

Customer Service Charter



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CEO Signature			Date 01/05/23
Responsible Officer and Unit	Coordinator Customer Service		
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Last Endorsement Date	27 November 2019		
Next Endorsement Date	26 April 2026		

Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Scope	3
Definitions	3
Commitment	5
Our service standards	5
If you have feedback, we encourage you to inform us	7
How to contact us	7
Other ways you can contact us	8
Contacting Councillors	8
What you can expect from us	8
What we expect of you	9
What we will not tolerate	9
Making a complaint	10
Requests which are the responsibility of other agencies	10
Reporting	10
Privacy	10
References	11
Related policies	11
Related legislation	11
Other references	12

Introduction

Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council) is committed to providing a high standard of customer service. We welcome your compliments, complaints and feedback regarding any Council service, program or policy/plan/strategy, because we understand that customer service is improved through customer feedback and review.

Purpose

The purpose of the Customer Service Charter (the Charter) is to explain how we provide and maintain a high standard of customer service and to define:

- timeframes for responding to phone calls, emails, social media enquiries, requests for service and complaints
- what you can reasonably expect from Council officers and what we reasonably expect of you
- how we will manage requests for service consistently
- how we will record and analyse customer contact data to identify trends and opportunities where we can improve our services
- how we will respond to requests which are the responsibility of other agencies
- how we will protect your privacy when you contact Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers and third party contractors carrying out services on Council's behalf.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Acknowledgement	Contact made with a customer by staff, to confirm that their enquiry, request for service, feedback, compliment or complaint has been received, and (where relevant) indicate when a resolution can be expected.
Compliment	An expression of satisfaction with the quality of action taken or service provided by Council.
Complaint	For the purpose of this charter, in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , a complaint is defined as:

	<p>“...the communication, whether orally or in writing, to the Council by a person of their dissatisfaction with—</p> <p>(a) the quality of an action taken, decision made or service provided by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council; or</p> <p>(b) the delay by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council in taking an action, making a decision or providing a service; or</p> <p>(c) a policy or decision made by a Council or a member of Council staff or a contractor.”</p>
Customer	Person(s) of any age, including children and young people, who access or utilise our services, including someone who receives services from Council or communicates with Council in relation to Council services, policies or decisions.
Enquiry	An act of asking for information regarding Council’s operations, programs and services.
Feedback	<p>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.</p> <p>Feedback can also be an idea, suggestion or opinion on how Council could improve its services.</p> <p>For the purpose of performance reporting and data analysis, negative feedback about Council will be recorded as a complaint.</p>
Resolution	Where staff provide a customer with an answer in relation to an enquiry, request for service or complaint.
Request for service	Contact with Council to seek assistance, to request access to a service, or to inform/make a report about something for which the Council has responsibility.
Services	Actions that provide assistance to Council’s customers such as rubbish removal, kindergarten, footpath maintenance, planning, permits and animal management.
Staff	All employees, contractors and volunteers employed or engaged by Council. Does not include Councillors.
Unreasonable customer conduct	Behaviour which, because of its nature or frequency, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council, other service users and/or the customer themselves. This includes behaviour which may be considered frivolous or vexatious in nature.

Commitment

We are committed to:

- providing prompt, friendly, courteous and efficient customer service
- improving our customer service by benchmarking and identifying new technologies to improve accessibility, efficacy, transactional ease and overall customer experience
- using systems which are customer friendly and efficient
- actively seeking your feedback on our services to make sure they meet your needs
- addressing barriers that impact diverse and vulnerable people from accessing services
- creating environments where all people, including children and young people are heard, valued and protected from harm and abuse
- enabling access to information and supporting customers to seek information.

Our service standards

The following standards are used to measure the quality of customer service:

Incoming contact method	Acknowledgement	Response	Resolution	Outgoing contact method
In person	Served within 5 minutes Where relevant staff member is unavailable, an acknowledgement will be provided within 3 working days	Response with details on how the enquiry or request is progressing is provided within 10 working days	Resolution communicated within 28 working days For complex matters where action to be taken will exceed 28 working days, updates will be provided at least once per month Staff will advise as soon as practical if these timeframes cannot be met	Where possible and appropriate, the customer will be asked what their preferred contact method is for responses If no preference is stated, staff will determine the most appropriate contact method for response, based on the nature of the enquiry and the contact details provided by the customer
Phone call	Call answered within 30 seconds Where relevant staff member is unavailable, an acknowledgement will be provided within 3 working days			
Mail	Acknowledgement from relevant staff member provided or			

	sent within 3 working days of receipt			
Email	Automatic acknowledgement on receipt when email sent to mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au or Acknowledgement from relevant staff member provided within 3 working days			
Website form	Acknowledgement from relevant staff member provided within 3 working days			
Social media	<p>Council's social media accounts are monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday. General enquiries are answered within 2 working days. More complex enquiries may take up to 10 working days for an answer to be provided.</p> <p>For privacy reasons, if an enquiry requires the disclosure of personal information, customers are encouraged to contact Council via the methods outlined above. For urgent enquiries or requests for service, customers are encouraged to call Council on 03 5422 0333.</p>			
Third party app or other online service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council supports the reporting of issues via the third party app Snap Send Solve. Such reports will be acknowledged to within 3 working days and a resolution communicated within 28 working days. For complex matters where action to be taken will exceed 28 working days, updates will be provided at least once per month ● Council's Governance Rules detail the requirements and processes to be followed in relation to electronic and online petitions. 			
Requests and enquiries subject to statutory requirements	<p>A number of requests and / or enquiries to Council are subject to statutory requirements and timelines, as determined by relevant legislation. The above service standards do not apply to such requests and enquiries, which include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning permit applications ● Freedom of Information requests ● Public interest disclosures ● Infringement appeals 			

While some enquiries and requests will be prioritised according to urgency, all effort will be made to meet these service standards.

