

		<h1>Complaints Management Policy</h1>	
<b>TRIM Reference</b> F19/124030		<b>Division</b> City Governance	
<b>Doc Type</b> Policy	<b>Application</b> Organisation	<b>Date</b> 16/10/2019	
<b>Author:</b> Principal Advisor Customer Relations		<b>Approver:</b> Executive Leadership Team	

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The objective of this policy is to:
- I. Define a complaint;
  - II. Document the process adopted by the City for handling complaints.
  - III. Ensure that complaints received are dealt with in an appropriate manner, in accordance with the City's Customer Service Charter; and its legal responsibilities under Section 339F of the Local Government Act 1993
  - IV. Ensure consistency in complaint management
  - V. Improve our service delivery by analysing complaint data
  - VI. Provide a benefit for Council officers and the community
  - VII. A concise statement on the rationale for the procedure

## 2 Scope and Background

- 2.1 This policy relates to the capture, handling and resolution of complaints made to the City of Hobart in respect to the City's Customer Service Charter.
- 2.2 The Local Government Act 1993 requires that the General Manager provides a report annually to the Council on the number and nature of complaints.
- 2.3 This policy relates to complaints concerning the City's service, not complaints related to a third party, such as neighbourhood noise or development applications lodged or complaints against issued infringements.

## 3 Principals

- 3.1 The City of Hobart will uphold the following complaint management principles:
1. **Commitment** – recognises the community's right to complain, where the Council does not meet its Customer Services Charter. We acknowledge that complaints management is a part of our commitment to improving service delivery;
  2. **Accessibility** – we will make it easy for customers to lodge a complaint and we will actively assist them in that process;
  3. **Transparency** – We will be transparent in our processes. Complainants and staff will both be treated fairly, with respect and courtesy.

4. Confidentiality – We will maintain the right to privacy of all individuals involved.
5. Accountability – The Council will provide explanations and reasons for decisions;
6. Continuous improvement – Complaints data will be analysed and reported on. We will look for ways to improve how our services are delivered and ensure that we implement appropriate changes where possible.

## 4 Policy

4.1 As part of the provision of quality service to customers, the City is committed to working to resolve issues and complaints, we regard complaints as an opportunity to improve practices and procedures. This policy aims to provide a fair, consistent and structured process for customers if they are dissatisfied with any of the actions, decisions or services provided by Council. Council views complaints as an opportunity for the customer to tell us when their experience with Council has not met their expectations. Lessons learnt from complaint investigations will be used to directly inform service improvements.

### 4.2 What is a complaint?

Complaints are defined as dissatisfaction with an employee's behaviour, or dissatisfaction with an administrative action of Council and include,

- a) Failure to respond to a request in a timely manner,
- b) Failure to provide valid reasons for a decision,
- c) Failure to act when requested,

Complaints can be more complex than they first appear. However, the Council is committed to having processes to deal with all complaints received, and to improving or implementing processes that ensure customers' needs are met in an equitable way.

### 4.3 What is not a complaint?

For the purposes of this policy a 'complaint' is not

- 1) a request for information – requests for information about Council services, policies or procedures
- 2) a request for service – request for action to be taken in relation to a service or product provided by Council
- 3) a report – report of damaged or faulty infrastructure, such as potholes, or of hazards, such as fallen branches
- 4) a suggestion – proposed service or product improvement
- 5) an enquiry- – request for clarification or further information
- 6) a follow up – further request for service or information that has not been completed by Council but is still within the timeframe of the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) advised to the customer
- 7) a petition to Council about a particular matter
- 8) comments received during formal consultation or negotiation processes

- 9) A complaint against a third party e.g. neighbour, dog, developer, food business
- 10) A complaint against an infringement or compliance breach, e.g. fines

#### 4.4 How to lodge a complaint

The following information is required as part of a complaint:

- The complainant's name and contact details.
- Detailed description of the nature of the complaint.

If this information is not provided, we may not be able to investigate the complaint and we cannot provide feedback to the customer.

##### **In writing:**

City of Hobart  
 GPO Box 503  
 Hobart Tas 7001

**or**

cohmail@hobartcity.com.au

##### **By phone:**

03 6238 2711

##### **In person:**

Hobart Council Centre  
 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

##### **Online:**

<https://www.hobartcity.com.au/Council/Communications-complaints-and-feedback/Customer-request-form>

#### 4.5 Receipt of a complaint

Following the complaint lodgement of a complaint, an acknowledgement will be provided to the complainant within three business days. This correspondence will outline the City's complaint management process, and provide the name and contact details of the coordinating/investigating officer.

#### 4.6 Management of complaints

Subsequent to the acknowledgement of the complaint, correspondence outlining the progress or outcome of the investigation will be provided within ten business days. Where a matter cannot be resolved within this timeframe an estimated timeframe for resolution and/or when to expect and update on the matter will be provided.

## 5 Amendment Table

Date of Issue	Description of Change
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## 6 Related Documents

- Complaints Management Internal Operating Guidelines (F19/124031)
- Customer Service Charter (F18/117918)