

| GOV25 | Dealing with Public Complaints |
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| Policy Custodian: | Chief Executive Officer |
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Purpose

Public relations are a vital part of the makeup of any public organisation and West Daly Regional Council is no exception. Councillors are elected by public opinion and trust and accordingly, Councillors remain conscious of the needs of the constituents. The sole purpose of a Council is to provide local government services to its member communities. There is a community expectation that Council will provide an efficient and universal service. Yet, in so doing, there will be occasions when not all members of the public are totally satisfied with the extent or level of services provided and so will voice their opinions or dissent from time to time.

Scope


Comments and complaints from the public should be viewed as valuable tools that allow Council and its employees to gauge the level of public opinion in respect to a particular service and carefully review the services provided. Council and its employees are able to reflect on the type and outcome of services being offered and consider community perceptions. While public complaints and criticism may not always be justified, they should always be carefully considered as a barometer of community expectations and any changes to improve community outcomes implemented where possible.

The other aspect to consider is that if public comments and complaints are not dealt with expeditiously and efficiently, they invariably tend to take on unjustified importance regardless of their details and ultimately it will become more difficult to achieve a universally accepted outcome.

Council’s policy is that public complaints should be investigated and responded to as soon as possible after receipt regardless of how vexatious or unjustified they may appear.

Policy Statement

1. All complaints and comments by members of the public regarding Council and / or its services, are to be in writing and recorded in a Register of Public Commend held at each Council office.
2. The registered compliant should then be directed to the appropriate Executive manager for investigation and depending on the seriousness may be forwarded on to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for response.
3. A written of acknowledgement shall be sent to the complainant in all cases within 48 hours of receipt of any complaint.

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4. The complaint will be investigated, and any recommendations shall be forwarded onto the appropriate management delegate. If required, action will be taken to either remedy the issue as soon as possible or determine that no action apart from an explanation is needed. If disciplinary action is appropriate, then the Executive delegate will action.
 5. In all cases, when the matter is resolved by either remedial action or explanation, details of the resolution should be sent to the complainant and a copy to the Executive manager (if not already handled at that level) and the CEO.
 6. Where a matter is raised by an Elected Member either during a Council meeting or privately, details of the explanation or resolution should be forwarded to that member by the CEO or their delegate.
 7. If an Elected Member is approached by a constituent outside a scheduled meeting, the member should immediately refer the matter to the Community Service Manager (CS) rather than wait to raise the matter at a Council meeting.

References

Local Government Act 2019 (NT)