

Feedback and Complaints Management Procedure

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The AlburyCity Feedback and Complaints Management Procedure is intended to:
- recognise the right to provide feedback or make a complaint
 - provide information about the process used to handle complaints
 - ensure that complaints are monitored in a systematic way so that corrective action is taken, and where appropriate, to ensure that unsatisfactory service is not repeated
 - provide information that can be used by AlburyCity to deliver quality improvements to our processes, services, our people and complaint handling
 - ensure that all feedback and complaints are reviewed and responded to in a timely and consistent manner

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Procedure aligns to and supports AlburyCity's Feedback and Complaints Management Policy. It provides a systematic approach to managing all feedback and complaints.
- 2.2 This Procedure does not apply to:
- any workplace-related grievances raised by a council officer, which are managed using internal processes, or
 - complaints made under the AlburyCity Code of Conduct, which are dealt with under the Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct.

3 Our Commitment

- 3.1 AlburyCity is committed to ensuring our customers receive efficient, responsive and friendly service. Feedback and complaints are encouraged as this provides business improvement opportunities. We will listen to you and handle your feedback or complaint with professionalism and do our very best to deliver you a timely resolution or outcome. AlburyCity promotes a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution. Our people are committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling.

4 Feedback and Complaints Management Portal – Authority (CRM)

- 4.1 All feedback and complaints are documented in the Customer Request Management System (CRM). This centralised register allows for consistent data collection, accurate reporting and quality assurance.

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5 What is a complaint?

'An expression of dissatisfaction made to AlburyCity relating to its products, services, people or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.'

5.1 Based on this definition a complaint includes, but is not limited to, an expression of dissatisfaction with:

- Council's procedures, fees, charges, agents and quality of service provided
- a decision taken in implementing Council's policy
- Council's decision-making process, or
- the performance of our people including contractors and volunteers.

5.1 Anonymous complaints

5.1.1 Anonymous complaints will be accepted and reviewed. However, such complaints may be difficult to resolve without the ability to thoroughly investigate the complaint. Action will be taken on anonymous complaints as far as it is possible to do so without being able to consult with the complainant.

5.2 Verbal Complaints

5.2.1 Verbal complaints are treated just as seriously as written complaints. An officer will record the complaint and read it back to the complainant to check for accuracy. This will then be actioned to the appropriate officer for resolution.

6 What is feedback?

6.1 Feedback is a compliment, suggestion or comment not defined as a complaint. Council encourages feedback as this provides a business improvement opportunity. Compliments demonstrate community appreciation for excellence in service delivery and allow these efforts to be formally recognised.

7 Feedback and Complaint System Entry Points

7.1 AlburyCity offers multiple methods to provide feedback and make a complaint.

Email

info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au

In person

Customer Service Centre - 553 Kiewa Street, Albury between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

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Feedback and complaints can also be received by visiting any of AlburyCity's staffed sites, such as, libraries, Community Centres, sporting facilities, MAMA or the Albury Airport.

By telephone

Call 02 6023 8111 between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Call 1300 133 391 after hours, weekends and public holidays

Through our website

Via Council's website – www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/contact/online

By mail

AlburyCity

PO Box 323

Albury NSW 2640

By social media

AlburyCity will monitor all feedback and complaints on AlburyCity's social media platforms. Feedback will be forwarded to the appropriate Team for action and complainants will be directed to lodge their complaint via info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au or our website www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/contact.

7.2 The following services are provided:

National Relay Service (NRS)

This is a phone service for people with a hearing or speech impairment.

Tel: 1800 555 677

Web: www.relayservice.gov.au

Voice/Text phone users

To make a call dial: 133 677 (24 hours 7 days per week).

People who have speech/communication impairment only (do not have a hearing impairment)

Speak and Listen Service (SSR) on 1300 555 727

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National)

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) can be accessed by calling 13 14 50 (24 hours 7 days per week). More information on www.tisnational.gov.au

Assistance for our community

Council will provide assistance for people requiring guidance to lodge feedback or a complaint.

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8 Feedback Process

- 8.1 Feedback, including compliments, is documented in the CRM system. The Team Leader Customer Experience manages all feedback and compliments, and will consult and liaise with appropriate teams and individuals within AlburyCity.

Compliments received will be reported bi-monthly to AlburyCity's Executive team together with complaints received.

