



ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 9 October 2023

Council Chambers

126-138 Main Road Speers Point

6.30pm

Committees will be held in the following order:

Development and Planning Standing Committee
Planning for the Future Standing Committee
Organisational Services Standing Committee
Built and Natural Assets Standing Committee
Service Delivery Standing Committee
General Business Committee

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Meetings of Lake Macquarie City Council are conducted in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice which supports open, accessible and accountable government.

Councillors are reminded of the oath or affirmation of office taken at the start of the Council term:

- To undertake duties in the best interests of the people of Lake Macquarie City and the Lake Macquarie City Council.
- To faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgment.

Councillors are also required to declare and appropriately manage conflicts of interest under the Code of Conduct.

Council meetings are streamed live on Council's website at webcast.lakemac.com.au

This allows our community greater access to Council proceedings, decisions and debate.

Organisational Services Standing Committee Meeting

Agenda

Monday 9 October 2023

6.30pm

Apologies: For the non-attendance of Councillors

Declaration of Interests:

Presentations: Nil

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23OS019 Wyee Point - Classification of Land - 23 Keightley Street	pg 4
23OS020 Wyee - Part of 58 Soreina Drive - Proposed purchase for open space	pg 8
23OS021 Feedback Management Policy review	pg 13
23OS022 Requests for donations under the Donations Program	pg 49

**Recommendations to the Organisational Services Standing Committee
Meeting**

Monday 9 October 2023

23OS019	Wyee Point - Classification of Land - 23 Keightley Street
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Key focus area	4. Diverse economy
Objective	4.1 Our city is a vibrant destination that reflects the lifestyle, culture and natural environment that make it special
File	F2006/00831 - D11146325
Author	Land Development Officer - Carlos Ferguson, Statutory Property Officer - Sara Young
Responsible manager	Manager Property and Business Development - Elizabeth Lambert
Previous items	23SP029 - Wyee Point - Proposed Acquisition - 23 Keightley Street - Ordinary Council - 24 Apr 2023 6.30pm

Executive summary

Council resolved on 24 April 2023 to purchase land at 23 Keightley Street, Wyee Point (Lot 3 Sec H DP 1596), as outlined in red in Attachment 1. Council has recently completed the purchase of this property for environmental conservation purposes.

Council approval is sought to classify the land as operational land in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Recommendation

Council authorises that the land at 23 Keightley Street, Wyee Point (Lot 3, Section H, DP 1596) is classified as operational land on completion of the purchase of that land, in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Context

The land at 23 Keightley Street, Wyee Point has been purchased by Council in accordance with Council's previous resolution on 24 April 2023 (23SP029), for environmental conservation purposes.

The previous report proposed that the land was to be classified as operational land upon completion of the purchase; however, to give effect to that proposal, Council is required to resolve that the land be classified as operational land.

Discussion

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council is required to classify land it acquires as operational or community land either before, or within three months after it acquires the relevant land.

Public notice of a proposed resolution to classify land is required, which must specify a period of not less than 28 days during which submissions may be made to Council.

Public notice of the proposal to classify the land was given on 22 July 2023 with submissions closing on 19 August 2023. It is now recommended that Council resolves to approve the classification of the land as operational land.

Community engagement and internal consultation

Internal consultation has been undertaken with Council's Asset Management, Financial Services, Legal and Environmental Systems departments. No concerns were raised with the proposal.

Public notice of the proposed operational classification was given on 22 July 2023, with submissions closing on 19 August 2023. No submissions were received.

Assessment of options

It is recommended Council classifies the land as operational land, as this will ensure consistency with the surrounding Council owned land which is an environmental conservation area and ecological offset site associated with the Ramsgate Estate paper subdivision development. Having all the land classified as operational will enable the efficient management of the area for environmental conservation.

Should Council not proceed with the recommendation, the land will be classified as community land. Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, community land is subject to different legislative controls that could result in unnecessary complexity and inefficiencies in the establishment and management of the land and broader area for environmental conservation.

Key considerations

Economic

None.

Environment

The proposal will facilitate improved management of land within the broader environmental conservation area, including efficiencies in weed management and access control.

Community

None.

Civic leadership

Civic leadership is shown through ensuring classification of the land is consistent with the classification of the surrounding lands.

Financial

None.

Infrastructure

None.

Compliance

This report is submitted in accordance with Council's statutory obligations in relation to the classification of land.

Legislative and policy considerations

Local Government Act 1993

Acquisition and Divestment of Land Policy

Attachments

1. Site map - 23 Keightley Street Wyee Point D11251907



23OS020	Wyee - Part of 58 Soreina Drive - Proposed purchase for open space
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Key focus area	5. Connected communities
Objective	5.1 Public spaces help connect us with each other
File	F2020/01321 - D11124206
Author	Valuation and Property Development Coordinator - Jade Curtis
Responsible manager	Manager Property and Business Development - Elizabeth Lambert

Executive summary

Council's approval is sought to purchase part of the property at 58 Soreina Drive, Wyee (Part Lot 4998 DP 1232266), outlined in red in Attachment 1 to deliver a new local park in this area in accordance with Council's development contribution plan.

Agreement has been reached with the current owner for Council to purchase the property by private treaty, and funds are available to meet the purchase costs.

All appropriate due diligence has been completed and the purchase is recommended.

Recommendation

Council approves:

- A. the purchase of part of 58 Soreina Drive, Wyee (part Lot 4998 DP 1232266), identified in red in Attachment 1, for the purchase price of \$1,150,000 (excluding any GST),
- B. giving public notice of Council's proposal to classify the property as operational land upon acquisition, in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, and
- C. execution of any documentation, under Common Seal where necessary, and implementation of any actions required to effect the above recommendations.

Context

The Morisset Contributions Catchment Plan 2012 identifies that land acquisition is required to deliver a local park (OS-019 New Local Park - Precinct 4). Proceeding with the purchase of this land will ensure delivery of the local park in this location. In addition, with Council's recent acquisition of a significantly larger site nearby, Council now has the land holdings to deliver a regional-scale sporting facility with four full-size sporting fields, sports court and an amenities building to cater for the continually growing population in the Morisset catchment.

Discussion

The current owners of part of 58 Soreina Drive are the developer of the residential estate known as 'Radcliffe' at Wyee. The land was proposed to be purchased to facilitate the delivery of a local park in Wyee (OS-019 New Local Park – Precinct 4).

The site is shown in Figure 1, outlined in red.

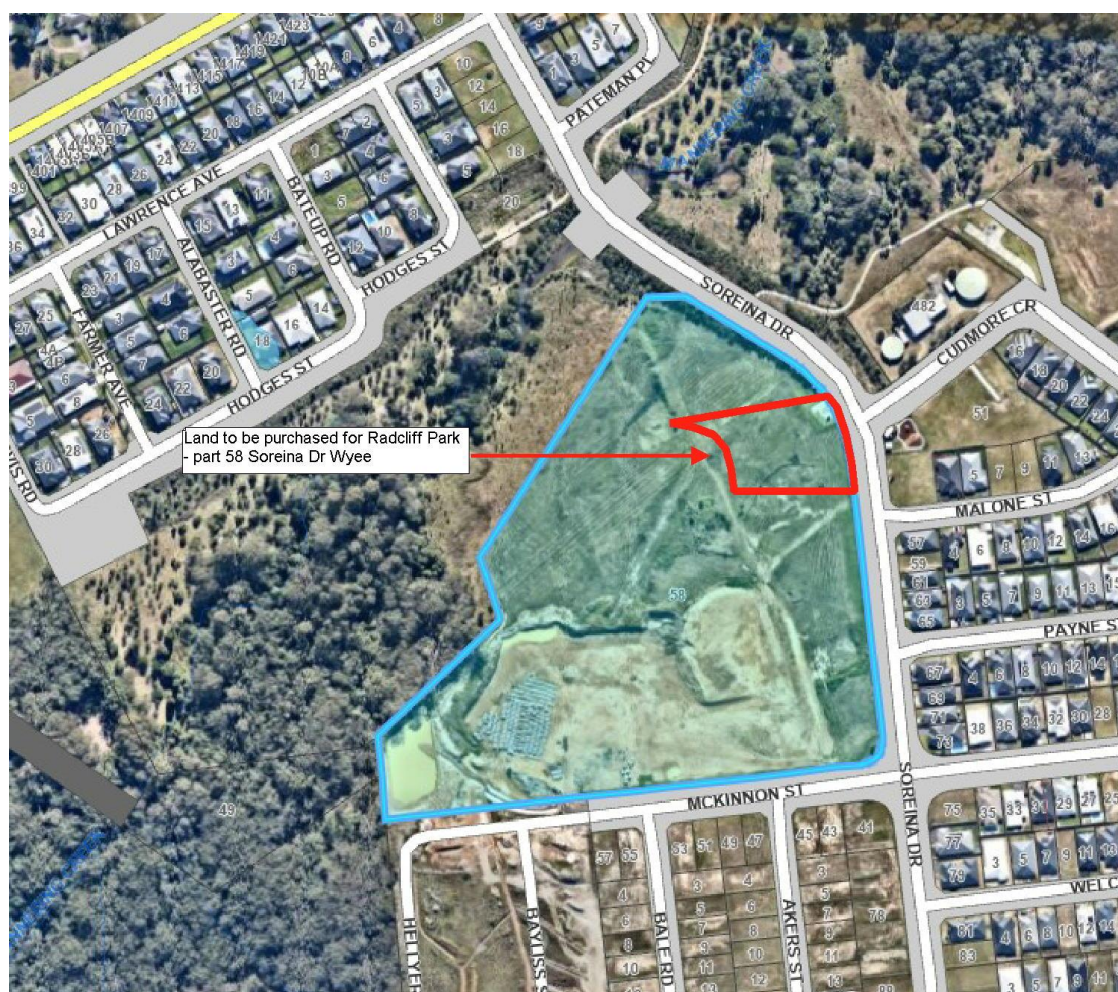


Figure 1 – Aerial photo of part of 58 Soreina Drive, Wyee Council is seeking to purchase outlined in red

Appropriate due diligence has been carried out, in accordance with Council's Acquisition and Divestment of Land Policy, including a market valuation by Council's Valuer.

