

# AMENDED REPORT



**Item No:** 4.2  
**Title:** After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models  
**Department:** Connected Communities

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9 December 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting

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## Report Purpose

This report was tabled at the ordinary meeting on 25 November 2019. The report was debated and remained at large and therefore deferred for consideration at a future meeting date of Council.

## Recommendation

***That Council defer this report for consideration, to allow time for a Councillor Briefing to be held prior to 24 February 2020.***

## Background

Council, at its ordinary meeting on 26 November 2018 resolved the following, part thereof:

- 1147/18 *That Council request the Chief Executive Officer provide a further report on alternative delivery models*
- 1148/18 *That Council resolve to not accept any tenders for the following reason; to allow Council to investigate alternative delivery model.*

In 2014, both the former Wyong Shire and Gosford City Councils moved to outsource after-hours service providers following reviews of their respective after hour service. Both former Councils identified that the best value for money would be for a contracted After Hours Call Centre service to manage customer calls outside of business hours, during emergency outages and on public holidays; providing the customers with information, lodging service requests to be actioned during business hours, direct emergency calls to Council staff and record all interactions with customers and provide reports on what calls were received after hours.

Up until late 2018 this after-hours service was provided by two separate suppliers until a tender for a single supplier could be issued.

## **4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)**

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At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 November 2018 it was resolved to place the tender for an after-hours service provider on hold so that a report on alternative models could be developed. While the tender was placed on hold and the report on alternative models was developed, the after-hours service was consolidated and is currently provided by one existing supplier on a month to month basis.

Council's after-hours service provision is primarily in place to manage emergency calls to Council outside of business hours (including weekends and public holidays). The service consists of a customer call service for emergency actions, these calls are taken by an external service who triage the customer enquiries, the calls are then escalated to Council After Hours Duty Officers (AHDOs) who respond to emergencies related to water and sewer, roads and drainage, facilities and other activities. If the call is not deemed to be an emergency, the Call Centre Service logs customer requests for action during business hours based on a service matrix provided by Council. The average number of calls received after-hours for this service is approximately 6,300 per year, or 17 calls per night.

### **Current status**

The current arrangement is delivered by Oracle CMS in conjunction with AHDOs for an approximate yearly cost of \$350,000, which can vary depending on external factors such as serious weather events impacting the region where additional trades or Council staff are required to attend.

### **Report Findings**

Council's service level is determined by the different business areas in accordance with Council requirements, as well as relevant legislation and regulations as set out by EPA, the Roads Act, Companion Animals Act and IPART for example. By the very nature of the services provided by Local Government, it is a complex business.

Council requested a report be undertaken on alternative delivery models (Attachment 1) for the After Hours Call Centre service, due to the complexity of the services provided by Local Government there are limited options on what can be sourced in the market place for third party providers. To support the review the report findings included evaluation of service model types, benchmarking with other Councils to understand alternatives and a cost analysis on what service model would provide the best value for the Central Coast community.

## **4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)**

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### *Benchmarking*

The following 10 councils were contacted to understand what alternatives could be considered:

- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Inner West Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- City of Casey (VIC)
- City of Greater Geelong (VIC).

There were two models in use by the Councils contacted:

- 1 Outsourced to an after-hours service provider specialising in local government services
- 2 An in-house 24/7 call centre.

The only council providing an in-house service was Brisbane City Council. They have operated an in-house model for some years which is resourced by nearly 200 staff. Brisbane City Council serves a population of over one million people and provides 24-hour service for general and urgent Council enquiries as well as a dedicated business support hotline providing information on a range of Council topics including licensing, development applications, business opportunities and procurement. It is noted that Brisbane City Council is not a recognised water authority and owns and manages Brisbane's bus and ferry transport network.

All other Councils contacted outsourced their after-hours service, which focused primarily on emergencies, and was supported by a range of various staff arrangements including After Hours Duty Officers – similar to the current model undertaken at Central Coast Council.

