



Sorell Council Customer Service Strategy

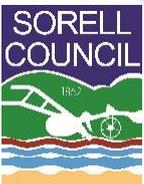


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CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Our commitment to you...

At Sorell Council, we are committed to working in partnership with our community to consistently deliver programs and services with a focus on exceptional customer service.

Our staff are committed to integrity, respect, openness and customer focus and aim to reflect these values in their actions, whether dealing directly with our customers, or working together to deliver programs and services to our community.

You can expect us to...

- Greet you with a smile and introduce ourselves with our first name.
- Communicate clearly and listen carefully.
- Make things as simple as possible for you.
- Provide accurate, prompt, friendly, courteous and professional customer service.
- Give you choices about how and when you contact us.
- Give you a record number for your query.
- Actively seek your feedback on our service to ensure they meet your needs.
- Provide an after-hours service response for emergency incidents.
- Acknowledge all written correspondence and promptly provide a response. *Where further investigation is required you will be notified of a timeframe.*
- Provide first contact resolution if possible.

You can help us by...

- Being complete and accurate in your dealings with us.
- Working with us to resolve issues.
- Showing respect and courtesy to other customers and Council staff.
- Making an appointment by phone if you have a complex issue
- Providing your name and contact details. If this information is not provided we will not be able to process your request.

Giving us feedback...

We encourage you to contact us directly regarding your service experiences.

Contact us in person, by email or via phone:

- Email us at: sorell.council@sorell.tas.gov.au
- Website: www.sorell.tas.gov.au
- Send us mail at:
Sorell Council
PO Box 126
SORELL TAS 7172
- Phone us on (03) 6269 0000 (weekdays from 8.30am to 4.45pm, excluding public holidays)

INTRODUCTION

Sorell Council's Customer Service Strategy (the Strategy) outlines the key initiatives and actions that Council will take to ensure that our customer service meets customer and community expectations over the next five years.

Council's Strategic Plan 2014-2018, focuses on Council's role in delivering the community's vision for the Sorell Municipality. This Strategy is intrinsically linked to the principles of this strategic plan, in particular Key Focus Area Nine "Continue to Deliver Valued Core Service".

"Continue to Deliver Valued Core Service" includes the way that Council engages with and responds to the local community in making and implementing decisions and delivering services that impact on the Sorell Local Government Area (LGA). This Strategy and the associated Customer Service Charter gives direction on how Council will do this and forms part of a wider on-going program of projects to see Council continuously improve.

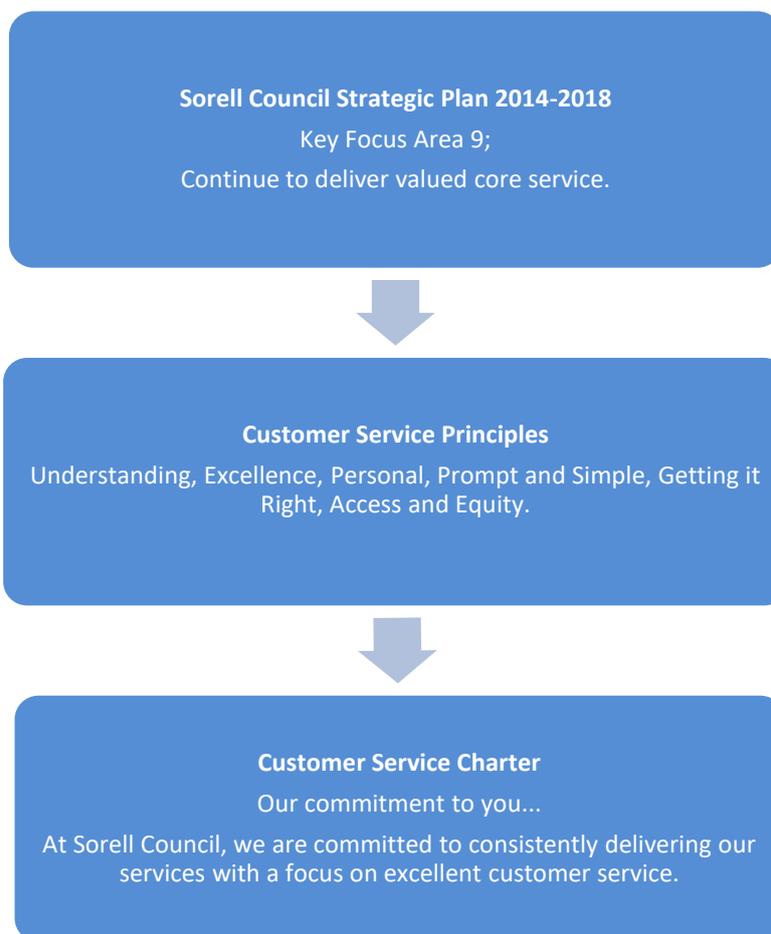
This Strategy has been developed to:

