



CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

2020



CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

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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 2019 - 2029 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 Objective 4 – Increased Community Confidence in Council.

"Increasing Community Confidence" 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). Provision of organisation wide customer service that generates customer satisfaction and increased resident satisfaction. This Strategy and the associated Customer Service Charter gives direction on how Council will achieve this and forms part of a wider on-going program of projects to see Council continuously improve.

This Strategy has been developed to:

1. Increase community confidence in Council by providing prompt and efficient Customer Service.
2. Give a clear direction on how we are achieving our Customer Service Charter.
3. Improve our customer's experience and satisfaction.
4. Support decision making and community engagement.

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 that are within our capacity and resources, with a focus on exceptional customer service.

Our staff are committed to ensuring that our organisation's values of integrity, unity, respect and innovation are reflected 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.
- 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 can contact us.
- 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.
- Provide first point resolution where possible.

You can help us by

- Treating our staff with mutual respect.
- 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.

Providing us feedback

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

You can contact us in person, by email, via phone or mail:

- Email sorell.council@sorell.tas.gov.au
- Website www.sorell.tas.gov.au
- Mail PO Box 126, SORELL TAS 7172
- In Person 47 Cole Street, Sorell
- Phone (03) 6269 0000
(Weekdays from 8.15am to 4.45pm, excluding public holidays)

OUR COMMITMENT

Underpinning this strategy is Council's commitment to our values and guiding principles for effective customer service.

Council Values

INTEGRITY

We work in good faith, are honest and forthcoming and take accountability for our decisions.

UNITY

We work cohesively as one Council, supporting our community and each other to achieve better outcomes.

RESPECT

We listen to and consider the opinions and input of each person and acknowledge each other's contribution.

INNOVATION

We are committed to finding new solutions, adapting to change and continuously improving in order to deliver the best outcomes for the community.

Customer Service Guiding Principles

1. Identifying our customers' needs and expectations and understanding what quality customer service is.
2. Ensuring excellent service provisions to all customers by meeting and exceeding our customers' expectations.
3. Recognising our customers are individuals with unique needs and empowering our staff to take ownership and deliver positive outcomes.
4. Respecting our customers' time and endeavouring to keep processing simple and resolve requests as effectively as possible.
5. Seeking customer feedback in order to measure organisational performance.

POSITIONING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

The principal legislation establishing the powers and functions of Councils is *The Local Government Act 1993* (The Act). The Act specifies that Councils must develop a Strategic Plan and a Customer Service Charter.

Council's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2029 describes how we will progress towards the longer term requirements of our community and influences our operations, including the way we deliver our services, how we engage with our community and how we govern the organisation.

The Customer Service Charter specifies the principles relating to services provided by Council and the procedures for dealing with complaints relating to services provided by Council.

The Customer Service Strategy outlines the way we will support the delivery of the Strategic Plan and upholds the standards set out in the Customer Service Charter.



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 (LGAT) etc.

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

We also recognise that as an organisation providing and delivering a diverse range of services, we often interact as customers ourselves internally. It is important that we do this well in order to best deliver services to our external customers.

KEY CUSTOMER SERVICE OBJECTIVES

To consistently achieve excellence in the provision of customer service, Council has implemented five key customer service objectives.

The key objectives of The Strategy are to:

1. Increase community confidence in Council by providing prompt and efficient Customer Service.
2. Provide organisational wide customer service that generates customer satisfaction.
3. Educate our community about the community service standards they can expect from Council.
4. Ensure that what Council says about itself is consistent with the customer experience of Council.
5. Engage with and understand our customers’ needs.

THE ACTION PLAN – HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES

Objective	1. Increased community confidence in Council by providing prompt, professional and efficient Customer Service.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide response times in line with our Customer Service Charter. ▪ Being transparent, open and honest. ▪ Implement and maintain a knowledge base system for Customer Service (LivePro). ▪ Review the Sorell Council’s Personal Appearance Policy to reflect a corporate standard and brand.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Correct and consistent answers to your questions. ▪ Questions answered at your first point of contact (where possible). ▪ Fast and efficient responses. ▪ Promote a professional, consistent and corporate image at all times.
Objective	2. Provide organisational wide customer service that generates customer satisfaction.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver an organisation wide training program focusing on customer service, ‘It’s everyone’s responsibility’. ▪ Incorporate front line Customer Service experience and expectations into staff inductions. ▪ Use our resources efficiently
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To build a culture that places the customer first. ▪ You will receive effective customer service across all teams and all areas of Council. ▪ Consistently meet our service standards.
Objective	3. Educate our community about the customer service standards they can expect from Council.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the Customer Service Charter is readily available to the community. ▪ Develop the communities understanding of what effective customer service means. ▪ Demonstrate those standards in each interaction with Council.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customers will understand what their role is in assisting us to provide them with effective customer service. ▪ Have a community that is better informed and aware of the customer service standards they can expect from Council.

Objective	4. Ensure what Council says about itself is consistent with the customer experience of Council.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to undertake a Customer Service Survey to find out how we are going and identify areas for improvement. • Refresh all staff on the standards outlined in the Customer Service Charter and their associated responsibilities. • Document our commitment to good internal and external customer service from all areas of the organisation, including it in the Annual Plan and as an annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of all staff. • Measuring our performance through benchmarking and reporting (e.g. monthly Council Meeting agenda reports and National Benchmarking Program).
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Council staff understand that Customer Service is everyone's responsibility. • Council staff are customer focused and ready to listen. • All staff have the training and knowledge required to provide good customer service. • We will work better together across all areas of Council to provide you with the level of customer service you expect. • Understand and track our progress against the industry standard. • Complaints decreasing over time, compliments increasing over time.
Objective	5. Engage with and understand our customers' needs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly seek feedback from you to ensure we continue to meet expectations. ▪ Review and update the content on the Sorell Council website to better reflect the information and services the community requires. ▪ Continue to develop website functionality and make improvements that will benefit our customers. ▪ Expand the range of online services we provide. ▪ Review and update our Customer Service Charter. ▪ Identify and use new technology as a Customer Service Tool e.g. Apps, Social Media, website etc.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ User friendly website that is accessible and easy to navigate for all members of our community. ▪ Improved range of online services to enable easier access and greater choice. ▪ Customers have the opportunity to have their say. ▪ Customers are informed of changes that affect them. ▪ We will better understand who our customers are and what their needs are.

How Will We Evaluate The Strategy

The Strategy will be reviewed annually and formally revised within twelve month of a new Council being elected. This will ensure that current issues, customer feedback and any new and emerging customer service trends can be captured and reflected in the Strategy.

The actions outlines in The Strategy will be built into the key performance indicators of relevant Council staff. The Manager HR, Customer and Community Services will be 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.

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.
- Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- 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.

NEXT REVIEW DATE:	June 2021
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