


REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER

	COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE	Section:	Governance
		Version No:	1.2
		Adopted:	Feb 2019
		Reviewed:	Jul 22
		Next Review:	Jul 26
		Minutes Ref:	126/22
		Responsibility:	CEO

1. PREAMBLE

Council is committed to providing an effective community member compliment, comment and complaints management process that reflects the needs, expectations, and rights of its community members. This is facilitated by a culture within Council that recognises the community member's opportunity to provide feedback and provides for these issues to be addressed in an efficient, fair, and timely manner. Our aim is to provide community members with the best possible service; however, we recognise that from time-to-time things may go better or worse than expected, or there may be aspects of Council's services that customers wish to provide feedback on.

2. SCOPE

This Policy and Procedure applies to compliments, comments and complaints received from customers regarding Council operations or service delivery by employees, contractors and volunteers. This Policy and Procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints regarding Elected Members: these will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedure under the Code of Conduct for Elected Members Policy
- Requests for a review of Council decision in accordance with section 270 of the *Local Government Act 1999*: these will be dealt with under the Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy and Procedure.
- Matters covered by the *Public Interests Disclosure Act 2018*: these will be dealt with in accordance with the Public Interests Disclosure Act 2018.
- Allegations of criminal activity: these must be referred to the South Australian Police.

3. PROCEDURE PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for dealing with customer compliments, comments and complaints. This document is designed to ensure that matters are addressed promptly and fairly and considered appropriately.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaint: is an expression of dissatisfaction with the Council's decisions, policies, procedures, charges, employees, agents or the quality of the service it provides. Dissatisfaction may arise from the service provided by Council staff, contractors and systems or from the impact of a particular policy and procedure.

A Complaint is NOT:

- a request for Council services (unless it is a second request, where there was no response to the first) request for information;
- a request for Council to exercise a regulatory function (unless it is a second request, where there was no response to the first);
- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure;
- Reports of hazards (eg fallen tree branches);

**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER
COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING
POLICY & PROCEDURE V1.2**

- Reports concerning neighbours or neighbouring property (eg noise or unauthorised building works) the lodging of an appeal or objection in accordance with a statutory process, standard procedure or policy; and
- A submission relating to the exercise of a regulatory function (eg an objection to a development application or a submission on a policy).

Unreasonable Request for Service, Information and Complaints: If Council or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) determines that a request is malicious, frivolous, vexatious and/or unreasonable, this is grounds to dismiss the request and not take any further action in relation to it.

A determination that a request is malicious, frivolous vexatious and/or unreasonable, must take into account:

- any similar requests previously made by the person (i.e. about the same service);
- the response and outcome to previous requests made by the person (if any);
- whether the service is capable of being provided by or required to be provided by the Council;
- the outcomes sought by the person; and
- the resources required to provide the service (to ensure that it is not an unreasonable diversion of public resources).

Please refer to Council's Unreasonable Requests for Service, Information and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Compliment: is when a customer expresses their appreciation for, or satisfaction with, a service or action taken by the Regional Council of Goyder or particular staff member/team.

Comment: is general information provided to Council by a customer. The information may be positive or negative and generally does not require a response, confirmation or follow up action.

Request for Information: is where a customer requests documents, information or an explanation of Council services, policies or procedures.

Request for Service: is where a customer requests the provision of a service, or action to be taken to address an issue, or requests a change to the way the Council delivers a service. Please refer to Council's Request for Service Policy and Procedure.

Investigating Officer: is the person to whom a customer issue is assigned, who consequently holds decision making delegations and is able to use discretion in determining how each matter should be dealt with. Investigating Officers will deal with Tier 3 matters.

5. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is ultimately accountable for the management of, and response to, customer interactions dealing with serious matters or where the customer has not been satisfied with the Council's response.

Directors

Directors are responsible for resolving customer interactions relevant to their Departments and where cross-department resolutions are required. They are also responsible for resolving customer interactions relevant to their portfolios and for ensuring that staff under their direct supervision deal with feedback

**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER
COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING
POLICY & PROCEDURE V1.2**

received in accordance with the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure,

Staff

All staff are responsible for dealing with First Tier customer interactions relevant to their responsibilities and for the application of the Customer Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

6. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Who can lodge a compliment/complaint or provide feedback?

Any person, group of people, body or organisation may lodge a complaint. The Compliments, Comments and Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure is not limited and includes all people residing, working, studying, conducting business, visiting and using the services or facilities of Council.

To assist with investigation and resolution, complaints should be lodged as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, within 90 days of the customer becoming aware of the matter which is the subject of the complaint.

How to lodge a comment, compliment or complaint:

- in person at the Council office (1 Market Square Burra or 25 Bruce Street Eudunda)
- by phone – 8892 0100
- by email – council@goyder.sa.gov.au
- by letter - Regional Council of Goyder, 1 Market Square, Burra SA 5417
- by using the Compliments, Comment and Complaints form available at the end of this policy or at request via the

Whichever method is chosen, it is essential to provide as much information as possible to enable appropriate treatment of the feedback provided. This may include:

- Name, address and contact details
- Dates relevant to the issue being communicated
- A complete description of circumstances/relevant information
- If known, the staff member or person associated with the situation
- What action has been taken to resolve the situation
- Details of the action(s) being requested
- Any supporting documentation that can be provided
- Receiving, recording and managing compliments/complaints or feedback
- Compliments, complaints and feedback will be recorded in the Council's Electronic Records and Document Management System

Note: Anonymous compliments/comments/complaints will not be recorded or followed up unless to not do so would place another person at risk or harm.