1. Provide a framework to tell our story;
2. Give a clear direction on how we are achieving our Customer Service Charter;
3. Improve our customer's experience;
4. Support decision making and community engagement

OUR COMMITMENT

Underpinning this strategy is Council's commitment to:

- **Act with integrity** – We behave and act ethically and seek to be truthful in all our operations and undertakings.
- **Provide services that are equitable** – We are fair and unbiased in our work and decisions.
- **Demonstrate respect** – We value dignity and diversity of each person in our community.
- **Be open and transparent** – We are transparent and take responsibility for our actions
- **Operate with a strong customer focus** – engaging, being responsive, keeping the customer at the centre of decisions and plans.



OUR CUSTOMERS

At Council, we use the word “customer” to describe the diverse array of individuals and organisations who receive services from us or interact with us.

Our “customers” include:

- Residents and rate payers;
- Local and national businesses;
- Community groups;
- Visitors and tourists;
- Councillors;
- Agencies such as Federal and State Government departments and not-for-profit groups; and
- Regulatory bodies such as auditors, Local Government Association (LGA) etc.

We recognise that not all of our customers directly contact Council but still rely on us to provide direction to help our community and deliver essential services.

As an organisation made up of a diverse range of businesses, we often interact as customers internally in order to deliver services to external customers.

CUSTOMER SERVICE FRAMEWORK

To consistently achieve excellence in the provision of customer service, Council has implemented a Customer Service Framework.

1. Understand the Customer

- Identifying our customers expectations.
- Understanding what excellent customer service means.

2. Design and Implement a Service Strategy

- Planning, designing and implementing a Customer Service Strategy.

3. Achieve Value Through People

- Develop customer relationships.
- Treating each customer as an individual.
- Staff have the tools to do their jobs.
- Working together across all areas of Council.

4. Manage Customer Interactions

- Faster and easier to access local services.
- Single point of contact.
- Resolve requests as effectively as possible.
- Processes and communications are simple and clear.

5. Measure Performance

- Post service evaluation.
- Asking the customer how they found their experience with us.
- Measuring our performance through benchmarking and reporting.

6. Act on Customer Feedback

- All customers have equal rights to information, support and service.
- Proactively finding opportunities for improvement.
- Capability to do it again and again.

Using this framework, Council services are continuously reviewed to leverage opportunities to:

Meet customer expectations and increase customer satisfaction

Improve Council's customer service via enhanced technology and education strategies

Reduce and eliminate 'red tape', processes that are overly complex or cause unnecessary inconvenience

Council aims to create a high quality customer experience which meets the customers expectations however they choose to contact us...

This Strategy aims to deliver on this objective by providing customers the opportunities to interact with Council in a way that suits their needs and expectations. One with faster access to service via a single point of contact, to make their life easier.

To deliver this consistently, this Strategy seeks to integrate multiple processes and technology thereby providing the customer with an experience that meets their expectations. Achieving a high quality customer experience requires coordinating and organising different technology, people and processes. This approach to service will allow Council's diverse range of customers to choose their own experience and balance between contact options.