Negotiations with the owner have resulted in an agreed purchase price of \$1,150,000 (excluding any GST), which is within the valuation range.

In addition, it is estimated Council will pay an additional amount of up to \$55,000 (excluding any GST) for the owner's valuation, survey and engineering expenses plus reasonable legal costs. This is considered fair and reasonable given the significant negotiation period for this acquisition.

It is proposed that the property will be classified as operational land upon completion of the purchase to facilitate future development of the park, subject to no objections being received within the required 28-day public notification period. A separate report will be submitted to Council if any submissions are received in relation to the proposal.

Community engagement and internal consultation

Internal consultation has been undertaken with the Asset Management and Integrated Planning departments, and no concerns were raised. Council's Legal department was consulted in preparation of this report.

Assessment of options

It is recommended Council approves the purchase of the property for the agreed purchase price of \$1,150,000 (excluding any GST) with an additional payment estimated up to \$55,000 for the reasonable landowners' expenses.

The purchase is required to facilitate the delivery of Item OS-019 of the Morisset Contributions Catchment Plan 2012, being a local park.

If the acquisition does not proceed, it could delay or impact the delivery of the project or result in increased acquisition costs if Council is required to compulsorily acquire the property in the future.

Key considerations

Economic

None.

Environment

None.

Community

The proposal will facilitate development of local park facilities to meet the demands of future growth, as identified in the development contributions plan.

Civic leadership

Committing to and providing improved open space and recreation areas is consistent with local strategic planning frameworks and will provide significant benefits to the local community.

Financial

Funds are available for the purchase within the Morisset Contributions Plan.
Council's external Valuer determined the market value of the property to be \$1,150,000 (excluding GST) plus reasonable expenses.

Infrastructure

The land is vacant. Any maintenance of assets built within the park will be included within future maintenance budgets.

Compliance

Appropriate due diligence has been undertaken. The proposed acquisition complies with Council's Acquisition and Divestment of Land Policy.

Legislative and policy considerations

Local Government Act 1993

Conveyancing Act 1919

Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014

Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991

Acquisition and Divestment of Land Policy

Attachments

1. Aerial Map of Part 58 Soreina Drive Wyee D11129558



23OS021	Feedback Management Policy review
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Key focus area	7. Shared decision-making
Objective	7.2 We know how and why decisions are made
File	F2023/00393 - D11175486
Author	Head of Customer Experience - Jasmyne Munro
Responsible manager	Director Organisational Services - Melissa Rowe

Executive summary

This report outlines the review of Council's Feedback Management Policy and recommends adoption of the revised policy.

Recommendation

Council:

- A. rescinds the current Feedback Management Policy – version 2, and
- B. adopts the revised Feedback Management Policy – version 3 (Attachment 1).

Context

The Feedback Management Policy outlines how community members can provide feedback to Council and how Council responds to this feedback. The policy ensures feedback is handled fairly, efficiently, effectively and in accordance with Council's Customer Charter.

The policy outlines the types of feedback customers can provide, staff responsibilities, and Council's complaint management process. The policy is scheduled for review every four years.

Discussion

Council staff have reviewed the Feedback Management Policy and propose minor amendments to:

- align to the NSW Ombudsman's guidelines
- include how community members can report child safe allegations
- update the format
- add a definitions/specific actions table, aimed at making the policy easier to read.

Other changes to the policy include updating titles of Council staff and minor grammatical changes that do not alter the intent of the policy.

All changes are shown in track changes in Attachment 2.

Community engagement and internal consultation

Consultation occurred with staff members from the Customer Experience and Integrity and Risk departments and Senior Leadership Network.

Assessment of options

It is recommended Council adopts the revised Feedback Management Policy – version 3 (Attachment 1), to ensure the policy remains up-to-date and in line with the NSW Ombudsman’s guidelines. The changes also make the policy clearer, ensuring our community understands how to provide feedback and make child safe reports.

Making further changes to the Feedback Management Policy is not recommended, as they may not reflect Council’s Customer Charter and may make the policy inconsistent with the NSW Ombudsman’s guidelines.

Next steps

If Council approves the Feedback Management Policy – version 3, staff will commence implementation of the policy, including updating Council’s website with the updated version, educating staff on the revised version, and updating the internal staff handling guideline for the policy.

Key considerations

Economic

There are no significant economic sustainability considerations for this policy.

Environment

There are no significant environmental sustainability considerations for this policy.

Community

This policy supports social sustainability by enabling community members to provide feedback on Council’s services and facilities and understand how to make child safe reports.

Civic leadership

The policy supports sustainable governance by clearly communicating Council’s commitment to handling feedback in an efficient, fair, and equitable manner.

Financial

None.

Infrastructure

None.

Compliance

Adopting the updated policy will ensure alignment with the NSW Ombudsman Complaint Management Framework and Complaint Handling Model Policy.

Legislative and policy considerations

NSW Ombudsman Complaint Management Framework and Complaint Handling Model Policy

Public Interest Disclosures Reporting Policy

Child Safe Policy

Business Ethics Policy

Attachments

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 1. | Recommended to be adopted: Feedback Management Policy - version 3 | D11255004 |
| 2. | Recommended to be rescinded: Feedback Management Policy - version 2 with tracked changes to version 3 | D11254983 |



Council Policy

Feedback Management

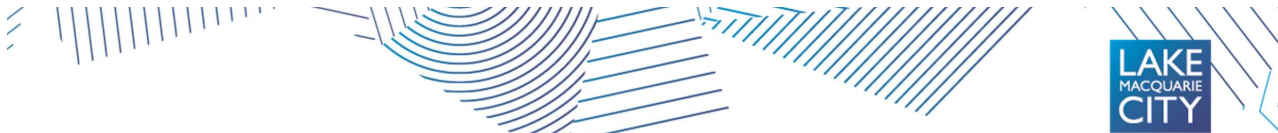
Version 3

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Policy - external Feedback Management

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Policy - external Feedback Management

Introduction

Purpose

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to delivering a high standard of service to all of our customers. We actively encourage feedback and are committed to using this information to improve our services and systems.

Scope

This policy outlines how you can provide feedback to Council, how we will listen to you and the principles we use to work together towards an appropriate resolution. The policy applies to all Councillors, Council employees and persons carrying out work on behalf of Council, for example, contractors and volunteers. Council employees are responsible for encouraging feedback and assisting to lodge feedback from our customers.

The policy relates solely to the management of complaints, compliments and general feedback made to Council. Complaints that are out of scope of this policy include:

- feedback relating to a Council resolution
- feedback relating to the determination of a development application
- a matter that has already been reviewed by an external agency
- feedback relating to a particular Councillor outside their role as a Councillor
- any work-related grievance from a Council employee
- a service request (see definitions)
- a request for information or an explanation of policies or procedures
- an expression of opinion – where a response or resolution is not expected (for example, a submission or feedback on a service)
- Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Requests (see definitions)
- privacy complaints (refer to Council's Privacy Management Plan).

Policy statement

Council is committed to delivering quality service and communicating effectively with our community.

We realise that sometimes, despite our best efforts, people may not be happy with the way we have performed a service. We encourage feedback from customers about our processes, services and conduct of Council staff.

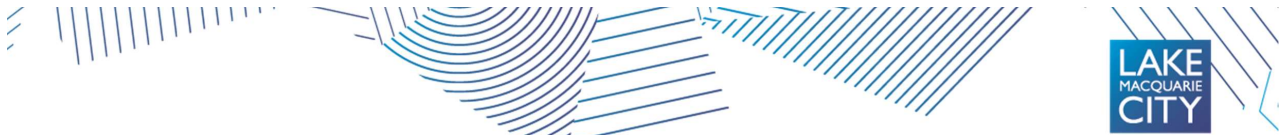
Objectives

To provide members of the community the opportunity to provide feedback to Council and to ensure feedback is handled fairly, efficiently, effectively and in accordance with Council's Customer Charter.

