

## Complaints handling at Council

### How does Council define a complaint?

Council's Complaint Handling policy defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. Please refer to the policy for exemptions at [www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au](http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

A complaint is not a request for service, such as requesting a pothole to be fixed or a second collection of your garbage bin.

### How can I lodge a complaint?

You can lodge a complaint by telephone, email, in person, in writing, via the website or by completing a form at Council.

### Will I receive an acknowledgement of my complaint?

Yes. Under Council's Customer Service Charter correspondence is to be acknowledged within seven days.

### How will my complaint be managed?

Complaints are registered in a central database and have a record number issued.

The complaint is then forwarded to the relevant officer to action. The officer will consider the complaint in accordance with the relevant Council policy/s and processes, together with any applicable legislation.

If the officer is unable to resolve the matter, it is then forwarded to the relevant section manager or group manager to consider and respond.

### Will I receive a response to my complaint?

Yes. Council will provide a response to your complaint.

### What will the time frame be to resolve the complaint?

Depending upon the nature of the complaint, Council endeavours to respond to complaints within 21 days. However each complaint will be assessed and advice will be provided on the particular matter should it exceed the 21 days.

### Can the matter be reviewed?

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response from Council, the matter can be escalated to the Council's Public Officer for a review of the matter.

The matter can also be referred to the Office of Local Government and/or the NSW Ombudsman where appropriate.

### How is complaints information used by Council?

The information collected as part of the complaints management process will be used to improve the services offered by Council. No personal information will be released to other parties as part of this process.

Information collected may be released in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

### For more information

[www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au](http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

(02) 4988 0255

[council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)