PRINCIPAL ONE: UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER

Identifying our customers' needs and expectations...

Strategic Direction

Understand the Customer

- Identifying our customers expectations.
- Understanding what excellent customer service means.

Our Approach

Listening to customers comes first...

Great customer experiences start with understanding what our customers need and expect.

To achieve this, we will:

- Speak with and listen to our customers;
- Make every effort to respond when the community actively communicates with Council.

Gathering data to make informed decisions...

Council must optimise customer information systems and infrastructure internally to link processes, service levels and people. This will allow Council to monitor key aspects of the customer experience to make informed decisions and continuously offer better service.

Key Actions

1. Increase community engagement with Council;
2. Identify and use new technology as a Customer Service Tool E.g. Apps, Social Media, website etc.;
3. Incorporate front line Customer Service experience and expectations into staff inductions;
4. Conduct an annual Customer Service Satisfaction Survey.

PRINCIPAL TWO: EXCELLENCE

Ensuring excellent service provision to all customers by meeting and exceeding our customers' expectations...

Strategic Direction

Design and Implement a Service Strategy

- Planning, designing and implementing a Customer Service Strategy.

Our Approach

Everyone working together to create an experience that meets customer expectations...

Meeting customer expectations requires coordinating and organising different technology, people and processes to achieve an experience that meets expectations. Customer service goes beyond the front line; we recognise that customers interact with different parts of the organisation and across multiple touch points. Council aims to deliver value by focusing on consistency; emphasising cross-functional collaboration and internal service between teams.

Key Actions

1. Develop a Customer Charter to guide our service to the community;
2. Utilise Council's Training & Development Program to promote delivering great customer service;
3. Utilise Council's Customer Request Management system to its full potential including internal requests;
4. Upgrade Council's intranet to support communication internally;
5. Identify new technologies to improve efficiencies and service options.

PRINCIPAL THREE: FRIENDLY AND PERSONAL

Recognising our customers are individuals with unique needs and empowering our staff to take ownership and deliver positive outcomes...

Strategic Direction

Achieve Value Through People

- Develop customer relationships
- Treating each customer as an individual.
- Staff have the tools to do their jobs.

Our Approach

Create experiences with real people...

We aim to make every engagement with our customers a personalised experience. Our staff know exactly what experience is intended and how they can be successful in delivering it. We will put the customer at the centre of everything we do. To us every conversation, regardless of the channel, is an opportunity to build a strong customer relationship.

Council staff are experts on our customers...

Our staff work with their customers every day. They know when something isn't right. Council will ensure they have the ability to solve problems without having to "pass you onto the manager" wherever possible.

We deliver consistent service and advice...

Council's technologically savvy people support our online and social media customer service work, but the people actually responding to customers will be the same ones who are expert at day-to-day customer service operations and are responsible for interacting with our customers.

Key Actions

1. Develop staff guides for answering phones, replying to emails and greeting customers;
2. Give Customer Service Officers the opportunity to build customer relationships that promote good will;
3. Give staff the tools and training to solve customer problems at the frontline;
4. Maintain a bright, modern and welcoming Customer Service Centre;
5. Deliver customer service training to the whole of Council.

PRINCIPAL FOUR: PROMPT AND SIMPLE

Respecting our customers time and endeavouring to keep processes simple and resolve requests as effectively as possible...

Strategic Direction

Manage Customer Interactions

- Faster and easier to access local services.
- Single point of contact.
- Resolve requests as effective as possible.
- Processes and communications are simple and clear.

Our Approach

Leverage technology to enhance the customer experience...

Identifying and implementing the *use of technology will present opportunities to improve accessibility and the services Council provides*. Council aims to integrate and consolidate technology to create better outcomes for our community. Council aims to use technology to improve customers experience, ensuring personalisation is complemented (not replaced) by ease of access.

Planning for the future...

Council will keep abreast of technological advances and monitor the emergence of new channels. Council strives to be responsible and adopt technology as it emerges to maximise value with minimal risk.

