

Resolution of Council

16 August 2021

Item 9.5

Customer Service

Moved by Councillor Vithoukias, seconded by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

(i) the City of Sydney has on its website:

(a) a Customer Service Charter:

- typically, a Customer Service Charter is a document that outlines how an organisation promises to work with its customers along with providing insights into how an organisation operates. This page does not provide this;
- this page states "your feedback is really important to us. We use this information, whether positive or negative, to monitor and improve our service for the benefit of all our customers" however it has no obvious process or mechanism for this; and
- this page does not have a clear path, link or instructions for how a customer is able to provide feedback or make a complaint;

(b) Complaints and Feedback Procedures Document:

- this document currently exists on the City's website as an editable document;

The Complaints and Feedback Procedures Document aims to:

*ensure the community's right to comment is protected and promoted;

*inform the community of the external and internal procedures for handling complaints and compliments;

*ensure that feedback is handled in an appropriate, effective and systematic way allowing corrective actions to be put in place where necessary; and

*increase the level of community satisfaction with the City's services;

- this document lists its next review date as January 2018;

(c) the Unreasonable Conduct by Customers Policy:

- the scope of this policy applies to the management of unreasonable conduct by customers, as defined in this policy;
- in December 2017 this policy was modified to align with Ombudsman NSW Unreasonable Complaint Conduct Model Policy (2013);
- this document appears as a PDF on the 'Customer Service Charter' City website page and lists its next review date as December 2019; and
- this document also appears as an editable version on a recently added City website page 'Unreasonable Conduct by Customer Policy' with an updated review date done in 2020;

(d) a Customer Complaint and Feedback page:

- this is known on the City's website as 'Make a complaint or provide feedback';
- "The complaints and feedback procedures aim to ensure the public's right to comment is protected and promoted";
- this page also provides an online form with five options for customers to choose the type of contact a customer might want;
- it does not provide an option to make a complaint; and
- this form also states "We will get back to you regarding any questions, or requests for service, or local issues within two business days or as applicable. If you are providing feedback or giving a compliment, we may not provide you with a response"; and

(ii) that in 2015, the Office of NSW Ombudsman and Department of Customer Service developed CHIP - The Complaint Handling Improvement Program that was adopted by the Secretaries Board for application by all NSW Departments and Agencies as part of the NSW Government's Whole of Government Commitments To Effective Complaint Handling (the Commitments). It recognises that a consistent approach to best practice complaint handling is needed for all major customer facing state government agencies. The six Commitments are:

(a) Respectful treatment;

- (b) Information and accessibility;
 - (c) Good communication;
 - (d) Taking ownership;
 - (e) Timeliness; and
 - (f) Transparency;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) investigate and review the City's Customer Complaints and Feedback policies and procedures, and update where required, including but not limited to:
 - (a) the Complaints and Feedback Procedures document; and
 - (b) the Unreasonable Conduct by Customers Policy.
 - (ii) review the design and content of the City's website in regard to Customer Complaints and Feedback policies and procedures, including the online form, and make all necessary improvements;
 - (iii) take the necessary steps to present to Council what is required to adopt the NSW Ombudsman Complaint Handling Improvement Program (CHIP); and
 - (iv) report back to Councillors on the above actions; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to write to the Office of Local Government and Local Government NSW as soon as possible, encouraging all NSW Councils to implement a consistent approach to customer complaint handling by adopting the NSW Ombudsman Complaint Handling Improvement Program (CHIP), should they not already be using the CHIP to guide their complaint handling process.

Carried unanimously.

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