



FEEDBACK POLICY P3.0112.2

FEEDBACK POLICY

DIVISION: Customer and Corporate Strategy

BRANCH: Corporate Performance and Customer Service

CATEGORY: 2

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Camden Council is committed to providing excellent customer service.
- 1.2 Any compliments or complaints about our service or staff are welcomed and provide valuable feedback about Council's quality of service.
- 1.3 This policy relates to the management of feedback received by Camden Council, including the capture, handling, resolution and reporting of feedback in the form of compliments and complaints.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - Provide a clear and concise process for both customers and Council staff in making and/or dealing with feedback received by Council;
 - Ensure customer feedback is recorded and handled in an efficient, fair, effective and systematic way, allowing corrective actions to be taken where necessary;
 - See complaints dealt with impartially, confidentially and internally in the first instance;
 - Identify areas of good performance and customer satisfaction;
 - Recognise customer feedback as a positive means of identify opportunities to continuously improve customer service provision in all areas; and
 - Support the organisational commitment to Council's values of 'customer focus', 'partnership', 'innovation', 'commitment' and 'leadership'.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 All employees of Council and persons carrying out work on behalf of the Council including contractors and volunteers must operate in accordance with this policy.
- 3.2 Anyone who has contact with Council employees or utilises Council facilities or services is eligible to provide feedback.
- 3.3 This policy applies to feedback in the form of complaints or compliments, as defined in this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Complaint** means an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's decisions, policies, procedures, charges, employees, agents or the quality of the services it provides.

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is not a:

- Request for works or services to be provided, actioned or approved
- Request for information, assistance or explanations of policy or procedure
- Report of damaged or faulty infrastructure (e.g. road pothole)
- Report of hazards (e.g. fallen tree branch)
- Report concerning neighbours or neighbouring property (e.g. noise or unauthorised building works)
- Report of failure to comply with laws regulated by Council
- An issue that is the responsibility of another authority or service provider, or
- The lodgement of an appeal or objection in accordance with a standard procedure, e.g. objection to a Development Application.

A 'complaint' is an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's decisions, policies, procedures, charges, employees, agents or the quality of the services it provides.

Some types of complaints may have processes separate to this policy, or Council may have statutory obligations that govern the way they are dealt with. These are outlined below:

COMPLAINT	DETAIL	POLICY / REFERENCE
Code of Conduct Complaints	<p>Related to Council officials such as Councillors, members of staff of Council, administrators, Council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of Council.</p> <p>Complaints may relate to breaches of the standards of conduct prescribed under the Code of Conduct and may include suspected corrupt conduct, maladministration, competitive neutrality concerns, criminal activity or serious and substantial waste.</p>	Refer to Council's Code of Conduct
Child Protection Complaints	Related to disclosure or allegation of child abuse or conviction	Refer to Council's

	against a current Council employee.	Keeping Kids Safe Policy
Public Interest Disclosures	Related to a report made by a public official that meets the requirements of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994</i> .	Refer to Council's Public Interest Disclosures Act Internal Reporting Policy
Privacy Breach Complaints	Related to public sector agencies. Complaints may relate to breaching any information protection principles of the <i>Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> (PPIPA) or the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government.	Refer to Council's Privacy Management Plan
Staff Grievances	Related to a grievance lodged by an individual employee of Council about another employee or work-related problem.	Grievance Handling Procedure

4.2 Compliment means an expression of praise or regard for service received or performance given.

A 'compliment' means an expression of praise or regard for service received or performance given.

PART 2 - FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

5. HOW TO LODGE FEEDBACK

5.1 Feedback may be lodged with Camden Council in the following ways:

- Email: mail@camden.nsw.gov.au
- Council's website: <https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/>
- Mail:
Camden Council
PO Box 183
CAMDEN NSW 2570
- Phone: (02) 4654 7777
- In person, by making an appointment to talk to the employee with whom you have been dealing or visiting our Customer Service Hub at:
70 Central Ave
ORAN PARK NSW 2570
(Office hours: weekdays from 8.30am to 5pm, excluding public holidays)
- Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/camdencouncil/>
- myCamden app, available for download from App Store for Apple and Google Play for Android, and
- Customer Feedback Surveys: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CamdenVoC>.