9 Complaints Management Process

9.1 Time Limits and Priorities

- 9.1.1 All complaints received will be acknowledged within five days of receipt in accordance with the AlburyCity Customer Service Charter. Complaints received over the phone or face to face will be either:

- logged in the CRM System and dealt with immediately, or
- lodged with an attempted resolution, or
- referred to an appropriate officer from AlburyCity or another organisation to manage and resolve.

- 9.1.2 Complaints are 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.

- 9.1.3 The time taken to reach a resolution is dependent upon the type of complaint, level of investigation required, and, where required, receiving additional information from the complainant. AlburyCity will attempt to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible given these additional time constraints.

9.2 Handling Complaints

- 9.2.1 When a complaint is received, regardless of the method of contact (verbal, written, email, online), details of the complaint will be recorded in the CRM system. Each complaint will be assigned an individual CRM number. The initial record must identify (where possible):

- the contact details of the person making the complaint
- the issues raised
- the outcomes sought
- any other information required to properly respond to the matter
- any additional support the person making the complaint may need
- details about the resolution – such as information provided, or referrals made (if the complaint is resolved at first contact).

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9.2.2 After a CRM has been raised for a complaint, the Team Leader Customer Experience will assess and confirm whether the complaint relates to AlburyCity or another jurisdiction. Once determined the complaint will be allocated to the appropriate Team Leader/Actioning Officer for management. The complaint will be assessed against the following:

- severity and urgency
- health and safety implications
- impact on the individual, the general public and /or AlburyCity
- potential to escalate
- whether another part of AlburyCity, or another organisation needs to be involved in resolving the complaint

9.2.3 Assessing the complaint involves determining what action is required, which may include options other than a formal investigation. Assessment may involve:

- determination as to whether the complaint primarily involves a communication problem or misunderstanding that can be resolved through explanation or discussion
- a decision whether an alternative and satisfactory means of redress or a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with the issue is available
- determination whether the complaint can or must be notified to a relevant government agency
- consideration of the time that has elapsed since the alleged events occurred
- assessment of the significance of the issue for the complainant and/or the organisation

9.2.4 After assessing a complaint, a decision will need to be made about how to manage it. Managing a complaint may involve:

- giving the complainant information or an explanation
- gathering information from the person or area that the complaint is about
- investigating the claims made in the complaint

9.2.5 There are two approaches to an investigation to determine the complaint:

1. Outcome focused

This is an appropriate strategy for less serious complaints and issues concerning organisational policies, procedures and practices. It aims to quickly identify and remedy problems, does not require an in-depth analysis of all available evidence, and may conclude that any issues or problems should be remedied through workplace training, amended policies or systems, an apology or mediation.

2. Evidence focused

This should be done if an allegation has been made about conduct that could result in disciplinary action, or a finding of wrong conduct against a person that could significantly affect their reputation or interests. All reasonable lines of inquiry

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should be pursued – and the more serious the allegation and possible consequences, the more rigorous the investigation will need to be.

Detailed notes on all communication throughout the complaint management process will be recorded in the CRM with associated documentation stored in TRIM – AlburyCity's Record Management System.

9.3 Confidentiality

9.3.1 Confidentiality of complaints, including the identity of the complainant, will be maintained. However, for the matter to be investigated and to ensure fair process for all concerned, the details of the complaint may have to be disclosed to the relevant parties involved in the case. This will only take place in accordance with relevant legislation or policies.

9.4 Safeguards against victimisation and retribution

9.4.1 Complainants will not be subject to victimisation or retribution as a result of lodging a complaint. Any allegations of such treatment will be investigated, and disciplinary action taken if substantiated.

9.5 Resolution of Complaints

9.5.1 All complaints will be treated with respect and integrity with an intended outcome to achieve a fair and reasonable resolve. All complainants are to be kept informed of all steps within the management of their complaint, this information is to be recorded within the CRM.

9.5.2 AlburyCity's responses to complainants will:

- use clear and courteous language
- acknowledge all information provided, including documents
- address all issues raised, and
- outline options for a review or appeal.

9.5.3 If the complaint cannot be resolved to the customer's satisfaction through AlburyCity's internal complaints handling Procedures, the complainant will be advised of alternate avenues such as the Related Agencies and Resources in Section 12.

9.5.4 In relation to complaints about alleged unauthorised activity, Clause 5 of Council's Compliance and Enforcement Policy and page 78 of the NSW Ombudsman Enforcement Guidelines state the following:

Decisions about what action should be taken by Council are made at the council's discretion. This means the objective is that reports alleging unauthorised activity will be resolved to the satisfaction of council, not necessarily the person raising the matter. Council will generally try to resolve

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matters as quickly and informally as possible so as to avoid the need to take formal action.

