

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Date 09 July 2018

Resolution Date 23 July 2018

Clause Number CCL18/127

Responsible Position Internal Ombudsman

Branch Governance & Internal Control

Division Executive Services

Version 1.0

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Review Date April 2021

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Document Revision History	
Description	Date
This policy has been revised to give Council officials, Council staff and members of the public clear and transparent guidance on how Council addresses complaints of dissatisfaction with Council service, employees or policies and procedures.	July 2018
Notes	

1. INTRODUCTION

Dubbo Regional Council is committed to providing the highest levels of customer service and effective communication with customers and the local community. Council values customer feedback as it assists to identify areas of continuous improvement and enhance service delivery.

2. PURPOSE

This policy outlines Council's approach for responding to complaints in a timely, consistent and structured manner and seeks to develop a positive attitude towards complaints that allows for Council to reflect upon customer feedback and enhance service delivery where potential for improvements are identified.

This policy aims to deal effectively with and manage complaints from the community by:

- Demonstrating and promoting Council's commitment to customer satisfaction
- Acknowledging receipt of complaints in a timely fashion
- Ensuring that complainants are responded to in a courteous, fair, respectful and timely manner, without bias or fear of retribution
- Ensuring that all members of the community have access to information on how complaints will be dealt with by Council
- Educating staff in relation to complaint handling procedures and practices
- Monitoring feedback to improve existing services and facilities
- Identifying areas that need improvement or would benefit from enhancement
- Assisting in the planning and allocation of resources
- Affording complainants with a process of review, should they remain dissatisfied

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RELATED LEGISLATION

A comprehensive complaints management system is an essential part of providing a quality service in local government. It is a mechanism that allows Council to measure community satisfaction and provides a useful source of information and feedback for improving Council's services.

Complaint handling is also a key component of sound corporate governance and is fundamental to ensuring an appropriate level of accountability in the exercise of Council functions.

The following legislation and Council publications are related to this policy:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*
- *Ombudsman Act 1974*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*

- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.*
- Dubbo Regional Council's *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* – Internal Reporting Policy
- Dubbo Regional Council's Code of Conduct
- Dubbo Regional Council's Unreasonable Complainant Conduct (UCC) Policy
- Dubbo Regional Council's Privacy Management Plan

This policy is based on the customer satisfaction formula suggested by the NSW Ombudsman's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines (2004) and the Australian Standard ISO 10002:2004, MOD, Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations.

Doing the job right the first time + **Effective customer contact / complaint handling** = **Increased customer satisfaction / support**

It is further informed by a best practice publication prepared jointly by the NSW Ombudsman and the Department of Local Government, entitled, 'Complaints Management in Councils – Practice Note No. 9, July 2009).

1.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors and officers of Dubbo Regional Council who deal with customers, members of the public, other agencies, service providers, community organisations or other members of staff.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

All Council officials are required to comply with the provisions of this policy. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

1.3.1 Councillors

The elected Councillors have a responsibility to relay complaints to the Chief Executive Officer, for onward dissemination as appropriate, and to reinforce the principles of this policy to their constituents, members of the public and parties who may express a level of dissatisfaction with Council or the delivery of services.

1.3.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer has a leadership role in demonstrating commitment to the effective resolution of complaints, and for promoting a culture that is receptive to the receipt of complaints, so that Council can improve on its service delivery.

If a complaint involves a concern that Council or a staff member has engaged in corrupt conduct, these should be referred to the Internal Ombudsman, Executive Manager (Governance and Internal Control) or the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer has a statutory duty to report to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) any matter he or she suspects on reasonable grounds concerns may concern corrupt conduct.

1.3.3 Directors

Directors are responsible for ensuring that staff, managers and Supervisors within their respective division, are aware of the requirements of this policy, and attend to any complaints expediently.

1.3.4 Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders

Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders are responsible for investigating complaints that relate to their main business area, determining outcomes and recommending appropriate remedy. They are also responsible for educating their employees with regard to this policy and ensuring that complaints are responded to in a timely, courteous, fair and impartial manner with the complainant kept up to date with the progress and outcome of their complaint.

