

Policy number	Policy 104
Policy title	Managing Complaints and Customer Behaviour
Strategic outcomes supported	CL2 – Communication and engagement with community.

Policy objective:

This policy outlines the Town’s commitment to a consistent, fair and equitable framework in its management of customer services, handling of complaints and customer behaviour.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and elected members who work for, or act on behalf of the Town of Victoria Park and the wider community.

Policy definitions:

Australian Standard - See Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organizations (as amended) at www.standards.com.au.

Complaint - is: a written “expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required” (as defined by the AS/NZS 10002-2014 Guidelines for complaint Management in Organisations)

A complaint is an allegation of:

- unmet standard or timeliness of service delivery;
- inappropriate behaviour of employees, contractors, or Councillors of the Town; or
- non-compliance with practices, policies and procedures of the Town.

Customer – A person, service area, organisation or its representative who has a direct relationship with the Town of Victoria Park. They receive or use the Town’s services, attend and participate in meetings such as Council Meetings and provide feedback.

Enquiries (does not include complaints) Each enquiry below is covered under a separate process or policy.

- The initial request for a service to be delivered;
- A request for documents, information or explanation of policies or procedures;
- Compliance enforcement action;
- The lodging of an appeal or objection in accordance with a statutory process, standard procedure or policy;
- A petition; and
- A civil dispute between private individuals

Complaints about Elected Members

Complaints about Elected Members are covered by Policy 026 Complaints Relating to Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates.

Policy statement:

1. The Town delivers a wide range of services to our community and visitors, and we are committed to providing exceptional service through the delivery of customer service standards and behaviours. Our customer service delivery aligns with the principles of commitments in the Town's Customer Service Charter.
2. The Town aims to demonstrate:
 - a) Transparency and good governance when delivering services, actioning requests and receiving feedback;
 - b) Increased customer satisfaction by achieving the right outcome when delivering services, with accountability and continuous improvement;
 - c) Consistency in all customer correspondence to meet set standards including resolution of complaints;
 - d) Guidance on responding to unreasonably persistent customers.
3. The Town values complaints as they provide feedback on our services which allows us to continuously improve. We are committed to a quality complaint handling process which reflects the essential elements as set out in the Australian Standard guidelines of effective complaint handling published by the Ombudsman's Office of Western Australia.

Complaints

How to make a complaint

4. Complaints may be lodged in writing by:
 - [Online web form \(Contact form\)](#)
 - By letter
 - [By e-mail](#)
 - By completing the feedback tear off page on the customer service charter brochure at our reception centre
5. At a minimum, the following information is to be supplied in order to effectively process the complaint:
 - Name and address
 - Contact details
 - Brief description concerning the feedback
 - Dates, times and location of key events
 - Photos if relevant
 - A statement of what the customer hopes to achieve by providing feedback

Anonymous complaints

6. An anonymous customer complaint will only be investigated where reasonable and sufficient information is provided and which, in the opinion of Town staff, constitutes:
 - I. A breach of statutory provisions;
 - II. A breach an approval, license or permit;
 - III. A matter for which the Town is obligated to act, prescribed in the Local Government Act 1995, Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003 or under any other written law;
 - IV. A matter which if not attended to could reasonably constitute a risk to the public health and safety of persons, animals or the environment; and
 - V. A matter which is deemed to be capable of investigation and resolution without assistance from the customer.

Complaints Process

Complaint courses of action

7. The Town may determine to take the following courses of action:
 - Take no further action and advise the complainant of the reason/s;
 - Resolve the complaint by use of appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, mediation, informal discussion or negotiation;
 - Enter into a formal mediation process; or
 - Discontinue the assessment in circumstances where it becomes evident that the matter would be referred to another body or person and advise the complainant accordingly.

Procedural Fairness

8. The Town will ensure that a fair and proper procedure is used when making a decision in regard to complaints and that the decision-maker is free from bias and is impartial when reading or listening to what is being complained of. The Town will handle complaints and deliver customer service based on the Town's vision, mission and values.

Privacy and confidentiality

9. The Town will ensure that information will be treated with confidentiality with regards to complaints and recorded within the Town's records management systems.

Recording complaints

10. Information recorded must be factual, accurate and current as per the State Records Act 2000 and will be recorded within the Town's records management systems.

Complaints about employees

11. A complaint against an employee is considered confidential and the complainant will not be advised of the outcome, unless required by law.

Complaints Review processes

Internal Review

12. A customer not satisfied with the way the Town has handled their initial complaint can request for the complaint to be reviewed. This can be due to several reasons:
 - Dissatisfied with the way in which the complaint was dealt with
 - Dissatisfaction with the final determination
 - Further information is provided
13. When a written request to review is received it will be reviewed by relevant Officer to ensure responses were equitable, objective and dealt with in unbiased manner.

External Review

14. The Town acknowledges that customers may request an external review of a complaint through the Department of Local Government and/or the State Ombudsman. The CEO will work cooperatively with the State Ombudsman and/or the Department of Local Government as appropriate to assist in the resolution of external review.

Closing of complaint

15. Where the Town has conducted an internal review and/or has been involved in an external review of a complaint and subject to the result of the external review, the Town must be able to bring the matter to a conclusion. Accordingly, where a customer repeatedly corresponds with the Town regarding a complaint that has been the subject of an internal review and/or the external review process that has concluded, the CEO may close the Town's file on the matter after informing the customer in writing of the decision.

Unreasonable customer behaviour

Unreasonable behaviour – means behaviour that is malicious, hostile, offensive or disruptive, and results in exhausting the resources of the Town, actively disrupts Town or Council business, or may cause a safety risk to others who are exposed to or dealing with such behaviour.

16. If a customer becomes unreasonable, then the Chief Executive Officer may implement restrictions on contact with the Town. This may include:
- Restricting who the customer has contact with;
 - Restricting the number of communications with the customer;
 - when a customer can have contact with the Town;
 - in what form the customer can have contact;
 - where a customer can make contact; and/or
 - restrictions to buildings owned or operated by the Town.
17. The customer will be advised in writing if any restriction will be implemented, and will include:
- The rationale and reason for the decision
 - What restrictions apply;
 - How long the restrictions apply for; and
 - Any alternative methods for dealing with the Town
18. Customers restrictions will be reviewed within one month of the restrictions ceasing. The review will include the reassessment of the customers behaviour and whether the restrictions are to be reinstated, reinstated with modifications or no need for reinstatement of the restrictions.

Related documents:

[Town of Victoria Park – Employee Code of Conduct](#)

[Town of Victoria Park – Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#)

Local Government Act 1995

State Records Act 2000

Town of Victoria Park- Customer Service Charter

[International Standardisation Organisation - ISO 26000- Social Responsibility](#)

Responsible officers	Customer Engagement Coordinator
Policy manager	Manager Stakeholder Relations
Approval authority	Council
Next evaluation date	August 2025

Revision history:

Version	Action	Date	Authority	Resolution number	Report number
1	Adopted	15/08/2023	Council	176/2023	Item 11.6