The main reason for most Councils outsourcing their after-hours service was due to cost effectiveness and value for money for ratepayers as well as to ensure business continuity during outages and major emergencies. Nine of the 10 Councils contacted were satisfied with the quality of service provided by their chosen external providers, whilst still employing Council staff to triage and oversee emergency responses. The one Council who was not satisfied indicated it was due some calls being escalated to the wrong service but said that this was due so some unclear areas in their service matrix/responsibility.

## **4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)**

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Research was undertaken with a view to identify local suppliers who could provide a similar or same service support Council, however no call management service providers were located in the Central Coast region. Of the call centres located on the Central Coast, none of these provided a call answer service outside of their specific organisation and were not looking to do so.

### **Model Comparison**

In reviewing the current service, call volumes and times, customer expectations and comparisons with other Council areas were considered. The alternative models have been assessed based on the following:

- Ability to ensure business continuity on short notice both during business hours and after hours to ensure consistency with customer service response in the event of an emergency, declaration of natural disaster, or an event such as system failures that impacts Council's resources
- Best value for money for ratepayers
- Better customer access for emergencies
- Ability for Council to meet customer needs and expectations
- Knowledgeable staff who understand Council operations and service requirements for the above situations
- Service that supports the needs of Central Coast.

The two alternative models considered are:

#### *Model 1: In-house 24/7 Customer Service Call Centre*

The model encompasses two staff per shift after hours in the call centre answering calls, triaging service response and contacting Council's AHDOs to respond and action.

#### **Benefits**

- All customer calls answered directly by Council night-shift call centre staff
- 6 additional night shift call centre staff required to allow coverage for annual leave, sick leave, etc. - these would be new positions.

## 4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)

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### Risks or challenges

- No business continuity or ability to service customers in the case of a wide-spread emergency or council only emergency such as an IT failure or phone outage either during or outside of business hours. This was experienced In July and August 2019 with one phone outage lasting over two hours during which customers could not contact Council. Due to the external provider being available calls were immediately diverted and customer calls continued to be answered with no break in service
- No ability to divert customer calls as required to support call over flow during unexpected high call volumes during business hours or during customer service training or unavailability
- Expensive service delivery option when call volume after-hours is low - 17 calls per night would equate to four calls per rostered staff member per night
- Customer response level would be a challenge in times of large scale emergency due to limited ability to scale up. An outsourced call centre has the scalability to meet unexpected increases to call volumes and have capacity to scale up or own immediately due to their operating models
- Volume of calls does not warrant the cost to deliver the service with on average 17 calls per night of which 12 would be escalated to AHDOs. Based on these figures and the number of staff per night shift it would equate to four calls per staff member between 5pm and 8:30am
- Long periods of annual leave or sick leave could impact staff availability to resource required hours and maintain customer service expectation levels.

### *Model 2: Outsourced Call Centre + After-Hours Duty Officers – current arrangement*

The model encompasses an external Call Centre service after hours answering calls, triaging service response and contacting Council's AHDOs to respond and action.

### Benefits

- Business continuity – ability to service customers regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency or infrastructure failure after-hours
- Scalability due to external provider operating models which can be easily scaled up or down to meet unexpected high or low call volumes
- All calls can be easily diverted to an offsite provider during business hours as required regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency (such as telephony, systems or IT failure)
- More cost effective option based on low call volumes compared to after-hours in-house call centre.

## 4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)

### Risks or challenges

- External provider are not Council or Central Coast experts. However, this is mitigated as the After-hours Duty Officers are and can effectively action and manage any required services or trades to attend emergencies
- Responses provided by external provider reliant on accurate script provided by council business areas
- External provider experiences a system or phone issue.

The costs for both an in-house model and an outsourced model After Hours Call Centre service were reviewed for cost comparison.