1.3.5 Employees

Employees are required to respond to complaints and requests from customers in a courteous, fair and timely manner.

1.3.6 Internal Ombudsman

The Internal Ombudsman is Council's complaints coordinator and is responsible for dealing with serious or difficult complaints which have been escalated to him/her as per the provisions of this policy.

The Internal Ombudsman is also responsible for investigating complaints that meet the assessment criteria of a Public Interest Disclosure or indicate that a staff member has seriously breached Council's Code of Conduct. The Internal Ombudsman has an obligation to investigate the conduct and actions of Council and Council staff in the case of possible corruption, misconduct, maladministration or unethical behaviour.

Further information can be found in the Internal Ombudsman Policy, *Council's Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act)* – Internal Reporting Policy, and the Code of Conduct.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's policies, procedures, charges, employees, agents or quality of service, affecting an individual or group of customers. These complaints are considered general complaints, and are dealt with and resolved inside Council.

1.4.2 What is not a Complaint?

For the purpose of this policy, the following are **not** considered to be complaints:

- An initial request for works
- A complaint about an event, service or business, for which Council is not responsible
- A request for information or explanation of policies, procedures and decisions of Council
- A request for information regarding Council's assets or services
- An expression concerning the general direction or the performance of Council or its elected representatives
- Reports concerning neighbours, neighbour disputes, noise, dogs, unauthorised building work or similar issues that fall within the regulatory aspect of Council's service.
- An expression of disagreement with Council's policy, procedures or a lawfully made decision
- The lodging of an appeal or objection in accordance with a standard procedure or policy, for example a complaint about an approved development or draft policy or plan – unless this is recorded as a complaint against Council's decision making process.
- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure

Many of the issues above are called 'complaints' when a customer contacts Council. They are called complaints because a customer is unhappy about the situation and wants something done. To Council, however, the 'complaint' is a request for action. This terminology does not reduce the importance of the issue, nor does it change the actions Council will take. However, it does help Council differentiate between a complaint and a request so that the issue can be registered appropriately in Council's customer request tracking system (CRM).

In general, most 'true' complaints, as Council defines them, are about staff behaviour, quality of service, Council policy, or the outcome of a decision.

1.4.3 Exceptions

This policy does not apply in circumstances where there is legislation covering the making of a complaint. For example:

- The making of, or a complaint assessed as, a Public Interest Disclosure under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*
- The making of applications for internal review of alleged breaches of privacy under the *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998*
- The making of applications for access to information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act)

Information on the above procedures is available from Council's website, or at Council's Customer Services Centre.

For complaints concerning Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer, corrupt conduct, child protection, pecuniary interests, public interest disclosures and competitive neutrality, please see Section 1.11 – Responding to special circumstances.

1.4.4 Complaints that will not be investigated

Dubbo Regional Council may determine that a complaint will not be investigated where that complaint:

- is considered frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith or concerns a trivial matter
- is a second request for service received within the service level timeframe
- involves a matter where an adequate remedy or right of appeal exists, whether or not the complainant uses the remedy or right of appeal
- where a matter is subject to existing mediation process
- private neighbourhood disputes
- relates to a decision of Council
- relates to a matter awaiting determination by the Council
- relates to matters already under investigation by the Minister for Local Government, the ICAC, the NSW Ombudsman's office, a Minister of the Crown or Government Department or the NSW Police Force
- relates to a matter before a court or tribunal
- relates to the appointment or dismissal of any employee or an industrial or disciplinary issue
- relates to the actions or conduct of private individuals, not contracted by Council
- involves a matter where the complainant declines or refuses to provide further information deemed necessary for action to be taken

- involves threats made against Council
- relates to a decision, recommendation, act or omission which is more than one year old

Should Council decide not to investigate a complaint, the complainant will be advised of the reason for the decision, and the decision will be registered on Council's records management system.

