

Policy

Customer Service Charter

Version 1.2

Adopted by Council at its meeting on 26 June 2012

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Customer Service Charter

Policy Objective

This Policy will explain how Council will meet the needs of our ratepayers, residents and clients in a professional and ethical manner with courteous and efficient service.

The areas it covers are:

- Our Commitment
- Opening Hours
- Office Locations
- Contact Information
- Standard of Service
- Monitoring and Reporting
- Conduct
- Additional Service Tools

Definitions

Not Applicable.

Policy Background

Not Applicable.

Policy

Our Commitment

Tweed Shire Council is committed to meeting the needs of our ratepayers, residents and clients in a professional and ethical manner with courteous and efficient service.

Tweed Shire Council's Contact Centre provides a streamlined link between the Tweed Shire Council and the local community, offering a centralised point of reliable information for residents, ratepayers and organisations.

The Contact Centre consists of a multi-skilled customer service team which provides a 'one stop shop' servicing a wide range of inbound customer interactions including telephone, face to face and electronic communications.

Quality Customer Service is a commitment shared by all Council staff.

Our staff will:

- Excel in customer service through continuous improvement.
- Treat all people with respect and courtesy.
- Respect the privacy and rights of all our customers.
- Listen to what residents/ratepayers have to say.
- Respond to resident/ratepayer enquiries promptly and efficiently.
- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Consult residents/ratepayers and clients about service needs and ways which we can improve our customer service.

Our Values:

- Transparency
- Customer Focus
- Fairness
- Reliability
- Progressiveness
- Value For Money
- Collaboration

Opening Hours

Council offices are open Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.15pm. Closed weekends and public holidays. After hours service is available for emergencies outside of opening hours.

Council's Contact Centre (phones only) will operate 8.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

The branch office (Customer Service only) at Tweed Heads will close between Christmas and New Year's Day. The main office in Murwillumbah will be open throughout the Christmas period during normal business hours and days.

Locations

Council provides two customer service locations in the Tweed:

Main Office:

Murwillumbah Civic and Cultural Centre, Tumbulgum Road, Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Branch Office:

Tweed Heads Civic Centre, Corner of Brett and Wharf Street Tweed Heads NSW 2486

Contact Information

Postal Address: PO Box 816, Murwillumbah NSW 2484
 Phone: (02) 6670 2400 or 1300 292 872 / 1300 292 TSC
 After Hours: 1800 818 326
 Fax: (02) 6670 2429
 Email: tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au
 Web: www.tweed.nsw.gov.au
 Smartphone Application: m.tweed.nsw.gov.au



Standard of Service

The branch office at Tweed Heads provides a reduced level of service compared to Council's main office. Every endeavour is made to ensure the day to day queries of the community are able to be answered at the branch office, however to ensure reliable and accurate advice is provided to customers the first time, more technical queries and lodgements may need to be directed to the subject matter experts at the Main Office in Murwillumbah. The branch office at Tweed Heads provides a courier service to Murwillumbah for development and building lodgement customers.

Customers should be aware that professional staff are not always available for walk-in enquiries. While Council endeavours to provide a broad range of services during business hours and have skilled Customer Service Officers to handle the bulk of customer enquiries at the first point of call, customers with more technical queries may be advised that an appointment with the relevant officer or subject matter expert would result in a better outcome for their enquiry.

It is the policy of Tweed Shire Council to acquaint its staff with all matters within their individual responsibilities and to encourage them to be as helpful as possible in answering public enquiries. However before acting on any verbal advice, customers should put their enquiry in writing and only act on Council's formal written response.

Our service standards publicly state the level of performance you can expect when dealing with us under normal circumstances.

Telephone General Enquiries

- Aim to achieve 80% of calls answered within one (1) minute.

Written Correspondence

- Response or acknowledgement provided within 14 days.

Customer requests

- Safety requests inspected within five hours.
- All other Customer requests will be investigated within 14 days. Actions will be determined by the priority of the request and Council work schedules.
- Customers will be provided with a Customer Request Reference number to enable them to follow up on their Customer Request.

Council staff will:

- Assist you with your enquiry promptly and professionally in a helpful manner and attempt to resolve customer enquiries at the first point of contact where possible.
- Act impartially and actively listen to your views.
- Lodge Customer Requests and provide you with a reference number either verbally, in writing or email at your request. Your customer request will be directed to the relevant department for a response and actions taken will be recorded.
- Provide you with information on the progress of your customer request when requested.
- Request and require proof of identification when accessing personal information to protect your privacy.
- Facilitate your feedback.

In person we will:

- Provide clean and professional customer service areas in Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah featuring customer seating, access to Tweed Shire Council website and self-help options, publications, community notice boards, dedicated and clearly marked 'on exhibition' areas and designated meeting spaces for more complex enquiries.
- Greet you on arrival as quickly as possible.
- Clearly identify staff as Tweed Shire Council employees using staff identification cards, name badges or uniforms.
- Identify ourselves at the beginning of the Council visit and outline the purpose of the visit.
- Accept responsibility for the timely processing of your business.
- Present our dress standards in a professional manner.
- Make an appointment wherever possible when a visit to a resident/client external to Council facilities is required.

On the telephone we will:

- Clearly and appropriately identify ourselves in a friendly manner.
- Answer your incoming call to Council quickly and efficiently.
- Make every attempt to resolve your enquiries through the Customer Contact Centre at the first point of contact.
- Keep you updated at regular intervals should we put you on hold for a period of time while we are attempting to obtain information for you.
- Should you require further specialist advice the Contact Centre will warm transfer you to the appropriate Council officer in the first instance and introduce your call to ensure appropriate hand over of customer transfer.
- Where possible, calls direct to Council extensions outside of the main number (02) 6670 2400 or 1300 292 872 are answered within five (5) rings or the call will be diverted to another member of staff or a voice mail.
- Accurately record the details of your enquiry when taking a message and forward to the appropriate Council officer to return your call.
- If requested to return a call, Council officers will aim to promptly return that call within two business days.
- Identify ourselves when making outgoing calls by name and council/division/branch, as appropriate, and shall clearly outline the purpose of the call.
- Indicate that calls may be monitored for coaching and training purposes. Customers have the ability to opt out of this process if they wish.
- When your call is answered by the Contact Centre, offer you the opportunity to provide feedback on your level of satisfaction with the resolution of your enquiry.
- Provide an informative on-hold message about the wide range of Council services and programs.
- Not 'block' Council's phone number to assist with caller ID and allow receivers to identify the phone number.

By written correspondence, including letters, email and faxes, we will:

- Respond to written correspondence including letters, emails and faxes within fourteen (14) days.
- Send an acknowledgement advice within fourteen (14) days where correspondence cannot be responded to within 14 days.

- Use clear, simple and courteous language.
- Send all official letters on approved Tweed Shire Council letterhead and in Tweed Shire Council official envelopes including the signature of a delegated Council officer, clearly displaying the officer's name and position.
- Should the Council contact person be different to the person delegated Council officer signing the letter, the written response will clearly indicate which Council officer to contact for further information or queries, their name, position title and phone number.
- Send all official faxes on approved Tweed Shire Council fax cover page and include the number of pages faxed as standard. We will include the sender's name, position and contact details.
- Send all emails from an @tweed.nsw.gov.au address and where possible include a Tweed Shire Council e-mail electronic signature of the Council officer as standard.
- Register all written correspondence transactions in Council's Records Management system.

On our website we will:

- Provide up-to-date and accurate information.
- Structure the site in a user friendly manner with a customer service focus to make information easy to find.
- Feature a useful A-Z for easy reference.
- Design the site in line with accessibility standards of the World Wide Web Consortium.
- Provide opportunity for feedback.

Monitoring and Reporting

We will measure our Customer Service standards and success through:

- Your feedback.
- Quality monitoring and coaching.
- Training and development programs.
- Telephone and customer request system reports.
- Corporate customer service key performance indicators.

Tweed Shire Council is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes customer feedback and suggestions. You can do this by:

- Speaking to one of our friendly Contact Centre team members at the Tweed Heads or Murwillumbah offices or over the phone.
- Writing a letter, sending an email or fax (see contact information above).

If you wish to lodge a formal complaint, please see Council's Complaint Handling Policy which is available on Council's website.

Zero tolerance to abuse of staff

Tweed Shire Council takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse of its staff as they perform the daily duties of their roles. Tweed Shire Council staff are here to support the needs of our ratepayers, residents and clients in a professional and ethical manner with courteous and efficient service. Tweed Shire Council customer service areas are under CCTV surveillance.

Physical or verbal abuse of any Council staff member will not be tolerated. Customers who verbally or physically abuse staff will be asked to leave the premises and may result in a police report or legal proceedings. Verbal abuse over the phone may result in the call being terminated. For more information, refer to Council's Dealing with Difficult People Policy.

Additional Customer Service Tools

After Hours

Tweed Shire Council provides an after-hours contact and service for emergency purposes. The after-hours number is 1800 818 326.

Website and social media - www.tweed.nsw.gov.au

Council's website and social media accounts host and provide a wide range of Council information about Council's programs and services.

Tweed Link <http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/LinkWeb/TweedLinkDetail.aspx>

One of Council's primary communication tools, Tweed residents are kept informed about Council services, programs, Development Applications and information from Council's weekly newspaper the Tweed Link. It is free and delivered weekly to 38,500 households and is also available on audio tape or via electronic subscription.

Access to Advertised Development

Development advertised in the Tweed Link can be inspected at Council's Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads Civic and Cultural Centres during the exhibition period in normal business hours. Council has provided large screen monitors to the Murwillumbah,

Tweed Heads and Kingscliff libraries to assist customers with viewing plans electronically. Customers can also view and track applications via Council's DA Tracker. <http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/PlanDevBuild/DATracking.aspx>

Smartphone Application

Customers can download Council's smartphone application, suitable for any smartphone or internet enabled device, for free by accessing m.tweed.nsw.gov.au.

The application features a wide range of Council information such as road closures and development application information, what's on in the Tweed, tenders, bin collection days and more.

SMS Service

Customers can access Council's SMS notification service by texting a keyword to 1992 2767 to receive an instant return text message on your selection of Tweed beaches, sporting grounds, roads, sewer, swimming pools, libraries and water - anywhere, anytime. For a listing of the SMS codes and further information about the service visit <http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/SmartPhoneServices/Default.aspx>

Access to Information

The GIPA Act creates new rights to information that are designed to meet community's expectations of more open and transparent government. It encourages the routine and proactive release of government information, including information held by providers of goods and services contracted by government agencies. For information on GIPAA or how to access information, visit Council's website.

Related Legislation

Access to Information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Compliance

Not Applicable.

Forms

1. Informal Access Request Form
2. Formal Access Application

Review Period

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of the election of each new Council or more frequently in the event of any legislative changes or change in circumstances.

Useful Links

[Tweed Shire Council website](#)



Version Control:

Version History		
Version #	Summary of changes made	Date changes made
1.1	Minor amendments to include Contact Centre, Our Values.	13/11/2007
1.2	Minor amendments to reflect initiatives and improvements.	26/06/2012
1.2	Regular Review by Council at its meeting held 20 June 2013.	20/06/2013