**Table 1: Cost Comparison of Model 1 and 2**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2 - recommended</b>
Staff required for call centre	6	0
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2 - recommended</b>
Salaries per year	\$1,080,000	\$0
After-Hours Duty Officer allowance	\$270,000	\$270,000
Service provider	\$0	\$80,000
Business Continuity Support	No	Yes
Costs for 1 year	\$1,350,000	\$ 350,000
Costs over 3 years	<b>\$4,050,000</b>	<b>\$1,050,000</b>
Cost per call/interaction (6,300 per year)	\$214	\$55

## 4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)

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### Consultation

Council's internal teams including Roads and Drainage, Water and Sewer, Open Space, Facilities and Asset Management and Compliance were consulted on the requirements for supporting the After Hours emergency services for call management. These services provide the primary After Hours Call Centre services.

No specific customer survey was undertaken for the After Hours Call Centre service. However, in the most recent Customer Experience survey 2019, while findings indicated general satisfaction with how Council handled their contact and their expectations were met the majority of the time, there were not specific responses relating to issues with the After Hours Call Centre services. In the last financial year 2018-19 only one complaint was received regarding the level of service after hours.

### Options

- Option 1 (not recommended)  
Establishing and providing an in-house call centre for after-hours customer service This model is not recommended for the following reasons:
  - Lack of business continuity capability regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency or infrastructure or IT failure
  - Limited scalability in times of large scale emergency with only two staff per shift to answer calls and limited ability to scale up to support service with this model
  - Small number of calls per year (6,300 per year or 17 calls per day)
  - Does not provide best value for money based on per interaction cost (\$214 vs \$55) with little additional benefit to the community.
- Option 2 (recommended)
  - Seeking the services of an external provider for the After Hours Call Centre. This model is recommended for the following reasons:
    - Ability to ensure business continuity on short notice both during business hours and after hours to ensure consistency with customer service response in the event of an emergency, declaration of natural disaster, or an event such as system failures that impacts Council's resources
    - Best value for money for Central Coast community based on per interaction cost of \$55
    - Ability to meet customer needs and expectations

## **4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)**

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- Continues to support additional employment with AHDO's undertaking the triage and emergency response, supported by an external call centre service that is specifically for emergency after hours and business continuity requirements. All calls can be easily diverted to an offsite provider during business hours as required regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency (such as telephony or internet failure) or to support customer service training. This option is not possible with an in-house service as there would be nowhere to divert customer calls and in the case of a telephone or IT outage customers could not be served during business hours
- Service level that supports the needs of Central Coast.

Council provides essential emergency After Hours Call Centre services to support the community for a range of services such as roads, drainage, water and sewer and other services where an emergency call out is required 24/7. Council also provides an online service request for customers available 24/7 for non-urgent issues that can be responded during business hours.

Based on the analysis of two service models for delivery of the emergency and After Hours Call Centre service, and the comparisons with other local government areas, along with the expectations of delivery of a cost effective service and meeting business continuity, it is proposed that Model 2 is the preferred option to meet the needs of the community.

### **Financial Impact**

The 2019/20 Budget allocation for call centre service to support the After Hours Emergency Service is \$350,000 per year.

Should Council consider Model 1 the total cost to implement an internal call centre service for after hours would be approximately \$1,350,000 per year. There has been no provision in the 2019/20 year to accommodate a significant increase in costs to provide this service.

### **Link to Community Strategic Plan**

Theme 4: Responsible

### **Goal G: Good governance and great partnerships**

R-G4: Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services.



## 4.2 After Hours Call Centre Service - Alternative Service Delivery Models (contd)

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### Risk Management

Risks have been identified in the review of the alternative models and have clearly outlined the requirement of the preferred model to meet business continuity.