1.4.5 Anonymous complaints

Dubbo Regional Council encourages complainants to provide full contact information when lodging complaints.

In the event of an anonymous complaint, Council will determine whether the complaint will be investigated dependent upon the seriousness of the complaint, and provided there is sufficient information in the complaint to enable an investigation to be conducted.

An anonymous complainant cannot be provided with reasons for any decision made about their complaint.

1.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Dubbo Regional Council will not disclose the identity of a complainant, should the complainant request their details remain confidential.

That said, in some circumstances, it may not be possible for Council to safeguard the confidentiality of the complainant due to the circumstances of the complaint, and/or having regard to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Should such a situation arise the complainant will be consulted prior to the disclosure of any identifying information and measures put in place to prevent the complainant experiencing any form of victimisation or retribution resulting from the complaint.

Dubbo Regional Council manages personal and private information collected by Council in accordance with Council's Privacy Management Plan, and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PIPA Act).

1.6 SAFEGUARDS AGAINST VICTIMISATION AND RETRIBUTION

Allegations of victimisation and retribution as a result of lodging a complaint will be investigated by the Internal Ombudsman. If a complainant has been victimised or has been subjected to any form of reprisal action, as a direct result of raising a concern that has been treated as a Public Interest Disclosure, criminal penalties may apply. Please refer to the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (PID Act) – Internal Reporting Policy.

If a complainant experiences such behaviour they should lodge a complaint with the Internal Ombudsman, Executive Manager (Governance and Internal Control) or the Chief Executive Officer.

1.7 LODGING A COMPLAINT

Before lodging a complaint with Council, it is useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- **What has Council or Council staff done wrong in this situation?**
- **Has Council or Council staff breached a law or policy which they have a duty to uphold?**
- **Has a process been applied unfairly or discriminatively?**
- **Has a Council officer done something that is against the law or could be a breach of Council's Code of Conduct?**
- **What is the outcome I am seeking?**

When lodging a complaint, complainants should include details such as name, address and contact number, together with a concise and factual description of the complaint and the outcome sought.

Complaints may be lodged with Council:

- In Person

By attending Council's Customer Service Centre:

- Dubbo Office: Corner of Church and Darling Streets, Dubbo Regional Council
- Wellington Office: Corner of Nanima Crescent and Warne Street, Wellington

The Customer Service Centre is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

- By Telephone

Direct to Council's Customer Service Centre on (02) 6801 4000.

- In Writing

- Email: council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au
- Post: PO Box 81, Dubbo, NSW 2830
- Fax: (02) 6801 4259

- To a Councillor

If complaints are made to Councillors of Dubbo Regional Council, it will be the responsibility of the Councillor to ensure the matter is formally relayed to the Chief Executive Officer as soon as practicable after having received the complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer will refer the complaint to the relevant Director responsible for the area subject of complaint, to ensure that it is assigned to the relevant business area.

The Chief Executive Officer will refer the complaint to the Internal Ombudsman, if the matter falls within his or her area of responsibility.

- To the Internal Ombudsman

- Tel: (02) 6801 4000

- Email: ombudsman@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Complaints can be made to the Internal Ombudsman in writing, marked for the attention of the Internal Ombudsman, via email, or completion of an online proforma on Council's website: <https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/I-Want-To/Contact-Council/contact-the-internal-ombudsman>

Assessment of complaints lodged with the Internal Ombudsman will be subject to the Internal Ombudsman Policy.

Where possible, complaints made in person or by telephone will be resolved at the initial point of contact. If this cannot be achieved, due to the nature of the complaint or because the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken, it is Council policy that complaints are to be lodged in writing* to ensure transparency in the complaint handling process and that all aspects of a complaint are reviewed and investigated in accordance with this policy.

* If complainants require assistance to lodge a complaint due to disability, emotional distress or are literacy challenged, they can be referred to Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre located at 1, 80 Gipps St, Dubbo (PH: 02 6882 2100) who will engage a relevant support service, at no cost, to assist and support the complainant throughout the complaint process.

