



**POLICY NO: CCC012**

# **COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT**

July 2019

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## Complaints and Feedback Management

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### History of Revisions:

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>TRIM Doc. #</b>
1	7 September 2017	Creation of the Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	D12818841
2	1 November 2018	Review of naming conventions	Draft
3	July 2019	Review of the policy to update new template, Code of Conduct Policy date change and update naming conventions of responsible authority. Procedure removed from Policy and separated into new document.	

**Policy Rank:** Operational



## Complaints and Feedback Management

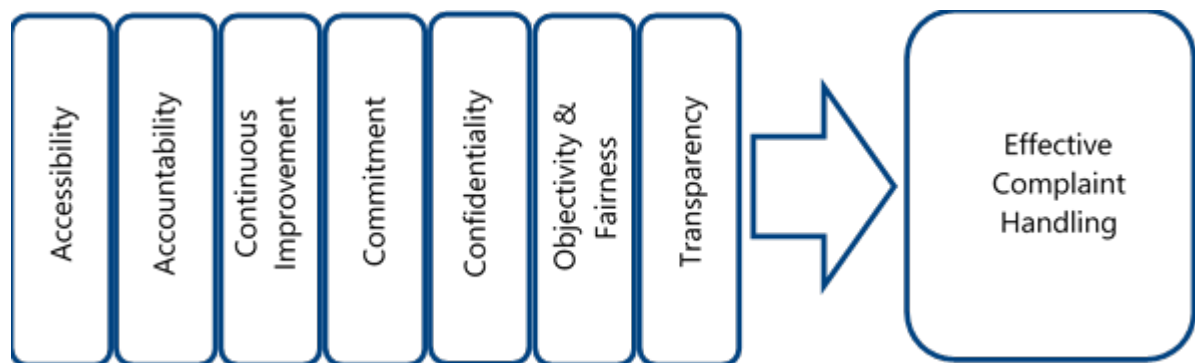
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## Complaints and Feedback Management

### 1. POLICY SUMMARY

- 1.1 This policy aims to provide clear direction for Central Coast Council [CCC] staff to respond effectively and independently to individual cases of dissatisfaction. Additionally, it aims to increase customer satisfaction, strengthen customer input into our services, acknowledge areas of excellence and identify service improvements.
- 1.2 It aims to address seven principles of effective complaint management:



Source: Victorian Ombudsman

- 1.3 The policy aims to assist Community members to:
- (a) be aware of the process of providing feedback, compliments and complaints to the Central Coast Council as well as the process for response and investigation; and
  - (b) be confident in our commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness when issues do arise.
- 1.4 The policy aims to assist all staff:
- (a) feel confident and supported in responding to community feedback and complaints;
  - (b) act fairly, consistently, honestly and appropriately when responding to feedback; compliments and complaints; and
  - (c) are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of feedback, compliments and complaints.



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### **2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 The policy will provide guidance to staff when managing complaints and feedback received from customers.
- 2.2 Enhance public confidence in the Council by creating an environment that encourages feedback and complaints.
- 2.3 Ensure complaints are managed in a timely and equitable manner and recognise the needs and expectations of the complainant.
- 2.4 Provide a transparent, accessible and effective complaints process that is supported by a system to analyse, evaluate and audit complaints and their outcomes in order to deliver quality improvements.
- 2.5 Supply a mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of Council's feedback and complaint management practices and outcomes.

### **3. POLICY BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Council delivers a diverse range of services to the community. These services are offered to our residents, community partners, visitors, government agencies and businesses.
- 3.2 Council welcomes and actively encourages all feedback from the community and are committed to managing feedback and complaints in a timely, respectful and appropriate manner, ensuring value is gained from the process.
- 3.3 Feedback from our community provides Council with valuable insights into areas where service standards are meeting customer's expectations or where service standards have not been met and improvements need to be made.



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- 3.4 Effective management of our community's feedback contributes to our commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, it is of significant importance to the reputation and performance of the Central Coast Council aiding in building strong connections within our community.
- 3.5 This policy incorporates the principles of the Australian / New Zealand standard: Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014) and the NSW Ombudsman's Complaint Management Framework (2015).

## **4. APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

- 4.1 This Policy covers all elected members of Council, all personnel employed by Council, any person or organisation contracted to or acting on behalf of Council, any person or organisation employed to work on Council premises or facilities and all activities of the Council.
- 4.2 This policy does not confer any delegated authority upon any person. All delegations to staff are issued by the Chief Executive Officer.

## **5. GENERAL**

- 5.1 Council understands the importance of receiving community feedback and outline our commitments within the Customer Experience Strategy.
- 5.2 Feedback may be acknowledged, however further investigation and response will be limited. The information is to be used to consider future improvements or to celebrate and acknowledge best practice.
- 5.3 Council encourages the community to provide feedback and offers multiple channels for our Community's convenience. It is recommended that only one channel is utilised to avoid duplication and maximise effectiveness of Council time and resources. Refer to Procedures Complaints and Feedback Management for methods of contact.
- 5.4 Complaints will be dealt with courteously, fairly and in a timely manner.
- 5.5 Council will endeavour to review anonymous complaints, however without the ability



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to thoroughly investigate, gather evidence and obtain witness information, action and/or resolution may be difficult and limited.

- 5.6 Data from feedback and complaints will be analysed to identify recurring and/or systemic issues in order to guide business improvements.
- 5.7 Unreasonable complainants will be managed in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman's Complaint Management Framework.
- 5.8 Council will aim to resolve all complaints at the first point of contact, however depending on the nature of the complaint, may require escalation through one of three tiers of response (see *Procedures*).
- 5.9 Council will ensure appropriate resources and training are available to respond to feedback and complaints. Council officers are trained to efficiently and effectively handle feedback and complaints.
- 5.10 It is the personal responsibility of all Council employees, volunteers, contractors and agents to have knowledge of, and to ensure compliance with, this policy.
- 5.11 This policy should be read in conjunction with Council's Code of Conduct.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 The following definitions are used in this policy:
  - (a) **Council** means Central Coast Council of NSW (CCC), being the organisation responsible for the administration of Council affairs and operations and the implementation of Council policy and strategies.
  - (b) **Competitive Neutrality** is the principle that Council business should not operate with any unfair competitive advantage.
  - (c) **Complaint** means any expression of dissatisfaction made to CCC related to a product or service, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
  - (d) A request for services or information, explanation of policies and procedures or lodging an appeal in accordance with standard procedure or policy is **not**



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considered a complaint – unless it is a follow up request and / or it is raising a concern regarding the decision making process.

- (e) **Complainant** is the term used to describe a member of the community, staff or organisation who has lodged a complaint with Central Coast Council.
- (f) **Sensitive Complaint** means a complaint about a member of CCC staff's conduct. This may be reporting on a breach of the Code of Conduct, maladministration, reportable allegations, public interest disclosures, harassment, staff attitude, dangerous driving, etc. Sensitive Complaints do not include complaints about Council processes or decisions in which a staff member is identified.
- (g) **Feedback** means any expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction made to CCC for the purpose of process improvement or to express appreciation of a service or program where no response (other than acknowledgement) is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- (h) **Service Request** means any report or request for service which is provided ordinarily by CCC as part of Council's service offering. Examples of a service request would include a request for a road to be repaired (pothole) or a request for rangers to attend a noisy or dangerous animal.
- (i) **Unreasonable Complainants** are individuals or groups who behave in ways that are inappropriate and unacceptable, despite Council's best efforts to assist them. Unreasonable complainant conduct ('UCC') is any behaviour by a current or former complainant which, because of its nature or frequency raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for our organisation, our staff, other service users and complainants or the complainant himself/herself.
- (j) **Public Interest Disclosure** is a complaint made about corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, government information contravention or local government pecuniary interest contravention by Council employees and Councillors.

## 7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE RIGHT TO ACCESS COUNCIL INFORMATION





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- 7.1 Council will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be used by CCC as permitted under the relevant privacy laws.
- 7.2 Members of the public have the right to access certain information held by Council as identified in the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. Councils are also required to allow members of the public to access other information unless satisfied that allowing access would be contrary to public interest or breach other statutory obligations.
- 7.3 The Local Government Act 1993 states that, members of the public have the right to attend Council and Committee meetings (where all committee members are Councillors), unless the meeting has been closed to the public under Section 10a. Attendance however, does not entitle the public to address the meeting, unless public participation is invited.

## **8. REVIEW**

- 8.1 This Policy will be reviewed annually.

## **9. RELATED RESOURCES**

- 9.1 Legislation:
  - (a) Local Government Act 1993
  - (b) State Records Act 1998
  - (c) Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
  - (d) Privacy and Personal Information Act
  - (e) Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002
  - (f) Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
  - (g) Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994
  - (h) State Records Act 1998
  - (i) Ombudsman Act 1974
- 9.2 Associated Documents:
  - (a) Code of Conduct
  - (b) Unreasonable Complainant Conduct