If you have feedback, we encourage you to inform us

- when you have received a high standard of customer service
- if you believe we fell short in our service in any aspect, so we have opportunities to improve.

How to contact us

In person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kyneton Administration Centre 129 Mollison Street, Kyneton• Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne• Romsey Community Hub 96–100 Main Road, Romsey• Woodend Service Centre Corner High and Forest Streets, Woodend <p>Opening hours are posted at all customer service centres and online at mrsc.vic.gov.au/contact</p>
Telephone (24 hours)	03 5422 0333 or 1300 656 577
Fax	03 5422 3623
Mail	PO Box 151, Kyneton Vic 3444
Email	mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Website	mrsc.vic.gov.au
National Relay Service	TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 5422 0333 Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 5422 0333 Internet relay users connect to the NRS (relayservice.com.au) and then ask for 03 5422 0333
Translating and Interpreting Service	Call TIS National on 131 450 or visit tisnational.gov.au

We are committed to ensuring accessibility to everyone contacting Council. Tell us if you have specific communication needs or barriers, and we can assist you by:

- talking with you if you have trouble reading or writing
- communicating with another person who is authorised to act on your behalf if you cannot make contact yourself

Other ways you can contact us

We invite you to:

- contact relevant staff directly, to discuss specific Council services and projects
- submit a question to be read and answered at a Council Meeting
- attend consultative and community forums involving Council
- participate in processes that will assist us to measure, evaluate and improve our customer service, e.g. surveys.

Contacting Councillors

You are welcome to get in touch with your local Councillors, and can find their contact details listed on Council's website at mrsc.vic.gov.au/councillors.

Councillors may be able to assist you with how to lodge a request for service, or refer you to the appropriate Council channel for your enquiry, feedback, complaint or compliment.

What you can expect from us

When you contact Council, you will receive a high standard of customer service:

- we will carefully listen to what you have to say to ensure we can determine the most appropriate way to address your request
- we will act with integrity and treat you with respect
- we will provide you with clear, accurate and timely information
- we will treat your personal information confidentially
- we will behave in a way that aligns with our values of honesty, accountability, innovation, respect and working together
- we will welcome your feedback on our services, our processes and our people.

What we expect of you

You can help us provide a high standard of customer service by:

- being honest and acting with integrity
- being courteous and respectful to our staff
- providing complete and accurate information about your request
- working with us to solve problems
- following Council's Complaints Policy when dissatisfied with our service
- making any accusations of misconduct in line with our Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure.

What we will not tolerate

- Shouting, threatening, undermining, harassing, bullying or intimidating behaviours
- Violence (physical and verbal) or aggression
- Abusive, inappropriate or discriminatory language or words of a derogatory or disparaging nature
- Use of inappropriate language in any form, including emails

Failure to meet these expectations will impact and/or compromise the level of service we are able to provide. It may trigger an internal investigation, and consideration of appropriate action to protect our staff, Councillors, customers and the public.

Council has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for our staff, customers and the public. As such, unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated.

In some cases, it may be deemed necessary to:

- cease the interaction, including ending phone calls or conversations
- ask you to leave a community forum/ feedback/information session/meeting
- escalate the matter to an appropriate staff member, or other regulatory body
- report inappropriate behaviour
- issue warnings to customers
- restrict contact options for customers
- suspend customers from accessing service centres or Council service facilities
- declare an individual as vexatious
- limit access to staff, including email addresses and phone extensions
- report the matter to Victoria Police.

Making a complaint

If you feel that the service we have provided to you has not met the terms of this Customer Service Charter, you may lodge a complaint. Complaints can be submitted via Council's website, email, mail, in person, over the phone, or by contacting a Councillor. For more information, please refer to our Complaints Policy, which outlines the procedures for the quick and effective actioning of complaints.

Requests which are the responsibility of other agencies

If we receive requests that are the responsibility of another agency, we will advise you of the agency and their contact details.

Reporting

We measure our customer service performance regularly. This demonstrates our commitment to reporting on our customer service standards. Data is collated and reported to our Executive Leadership Team monthly, as well as to Council Meetings quarterly.

Privacy

Council is committed to protecting your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

References

Related policies

- > Bullying Prevention Policy (internal)
- > Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- > Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- > Complaints Policy
- > Councillor Code of Conduct
- > Employee Code of Conduct (internal)
- > Early Years Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy (internal)
- > Governance Rules
- > Occupational Health and Safety Policy (internal)
- > Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy (internal)
- > Privacy Policy
- > Public Interest Disclosures Policy
- > Public Transparency Policy
- > Sexual Harassment Policy (internal)
- > Social Media Policy (internal)
- > Working Alone or In Isolation Policy (internal)

Related legislation

- > *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- > *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*
- > *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'wealth)*
- > *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic),*
- > *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*
- > *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*
- > *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- > *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- > *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 2017 (Vic)*
- > *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- > *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic)*
- > *Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)*
- > *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (C'wealth)*

Other references

- > Victorian Ombudsman - Councils and complaints - a good practice guide 2nd edition
- > Child Safe Standards 2022