

## **8.5. Customer Feedback and Complaints Report: January 2021 to June 2021**

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**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

To provide a summary of the complaints, both justified and partially justified, and compliments received during the period 1 January to 30 June 2021.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report compares the number of complaints to the total number of customer contacts Council received for the period January 1 to 30 June 2021, summarised below:

- total number of customer contacts - 38,004
- number of compliments - 60
- number of complaints - 30 (50% considered justified or partially justified)

Council's *Complaints Handling Policy* is currently being reviewed to ensure alignment as appropriate to the model policies and guidelines issued by the NSW Ombudsman.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** the Customer Feedback and Complaints Report: 1 January to 30 June 2021 be received.

## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

5. Our Civic Leadership

5.2 Council is well governed and customer focused

## **BACKGROUND**

Council's *Complaints Handling Policy* requires that a report be provided to Council detailing the registered complaints received biannually.

This biannual report summarises the complaints/compliments received by Council and recent trends in the number and type of complaints. It highlights areas where improvements to customer service may be required along with other customer feedback and consultation results.

Complaints received from residents and other members of the public are treated with utmost seriousness. Council's objective is to handle complaints in a professional, respectful and timely manner to resolve the issues raised by complainants and where possible, to avoid a repeat of a similar incident.

Council reviews the compliments received to identify areas of good/better/best practice.

Council's *Complaints Handling Policy* is currently being reviewed to ensure alignment as appropriate to the model policies and guidelines issued by the NSW Ombudsman.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Community engagement is not required.

## **DETAIL**

This report contains a summary of complaints and compliments received over the period 1 January to 30 June 2021.

### **1. Contacts with Council**

During this period, contacts with Council (incoming) totalled 38,004 (Table 1), compared with 36,210 for the period 1 July to 31 December 2020 (Table 2).

<b>Table 1: Contacts with Council 1 January to 30 June 2021</b>	
Requests for Service (letter, email, fax)	25,787
Depot	5,234
Library	6,893
Complaints	30
Compliments	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,004</b>

<b>Table 2: Contacts with Council 1 July to 31 December 2020</b>	
Requests for Service (letter, email, fax)	24,800
Depot	5,604
Library	5,682
Complaints	26
Compliments	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,210</b>

## 2. Complaints

Complaints are defined by Council as an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's policies, procedures, charges, staff, agents or quality of service. Complaints relate to a specific incident or issue involving Council or to matters of a more philosophical, general nature regarding Council's processes and/or procedures.

Trends in the number and type of complaints received and complaints handling are registered and assessed biannually by each Director. Reports provide the following information about each complaint:

- the outcome of each investigation;
- action taken to address the complainant's issues;
- feedback from the complainant where possible, as to satisfactory resolution of the complaint or otherwise;
- whether the complaint was justified; and
- recommendations or actions taken to improve service.

Code of Conduct complaints are not included in this report. The Public Officer will prepare a statistical summary of Code of Conduct complaints received for the statutory Annual Report, reported to Council in October.

### 2.1 Complaints Received

Council received 30 complaints during the period 1 January to 30 June 2021 made by 30 complainants. Fifteen (50%) of the complaints were considered justified or partially justified.

A complaint is deemed justified when the investigation has shown the complaint to be valid and that it occurred under Council’s area of control/responsibility. The decision whether a complaint is justified or unjustified/unsubstantiated is confirmed by the responsible Director. Complaints received were classified as follows:

Level of program/service	12
Inadequate information	1
Staff behaviour	9
Compliance issue	4
Lack or delay in service provision	1
Inadequate/no response to previous complaint	0
Council policy	1
Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

Since the last report to Council in April 2021 (for the period 1 July to 30 December 2020), justified and partially justified complaints have risen from 10 to 14. Compared to the same period last year, the number of justified and partially justified complaints has risen from nine to 14.

Each Director has access to reports analysing complaints related to their assigned services and use this information to improve the overall management of their service and in turn the service the customer receives.

## 2.2 Complaint Resolution

In accordance with Council’s *Complaints Handling Policy*, a complaint must be resolved within 10 working days of being received. It is noted that the policy is undergoing a periodic review and that changes may be made to the content of future report.

Directors have discretion in the recommendations they make but must ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce the likelihood of further complaints being received on the same issue.

80% of all the complaints (N = 30) received during this period (including those unjustified) were resolved within 10 working days. This compares to a total of 88% of all the complaints (N = 26) resolved within 10 working days in the 1 July to 31 December 2020 period.

No complaints received remain unresolved and there are no major trends or issues that require specific attention.

## 3. Compliments

Council received significantly more compliments (60) than complaints (30) for the period.