1.8 SERVICE STANDARDS

Dubbo Regional Council aims to address and finalise all complaints within the following specified timeframes:

- Acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days by phone or email
- Record the complaint in Council's electronic document management system, HP Content Manager, on the same day the complaint is made
- Finalise the response to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If not possible, the complainant will be informed of this within 10 working days and an explanation provided as to why. A finalised response will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days, unless this is not possible. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised in writing within 20 working days and will be given an expected timeframe for finalisation.

- All actions undertaken will be recorded in Council's records management system.

1.9 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

1.9.1 Tier 1 – Frontline Complaints Handling

Registration and attempted resolution by frontline staff. Complainants are encouraged to provide feedback and discuss their complaint with the officer who provided the service or who dealt with the issue, as this is more likely to result in a speedy resolution of the complaint.

A staff member receiving a complaint of a minor nature will, within the scope of their delegation, deal with the complaint at the time or refer it immediately to the appropriate Council officer, Manager or Supervisor who may be able to resolve the complaint on the spot.

If the complaint is against a Council staff member, the matter is to be referred to that persons Manager or Supervisor. Serious allegations or allegations of corruption, misconduct, maladministration or unethical conduct, the matter is to be referred to the Internal Ombudsman, or in his/her absence, the Executive Manager (Governance and Internal Control).

All complaints and any actions / resolutions must be recorded on Council's records management system on the same day and copied to the relevant Manager or Supervisor and the Internal Ombudsman for their information.

1.9.2 Tier 2 – Review

If the complainant remains unsatisfied after speaking to or corresponding with the Council Officer who delivered the service or who dealt with the issue, or if they feel uncomfortable approaching the officer, they may lodge a complaint in writing which will be reviewed and assigned to a Director, Manager or Supervisor (as appropriate) for action in accordance with this policy. In the case of complaints made against specific staff members, the Director, Manager or Supervisor will inform the staff member of the complaint and give such person(s) an opportunity to respond to the allegation/s.

The only circumstance where staff won't be informed of allegations against them is if such allegations have been found to be unsubstantiated, or the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith.

1.9.3 Tier 3 – Escalation

Should the processes undertaken by the Director, Manager or Supervisor fail to resolve the complaint, or the outcome be regarded as unsatisfactory to the complainant, the Director, Manager or Supervisor will refer the complaint to the Internal Ombudsman for further review in accordance with Council's Internal Ombudsman Policy.

1.9.4 Tier 4 – External Review - Referral

In circumstances where these internal processes are unable to resolve a complaint or satisfy the complainant, the complainant has the option of referring their concerns to an external agency, depending on which jurisdiction might be appropriate. Such agencies may include the NSW Ombudsman's Office, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Office of Local Government or the Office of the Information Commissioner (Contact details are provided later in this policy).

1.9.5 Exceptions

Complaints will automatically be referred to the appropriate officer on the next tier, if:

- The complaint is about the staff member's **own conduct**
- A request to do so is made by the complainant
- The problem is clearly outside the staff member's delegation or area of expertise
- A staff member is alleged to have committed a criminal offence, acted corruptly, or engaged in other serious or controversial conduct (these complaints are to be referred to the Internal Ombudsman)

When a complaint has been referred on, the complainant will be told the name of the person to whom it has been referred and advised that they can expect contact from this person within three working days.

1.10 POSSIBLE REMEDIES

Possible remedies may include;

- an apology where Council has made a mistake or where a Council Officer's comments or behaviour have offended
- provision of the desired service
- a refund of overcharged or incorrectly charged monies
- provision of more information about Council's policies and/or the decision making process including regular progress updates
- a commitment to investigate and/or review Council procedures or practices where a complaint is justified

- recommendation to refer the complaint to an external body where Council cannot resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant
- any other remedy deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer

1.11 RESPONDING TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1.11.1 Complaints Concerning Councillors

Complaints concerning Councillors of Dubbo Regional Council will be managed in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and should be referred in the first instance to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer will discuss the matter with the Internal Ombudsman, who is Council's Complaints Coordinator to determine if the complaint is to be referred to Council's Conduct Reviewer/Review Committee and treated in accordance with the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW.

