



Complaints Handling Policy

Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
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Objective

To establish an effective complaints handling system that will provide the framework and basis for all complaints to be resolved in a fair, efficient and structured manner.

Scope

This policy applies to any individual or representative that has communications with Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands. These communications include all public interactions with any Shire staff member and may be in any form i.e. written, electronic, verbal or face to face.

Policy

The Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands has a statutory obligation to carry out their functions in a fair, impartial, transparent, responsive and efficient manner for the benefit of all members of the community.

The Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands recognises that its community has the right to expect that these principles will underpin its decisions and delivery of excellent customer service.

When members of the community believes that their expectations have not been met, they have the right to expect that the Shire will deal with their concerns in a professional, respectful, satisfactory and timely manner.

The Shire welcomes complaints with respect to customer service as a form of feedback, and will use this feedback to:

- provide opportunities for system and process improvement;
- provide equitable redress to customers for poor service and processes;
- provide an opportunity to actively resolve service complaints and reduce the incidence of recurring complaints.

Members of the community submitting a complaint to the Shire can expect that:

- staff will regularly provide updates on the progress of the complaint and the expected timeframes for resolution;
- they are provided with information on the Shire's complaints handling process;
- they will be treated with tact, courtesy and fairness at all times; and
- appropriate confidentiality of the complaint will be maintained upon request.

If a complaint is the same as or similar to a prior complaint or if the complaint is considered by the Shire to be vexatious:

- the individual who submitted the complaint will be notified that their complaint has been considered to be either repetitive or vexatious, and as such will not be dealt with.
- if the complaint has been considered to be repetitive, the resident who submitted the complaint will be notified where the information or advice previously given can be located.
- if after being notified of the above, the individual continues to submit repetitive or vexatious complaints, the complaints will neither be acknowledged nor answered.

The Shire will not consider or investigate any complaints that are over two (2) years old [this accords with the time limit for general prosecutions of issues under the Local Government Act (WA) (CKI) 1995].

In the context of this policy, complaints involving the behaviour of Employees and Elected Members is excluded. These matters will be handled under the Shire's Code of Conduct

Definitions

Definition of a Complaint

A 'Complaint' is an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service, action or lack of, by the Council or Shire staff, affecting an individual person or group of people. Issues the Shire will not consider as complaints under this Policy are:

- a request for Shire services.
- a request for information or explanation of policies or procedures or decisions of Council.
- reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure (e.g.: damaged paved road, potholes in the road)
- reports of hazards (e.g.: fallen tree branch).
- reports concerning neighbours or neighbouring property (e.g.: noise or unauthorised building works). Including disputes between property owners.
- the lodging of an appeal in accordance with procedure or policy.
- issues relating to Statutory Functions with respect to Planning, Building, Health or Ranger Services.

- excludes issues relating to debt collection matters.

Office Use Only				
Relevant Delegations				
Council Adoption	Date	2/12/2015	Resolution #	10.4/ A1
Reviewed/Modified	Date	8/11/2017	Resolution #	1117/09
Reviewed/Modified	Date		Resolution #	