

Request for Services Policy

Strategic Reference	Provide leadership, good governance, and efficient, effective and responsive Council services
File Reference / Record No	18/067/229/3 / NGO191681
Responsibility	Chief Executive Officer
Version Number	3.0
Last Revised Date	February 2024
Minute Book Reference	C24020
Next Review Date	February 2028
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 (S270)
Related Policies	Complaints Policy Internal Review of a Council Decision Policy and Procedure
Related Procedures / Documents	Request for Service Procedure Complaints Procedure Protocol – Ombudsman Enquiry Procedure

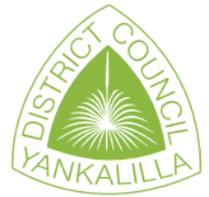
1. Objective

District Council of Yankalilla delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to communities, and discharges obligations under many pieces of legislation. 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 regular 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.

Section 270 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires Council to develop and maintain a policy about "any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the Council or for the improvement of a service provided by the Council."

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This policy aims to:

- provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service.
- distinguish between requests, complaints and feedback to Council and give direction on the management of requests.
- establish a standardised process for assessing and processing requests including the collation of information which can be used to directly inform service improvements.

2. Principles

2.1. Principles Underlying the Policy

This policy is based on six principles, which will be fundamental in the way Council approaches requests for service. They are:

- **Fairness:** To ensure the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable complaints are dealt with in a consistent, objective and unbiased manner. Council will take every reasonable step to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint is made by them or on their behalf.
- **Accessibility:** Council publicises how and where complaints may be made ensuring transparency and accessibility for all complaints is made.
- **Responsiveness:** will be achieved by providing sufficient resources, well trained staff, assessment and review of complaints made, and the seeking of opportunities to improve systems or processes.
- **Efficiency:** complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible while ensuring they are dealt with at a level reflecting their complexity and priority
- **Integration** of different areas of Council where the customer request overlaps functional responsibilities.
- **Confidentiality** personal information related to complaints is kept confidential. Where appropriate the confidentiality of information related to a complaint will be respected. Complaints about employees or volunteers will remain confidential during the investigation process.

2.2. In processing a request for service, emphasis will be placed on:

- Public safety and emergencies.
- Fulfilling Council's Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plans.
- Using Council resources effectively.
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs (e.g. Home and Community Care).

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3. Scope

This Policy applies to all Council employees who may be involved in receiving or processing a request for service in the course of their work.

Officers will act reasonably and transparently, demonstrate good customer service, undertake their responsibilities in a proficient manner and use their judgement where necessary to ensure an outcome in line with Councils Request for Service Procedure.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Business Day means a day when the Council is normally open for business, i.e. Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays

Complaint. is an expression of dissatisfaction with the product or service delivered by the council, or its representatives, that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or documented. This includes complaints about a request for service that has been or should have been delivered.

Employee includes a person employed directly by the Council in a full time, part time or casual capacity (whether that position is permanent or contractual) and persons providing services to, or on behalf of, the Council even though they may be employed by another party

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

Request for Service is an application to have Council or its representative take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service

5. What is a Request for Service?

5.1. A Request for Service is an application to have Council or its representative take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

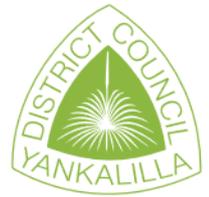
5.2. Council also receives complaints and feedback across all areas of operations and clarification may be necessary to make the distinction for the purposes of this Policy.

5.3. A Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service which has, or should have, been received. Council's Complaints Policy defines a complaint as:

"An expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected. This includes complaints about a service that has been or should have been delivered."

5.4. Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been, delivered the Complaints Policy and the associated Procedures apply. Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with a matter as a request for service, rather than a complaint, in the first instance.

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6. Policy Statement

Requests for service will be assessed in the context of the services and work provided for in the Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget and according to the conditions of externally funded programs.

6.1. Reasonable Requests for Service

In determining how to respond to a request for service Council will consider:

- Public safety and emergencies
- An assessment of risk
- Statutory responsibilities
- The content of Council's Strategic Management Plans, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget
- Relevant Council policies, procedures and codes
- Established service standards when developed and response times for regular Council activities.
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs;
- Available service options;
- Efficient and effective use of Council resources; and
- Equitable provision of services and products
- Processing a Request for Service

6.2. In Council's experience, most requests fit within well established guidelines which will be explained to an applicant at the outset. Council aims to manage requests efficiently and effectively.

6.3. Employees are provided with a level of authority to advise applicants of the likely timeframe to complete the action required. Where further evaluation is necessary the applicant will be informed in a timely manner. If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe the applicant will be advised, including an explanation of why.

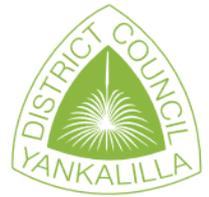
6.4. Where an applicant is not satisfied with the Council's decision, it is open to the applicant to lodge a complaint against the decision under Council's Complaints Policy or request for a review of a Council decision under Council's Internal Review of a Council Decision Policy, depending on the matter considered.

7. Timeframes for Response

7.1. Response to requests will be processed in accordance with the timeframes set by Council.

7.2. Response times may vary depending on the volume of the work currently being progressed within Council and the risk profile of the request.

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7.3. The circumstances of individual requests for service will vary greatly.

7.3.1. Request Types

7.3.1.1. Routine requests are often subject to service response standards.

7.3.1.2. Requests relating to public safety concerns will occur, where practicable, on the same day as the request is received.

7.3.1.3. Other requests may be best suited to be scheduled to coincide with work in a particular area or season. Examples include tree pruning on Council maintained street/roads.

7.3.1.4. Requests for major works or new services will be assessed by the relevant Director and referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual cycle of review, budget etc.

7.4. In the majority of cases requests will be processed promptly and the applicant advised by return post/email.

7.5. Where no earlier response is required by Council's specific timeframes, Council staff will respond in writing within ten (10) business days advising of Council's intentions in regard to the request.

8. How to Make a Request for Service

8.1. A person can make an application for a service through the following channels:

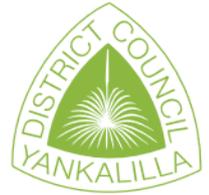
- Completion of the appropriate form on Council's website:
www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au
- Telephone: (08) 8558 0200
- Fax: (08) 8558 2022
- Email: council@yankalilla.sa.gov.au
- Letter: PO Box 9, Yankalilla SA 5203
- Petition to Council
- Attend Councils office at 1 Charles Street, Yankalilla

8.2. Comments and requests made through social media are not considered, nor treated as an official Request for Service.

8.3. Council will not investigate or action anonymous service requests. If a complainant is concerned about disclosing their identity they may request that their identity be kept confidential.

8.4. All requests will be recorded in Council's electronic records management system (ERDMS) to enable analysis and opportunity for service improvement opportunities.

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9. Denied Requests

All denied requests will be recorded in Council's ERDMS and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with the preparation of an Annual Business Plan and associated budget.

10. Availability

This Policy is available for inspection at the Council office during ordinary business hours and provided to interested parties as per Council's Fees and Charges Register. Copies are available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website: www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au

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11. Review Cycle

This Policy will be reviewed every four (4) years or more frequently if legislation or Council require.

12. Document History

Date	Version	Council Resolution No.	Description of changes
August 2012	1	Not in Use	Adoption of Policy
September 2014	1.1	Not in Use	Review of Policy
October 2019	2.0	C19195	Review of Policy
February 2024	3.0	C24020	Updated with formatting changes and language revisions.

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