: | Any queries in relation to this policy must be in writing to info@apc.sa.gov.au , marked: <i>Attention: Manager Governance</i> |

¹⁸ As outlined in Council's Fees & Charges Schedule.