

## FEEDBACK POLICY

### PURPOSE

The Shire welcomes all feedback which we use to continuously improve our quality of community engagement, product and service delivery and innovative project design and delivery.

This policy supports Shire of Quairading officers to manage compliments, complaints and feedback in a fair, effective and consistent manner that is responsive to the needs of our community.

Most importantly, this feedback is actively used to inform continuous quality improvement across all aspects of Shire operations.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to compliments, suggestions and complaints relating to the Shire of Quairading, the scope of which includes:

- a. Decisions made by employees of the Shire;
- b. Suggestions from the public for improving service quality and delivery;
- c. The conduct of employees and contractors of the Shire;
- d. Practices, policies and procedures of the Shire; and
- e. Organisational learning and continuous improvement.

### DEFINITIONS

#### **Compliment**

A compliment is positive feedback about our products, services or staff. It can recognise a skill, behaviour or activity of the organisation, an organisation's business unit, or individual staff member.

#### **Complaint**

A complaint is negative feedback and an expression of dissatisfaction related to our products, services or staff.

#### **Suggestion**

A suggestion is any opinion, comment, feedback, and expression of interest or concern made about our products, services or staff.

#### **Customer**

A customer is the recipient of a service or product of the Shire of Quairading.

### POLICY

The Shire of Quairading undertakes to respond to all feedback in a timely and courteous manner in accordance with its Code of Conduct and Feedback Management Framework.

## Compliments

There are numerous instances where the Shire is complimented on the provision of services it provides and the employees that undertake those services.

Compliments provide clear indications on what our community values about the work we do, and listening to what the Shire's customers have to say:

- a. Indicates which aspects of the Shire's services customers value;
- b. Helps to build a balanced picture of how services impact customers;
- c. Provides the Shire with an opportunity to share compliments among its employees demonstrating good practice in the services provided; and
- d. Helps to boost morale and provide recognition to employees.

Employees who continually demonstrate excellent customer service may be recognised through regular performance reviews.

All compliments will be logged into the Shire's records management system so we can use the feedback for continuous quality improvement (to improve our products and services). Comments will be sent to the officer/s involved and to the appropriate supervisor for assessment and response. This response may include a change to system, policy and/or process.

## Suggestions

The Shire also encourages the community to submit suggestions and ideas as part of its commitment to providing great service and striving towards continuous improvement.

As part of our commitment to providing excellence in customer service the Shire will:

- a. Listen to suggestions;
- b. Create an environment where feedback is seen as a means to continually improve our services; and
- c. Ensure that employees acknowledge and respond to suggestions in a timely manner.

## Complaints

What is a Formal Complaint?

The Australian Standard on Complaints Handling defines a 'complaint' as any: *"expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products [or services] or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected."*

What is not a Formal Complaint?

Examples of matters that are **not** formal complaints are as follows: -

- a. A request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for a service);
- b. A request for information or an explanation of a Policy or Procedure;
- c. Disagreement with a Council Policy;
- d. A request for review of a decision for which a structured process applies;
- e. An expression concerning the general direction or performance of the Council or Councillors;
- f. A petition
- g. Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure; and

- h. 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.

**Anonymous Complaints**

An anonymous customer complaint will only be investigated where reasonable and sufficient information is provided and which, in the opinion of Shire employees, constitutes:

- a. A breach of statutory provisions;
- b. A breach of an approval, licence or permit;
- c. A matter for which the Shire is obligated to act, prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1995, Corruption Crime & Misconduct Act 2003* or under any other written law (i.e. the Public Interest Disclosure (PID) legislation);
- d. A matter which if not attended to could reasonably constitute a risk to the public health and safety of persons, animals or the environment; and
- e. A matter which is deemed to be capable of investigation and resolution without assistance from the complainant.

Please refer to Annexure A for the Feedback Management Framework.

**GUIDELINES**

**Annexure A** - Feedback Management Framework attached.

*Freedom of Information Act (WA) 1992*

*Local Government Act 1995*

*Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*

*Privacy Act 1998*

*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003.*

**STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT**

*Freedom of Information Act (WA) 1992*

*Local Government Act 1995*

*Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*

*Privacy Act 1998*

*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*

AS/NZ 1002:20014 - Guidelines for complaints management in organisations;

<b>Record of Policy Review</b>					
Version	Author	Council Adoption	Resolution	Reason for Review	Review Date
01	Neville Hale(ACEO)	29 June 2017	217-16/17	New Policy	
02	Graeme Fardon	20 December 2018	115-18/19	Policy Review Project – 03/10/2018	

03	Graeme Fardon	17 December 2020	97-20/21	Biennial Policy Review	December 2020
04	Nicole Gibbs	30 June 2022	198 -21/22	Policy Update	30 August 2024

## Annexure A

### FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

#### 1. OBJECTIVE

The intent of the Feedback Management Framework is to guide the Shire of Quairading in its management and handling of complaints, and provide information to the public on how to appropriately submit feedback.

