



MID MURRAY COUNCIL

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Adopted by Council
June 2017



MID MURRAY COUNCIL

Our Customer Service Commitments

FOREWORD

As a service organisation, the Mid Murray Council is committed to providing quality services to its customers. We have introduced a number of initiatives to provide the best possible service to our customers.

This document explains the key initiatives so that you, our customers, know:

- what to expect from us in the way of services;
and
- what to do if you are not satisfied with some aspect of our service.

For your information attached to this Customer Service Charter is:

- our Complaints Handling Process;
- our Standards for Service and Performance to Customers.

While we take pride in these initiatives and in the standard of our services, we recognise that there will always be room for improvement. You, as our customers, are best placed to suggest where these improvements can be made. We encourage you to take the time to let us know your concerns and suggestions.

You can contact the Council using any of the following means:

- personally
- by telephone on (08) 8569 0100
- by facsimile (08) 8569 1931
- by letter addressed to Mid Murray Council, PO Box 28, Mannum SA 5238
- via e-mail – postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au
- via our website at www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au

We undertake to act on your concerns and suggestions and to endeavour to provide the best service possible to our customers.

Russell Peate
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



MID MURRAY COUNCIL

Our Customer Service Commitments

USING THE UNDERTAKING

Mid Murray Council is committed to ensuring that you receive quality service, quickly and courteously. We know that you – our customer – can monitor our performance, provide feedback on how we measure up and make sure we deliver on our undertakings.

We undertake to comply with the following principles of good service:

ACCESSIBILITY

1. Council can be contacted at:

Mannum Office Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

49 Adelaide Road, Mannum

Telephone (08) 8569 0100

Cambrai Office Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Main Street, Cambrai

Telephone (08) 8564 6020

Morgan & Districts Community Hub Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm
and Saturday 8.00am to 11.00am

Corner Fourth & Eighth Streets, Morgan

Telephone (08) 8540 0060

Blanchetown Community Hub Monday to Friday 10.00am to 2.00pm

3 Shaw Street, Blanchetown

Telephone (08) 8540 0901

You can contact the Council:

- personally
- by telephone
- by facsimile on (08) 8569 1931
- by letter addressed to Mid Murray Council, PO Box 28, Mannum SA 5238
- via e-mail – postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au
- via our website at www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au

Our Customer Service Commitments

-
2. This Charter explains standards for service and performance to customers.

SERVICE STANDARDS & GUARANTEES

3. The Council has established standards for responsiveness and the provision of information as well as for specific services.

Each undertaking for a specific service clearly describes:

- The service we will provide;
- How these services will be provided;
- The standards which you can expect;
- How you will be able to tell if we are achieving the standards;
- The rights and obligations you may have as a customer of these services; and
- How concerns and complaints will be handled.

CONSULTATION, ACCOUNTABILITY & AUDIT

4. We will provide opportunities for you to comment and make suggestions on our services and we welcome such feedback.
5. Our service standards are available on request.
6. We will use a range of consultative mechanisms to monitor our services and to ensure that the standards remain relevant. Customer surveys may be undertaken for service areas. We may also use focus groups, contacts with community organisations and advisory groups to obtain community input and feedback.
7. This undertaking commenced in September 2012 and will be reviewed annually.

FEES AND CHARGES

8. Fees and charges apply to a number of Council services. Customers are encouraged to contact us to ascertain what, if any, fees and charges may apply and the payment arrangements available.

Our Customer Service Commitments

REDRESS

9. Where you believe that the Council has **not** met one of the Undertakings set out in this document you are encouraged to:
- (a) contact the responsible Officer in the first instance; and if not satisfied with the outcome;
 - (b) contact the appropriate Manager, Director, or the Chief Executive Officer.

Whilst a complaint may be initially lodged at any level, it can be dealt with more quickly if it is lodged with the office nearest the source of the complaint in the first instance.

The appropriate Council Director for specific Council functions are identified in the "Redress" section of the particular undertaking.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS – GENERAL SERVICE COMMITMENTS

Customers contact Council for a wide variety of issues ranging from enquiries and requests for information or advice, to the provision of direct services such as Development Applications and Dog Registrations.

