

# Customer Service Strategy 2017 - 2021



**city of  
kalamunda**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This strategy outlines the key principles, strategies, actions, and performance measures for improved customer service standards over the next four years at the City of Kalamunda.

It will align with the statements made in a revised Customer Service Charter and will support the improvement of the City's customer service outcomes across the whole organisation. It will also enable Council to align itself to deliver better community engagement and continuously improve and refine its whole service delivery.

Under a new business unit: 'Customer and Public Relations' formed in July 2016 the City of Kalamunda began a journey toward consolidating its customer service operations and put in place a team to lead and monitor customer satisfaction with responsibility for delivering better customer service outcomes more holistically. To achieve this we have developed a new Customer Service Strategy and a set of strategic initiatives to meet emerging customer needs.

Traditionally customer service approaches in Local Government have been largely reactive with little choice or innovation in processes and service delivery models, leaving a general perception that Local Government is difficult and slow to deal with.

The City of Kalamunda is acutely aware of these perceptions and realises in order to create a welcoming, responsive Local Government, we need to work with internal teams and customers in a more proactive manner, with the aim of making all and any interactions easier, friendlier and faster.

Nearly every decision made by the City impacts community, consequently making them the centrepiece of every service transaction and interaction, and the critical driver behind developing, delivering and improving services and maintaining excellent customer service standards.

The Customer Service Strategy 2017 – 2021 is the catalyst for bringing together an ongoing program of initiatives to focus the City on continually improving the customer service experience in all spaces. The Customer Service Strategy strives to achieve an aspirational vision within the next four years.

# 2.0 The Strategy

## Organisational Vision

Connected Communities, Valuing Nature and Creating our Future Together.

## Organisational Values

<b>(behaviours to be consistently demonstrated by all employees):</b>	
<b>Core Values</b>	
<b>Service</b>	We deliver excellent service by actively engaging and listening to each other
<b>Respect</b>	We trust and respect each other by valuing our difference, communicating openly and showing integrity in all we do
<b>Diversity</b>	We challenge ourselves by keeping our minds open and looking for all possibilities and opportunities
<b>Ethics</b>	We provide honest, open, equitable and responsive leadership by demonstrating high standards of ethical behaviour
<b>Aspirational Values</b>	
<b>Creativity</b>	We create and innovate to improve all we do
<b>Courage</b>	We take risks that are calculated to lead us to a bold new future
<b>Prosperity</b>	We will ensure our City has a robust economy through a mixture of industrial and commercial development
<b>Harmony</b>	We will retain our natural assets in balance with our built environment

## Objectives

### The key objectives of this strategy are to:

- Strive to achieve a new customer service ethos and deliver on the customer service promise and principles
- To culturally optimise the organisation to achieve best practice customer service outcomes
- To support and train staff to feel empowered, be proactive and work collaboratively toward business objectives and customer service excellence
- To effectively communicate with our customers, internally and externally

## Customer Service Ethos

We will focus on a combination of concepts including; cultural change, technological and process improvement, and a centralised service model - with increased self-service options and improvements based on customer feedback.

*Our customers are the 'key influencers' in the development, improvement and delivering of our services.*

## Customer Service Promise

Supported by innovative technology solutions and regular best practice training, staff will be proactive, focus on future planning to meet business objectives and work collaboratively, with the customer experience always in mind.