9.6 Monitoring and Reviewing Complaints

- 9.6.1 We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:
- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints, and
 - identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.
- 9.6.2 Monitoring may include the use of audits, satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.
- 9.6.3 All complaints are entered into our CRM, recorded and given an individual reference number. AlburyCity's Team Leader Customer Experience monitors, reviews and reports on all complaints to the Executive Team.
- 9.6.4 All complaints require final sign off by the Team Leader Customer Experience, allowing the Team Leader to review the quality of service delivered by assessing areas such as:
- the number of complaints received
 - the outcome of complaints
 - issues arising from complaints
 - any systematic and reoccurring issues; and
 - the detail of complaint notes
- Any abnormalities will be raised with the Team Leader where the complaint was raised.

9.7 Continuous Improvement

- 9.7.1 The Team Leader Customer Experience will monitor the CRM system to ensure complaints are effectively responded to and resolved. Any deficiencies in the operation of the system will be identified and rectified. Monitoring may include the use of audits, reports and satisfaction surveys.

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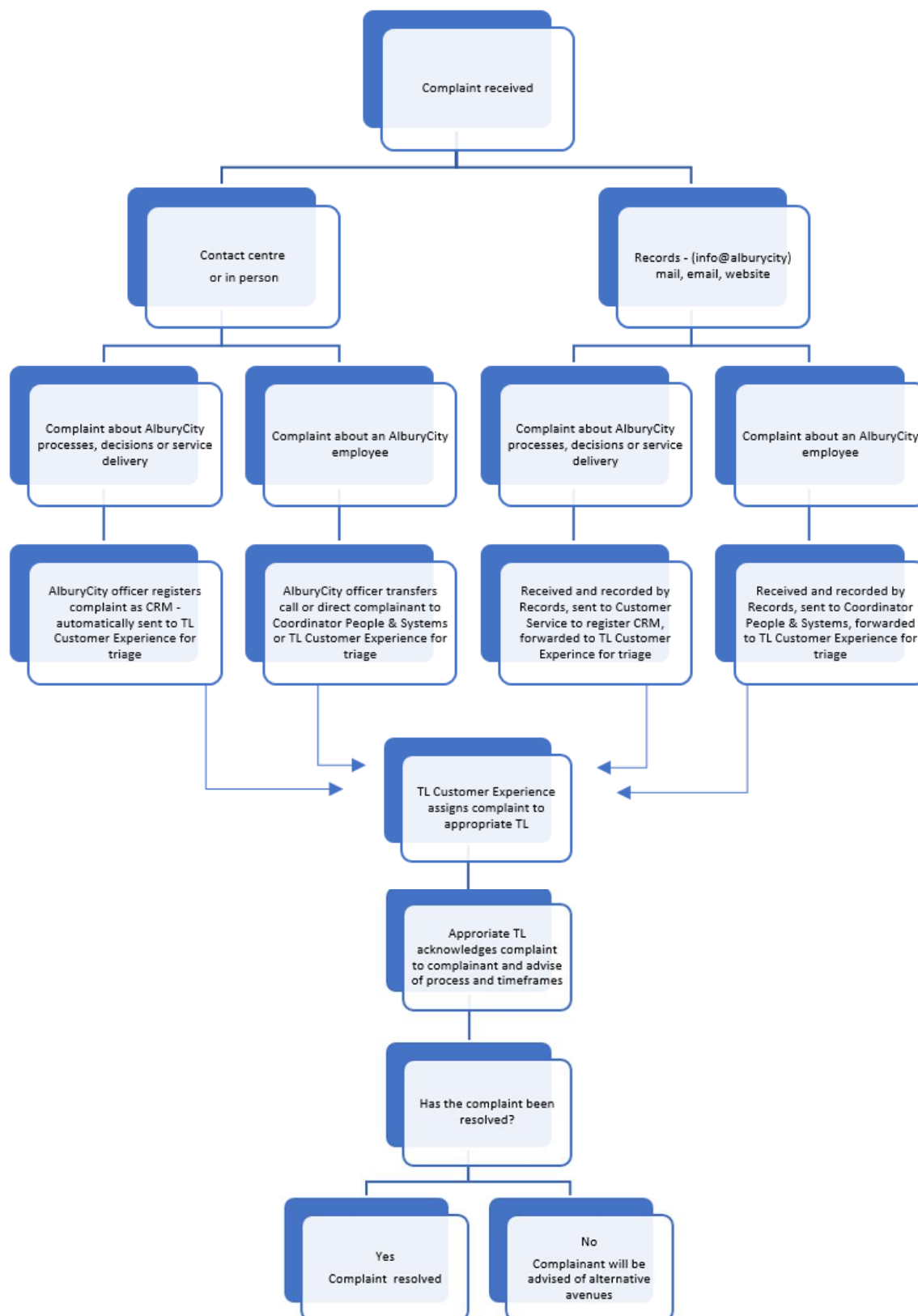
10 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Councillors** – AlburyCity’s elected Councillors have the responsibility to accept complaints from the community and refer them to the CEO, Deputy CEOs or the Public Officer where relevant.
- **CEO** – Has the responsibility to:
 - manage the complaint if it is about the Public Officer or any of the Public Officer’s team
 - manage all complaints about Councillors
 - report allegations of corruption to ICAC
 - refer complaints alleging breaches of the pecuniary interest provisions of the Local Government Act to the Office of Local Government
- **Deputy CEOs** –examine details of complaints when referred and decide action when and where relevant.
- **Public Officer** –manages complaints regarding:
 - Deputy CEOs
 - corrupt conduct or privacy breaches
 - complaints about corruption, serious or substantial waste, pecuniary interests, competitive neutrality or criminal activity.
- **Service Leaders** –manage complaints if referred by Team Leaders when a resolution is not reached
- **Team Leaders** –manage complaints received within their team.
- **Team Leader Customer Experience** – oversees all feedback and complaints received by AlburyCity.
- **Customer Service Team** –register and document feedback and complaints received over the counter or via telephone. The Customer Service Team provides information about the organisation’s complaint handling Policy and Procedures if requested and resolves complaints, where possible.
- **AlburyCity People** –must listen to customers, treat each complaint with respect and integrity with an intended outcome to achieve a fair and reasonable resolution.