1 Definitions

Term	Definition/specific action
Anonymous complaints	A complaint made where the complainant does not want to be, or cannot be, identified.
Child abuse or harm	All forms of physical, and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a person who is under 18 years of age. Council supports a culture of reporting and has adopted a child-focused approach

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Policy - external Feedback Management

	<p>to managing complaints of child abuse.</p> <p>In the case of allegations being made against a Council employee or representative, Council will investigate the matter in accordance with Council's Child Safe Policy and Reportable Conduct - supporting and protecting children and young people procedure. All allegations will be reviewed and assessed, and if applicable, a notification report will be made to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police or other relevant agencies.</p>
Complaint	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction with our services, staff or procedures.</p> <p>A complaint is an expression of concern about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct • delivery of a Council service • customer service • failure to provide information • competence or conduct of staff • errors of judgement or misinterpretation of information • decisions being unfair, unreasonable or lacking in merit • poor administrative processes.
Compliment	An expression of satisfaction with our services, staff, programs or procedures.
Corruption	<p>The misuse of power or authority for personal gain.</p> <p>Council is committed to maintaining high ethical standards. It is everyone's responsibility to not only act honestly but to report any instances of possible corruption, maladministration, or serious substantial wastage.</p> <p>Such reports can be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer. You can also report suspected instances to the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) on 1800 463 909, suspected maladministration to the NSW Ombudsman on 1800 451 524 or to the Office of Local Government Head Office on 02 4428 4100.</p>
Criminal activity	<p>Criminal activity may include suspected fraud or corruption by a Council employee or relating to Council-owned property.</p> <p>Complaints claiming or suspecting criminal activity will be directed to the Internal Ombudsman for assessment and reporting to the police where necessary.</p>
General feedback	Suggestions for new services or programs.
Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Requests	Requests made by the public or external agencies for documents held by Council. These requests are assessed under the <i>Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009</i> .
Maladministration	Action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, that is unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory, or that is based wholly or partly on improper motives.
Pecuniary interest	<p>An interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another with whom the person is associated.</p> <p>Where a matter involving a pecuniary interest constitutes or is likely to constitute</p>

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Policy - external Feedback Management

	<p>corrupt conduct, members of the community may choose to report it to Council by way of a complaint.</p> <p>Alternatively, complaints relating to pecuniary interests may be made in writing to the Office of Local Government, identifying the complainant and the person against who the complaint is made, giving particulars of the complaint, and being verified by statutory declaration.</p> <p>Council staff and Council officials will use the reporting mechanisms outlined in Council's Fraud and Corruption Prevention Internal Policy and Procedure.</p>
Public interest disclosure	A report about wrongdoing made by a public official in NSW that meets the requirements of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act</i> as amended from time to time.
Sensitive complaints	Complaints made that identify concerns around behaviour or actions of particular employees, Councillors, the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.
Serious and substantial wastage	The excessive and unnecessary depletion of resources, often resulting from mismanagement or corrupt practices.
Service request	<p>A service request includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests for the provision of works or services • routine enquiries about the organisation's business • requests for the provision of services and assistance • reports of failure to comply with laws regulated by the organisation • requests for information or explanation of policies, procedures and decisions.

2 Feedback

We encourage all suggestions and feedback, which are assigned to the appropriate department for consideration.

Customers will be notified their feedback has been received, however they will not receive an outcome from the department on their feedback.

3 Compliments

Compliments are used to inform Council on what we are doing well and what is important to our community. Analysing compliments helps Council understand our current performance and future service provision.

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of compliments and refer them to the appropriate department manager for the relevant staff to be recognised.

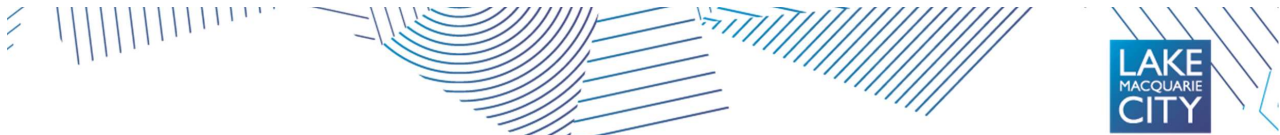
4 Complaints

4.1 Guiding principles for complaints

We are committed to providing a service that is efficient, fair and transparent when assessing a customer complaint. To do this, we are guided by the NSW Ombudsman's guiding principles.

Facilitate complaints	People focus	We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling. Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will
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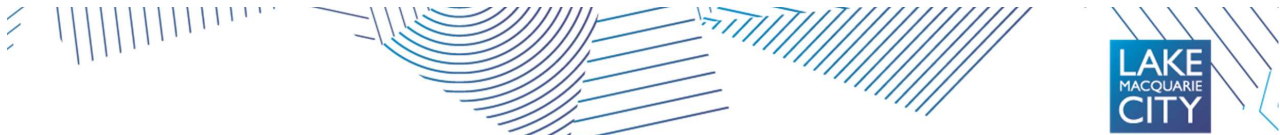
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		<p>be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>People making complaints will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided with information about our complaint assessing process provided with multiple and accessible ways to make complaints listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process, where possible and appropriate provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.
	No detriment	We will take all reasonable steps to ensure people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
	Anonymous complaints	We accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an assessment of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.
	Accessibility	<p>We will ensure information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised. We will ensure our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.</p> <p>If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative, if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (for example, an advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament or another organisation).</p>
	No charge	Lodging a complaint with us is free.
Respond to complaints	Early resolution	Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact.
	Responsiveness	<p>We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints. We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised.</p> <p>We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the complaints process the expected timeframes for our actions the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay their likely involvement in the process the possible or likely outcome of their complaint. <p>We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).</p> <p>We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our timeframes for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.</p>
	Objectivity and fairness	We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

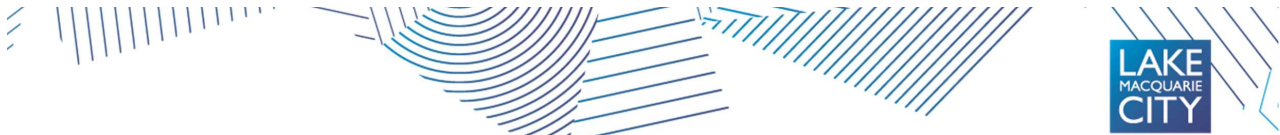
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		The person handling the complaint will be different from any staff member whose service or conduct is being complained about. Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.
	Responding flexibly	Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives. We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process, as far as possible.
	Confidentiality	We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.
Manage the parties to a complaint	Complaints involving multiple agencies	Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s, where possible, to ensure communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated. Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint. Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated. Where our services are contracted out, we expect the contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. In such circumstances, we will take complaints about the products, services and staff of our organisation and that of the service providers.
	Complaints involving multiple parties	When similar complaints are made by related parties, we will try to arrange to communicate with a single representative of the group.
	Empowerment of staff	All staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.
	Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints	We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time, our success depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the health, safety and security of our staff our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive. <p>When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.</p>
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4.2 Complaint management system

Complaints are managed in accordance with Council's three-tier Complaints Handling Model.

Tier 1 - frontline complaint handling	Where possible, complaints will be resolved at the first contact. If we are unable to resolve a complaint at the first contact, the complaint will escalate to the appropriate senior officer, generally the department manager, who will nominate an appropriate officer to handle the complaint.
Tier 2 - internal review	<p>If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may seek an internal review of the matter.</p> <p>The Feedback Management Officer is responsible for reviewing Tier 2 complaint reviews.</p>
Tier 3 - escalated review	If the complaint is still unresolved, and the complainant requests that the matter be escalated, the complaint will be referred to a Senior Council Officer for review.

4.2.1 Tier 1

When responding to complaints, staff should follow our Staff Handling Guideline for the Feedback Management Policy, as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints. Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.



Receipt of complaints

When we receive a complaint, we will record the complaint and its supporting information.

On receipt of a complaint, it will be assessed to determine the appropriate category.

- General complaints are lodged in our Customer Request Management system and customers will receive a unique Customer Request number upon receipt.
- Sensitive complaints will be allocated a unique reference number and customers will receive the reference number at the time of acknowledgement.

The record of the complaint will document:

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- the contact information of the person making a complaint, unless the complaint is anonymous
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- any other relevant information
- any supporting documents supplied by the customer
- any additional support the person making a complaint requires, including translation and/or accessibility requirements.

We accept anonymous complaints where there is enough information to be able to look into the issues raised. We encourage complainants to provide their contact details, as we may not be able to look into the matter thoroughly without obtaining additional information.

Comments of a harassing nature with no identifiable purpose are not classified as complaints and will not be assessed further.

Acknowledgement of complaints

The Complaint Assessment Officer will acknowledge receipt of general complaints within five business days. Anonymous complaints will not be acknowledged due to their nature.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate way for communicating with the person making a complaint (for example, email, letter, phone call, in person meeting).

Assessment and review of complaints

The Complaint Assessment Officer will:

- look into all history relevant to the complaint
- if relevant, speak to customers/witnesses/interested parties
- tailor the approach and communication method, dependent on all factors relating to the complaint
- keep the complainant informed of the progress and estimated completion date of the complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer, Mayor or Internal Ombudsman may refer the matter for conduct review under the Code of Conduct.

Response and closure of complaint

The Complaint Assessment Officer will respond to the complainant with:

- the outcome, including any relevant reasons or actions taken
- provide any available options for review.

4.2.2 Tier 2

The purpose of a Tier 2 internal review is not to determine a different response, but to check that all involved in determining the original decision have taken all the required steps in their assessment.

