



CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Indigo Shire Council believes that excellent customer service involves sharing knowledge and information in an appropriate and timely manner. A policy has been created as part of continuing focus on customer service.

REFERENCE TO CURRENT OR PREVIOUS LEGAL /COUNCIL PLAN / POLICY

The policy will assist with the achievement of the key strategic objective 1.2 Build a positive customer service culture, as set out in the Indigo Shire Council Plan 2011 – 2014, specifically by contributing to strategic actions *Enhance organisational awareness and ownership of the Customer Service Policy and promote the policy via the Indigo Informer and other means.*

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors, council staff members and volunteers.

PURPOSE

This policy has been created to ensure a uniform approach to customer service throughout Indigo Shire Council. The policy will be used as a training tool and a standard by which staff will deliver customer service.



POLICY DETAILS

Indigo Shire Council believes that excellent customer service involves sharing knowledge and information in an appropriate and timely manner.

We believe:

- That our customers are our highest priority.
- Excellent customer service involves relating to people in a positive, meaningful way. It is everyone's responsibility.
- Excellent customer service contributes significantly to the perception residents have about the Council and the way we do business.
- Excellent customer service means the customer's needs have been met in an appropriate and timely manner.

Our customers are: Internal and External

1. OUR MISSION

In meeting customers' needs we believe in:

1. **Being Proactive:** We actively seek ways to find solutions to problems.
2. **Honesty:** We act with honesty and integrity in all that we do.
3. **Accessibility:** We will be accessible and use plain language.
4. **Responsibility:** We take responsibility for our actions.
5. **Responsiveness:** We respond in a timely manner and keep people informed of progress.
6. **Respect:** We respect different views and opinions.
7. **Accountability:** We are accountable to our residents and this policy.

2. OUR STANDARDS

When engaging with our customers, we will:

Face to face:

- acknowledge all customers on arrival with a smile
- be conscious of potential audiences when discussing confidential information and offer a more private location



- provide an avenue for feedback at all service points
- wear an ID badge, in a prominent position
- answer the inquiry immediately if possible
- if we cannot answer the inquiry immediately we will respond within three working days with either an answer or the likely timeframe for an appropriate response / action / answer.

By telephone:

- make sure our work area is staffed, or ensure someone is contactable at all times during normal business hours
- handle all calls within five rings, where possible
- respond with “good morning/afternoon or welcome to Indigo Shire, this is (name)”
- take responsibility for every call we receive, regardless of the subject matter
- never ignore a ringing phone
- use group pickup or diversion on our phones when we are away from our desks or on leave
- use voicemail with reference to an alternative number for contacting the main switch
- when transferring calls introduce the caller and provide relevant details
- answer the inquiry immediately if possible
- if we cannot answer the inquiry immediately we will respond to customer phone calls within three working days with either an answer or the likely timeframe for an appropriate response / action / answer.

In correspondence:

- provide a written hard-copy response within 14 working days or an email within five working days
- use our out-of-office auto-reply system when out of the office for more than one day
- give details of return date and alternative contact information on automated out-of-office emails
- provide acknowledgement and regular updates of a request where it cannot be completed within 14 working days
- include an appropriate contact name, address, telephone number and email address for Indigo Shire Council.

Online:

- provide a comprehensive online service where customers can access information
- ensure information is current, accurate, timely and relevant
- ensure our website is accessible and user-friendly
- meet international guidelines for accessibility



- use clear plain and concise language, avoiding jargon
- offer feedback options
- include a contact address, telephone number and email address for the Indigo Shire Council.

At meetings (internal and external):

- be punctual or provide advice of non-attendance or lateness
- turn mobile phones off or to silent before meetings start
- arrive prepared and briefed for all meetings
- actively participate and represent Council in a professional manner
- wear an ID badge, in a prominent position
- ensure Minutes are distributed within 10 working days of the meeting
- be flexible in scheduling venues and times of meetings
- take responsibility for all Council rooms and resources when used
- ensure the venue is left tidy at the conclusion of all meetings.

With complaint resolution:

- treat customer complaints seriously, confidentially and in a professional manner
- offer help in lodging a complaint, where needed
- provide information on how, when, where and to whom to make a complaint
- explain the complaint resolution process
- respond to all formal complaints, in writing, within 14 working days
- forward written complaints to the Corporate Information Management Department for registering
- record verbal complaints in our customer service response system.

3. MEASUREMENT

We will measure our customer service and strive to improve and enhance our customer experience.

We will do this by:

- regularly asking our customers about the service they receive from us and using their feedback to improve our services and standards
- taking note of ratings from the Customer Service component in the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey and Council community satisfaction survey, and taking action where applicable
- monitoring and reviewing customer service standards
- Annual staff reviews include assessment of each employee's compliance with this charter.



In the spirit of communication

It is acknowledged that at times people may be upset over an issue and this may lead to heightened emotions. Indigo Shire Council staff will treat others with respect and in a professional manner and if a customer is unable to do the same, we ask that the customer take some time to reflect and re-engage with staff at a later time.

COMMUNICATION

The policy will be communicated internally as well as being available on the Indigo Shire Council website. It will also be included as part of the new employee induction program.