Risks of Model 1 - *In-house 24/7 Customer Service Call Centre*:

- Expensive operating costs with significantly less value for money for the community
- Customer experience in response level, with only one to two staff able to answer calls if there was a larger emergency or water main break the volume of calls would be challenging for staff to respond in a timely manner, no scalability
- No business continuity or ability to service customers regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency or infrastructure failure
- No ability to divert customer calls during business hours in the case of a telephony outage or as required to support the ability to ensure appropriate customer service training and refresher training to be undertaken by frontline staff
- In the likelihood of emergency or major disaster, with no building or equipment access, staff may be unable to deliver operations required to support call centre services
- Volume of calls would not necessitate the cost to deliver the service with on average 17 calls per night of which 12 are escalated to AHDOs.

Risks of Model 2 - *Outsourced Call Centre + After-Hours Duty Officers – current arrangement*:

- Responses provided by external provider reliant on accurate script provided by Council business areas.
- External provider experiences a system or phone issue
- AHDOs experience high number of escalations during an emergency.

Further risk to Council in undertaking a month to month procurement arrangement is the likelihood of cost increases or unexpected termination of service by external provider.

### Critical Dates / Time Frames

Council is currently serviced on a month to month basis outside of a contract arrangement. This is a significant risk if not formalised to secure pricing and continuity of service provision.

### Attachments

1	After Hours Call Centre Service Model Review October 2019	Provided Under Separate Cover	D13717851
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# **After Hours Call Centre Service Model Review**

**22 October 2019  
Final**

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## Purpose

This report has been undertaken in response to a Council Resolution from its Ordinary Meeting on 26 November 2018. The purpose of this Review is to provide Council with a report on alternative delivery models for the After-Hours Call Centre Service.

## Background

In 2014, both the former Wyong Shire and Gosford City Council moved to outsourced after-hours service providers following reviews of their respective after hour service. Both former Councils identified that the best value for money would be for a contracted After Hours Call Centre Service to manage customer calls outside of business hours, during emergency outages and on public holidays providing the customers with information, lodging service requests to be actioned during business hours, direct emergency calls to Council staff and record all interactions with customers and provide reports on what calls were received after hours.

Up until late 2018 this after-hours service was provided by two separate suppliers until a tender for a single supplier could be issued. At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 November 2018 it was resolved to place the tender for an after-hours service provider on hold so that a report on alternative models could be developed. While the tender was placed on hold and the report on alternative models was developed, the after-hours service was consolidated and is currently provided by one existing supplier on a month to month basis.

Desktop research was undertaken with a view to identify local suppliers however no call management service providers were located in the Central Coast region. Of the call centres located on the Central Coast, none of them provided a call answer service outside of their specific organisation (ie NRMA, NIB, ING).

Oracle CMS, supplier to the former Wyong Shire Council, was chosen to provide the service and commenced provision of after-hours call centre service to the entire Central Coast from early April 2019.

## Current Service

Council's current after-hours service provision is primarily in place to manage emergency calls to Council outside of business hours (including weekends and public holidays). The Call Centre Service, currently Oracle CMS, triages calls and escalates as required to After Hours Duty Officers (AHDOs) in the case of emergencies related to water and sewer, roads and drainage, facilities and other activities. If the call is not deemed to be an emergency, the Call Centre Service logs customer requests for action during business hours based on a service matrix provided by Council.

Council's service level is determined by the different business areas in accordance with Council requirements, as well as relevant legislation and regulations for example, as set out by EPA, the Roads Act, Companion Animals Act and IPART.

The current arrangement is delivered by Oracle CMS, in conjunction with After Hours Duty Officers, for an approximate yearly cost of \$350,000 which can vary depending on external factors such as serious weather events impacting the region where additional trades or council staff are required to attend.

- The number of calls received after hours by Central Coast Council fluctuates depending on weather conditions and various infrastructure failures and emergency activities.
- The average number of calls received during a 12 month period is 6,300 or 17 calls daily after hours of which 12 would be required to be escalated to AHDOs.

Average per month - weekdays			
7am – 8am	8am – 9am	5pm – 6pm	6pm – 7pm
165	1237	222	77

- The majority of calls between 7am to 8am are in relation to Water and Sewer (80-90%)
- The majority of calls between 8am to 9am are general enquiries and of those most of the calls are between 8:30 to 9am as these are the known business hours of Council.

## Customer Expectations

Customer expectations for high quality services continue to evolve. Changing lifestyles and the emergence of the 24/7 access increasingly means that many customers expect local government services to change to support their changing needs and to be accessible how, where and when they wish to access them; and for Councils to deliver services in a more cohesive manner.

With customer expectations high there is also an understanding that not every service available during business hours will also be available out of hours. With this in mind the after-hours customer support delivery is focused on emergencies only, so that they are immediately actioned, and other requests processed as normal on the next working day or via improved customer channels, such as increased online capabilities and additional face to face customer service points which are currently being investigated by Council to improve customer service delivery overall.

To date complaints received in relation to Council's after-hours service levels are rare with only one formal complaint about service level after hours received in the last 12 months. This low number indicates overall satisfaction with and understanding of Council's after-hours service provision.

## Customer Experience Survey 2019

Recent findings from the Customer Experience Survey 2019 undertaken by Micromex highlighted the following in relation to customer service:

- 72% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied with how their contact with Council was handled
- 59% in the last 12 months contacted Council by phone
- 89% indicated their preferred method for future contact with Council would be by phone (14% increase compared to 2018 results)
- 67% expected action of urgent issues in one business day or less
- 68% of respondents expected non-urgent issues to be actioned in 5 business days or less.

While the survey indicated general satisfaction with how Council handled their contact and their expectations were met the majority of the time, it was not specific to the after-hours service delivery.

## Comparisons with other Councils

To inform options or alternatives for After-Hours Customer Call Service Delivery 10 councils were contacted.

- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Wollongong City Council
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Inner West Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- City of Casey (Vic)
- City of Greater Geelong (VIC)

There were two models in use by the Councils contacted - outsourced to an after-hours call centre service provider or an in-house call centre 24/7 solution.

The only council providing an in-house call centre service was Brisbane City Council. They have operated an in-house model for some years which is resourced by nearly 200 staff. However, Brisbane City Council is not a recognised water authority. They have a population of over one million people and provide 24-hour service for general and urgent Council enquiries as well as a dedicated business support hotline providing information on a range of Council topics including licensing, development applications, business opportunities and procurement.

All other Councils contacted outsourced their after-hours call centre service, which focussed primarily on emergencies, and was supported by a range of various staff arrangements

including After Hours Duty Officers – similar to the current model undertaken at Central Coast Council.

The main reason for most councils outsourcing their after-hours call centre service was due to cost effectiveness and value for money for ratepayers as well as to ensure business continuity during outages and major emergencies. The nine of the 10 councils contacted were satisfied with the quality of service provided by their chosen external providers.

The main difference between Central Coast Council and the other councils contacted is that while other councils provide water service they are not classed as water utility providers and therefore are only subject to the Local Government Act in relation to water. Their water business is based on a cost recovery model and not subject to IPART regulations. Central Coast Council is required to adhere to IPART regulations as well as the Local Government Act and therefore required to action water and sewer emergencies immediately and report them appropriately to IPART while other council areas may not be held to the same requirements. This is one of the critical reasons for the requirement to have an effective after-hours process in place. The only other council subject to both IPART and the Local Government Act is Broken Hill City Council who have a customer base of 10,000.

