

# Tasman Council

## *Customer Service Charter Policy – M 016*

*2016-2018*



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## Introduction

At Tasman Council, we strive to develop and maintain high standards of customer service at all times so that everyone using our services and facilities receives friendly, efficient and excellent service.

Our Customer Service Charter is one of the ways in which we hope to achieve and monitor this standard of service.

## Policy Statement

This Customer Service Charter is in compliance with the requirements of Section 339(1) through (5) of the *Local Government Act 1993* and outlines our commitment to customers in accordance with our Strategic Plan and provides a formalised process for making complaints. It outlines customer's rights, the standards customers can expect when dealing with council and what a customer can do if dissatisfied with Council decisions or actions.

## How to Access Council Services

### Council Office

Address: 1713 Main Road, Nubeena, TAS 7184  
Telephone: (03) 6250 9200  
Facsimile: (03) 6250 9220  
Email: [tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au](mailto:tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au)  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm  
Website: [www.tasman.tas.gov.au](http://www.tasman.tas.gov.au)

After Hours Emergencies Only - 0458 512 400

### Elected Members

|              |                  |  |
|--------------|------------------|--|
| Mayor        | Roseanne Heyward | <a href="mailto:roseanne.heyward@tasman.tas.gov.au">roseanne.heyward@tasman.tas.gov.au</a> |
| Deputy Mayor | Kelly Spaulding  | <a href="mailto:kelly.spaulding@tasman.tas.gov.au">kelly.spaulding@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>   |
| Councillor   | Maria Stacey     | <a href="mailto:maria.stacey@tasman.tas.gov.au">maria.stacey@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>         |
| Councillor   | Pam Fenerty      | <a href="mailto:pam.fenerty@tasman.tas.gov.au">pam.fenerty@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>           |
| Councillor   | David MacDonald  | <a href="mailto:david.macdonald@tasman.tas.gov.au">david.macdonald@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>   |
| Councillor   | Alan Hull        | <a href="mailto:alan.hull@tasman.tas.gov.au">alan.hull@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>               |
| Councillor   | David Moser      | <a href="mailto:david.moser@tasman.tas.gov.au">david.moser@tasman.tas.gov.au</a>           |

## **Our Aims**

In developing this Customer Service Charter, our aim is to:

- Provide an easy way to access means of finding information relevant to you;
- Provide you with services that will meet with your expectations and needs;
- Set in place protocols within our roles, to maximise productivity and efficiency;
- Recognise individual needs and cater for these effectively;
- Inform our clients of our obligations to them.

## **Our Values**

- Integrity and openness;
- Quality, consistency and cooperation;
- Communication, consultation and participation;
- Responsiveness to the needs of the client;
- Continuous improvement as employees and as an organisation;
- Everyone's right as an individual to have an opinion.

## **Statement of Values**

Tasman Council will operate in a way that:

- Values our historical, cultural and natural environment and the things that make the Municipality such a unique place to live and work;
- Seeks and encourages quality sustainable, innovative and compatible development;
- Fosters and supports community participation and involvement, tolerance, and pride in our community;
- Promotes and maintains a community that is healthy, active, skilled and informed.

## **Service Standards**

We strive to deliver the best service we can and our commitment to you is:

### **You can expect that:**

- We will provide a prompt, friendly, courteous and efficient service;
- We will provide clear and accurate information;
- We will respect, listen and respond to your concerns;
- We will respect your privacy; and
- We will keep you informed of the progress of your enquiry.

### **As our customer we will:**

- Greet you in a friendly way and identify ourselves;
- Have our front counter attended to at all times;
- Answer and return telephone calls promptly;
- Respond to your correspondence promptly;
- Be helpful and sensitive to your needs;
- Communicate clearly and in plain language; and
- Work with you to solve problems.

### **You can help us by:**

- Treating our staff with mutual respect;
- Respecting the rights of other customers;
- Providing accurate and complete information in your dealings with us;
- Respecting the community in which we live;
- Working with us to solve problems;
- Comply with Councils Policies and Government Regulations; and
- Provide constructive feedback wherever you believe that there could be an improvement to our services.

## **Privacy**

As a customer of Tasman Council you can expect your privacy respected and your personal information protected under the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 and the Right to Information Act 2009.

## Customer Service Request System

### A customer service request is, but not limited to:

- A request for information for an explanation of a policy or procedure;
- Reports of damage of faulty infrastructure
- Reports of noise, dogs, nuisances, unauthorised building works or similar issues that fall into the regulatory aspect of our service;
- A request for Council to provide new infrastructure.

Request can be logged via Council's website [www.tasman.tas.gov.au](http://www.tasman.tas.gov.au), in person or sent via the mail to 1713 Main Road, Nubeena TAS 7184 or emailed [tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au](mailto:tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au).

All requests are logged into the Council "Public Request Register", assigned a priority and allocated to the appropriate officer for action.