*All City interactions with customers will be **timely** and **meaningful**.*

## Principles

1.	<b>Customers will receive timely responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will always provide an estimation of timeframe for response at each interaction</li> <li>• We will update customers on the status of their enquiry at regular intervals</li> <li>• Customers referrals across business units will be as minimal as possible</li> <li>• We monitor the timeliness of our correspondence</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Customer interactions will be meaningful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to handle enquiries at first point of contact</li> <li>• All staff will have access to accurate and up-to-date information</li> <li>• Staff will seek to understand enquiries to the deepest possible level before responding</li> <li>• All responses to customers will be personalised and professional</li> <li>• Even when we may need to say 'we can't' we will offer options for things we 'can do'</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Each customer will be made to feel like the only customer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ask our customers how they like to receive information and deliver it accordingly</li> <li>• We recognise 'one-size does not fit all' and we will be flexible in our service offerings</li> <li>• We will always do more to exceed expectations</li> <li>• Complex requests and complaints will be handled with priority</li> </ul>
4.	<b>We will help our customers to help themselves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We offer and promote integrated self-service options</li> <li>• We explore and use innovative technology solutions that makes accessing information easy</li> <li>• Online information will be available 24/7 and enabled for mobile devices</li> <li>• As many transactions as possible will be automated</li> <li>• Develop simple guides and instructions to help customers understand our processes</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Our customers are informed and will help inform our services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will consider the customer's perspective and actively seek feedback often, in different ways</li> <li>• We will admit when we get it wrong, reviewing and improving our processes each time</li> <li>• We will communicate on any new service (or fee) or expected change in levels of service as early as possible</li> <li>• Our people and our customers will be our best advocates</li> </ul>

## 4.0 Focus Areas

Achieving outcomes under these principles has been broken down into three Focus Areas of strategic action.

1. **Service Standards:** Methods for setting standards and working together better
2. **Communication & Culture:** Staff engagement, motivation and skill development
3. **Technology:** Systems, tools and processes to support customer service delivery

### Service Standards

Objectives	Actions	Measures
<b>1. Be responsive to enquiries &amp; complaints</b>	1.1 Revise and update the Customer Service Charter & Standards every two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charter updated every 2 years and standards being met</li> <li>▪ Monthly ICS Customer Request and Records outstanding</li> <li>▪ Complaint policy revised &amp; new guidelines adopted</li> <li>▪ Complaints Handling Reports – outlining process followed, and service area improvements</li> <li>▪ Satisfaction with after-hours call service</li> <li>▪ Business Unit cooperation and adherence to Service Level Agreements</li> </ul>
	1.2 Revise Complaints Policy and implement new guidelines – appointing customer advocates to case manage complaints from reporting to resolution  Complaints valuing will drive priority service areas for improvement	
	1.3 Open Expressions of Interest for contractor of after-hours phone service	
	1.4 Extend customer service standards to internal teams & introduce Service Level Agreements between Business Units	
<b>2. Recognise 'one-size does <u>not</u> fit all' and offer options</b>	2.1 In all forms of communication standardise asking customers how they prefer to receive information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Biennial Community Perception Survey</li> <li>▪ Customer feedback / compliments on flexible approaches &amp; customised responses and resolutions</li> <li>▪ Staff utilisation of the checklist</li> <li>▪ Accessibility testing compliance</li> <li>▪ Successful audit completed</li> <li>▪ Research and case studies sourced</li> </ul>
	2.2 Offer flexible options for delivery of services to extenuating individual circumstances and needs	
	2.3 Create a customer service checklist to guide staff when reviewing, strategies, polices and processes	
	2.4 Conduct yearly accessibility testing on all products for customers	
<b>3. Ensure organisational capability to deliver optional</b>	3.1 Facilitate an independent audit of the current structure of front counter and Customer Relations Officer roles across the organisation	

<b>customer service</b>	3.2 Conduct comparative local government research of contact/ reception centres and support structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report delivered to council with key findings and relevant recommendations</li> </ul>
	3.3 Deliver a report to Council with options and impact assessment	

*"Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first. Only when a critical mass of employees are inside the Circle of Safety, and feel that their leaders are working to defend them from dangers outside, can the company then invite customers into the circle too".* **Simon Sinek, New York Times Best Selling Author of titles 'Start with Why' and 'Leaders Eat Last'.**

