



CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

2018 - 2021



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INTRODUCTION

Buloke Shire Council is committed to our customers and to providing efficient and responsive services, whilst always striving for improvement.

Council values feedback and we encourage you to utilise opportunities to communicate with us via Council Meetings, Councillor Briefings, Community Groups, formal submissions, Council website, Social Media, community consultations and open forums.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the organisation's commitment to customer service excellence, both internal and external and outline the key actions to be taken to achieve related Strategic Objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2017-2021. The strategy is designed to provide a clear way forward in meeting the service needs of our customers now and in the future.

Buloke Shire Council formed in 1995 after the amalgamation of the Shire of Wycheproof, Shire of Birchip, Shire of Charlton, Shire of Donald and Parts of the Shire of Kara Kara. Buloke is named after the Buloke or "Bulloak tree" "Allocasuarina luehmannii" which is common in the area.

Buloke Shire is located in the Western part of the State, Including the towns of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof and the smaller townships of Berriwilllock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It gives me great pleasure to present the Buloke Shire Council Customer Service Strategy 2018-2021.

The Customer Service Strategy will guide Council's actions over the next three years, aligned with our Council Plan, to deliver clear guidelines on how we will not only maintain our strong customer service focus but improve the experience for customers and support for our staff.

This is a living document that will be reviewed each year to ensure Council is adaptable and takes advantage of any opportunities that will help drive our customer satisfaction.

Buloke is entering an exciting phase of growth and new possibilities and we will continue to work side by side with the community to deliver great services and build a better Buloke.

**Mayor,
Cr David Pollard.**



WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

Our Customers come from a diverse range of backgrounds and interests, so their needs and expectations are also diverse. With this in mind we want to recognise these needs and deliver excellent customer service to maximise customer satisfaction.

OUR CUSTOMERS INCLUDE:

- Rate Payers
- People who reside within the Buloke Shire
- People, who visit, are tourists or who wish to live here
- People who work within our Shire
- People who invest in our Shire such as developers and businesses
- People who seek products, services or information
- Other stakeholders including Commonwealth and State Governments, local members of parliament, and community agencies that deliver services to our community.

CUSTOMER SERVICE INFORMATION

Buloke Shire Council's head office for customer service is located at 367 Broadway Wycheproof, Victoria 3527.

Customer Service Officers can assist you with your enquiries about our services or facilities and process your payments. We are open Monday to Friday 8.30am-5.00pm excluding public holidays.

Customer Service staff took well over 29,000 calls on 1300 520 520 in 2017 averaging around 100 calls per day. They have also receipted over 4558 payments and have logged over 2023 works requests over 260 working days at an average of 8 per day.

Council also received over 6900 pieces of written hard mail to our PO Box 1 Wycheproof 3527 and received an estimate of 25,000 emails to our buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au address.

A range of functions are available on Council's website
www.buloke.vic.gov.au

Council operates Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn social media accounts.





COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

The Council Plan is developed every four years by Council and reviewed annually. It is a collaborative project between the Councillors and the community, identifying the key themes and strategic initiatives that Council will pursue through our work, decisions and efforts.

CENTRAL TO THE PLAN ARE FIVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Deliver our services in a financially viable way.
- Build a healthy and active community.
- Diversify and enhance our local economy.
- Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment.
- Support our Councillors, staff, volunteers and the community to make informed and transparent decisions.

RELATED ACTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

- Invest in the priorities of the Information and Communication Technology Strategy to improve productivity and online service delivery.
- Increase our online communication presence through the website and social media.
- Implement an inclusiveness plan to address accessibility and engagement for all within our community.
- Provide high quality customer service and manage requests effectively through a Customer Service Charter.
- Provide targeted communication aligned to requirements and expectations of residents and stakeholders such as businesses and forums.
- Improve Council's website functionality and accessibility.

BULOKE. SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER.



OUR VALUES

Council addresses its key values through:

- Good Communication
- Transparency in decision making
- Accountability by actions
- Working collaboratively with partners
- Taking responsibility
- Being responsive and timely

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Council's Customer Service Charter outlines what you can expect when you contact Council by phone, in person, online or in writing. Excellent customer service outcomes are built on two way relationships. Council outlines clearly what customers can expect when they contact us and in return we ask our customers to help us to help them by being respectful and courteous.