## 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 or Rule) specifically makes provision for an appeal, internal or external review of a decision.

Any Council Officer having difficulty in determining a complaint as from a customer service request should seek advice of the General Manager.

### Type of Complaint

A complaint may be lodged verbally (by telephone or over the counter) and may be responded to verbally by phoning and do not form part of the formal complaints management process.

If the complaint is of 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 Council is dealing with your complaint a customer should include as much information as possible, such as date/s, time/s and location of events. The customer should also state what they hope to achieve as an outcome of the complaint.

Whilst most complaints can usually be resolved quickly by the relevant Officer, there are times when a detailed investigation is required, If it will take time, we will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint.

If a person is not satisfied with the outcome they may request a review of the complaint by the Council's General Manager. A request for a review of the complaint to the General Manager is to be made in writing. The General Manager will inform the customer of the finding on completion of an investigation.

The relevant Officer or the General Manager may enter into informal discussions or mediation on a complaint with a view to resolve the issue.

### **Vexation Complaints**

All complaints received by Council will be treated with the utmost seriousness, if a complaint is found to be malicious, frivolous or vexation, as determined by the General Manager, then no further action will be taken on the complaint. The customer will be informed of this decision in writing by the General Manager

### **Anonymous Complaints**

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

### **If a customer is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint?**

Although Council is confident that the majority of complaints received can be resolved, we understand that we may not be able to satisfy every customer on every occasion.

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 includes:

- Available Administrative Appeals Process;
- The Judicial Review Act 2000;
- Contact external agencies which can review actions and decisions taken by the Council, which include;
  - The Ombudsman at the Ombudsman's Office on 03 6233 6217, or 1800 001 170 (cost of local call outside Hobart area), or by email at [ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au). The Ombudsman is located at Ground Floor, 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart 7000.
  - Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Level 14, 39 Murray Street, Hobart (GPO Box 123, Hobart 7000) Ph: 03 6233 6758.

### **Complaints against Non Compliance or Offence**

Pursuant to Section 339E of the Act, a person may make a complaint to the Director of Local Government:

- The Council, a Councillor or the General Manager has failed to comply with the requirements under an Act; or
- That a Councillor, the General Manager or an employee of the Council may have committed an offence under the Act.

Complaints must be in writing, identifying the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made, giving particulars of the grounds of the complaint and must be verified by statutory declaration and lodged with the Director, Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Level 14, 39 Murray Street, Hobart (GPO Box 123 Hobart 7001).

### **Expectations of the Customer**

Council requires that customers assist Council staff in our service delivery by:

- Treating staff with courtesy and respect;
- Respecting the rights of other customers;
- Supplying staff with accurate and complete information;
- Working with staff to resolve problems and issues;
- Provide Council with feedback;
- Respecting our community.

### **Abusive Customers**

No Council employee is required to abide threatening, abusive or insulting conduct from customers. In cases where a customer behaves in such a way the Council employee may immediately terminate dealings with them.

If dealing with a customer face to face, we will advise you that we are terminating the conversation with you due to your behaviour, ask you to leave the premises and then the officer will walk away. If on the telephone we will advise you that we are terminating the conversation with you due to your behaviour and then the officer will terminate the call. If is an email, the address you sent the email from may be blocked to prevent further contact, after advising the customer that this will happen.

A member of the public has no right to enter private offices or some areas in Council buildings unless invited by a duly authorised council employee.

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If a staff member feels threatened by the language of a customer or if the person fails to leave an area that is not open to the public when asked to do so, the Police may be called.

The General Manager may decide to restrict or cease responses to any person who is abusive in his or her dealings with Council or who refuses to accept that Council has done all that it can to assist. A decision of this nature will be communicated to the person in writing.

### **Services Available – Council Office**

- Planning, building and plumbing applications and enquiries
- Dog registrations
- Rates payments and enquiries
- Payment of other council accounts
- Hiring of Council halls and recreation grounds
- Road and drainage enquiries
- Cemeteries enquiries
- General Municipality enquiries
- Public Request Applications

### **Payment Options Provided**

#### **CASH, CHEQUE AND EFTPOS**

Cash and cheques can be used for payment at the front counter at the Council Office, as well as EFTPOS facilities. American Express credit cards are **NOT** accepted.

#### **CREDIT CARDS**

MasterCard / VISA are accepted methods of payment at the Council Office or over the telephone by contacting Council on (03) 62509200.

#### **DIRECT DEBIT**

Direct Debit facilities are available for payment of rates on a regular basis. Please contact the Council Office for more information.

#### **INTERNET PAYMENTS**

Payments can be made through the Internet by accessing Councils website [tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au](mailto:tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au) or via your own bank's website.

#### **AUSTRALIA POST**

Payments for rates will be accepted at all Australia Post outlets using cash, cheque, EFTPOS (savings, cheque and credit account). You will need to present your original rates notice at the time of the payment.