5.2 Please note: anonymous feedback will only be investigated where there is sufficient information and the allegation is of a serious nature.

6. HOW COMPLAINTS WILL BE HANDLED

6.1 In order to respond to and resolve complaints as promptly and effectively as possible, a three-tier approach is employed by Council.



First Tier: Frontline

6.2 To facilitate early resolution of complaints, in the first instance, customers are encouraged to provide feedback on the complaint to the appropriate Council Officer who provided the service or dealt with the issue.

An employee receiving a complaint should deal with the complaint at that time or refer it immediately to the appropriate Council Officer who may be able to resolve the complaint on the spot.

Where complaints cannot be resolved after speaking with the appropriate Council Officer (First Tier), or where they are received in writing, they will be forwarded to the appropriate next level supervisor to review, investigate and respond (Second Tier).

Second Tier: Internal Review

6.3 All Second-Tier complaints will be acknowledged in writing within **1 business day** of receipt, giving contact details of the Council Officer who will be responsible for the investigation.

6.4 All Second-Tier complaints will be investigated and responded to within 10 business days.

6.5 Where this time frame cannot be met, the appropriate Council Officer will contact the customer via telephone prior to the time limit expiring, advising the customer of the reasons for the delay and providing a revised time frame.

Complaints escalated to the Second Tier will be acknowledged within 1 business day and reviewed, investigated and responded to within 10 business days.

Third Tier: Independent Review

6.6 Where complaints cannot be resolved by Council, the complainant may be referred to an external agency such as the NSW Ombudsman, Department of Local Government, Office of the Small Business Commissioner or an alternative dispute resolution provider.

6.7 Detail on agencies that receive and investigate complaints is provided as Appendix A to this policy.

6.8 Complaints will move from one tier to the next if:

- The complaint is about the employee's own conduct or the employee has a real or perceived conflict of interest and it is not appropriate that they deal with it;
- The customer requests it;
- The complaint is outside the staff members' delegation or area of expertise; and
- An employee is alleged to have committed a serious criminal offence, acted corruptly or engaged in other serious or controversial conduct.

Outcomes

6.9 Where a complaint is determined to be justified, an appropriate response will be provided. Depending on the complaint, this may lead to one or more of the following remedies being applied:

- An apology
- An explanation
- The desired service being provided
- Mediation
- A change in, or review of, a decision
- A correction of misleading records
- A refund of any overcharged or incorrectly charged monies
- A review and/or change in Council policy, procedure or practice
- Referral to an external agency.

6.10 The Council Officer responsible for the investigation will maintain contact with the customer and advise the customer of the results of the investigation in writing. This will include details of any proposed remedies if appropriate.

6.11 There may be occasions where Council cannot resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the customer. In such cases, Council may initiate conciliation or another form of alternative dispute resolution procedure or may refer the customer to an external agency or legal remedy.

The Council Officer responsible for the investigation of a complaint will advise the complainant of the outcome in writing, including any proposed remedies if appropriate.

7. HOW COMPLIMENTS WILL BE HANDLED

- 7.1 Council will regularly monitor compliments about its services and staff to ensure best practice is celebrated and promoted. All compliments will be logged into Council’s Compliments Register and forwarded to the relevant Director and Manager.
- 7.2 Employees who consistently demonstrate excellent customer service will be recognised through performance feedback and Council’s Reward & Recognition arrangements.

8. HOW FEEDBACK WILL BE RECORDED & REPORTED

Recording of Complaints

- 8.1 If a complaint is unable to be unresolved at the frontline (First Tier outlined above), details of the complaint are to be gathered and provided in writing to the relevant next level supervisor for review, investigation and response, as well as the relevant Divisional Personal Assistant (PA) for the information to be captured in Council’s Complaints Register/s.
- 8.2 Records will also be maintained on the complaints review, any investigations carried out and the response provided to the complainant.