What customers can expect

- To be spoken to in a friendly and courteous, helpful and professional manner.
- Listening to your communication carefully to establish your requirements.
- Valuing of customers' privacy by treating all personal information confidentially.
- Provision of necessary and relevant information in a timely manner.

OUR SERVICES

Buloke Shire Council provides an extensive range of services that support and enhance the lives of our community and customers.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Statutory Compliance – The purpose of the Statutory and Compliance Service is to provide Statutory Planning, Building Services and Compliance and Local Laws services. This department also includes areas such as Fire Hazards, Dog and Cat registration and control and stock control.

Library Services – This Council delivered service provides library services to the townships of Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Culgoa, Donald, Nullawil, Sea Lake, Watchem and Wycheproof.

Environmental Health – This service promotes the health and well-being of the Shire's local communities through a range of Public Health Programs including immunisations, food surveillance and registration of food premises, accommodation standards and waste water management.

Early Years – This service is to advocate for the wellbeing of children and their families and ensure it is supported through planning and service development. The service provides pre-school services in 5 towns, maternal and child health and support for playgroups run by parents.

Community Grants – This service provides donations, allocations and support to groups in the community that contribute to services that connect and involve the local area.

Community Support – This service develops links between and within the communities in the Shire and works with local communities and groups to access community projects recognised as community priorities and provides a range of youth services that support young people aged between 12 and 25. The service also facilitates economic development throughout the Shire and Provides support to local businesses and assists in the promotion of tourism.

Aged and Disability Services – This service provides a range of maintenance and support services to assist frail older people and younger people with a disability to live independently at home. Council's service provides domestic assistance, personal care, respite care, home maintenance, meals services, volunteer coordination, aged accommodation and five senior citizens centres. These services are integral to allowing many people to stay living in their homes.

Environmental Planning – This service manages Council's Environmental Compliance and Sustainability Programs and Services.

WORKS AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Recreation – This service provides recreational facilities and support to community run recreation reserves in 10 towns across the Shire, as well as governance support to community recreation clubs and committees.

Property Maintenance – This service is to provide Property Maintenance Services to a range of Councils building-based assets, focusing on the upkeep and renewal of buildings. This area maintains in excess of 250 buildings across the shire and aims to keep them maintained in a fit for purpose state.

Road Services – This service is to provide road maintenance for the 1100km of Sealed, 650km Gravel and 3800km of Earth roads across the Shire. The income relates to Local Roads Funding received from Victorian Grants Commission.

Swimming Pools – This service manages and operates seven seasonal swimming pools, from the third week in November to the third week in March annually.

Assets and Project Management – This service is to provide for the management, design and administration of Council's assets and Infrastructure services, including planning management of the Capital Works Program.

Saleyards – This service provides for the management and administration of Councils Saleyards Precinct at Wycheproof for external Livestock Agents to sell livestock.

Urban Areas – This service manages and coordinates Council's parks, gardens and urban infrastructure providing routine, preventative and on-going maintenance and improvements.

Lakes – This service provides a contribution to the management and development of the Recreational Lakes including Tchum, Watchem and Wooroonook Lakes. Council undertakes toilet cleaning at the lakes outside the summer peak period.

Waste and Environment – Waste and Environment Services is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of Council's landfill and transfer stations as well as providing a Residential Kerbside Garbage and Recycling Service in all towns within the Shire.

Municipal Emergency Management – This service develops, coordinates and delivers Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and coordination of the Municipal Operation Coordination Centre and associated software.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Finance – This service encompasses all areas of financial reporting, rates, debtors and creditors for Council. Expenses include loan interest, internal and external audit fees, property valuation fees and other miscellaneous corporate expenses.

Information Management – This service is to provide the organisation with Records Management Services and Information and Telecommunication Services.

Governance and Executive Management – This service provides for Councillors and the organisation overall governance services.

Executive Administrative Support – This service provides administrative support to Councillors and Executive Leadership and is responsible for the distribution of Council agendas.

Customer Service – This service provides for both internal and external customers by resolving the majority of customer enquiries, requests and payments at the first point of contact.

Risk and Human Resources – This service provides the organisation with recruitment, training, organisational development, occupational health and safety, corporate risk management and insurance programs.

