1. **PURPOSE**

1.1 This Charter sets out Council’s approach to managing customer enquiries, requests or complaints, and sets Council’s standards of service in responding to customers.

2. **SCOPE**

2.1 The Customer Service Charter applies to all enquiries, requests or complaints to council from its customers. Customers are defined as any persons or organisations that have any form of dealings with Council. This definition also includes Council staff, contractors and elected members.

3. **APPLICATION**

3.1 Objective

   (a) To provide a practical framework for customer service and to ensure that all staff respond in a courteous, consistent, timely and fair manner to all reasonable enquiries, requests, or complaints from customers; and

   (b) To ensure, as far as is practicable, that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively when dealing with customers’ enquiries, requests or complaints.

4. **LEGISLATION**

   *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*
   *Local Government Act 1993 (Tasmania) (S339F)*
   *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*
   *Right to Information Act 2009*
A OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

A.1 What can you expect from Council staff and services:
(a) Treat customers courteously and with respect;
(b) Listen to customers and take their views into account;
(c) Provide customers with necessary and relevant information;
(d) Act on our commitments in a timely manner;
(e) Value customers privacy by treating all personal information confidentially; and
(f) Be punctual for meetings and appointments.

B ENQUIRIES

B.1 When a customer visits or telephones the Council
(a) Staff who attend the counter and answer the telephone will courteously deal with an enquiry directly without unnecessary referrals or transfers;
(b) If staff are unable to deal with the enquiry they will provide the customer with the name of the relevant Department to whom the request will be referred;
(c) In the event that the information is not readily available the customer will be contacted directly; and
(d) Telephone calls to Council will be returned within 2 working days to provide a response to the initial enquiry or to advise the timeframe in which we can respond.

B.2 When a customer writes or emails
(a) Council will respond to all written requests or enquiries within 5 working days of receipt;
(b) Our response will either be in full, or as an acknowledgement outlining the name of the relevant department handling the matter. Such acknowledgement may be by telephone or in writing as appropriate; and
(c) All correspondence will be as prompt as possible, courteous and written in plain English.

C CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS

C.1 All customer enquiries and requests received by staff at Council are dealt with appropriately. If necessary, customer requests are entered into our Customer Request Management system to ensure they are directed to the appropriate officer for further actioning.

C.2 Where a service request is urgent, and the matter places the safety of the community at a high risk, the matter will be dealt with immediately where possible.
C.3 For routine service requests we will respond within 10 days and the customer will be informed of progress and/or proposed actions.

D COMPLAINTS

D.1 If you are dissatisfied or have concerns about the services, decisions or actions of Council we would like to hear about it:
   (a) We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days;
   (b) We will respond in full within 20 working days to allow for a full investigation;
   (c) There are times when it is not possible to meet this deadline, e.g. where a complaint is a complex one and Councillors are to be briefed on the outcome of the investigations. In these cases, we will keep the customer informed of progress and an expected completion date; and
   (d) If a complaint remains unresolved or a customer is dissatisfied with Council’s process in dealing with a complaint, other avenues remain for the customer which include:
      (i) Available Administrative Appeals process;
      (ii) The Judicial Review Act 2000; and
      (iii) External agencies which can review actions and decisions taken by Council such as:
         ▪ The Ombudsman who is located at 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart, 7000.
           Ph (03) 6233 6217.
         ▪ Local Government Division 15 Murray Street, Hobart, 7000.
           Ph (03) 6233 6758.

E EXPECTATIONS OF CUSTOMERS

E.1 Customers can help Council staff meet their commitments under our Customer Service Charter and Service Standards by:
   (a) Treating Council officers with respect;
   (b) Providing information that is clear, concise and complete;
   (c) Telephoning to make an appointment when there is a complex enquiry or a need to see a specific Council officer;
   (d) Giving reasonable opportunity to respond to any request or complaint; and
   (e) Respecting the privacy, safety and needs of other members of the community.

E.2 Abusive customers
   (a) In any interaction with customers where personal abuse or vulgar language is used, the communication may be terminated immediately by the Officer.
      (i) If face to face, the Officer will ask that the customer take a seat in the meeting room and they will arrange for a Senior Manager to meet with them.
(ii) If on the telephone, the Officer will terminate the call
(iii) If in email, the address may be blocked.

(b) If an Officer feels threatened by the language or behaviour of the customer, he/she may notify their Manager in the first instance for assistance but if the behaviour continues, notify Police.

(c) There may be occasions when the issue a person has cannot be dealt with to their satisfaction and it is not possible for council officers to continue to respond or where correspondence contains personal abuse or vulgar language. In these cases, Council may decide to limit or cease responses to that person. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing to the person.

F HOW YOU CAN CONTACT COUNCIL:

F.1 You can contact Council to make an enquiry, lodge a customer service request or a complaint:
(a) In person by visiting Council’s offices at 21 Saunders Street, Wynyard during the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday;
(b) In person by visiting Council’s offices at 12 Smith Street, Waratah during the hours of 8.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm Monday to Friday;
(c) By post to Waratah-Wynyard Council, PO Box 168, Wynyard, TAS 7325;
(d) By phoning 6443 8333 during the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm. Outside of these times all phone calls will be diverted to our After-Hours Emergency Service;
(e) By email to: council@warwyn.tas.gov.au;
(f) Via internet on the Council website at: www.warwyn.tas.gov.au; and
(g) Via social media: Facebook – www.facebook.com/WaratahWynyardCouncil.

G PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION

G.1 Council has a commitment to protection of Personal Information provided by a customer to Council in accordance with the requirements of the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 and the Right to Information Act 2009.

G.2 The Right to Information Act 2009 allows for a person to obtain certain information that is held by the Council that is not already publicly available.

H MEASURING PERFORMANCE

H.1 An internal audit process will be developed to monitor performance during the first half of 2018-19.
I. REPORTING

I.1 The General Manager is to provide Council with a report at least once per annum of the number and nature of complaints received in accordance with Section 339F (5) of the Local Government Act 1993.

J. AVAILABILITY

J.1 This Customer Service Charter is available for public inspection at the Council office during normal business hours or on the Council's website in accordance with Section 339F (3) of the Local Government Act 1993.

K. REVIEW

K.1 This Customer Service Charter will be reviewed at least once every 2 years in accordance with Section 339F (4) of the Local Government Act 1993.