8.3 The record of the complaint in Council's Complaints Register will include:

- The contact information of the person making the complaint
- Issues raised by the complainant and the outcomes they are seeking
- How Council managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint, including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations
- Any outstanding actions that need to be followed up, and
- Any other relevant information.

8.4 Documentation related to the complaint should be recorded and stored in accordance with Council's Information Management Policy.

Reporting

8.5 Complaint data will be analysed to identify any systemic or recurring problems which need to be rectified to improve processes and customer satisfaction with Council services.

8.6 Reporting on feedback will be reported to Council's Executive Leadership Group on a monthly basis via Council's Corporate Health Indicators.

Feedback is captured, analysed and reported to Council's Executive Leadership Group on a monthly basis. Results are used to recognise good performance and guide continuous improvement activities at Council.

Confidentiality

8.7 Confidentiality of feedback, including the identity of the customer, will be maintained where requested and in accordance with relevant legislation.

8.8 Any personal information collected and stored by Council will be used and disclosed only in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

8.9 Disclosure of customer details is not supported by Council but it is required to deal with any requests for access to such details in accordance with Council's Access to Information Policy, the *Local Government Act 1993* and/or the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA), whichever is applicable in the circumstances. In dealing with the complaint, confidentiality may be maintained beyond anyone directly involved in the investigation if the investigating officer deems it is in the public's best interest to do so.

9. UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT

9.1 There may be occasions where a customer's actions or motivations are unacceptable. Council employees and persons carrying out work on behalf of the Council including contractors and volunteers have rights that must be respected when dealing with aggressive or vexatious complaints, as outlined in Council's Dealing with Unreasonable Customer Conduct Policy.

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RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS:

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection Act 1998
Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES:

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 – Agency Information Guide
Public Interest Disclosures Act Internal Procedures Policy (P3.0107.3)
Code of Conduct (P3.0109.8)
Protection of Children in the Workplace Policy 5.31
Access to Information Policy
Information Management Policy

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR:

Customer and Corporate Strategy

APPROVAL:

Council

HISTORY:

Version	Approved by	Changes made	Date	EDMS Number
1	Council	New policy	27/10/2009	17/138517
2	Council	Revision based on NSW Ombudsman's model policy	23/07/2019	19/219461

APPENDIX A - EXTERNAL CONTACTS

Agency	Type of Complaint
Anti-Discrimination Board Web: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb	Matters in relation to discrimination, disability and harassment.
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Web: www.accc.gov.au	Competitive Neutrality complaints
The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Phone: 02 8281 5999 Email: icac@icac.nsw.gov.au Web: www.icac.nsw.gov.au	Matters concerning corrupt conduct by councils, councillors and council staff. Under Section 11 of the ICAC Act 1988, the General Manager has a duty to report suspected cases of corrupt conduct.
The Information & Privacy Commissioner (NSW) Phone: 1800 472 679 Email: oinfo@oic.nsw.gov.au Web: www.oic.nsw.gov.au	Public Interest Disclosures about breaches of the GIPA Act
NSW Ombudsman Phone: 02 9286 1000 Email: nswombo@ombo.gov.au Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au	Matters concerning maladministration by Councils, councillors and council staff
Office of Local Government Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au Web: www.olg.nsw.gov.au	Matters concerning a serious breakdown in Council's operations or serious flaws in Council processes. Also pecuniary interest matters, councillor misbehaviour and public interest disclosures relating to serious and substantial waste. The General Manager has an obligation to refer complaints alleging breaches of pecuniary interest provisions to the Department.
Office of the Small Business Commission (OSBC) Tel: 1300 795 534 or (02) 8222 4800 Web: we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au	Matters concerning complaints from small businesses that have not been resolved.
Privacy NSW Email: Privacy_NSW@agd.nsw.gov.au	Breaches of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection