

# Requests for Services Policy



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Record number	D20/76552
Responsible Manager	Manager Customer & Communications
Other key internal stakeholders	Director Assets & Environment Director Community & Cultural Development Manager Building Assets & Environment Manager Civil Assets Manager Civil & Water Operations Manager Parks Manager Community Safety Manager City Development Manager Community Development & Engagement Manager Library Services. Arts & Culture Manager Finance & Rating Operations
Last reviewed	21 October 2020
Adoption reference	Policy and Strategic Development Committee
Resolution number	93
Previous review dates	18/10/17, 10/03/15
Legal requirement	There is a legal requirement under section 270 of the Local Government Act 1999 for Council to develop and maintain policies, practices and procedures for requests for services.
Due date next review	2023

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## 1. PURPOSE

The City of Tea Tree Gully delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to the community and discharges its obligations under many pieces of legislation and contractual arrangements. Providing services to the community is a key component of Council's operations and requests for work to be undertaken or a service provided are a daily occurrence.

Council is committed to the provision of quality service to customers and aims to provide services fairly and efficiently. It also monitors requests to identify ways in which it can proactively improve its services.

This policy aims to:

- a. Provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service
- b. Distinguish between requests, General Complaints and Feedback to Council and give direction on management of requests
- c. Establish a standardised process for assessing and processing requests including the collation of information which can be used to directly inform service improvements.

## 2. POLICY

A request for service is an application to have Council or its delegates or representatives take some form of action to provide or vary a Council service. Council also receives General Complaints and Feedback across all areas of operations and clarification may be necessary to make the distinction for the purposes of this policy (complaints or requests for services).

Where Council has not met the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been delivered, the General Complaints Policy and the associated procedures apply. Requests for review of Council decisions will be in accordance with the Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy.

### 2.1 Reasonable Request for Service

A person can make an application for a service either verbally or in writing and Council encourages residents to lodge service requests via its online systems. In determining how to respond to a Request for Service Council will consider the following:

- a. An assessment of risk
- b. Statutory responsibilities
- c. Current available budget
- d. The content of Council's Strategic Management Plans, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget
- e. Relevant Council policies and codes
- f. External funding service agreements
- g. Unusual or extenuating circumstances (these may be physical, environmental, demographic or cultural)
- h. The overall need for consistency and fairness in the level of services provided to the community
- i. Established service standards and response times for regular Council activities.

## 2.2 Processing a Request for Service

In Council's experience, most requests fit within well established guidelines which will be explained to a customer at the outset. Council aims to manage requests efficiently and effectively using a variety of systems. Employees are provided with a level of authority to advise customers of the likely timeframe to complete the action required.

Other requests may be best suited to scheduling to coincide with work in a particular suburb or season. Reasonable requests for additional major works or new services will be referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual budget cycle of review and community engagement.

If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe or is a service that is not the responsibility of the Council to deliver, the customer will be advised, including an explanation of why this decision was taken. In cases where it is not the responsibility of Council to deliver, the customer will be referred onto a suitable service provider or the responsible authority where appropriate. If the service cannot be provided by a third party, Council will assess its role in advocating on behalf of the customer.

Council will use the information gained by the community to improve its services and operations. Where a customer is not satisfied with the Council's decision they may lodge a complaint against the decision under Council's General Complaints Policy, Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy or contact the Ombudsman. As a general rule, the Ombudsman prefers a complaint to be addressed by Council in the first instance, unless this is not appropriate in the circumstances.

## 2.3 Timeframes for Response

The circumstances of any individual Request for Service will vary greatly. Routine requests are often subject to established service response standards. As noted previously, requests for additional major works or new services will need to be referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual budget cycle and community engagement.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

### Act

*Local Government Act 1999.*

### Council

Refers to the City of Tea Tree Gully, the organisation.

### Customer

Ratepayer, resident, visitor or business

### Employee

Any person who is employed by Council but also includes any trainee, work experience student, temporary labour hire staff, volunteer and consultants undertaking work for, or on behalf of Council, regardless if they are full time, part time or casual.

### Feedback

Can take the form of comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of service or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods.

### General Complaint

Is an expression of dissatisfaction with:

- a. Council's actions, policies, procedures, processes, charges, employees, agents or services
- b. The quality of services provided or works carried out
- c. The lack of action on a request for service
- d. Delays associated with the provision of a service
- e. The conduct of Council's employees or nominated agents/representatives.

### The Council

Refers to the Elected Member body.

### Requests for services

Requests made by external customers.

## 4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The following legislation applies to this Policy:

### Local Government Act 1999

Section 270(a1) and (b) states that council must develop and maintain policies, practices and procedures for dealing with:

- a. Any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the council or for the improvement of a service provided by the council
- b. Complaints about the actions of the council, employees of the council or other persons acting on behalf of the council.

Section 270(a2) states that the policies, practices and procedures required under subsection (a1) must be directed towards:

- a. Dealing with the relevant requests or complaints in a timely, effective and fair way
- b. Using information gained from the council's community to improve its services and operations.

## 4.1 Other references

Council documents including:

- a. Fees and Charges Register
- b. General Complaints Policy
- c. Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy

External document including:

This Policy is based on a model policy developed by the Local Government Association.

## 5. STRATEGIC PLAN/POLICY

### 5.1 Strategic Plan

The following strategic objectives in Council's Strategic Plan 2025 are the most relevant to this report:

Objective	Comments
<b>Community</b>	
<i>People feel a sense of belonging, inclusion and connection with the City and the community</i>	The opportunity to request services provides the community with a sense of ownership and belonging.
<i>Our services are accessible to all and respond to changing community needs</i>	All residents have the ability to request a service, and providing services in a fair and equitable manner to the community is a key component of Council's operations.
<b>Places</b>	
<i>Streets, paths, open spaces and parks are appealing, safe and accessible</i>	Service requests allow Council to identify areas of opportunity and to prioritise them through its business planning processes. This ensures our City remains appealing, safe and accessible.
<b>Leadership</b>	
<i>Customer service provides a positive experience for people and is based on honesty and transparency</i>	Providing services in a fair and equitable manner to the community is a key component of Council's operations. Staff are provided with a level of authority to advise customers of the likely timeframe to complete the action required.
<i>Planning considers current and future community needs</i>	Service requests allow Council to identify areas of opportunity and to prioritise them through its business planning processes.

<i>Delivery of services is sustainable and adaptable</i>	Service requests allow Council to identify opportunities and proactively improve its service delivery.
<i>Major strategic decisions are made after considering the views of the community</i>	Service requests allow Council to identify areas of opportunity and to prioritise them through its business planning processes.

## 5.2 Organisation Plan

Our Strategic Plan is supported by an Organisation Plan which focuses on five key themes of organisational excellence. The themes most relevant to this report are: People and Leadership; Customers and community relations; Governance; Finance and systems, Continuous improvement

## 6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant portfolio director and managed in accordance with Council's scheme of delegations.

## 7. ACCESSIBILITY

This Policy and Council's Fees and Charges Register are available to be downloaded free of charge from Council's website: [www.cttg.sa.gov.au](http://www.cttg.sa.gov.au)

Hard copies, for a fee, can be provided in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges Register at Council's Civic Centre at 571 Montague Road, Modbury SA 5092.