

# Request for Service Procedure



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Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Read in conjunction with Council's *Request for Service Policy*, the *Request for Services Procedure* (the Procedure) provides guidance from the point that a request for service is received and covers processes for:
  - 1.1.1 distinguishing between requests, complaints and feedback to Council
  - 1.1.2 deciding how to respond to the request
  - 1.1.3 using requests to directly inform service improvements
- 1.2 The aim of this Procedure is to ensure requests for service are addressed in a fair, consistent and structured process which is transparent to all customers. It does not apply to matters that fall outside of Council's jurisdiction, as these types of issues will be referred to appropriate external bodies

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Business Day** means a day when the Council is normally open for business, i.e. Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays and Christmas closure.
- 2.2 **Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council, or its representatives, that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or documented. This includes complaints about a request for service that has been or should have been delivered.
- 2.3 **Feedback** can take the form of comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods. **Request for Service** is an application to have Council or its representative take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

Complaints about the activities of third parties [e.g. barking dogs or food premises] are to be treated as Requests for Service in the first instance where this is a reasonable interpretation.

However, if the complaint is about the way in which Council has dealt with a matter concerning the activities of a third party, this will be dealt with as a complaint (see [Complaints Policy](#)).

## 3. Scope

- 3.1** This Procedure applies to all Council employees who may be involved in receiving or processing a request for service in the course of their work.
- 3.2** Officers will act reasonably and transparently, demonstrate good customer service, undertake their responsibilities in a proficient manner and use their judgement where necessary to ensure an outcome in line with Council's *Request for Service Policy* and *Customer Service Charter*.

## 4. Procedure

Council welcomes requests for service as a way of improving its services and programs as well as fulfilling the needs of its customers.

### 4.1 Assisting with the lodgement requests for service

No one shall be excluded from lodging a request for service because of any difficulties they may have representing themselves. All staff are expected to offer assistance where appropriate and provide it on request, including assistance in documenting the request in writing should circumstances warrant.

### 4.2 Receiving requests for service

A person can make a request in a number of ways including:

- Completing the appropriate form on Council's website
- Telephone
- Fax
- Email
- Letter
- Visit to one of Council's offices

### 4.3 Recording requests for service

Record details of all requests in Council's Customer Action System, including:

- Date and time of call
- Taken by
- Customer's Name
- Customer's address
- Customer's contact phone numbers and email address
- Comprehensive information about the nature of the request
- Who the request is assigned to
- Does the customer wish to be advised when the work is completed?

### 4.4 Deciding how to respond to requests for service

- 4.4.1** Each request must be assessed to determine its nature, how it should be dealt with, when it should be dealt with, and who should be involved.
- 4.4.2** Requests can generally be scheduled and actioned promptly. However some will necessitate direction from a Director or Manager and, occasionally, a decision of Council will be required
- 4.4.3** When determining a response it is important to consider:
- Public safety and emergencies (is there a need for immediate action?)
  - Using Council resources efficiently and effectively
  - The guidelines and conditions which apply to certain externally funded programs (e.g. Home and Community Care)
  - The complexity of the response by Council (does it require an integrated approach from more than one department?)

- 4.4.4 Where possible, when a request is lodged, officers shall advise customers what action will be taken and lodge the request using Council's customer request system. The officer will also advise the customer of the next steps.
- 4.4.5 More complex requests will be forwarded to the relevant Director or Manager for determination of how to respond. Ensure that the referral occurs promptly and the customer understands the process and timeline for the next action.
- 4.4.6 Requests for major work or new services will be considered in the preparation of the next Annual Business Plan.

#### **4.5 Denied requests for service**

Where a request cannot be accommodated it is to be identified in the records management system as a denied request.

#### **4.6 Acknowledging requests for service and progress**

- 4.6.1 Council will respond to customer requests as soon as possible, and within the timeframe as stated in Councils *Customer Service Charter* advising of Council's intentions regarding a request.
- 4.6.2 Communication with the customer is an important ongoing process while undertaking the actions necessary to resolve the request. When immediate resolution is not possible, the customer must be regularly kept informed of progress, either by email, letter, telephone or personal contact. Officers will record file notes of any follow-up contact made.
- 4.6.3 If a request is denied Officers will explain the decision clearly and offer any possible alternative actions available to the customer, including reference to Council's *Complaints Policy*.
- 4.6.4 If the customer has asked to be advised when the work is completed, the officer finalising the request will advise accordingly.

#### **4.7 Service improvement**

- 4.7.1 Learning from requests for service is Council's opportunity to improve processes and procedures. Council therefore has systems to:
  - record, analyse and report on the types of requests for service it receives
  - apply the information to improve customer service.
- 4.7.2 Understanding the number and type of requests initiated by customers may suggest changes to policies, procedures or systems to improve service delivery. It is important to ensure that lessons learnt are put into practice.
- 4.7.3 All requests for service, including those denied, must be recorded in Council's records management system enabling the information to be analysed for service improvement opportunities.
- 4.7.4 At intervals determined by the number of requests received, the data on requests for service is reported to Executive Management in order to ensure that systemic issues are identified and addressed.
- 4.7.5 Council is provided annually with reports providing data about requests for service, actions taken to address to them and changes made as a result.

## **5. Records Management**

- 5.1 All documents, notes, notes from telephone calls, photographs and correspondence must be retained and stored in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy as required by Section 125 of the [Local Government Act 1999](#).
- 5.2 All requests for service must be recorded in Council's records management system.

## 6. Availability/Accessibility

- 6.1 This Procedure and Council's Fees & Charges Register are available to be downloaded free of charge from Council's website: [www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au](http://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au).
- 6.2 This Procedure is available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours. Hard copies, for a fee in accordance with Council's schedule of Fees and Charges, can be provided upon request.

## 7. Procedure Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring the proper operation of this Procedure.

## 8. Legislative Framework / Other References

- 8.1 [Local Government Act 1999](#), Section 270
- 8.2 *Requests for Service Policy*
- 8.3 *Complaints Policy*
- 8.4 *Customer Service Charter*

## 9. Document History

This Procedure shall be reviewed at least every four (4) years or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

Version	Adopted	Minute	Description of Change
1	11 September 2018	20639/1	Adopted
2	17 October 2023	C10-23/015	Procedure reviewed following 2022 Council Election, amendments to purpose, definitions and scope.