

## Abusive Customers

Unacceptable behaviours from all parties:

- Any act of written or verbal abuse, including those of a discriminatory nature
- Threatening behaviour or intimidation
- Serious or persistent harassment
- Damage to property; or
- Behaviour that causes anyone to feel upset, threatened, frightened or physically at risk.

Any interaction with members of the community where any of the above behaviours are used, the communication may be terminated immediately by the Officer. If face to face, the Officer should walk away. If on a telephone, the Officer may terminate the call. If in email, the address may be blocked.

If an Officer feels threatened by the language or behaviour of the customer, he/she may notify the Police as soon as possible and notify the Chief Executive Officer.

There may be occasions when

- The issue(s) a person has cannot be dealt with to their satisfaction and it is not possible for Council officers to continue to respond; or
- Correspondence contains personal abuse or offensive language is used. In these cases, it may be decided to limit or cease responses to the person. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing to the person.

## Freedom of Information (FOI)

Please see our information statement for information on applications and process. If you are unsure whether you need to lodge an application, or for further information, please contact us.

## Vexatious Complaints

All complaints received by the shire will be treated with the utmost seriousness; however, if a complaint is found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer, then no further action will be taken on the complaint. The customer will be informed of this decision in writing by the CEO.

## Anonymous Complaints

While we will receive anonymous complaints, we will generally only act on them where the matter is considered to be serious and there is sufficient information in the complaint to enable an investigation to be undertaken.

## Protection of Customer

We will take all care to ensure that the reporting of complaints will not result in a customer experiencing any form of victimisation or retribution as a result of the complaint

**When a customer visits or telephones** - we will attend the counter and answer the telephone promptly, courteously and deal with an enquiry directly. If we cannot deal with the enquiry we will provide the customer with the name of the person the request or enquiry will be referred to or, will request the relevant person to contact the customer directly. Telephone calls will be returned at the first opportunity however where information is not readily available verbal enquiries will be answered within one (1) working day.

**When a customer writes** - we will respond to all written requests or enquiries within five (5) working days of receipt. Our response will be either in full, or as an acknowledgement outlining the name of the person handling the matter. Such acknowledgement may be by telephone or in writing as appropriate. All correspondence will be as prompt as possible, courteous and written in plain English.

**When a customer emails** - we will respond to all written requests or enquiries within one (1) working days of receipt. Our response will be either in full, or as an acknowledgement outlining the name of the person handling the matter. Such acknowledgement may be by telephone or in writing as appropriate. All correspondence will be as prompt as possible, courteous and written in plain English.

## Reporting

The Chief Executive Officer is to provide Council with a report of the number and nature of complaints received.

## Availability

This Customer Service Charter is available:

- For public inspection at the Shire Office during normal office hours; and
- On the Council's Web-site free of charge.

## Review

This Customer Service Charter is to be reviewed at least once every two years.



## Our Commitment To Customer Service

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley is committed to the provision of timely, efficient, consistent and quality services provided by polite and helpful Officers that meet our customer's expectations. Our aim at all times is to provide a quality service. By knowing what to expect, our customers can monitor our performance, provide feedback on how we measure up and ensure we deliver on our undertakings. We may not be able to provide complete satisfaction but we will always strive for the best possible solution.

As part of our commitment to you, we will:

- Respect, listen and care for you and your concerns
- Identify ourselves in all communication with you
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality
- Aim to communicate clearly and in plain language
- Be positive and receptive to new ideas
- Take a fair, balanced and long-term approach with our decisions
- Provide relevant and up-to-date information relating to our services via our website and publications

## Our Vision

*"A friendly and diverse place with awesome opportunities"*

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley aspires to:

- Be the best Local government for our community
- Work hand in hand with our community
- Be a leader of small local governments by
  - Fostering community spirit and cohesion
  - Excellent customer service
  - Provision of high quality facilities and services
  - Representing community views at an influential level

In dealing with Individuals, landowners, the community and organisations the Council will:

- Be fair
- Be honest, open and accountable
- Respect the views and rights of individuals and groups
- Be receptive as everyone in the community counts
- Will recognise the increased awareness that a small community brings
- Will provide an atmosphere of energy, excitement, optimism and positiveness
- Will facilitate group discussion and help to overcome stumbling blocks and conflict.

## How you can contact us

You can contact us to make an enquiry, lodge a customer service request or a complaint:

DERBY

In Person Council's Offices at 30 Loch Street, Derby

By Phoning 08 9191 0999

8:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday

By Email to [sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au](mailto:sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au)

By Post to PO Box 94, Derby WA 6728

Via the Internet by visiting our website at [www.sdwk.wa.gov.au](http://www.sdwk.wa.gov.au)

FITZROY CROSSING

Flynn Drive Fitzroy Crossing

08 9191 5355

8:30am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday

## OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

At all times we aim to:

- Treat customers courteously and with respect
- Deal with customers in a polite and helpful manner
- Listen to customers and take their views into account
- Provide customers with necessary and relevant information
- Treat customers fairly and take account of the customer's particular needs
- Act on our commitments in a timely manner
- Value customers privacy by treating all personal information confidentially
- Leave a "visit card" with our name and contact number following a visit to a customer's residence if that customer is absent at the time
- Be punctual for meetings and appointments

**Who is a customer?** A customer is any person or organisation having dealings with the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE CUSTOMER

To make our job easier in providing our services we ask customers to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect
- Respect the privacy, safety and needs of other members of the community
- Provide accurate and complete details
- Provide your current contact details and advise us if they change
- Phone to make an appointment for a complex enquiry or a need to see a specific Officer
- Phone the Officer nominated on correspondence sent to the customer and quoting the correspondence number on the letter
- Work with us to solve problems; and
- Provide us with feedback so we can deliver a better service.

## COMPLAINTS

There are many types of complaints; however, a formal complaint must be in writing.

### What is a formal complaint?

A formal complaint is a written expression of dissatisfaction with a decision (outside of a structured process), level or quality of service, or behaviour of an employee or agent, which can be investigated and acted upon.

A structured process is where legislation (Act, Regulation, Rule or By-law) specifically makes provision for an appeal, internal or external review of a decision.

### What is not a formal complaint?

Examples of matters that are not formal complaints are:

- A request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for a service)
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure
- Disagreement with a Council policy
- A request for review of a decision for which a structured process applies
- An expression concerning the general direction or performance of the Council or Councillors
- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure; and
- Reports about noise, dogs, nuisances, unauthorised building work or similar issues that fall into the regulatory aspect of Council's service.

Many issues raised are called "complaints" because the customer is unhappy about the situation. However, they are simply issues dealt with by Council on a day-to-day basis, are not formal complaints and do not form part of the formal complaints management process

### Complaints Management Process

A senior officer of the relevant department is responsible for handling complaints. While most issues can usually be resolved at an early stage, there are times when they require detailed investigation. If a complaint is of a very serious nature, or is a complaint about the supervisor it will be directed to the Chief Executive Officer. Irrespective of the manner in which the complaint was received a response to the complaint can be expected within twenty (20) working days. If a Councillor has submitted a complaint on a customer's behalf we will also try to respond to the Councillor within twenty (20) working days. There are times when it is not possible to meet this deadline, eg. Where a complaint is a complex one and Councillors are to be briefed on the outcome of the investigations. In these cases we will endeavour to keep the customer informed of progress

## Consideration of a Complaint

In considering a complaint the relevant officer or Chief Executive Officer will:

- Examine and analyse the information already available and follow up points requiring clarification
- Look at the Council Policies which might have a bearing on the complaint
- Consider whether or not the Council is at fault
- Consider any necessary action to be taken to correct the faults identified; and
- Consider a review of the Council's procedures to avoid recurrence of any similar complaint in the future if necessary.

## Type of complaint

An informal complaint may be lodged verbally (by telephone or at the counter) and may be responded to verbally by phoning or by meeting with the relevant officer to discuss the complaint.

If the complaint relates to a complex matter or there is no resolution from discussing the matter with the relevant Officer, a statement should be made in writing setting out the complaint as simply as possible.

To assist in dealing with your complaint a customer should include the following if relevant:

- Date, times and location of events
- What happened
- To whom the customer has spoken (names, position in the Council and dates); Copies or references to letter or documents relevant to the complaint; and
- State what the customer hopes to achieve as an outcome to the complaint.

## What if a customer is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint?

The Shire is confident that it can resolve the majority of complaints received; however, we understand that we may not be able to satisfy every customer on every occasion. Sometimes Local government has to make difficult and complex decisions involving many people and individual customers to no get the outcome they would prefer.

If a complaint remains unresolved or a customer is dissatisfied with our process in dealing with a complaint other avenues remain for the customer to explore which include.

<b>Ombudsman Western Australia</b> The Ombudsman investigates complaints about State government departments, agencies and boards; government services such as hospitals, prisons, schools, and also Local governments. The Ombudsman will generally ask that you try to resolve the complaint first with the public authority involved	PO Box Z5386 PERTH WA 6831 Tel: 08 9220 7555 Web: <a href="http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au">www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au</a> Email: <a href="mailto:mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au">mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries</b> The Department of Local Government Standards Panel deals with complaints about Council members who it is alleged have committed a breach of one or more of the provisions of the Local Government (Official Conduct) Act Rules of Conduct Regulations. The Standards Panel has no jurisdiction to deal with complaints made against Local government employees.	GPO Box R1250 PERTH WA 6844 Tel: 08 6551 8700 Web: <a href="http://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au">www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@dlgsc.wa.gov.au">info@dlgsc.wa.gov.au</a>
Elected State politician responsible for the relevant ministerial portfolio.	

*While a customer is entitled to refer a complaint directly to these Bodies at any time, customers are encouraged to allow the Shire the opportunity to resolve the complaint in the first instance*