(1) In general staff will:

- Act in a professional manner and be courteous and respectful.
- Deal with enquiries promptly, making every effort to comply with stated timelines, or explain the reason for any delay.
- Accept the customer's right to complain and ensure an appropriate investigation and considered response.
- Carefully identify and confirm your needs.
- Only make promises that will be met.
- Welcome your comments and feedback as an opportunity for improvement.
- Arrive on time for meetings and appointments.

(2) When customers telephone the Mid Murray Council during office hours we will:

- Answer telephone enquiries promptly and courteously.
- Answer telephones within 5 rings.
- When answering a call staff will identify the Council and their first name.
- Have employees take responsibility for putting telephone and in-person customers in direct contact with the appropriate staff member.

Our Customer Service Commitments

- Return phone calls immediately where possible, but not exceeding 2 business days.
- Always end our conversation in a polite way.

(3) *When customers visit our offices we will:*

(How counter staff greets customers on behalf of the organisation)

- Acknowledge people if there is a queue.
- Give a courteous welcome and offer assistance.
- Listen carefully to their needs by asking questions, taking notes and confirming details.
- If follow up action is promised, ensure appropriate action or referral is provided in a timely manner.

(4) *When dealing with customers face to face we will:*

(How non-counter based staff greet customers)

- Introduce ourselves.
- Attend to customers promptly, keep to appointment times, or notify any potential for delay.
- Conduct our contact courteously and respectfully.

(5) *Handling difficult situations or abusive customers:*

(“Abusive behaviour” is displayed when customers shout, display extreme bullying behaviour, use abusive or obscene language or make a personal threat or threat to other Council personnel.)

- Staff are not expected to tolerate abusive behaviour.
- The staff member involved will immediately advise his or her supervisor of the action taken, and record the incident in writing.
- Any complaint or threat concerning another staff member will be referred immediately either to that person’s immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources.

ORGANISATION CORRESPONDENCE

Mid Murray Council aims to make contact with Council a positive experience, through seeking to provide information quickly, courteously and in a clearly understandable manner.

Our Customer Service Commitments

(1) General correspondence

- All correspondence will be recorded in the Council's record management system.
- We will respond to correspondence by letter or by making personal contact with the sender within 5 working days with a substantive reply or an interim reply detailing when a substantive reply can be expected.
- All letters will be produced following the corporate style and will contain a reference to the contact officer and a contact telephone number.
- The name and position of the signatory will appear at the end of each letter.

(2) Email correspondence

- An email will be responded to within 5 working days with a substantive reply or an interim reply detailing when a substantive reply can be expected.

COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT HANDLING

(See also Council's Procedure for the Internal Review of Council Decisions.)

Council acknowledges the individual's right to make a complaint if it is considered Council has been remiss in its service provision or actions.

(1) General complaints

(This does not include general customer Requests for Action)

- If a customer has a complaint about the service we have provided we will ensure an appropriate investigation and considered response.
- We will acknowledge a complaint within 5 working days and try to resolve complaints within 20 working days.
- If we have made a mistake the customer will receive a written apology and advice concerning actions to be taken.
- Council will keep a general record of complaints received and action taken, with due regard to protecting the privacy of customer and staff.
- Complainants will be advised of the outcome and thanked for bringing the matter to the attention of Council.
- It is Council's preference that complaints be in writing, anonymous complaints are not supported.

Our Customer Service Commitments

(2) Complaints concerning employees of Council

- The rights of both the customer and the staff member will be observed.
- Complaints concerning a particular individual's attitude or actions will be referred firstly to the individual's line Manager for attention. Secondly, the individual will be advised of the details of the complaint received and be requested to respond to the complaint.
- The relevant Manager/Director will take into account the response received and advise the complainant and employee of the outcome.
- Serious complaints will be directed to the Chief Executive Officer for appropriate action.
- Full details concerning the complaint, investigation and action taken may be kept in the employee's personal files.

(3) Compliments received

- Compliments received will be referred to the appropriate Manager and/or Department and any staff member involved.
- A copy of a letter of compliment may be kept in the employee's personal files.

CORPORATE SERVICES

ACCESS AND INFORMATION

Corporate Services includes governance, administration, community development, records management, public relations and customer service. Telephone (08) 8569 0100 between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays or when the Council office is closed) with any enquiries.