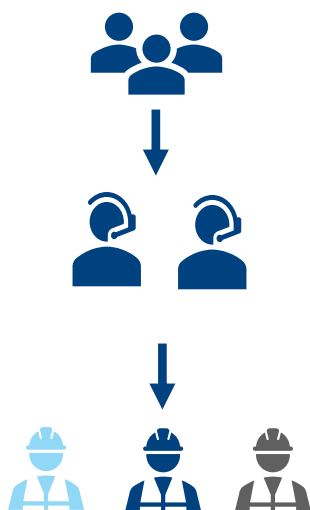
## Delivery Model Options

In reviewing the current service, which is emergencies only, call volumes and times equating to an average of 6,300 per year after-hours (or 17 per night), customer expectations and comparisons with other Council areas, the models below have been assessed based on the following:

- Ability to ensure business continuity on short notice both during business hours and after hours to ensure consistency with customer service response in the event of an emergency, declaration of natural disaster, or an event such as system failures that impacts Council's resources
- Best value for money for ratepayers
- Better customer access for emergencies and consideration for residents who work or commute
- Ability for Council to meet customer needs and expectations.

### Model 1

#### Model 1: In-house 24/7 Customer Service Call Centre



Customer calls:

- **5pm to 8:30am** weekdays
- Saturdays and Sundays
- Public holidays

In-house **24/7** call centre:

- Determine urgency and required actions
- Contact on-call officers from relevant business areas if an emergency
- Supports business continuity
- Lodge service request for non-emergency

On-call officer response:

- Determine requirements and action as required based on business area after hours processes
- Close service request once completed

#### Benefits

- All customer calls answered directly by Council night-shift call centre staff
- 6 additional night shift call centre staff required to allow coverage for annual leave, sick leave, etc. - these would be new positions.

The proposed roster for this model would be as follows and subject to the Local Government Award and penalty rates of between 20 – 50%:



	Start	Finish	Total hours	Staff required	Number of shifts / staff	Hours for each shift (approximate)
Monday pm	17:00	8:30	15.5	4	2 shifts of 2	7.75
Tuesday	17:00	8:30	15.5	4	2 shifts of 2	7.75
Wednesday	17:00	8:30	15.5	4	2 shifts of 2	7.75
Thursday	17:00	8:30	15.5	4	2 shifts of 2	7.75
Friday	17:00	0:00	7	2	1 shifts of 2	7
Saturday	0:00	0:00	24	6	3 shifts of 2	8
Sunday	0:00	0:00	24	6	3 shifts of 2	8
Monday am	0:00	8:30	8.5	2	1 shifts of 2	8.5
Public Holidays	0:00	0:00	24	6	3 shifts of 2	8

NOTE: Based on current volume of after hours calls, 17 per night, this would equate to 4 calls per staff member per night.

### Risks or challenges

- No business continuity or ability to service customers in the case of a wide-spread emergency or council only emergency such as an IT failure or phone outage either during or outside of business hours. This was experienced In July and August 2019 with one phone outage lasting over two hours during which customers could not contact Council. Due to the external provider being available calls were immediately diverted and customer calls continued to be answered with no break in service
- No ability to divert customer calls as required to support call over flow during unexpected high call volumes during business hours or during customer service training or unavailability
- Expensive service delivery option when call volume after-hours is low - 17 calls per night would equate to four calls per rostered staff member per night
- Customer response level may be a challenge in times of large scale emergency due to limited ability to scale up. An outsourced call centre has the scalability to meet unexpected increases to call volumes and have capacity to scale up or own immediately
- Volume of calls does not warrant the cost to deliver the service with on average 17 calls per night of which 12 would be escalated to AHDOs. Based on these figures and the number of staff per night shift it would equate to four calls per staff member between 5pm and 8:30am
- Long periods of annual leave or sick leave could impact staff availability to resource required hours and maintain customer service expectation levels.

Costs

**\$1,350,000 per year** - includes penalty rates as applicable per the Local Government Award 2014 and on-call supervisor costs and After-Hours Duty Officer costs.

