

City of Melville Response to

**The Report on the Outcome of the  
Authorised Inquiry into the City of  
Melville, Recommendation 7**

## Executive Summary

The Director General of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries authorised an inquiry on 30 November 2017. The Terms of Reference directed the Inquiry to investigate the following aspects of the City of Melville (City) and its operations and affairs beginning 1 January 2015:

1. Council's relationship with the City of Melville administration
2. The adequacy of Council's Policies and Procedures, including, but not limited to:
  - a. the manner in which the City and Council deal with complaints from members of the public
  - b. management of public question time
  - c. public access to information, and
  - d. adherence to Council policies and procedures by the Council and City of Melville administration
3. Acquisition of land
4. Any other issues that are determined to be of relevance to the above.

The City received an embargoed copy of the Report of the Inquiry into the City of Melville on Wednesday 26 June 2019, with The Report being released on 27 June 2019 when the Minister for Local Government, Hon David Templeman MLA tabled The Report in State Parliament.

The Council considered the Report on the Outcome of the Authorised Inquiry into the City of Melville, which contained seven recommendations, at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 16 July 2019 where it resolved:

### **That the Council:**

1. **receives The Report ([5697 COM Inquiry Report](#)) of the Inquiry into the City of Melville, produced by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and tabled in State Parliament on 27 June 2019.**
2. **notes and supports the Recommendations 1,3,4,5,6 and 7 of The Report of the Inquiry into the City of Melville**
3. **supports Recommendation 2 and directs the Chief Executive Officer to expedite the engagement of an independent person to review and act on complaints about the City's processes and decisions for a period of 3 months from the date of engagement.**
4. **by Absolute Majority Decision approves a budget amendment to debit account 100.29105.7126.000 (Inquiry) and credit the Rates Equalisation Reserve Account (Funds to be used) 277.28129.7888.000 for the amount of \$150,000 to cover the costs of implementing the recommendations of The Report of the Inquiry into the City of Melville.**
5. **authorises the Chief Executive Officer to forward the minutes (this report and resolution of the Council) to the Minister for Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to meet the statutory obligation contained in Section 8.14(3) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.**

A Special Meeting of Electors was held on 12 August 2019, with the motions submitted at that meeting being considered at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 17 September 2019 where the following was endorsed unanimously:

**“4 directs the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and submit to the Minister for Local Government an addendum to the City’s response to the Director General, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries dated 28 July 2019, advising that the Council reiterates that it acknowledges and accepts that Ministers Templeman’s call for cultural change is appropriate and fully supported by the City.”**

Correspondence advising of the Council resolution was forwarded to the Minister for Local Government on 26 September 2019.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

**Council continue to review their public question time policy on a regular basis to ensure it is clear, concise, and transparent**

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 11 December 2018, the Council resolved to adopt Council Policy CP-014 – Public Question Time at Council and Committee Meetings as follows:

**That the Council:**

1. **Approves the implementation of the new Council Policy CP-014 – Public Question Time at Council and Committee Meetings**  
**5657 Public Question Time Policy subject to the following amendments:**
  - **Insert the following sentence at the end of the section “Responses to Questions” on pg 2:**  
***“Questions on notice will be provided to Elected Members in written form by email before the start of the meeting so they have the opportunity to read through and follow the questions whilst they are being read out during Question Time.”***
  - **After the words ‘previous meeting’ at the end of the last bullet point in the section ‘Assessment of Questions’ insert the following:**  
***“..., where the answers to those questions have not changed...”***
  - **At the end of the last sentence in the section ‘Assessment of Questions’ insert the following new sentence:**  
***“No distinction will be made between questions on the basis of whether they relate to ‘operational’ or ‘strategic’ matters.”***
  - **That the paragraph “Questions that do not comply with this policy” be amended to read .....**  
***“Questions from members of the public that do not comply with this policy, the City of Melville Meeting Procedure Local Law 2017 or the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations may be ruled out of order and the question will not be recorded in the minutes.”***
2. **Directs that the new policy be implemented at the commencement of the 2019 Schedule of Council meetings; and**
3. **That the Amendments proposed at the February 2018 Ordinary Meeting of Council be deemed to have been dealt with.**

A copy of the policy as amended by the above resolution is available on the City’s website [Council Policy Question Time At Committee and Council Meetings](#)

The new policy was implemented from 1 February 2019, with information available on the City’s website ([www.melvillecity.com.au/our-city/our-council/council-meetings/public-question-time](http://www.melvillecity.com.au/our-city/our-council/council-meetings/public-question-time)) and was supported through the implementation of a revised form for the submission of questions and revised internal processes to meet the policy requirements.