1.11.2 Complaints Concerning the Chief Executive Officer

Complaints concerning the Chief Executive Officer will be managed in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and should be referred in the first instance to the Mayor.

The Mayor will discuss the matter with the Internal Ombudsman, who is Council's Complaints Coordinator to determine if the complaint is to be referred to Council's Conduct Reviewer/Review Committee and treated in accordance with the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW.

1.11.3 Complaints Concerning Public Interest Disclosures

Complaints concerning allegations of corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, contravention of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or Local Government pecuniary interest contravention shall be referred immediately and directly to the Internal Ombudsman, Executive Manager (Governance and Internal Control) and/or the Chief Executive Officer.

Under Section 11 of the ICAC Act, the Chief Executive Officer has a statutory duty to report any matter that he or she suspects on reasonable grounds concerns corrupt conduct.

The reporting of such matters to ICAC will not delay or substitute reporting to NSW Police or any other authority, or impact upon any assessment by the Internal Ombudsman.

Complaints of such nature may be assessed as Public Interest Disclosures in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (PID Act). Any complaints made or assessed as a PID will be managed in accordance with Council's *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 – Internal Reporting Policy*.

1.11.4 Complaints Concerning Child Protection

Dubbo Regional Council requires that suspicions or disclosures of harm against children must be acted on. Any child protection concerns must be reported in the first instance to senior management of the relevant work area and notification made as soon as practicable to the Chief Executive Officer and Internal Ombudsman. A mandatory report (under Section 27 and 27A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*) may be made to the Department of Family and Community Services NSW following a preliminary investigation and approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

Any Council Officer who is investigated and found to have committed an offence against a child or young person will be taken to have breached Council's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary process and the requirements of *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

Any allegation of child abuse against an employee of Council will immediately be forwarded by Council's Chief Executive Officer to the NSW Ombudsman and/or NSW Police.

If a child is identified as being at imminent risk of harm, staff are to make an immediate report to Police by calling 000 and make notification in accordance with this policy immediately thereafter.

1.11.5 Complaints Concerning Pecuniary Interests

All complaints relating to pecuniary interest matters will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer for referral to the Chief Executive of the NSW Office of Local Government. In consultation with the Internal Ombudsman, any pecuniary interest matter involving a staff member may be subject to investigation as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

Complaints concerning pecuniary interest matters are required to be assessed and investigated by the Chief Executive of the NSW Office of Local Government.

1.11.6 Complaints Concerning Competitive Neutrality

Dubbo Regional Council supports the principles of competitive neutrality by ensuring that Council business operates without any net competitive advantages over other businesses as a result of its public ownership.

Council will receive and consider any complaint alleging that Council has not abided by the spirit of competitive neutrality in the conduct of a business activity.

Any complaint of this nature received by Council will be managed in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

1.12 UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT

Dubbo Regional Council accepts that the process of making a complaint to an organisation can sometimes be difficult and distressing. It is acknowledged that this may result in difficulties in communicating concerns and distressed behaviour.

In a small percentage of cases, despite the best efforts of Council, it may be challenging to manage complainants whose conduct is unreasonable, and whose actions or motivations are unacceptable.

Council will treat all complaints with the utmost seriousness and will take reasonable steps to manage these situations, while fulfilling the obligation to provide its employees with a safe workplace and to ensure appropriate use of public resources.

Dubbo Regional Council reserves the right to put in place administrative controls to assist in the management of unreasonable, persistent and difficult complainants. Further information and guidance is contained with the Unreasonable Complainant Conduct (UCC) Policy. This policy is not intended to apply to complainants who are justifiably or understandably angry or upset because of an error on Council's part (whether real or perceived), or out of frustration with their dealings with Council or Council staff. It is intended to apply to complainants who exhibit unreasonable complainant conduct.