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11 Complaint Management Flowchart



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12 Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

12.1 AlburyCity will utilise the NSW Ombudsman's Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Practice Manual to assist in the identification of unreasonable conduct by complainants and to identify strategies to address this conduct. The NSW Ombudsman divides unreasonable conduct into five broad categories:

1. **Unreasonable persistence** – This includes people persisting with their issues even though they have been finalised, refusing to accept a final decision, and sending excessive amounts of correspondence.
2. **Unreasonable demands** – This includes people insisting on outcomes that are unattainable, moving the goal posts or demanding to have their matters dealt with in particular ways.
3. **Unreasonable lack of cooperation** – This includes people providing disorganised, excessive or irrelevant information, failing to provide relevant information that might not suit their position or argument, being unwilling to consider other valid viewpoints, or refusing to define their issues of concern when they are capable of doing so.
4. **Unreasonable arguments** – This includes people seeing cause and effect arguments where there are none, holding conspiracy theories unsupported by evidence, or irrationally interpreting facts or laws and refusing to accept other interpretations.
5. **Unreasonable behaviours** – This includes extreme anger, aggression, threats or other threatening or violent conduct. The best approach for dealing with unreasonable behaviours is setting limits and conditions about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and, if necessary, applying risk management strategies and/or security Policies and Procedures.

12.2 A complainant who is deemed to be behaving unreasonably may be restricted in their contact with AlburyCity by the CEO. This may include advice to limit their contact with AlburyCity officers, limiting how the customer interacts with AlburyCity, and minimising responses from AlburyCity to the customer.

13 Related Agencies and Resources

Related Agencies and Resources

Office of the (NSW) Ombudsman

Telephone 02 9286 1000
Toll free 1800 451 524
Email nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au
Web www.csc.nsw.gov.au

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Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

Telephone 02 8281 5999
Fax 02 9264 5364
Toll free 1800 463 909
Email icac@icac.nsw.gov.au
Web www.icac.nsw.gov.au

Office of Local Government

Telephone 02 4428 4100
Fax 02 4428 4199
Email olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Web www.olg.nsw.gov.au

For complaints relating to Children's Services please send information to the following:

Director
Central Licensing and Regulatory Support
Department of Community Services
Locked Bag 4028
Ashfield NSW 2131
Fax : 02 9716 2162
Email: cslicensing@community.nsw.gov.au

14 Authorisation

Owner	Directorate	Business, Growth and Community – Engagement
	Responsible Officer	Team Leader Customer Experience
Authorisation		
Review Date	February 2026	
Register	Public Policy and Procedure Register.	
Record of Amendments	February 2021	Creation of Feedback and Complaints Management Procedure

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