

Request for Service

Classification:	Council Policy
First Issued / Approved:	22 May 2012, C8719
Last Reviewed:	26 June 2018, C11739 26 July 2022, C260722/13228
Next Review:	July 2026
ECM Tracking No.:	1453121
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate
Relevant Legislation:	Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Equal Opportunity Act 1984 Freedom of Information Act 1991 Libraries Act 1982 Local Government Act 1999 Ombudsman Act 1972 Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) State Records Act 1997
Related Policies:	Better Living, Better Health (2020-2025) Regional Public Health and wellbeing Plan (EHA) Code of Conduct for Council Members Community Home Support Packages (CHSP) Protocol(s) Customer Service and Complaints Handling Policy Employee Conduct Protocol External Customer Experience Protocol Internal Review of Council Decisions (Section 270) Procedure Privacy Policy Records Management Policy

1. Introduction

- 3.1 The City of Burnside endeavours to provide cost-effective services to the community and strives to deliver the best possible outcome on every request for service ensuring fairness and equity. Council also monitors requests for service to identify ways in which services can be proactively improved.
- 3.2 The policy aims to:
- 3.2.1 Provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service;
 - 3.2.2 Distinguish between requests, complaints and feedback to Council and give direction on the management of requests;
 - 3.2.3 Establish a standardised process for assessing, processing and finalising requests.

2. Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

- Principles:* Covers all principles
- Themes:* Spans all Strategic Plan Themes
- Goals:* Spans all Strategic Plan Goals
- Priorities:* Spans all Strategic Plan Priorities

3. Our Approach

- 3.3 Regularly review, update and adopt leading governance, risk management and administrative practices.
- 3.4 Review services to ensure they meet community needs facilitating efficient and effective outcomes of the Strategic Community Plan.

4. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 270(a1)(a) 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.”
- 4.2 Section 270(a2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1999* states that the “policies, practices and procedures required under subsection (a1) must be directed towards (a) dealing with the relevant requests or complaints in a timely, effective and fair way”.
- 4.3 Council also provides services that are funded by the State and/or Commonwealth Governments and these are subject to the policies and procedures particular to those services.

5. Interpretation

- 5.1 For the purpose of this policy:
- 5.1.1 **“the Act”** means the *Local Government Act 1999*.
- 5.1.2 **“Business day”** means Monday to Friday inclusive (except for public holidays).
- 5.1.3 **“Council”** means the City of Burnside.
- 5.1.4 **“Complaint”** means 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 documented. This includes complaints about a request for service that has been or should have been delivered.

- 5.1.5 “**Complainant**” is a person who makes a complaint.
- 5.1.6 “**Customer**” means a person who is utilising Council Services or Council Premises and includes external Customers being any residents, ratepayers, members of public or organisations that have any form of dealings with Council
- 5.1.7 “**Council Member**” means a member of Council. The role of members of councils is outlined in section 59 of The Act.
- 5.1.8 “**Employee**” means a person employed by the Council.
- 5.1.9 “**Request for service**” means an application to have Council or its representative take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

6. Policy

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The policy is based on the following principles:
 - 6.2.1 Council aims to liaise with customers fairly and transparently at all stages of the process;
 - 6.2.2 Information about Council’s services and contact options will be readily available;
 - 6.2.3 Council will ensure the provision of appropriate resources and suitably trained staff;
 - 6.2.4 Customer requests will be dealt with as quickly as practicable while adhering to this policy;
 - 6.2.5 Where the customer request overlaps functional responsibilities, there will be liaison between different Council departments;
 - 6.2.6 Council services and systems are subject to periodic review and evaluation.
- 6.3 Where ambiguity exists between a complaint and a request for service, the matter will be dealt with in the first instance as a request for service.
- 6.4 In determining how to respond to a reasonable request for service Council will consider the community need in light of:
 - 6.4.1 Public safety and emergencies;
 - 6.4.2 An assessment of risk;
 - 6.4.3 Statutory responsibilities;
 - 6.4.4 Council’s Strategic Management Plans, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget;
 - 6.4.5 Relevant Council policies and codes;
 - 6.4.6 Established service standards and response times for regular Council activities;
 - 6.4.7 Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs;

- 6.4.8 Available service options;
- 6.4.9 Efficient and effective use of Council resources;
- 6.4.10 Equitable provision of services and products within the community.

