



Complaints Management Policy

Policy Type: Operational Policy Policy Owner: Director Community Development	Policy No. OP-039 Last Review Date: 14/10/2020
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Policy Objectives

- Document the position of the City in relation to complaints handling
- Provide a framework to ensure that the complaints received by the City are managed efficiently, effectively and fairly from the time of receipt through to a satisfactory resolution or final determination of the matter.
- Enable the City to use complaint data to drive business improvement initiatives and increase the level of satisfaction with the delivery of services.
- Enhance community confidence in the City's general complaint process and the City's reputation for being transparent and accountable.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all complaints received from customers in relation to:

- A City policy, product, service, event or facility.
- The service provided by a City employee, elected member or a contractor.
- A third party who is under the jurisdiction of the City.

This policy and the principles within it, apply to all City staff, elected members and contractors of the City that receive and manage complaints.

This policy **does not apply** to the compliments, suggestions or the following matters:

- Complaints made by City staff that are employment related
- Feedback obtained during stakeholder and community engagement processes
- Enquiries and requests for specific information
- A request for service or action by the City (unless there was inaction or an unsatisfactory response to the initial request for service)
- Reports concerning neighbours or neighbouring properties

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- Matters currently being dealt with or have previously been dealt with by a court, tribunal or external complaints agency
- Matters that have already been subjected to an internal review and an outcome has been determined
- Report of any suspected minor or serious breach/misconduct by an individual elected member or employee

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply

Customer feedback includes any compliments or suggestions received from customers where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about products, services, staff or information provided by the City, or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legal required.

Complainant means the customer or any entity expressing dissatisfaction

Customer includes residents, rate payers, members of the public receiving advice, a service, using facilities, or engaging in a business relationship or any other person or organisation having an interest in the functions or activities of the City.

Request for Service is defined as the provision of a City service or an action required to address a problem. *For example, a customer at the Aquatic Centre tells a staff member there is no hot water in the shower. This is a request for service and the staff member must rectify the problem. If the problem is not rectified, and the customer must repeatedly ask for hot water over a several visits this may escalate into a complaint.*

Policy Statement

The City recognises that effective complaint handling is integral to customer service excellence, values all complaints and encourages a customer focused and proactive approach to complaints management.

The City recognises the right of customers to make complaints and considers complaint handling to be an essential part of serving its community in an accountable, open and transparent manner.

Responsibilities

The City staff, elected members and contractors of the City have the responsibility to:

- Manage all complaints courteously, professionally and efficiently.

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- Record all complaints, actions taken to resolve the complaint and correspondence in the City's Customer Request Management System (CRMS) and document management system (DMS).
- Provide information to the complainant about the complaint process
- Assist the complainant to effectively resolve the complaint in accordance with this policy and the City's Complaint Handling procedures.
- Provide information requested by the complainant, where appropriate.
- Provide information to the complainant as to their rights of appeal or review.
- Identify opportunities to minimise the chance of reoccurrence.

Complainants have a responsibility to:

- Provide enough information and detail about the complaint to ensure that complaint can be actioned.
- Treat the City staff with courtesy and respect
- Allow the City enough time to resolve the complaint within a reasonable timeframe
- Listen to the response provided by the City
- Identify if their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved

Where the complainant fails to meet their responsibilities, the City may set limits or conditions on the handling of their complaint. Any abuse, or threats to the safety or welfare of City staff will be handled under the City's Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Customers policy and may result in the immediate cessation of the complaint investigation and contact with the complainant will cease.

Anonymous Complaints

The City understands that some customers may wish to remain anonymous. Whilst anonymous complaints will not be rejected, they may limit the City's ability to fully investigate the matter and resolve the complaint. Where sufficient information is provided, the City will manage the complaint in accordance with the City's Complaint Handling policy and procedure. However, due to the anonymity, the City will be unable to provide any feedback on decisions made or action taken.

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Guiding principles

The City's handling of customer complaints is based on the City's values and is in line with the standards set by the Code of Conduct and Customer Service Charter.