## Communication & Culture

Objectives	Actions	Measures
<b>1. Introduce internal communication practices &amp; processes</b>	1.1 Develop a City Communication and Engagement Policy to provide a framework for internal use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal policy and procedures adopted</li> <li>▪ Consistent use of communication templates and tools</li> <li>▪ Staff voluntarily attend training sessions</li> <li>▪ Feedback from internal stakeholders</li> </ul>
	1.2 Develop standardised internal communication rules, templates and tools	
	1.3 Deliver internal communication & education training programs ('Lunch n Learn' series delivered by staff within areas of expertise)	
<b>2. Create a Customer Centric organisation</b>	2.1 All new staff receive specific customer service induction with time spent with a frontline team with a buddy Customer Relations Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All new staff inducted in Customer Service with time spent at contact centre</li> <li>▪ Annual customer service training delivered</li> <li>▪ Customer feedback / working group suggestions adopted</li> <li>▪ No of customer compliments Vs complaints received measured monthly</li> <li>▪ Customer Journey Mapping</li> <li>▪ Achieve external accreditation in customer service excellence</li> </ul>
	2.2 All staff receive one element of customer service training annually	
	2.3 Form an internal customer service working group with officers from all frontline service areas	
	2.4 Include customers in focus groups for designing and improving services	
<b>3 Build a 'one team' internal Culture</b>	3.1 Deliver 'cultural optimisation' training through the GROW program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural training delivered</li> <li>▪ Staff survey –staff feel supported and aptly skilled to service customers</li> <li>▪ Customer Service Champions award program implemented</li> <li>▪ Number of cross functional Project Teams formed</li> </ul>
	3.2 Introduce internal Customer Service Awards program	
	3.3 Form collaborative internal working groups for key strategic project delivery	

## Technology

Objectives	Actions	Measures
<b>1. Offer and promote integrated self-service options</b>	<p>1.1 In conjunction with ICT Strategy Website Redevelopment Project – employ and promote e-business services and capabilities</p> <p>1.2 Implement a 'paperless front counter' (digital brochures) using touchscreen kiosks / ipads for checking in visitors, processing customer requests &amp; information</p> <p>1.3 Roll out additional touch screens in City contact centres and local shopping centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No of e-business capabilities enabled through the website</li> <li>▪ Customer take up of e-business services</li> <li>▪ Front Counter touch screen kiosk implemented and preferred by customers</li> <li>▪ Deployment of more digital screens at contact centres: ie visitors centre, rec centres etc</li> </ul>
<b>2. Make online information available 24/7 and enabled for mobile devices</b>	<p>2.1 Collaborative delivery of the ICT Strategy for mobile requirements for website and online services</p> <p>2.2 Programed regular intranet and website updates for staff and customers to access up to date information</p> <p>2.3 Develop Digital Marketing Strategy + Boost customer service engagement on social media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Online service mobility enabled</li> <li>▪ CROs champion development, deployment and usage of mobile devices for staff</li> <li>▪ Consistent intranet and website updates occur simultaneously from a single Corporate source</li> <li>▪ Digital &amp; social media reach &amp; engagement measured monthly</li> <li>▪ Customer feedback on finding information online</li> </ul>
<b>3. Improve on collection and analysis of customer request data</b>	<p>3.1 Design SynergySoft applications to better record, automate, track and report on customer enquiries and responsiveness</p> <p>3.2 Collaborative delivery of the ICT Strategy to deliver new Records Management and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requirements are gathered consistently by Business Analyst from Corporate Systems</li> <li>▪ Enablement of automated transactions</li> <li>▪ Effective customer enquiry and records tracking</li> <li>▪ CRM implemented</li> </ul>

## **5.0 Review and Evaluation**

It is proposed this strategy is reviewed by a cross-functional team which includes customer service officers from all business units across the organisation and a reference group of customers. It is due for review in 2021.

The main evaluation mechanisms for the successful implementation of this strategy will include the following:

- Customer Service Metric benchmarks – Community Perception Scorecard
- Net Promoter Scores
- Customer Charter adopted and lived
- Customer Service Inductions and Training annually delivered
- Staff satisfaction survey scores – engaged internal culture
- Communication & Engagement policies and training delivered
- Accessibility testing compliance
- Customer Enquiry and Record Reports
- Complaints Handling Reports
- Customer Relationship Management tool implemented
- No of e-business service offerings available
- Change and improvement in services and workflow based on customer feedback

## **6.0 Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Issues Analysis**

#### **Customers Want More Choice and Flexibility in How they Interact With Us**

The key to effective communication is a consistent, proactive and seamless service experience across all interactions. There is a need to offer a diverse service, for our different customer types and identify the preferred communication channels for each customer. There is an expectation from customers their requests are resolved in a timely manner. The customers value knowledgeable employees who can answer questions directly or refer them onto the right person for a resolution. This will add greater value to each customer interaction.