STANDARDS

We undertake to:

- Ensure the efficient and effective operation of all services.
- Answer your call promptly, greet you, identify the Council and ourselves when answering.
- Circulate and have available minutes of council meetings within 5 working days of the Council meeting.
- Provide Notice papers for Council meetings not less than 3 days prior to the meeting upon request.

Our Customer Service Commitments

- Issue Agendas for all meetings involving Councillors and/or members of the public not less than 3 days prior to the meeting.
- Respond to media enquiries within 4 hours or as agreed with the media. All media liaison in first instance should be directed to the CEO.
- Provide information to the community about the Council.
- Treat all our customers (internal and external) in the same manner – with quality customer service.

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to “Redress” section of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) The Acting Director, Corporate and Finance
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer

WORKS

The Works Department includes all roadworks construction and maintenance, bridge, drainage, footways, cycle tracks, traffic management, quarries, construction and maintenance of sporting and recreation facilities, street cleaning, roadside vegetation clearance, street lighting.

Telephone (08) 8569 0100 between the hours of 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

STANDARDS

The Works Department will:-

- Make ourselves available to meet with you by appointment between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm.
- Notify you at least five days in writing prior to major road works construction or maintenance commencing on your road/street.
- Advertise in the local newspaper or community newspaper of any major road works that may inconvenience through traffic prior to such works commencing.

Our Customer Service Commitments

- Aim to assess, and if required, repair potholes or undertake road maintenance within five (5) working days of notification.
- Aim to assess and undertake roadside tree and shrub pruning within ten (10) working days of notification where possible, recognising the large size of the Council area.
- Undertake all construction and maintenance works scheduled in the annual budget adopted by Council by 30 June of the following year, (*with the exception of circumstances where the completion of works by the due date is not possible, and in this event approval to reallocate funding for the following financial year is sought from Council and adopted in the budget for that year.*)

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to “Redress” section on page 3 of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) The Director Infrastructure Services
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer

DEVELOPMENT

ACCESS AND INFORMATION

Council provides assistance for intending applicants. The Acting Director – Development & Environmental Services and other Development Staff are available to talk to you about your application on appointment. Please telephone (08) 8564 6020 to arrange an appointment.

Requested meetings to discuss applications will be arranged within ten working days of your request at a mutually convenient time.

Applications can be submitted in person at any of Council’s three offices (Mannum, Cambrai or Morgan), by email or via post.

STANDARDS – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Pursuant to Section 41 of the Development Act 1993 and Regulation 41 of the Development Regulations 2008 Council must adhere to several legislative requirements for the time taken to assess a Development Application. These timeframes are indicated in the second column of the table below. The Service Standards that Council will aim for are listed in the third column.

Our Customer Service Commitments

Development Applications	Legislative Requirement (weeks)	Council's Service Standard (weeks)
Development Plan Consent Only		
Complying Development	2	2
All other Development (not including Land Divisions)	8	6
Building Rules Consent		
Class 1 or 10 Buildings (standard residential development)	4	3
For all other Classes of Buildings	12	8
Development Approval for Standard Residential Development	12	8
Development Approval for all other Development (not including land divisions)	20	16
The following service standards are for certain procedural matters that may be required as part of the assessment process (referrals, public notification etc). The times required should be added to those above.		
If a referral is required to the Development Assessment Commission or a prescribed body under Section 37 of the Development Act 1993 (State Government Departments such as the EPA, Heritage SA, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, DPTI for example) plus any extension of time. NOTE – Referrals to Department for Water can take up to 8 weeks.	6	6
If Public Notification is required (either Category 2 or 3) NOTE – generally occurs concurrently with any referral if a referral is required.	-	4
Referral to Council's Development Assessment Panel	-	3

(NB: Whilst Council try to process the application promptly, the process is often delayed by mandatory referrals to Government Agencies.)

Council staff can provide you with preliminary advice on your development proposal prior to lodgement of the formal development application, free of charge. This service can't provide a guarantee of approval, but will identify potential issues such that these can be addressed in a future application. Applicants need to allow a period of 30 business days for preliminary advice to be provided.

Council staff retain records and file notes of all instances where preliminary advice is given (both verbal and written), such that a record of all advice is kept on file for future reference.