A request for internal review is required to be in writing.

The Feedback Management Officer will communicate the outcome of the Tier 2 review to the customer within 10 working days.

4.2.3 Tier 3

Where possible, the officer responsible for the Tier 3 escalated review should be independent to previous assessments pertaining to the same complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of our escalated review process, they may seek a review of our decision by an external agency. This may take the form of:

- alternative dispute resolution procedures such as mediation or conciliation

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- referring the complaint to external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Division of Local Government and the Office of the Information Commissioner, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Whilst the majority of complaints should follow the escalation process described above, it is possible for a complaint to enter the process at any one of the three tiers.

5 Limitations on service or communication

We encourage customers to lodge complaints in an appropriate manner. Council expects the behaviour of customers and the community to stay within reasonable limits. If behaviour strays beyond these limits, we are entitled to place and enforce limits on contact between Council and the person displaying inappropriate/unreasonable behaviour.

We will only apply this part of the policy in exceptional cases, where it is necessary to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of Council staff or equity in the use of Council resources. These limits can apply to an individual customer or a group. This policy does not limit legislative access and service rights.

The Chief Executive Officer may limit service or communication with a customer if there is evidence they are an unreasonable complainant. The Chief Executive Officer will first consider whether:

1. the complaints procedure has been implemented correctly so far as practical to this point and no material element of the complaint has been overlooked or inadequately addressed
2. the behaviour of the complainant has become intimidating, threatening, offensive or so habitual or obsessive that it constitutes an unreasonable demand on Council's resources.

Depending on the circumstances, the limitations placed on a customer can vary:

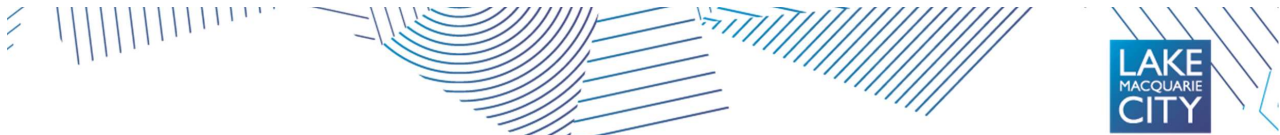
- whom a customer may contact within Council
- the number of opportunities we will give to a customer to address the same or similar issues
- the number of issues we will address in any given period
- the types of issues we will address, for example, we will only address significant and serious issues
- the times and days telephone calls will be accepted by Council
- the termination of phone calls or meetings when appropriate (for example, we may terminate phone calls or meetings if the customer is abusive or threatening and continues to be after a warning or they have been instructed to correspond only with a specific staff member who is not available at that time)
- the requirement that the customer must only communicate with Council in writing
- the number of responses to complaints, correspondence, or enquiries on the same or similar issues where they do not provide new information
- that correspondence will be received, read, and recorded, but only acknowledged or otherwise responded to if they provide new information.

Limitations on the provision of information will not occur if we are under a statutory responsibility to provide the information.

The Chief Executive Officer will document the limits on service or communication and inform the customer of the reasons for taking such steps.

5.1 Review or appeal of limits on service or communication

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Requests to remove a limitation of service or communication must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer by the person to whom the limits apply. The Chief Executive Officer will only consider one written request per year. On completion of the review, the Chief Executive Officer will advise the person of any subsequent review dates. If the customer is dissatisfied with the review, they may contact the NSW Ombudsman's Office, depending on the circumstances, or the Office of Local Government.

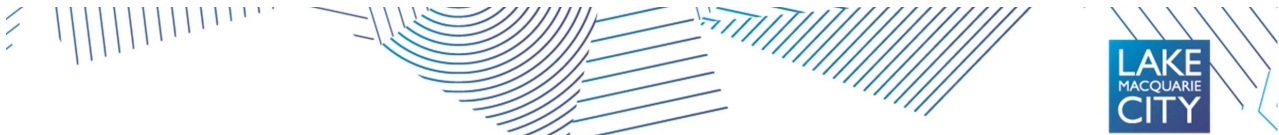
6 Council staff responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff awareness and compliance with the policy • Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints and support recommendations for improvement • Assess sensitive and serious complaints or nominate a Complaint Assessment Officer to do so • Ensure integrity of the assessment of the complaint • Encourage staff to make recommendations for improvements.
Department Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff awareness and compliance with the policy • Assist and support staff to manage feedback at first contact • Recognise staff who have received compliments for service • Assess complaints or nominate a Complaint Assessment Officer to do so • Ensure integrity of the assessment of the complaint • Consider feedback to improve quality and best practice.
Feedback Management Officer (FMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Council's Feedback Management Policy • Ensure all Council employees receive training in the policy • Assist and support Council employees in relation to administering the policy • Review Tier 2 (Internal Review) complaints • Provide regular reports to the Chief Executive Officer, Executive and department managers on complaints received.
Internal Ombudsman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and assess serious sensitive complaints.
Records Services Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept sensitive complaints • Create a record for the appropriate manager • Provide monthly reports on sensitive and serious sensitive complaints for the Chief Executive Officer.
Complaint Assessment Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the complaint in-line with the policy's principles.
Frontline Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist customers to lodge feedback and advise them of the feedback management process • Be aware of the policy • Accept and record feedback • Attempt to resolve minor complaints before they escalate • Treat all people with respect.

Review and evaluation

We will continually monitor our feedback management system to:

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- ensure effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.

Monitoring may include the use of audits and satisfaction surveys.

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

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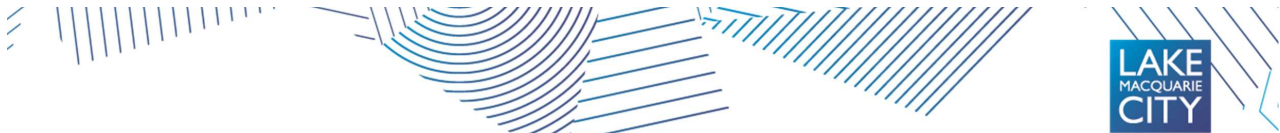
Authorisation Details

Folder No:	F2005/02232	TRIM Record No:	D10995413
Audience:	External - This Policy applies to all staff and customers of Council		
Department:	Customer Experience	Officer:	Head of Customer Experience - Jasmyne Munro
Key focus area(s):	Shared Decision Making		
Review Timeframe: Max < 4 years	4 years	Next Scheduled Review Date:	October 2027
Authorisation:	Council		
Authorisation - Council Adoption Date:			

Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	NSW Division of Local Government Complaints Management in Councils Practice note 9 (2009-revised)	(Relationship/Context)
Related Policies:	<p>Fraud and Corruption Prevention – Internal Policy</p> <p>Public Interest Disclosures Reporting Policy</p> <p>Child Safe Policy</p> <p>Business Ethics Policy</p>	<p>(Relationship/Context)</p> <p>Contains additional guidance for Council staff and Council officials regarding reporting suspected fraud or corruption.</p> <p>Contains guidance about protections for public officials who report certain types of wrongdoing in the workplace.</p> <p>Contains additional guidance for the community and staff on Council's reporting and investigation procedures in relation to child harm/abuse.</p> <p>Provides guidance to contractors and suppliers on expectations when doing business with Council.</p>
Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements:	<p>Customer Charter</p> <p>Feedback Management Policy– Staff Handling Guideline - D07563828</p> <p>Reportable Conduct - supporting and protecting children and young people Procedure</p>	<p>(Relationship/Context)</p> <p>Sets our commitments and response times to customer correspondence.</p>
Standards, COP's & Other References	<p>Australian/ New Zealand Standard-Guidelines for complaints management in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014)</p> <p>NSW Ombudsman Complaint Management Framework and Complaint Handling Model Policy</p>	<p>(Relationship/Context)</p> <p>Complaint handling standard</p>

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Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

Consultation (update for each version created)

Key Departments, Teams, Positions, Meetings:	Customer Experience Business Support Officer, Executive Manager Integrity and Risk, Content Specialist, Senior Leadership Network
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Version History

Version No	Date Changed	Modified By	Details and Comments
1	June 2017	J Munro	Creation of new Policy to incorporate all forms of feedback received and to align the way we handle feedback received to Council's Customer Charter.
2	May 2019	T Hamilton	Updated to provide a clearer definition of what is a complaint, including examples of what is and isn't a complaint, and updated Officer role titles.
3	June 2023	T Hamilton	Updated to include components of Child Safe Policy, aligned to the NSW Ombudsman's guidelines, changed format to make it clearer and added a definitions/specific actions table.

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Council Policy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Feedback Management</p>	
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Policy Introduction

Background Purpose

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to delivering a high standard of service to all of our customers. ~~and we~~ We actively encourage feedback ~~from our customers~~ and are committed to using this information to improve our services and systems.