7. How to Make a Request

- 7.1 A person can make a service request in a number of ways:
 - 7.1.1 In person at the Civic Centre;
 - 7.1.2 On Council's website;
 - 7.1.3 Telephone;
 - 7.1.4 Email;
 - 7.1.5 Letter addressed to the City of Burnside; or
 - 7.1.6 Petition to Council.
- 7.2 For contact details, see "Availability" at clause 14 below.

8. Processing a Request for Service

- 8.1 Requests that fit within well-established guidelines will be managed accordingly and the process will be explained to the applicant at the outset.
- 8.2 Where further evaluation is necessary before committing Council to undertake the work or provide the service, then the applicant will be informed accordingly.

9. Timeframes for Response

- 9.1 Response to requests will be processed in accordance with the timeframes set by Council, with the applicant advised of the process and timeframe for a detailed response, where possible.
- 9.2 The circumstances of individual requests for service will vary greatly. In the majority of cases requests will be processed promptly and the applicant advised verbally or by return post/email/text message.
- 9.3 Council staff will acknowledge receipt of the request within three [3] business days advising of Council's intentions regarding the request, or explaining more time is required to respond to the request and provide a timeframe where possible.
- 9.4 If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe, or is a service Council is otherwise not able to deliver, or is not the responsibility of the Council to deliver, the applicant will be advised, including an explanation of why this decision was made.
- 9.5 Service response standards may apply to routine requests. (For example, uncollected rubbish bins will be typically collected within 48 hours). Other requests may be scheduled to coincide with work in a particular suburb or season.

(For example, tree pruning on Council streets and attention to minor drainage problems.)

- 9.6 Response times may vary depending upon the volume of work currently being progressed within Council and the risk profile of the request.
- 9.7 Requests for major works or new services will be referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual budget cycle. Community consultation on proposed projects and services is included as part of the budget process each year.

10. Record Keeping

- 10.1 All service requests will be captured and maintained in Council's electronic document records management system (EDRMS) in accordance with the *State Records Act 1997* and Council's Records Management Policy.
- 10.2 Council records are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the provisions of that legislation.
- 10.3 Information may be disclosed publicly in de-identified format for annual reporting, employee training and other purposes required by legislation.

11. Rejected Requests

- 11.1 All rejected requests that are within the bounds of Council's service provision will be recorded and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with the preparation of an Annual Business Plan and associated budget.

12. Complaints

- 12.1 Where a customer is not satisfied with the standard of service delivery, they may lodge a complaint under Council's Customer Service and Complaint Handling Policy.
- 12.2 Where a complainant is not satisfied with the Council's *decision* to provide (or not) a service, they may lodge a request for review of the decision under Council's Internal Review of Council Decision (Section 270) Procedure.
- 12.3 The complainant may contact the Ombudsman at any time within the process, noting that as a general rule, the Ombudsman prefers a complaint to be addressed by Council in the first instance, unless this is not appropriate in the circumstances.

13. Review and Authority

- 13.1. This Policy will be reviewed every four years at maximum in line with Council's Policies and Protocols Framework.

14. Availability

- 14.1 The Policy is available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website www.burnside.sa.gov.au
- 14.2 The Policy will be available for inspection, free of charge, at the Civic Centre during ordinary business hours and a copy may be purchased at a fee as set annually by Council.

City of Burnside Civic Centre
401 Greenhill Road, Tusmore SA 5065
Telephone; (08) 8366 4200
Fax; (08) 8366 4299
Email: burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm (except public holidays)

15. Further Information

- 15.1. For further information about this policy please contact:

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Telephone: 08 8366 4200; Email: burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au