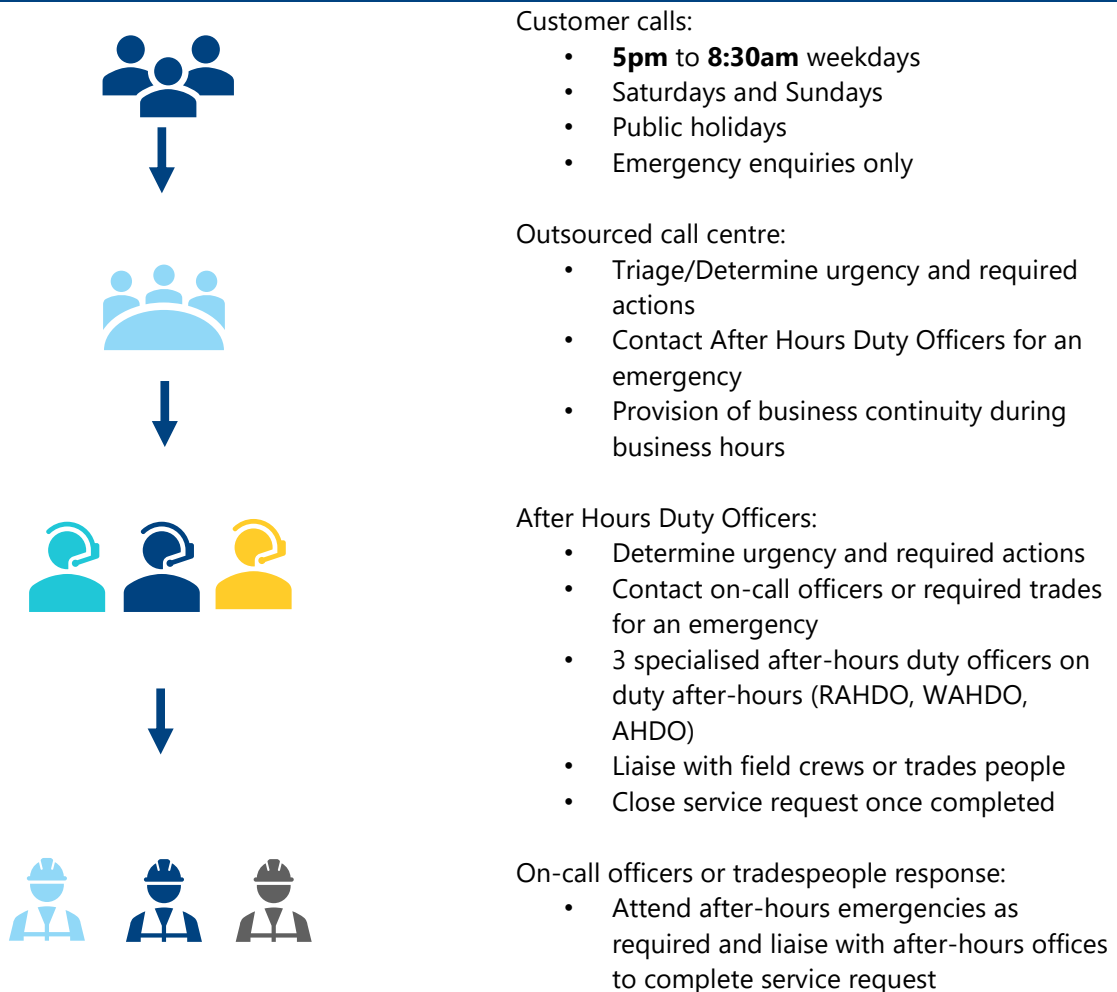
Does not include:

- Costs for additional on call staff as required or any trade or contractors costs that may be required
- Infrastructure / IT/ workplace requirements or compliance with 'work from home' requirements. Potentially up to \$3,000 per new call centre agent (one off cost to start).

This Average cost per interaction / call (based on 6,300 calls per year): **\$214.**

## Model 2

### Model 2: Outsourced After Hours Customer Call Service + After-hours Duty Officers



### Benefits

- Business continuity – ability to service customers regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency or infrastructure failure after-hours
- Scalability due to external provider operating models which can be easily scaled up or down to meet unexpected high or low call volumes
- All calls can be easily diverted to an offsite provider during business hours as required regardless of situation whether wide-spread emergency or council only emergency (such as telephony, systems or IT failure)
- More cost effective option based on low call volumes compared to after-hours in-house call centre.