~~We welcome your feedback including suggestions, compliments and complaints about our program delivery, services or performance.~~

~~This Policy outlines how you can provide feedback to Council, how we will listen to you, and the principles we use to work together towards an appropriate resolution. It is based on the Australian Standard ISO 10002-2014 Guidelines for complaints management in organisations and the NSW Ombudsman's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for public sector agencies.~~

Scope

~~This policy outlines how you can provide feedback to Council, how we will listen to you and the principles we use to work together towards an appropriate resolution.~~ The policy applies to all Councillors, Council employees and persons carrying out work on behalf of ~~the~~ Council, for example, contractors and volunteers. Council employees are responsible for encouraging feedback, ~~and assisting to lodge feedback, from our customers.~~

The policy relates solely to the management of complaints, compliments and ~~suggestions-general feedback~~ made to Council. Complaints that are out of scope of this policy include:

- feedback relating to a Council resolution
- feedback relating to the determination of a development application
- a matter that has already been reviewed by an external agency
- feedback relating to a particular Councillor outside their role as a Councillor
- any work-related grievance from a Council employee
- a service request (see definitions)
- a request for information or an explanation of policies or procedures
- an expression of opinion – where a response or resolution is not expected (for example, a submission or feedback on a service)
- Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Requests (see definitions)
- privacy complaints (refer to Council's Privacy Management Plan).

~~It does not provide for the management of requests for service.~~

~~Attachment 1 outlines the roles and responsibilities of Council staff in managing feedback.~~

Policy Statement

~~We encourage feedback from customers about our processes, services and conduct of Council staff, and we follow the NSW Ombudsman's principles of feedback management:~~

Visibility	Accessibility	Responsiveness
Objectivity	Charges	Confidentiality
Customer-focused approach	Accountability	Continual improvement

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Our customers will:Be treated with respect, integrity and honesty.Have their feedback passed onto the responsible/nominated officer(s).Receive no charge for providing feedback.Have their feedback handled in accordance with our Customer Charter.Have their personal details kept secure and in accordance with our Privacy Management Plan.Not be adversely affected because they have made a complaint.Council is committed to delivering quality service and communicating effectively with our community.We realise that sometimes, despite our best efforts, people may not be happy with the way we have performed a service. We encourage feedback from customers about our processes, services and conduct of Council staff.**Objectives**

To provide members of the community the opportunity to provide feedback to Council and to ensure feedback is handled fairly, efficiently, ~~and~~ effectively and in accordance with Council's Customer Charter.

1 Policy Statement

~~We encourage feedback from customers about our processes, services and conduct of Council staff, and we follow the NSW Ombudsman's principles of feedback management:~~

- ~~• Visibility~~
- ~~• Objectivity~~
- ~~• Customer focused approach~~
- ~~• Accessibility~~
- ~~• Charges~~
- ~~• Accountability~~
- ~~• Responsiveness~~
- ~~• Confidentiality~~
- ~~• Continual improvement~~

~~Our customers will:~~

- ~~• Be treated with respect, integrity and honesty.~~
 - ~~• Have their feedback passed onto the responsible/nominated officer(s).~~
 - ~~• Receive no charge for providing feedback.~~
 - ~~• Have their feedback handled in accordance with our Customer Charter.~~
 - ~~• Have their personal details kept secure and in accordance with our Privacy Management Plan.~~
- ~~• Not be adversely affected because they have made a complaint.~~

21 Types of feedback Definitions

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition/specific action</u>
<u>Anonymous complaints</u>	<u>A complaint made where the complainant does not want to be, or cannot be, identified.</u>
<u>Child abuse or harm</u>	<u>All forms of physical, and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a person who is under 18 years of age.</u> <u>Council supports a culture of reporting and has adopted a child-focused approach to managing complaints of child abuse.</u>

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	<u>In the case of allegations being made against a Council employee or representative, Council will investigate the matter in accordance with Council's Child Safe Policy and Reportable Conduct - supporting and protecting children and young people procedure. All allegations will be reviewed and assessed, and if applicable, a notification report will be made to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police or other relevant agencies.</u>
<u>Complaint</u>	<p><u>An expression of dissatisfaction with our services, staff or procedures.</u></p> <p><u>A complaint is an expression of concern about:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>conduct</u> • <u>delivery of a Council service</u> • <u>customer service</u> • <u>failure to provide information</u> • <u>competence or conduct of staff</u> • <u>errors of judgement or misinterpretation of information</u> • <u>decisions being unfair, unreasonable or lacking in merit</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>poor administrative processes.</u>
<u>Compliment</u>	<u>An expression of satisfaction with our services, staff, programs or procedures.</u>
<u>Corruption</u>	<p><u>The misuse of power or authority for personal gain.</u></p> <p><u>Council is committed to maintaining high ethical standards. It is everyone's responsibility to not only act honestly but to report any instances of possible corruption, maladministration, or serious substantial wastage.</u></p> <p><u>Such reports can be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer. You can also report suspected instances to the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) on 1800 463 909, suspected maladministration to the NSW Ombudsman on 1800 451 524 or to the Office of Local Government Head Office on 02 4428 4100.</u></p>
<u>Criminal activity</u>	<p><u>Criminal activity may include suspected fraud or corruption by a Council employee or relating to Council-owned property.</u></p> <p><u>Complaints claiming or suspecting criminal activity will be directed to the Internal Ombudsman for assessment and reporting to the police where necessary.</u></p>
<u>General feedback</u>	<u>Suggestions for new services or programs.</u>
<u>Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Requests</u>	<u>Requests made by the public or external agencies for documents held by Council. These requests are assessed under the <i>Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009</i>.</u>
<u>Maladministration</u>	<u>Action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, that is unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory, or that is based wholly or partly on improper motives.</u>
<u>Pecuniary interest</u>	<p><u>An interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another with whom the person is associated.</u></p> <p><u>Where a matter involving a pecuniary interest constitutes or is likely to constitute corrupt conduct, members of the community may choose to report it to Council by way of a complaint.</u></p> <p><u>Alternatively, complaints relating to pecuniary interests may be made in writing to the Office of Local Government, identifying the complainant and the person</u></p>

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	<p><u>against who the complaint is made, giving particulars of the complaint, and being verified by statutory declaration.</u></p> <p><u>Council staff and Council officials will use the reporting mechanisms outlined in Council's Fraud and Corruption Prevention Internal Policy and Procedure.</u></p>
<u>Public interest disclosure</u>	<u>A report about wrongdoing made by a public official in NSW that meets the requirements of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act</i> as amended from time to time.</u>
<u>Sensitive complaints</u>	<u>Complaints made that identify concerns around behaviour or actions of particular employees, Councillors, the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.</u>
<u>Serious and substantial wastage</u>	<u>The excessive and unnecessary depletion of resources, often resulting from mismanagement or corrupt practices.</u>
<u>Service request</u>	<p><u>A service request includes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>• requests for the provision of works or services</u> <u>• routine enquiries about the organisation's business</u> <u>• requests for the provision of services and assistance</u> <u>• reports of failure to comply with laws regulated by the organisation</u> <u>• requests for information or explanation of policies, procedures and decisions.</u>

2.4—Compliments

~~Compliments are received when we have met or exceeded the expectations of the community.~~

~~The receipt of compliments assists us in:~~

- ~~• Understanding what aspects of our service customers value.~~
- ~~• Understanding how our service impacts on our customers.~~
- ~~• The ability to share and reinforce examples of best practice.~~
- ~~• Building morale and provide recognition to our staff.~~

32 General Feedback

We encourage all suggestions and feedback, which are assigned to the appropriate department for consideration.

Customers will be notified their feedback has been received, however they will not receive an outcome from the department on their feedback.

~~General feedback includes suggestions for new services, programs or requests for information.~~

~~The receipt of general feedback assists us in understanding:~~

- ~~• What services our customers require.~~
- ~~• How our service impacts on our customers.~~
- ~~• What information we could provide to the community.~~

43 General complaintsCompliments

~~Compliments are received when we have met or exceeded the expectations of the community.~~

~~The receipt of compliments assists us in:~~

- ~~Understanding what aspects of our service customers value.~~
- ~~Understanding how our service impacts on our customers.~~
- ~~The ability to share and reinforce examples of best practice.~~

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Building morale and provide recognition to our staff.

Compliments are used to inform Council on what we are doing well and what is important to our community. Analysing compliments helps Council understand our current performance and future service provision.

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of compliments and refer them to the appropriate department manager for the relevant staff to be recognised.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with our services, staff or procedures. General complaints are managed in accordance with Council's three-tier Complaints Handling Model (explained in section 9 of this policy).

Requests for service (unless they are complaints related to Council's response times to a request for service) and requests for information or explanation of Council policies or procedures are not classified as complaints. Similarly, comments of a harassing nature with no identifiable purpose are not classified as complaints and will not be investigated further.

A complaint is an expression of concern about:

- Conduct.
- Delivery of a Council service.
- Customer service.
- Failure to provide information.
- Competence or conduct of staff.
- Errors of judgement or misinterpretation of information.
- Decisions being unfair, unreasonable or lacking in merit.
- Poor administrative processes.

A complaint is not:

- Feedback relating to a Council resolution.
- Feedback relating to the determination outcome of a development application.
- A matter that has already been reviewed by an external agency.
- Feedback relating to a particular Councillor outside their role as a Councillor.
- Any work-related grievance from a Council employee.
- A request for services — unless it is a second request where there has been no response to the first.
- A request for information or an explanation of policies or procedures.
- Making an expression of opinion — where a response or resolution is not expected (for example, a submission or feedback on a service).

4.1 — Other types of complaints

4.1.1 Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints, where there is enough information to be able to look into the issues raised. We encourage complainants to provide their contact details, as we may not be able to investigate the matter thoroughly without obtaining additional information.

4.1.2 Sensitive complaints

Complaints received naming particular employees are sent securely to the appropriate department manager for investigation to ensure, as far as practical, the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved.

Under the principle of natural justice, named employees are entitled to be provided with details of any complaint against them which is investigated. Assistance and support will be provided to both the complainant and the employee (where required) during any investigation.

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The Investigating Officer will contact the complainant where possible via telephone within five working days to discuss the matter. The complaint will be investigated and the complainant will be contacted with the outcome of the investigation, and any steps taken, resulting from the investigation.

Complaints received naming Councillors, the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer will be sent securely to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer (as appropriate) for assessment, investigation and possible resolution.

4.1.3 Serious sensitive complaints

4.1.3.1 Pecuniary interest

A pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another with whom the person is associated.

Where a matter involving a pecuniary interest is or is likely to constitute corrupt conduct, members of the community may choose to report it to Council by way of a complaint.

Alternatively, complaints relating to pecuniary interests may be made in writing to the Office of Local Government, identifying the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made, giving particulars of the complaint, and be verified by statutory declaration.

Council staff and Council officials will use the reporting mechanisms outlined in Council's Fraud and Corruption Prevention Internal Policy and Procedure.

4.1.3.2 Corruption, maladministration, serious and substantial wastage

Council is committed to maintaining high ethical standards. It is everyone's responsibility to not only act honestly but to report any instances of possible corruption, maladministration, or serious substantial wastage.

Such reports can be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer. You can also report suspected instances to the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) on 1800 463 909, suspected maladministration to the NSW Ombudsman on 1800 451 524 or to the Office of Local Government (Head Office) on 02 4428 4100.

4.1.3.3 Criminal activity

Complainants claiming or suspecting criminal activity (including suspected fraud or corruption) by a Council employee or relating to Council owned property will be directed to the Internal Ombudsman for assessment, investigation and reporting to the police where necessary.

4 How to provide feedback Complaints

4.2.1 Guiding principles for complaints

You can provide us feedback in the following ways:

- Email us at council@lakemac.com.au.
- Visit us at www.lakemac.com.au.
- By telephone on 02 49210 333 between 8.00am–5.00pm.
- In person at Council's Customer Service Centre in the Administration Building, 126–128 Main Road Speers Point between 8.00am–5.00pm.
- You can write to us at PO Box 1906, Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310.

We are committed to providing a service that is efficient, fair and transparent when assessing a customer complaint. To do this, we are guided by the NSW Ombudsman's guiding principles.

	People focus	We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures,
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<u>Facilitate complaints</u>		<p>products and complaint handling. Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>People making complaints will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided with information about our complaint assessing process provided with multiple and accessible ways to make complaints listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process, where possible and appropriate provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.
	<u>No detriment</u>	We will take all reasonable steps to ensure people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
	<u>Anonymous complaints</u>	We accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an assessment of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.
	<u>Accessibility</u>	<p>We will ensure information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised. We will ensure our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.</p> <p>If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative, if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (for example, an advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament or another organisation).</p>
	<u>No charge</u>	Lodging a complaint with us is free.
<u>Respond to complaints</u>	<u>Early resolution</u>	Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact.
	<u>Responsiveness</u>	<p>We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints. We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security, the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.</p> <p>We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the complaints process the expected timeframes for our actions the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay their likely involvement in the process the possible or likely outcome of their complaint. <p>We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).</p> <p>We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our timeframes for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.</p>

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	<u>Objectivity and fairness</u>	<p>We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.</p> <p>The person handling the complaint will be different from any staff member whose service or conduct is being complained about. Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.</p>
	<u>Responding flexibly</u>	<p>Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.</p> <p>We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process, as far as possible.</p>
	<u>Confidentiality</u>	<p>We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.</p> <p>Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.</p>
<u>Manage the parties to a complaint</u>	<u>Complaints involving multiple agencies</u>	<p>Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s, where possible, to ensure communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.</p> <p>Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.</p> <p>Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated. Where our services are contracted out, we expect the contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. In such circumstances, we will take complaints about the products, services and staff of our organisation and that of the service providers.</p>
	<u>Complaints involving multiple parties</u>	<p>When similar complaints are made by related parties, we will try to arrange to communicate with a single representative of the group.</p>
	<u>Empowerment of staff</u>	<p>All staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.</p>
	<u>Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints</u>	<p>We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time, our success depends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the health, safety and security of our staff our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive. <p>When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.</p>
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4.2 Complaint management system

Complaints are managed in accordance with Council's three-tier Complaints Handling Model.

<u>Tier 1 - frontline complaint handling</u>	<u>Where possible, complaints will be resolved at the first contact. If we are unable to resolve a complaint at the first contact, the complaint will escalate to the appropriate senior officer, generally the department manager, who will nominate an appropriate officer to handle the complaint.</u>
<u>Tier 2 - internal review</u>	<u>If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may seek an internal review of the matter.</u> <u>The Feedback Management Officer is responsible for reviewing Tier 2 complaint reviews.</u>
<u>Tier 3 - escalated review</u>	<u>If the complaint is still unresolved, and the complainant requests that the matter be escalated, the complaint will be referred to a Senior Council Officer for review.</u>

4.2.1 Tier 1

When responding to complaints, staff should follow our Staff Handling Guideline for the Feedback Management Policy, as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints. Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.



Receipt of complaints

When we receive a complaint, we will record the complaint and its supporting information.

On receipt of a complaint, it will be assessed to determine the appropriate category.

- General complaints are lodged in our Customer Request Management system and customers will receive a unique Customer Request number upon receipt.
- Sensitive complaints will be allocated a unique reference number and customers will receive the reference number at the time of acknowledgement.

The record of the complaint will document:

- the contact information of the person making a complaint, unless the complaint is anonymous
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want

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- any other relevant information
- any supporting documents supplied by the customer
- any additional support the person making a complaint requires, including translation and/or accessibility requirements.

We accept anonymous complaints where there is enough information to be able to look into the issues raised. We encourage complainants to provide their contact details, as we may not be able to look into the matter thoroughly without obtaining additional information.

Comments of a harassing nature with no identifiable purpose are not classified as complaints and will not be assessed further.

Acknowledgement of complaints

The Complaint Assessment Officer will acknowledge receipt of general complaints within five business days. Anonymous complaints will not be acknowledged due to their nature.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate way for communicating with the person making a complaint (for example, email, letter, phone call, in person meeting).

Assessment and review of complaints

The Complaint Assessment Officer will:

- look into all history relevant to the complaint
- if relevant, speak to customers/witnesses/interested parties
- tailor the approach and communication method, dependent on all factors relating to the complaint
- keep the complainant informed of the progress and estimated completion date of the complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer, Mayor or Internal Ombudsman may refer the matter for conduct review under the Code of Conduct.

Response and closure of complaint

The Complaint Assessment Officer will respond to the complainant with:

- the outcome, including any relevant reasons or actions taken
- provide any available options for review.

4.2.2 Tier 2

The purpose of a Tier 2 internal review is not to determine a different response, but to check that all involved in determining the original decision have taken all the required steps in their assessment.

A request for internal review is required to be in writing.

The Feedback Management Officer will communicate the outcome of the Tier 2 review to the customer within 10 working days.

4.2.3 Tier 3

Where possible, the officer responsible for the Tier 3 escalated review should be independent to previous assessments pertaining to the same complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of our escalated review process, they may seek a review of our decision by an external agency. This may take the form of:

- alternative dispute resolution procedures such as mediation or conciliation
- referring the complaint to external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Division of Local Government and the Office of the Information Commissioner, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Whilst the majority of complaints should follow the escalation process described above, it is possible for a complaint to enter the process at any one of the three tiers.

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5 ~~What we need to know~~ Limitations of service or communication

We encourage customers to lodge complaints in an appropriate manner. Council expects the behaviour of customers and the community to stay within reasonable limits. If behaviour strays beyond these limits, we are entitled to place and enforce limits on contact between Council and the person displaying inappropriate/unreasonable behaviour.

We will only apply this part of the policy in exceptional cases, where it is necessary to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of Council staff or equity in the use of Council resources. These limits can apply to an individual customer or a group. This policy does not limit legislative access and service rights.

The Chief Executive Officer may limit service or communication with a customer if there is evidence they are an unreasonable complainant. The Chief Executive Officer will first consider whether:

1. the complaints procedure has been implemented correctly so far as practical to this point and no material element of the complaint has been overlooked or inadequately addressed
2. the behaviour of the complainant has become intimidating, threatening, offensive or so habitual or obsessive that it constitutes an unreasonable demand on Council's resources.

Depending on the circumstances, the limitations placed on a customer can vary:

- whom a customer may contact within Council
- the number of opportunities we will give to a customer to address the same or similar issues
- the number of issues we will address in any given period
- the types of issues we will address, for example, we will only address significant and serious issues
- the times and days telephone calls will be accepted by Council
- the termination of phone calls or meetings when appropriate (for example, we may terminate phone calls or meetings if the customer is abusive or threatening and continues to be after a warning or they have been instructed to correspond only with a specific staff member who is not available at that time)
- the requirement that the customer must only communicate with Council in writing
- the number of responses to complaints, correspondence, or enquiries on the same or similar issues where they do not provide new information
- that correspondence will be received, read, and recorded, but only acknowledged or otherwise responded to if they provide new information.