Keeping our communications clear and user friendly...

Clear and accurate two-way communication is essential. Although many of the services and projects Council provides are complex we are determined to communicate these in a way that most of customers can easily comprehend.

Key Actions

1. Allow customers to choose how they contact Council and how they are updated on their request;
2. Communicate in “Plain English” and from the customer’s perspective;
3. Maintain Councils website search function so it is clear, simple and effective.

PRINCIPAL FIVE: FEEDBACK

Seeking customer feedback in order to measure organisational performance...

Strategic Direction

Measure performance

- Post service evaluation.
- Asking the customer how they found their experience with us.
- Measuring our performance.

Our Approach

Tracking metrics and feedback...

Council will manage the customer's experience by tracking the real time data and metrics behind delivering our service. We aim to use data to analyse how effective our strategies are and make better business decisions using actionable customer feedback.

Key Actions

1. Proactively ask customers for feedback;
2. Ensure staff receive feedback from customers about the service they provide so they know how they are performing;
3. Promote feedback between teams so staff can support each other;
4. Understand and track our progress against the industry standard.

PRINCIPAL SIX: GETTING IT RIGHT

Continuously improving Council's customer service skills, processes and systems, and recognising that all customers have equal rights to information, support and service...

Strategic Direction

Act on Customer Feedback

- All customers have equal rights to information, support and service.
- Proactively finding opportunities for improvement.
- Capability to do it again and again.

Our Approach

All customers have equal rights to information, support and service...

All Council's customers have the right to contact Council how and when they choose. We will ensure our various channels are of the highest quality and are inclusive to all members of our community.

Continuously improving...

Council aims to systematically improve high traffic services (external and internal) across the organisation.

Developing the capability to do it again and again...

Council is aiming to develop our capability to please customers again and again. We will use what we learn from customer feedback to evaluate managers and continually improve our strategy and its execution.

Key Actions

1. Staff have an understanding of access and diversity and where to access information when required;
2. We will monitor the results of the Customer Service Strategy.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Principal	How we will achieve this	Desired Outcome
<p>Understanding the Customer Identifying our Customer's need and expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/Improve Customer Satisfaction
<p>Excellence Ensuring excellent service provision to all customers by meeting and exceeding our customers' expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark against other organisation's through networking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in state and national networking groups e.g. National Local Government Customer Service Network.
<p>Friendly and Personal Recognising our customers are individuals with unique needs and empowering our staff to take ownership and deliver positive outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual staff survey. • Track positive trends through Customer Request and Record Management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feel they work in a positive customer culture. • Complaints decreasing over time, compliments increasing over time.
<p>Prompt and Simple Respecting our customers' time and endeavouring to keep processes simple and resolve requests as effectively as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a timely greeting and response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average queue and phone wait time less than 15 seconds. • Correspondence is acknowledged within 10 days.
<p>Feedback Seeking customer feedback in order to measure organisational performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Satisfaction survey score is monitored and increases over time. • Face to face consultation with the community. E.g. Community Conversations, Senior Advisory Group, Committee Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/Improve Customer Satisfaction
<p>Getting it right Continuously improving Council's customer service skills, processes and systems and recognising that all customers have equal rights to information, support and service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accuracy of customer data and information recorded through the Customer Request Management System (CRM) and Records Management System. • Continuously upskill Customer Service Employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified services are improved.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

The Customer Service Strategy was developed in consultation with staff, Councillors and Management. It is linked to Council's:

- Strategic Plan; and
- Customer Service Charter.

This strategy applies to;

- All of Council's permanent full time part time, and casual employees;
- Contract staff;
- Consultants; and
- Partner organisations who have been engaged to deliver services on behalf of Council.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Manager Customer and Community Services is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Customer Service Strategy. In order to ensure the timely delivery of service standards articulated in the Customer Service Charter an annual report that outlines performances will be endorsed by Council's Management Group.

NEXT REVIEW DATE:	DD/MM/YYYY
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