



## Complaints Management Policy

Application	All Staff
Responsible Officer	Director Corporate and Community Services
File No	CM:POL:CWP
Authorised by	Council
Effective Date	19.09.2023
Distribution	Internet / Intranet / Public Exhibition

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that an effective complaints management system is implemented to ensure complaints are handled efficiently and to result in a positive complaint outcome, to measure community satisfaction and provide a useful source of information and feedback for improving Council's services. Complaint handling is a key component of sound corporate governance and is fundamental to ensuring an appropriate level of accountability in the exercise of Council's functions.

### Definitions

Council:	Carrathool Shire Council
Complaint:	An expression of dissatisfaction with the Council's decisions, policies, procedures, charges, employees, agents or the quality of the services it provides.

#### What is not a Complaint:

- a request for council services (unless it is a second request, where there was no response to the first)
- a request for documents, information or explanation of policies or procedures
- a request for the council to exercise a regulatory function (unless it is a second request, where there was no response to the first)
- the lodging of an appeal or objection in accordance with a statutory process, standard procedure or policy (unless this is recorded as a complaint about the council's decision making)
- a submission relating to the exercise of a regulatory function (eg an objection to a development application or a submission on a policy).

Note: Discretion must be used to decide if correspondence is a complaint or a request for service. If it requests a service but says "I am not happy" or anything to indicate that a service has not been delivered as promised or as required, then the feedback is a complaint.

Code of Conduct	Sets out the standards of conduct and behaviour which all councillors, administrators, members of staff, committee members and delegates of Council must comply with.
Public Interest Disclosures	Provides support and protection for individuals who report serious wrongdoing which may involve corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, government information contravention and local government pecuniary interest contravention.
Internal Reporting System	Is a system for receiving, assessing and dealing with public interest disclosures and ensuring that individuals who report wrongdoing are supported and protected.



## Reference

This policy complements other legislation and where it is silent on matters referred to in the following legislation such matters must be followed in accordance with the legislation.

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government State Award (Disciplinary Procedures)
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (Protected Disclosures Internal Reporting System)

## Policy statements

1. Council welcomes complaints (and compliments) as a way of improving services to the community and will ensure every complaint is received courteously, investigated and acted on quickly and appropriately.
2. Council recognises that an effective complaints system will benefit council through:
  - creating a second chance to provide service and satisfaction to dissatisfied members of the public
  - identifying areas that need improvement
  - providing opportunities to strengthen public support for the council,
  - assisting in planning and allocation of resources.
3. That staff receive complaints in person, by telephone, by email, through the website or preferably by written correspondence. It is preferred, and in some cases essential, that the complainant gives their name and contact details.
4. All complaints will be recorded in the complaints register within the electronic document management system, to ensure that they are addressed and action taken to prevent a recurrence.
5. Complaints are to be acknowledged within ten days and finalised within 20 days.
6. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved, the complainant will be referred to an appropriate authority or advised of the reasons.
7. Council will ensure that complaints that should be addressed through the Disciplinary Procedure of the Local Government (State) Award, Code of Conduct procedures or Public Interest Disclosures Internal Reporting System are referred and actioned appropriately.

## Revision Table

Minute /Date	Amendment Summary (Reason or Reference)
0557 / 19.05.1987	
3888 / 16.09.2003	Replace 1.4 Complaints
1105 / 16.05.2006	Reviewed by Council
0546 / 13.03.2014	Reviewed by Council
1056/20.08.2019	Reviewed and amended – update purpose, complaint definition, insert legislations, statement 5 and documents.
0654/19.09.2023	Reviewed and amended – change of PID Act

## Associated Documents

- Code of Conduct Complaints Handling Procedure
- Business Ethics Statement
- Customer Service Charter



### **Review**

This policy may be amended from time to time and will be reviewed within four years of its adoption (or latest amendment) with reference to any relevant legislation, best practice guides, or other factor.