Limitations on the provision of information will not occur if we are under a statutory responsibility to provide the information.

The Chief Executive Officer will document the limits on service or communication and inform the customer of the reasons for taking such steps.

It is important to record information about your feedback. To help us understand your feedback, please provide:

- A description of the issue or situation, including any dates, times or locations of incidents, if applicable.
- Your contact details including name, address, contact phone numbers and email address.

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5.1 Review or appeal of limits of service or communication ~~How we handle your feedback~~

~~Requests to remove a limitation of service or communication must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer by the person to whom the limits apply. The Chief Executive Officer will only consider one written request per year. On completion of the review, the Chief Executive Officer will advise the person of any subsequent review dates. If the customer is dissatisfied with the review, they may contact the NSW Ombudsman's Office, depending on the circumstances, or the Office of Local Government.~~

~~We will:~~

- ~~• Record the details of your feedback.~~
- ~~• Acknowledge and attempt to resolve your complaint within a reasonable time. For a lengthy process, we will keep you informed along the way.~~
- ~~• Keep you up to date on the progress of your complaint and be available to discuss your feedback.~~
- ~~• Regularly monitor the feedback we receive and use this information to improve our delivery of services, procedures and our future planning processes.~~
- ~~• Ensure staff members are well trained and confident in their dealings with customers.~~
- ~~• Provide internal and external avenues of review if you are dissatisfied with how we deal with your complaint or its resolution.~~
- ~~• Keep your personal details in accordance with our Privacy Management Plan.~~

6 ~~Complaint handling~~

~~We use a three tier complaint handling model and will acknowledge and respond to complaints within five working days. While most problems can be resolved quickly, there are times when detailed investigation is required. We will keep you informed of the progress if this is the case.~~

~~Where assessment and investigation of a complaint is required, the Chief Executive Officer, Mayor or Internal Ombudsman may refer the matter to a conduct reviewer who may be internal or external to Council.~~

6.1.1 Tier 1 – frontline complaint handling

~~Where possible, complaints will be resolved at the first contact. If we are unable to resolve a complaint in the first contact, the complaint will escalate to the appropriate senior officer, generally the department manager, who will nominate an investigating officer.~~

~~The investigating officer will contact the complainant, investigate, and will attempt resolution.~~

6.1.2 Tier 2 – internal review

~~If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may seek an internal review of the matter.~~

~~The Feedback Management Officer is responsible for Reviewing Tier 2 complaint reviews. A request for internal review is required to be in writing.~~

~~The purpose of a Tier 2 internal review is not to determine a different response, but to check that all involved in determining the original decision have taken all the required steps in the procedure.~~

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~~The Feedback Management Officer will communicate the outcome of the Tier 2 review to the customer within ten working days.~~

~~6.1.3 Tier 3 – escalated review~~

~~If the complaint is still unresolved, and the complainant requests that the matter be escalated, the complaint will be referred to a Senior Council Officer for review. Where possible, the Officer responsible for the Tier 3 escalated review should be independent to previous investigations pertaining to the same complaint.~~

~~If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of our escalated review process, they may seek a review of our decision by an external agency. This may take the form of:~~

- ~~• Alternative dispute resolution procedures such as mediation or conciliation.~~
- ~~• Referring the complaint to external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Division of Local Government and the Office of the Information Commissioner depending on the nature of the complaint.~~

~~Whilst the majority of complaints should follow the escalation process described above, it is possible for a complaint to enter the process at any one of the three tiers.~~

~~6.2 Limitations on service or communication~~

~~We encourage customers to lodge complaints in an appropriate manner. Council expects that the behaviour of customers and the community will stay within reasonable limits. If behaviour strays beyond these limits, we are entitled to place and enforce limits on contact between Council and the person displaying inappropriate behaviour.~~

~~We will only apply this part of the policy in exceptional cases, where it is necessary to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of Council staff or equity in the use of Council resources. These limits can apply to an individual customer or a group. This policy does not limit legislative access and service rights.~~

~~The Chief Executive Officer may limit service or communication with a customer if there is evidence that he or she is a unreasonable complainant. The Chief Executive Officer will first consider whether:~~

- ~~1. The complaints procedure has been implemented correctly so far as practical to this point and no material element of the complaint has been overlooked or inadequately addressed; and~~
- ~~1. The behaviour of the complainant has become intimidating, threatening, offensive or so habitual or obsessive that it constitutes an unreasonable demand on Council's resources.~~

~~Depending on the circumstances, the limitations could include one or more of the following:~~

- ~~• Whom a customer may contact within Council.~~
- ~~• The number of opportunities we will give to a customer to address the same or similar issues.~~
- ~~• The number of issues we will address in any given period.~~
- ~~• The types of issues we will address, e.g. we will only address significant and serious issues.~~
- ~~• The times and days telephone calls will be accepted by Council.~~
- ~~• The termination of phone calls or meetings when appropriate, e.g. we may terminate phone calls or meetings if the customer is abusive or threatening or has been instructed to correspond only with a specific staff member who is not available at that time. Staff members may terminate calls or meetings after an initial warning to any customer who is abusive or threatening.~~
- ~~• The requirement that the customer must only communicate with Council in writing.~~
- ~~• The number of responses to complaints, correspondence, or enquiries on the same or similar issues where he or she does not provide new information.~~
- ~~• Correspondence will be received, read, and recorded, but only acknowledged or otherwise responded to if he or she provides new information.~~

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Feedback Management - Council Policy**Version 2 - 26 August 2019**

~~Limitations on the provision of information will not occur if we are under a statutory responsibility to provide the information.~~

~~The Chief Executive Officer will document the limits on service or communication and inform the customer of the reasons for taking such steps.~~

~~6.3—Review or appeal of limits on service or communication~~

~~Requests to remove a limitation of service or communication must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer by the person to whom the limits apply. The Chief Executive Officer will only consider one written request per year. On completion of the review, the Chief Executive Officer will advise the person of any subsequent review dates. If the customer is dissatisfied with the review, he or she may contact the NSW Ombudsman's Office, depending on the circumstances, or the Office of Local Government.~~

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Attachment 16 Council staff responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff awareness and compliance with the pPolicy Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints and support recommendations for improvement. Investigate-Assess sensitive and serious complaints or nominate an a Complaint Assessment Officer to do so Investigating Officer. Ensure integrity of the assessment of the complaint investigation. Encourage staff to make recommendations for improvements.
Department Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff awareness and compliance with the pPolicy Assist and support staff to manage feedback at first contact Recognise staff who have received compliments for service. Investigate-Assess complaints or nominate a Complaint Assessment n-Investigating Officer to do so Ensure integrity of the investigation assessment of the complaint Consider feedback to improve quality, and best practice.
Feedback Management Officer (FMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Council's Ffeedback Mmanagement policy Ensure all Council employees receive training in the pPolicy Assist and support Council employees in relation to administering the pPolicy. Review Tier 2 (Internal Review) complaints. Provide regular reports to the Chief Executive Officer, Executive and department managers on complaints received.
<u>Internal Ombudsman</u>	Manage and assess serious sensitive complaints.
<u>Records Services Coordinator</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept sensitive complaints Create a record for the appropriate manager Provide monthly reports on sensitive and serious sensitive complaints for the Chief Executive Officer.
<u>Complaint Assessment Officer</u>	Assess the complaint in-line with the policy's principles.
Frontline Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist customers to lodge feedback and advise them of the feedback management process. Be aware of the pPolicy. Accept and record feedback. Attempt to resolve minor complaints before they escalate. Treat all people with respect.
<u>Records Services Coordinator</u>	Administering the sensitive complaint process by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept sensitive complaints. Create a record for appropriate manager. Provide monthly reports on sensitive and serious sensitive complaints for the Chief Executive Officer.
<u>Investigating Officer</u>	Investigate the complaint in-line with the Policy's principles
<u>Internal Ombudsman</u>	Manage, assess and investigate serious sensitive complaints

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Review and evaluation

We will continually monitor our feedback management system to:

- ensure effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.

Monitoring may include the use of audits and satisfaction surveys.