#### 2. SCOPE

The Feedback Management Framework acknowledges customers, employees, Elected Members, contractors and all parties who deal with the Shire of Quairading have a right to provide feedback about the Shire's Policies and Services.

#### 3. FEEDBACK PROCESS

The Shire accepts compliments, suggestions and complaints via our website, email, letter, social media, telephone or in person.

A customer can nominate an independent person to assist or provide feedback/a complaint on their behalf. The customer who is impacted by the complaint must provide permission for another person to act on their behalf and the Shire must be notified in writing.

##### 3.1 Compliments or suggestions management process

If the nature of the feedback is a compliment or suggestion, Council staff receiving the compliment are to:

- a. Thank the person and acknowledge the compliment or suggestion has been received
- b. Save the correspondence in the record keeping system
- c. Ensure that the information is sent to the relevant division supervisor

If applicable or requested, the department supervisor or delegated person should provide a follow up call to the person who submitted the feedback and provide information on any outcomes that resulted from their submission.

##### 3.2 Complaints management process

If the nature of the feedback is a complaint, it is encouraged that the complainant provides their complaint in writing to ensure information is correctly documented and received. At a minimum, the following information is to be supplied in order to effectively process the complaint: -

- a. Name and address.
- b. Contact details.
- c. Complaint details
- d. If applicable, the date and time of occurrence of complaint
- e. If applicable, the outcomes expected by the complainant

If this information is not provided it may hinder Council officer's ability to effectively and efficiently investigate the complaint.

All corporate records in relation to the complaints handling process as set out in this Policy will be captured in the Council's record keeping system. Council officers will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

#### Elected Member Feedback Receival Process

If an Elected Member is approached with feedback from a community member or rate payer, the Elected Member should either forward the suggestion onto the CEO or encourage the person putting the suggestion forward to contact the Shire directly.

If a rate payer/community member is not satisfied with the Shire's response they should be directed to contact the Shire President.

#### Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

All complaints which are received by the Council will be treated seriously and complainants will be treated with respect. However, occasionally the conduct of a complainant can be unreasonable and may impede the Council's investigation of a complaint, the ability to allocate resources fairly across all matters, or may detrimentally impact upon the health, safety or security of Council staff.

This may take the form of unreasonable persistence, unreasonable demands, unreasonable lack of cooperation, unreasonable arguments or otherwise unreasonable or threatening behaviour.

Should a complainant become unreasonable they should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Shire's principles of complaint management are;

#### Fairness and Objectivity

The Shire's handling of customer feedback is based on the Shire of Quairading's values and guiding principles and is in line with the standards set by the Shire's Customer Service Charter. All feedback is to be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the Shire of Quairading's services can easily and simply make a complaint, and can do so without fear of retribution.

#### Customer Focus

The Shire is committed to providing an open, transparent and easily accessible complaints handling process for its customers.

#### Responsiveness

The Shire is required to address each Complaint in a fair, objective, unbiased and timely manner. If the nature of the feedback is a complaint, our customers are to be kept informed of the complaint's progress and of any delays during the process.

#### Remedies and Resolution of Complaints

The Shire's Chief Executive Officer is assigned to make decisions in order to deal with complaints promptly, and, where possible, to achieve an early resolution.

The decision or action taken regarding the customer complaint is to be communicated to the customer as soon as the decision or action is taken.

The Shire recognises the various remedial methods that can be used to deal with a complaint:

- a. A review of the Issue.
- b. Information to the customer as to how the complaint was dealt with, upon conclusion thereof.
- c. A change to the decision.
- d. A conciliation process.
- e. Referral to third party for appeals e.g. State Administrative Tribunal, the State Ombudsman's Office.
- f. Other remedies that are considered appropriate to the circumstances i.e. an Apology.

### Timeliness

Any complaint submitted to the Shire is required to be acknowledged within 2 business days.

The Shire is committed to respond within 7 business days to all complaints submitted, either with a final solution or, if the nature of the complaint requires a longer period to resolve, with an interim response outlining the reason for the delay, further action to be taken and anticipated timeframe that a full response be provided.

### Risk

In establishing the order in which complaints may be attended to, consideration is given to the urgency of each complaint in terms of public safety implications, seriousness, frequency of occurrence, severity and the need for immediate action.

### Confidentiality

Customers of the Shire have the right to expect that their Privacy is respected when making a complaint or having a complaint investigated. Personal information related to the complaint is required to be kept confidential in accordance with the *Freedom of Information WA Act 1992*.

All complaints are treated confidentially, unless required by law or the complainant provides their permission to release information. There may be no adverse repercussions by the Shire for a complainant who, in good faith, chooses to make a complaint against the Shire or an employee of the Shire.

### External Review

Any complainant is able to seek external review about any complaint about any Elected Members or Shire Staff from the Ombudsman, Public Sector Commission or Department of Local Government and Communities.

The level of information provided to the Shire by these agencies, and that which it can report to others is constrained by the various laws and policies governing those agencies.

### Reporting to the Council

As part of Council's Performance Review, Council's Complaint Processes, Activity Level and Resolution Percentage Achieved by Council will be reported to Council on an Annual Basis.