The following guiding principles are adopted when handling complaints:

Customer Focus	The City is committed to effective complaints handling and values the opportunity for improvement through complaints.
Visibility	The City will ensure that the complaint handling policy and procedures are well publicised to customers, staff and other interested parties via the City's intranet, website and front counters.
Accessibility	The City is committed to making it easy for customers to raise complaints ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the process to raise a complaint is easy• assistance to those customers wishing to raise a complaint, including customers with special needs or requiring special needs assistance (including interpreters).
Accountability	Each City staff member at each level within the City is accountable for effective complaint handling in their area of responsibility. If staff do not have the necessary expertise or experience, they are to refer the complaint onto the next level of management within their team. Support for managing complaints can be sought at any time from the Customer Relations Improvement Officer.
Confidentiality	Confidentiality and privacy of complainants will be protected. Personal information collected in relation to a complaint will only be used for the purpose of addressing the feedback and any follow up actions.

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Responsiveness

To ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly, courteously, fairly and within established timeframes, staff in the department most relevant to the complaint are empowered to resolve complaints and will be provided the first opportunity to resolve complaints. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the relevant department, the complaint will be promptly escalated.

The City records all complaints in the City's CRMS for recording, tracking and responding to complaints to ensure that they are actioned appropriately and within agreed timeframes.

The following timelines will be complied with in respect to complaints

- Verbal / in-person complaints will be responded to immediately, if possible, providing a resolution to the customer
- Verbal / in-person complaints which must be referred to a manager, or other designated staff member will be acknowledged in accordance with the City's Customer Service Charter within 48 hours, and where possible, a timeframe by which resolution should be expected will be provided.
- Written complaints will be acknowledged in accordance with the City's Customer Service Charter within 48 hours, and where possible, a timeframe by which resolution should be expected will be provided.
- In accordance with the City's Customer Service Charter, all complaints will be resolved within 10 days
- For complaints that are complex in nature and are unable to be resolved within the 10 days, the City will provide update on the progress of the complaint, every 10 days in accordance with the City's Customer Service Charter.

Complainants will be kept informed regularly of the progress made to resolve their complaint, either by telephone, in writing or meeting in-person. If additional time is required, the complainant must be informed of the revised timeframe and reason for delay.



Fairness and Objectivity

All complaints will be addressed in a respectful, equitable, objective manner applying the principles of natural justice. Customers can log complaints without fear of retribution.

Remedies

If the complaint is upheld, the City will determine an appropriate remedy that is fair to both the complainant and to the City. The City will provide a formal response to the complainant detailing the remedies that are fair and reasonable in the circumstances. These may include:

- An apology
- A change to a City decision, documented, policies, procedures, products, service
- A conciliation process
- Provision of additional information
- Referral to another agency e.g. WA Ombudsman Office

Continual Improvement

The City will analyse the complaints data to identify and address recurring or systemic issues and used to improve service.

Charges

The City will not charge for dealing with complaints unless relevant legislation requires the City to charge a fee.



How to make a complaint

Customers can make a complaint via the following methods:

- Website: **www.melvillecity.com.au**
- Email: **melinfo@melville.wa.gov.au**
- Telephone: During business hours (Monday to Friday from 8:30am – 5:00pm):
1300 635 845 or **9364 0666**
- For hearing or speech impaired:
National Relay Service (TTY) 133 677
- For interpreting:
TIS National 130450
- In person: At any City of Melville facility and to any City staff, elected member or contractor of the City
- Mail: **City of Melville**
Locked Bag 1
BOORAGOON
WA 6954

References that may be applicable to this Policy

Legislative Requirements:

Procedures, Process Maps, Work Instructions:

Complaints Handling Procedure

Other Plans, Frameworks, Documents Applicable to Policy:

Customer Services Framework
Customer Feedback Operational Policy
The Australian Standards on Complaints Handling (ISO 10002:2006)

Customer Service Charter

Customer Service Charter for Our Contractors

Origin/Authority
Executive Management Team Meeting

5 August 2020

Reviews

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