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

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Controlled Document Information

Authorisation Details

Folder No:	F2005/02232	TRIM Record No:	D10995413
Audience:	External - This policy applies to all staff and customers of Council		
Department:	Customer Experience		
Officer:	Customer Service Centre Coordinator – Troy Hamilton		
Review Timeframe: Max < 4 years	4 years	Next Scheduled Review Date:	October 2027
Authorisation:			
Authorisation - Council Adoption Date:			

Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	NSW Division of Local Government Complaints Management in Councils Practice note 9 (2009-revised)	(Relationship/Context)
Related Policies (Council & Internal):	Fraud and Corruption Prevention – Internal Policy and Procedure	(Relationship/Context) Contains additional guidance for Council staff and Council officials regarding reporting suspected fraud or corruption.
	Public Interest Disclosures Reporting Policy	Contains guidance about protections for public officials who report certain types of wrongdoing in the workplace.
	Child Safe Policy	Contains additional guidance for the community and staff on Council's reporting and investigation procedures in relation to child harm/abuse.
	Business Ethics Policy	Provides guidance to contractors and suppliers on expectations when doing business with Council.
Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements:	Staff handling for the Feedback Management Policy - Guideline - internal Feedback Management Policy- Staff Handling Guideline – D07563828	(Relationship/Context) Sets our commitments and response times to customer correspondence.
	Customer Charter	Sets our commitments and response times to customer correspondence.
	Reportable Conduct - supporting and protecting children and young people Procedure	Provides guidance to staff on best practice and compliance with all requirements of the legislative framework governing the protection of children and young people.
Standards COP's & Other References	Australian/ New Zealand Standard- Guidelines for complaints management in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014)	(Relationship/Context) Complaint handling standard
	NSW Ombudsman Complaint Management Framework and Complaint Handling Model Policy	Complaint handling standard

Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

Consultation (update for each version created)

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Key Departments, Teams, Positions, Meetings:

~~Shared Decision Making Councillor Portfolio – Feedback Management Policy workshop, Internal Ombudsman, Head of Customer Experience, Customer Experience Business Support Officer, Executive Manager Integrity and Risk, Content Specialist, Senior Leadership Network, Director of Organisational Services.~~

Version History

Version No	Date Changed	Modified By	Details and Comments
1	June 2017	J Munro	Creation of new policy to incorporate all forms of feedback received and to align the way we handle feedback received to Council's Customer Charter.
2	May 2019	T Hamilton	Updated to provide a clearer definition of what is a complaint, including examples of what is and isn't a complaint, and updated Officer role titles.
<u>3</u>	<u>June 2023</u>	<u>T Hamilton</u>	<u>Updated to include components of Child Safe Policy, aligned to the NSW Ombudsman's guidelines, changed format to make it clearer and added a definitions/specific actions table.</u>

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23OS022	Requests for donations under the Donations Program
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Key focus area	2. Lifestyle and wellbeing 5. Connected communities
Objective	2.1 Our community has access to adaptable and inclusive community, health and wellbeing services 2.2 Our open and shared spaces are inclusive and help us to live a healthy and safer social lifestyle 5.2 We are a supportive and inclusive community
File	F2023/00975 - D11204093
Author	Council Liaison Officer - Shannon MacKenzie
Responsible manager	Head of Communications and Corporate Strategy - Kate Davies

Executive summary

This report considers three applications for donations made under the Funding from Council Policy, in accordance with section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Recommendation

Council approves the donations of:

- A. \$2000 to Healing Path to Wellness for their art therapy project at Morisset High School,
- B. \$2000 to NSW Police and Emergency Services Sailing Club to assist with the expenses of their sailing regatta in Toronto, and
- C. \$1525 to Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club for the purchase of a new rowing machine to be used at their clubhouse in Caves Beach.

Context

Under section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council may provide donations and financial assistance to support community, sporting and cultural projects in Lake Macquarie City. The Funding from Council Policy is a framework of four specific programs to assist Council to distribute its annual funding allocation equitably to external bodies and groups.

Discussion

The Donations Program considers requests from not-for-profit groups and organisations with significant local membership or participation, and/or are undertaking a project with significant local benefits. The maximum allowable donation per financial year under this program is \$2000.

Three applications have been received for consideration in October 2023, requesting donations totalling \$5525.

Community engagement and internal consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the applicants and Council's Executive, Community Partnerships and Communications and Corporate Strategy departments.

Assessment of options

The three applications received in October 2023 have been assessed by staff against the criteria in the Donations Program Guidelines and are recommended for approval. The assessment of the applications is detailed in Attachment 1.

The Funding from Council Policy does not prohibit Council from considering funding assistance or in-kind support outside the scope of the policy. Council will consider each case on its merits and any assistance provided will not be considered a precedent for future requests.

Key considerations

Economic

The application from the NSW Police and Emergency Services Sailing Club will attract people to Toronto and the wider Lake Macquarie area, thereby supporting local business.

Environment

None.

Community

The application from Healing Path to Wellness will support people in the community living with mental illness, chronic pain and special needs.

The application from the NSW Police and Emergency Services Sailing Club will enhance the health and wellbeing of participants and foster social connections for emergency service personnel in the community.

The application from the Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club will enhance the social and physical health and wellbeing of community members using the new equipment.

Civic leadership

The Donations Program allows Council to support the community and work in partnership with organisations to achieve the best outcomes for residents and visitors to the city.

Financial

Donations budget	2023-2024
Allocation	\$30,000
Proposed additional allocation (September review)	\$20,000
	<hr/> \$50,000
<u>Less:</u>	
Donation fund commitments as at 31 August 2023	-\$32,039.98
October 2023 commitment	<hr/> -\$5525
Remaining funds	<hr/> \$12,435.02

Infrastructure

None.

Compliance

It is a condition of receiving funding that the successful applicant will assume all normal commercial responsibilities including public risk and/or any other appropriate insurance cover for the project.

Legislative and policy considerations

Local Government Act 1993

Funding from Council Policy

Donations Program Guidelines

Attachments

1. Requests for donations - October 2023 D11204102

Requests for donations – October 2023

A)	Applicant	Request	Funding requested	Funding recommendation
	Healing Path to Wellness	Art therapy for students at Morisset High School	\$2000	\$2000
Request details Healing Path to Wellness is a health promotion charity that offers support services for those living with mental illness, chronic pain and special needs. Services including counselling, art therapy and life coaching are offered by accredited professionals to alleviate their symptoms. The welfare department at Morisset High School identified art therapy support sessions may be beneficial to students struggling with mental health and emotional regulation. Funding is sought to provide weekly art therapy sessions to a rotation of students, free of charge to the students and the school. The funding would cover the cost of art materials for approximately 30-40 students and completion certificates. Healing Path to Wellness will cover the therapist fees and travel costs.				
History 2022-2023: \$2000 – Art therapy for students at Morisset High School 2021-2022: \$2000 – Art therapy for students at Morisset High School				
Donations Program Guidelines provisions The Donations Program offers financial assistance to not-for-profit groups and organisations that have significant local membership or participation, and/or are undertaking a project that shows significant local benefits. Council will consider each request on an individual basis against the eligibility and criteria requirements of this program. The maximum allowable donation per financial year under this program is \$2000.				
Assessment As the project specifically provides benefits to the Lake Macquarie community, this application is consistent with the policy and is recommended for approval.				

B)	Applicant	Request	Funding requested	Funding recommendation
	NSW Police and Emergency Services Sailing Club	Emergency Services Sailing Regatta	\$2000	\$2000
	<p>Request details</p> <p>NSW Police and Emergency Services Sailing Club (NSWPSC) is a not-for-profit club that provides an outlet for retired and serving Police, Emergency Service and Australian Defence Force personnel to sail, race and socialise with others in the community.</p> <p>The group is hosting a two-day sailing regatta in Toronto from 13-14 November 2023. The event is expected to attract 25 yachts and over 130 competitors from as far as Batemans Bay and Tweed Heads.</p> <p>NSWPSC is seeking a donation from Council to assist with the costs involved in running the regatta including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race t-shirts for competitors and officials • a race starter • personal protective equipment such as sunscreen, hats, gloves and high-visibility clothing for volunteers, competitors and officials • stationery supplies for registrations and scoring. <p>The total cost of the project is \$5000, with the remaining funds to be provided by personal contributions and the group's other fundraising efforts.</p>			
	<p>History</p> <p>Funding has not previously been requested and/or provided under the Donations Program.</p>			
	<p>Donations Program Guidelines provisions</p> <p>The Donations Program offers financial assistance to not-for-profit groups and organisations that have significant local membership or participation, and/or are undertaking a project that shows significant local benefits.</p> <p>Council will consider each request on an individual basis against the eligibility and criteria requirements of this program. The maximum allowable donation per financial year under this program is \$2000.</p>			
	<p>Assessment</p> <p>As the project specifically provides benefits to the Lake Macquarie community, this application is consistent with the policy and is recommended for approval.</p>			

C)	Applicant	Request	Funding requested	Funding recommendation
	Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club	New rowing machine	\$1525	\$1525
Request details <p>Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club has more than 500 members, with approximately 150 members actively involved in patrolling the beach. The clubhouse at Caves Beach facilitates life saving services as well as training, educational programs and recreation, and is a social space for the community.</p> <p>The club is seeking a donation from Council to purchase a new rowing machine for the members' gymnasium. Active lifesavers require high levels of personal fitness and strength for patrolling, rescuing and providing emergency assistance to the community.</p> <p>The new machine will improve the facilities offered to members which is hoped to increase the club's capacity to recruit and retain members who are part of the Lake Macquarie community.</p>				
History <p>2022-2023: \$2000 – Outdoor blinds for weather protection</p>				
Donations Program Guidelines provisions <p>The Donations Program offers financial assistance to not-for-profit groups and organisations that have significant local membership or participation, and/or are undertaking a project that shows significant local benefits.</p> <p>Council will consider each request on an individual basis against the eligibility and criteria requirements of this program. The maximum allowable donation per financial year under this program is \$2000.</p>				
Assessment <p>As the project specifically provides benefits to the Lake Macquarie community, this application is consistent with the policy and is recommended for approval.</p>				