1.13 External Agencies

Agency	Nature of Complaint
<p>NSW Ombudsman</p> <p>Level 24, 580 George Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Phone: 02 9286 1000 or 1800 451 524</p> <p>Fax: 02 9283 2911</p> <p>Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p>Matters concerning maladministration</p>
<p>NSW Office of Local Government (OLG)</p> <p>Locked Bag 3015, NOWRA NSW 2541</p> <p>Phone: 02 4428 4100</p> <p>Fax: 02 4428 4199</p> <p>Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p>Matters concerning serious Council misconduct or pecuniary interest matters</p>
<p>NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)</p> <p>Level 7, 255 Elizabeth Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Phone: 02 9318 5999 or 1800 463 909</p> <p>Fax: 02 9264 5364</p> <p>Email: icac@icac.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p>Matters concerning corrupt conduct, which is defined as dishonest or partial exercise of any official functions by a public official.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer is required to report suspected cases of corrupt conduct to the ICAC.</p>
<p>Anti-Discrimination Board</p> <p>Level 7/10 Valentine Avenue, PARRAMATTA NSW 2150</p> <p>Phone: 02 9268 5555 or 1800 670 812</p> <p>Fax: 02 9268 5500</p> <p>Email: complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p>Matters in relation to discrimination, disability and harassment</p>
<p>Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)</p> <p>Level 20, 175 Pitt Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Phone: 02 9230 9133</p>	<p>Competitive neutrality complaints</p>

Agency	Nature of Complaint
Fax: 02 9223 1092	
Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) Level 17, 201 Elizabeth Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000 Free call phone: 1800 INFOCOM (1800 463 626) Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au	Breaches of the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (GIPA Act) Breaches of the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i>

1.14 Review

The Internal Ombudsman will conduct a review of Council's Complaint Management Policy every three years or otherwise on the commencement of a new Internal Ombudsman to ensure the processes are responsive and appropriate in addressing issues raised by complainants.

1.15 Contact

Internal Ombudsman (policy matters) – 6801 4000.

Complaints Flowchart

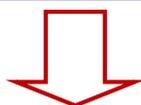
Tier 1 – Frontline Complaints Handling

Registration and attempted resolution by frontline staff. Complainants are encouraged to provide feedback and discuss their complaint with the officer who provided the service or dealt with the issue as this is more likely to result in a speedy resolution of the complaint.

A staff member receiving a complaint of a minor nature will, within the scope of their delegation, deal with the complaint at the time or refer it immediately to the appropriate Council officer, Manager or Supervisor who may be able to resolve the complaint on the spot.

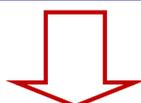
If the complaint is against a Council staff member, matter to be referred to that persons Manager or Supervisor. Serious allegations or allegations of corruption, misconduct, maladministration or unethical conduct, the matter is to be referred to the Internal Ombudsman.

All complaints and any actions/resolutions must be recorded on Council's records management system on the same day and copied to the relevant Manager / Supervisor and Internal Ombudsman.



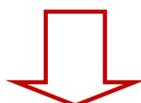
Tier 2 – Review

If the complainant remains unsatisfied after speaking to or corresponding with the Council Officer who delivered the service or who dealt with the issue, or if they feel uncomfortable approaching the officer, they may lodge a complaint in writing which will be reviewed and assigned to a more senior staff member, Manager or Supervisor for action in accordance with this policy.



Tier 3 – Escalation

Should the processes undertaken by the Manager or Supervisor fail to resolve the complaint, or the outcome be regarded as unsatisfactory to the complainant, the Manager or Supervisor will refer the complaint to the Internal Ombudsman for further review in accordance with Council's Internal Ombudsman Policy.



Tier 4 – External Review

In circumstances where these internal processes are unable to resolve a complaint or satisfy the complainant, the complainant has the option of referring their concerns to an external agency, depending on which jurisdiction might be appropriate. Such agencies may include the NSW Ombudsman's Office, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Office of Local Government or the Office of the Information Commissioner.