#### **Customers Progressively Value Self-Service Technologies and Mobility**

While face to face contact will remain a vital part of our customer interaction, many customers want to find more information themselves as they seek greater autonomy and control over their interactions, information, and service delivery use. Customers expect access to self-service communication tools that are efficient, easy to use and available 24/7, mobile devices such as Tablets, Smartphones and other emerging devices.

Integrating self-service products and optimising the website for mobile access will greatly improve the customer experience and reduce our cost to serve customers. We will engage customers in the design process to ensure the usability and value of our self-service products.

#### **Value for Money Retains Its Importance**

Customers would like to know how we compare against other local governments in terms of reliability and cost-efficiencies. They expect to pay a reasonable price for an excellent service and need to have confidence we invest responsibly to meet current and emerging needs. Customers also want to know more about our planning to better understand and appreciate the value we provide through asset management. By engaging our Customers both individually and collectively, we can offer better value. Consultation in the early stages of new infrastructure or services, avoids unnecessary costs and the potential for complaints.

#### **Customers Require Clarity about Our Role, Our Brand and Our Processes**

Customers are looking for a single trusted advisor to provide accurate information to assist them in making informed decisions. Many customers claim they have been confused as to who we are and what we do. Local Government, being a highly regulated organisation operates under a highly complex compliance framework, comprising of many codes and practices within Australia. This makes the task of being able to keep customers informed, updated and educated about our functions and processes a key challenge. Gaining a greater understanding of the methods our customers use to communicate will allow us to release targeted messages and campaigns to boost brand awareness. Online communication channels such as the website and social media present an opportunity to

improve our brand perception. The use of rich media content engages and educates our customers.

### **Highly Valued Customer Service Attributes**

Research indicates there is a set of service attributes all customer segments highly value. These insights help us to determine where we should place emphasis in our service delivery and changes we may need to make to serve our customers in a way they most value.

### **Not All Customers Are the Same**

While there are common needs and service attributes across all customer segments, there are also specific needs that will improve the customer experience. For example, commercial and business customers will have complex development applications that will see their preference for face to face guidance throughout the planning processes. Whereas a customer wanting to use a recreation centre will want to be motivated to come back, so they will want a friendly, supportive and encouraging service experience. It is important the City identifies all its relevant customer segments and have targeted conversations, to identify evolving needs, wants and issues. This will enable delivery against changing expectations. Above all, our customers seek transparency in our operations.

## Appendix B - Customer Segments

### Our Key Customer Segments

Across the City there are five broad customer segments. The following provides a summarised profile of each customer segment, their characteristics, service attributes that are most important to them, their communication channel preferences and their priority needs. These insights help us determine where we should prioritise our resources to serve our customers in a way they most value.

### Residential

The City's residential population characteristics include a mix of different genders, ages, locations and life's stages. It includes:

- People where English is a second language
- People with disability or carers of others
- Tenants
- Property owners
- Mortgagees
- People experiencing hardship
- People living in medium and low density urban environments
- People living in large rural and agricultural properties

The diversity that exists in the City means our customers will have a wide range of demands and will expect the City to respond effectively to this diversity. This customer segment will have the greatest demand upon service delivery across all functions of the City, particularly around amenity of street scape, infrastructure, parks and community facilities. They will demand high quality services, as ratepayers they have an expectation of ownership of the City. These customers may require communication through various channels will predominantly focus on information about access to services.

### Business

The City has a number of commercial activity centres and industrial areas that include varying enterprises that operate largely independently of most City services. These customers rely on the City for highly effective and streamlined planning and building services, as well as amenities that will enable their workforce to live locally and utilise their businesses. Whilst the demand from this segment is not as regular as others, when they do require access to a service they will need it done quickly and accurately. Any delays will impact on the growth and profitability of their business.