It is noted that the new Policy no longer draws a distinction between questions to be answered by the Administration outside of the meeting process or questions to be answered at a Council meeting.

Below is the trend for public questions (with and without notice) under the new policy for 2019, which shows a substantial decrease when compared to the statistics during the Authorised Inquiry.

<b>2019</b>	<b>Public Questions With Notice (No. of Questioners)</b>	<b>Public Questions Without Notice (No. of Questioners)</b>
January	Recess	
February	3 (1)	7 (3)
March	3 (1)	17 (3)
March SMC	14 (1)	0
April	0	7 (2)
May	15 (2)	1 (1)
June	14 (2)	0
July	4 (1)	0
August	2 (1)	16 (1)
September	0	9 (1)
October	0	7 (2)
November	15(1)	2 (1)
November SMC	8 (1)	0
December	13 (1)	3 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>67</b>

(SMC – Special Meeting of Council)

Whilst there has been a substantial reduction in the volume of questions being asked in 2019, it can be seen above that certain members of the public still have an expectation that they will have the opportunity to ask multiple questions. There is also an expectation by some that lengthy preambles will be read aloud at the meeting and recorded in the minutes. The City is however dealing with these matters in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, *City of Melville Meeting Procedures Local Law 2017* and the City's *Public Question Time at Council or Committee Meetings* policy and is summarising such preambles and recording the summary in the minutes.

Future work is planned for January 2020, to review the website content associated with Public Question Time to take into consideration feedback received to improve the end user experience.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**That consideration be given by the Council to engage an independent person to review and action on complaints about the City's processes and decisions for a period of 3 months from the date of this report.**

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 16 July 2019, in relation to Recommendation 2, the Council resolved that it:

- 3. supports Recommendation 2 and directs the Chief Executive Officer to expedite the engagement of an independent person to review and act on complaints about the City's processes and decisions for a period of 3 months from the date of engagement.**

The City provided a draft project scope to the Department of Local Government via email on 8 August 2019 (Appendix A) with confirmation on the scope received by return email on 8 August 2019.

The independent company Customer Science Pty. Ltd. was appointed on 28 October 2019 and their Report was received on Wednesday 18 December 2019. This Report contains the initial findings and recommendations with a final report, including a detailed review due in early 2020. A copy of the initial Report is attached as Appendix (B).

In addition to retaining accreditation to the Customer Service Standard ICSS 2015:2020 in November 2018, the City was the recipient of the Service Champion of the Year Government/Not for Profit Award at the 2018 Australian Service Excellence Awards.

In March 2019 we received the results of the 2019 Certification Assessment of the City of Melville conducted against the Complaints Handling Framework (CSIA – CHF 2015) conducted by CSIA (Customer Service Institute of Australia).

The score achieved is **4.83** which is positive one, meaning we as an organisation are taking complaints seriously and striving to pursue 'best practice' in our customer relations.

The objective of the CSIA/CHF :2015 Standard in line with the AS/NZS 10002:2014 and ISO 1002:2014 Standards is to **provide guidance on complaints handling related to product and service delivery within an organisation**, including planning, design, operation, maintenance and improvement.

The International Standard addresses the following aspects of complaints handling, including:

- Enhancing customer satisfaction by welcoming feedback, resolving any complaints received and use the learnings to improve its products and services
- Top management involvement and commitment via adequate acquisition and deployment of resources
- Recognising and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants
- Provide an open and effective easy to use complaints process
- Analysing and evaluating complaints to improve product/service and customer service quality
- Assessment of the complaints management process and
- Reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints handling process.

As a result of the assessment undertaken against 26 prescriptives we received recommendations that we are progressively addressing in order to continue to improve our complaints handling processes.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**All Senior Staff undertake training on complaint management and dealing with unreasonable complainants within 3 months from the date of this report.**

In November 2018 the City employed a skilled Customer Relations Improvement Officer who came to the City with extensive complaints handling experience having worked in that area for a major telecommunications company. This role conducts customer service training across the organisation and is the gatekeeper for all complaints and conducts regular audits of complaints resolution and customer satisfaction.

This officer has also conducted the complaints handling training of City staff including the senior staff as listed below.

The City’s Executive Leadership Team and Management Leadership Team have undergone training in relation to complaint management as detailed below:

	<b>Date Training Complete Complaint Resolution (4 step Complaint Resolution Process)</b>
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	Yes - 20/06/2019
Director Community Development	Yes - 20/06/2019
Director Corporate Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
Director Technical Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
Director Urban Planning	Yes - 20/06/2019
Executive Manager Organisational Development	Yes - 20/06/2019
Executive Manager Governance and Legal Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
<b>Management Leadership Team</b>	
Manager Building and Environmental Health Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager City Buildings	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Cultural Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Engineering	Yes - 09/07/2019
Manager Financial Services	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Governance and Property	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Healthy Melville	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Information and Communication Technology	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager People Services	Yes- 20/06/2019
Manager Natural Areas and Parks	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Neighbourhood Amenity	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Resource Recovery and Waste	Yes - 03/07/2019
Manager Strategic Urban Planning	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Statutory Planning	Yes - 20/06/2019
Manager Neighbourhood Development	Yes - 20/06/2019

The Executive Leadership Team endorsed the Directorate Procedure associated with Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Customers in December 2019. The Procedure has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders from the organisation. An awareness and training program will be rolled out in early 2020. It is also noted that the Customer Science Interim report recommends external customer complaints training which will be undertaken.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**The City undergo an independent governance review as determined appropriate by the Director General within 3 months of the date of this report and provide the Director General with a copy of the full report upon it completion.**

Following a procurement process, in October 2019 the City engaged the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) to undertake a Governance Review in accordance with the scope below:

*“The Director General of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries authorised an Inquiry on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 into the operations and affairs of the City of Melville. The Report of the Inquiry into the City of Melville (The Report) released in June 2019 presented findings and seven recommendations which were all supported by the Council.*

*A copy of the Inquiry Report is attached for your reference. The City now seeks, by way of request for proposals from suitably qualified and experienced organisations, to undertake actions described in recommendation number four “that the City undergo an independent governance review as determined appropriate by the Director General within three months of the date of this report and provide the Director General with a full copy of the report upon its completion.”*

*The successful proponent may also be required to undertake actions described in recommendation number five being that “the City undergo a further independent governance review as determined appropriate by the Director General 6 months after the local government elections held in October 2019 and provide the Director General with a copy of the full report upon its completion.”*

The survey associated with the Governance Review was undertaken with the Pre 2019 Election Elected Member Group.

The Confidential Report to the City of Melville – Governance Review was received by the City on Thursday 12 December 2019.

A telephone briefing on the contents of the report was held between representatives of AICD and the City of Melville Mayor and Chief Executive Officer on 17 December 2019. The Report was provided to all Elected Members via the Mayor on the Elected Member extranet on Wednesday 18 December 2019, with a workshop with all Elected Members currently being planned for February 2020.

A full copy of the Report, as required by Recommendation 4, is included at Appendix C.



## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**The City undergo a further independent governance review as determined appropriate by the Director General 6 months after the local government elections held in October 2019 and provide the Director General with a copy of the full report upon its completion**

The scope for the Governance Review as contained in Recommendation 4, includes the option for this work. This work is scheduled to commence towards the end of March 2020.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**The City implement processes and/or procedures to ensure that unauthorised acquisition of properties or any other assets does not re-occur.**

The City has reviewed the circumstances that related to the unauthorised acquisition of property the subject of the Authorised Inquiry. Review and modification to the City's existing processes and procedures has been undertaken and where necessary modified to ensure that a similar set of circumstances does not occur in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**Within 6 months of the date of this report the Chief Executive Officer is to deliver a comprehensive report to the Director General of the Department outlining:**

**i The steps taken in response to the above recommendations**

See information above.

**ii Identifying the number of senior staff that have undergone the training as set out in recommendation 3.**

Both the City of Melville Executive Leadership Team (7 members) and the Management Leadership Team (15) have undergone training.

**iii Updating the status of the Governance Review in relation to the number of elected members and staff who have participated**

The Survey associated with the Governance Review outlined in Recommendation 4 had a participation rate of 85% for Elected Members (11 of 13 members) and 100% participation of the staff (CEO and four Directors).

**iv The processes the City has put in place in response to recommendation 5**

Included in the scope of the Governance Review outlined in Recommendation 4.

