



## Policy

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### CUSTOMER REQUESTS

Strategic Outcome:	Good government	
Policy type	Administrative	
Date of Adoption:	21 September 2022	Minute Number:
Date for Review:	16 September 2026	
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate Services	
Document Control:	New policy	
Delivery Program Link:	2.1.3	

#### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Berrigan Shire Council's (Council) Customer Requests Policy has been created to guide the development of an organisational culture focused on meeting the needs and expectations of its customers and to continuously improve its services for customers.

This policy sets a standard for Council's commitment to the customer and explains what customers can do if we have not delivered a service to the promised standard. It also provides council officers with clear benchmarks to adhere to.

#### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Customer Requests Policy is to;

- be responsive to requests of the community;
- control, monitor and improve the physical environment and maintain the health and wellbeing of the community;
- ensure Council responds to issues raised by customers making requests and complaints in a timely manner;
- boost public confidence in our administrative process; and
- promote best practise customer service behaviours and attitudes by all Berrigan Shire Councillors, Council Staff, Contractors and Volunteers.
- This policy will provide guidance to both staff and customers on the key principles and concepts of our Customer requests management system



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### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all customers, Councillors, Council staff, contractors and volunteers of Berrigan Shire Council. The preceding are all responsible for the provision of quality customer experience to the customers of Berrigan Shire Council. They should perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner and treat members of the public fairly, respectfully, and consistently, in a non-discriminatory manner and with proper regard for rights and obligations.

### 4. OBJECTIVE

This policy is developed to assist the Council with the Delivery Program Objective 2.1.3:

*Council operations and financial management support ethical, transparent and accountable corporate governance.*

### 5. DEFINITIONS

- Customer:** Our Customers are people who we interact with, or serve on a day to day basis including:
- Residents, community groups, members of the business community
  - Councillors as elected representatives of the community
  - Government departments and Non-Government organisations
  - Visitors to the Berrigan Shire
- Customer Request:** An appeal for assistance to inspect, remove, replace, repair or reinstate Council facilities or amenities which may be damaged or missing as a result of a number of circumstances.
- Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction with a service or product offered or provided, by the Council which has, or should have, been received that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected.
- Specialist Staff:** Example; a staff member with specialist knowledge such as an accountant, engineer or building surveyor.
- EDRMS:** Electronic document and records management system.
- Personal information:** Personal information is defined to mean information or an opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion. This information can be on a database and does not necessarily have to be recorded in a material form.



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### 6. PRINCIPLES/VALUES

#### 6.1 Values

Berrigan Shire Council has identified four underpinning values that have established the basis of the Customer Experience Charter – these values are;

Convenient – involving little trouble or effort

Attentive – assiduously attending to the comfort or wishes of others

Prompt – done without unnecessary delay

Accurate – correct in all details

#### 6.2 Customer Experience Charter

The customer experience charter has been published to ensure Berrigan Shire Council customers are aware of the standards they can expect from the representatives of Berrigan Shire Council and the standards expected of them as customers.

We will:

- make contacting Berrigan Shire Council easy and convenient;
- treat customers with respect, courtesy, patience, sensitivity and attentiveness;
- respond to customer enquiries promptly and efficiently; and
- provide clear, concise and accurate advice and information.

In return we ask our customers to:

- treat staff and Councillors with respect, courtesy, and patience;
- provide sufficient information to enable a response; and
- Recognise that council does not have unlimited resources and will set priorities based on formal protocols

The Customer Service Charter defines the standards of response from Council. General enquiries can be handled by frontline staff, however complex queries will be handled by specialist staff.

##### 6.2.1 Service standards

Our service standards are;

Phone enquiries;

- Staff will identify themselves by name.



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- When work is to be completed, as requested by a customer, a reference number will be given.
- The after-hours telephone service will assist with urgent enquiries.

### Mail

- We will provide a response within 10 working days

### Email

- We will acknowledge that we have received your email immediately

Service	Standard
<u>Frontline Customer Service</u>	
Answer your call	Within 30 seconds
Return phone messages left after hours	Within 1 working day
Acknowledge emails sent to mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au	Automatic reply
Respond to general correspondence	Within 2 working days
Response to a request for service	Initial response with works request number within 2 working days
Informal GIPA request	Acknowledgment within 2 working days Decision within 10 working days
Formal GIPA request	Within statutory timeframes
355 Committee requests for works	Urgent repairs within 24 hours  Acknowledgment within 5 working days. Acknowledgment will provide expected timeframe for a formal response.
<u>Building and Planning</u>	
S10.7(2) Certificates	As per statutory timeframes
Drainage Diagram	Urgent: 1 working day (payment applicable) Standard: 5 working days
Development Application	Acknowledgment of application in 7 working days. Registration within 5 days of payment.

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	Assessment within 40 working days from registration.
Construction Certificate	Acknowledgment of application in 7 working days. Registration within 5 days of payment. Assessment within 21 working days from registration.
Complying Development Certificate	Acknowledgment of application in 7 working days. Registration within 5 days of payment. Assessment within 10 working days from registration.
Building Certificate	Within 14 days of payment
Final Occupancy Certificate	Within 14 days from lodgement
General Enquiry	5 Working days
Enquiry relating to current application	3 Working days
Requests for duplicate approvals/house plans	14 working days
Dwelling Entitlement	28 working days from payment
<u>Biosecurity and Compliance</u>	
Animal Registration Process	5 working days
Collection of contained animal	Same day
Attend to wandering stock	Same day
Respond to reports of nuisance dog	48 hours
Inspect dumped rubbish	2 working days
Fire prevention notice	Inspection & within 3 working days. Notices as per statutory time frames.
<u>Libraries/Economic Development</u>	
General Enquiries	Response within 2 working days
Infrastructure	
Emergency Response	As per Transport Asset Management Plan Appendix E
Water Over Road	As per Transport Asset Management Plan Appendix E



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Mowing requests	Response to customer within 3 working days
Tree trimming requests	Decision within 10 working days
<u>Water &amp; Sewer</u>	
Water Leak	Initial investigation within 3 business days
Mains Break	Initial investigation within 24 hours
Water Enquiry	Response within 2 business days
Sewer Blockage	Initial investigate within 3 business days
Low Pressure Sewer	Initial investigation within one business day

## 7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### 7.1 Customer Experience Responsibility

- Directors, Managers and Coordinators are responsible for developing a customer focused work ethic in their teams and empowering staff to undertake customer focused decision making.
- Directors, Managers and Coordinators are responsible for working in consultation with their teams to develop and implement customer focused systems and processes that respond to and satisfy customer needs and expectations.
- Each staff member is responsible for the delivery of exceptional customer service to the Berrigan Shire community and adherence to this policy and expected timeframes to the best of their ability.

### 7.2 Record Keeping

Council is obligated to properly record all Customer Requests into an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) in a timely manner, the purpose of this recording is to ensure that full and accurate records of the activities in the course of Official Duties, are created, managed and disposed of appropriately to meet the Council's organisational needs and accountability requirements. Council Staff members should refer to Council's Record Management policy and Records Management procedures when recording all works request.

All records must be kept in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy and Destroyed as per General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Record (GA39).



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### 7.3 Complaints, compliments, service requests and feedback

Requests for service are a request for Council to undertake action or maintenance on a matter such as grading of a road, roadside slashing, clearing of a fallen tree etc. These requests are to be made to the Customer Experience Team via phone, email, in writing, or a council platform where available.

Our staff will ask for sufficient detail on your request to be able to determine the most effective manner in which to handle it – this ensures the customer's complaint or service request is directed to the correct department with enough detail to be investigated. A full name, contact phone number and email address or postal address is to be provided for ease of contact.

Complaints are different from requests for service. Unfortunately, there may be times where Council fails to meet expectations – resulting in a complaint. Complaints are dealt with by the managers of the relevant area, who will try to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible. Whilst most complaints can be resolved quickly, there are times when detailed investigation is required. If it will take time, we will keep you involved throughout the process and update you on the progress of your complaint.

A complaint does not include;

- A request for service
- Reports of a hazard
- Reports concerning neighbor's or neighboring properties (e.g. dog barking or noise issues)
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure
- A dispute between neighbour's
- Decisions made under legislation which provides for separate avenues of appeal (e.g. prosecutions under Local Laws and decisions under the Building Act)

### 7.4 Escalation of requests

If Council has failed to meet the service standards as listed in 6.2.1 a customer may wish to escalate their request to a manager or director.

If the request is with a staff member that reports to a Director, the request shall be escalated in writing by the Customer Experience Team to the appropriate Director. If the request is with a staff member that reports directly to a Manager, the request will be escalated in writing to the appropriate Manager. Once escalated, the customer is to be contacted within 3 working days.

### 7.5 Anonymous Complaints and Requests

Where valid evidence is presented, an anonymous complaint will be investigated and actioned. If no evidence is presented and the complainant is anonymous, the complaint will be investigated at the discretion of management.



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Complaints and requests reported anonymously are unable to be tracked for updates, callers must be aware that by providing no name or contact details, officers will not be able to make contact for further information or to provide advice or a resolution.

### **7.6 Privacy**

Council has a commitment to the protection of personal information provided by a customer to Council in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, 1998*, and Councils Privacy Management Plan.

### **7.7 Requests that are Unreasonable or Abusive**

Berrigan Shire Council is committed to treating all customers fairly and with equality. Council also reserves the right to terminate or restrict communication channels with unreasonable customers, this includes those:

- Who become physically or verbally aggressive;
- Who make substantial and unreasonable demands on the workload and resources of Council;
- whose aim is to annoy, harass, humiliate, and irritate; and
- any person deemed vexatious in nature

### **7.8 Accessibility**

Council is committed to providing all customers with the opportunity to lodge a request or complaint. If you or a person who you know needs additional support the Council offices are accessible. Alternatively please let us know your specific access needs by mail, email or phone.

Council information and services are also available remotely for those that cannot travel to Council Offices; via the website, over the phone or by email. Council Libraries are also equipped to assist with some enquiries.

## **8. RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

### **8.1 Legislation**

- *Privacy Act 2000*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*

### **8.2 Council policies and guidelines**

- Governance Policy
- Code of Conduct





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- Privacy Management Plan

### 9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All Records must be kept in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy (currently under development) and destroyed as per the General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records (GA39).

### 10. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy (procedure) will be evaluated and reviewed at least once every four (4) years as per Council's Governance Policy (currently under development) or as required.

### 11. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

This policy will be available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours as per the requirements of section 18 (c) of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* and section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Access to the policy in digital format is free and is available on Council's website <https://www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au/>

Printed copies of the document are available at Council's principal office (address noted below) and are subject to Council's Fees and Charges.

*Berrigan Shire Council*  
*56 Chanter Street*  
*BERRIGAN NSW 2712*

*Ph: 03 5888 5100*

*Email: [mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au)*

### 12. VERSION CONTROL

Version Number	Date	Summary	Responsible Officer
1.0	21.09.2022	New Policy	Coordinator Customer Experience

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Customer Experience Charter



## Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Customer Service Charter is to outline Berrigan Shire Councils "Can Do" approach to customer service as a whole organisation and establish a standardised method to managing contact with our customers.

### SERVICE STANDARDS

Required Service	Our Aim
Answer your call	Within 30 seconds
Return after hours phone message	Within 1 working day
Response to a request for service	Initial request with works request number within 2 working days
General Building Enquiry	Response within 5 working days
Collection of contained animal	Same working day



### CONTACT US

- 03 5888 5100
- mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au
- Berrigan Shire Council
- www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au
- 56 Chanter Street Berrigan NSW 2712





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### REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

"Complaints" are different from "Requests" "Requests" for service are a request for Council to undertake action or maintenance on a matter such as grading of a road, or roadside slashing. These requests are to be made to the Customer Service Team via contact channels listed to the back of the pamphlet The Customer Service team will log the request into Council Asset Maintenance System where the appropriate staff member will be assigned for actioning. Unfortunately there may be times where we fail to meet your expectations – resulting in a "complaint".

You can report your complaint via phone, email or in person; you may also wish to:

- Ask to speak to a supervisor or manager
- Ask to speak to a Director (who reports directly to the CEO)
- Ask the Customer Service team to escalate your request

All people have the right to raise concerns and make legitimate complaints and expect that the issues raised will be handled in a fair, confidential and responsive manner. Clearly explaining the issue and what you think should be done to fix it will assist us.

If you remain dissatisfied with Berrigan Shire Council's response, a review body such as the NSW Ombudsman may be able to help.  
Visit: [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)  
Call: 1800 451 524

*"Building a better Berrigan Shire"*



### We are committed to:

- Making contact with us as easy and convenient as possible
- Treating customers with respect, courtesy, patience, sensitivity and attentiveness.
- Handle customer requests and enquiries with discretion and maintain privacy.
- Respond to customer enquiries promptly and efficiently
- Provide clear, concise and accurate advice and information.



### Our expectations in return:

- Treat staff and councilors with respect, courtesy and patience
- Clearly articulate enquiries, problems and complaints
- Provide sufficient information to enable a response
- Recognise that council does not have unlimited resources and will set priorities based on formal protocols.