### Community Organisations

The City has a significant number of community organisations who all have a wide range of service requirements, ranging from:

- Facility supply and management
- Maintenance
- Supporting events
- Partnering

- Assisting with establishment or growth plans
- Advocating on their behalf for funding and support from external funding sources

This customer segment demand effective and efficient delivery of services, as they operate with groups of people who themselves are reliant on the services and facilities provided by the City. This enables their activities in the delivery of community or recreation services. They will expect to receive priority service, as they see themselves as serving the community. These customers will expect communication to be regular and face to face whenever possible, particularly when solving problems or setting goals.

### **Government**

Includes government at all levels particularly where community projects are affected by the various departments and employees across the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local). Level of contact is prioritised according to whether the interaction is operational, for key projects or political.

### **Visitors**

Visitors to the region include day trip Perth and Western Australian residents, interstate and international guests who generally travel for a round trip commute from Perth and surrounding areas and are away from a home base for at least 4 hours at a time. They may or may not spend the night away as part of their travel.

These visitors typically come to the region for shopping, sightseeing, restaurants, to visit friends and relatives and to explore national parks. As a destination Local Government Tourism is a key pillar of economic development for the region and so customer service offerings in this space need to be high to attract and engage visitors to recommend and frequently return to the region. The appropriateness of employing and training casual and volunteer staff to assist in the Visitor Centre and with delivery of cultural events and activities, needs to be a key consideration in ensuring we deliver on expectations and service standards in this space.

# Appendix C - Resolve a Customer Request Workflow

## Summary

**Objective**  
To resolve a Customer Request

**Background**  
Required to ensure that the customer is served in a timely and appropriate manner

**Owner** Carrie Parsons

**Expert** Jenny Woodgate

## Procedure

### 1.0 Record Request Details

Initiator

- a Record customer details and request information. Follow the steps in the guide below.

 [Cheatsheet-for-using-the-Customer-Request-System.pdf](#)

- b Select the applicable service unit within SynergySoft

**NOTE** **What if the request is lodged in person?**  
Take the above notes and enter into SynergySoft

**NOTE** **What if the request is lodged via email or online request form?**  
Lodge the email into the SynergySoft system for actioning.

**NOTE** **What if the request is delivered directly to the staff member?**  
If the request is to be actioned by the staff member it is expected that the staff member will lodge the request to SynergySoft themselves. Otherwise the request is forwarded to SynergySoft Records to be actioned to the appropriate unit.

**NOTE** **What if the request is delivered by phone?**  
Check that you are qualified to action the request. If not, transfer the call to the appropriate unit. Appropriate person is to enter the request into SynergySoft.

**NOTE** **What if the request is received by post?**  
The request will be received by Records and then actioned into the SynergySoft program to the appropriate business unit.

**NOTE** **What if the request is received after hours?**  
The call centre will determine if the request can be actioned as a direct after hours phonecall to an individual or passed on as an email to the appropriate business unit.

### 2.0 Acknowledge the initiator

Responsible Officer (SynergySoft)

- a Provide an acknowledgement that the customer request has been received, and will be responded to as soon as possible.

### 3.0 Assign to Appropriate Officer

Responsible Officer (SynergySoft)

- a Receive notification in SynergySoft of a new record requiring action.

**NOTE** **Who will get this notification?**  
The responsible officer for the applicable business unit.

- b Action the request if qualified to do so

- c Allocate to an appropriate staff member to action.

**NOTE** **What happens next?**  
The request is actioned by the allocated staff member.

## PROCESS Service Delivery ALL STAFF

### 4.0 Record actions

ALL STAFF

- a Record actions completed in Service Delivery in the Customer Requests system in SynergySoft

 [Cheatsheet-for-using-the-Customer-Request-System.pdf](#)

### 5.0 Provide response to initiator

Responsible Officer (SynergySoft)

- a Provide a response to the resident, internal customer, or external stakeholder

**NOTE** **Provide response in most appropriate format**  
Provide response either by telephone, email or letter, depending on how the initiator asked for a response.

### 6.0 Close Customer Request

Responsible Officer (SynergySoft)

- a Complete the Customer Request in SynergySoft, adding the appropriate Action Date