In summary, Council will aim to process all Development Applications in a timely and expedient manner, certainly within legislative timeframes – sooner wherever possible. Customers are reminded there are specific challenges and procedural requirements relating to the processing of applications in areas within Council associated with the River Murray.

Our Customer Service Commitments

The above time frames do not include land divisions which are administered by the Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure.

*It is important that **ALL** information is provided with the application to Council to enable standards to be met.*

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to the “Redress” Section on page 3 of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) The Acting Director, Development & Environmental Services
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer

FINANCE

ACCESS AND INFORMATION

Finance includes accounts payable, accounts receivable, rates, properties, payroll, costing, budgeting Financial Reporting and financial management services.

Telephone (08) 8569 0100 between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday with any enquiries.

STANDARDS

The Council will:

- Process all accounts within agreed business terms.
- Provide courteous and prompt response to all customer enquiries.
- Provide accurate and reliable information on rates and property services within regulatory time frames.
- Ensure Council and the Community are provided with accurate and reliable Financial Reports and updates on Council expenditure throughout the year.
- Treat all our Customers (internal & external) in the same manner – with Quality Customer Service.

Our Customer Service Commitments

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to “Redress” section on page 3 of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) The Acting Director, Corporate and Finance
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

ACCESS AND INFORMATION

Council is responsible for implementing appropriate standards to protect the general health and well being of the community. Please telephone the Environmental Health Team on (08) 8564 6020 between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday regarding environmental health matters.

STANDARDS

The Council will:

- Respond to food poisoning complaints within 48 hours and respond to all other food and environmental health complaints within 3 working days.
- Produce a Register of all food and health premises and maintain the accuracy of the Register.
- Inspect all new food and health premises within 28 working days of notification of premises being occupied or change of ownership, as required by the Food Act 2001.
- Conduct regular inspections and monitor food premises to minimise the effects of food borne illness within the community.
- Will ensure standards of practice in hairdressers, acupuncturists, beauticians and skin penetration premises are maintained in order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- Regularly inspect public swimming pools and spas to ensure that they comply with water quality standards.
- Provide an accessible immunisation program.
- Process applications for wastewater disposal systems within 28 working days on receipt of all relevant information.

Our Customer Service Commitments

- Respond to customer requests for action relating to refuse, drainage, pest control, community waste management systems.
- Issue permits for roadside trading

*It is important that **ALL** information is provided with the application to Council to enable standards to be met.*

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to “Redress” section on page 3 of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) The Manager – Health Services
- (b) The Acting Director, Development & Environmental Services
- (c) The Chief Executive Officer

REGULATORY SERVICES

Council is responsible for implementing appropriate standards regarding all By-laws matters, animal control, stock control, nuisance litter and parking. Please telephone Council’s Regulatory Services staff during office hours on (08) 8564 6020.

Council provides a service to deal with after hours emergencies e.g. dog attacks etc. Please telephone 0409 554 807 if you require this service.

STANDARDS

The Council will:

- Issue the following permits within two working days of receipt of full information:
 - permits to burn under the Fire & Emergency Services Act during the Fire Danger Season, when appropriate;
 - permits for Reserve access;
 - permits for activities relating to footpaths;
 - permits to keep more than prescribed animals per property.

Our Customer Service Commitments

- Respond swiftly and if possible, within 4 hours at the scene of an **emergency** for dog attacks, dogs at large, wandering stock, unauthorised burning off or nuisance endangering health, obstructions endangering safety including illegally parked cars if the situation is disrupting traffic and endangering the health and safety of the community or an individual.
- Respond to other nuisances within 3 working days or within 24 hours for requests deemed as urgent where any matter could adversely affect the health or safety of the community or an individual.

REDRESS

If you believe that the Council has failed to meet any one of the Undertakings set out above, you are encouraged to seek redress by contacting the appropriate Council Officers. Refer to “Redress” section on page 3 of this document for information on how to seek redress.

For this undertaking the appropriate Officers for redress are:

- (a) Manager, Regulatory Services
- (b) The Acting Director Development & Environmental Services
- (c) The Chief Executive Officer

This Customer Service Charter was adopted by Council in June 2017.