Media and Communications – This service is responsible for the management and provision of advice on external communication, in consultation with relevant stakeholders on behalf of Council. The service is responsible for outgoing media releases, social media and advertising.

BENCHMARKING

Local Government Victoria (LGV) co-ordinates annually the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey. This survey is conducted across each Council and provides data to fulfil a number of statutory reporting requirements and assists in benchmarking.

The Victorian Government established the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) in 2014 to ensure that all Councils measure and report on their performance in a consistent way.

The LGPRF and the reporting format for indicators and measures are prescribed by the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Council endeavours to understand our customers' needs and works to remain open to evolution alongside technology and the growing expectation that comes with that growth.

By following these directions and implementing the following Action Plan, Council will improve the customer service experience.

1. EMPATHISE

Listen to our customers to understand their expectations and in turn provide outstanding service levels.

2. SIMPLIFY

Develop and maintain systems that make it easy for customers to find and receive the information they are seeking.

3. PERSONALISE

Understand how our customers interact with us and develop and maintain multiple points of access to suit our customer's needs.

4. INSPIRE

Develop our staff to build a culture of excellent customer service across the organisation.

ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	COMPLETION DATE
INSPIRE A CULTURE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE.	Complete a Customer Service Strategy to communicate the service standards within the organisation.	Manager Customer Engagement	September 2018
	Continue to develop an internal customer service focused culture across all departments.	Senior Leadership Team	Ongoing
	Production of a Customer Service Charter.	Manager Customer Engagement	December 2018
	Incorporation of customer service standards in our training programs and staff inductions.	Manager Customer Engagement/ Manager Human Resources	June 2019
IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY.	Investigation of avenues to provide more face to face opportunities in all towns.	Manager Customer Engagement	Ongoing
	Embrace technology to enhance customer's experience. Appropriate use of Mxie phone system and out of office email messaging.	All staff	Ongoing
	Matching our customers' needs in regards to access and technology. Still being able to give them access to service no matter their technology status.	Manager Customer Engagement	Ongoing
	Place all requests in to the customer request system and measure our results against our customer service charter.	Manager Customer Engagement	Quarterly
	Investigate the use of website access in Customer Service Office.	Manager Customer Engagement	June 2019
	Elevated use of Messages on Hold service in line with new phone systems capability to better inform customers.	Manager Customer Engagement/ Manager Information Services	December 2018
CONSISTENCY AND RELIABILITY OF SERVICES ACROSS OUR ORGANISATION.	Being responsive to customer's enquiries and follow up on requests as per the customer service charter.	Manager Customer Engagement	Ongoing
	Develop a framework that guides customers to when and how they should be informed about the progress of their request. SMS, Phone call, email or by mail.	Manager Customer Engagement	December 2018
	Staff accountability measures to assess if customers have had clear or accurate communication in regards to their request.	Manager Customer Engagement	March 2019
	Audit closed customer requests to ensure we're meeting our customer service obligations.	Manager Customer Engagement	Quarterly

INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	COMPLETION DATE
PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF AND OUR CUSTOMERS.	Implementation of processes to handle difficult and unforeseen circumstances.	Manager Customer Engagement	December 2018
	Ensuring staff are able to take required leave and so as to not impact on service levels.	Manager Customer Engagement	Ongoing
	Ensuring staff are valued and engaged with customers, staff and Council.	Manager Customer Engagement	Ongoing
	Provide relevant training and personal development opportunities for Customer Service Staff.	Manager Customer Engagement	Quarterly
IMPROVE INFORMATION SHARING WITHIN ORGANISATION.	Devise and then regularly distribute easy to read communication to help inform staff and drive customer service levels.	Manager Customer Engagement	September 2018
	Management Team members to build better relationships and become more visible to Customer Service team to build better knowledge of Customer Service Officer's needs.	Management Team	Ongoing

MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT

Buloke Shire Council is committed to providing excellent Customer Service and an outstanding work culture to drive the best outcomes for staff and customers. Staff and customers should feel supported by the Customer Service Strategy to see continually improving levels of competency and service.

The strategy sets out activities to:

- Grow staff morale and culture
- Improve staff safety
- Improve customer accessibility
- Develop staff
- Develop an "organisational wide" approach to customer service.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Customer Service Charter
- Community Satisfaction Survey 2018
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Communication Strategy
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Inclusiveness Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Support Policy

