

# Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy

GS03-CP (Superseded CP114 – Customer Complaints Policy)

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## 1. Purpose

To outline how MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) will handle and process any complaints and feedback about MRC.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all external complaints made by members of the public to any employee or office of the MRC.

## 3. Objectives

MRC strives to handle all external complaints and feedback in a fair, efficient and effective way. To do this, MRC aims to provide a constructive resolution to all complaints in a timely and responsive way as well as recording and responding to any feedback.

## 4. Definitions

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|--------------------|--|
| Complaints         | Any external expression of dissatisfaction made to or about MRC, our services, policies, employee conduct and Council decisions that a response or resolution is required.   |
| Complainant        | Any person including members of the public, stakeholders, residents and service recipients that wishes to make a complaint about MRC.  |
| Feedback           | Feedback does not require formal resolution as it may be constructive criticism, general comments or compliments.  |
| Simple complaints  | Straightforward issues with service provision that can be resolved quickly.  |
| Complex complaints | May involve challenges to a decision or policy, or a complaint about a staff member or elected member.   |
| Serious complaints | Complaints concerning matters that come under legislation: discrimination, sexual harassment, fraud, child protection issues etc.  |
| Exceptions         | For the purposes of this policy, routine housing maintenance or other routine service requests are not considered to be complaints unless the initial request has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant or the complainant expresses they wish to pursue a complaint. |

## 5. Statement

5.1. An effective complaints handling process is integral to providing all of our customers and stakeholders with the highest possible quality service.

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- 5.2. MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) recognises that handling complaints and feedback is an important part of service provision. It provides accountability and will be managed effectively.
- 5.3. This policy is underpinned by the following general principles:
  - 5.3.1. Any person or organisation affected by MRC's operations has the right to complain or give feedback about any part of the service.
  - 5.3.2. Those complaining are entitled to be heard and have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness and natural justice, accountability and transparency.
  - 5.3.3. The resolution of complaints is a priority for MRC; however it is recognised that in some cases complaints will not be able to be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.
  - 5.3.4. The process for people to make complaints will be clear and simple, and effectively promoted.
  - 5.3.5. The complainant will be supported in making the complaint and assured of their right to do so without retribution or discrimination.
  - 5.3.6. Complaints will be confidential and only those who need the information to manage the complaint will have access to the information.
  - 5.3.7. Complaints will be dealt with according to set procedures whether they are written, verbal or made with the assistance of a third party.
  - 5.3.8. Anyone making a complaint may have a support person at all stages of the complaints resolution process.
  - 5.3.9. Feedback data will be used to contribute to organisational reviews and follow-up.
  - 5.3.10. Induction processes will ensure that all elected members, management and employees are aware of MRC procedures for making complaints.
- 5.4. Timeframe for complaints resolution, MRC will respond to:
  - 5.4.1. Simple complaints within 3 working days
  - 5.4.2. Complex complaints within 10 working days
  - 5.4.3. Serious complaints within 30 days.
  - 5.4.4. If these timeframes cannot be kept, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and alternative timeframes.
- 5.5. If the complaint is unresolved or the complainant is unsatisfied with the resolution they can be referred to the Northern Territory Ombudsman.

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## 6. Policy Details

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| <b>Replaces Policy No: (if applicable)</b>      | CP114 – Customer Complaints Policy   |
| <b>Responsible Directorate/Department:</b>      | Corporate Services – Governance and Compliance   |
| <b>Approval Date:</b>                           | 30 October 2020  |
| <b>Minutes Reference and Resolution number:</b> | Item # 15.2 - Resolution OC2020-112  |
| <b>Review Cycle:</b>                            | October 2024. Review every four (4) years or after changes to relevant legislation or Council policy |

## 7. Legislation and References

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Related Legislation:</b>  | Information Act (2002)                             |
| <b>Related Policies:</b>     | IR03-CP Privacy and Freedom of Information Policy  |
|                              | IR05-CP Records Management Policy                  |
|                              | HR22-OP Employee Complaints Management Policy      |
|                              | HR05-CP Whistleblower Policy                       |
| <b>Associated Documents:</b> | GS03-P1 Customer Complaints and Feedback Procedure |
|                              | GS03-F1 Customer Complaints Form                   |

## 8. Version Control

| Version No. | Approval Date    | Policy No. | Minutes reference and Resolution number |
|-------------|------------------|------------|---|
| 1.          | 13 August 2013   | DCS001     | OCM Item # 11.4 - OCM2013               |
| 2.          | 11 December 2015 | DCS001     | OCM Item # 13.3 – OCM2015-013           |
| 3.          | 13 April 2017    | CP114      | OCM Item # 13.2 – OCM2017-025           |
| 4.          | 30 October 2020  | GS03-CP    | OCM Item # 15.2 – OCM2020-112           |