**v The impact, if any, of the updated policies on Public Question Time, Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Customers, Legal Representation and the Complaint Management Policy.**

The new Council Policy CP Council Policy CP-014 – Public Question Time at Council and Committee Meetings was implemented in February 2019, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of questions submitted to Council. The Policy provides:

- the community clear guidelines around submitting questions for Public Question Time;
- officers with clear guidance on managing Public Question Time, which has been enabled clear work processes to be developed and for workloads to be managed;
- provides Elected Members the opportunity to view Questions Submitted With Notice prior to the meeting.

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 20 & 27 August 2019, the Council adopted new Council Policy CP-108 Deputations to the Council. This policy was implemented from 1 October 2019 and information on the policy and the City's approach to Deputations can be found on the City's website. The City is currently monitoring the impact of this Policy.

A further trend has emerged over the last few months of 2019, with an increase in the number of Petitions being submitted to the Council, with petitions having a single signature through to in excess of 2,000 signatures. It is noted that this mechanism is being used to seek the further commitment of City's resources on matters of interest to a single person. The City will continue to monitor this trend.

The table below shows the trend on these matters for 2019.

<b>2019</b>	<b>Public Questions With Notice</b>	<b>Public Questions Without Notice</b>	<b>Deputations Granted</b>	<b>Petitions (signatures)</b>
January	Recess			
February	3	7	1	1 (307)
March	14	15	3	1 (573)
April	0	7	0	0
May	15	1	1	0
June	14	0	2	0
July	4	0	3	1 (113)
August	2	16	4	1 (13)
September	0	9	2	1 (1)
October	0	7	1	3 (44) (2,184) (100)
November	23	2	5	5 (1) (64) (77) (101) (1)
December	13	3	1	0
	<b>91</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>

With respect to Council Policy CP-017 Legal Representation Policy for Elected Members and Employees there have been no instances of this policy being applied during 2019. This Policy is due for review in the first half of 2020.

The City continues to manage unreasonable behaviours by customers in accordance with Council Policy CP-107 Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Customers to ensure the equitable, effective and efficient use of the City’s resources. The impact of this policy has however been minimal and this area has been a steep learning curve for the City, and has resulted in the development of a Directorate Procedure to provide guidance in the management of clearly defined unreasonable behaviours. The Directorate Procedure was endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team in December 2019 with a training and awareness program planned for early 2020.

A disproportionate level of the City’s resources is still being deployed in addressing the issues associated with a single persons and the City will be guided by the new Elected Member Group with respect to the future management of these types of issues.

The Initial Complaints Review conduct by Customer Science Australia has found that the City of Melville has a solid complaints management framework with policies and procedures that were certified under the Customer Service Institute of Australia’s Customer Complaints Framework in March 2019, however there are opportunities to create clarity, ownership, consistency and discipline to the management of all complaints. The findings contained in this Report (received late December 2019) will be further explored in early 2020.

- Appendix A      Scope of Independent Review of Complaint Handling
- Appendix B      Customer Science Australia – Initial Complaints Review 18 December 2019
- Appendix C      Australian Institute of Company Directors - Governance Review

**Title: Enhancing Customer Experience****Outcomes:**

- Independently review the City of Melville's complaints management process
- Review decision resolution for complaints from 27 June for a period of three months

**Scope:**

- Review complaint resolution/decisions and actions and associated applied processes for complaints received for a period of three months from 27 June, noting any opportunities for process improvement.
- Review all complaints related documentation (policies, procedures) in order to verify the practice of handling complaint and resolution at all levels of the organisation.
- The internal review process includes conformity scan covering health and safety, environmental, regulatory, legal and other policies.
- Preparation of a report to summarize the work conducted, by including methodology of the review conducted and offer further recommendations that will further support the organisation's pursuit of customer centricity and enhancing customer satisfaction.

**Relevant Documents**

- CP-101 Complaints Management Policy
- CP-107 Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Customers
- OP- 022 Customer Feedback Policy
- Customer Feedback Complaints Procedure
- CSIA Complaints Handling Framework (CHF) Assessment report completed in March 2019

**Essential Criteria**

- Sound knowledge and application of AS/NZS 10002:2014 and ISO 10002:2014 Standards
- Sound knowledge and application of the Australian Standards of complaint handling ISO 10002:2006
- In depth understanding of policy and processes of local government
- Preferred knowledge and application of the CSIA – CH :2015 Standard