## Risks or challenges

- External provider are not Council or Central Coast experts. However, this is mitigated as the After-hours Duty Officers are and can effectively action and manage any required services or trades to attend emergencies
- Responses provided by external provider reliant on accurate script provided by council business areas
- External provider experiences a system or phone issue.

## Costs

**\$350,000 per year** includes cost of external service provider and penalty rates as applicable per the Local Government Award 2014 and on-call supervisor costs and AHDO costs.

Does not include:

- Costs for additional on call staff as required (managed though Local Government Award as 'on-call or 'call back' or any trade or contractor s costs that may be required
- Costs for required IT equipment for AHDOs such as laptops and mobile phones. Up to \$3000 per AHDO if laptop or mobiles not already issued by Council as part of their regular roles

This Average cost per interaction / call: **\$55.**

## Recommended Model

The recommendation is to continue with the current arrangement as outlined in Model 2, with further refined After-Hours Duty Officer roles specific to relevant business and issue a Tender for an external provider.

### After Hour Duty Officer roles:

Specific after-hours escalation contacts for Roads and Drainage (RAHDO) and Water and Sewer (WAHDO) plus a generalist AHDO to coordinate actions in the case of an emergency outside of Roads and Drainage or Water and Sewer.

The refined roles are currently being implemented to improve the customer experience and simplify the escalation contacts for the external service provider ensuring better clarity and immediate action of urgent enquiries. Currently the escalation contacts can be complex with different AHDOs having to take all escalations while others only take general escalations.

Only three after-hour duty officers would be rostered at any one time:

- 1 x RAHDO for all roads related emergencies
- 1 x WAHDO for all water and sewer related emergencies
- 1 x AHDO for general emergencies not related to roads or water and sewer

There is no other change to AHDO roles other than a refinement of responsibilities.

### **Cost comparison over a three period of the models presented:**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2 (recommended)</b>
Staff required for call centre	6	0
Salaries per year	\$1,080,000	\$0
After-Hours Duty Officer allowance	\$270,000	\$270,000
Service provider	\$0	\$80,000
Business Continuity Support	No	Yes
Costs for 1 year	\$1,350,000	\$ 350,000
Costs over 3 years	<b>\$4,050,000</b>	<b>\$1,050,000</b>
Cost per call/interaction (6,300 per year)	\$214	\$55

Note: The above does not include costs for on call officers or trades for specific requirements in Water and Sewer or Roads and Drainage or any other business area to respond (managed through Local Government Award as 'on-call or 'call back').

## Summary

The recommended model is the most cost-effective after-hours customer call service solution that meets the expectations and need of the Central Coast community while still providing value for money, specifically:

- Ability to ensure business continuity on short notice both during business hours and after hours to ensure consistency with customer service response in the event of an emergency, declaration of natural disaster, or an event such as system failures that impacts Council's resources
- An outsourced call centre service is the best value for money as providers are better equipped to deal with varying call volumes and suppliers in this field generally manage contracts for multiple companies which reduce costs through economies of scale. The internal staff undertaking various roles to deliver on the emergency responses provides additional employment options for staff currently employed by Central Coast Council
- Comparison of other Councils identified this option as consistent with and preferred by most other councils
- More and more customers are accessing online services when interacting with other businesses and organisations – they have an expectation that this should also be the case for interacting with Council – specifically in the case of an emergency. A review of current online customer service offering, and continued improvement of online services will provide customers with the ability to undertake council business without the need to call or visit Council for non-emergencies
- Improved information on Council's out of hours service level and potentially better ability to better cater for residents who work and/or commute.

## Next steps

- Review after-hours service matrix to ensure updates are incorporated
- Commence tender process for an after-hours service provider
- Continue communications to raise awareness of Council service levels after-hours.