

POLICY NUMBER & TITLE	AP021 COMPLAINTS HANDLING
Responsible Directorate	Executive Services

1. PURPOSE OR OBJECTIVE

A formal complaints handling policy and procedure has been implemented to ensure all complaints are treated with the same amount of respect and diligence, and that complainants receive prompt action and formal response.

2. DEFINITIONS

Complaint

The Australian Standard for Complaints Management (ISO 10002:2022) defines a complaint as any *“Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required”*.

A complaint is not:

- The initial requests for a service or action by the Shire (unless there was inaction or an unsatisfactory response to the initial request for service).
- Feedback on a service where there is not an issue to be resolved or does not necessitate action by the Shire.
- Feedback obtained during stakeholder and community engagement processes.
- Requests for information or explanations of policies, procedures, or decisions of Council.
- Reports of damaged, faulty infrastructure or a hazard.
- Reports concerning neighbours or neighbouring property.
- The lodging of an appeal or an objection in accordance with policy or procedure.
- A petition.
- A civil dispute between private individuals.
- Made on social media or letters to the editor.
- Matters regarding State or Federal Government or matters not within the Shire’s jurisdiction.



3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Shire:

- Welcomes complaints as a form of feedback that will ultimately identify service improvement opportunities.
- Values integrity, responsible management, fairness and equity, and will continue to strive to maintain the highest standards in its dealing with its customers while meeting the needs of the community.
- Is committed to identifying, investigating and where possible resolving complaints and grievances.
- Recognises the importance of transparency in decision making and the need to provide a fair and objective procedure for the review of all decisions and service provisions.

These principles are of utmost importance in the Shire's endeavours to retain the trust, confidence and support of its community.

Customers have a right to expect that principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, fairness impartiality and responsiveness will underpin the Shire's service delivery.

Customers have a right to expect that the values, being Trust, Respect Accountability, Customers & Community, Excellence and Support will be the norm when dealing with the Shire.

This policy **does not apply** to complaints involving the following issues:

- Conflicts of interest - refer to Code of Conduct.
- Code of Conduct complaints against an Elected Member – refer Code of Conduct for Elected Members.
- Access to information - Freedom of Information (FOI).
- Internal Shire employee complaints.
- Relate to a matter before a Court, Tribunal.

This policy applies to complaints in relation to service provision and delivery received by the Shire from customers and any other external organisation or person.

The Shire of Dardanup:

Views its management of complaints as an important component of continuously improving the service offered to customers.

- Is committed to identifying, investigating and resolving issues whether these arise as service requests, suggestions or complaints.
- Recognises the importance of transparency in decision making and the need to provide a fair and objective procedure for the resolution of all complaints.
- In resolving ongoing customer concerns or complaints is conscious of not over committing resources and funds to the detriment of the community at large.



- Is committed to tracking the progress of complaint handling within the organisation and reporting this on a regular basis.

This Policy aims to ensure:

- Improved customer service through consistent, effective management of complaints.
- Complaints are resolved in a timely manner.
 - All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
 - When a resolution cannot occur within 10 working days a response will be delivered to the customer outlining time frames set by the staff member responsible for resolving the complaint.
- That the complainant understands what the Shire can and cannot do and, will and will not do.
- That the Shire's limited resources are not utilised on malicious, frivolous, unreasonable, persistent or vexatious complaints.
- That the complainant is informed of the role of Elected Members in relation to decision making.
- That the Shire will use its complaint received to assist with its continuous improvement across the organisation.
- Complaints will be recorded in the Shire's Electronic Records and Document Management System to enable tracking and effective response.
- Decision making processes in relation to complaints will be equitable, transparent and accountable.

In line with its values, the Shire of Dardanup will provide a complaints handling procedure which:

- Demonstrates everyone will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Ensures all of the community is listened to and will be dealt with equally.
- Encourages staff to be positive and take responsibility for their role in the complaint handling process.

4. DOCUMENT CONTROL

DOCUMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:			
Owner:	Manager Human Resources		
Reviewer:	Chief Executive Officer	Decision Maker:	CEO/EMT
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:			
Legislation:	Local Government Act 1995		
Other (Plans, Strategies, Policies, Procedures, Standards, Promapp, Delegations):	PR030 - Complaints Handling Customer Service Charter Australian Standard for Complaints Management (ISO 10002:2022)		
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT:			
Risk Rating:	Low	Records Ref:	R0000190556
Review Frequency	Biennial	Next Due:	21-11-2025
Version #	Date & Decision Reference:	Synopsis:	
1	28-02-2001 OCM Res: 49/01	EXEC29 Council Policy created and endorsed	

2	13-02-2013 OCM Res: 24/13	EXEC29 Council Policy amended
3	25-01-2017 OCM Res: 02-17	EXEC29 Superseded
4	25-01-2017 OCM Res: 02-17	AP021 New Admin Policy endorsed
5	21-11-2023 Reviewed	AP021 Policy Biennial Review endorsed by EMT

Note: Changes to Compliance Requirements may be made without the need to take the Policy to EMT/CEO for review.

