

Customer feedback policy

Policy No. 2601.100.E.R

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure customer feedback is received and responded to in a systematic manner that is fair, efficient and effective.

2 Scope

This policy applies to receiving or managing negative feedback and complaints from the public to or about City of Darwin.

This policy does not address complaints about elected members, corrupt conduct, internal grievances, or reviewable decisions which are managed through other policies, procedures, or legislation. Details on these referrals are outlined below.

2.1 Complaints about elected members

Complaints not relating to corruption, about the conduct of an elected member, are to be made to the department responsible for Local Government in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) (The Act).

However, if a complaint of this nature is made directly to City of Darwin, it will be referred directly to the department responsible for Local Government in accordance with The Act.

2.2 Corrupt conduct

A complaint, information or matter that involves or may involve suspected corrupt conduct should be made directly to the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC). If the complaint is made to City of Darwin, this will be referred directly to ICAC, and City of Darwin will provide information and support the complainant.

2.3 Internal complaint or staff grievance

Complaints that are considered a staff grievance or are generated internally will be administered in accordance with internal procedures.

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2.4 Reviewable decisions

In some circumstances a review of administrative decisions made by City of Darwin may be sought. These are in relation to decisions made that are designated as reviewable by The Act or by Council resolution. Other matters are dealt with through the appropriate mechanism. For details relating to reviews of administrative decisions refer to 0043.100.E.R Meetings, Meeting Procedures and Committees.

3 Policy Statement

This policy, informed by ISO 10002:2018 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations, sets out the guiding principles for providing a response to feedback received on behalf of City of Darwin.

These principles are:

- enabling complaints
- managing complaints
- managing the parties
- accountability, learning and prevention.

3.1 Enabling complaints

City of Darwin are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaints handling.

Any concerns raised in feedback and complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

Any compliments or positive recognition will be acknowledged and passed onto the staff concerned as feedback.

City of Darwin will ask people what outcome they seek from a complaint as part of the complaints processes and will actively involve complainants in the complaints process as far as practicable and appropriate in the circumstances.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process
- provided with multiple and accessible ways to make complaints
- listened to, treated with respect by staff, and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate
- provided natural justice and procedural fairness, and
- provided written reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

City of Darwin will provide internal appeal mechanisms and will assist in any external reviews.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them, or on their behalf.

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City of Darwin accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised if there is enough information provided.

Information about how and where complaints may be made to or about City of Darwin is well publicised.

City of Darwin will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance. If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, City of Darwin will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent.

Making a complaint is free.

3.2 Managing complaints

City of Darwin will promptly acknowledge receipt of all complaints.

All complaints will be assessed and prioritised in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

City of Darwin are committed to managing expectations, and will inform complainants as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected timeframes for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involved in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

City of Darwin will:

- advise complainants as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide information about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).
- advise complainants as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our timeframes for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.
- address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.

Internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

Officers are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

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All complaints will be assessed on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

The identity of complainants will be protected where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by City of Darwin as permitted under the Information Act and 0033.100.E.R Privacy Policy.

3.3 Managing the parties

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, City of Darwin will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or representative will also be coordinated.

Where services are contracted out, City of Darwin expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complain management system. City of Darwin take complaints not only about the actions of workplace participants but also the actions of service providers.

When similar complaints are made by related parties City of Darwin prefer to communicate with a single representative of the group.

All officers managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

City of Darwin are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach City of Darwin with feedback or complaints. At the same time success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of workplace participants, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects City of Darwin and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with 2062.100.E.R Customer Conduct Policy.

3.4 Accountability, learning and prevention

City of Darwin will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis. Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

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The complaint management system will be monitored to:

- ensure its suitability for responding to and resolving complaints, and
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.

Monitoring may include the use of audits, complainant satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

City of Darwin are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, City of Darwin will:

- maintain open and regular support for the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- regularly review the complaint management systems and complaints data; and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system, and
- extract available data to provide reports.

The Chief Executive Officer shall advise Elected Members as soon as reasonably possible of any complaints from:

- the Anti-Discrimination Commission;
- ICAC (where so authorised);
- The Commissioner of Police (where so authorised);
- Fair Work Australia; and
- The NT Ombudsman.

4 Definitions

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, products, responsiveness and/or complaint handling, where a response or resolution is expected.

A complaint covered by this policy can be distinguished from:

- staff grievances
- notifiable disclosures made by our staff
- responses to requests for feedback about the standard of our service provision
- reporting of problems or wrong doing merely intended to bring a problem to our notice
- with no expectation of a response
- services requests, and
- requests for information under the Information Act.

Complaint Management System is all policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by City of Darwin in the management of complaints.

Dispute is an unresolved complaint escalated within or outside of our organisation.

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Feedback is opinions, comments and expression of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services, products and/or complaint handling where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Grievance is a statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem.

Notifiable Disclosures are disclosures about improper conduct that meet the requirements of the ICAC Act.

Service Request is contact seeking an action or outcome in an area of core business, including:

- requests for approval/permits
- requests for action
- routine inquiries about Council matters
- requests for the provision of services and assistance
- reports of failure to comply with Council by-laws or policies
- requests for explanation of policies, procedures and decisions.

5 Legislative References

Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017 (NT)

Information Act 2002 (NT)

Local Government Act 2019 (NT) and Associated Regulations

6 Procedures / Related Documents

0033.100.E.R Privacy Policy

2602.100.E.R Customer Conduct Policy

2602.010.I.R Customer Conduct Procedure

2601.010.I.R Customer Feedback Procedure

ISO 10002:2018 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations

7 Responsibility / Application

The General Manager Corporate is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

All workplace participants are responsible for adhering to this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every four years or as required.

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Who	Commitment	How
CEO supported by Strategic Directions Group	Promote a culture that values feedback, including complaints and their effective resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report publicly on our complaints handling. • Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints. • Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints. • Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly. • Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvement. • Recognise good complaint handling by staff. • Support recommendations for system, service and/or product improvements arising from analysis of complaint data. • Ensure that compliments and positive recognition of staff is acknowledged.
Executive Manager Corporate and Customer Service	Establish and manage City of Darwin's complaint management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular reports to the CEO and SDG in issues arising from complaint handling work. • Ensure recommendations arising out of complaint data analysis are canvassed with the CEO and SDG and implemented where appropriate. • Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with policies and procedures. • Encourage staff managing complaints to provide suggestions on ways to improve the complaint management system. • Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly. • Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.
Staff whose duties include complaint handling	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.

Who	Commitment	How
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with complaint handling policies and procedures. • Keep informed about best practice in complaint handling. • Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve the complaint management system. • Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management.
All staff	Understand and comply with complaint handling practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints. • Be aware of complaint handling policies and procedures. • Assist people who wish to make complaints to access the complaints process. • Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly. • Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints. • Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management.