6.1 Customer complaints will be managed in a three tiered approach:

Tier 1 – Front Line Customer Compliment, Comment or Complaint Handling

- a) All Community member Compliments, Comments or Complaints should be acknowledged within **5** working days using an appropriate method of communication.
- b) Staff are empowered to deal with core Council business, resolve issues wherever possible at first contact, and provide a response within **10** working days.

**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER
COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING
POLICY & PROCEDURE V1.2**

- c) If a resolution cannot be provided within this timeframe staff are required to advise the complainant when a resolution will be provided.
- d) Details of written complaints will be recorded within Council's Electronic Records and Document Management System.

Tier 2 – Escalation of a matter that has not been resolved at first contact

- a) Unresolved matters will be referred to the Director of the staff member initially responsible for action (dependent upon the position of the staff member initially tasked with the complaint).
- b) All discussions/communications, documentation and material associated with the matter must be recorded and appropriately stored (taking into consideration the nature of the information and the level of confidentiality to be applied).
- c) Tier 2 matters will be completed wherever possible within 10 working days of receipt by the Director.
- d) Tier 2 matters that are not completed within 10 working days will be escalated the Chief Executive Officer for action (dependent upon the position of the Tier 2 Officer).

Tier 3 – Escalation of a matter that has not been resolved within 20 business days (total)

- a) The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for management/resolution of matters that have not been resolved within 20 days and will act in the capacity of Investigating Officer.
- b) Tier 3 investigations will, wherever possible, be completed within 28 business days.
- c) If a matter is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the community member they may request an internal review of the decision in accordance with 270 of the *Local Government Act 1999*: This would be dealt with under the Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy and Procedure.
- d) The community member will also be provided with information regarding their options of referral of the matter to an external public sector agency (e.g. Ombudsman), appeal rights to the courts or other legal remedies.

6.2 Comment Receipt Process

Comments received are to be registered in Council's Electronic Records and Document Management System against the appropriate Director or CEO for review and action as appropriate.

The Director or CEO will assess the nature of the feedback and determine what action is required including a response to the person who has submitted the feedback.

6.3 Compliments Receipt Process

Compliments received are to be registered in Council's Electronic Records and Document Management System against the appropriate Director or CEO for review and action as appropriate.

The Director or CEO will assess the nature of the feedback and determine what action is required including a response to the person who has submitted the feedback.

- Where the compliment is about a particular staff member or team, distribute the compliment details and determine how the staff member or team will be recognised.

6.4 Complaints Receipt Process

Complaints received are to be registered in Council's Electronic Records and Document Management System against the appropriate Director or CEO.

The Director or CEO will:

**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER
COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING
POLICY & PROCEDURE V1.2**

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint and attend to it within the relevant timeframe.

The Director or CEO responsible for resolving/completing a complaint must ensure the following information is recorded:

- Details of the resolution achieved
- Actions required to deliver the resolution, including timeframes for completion
- Communication of the outcome to ensure relevant policies/procedures are updated accordingly (where appropriate).

Where matters escalate to Tier 3 the Investigating Officer will

- Have appropriate authorisation to conduct the investigation;
- Clarify the issues with the community member and set appropriate expectations with the community member in relation to the scope and likely implications of the investigation;
- Gather information, prepare a report and formulate resolution options;
- Act reasonably, fairly and objectively, and in good faith;
- Ensure the report reflects the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice;
- Manage implementation of actions decided as part of the decision; and
- Clearly communicate the outcome to the community member. Monitor the effectiveness of outcomes.

7. Complaints regarding Code of Conduct for Council Employees

7.1 Complaint procedure

Where a person alleges — an employee (or a relative of an employee) has sought or received a gift or benefit that is, or could reasonably be taken to be, intended or likely to create a sense of obligation on the part of the employee to a person or to influence the employee in the performance or discharge of the employees functions or duties; or an employee has failed to record, or correctly record, details of a gift or benefit received by the employee (or a relative of an employee) on the gift and benefits register; or the CEO has not appropriately maintained a register for gifts and benefits received by employees of the council, they may submit a complaint alleging that an employee of council has contravened or failed to comply with the Code of Conduct for Council Employees, as prescribed in Schedule 2A of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2013*.

A complaint must be given to the Chief Executive Officer (or Mayor). In the case of a complaint against the Chief Executive Officer, a complaint must be given to the Mayor of the council, except in circumstance where it would be to remain confidential.

8. RECORDS

All records should be treated in accordance with Local Government GDS40.


9. REVIEW

This document shall be reviewed by Council at least four (4) yearly or on significant change to legislation or aspects included in this policy that could affect the health and safety of workers.

10. REVIEW HISTORY

Document History	Version No:	Issue Date:	Description of Change:
	1.0	22/02/19	Adopted refer minute 26/19
	1.0	16/06/20	Refer minute 087/20
	1.1	18/08/20	Refer minute 165/20
	1.2	18/07/2022	Refer minute 126/22

**REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER
COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING
POLICY & PROCEDURE V1.2**

	Compliments, Comments and Complaints Feedback Form Page 1 of 1	Responsible Officer:	
		Synergy Ref No:	
		Synergy File Ref #:	___ . 67 . 2 . 1

For a personal reply to your compliment, comment or complaint please provide the following contact details in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Name: Date:

Contact Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Postal Address:

The Council staff member, service or department your feedback relates to:

.....
.....

Has this matter been previously discussed with a staff member? Yes ☐ No ☐

This is a: Compliment ☐ Comment ☐ Complaint ☐

Feedback relating to the Staff member, service or department (please provide a detailed description):

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....