



Limits on Service Policy

Important

This document contains important information about Rockdale City Council. If you do not understand, please visit Council's Customer Service Centre at 2 Bryant Street Rockdale, Monday – Friday from 8.30am – 4.30pm. Council Staff will be happy to arrange interpreter services for you.

You may also contact Telephone Interpreter Services on 131 450 and ask them to ring Rockdale City Council on 9562 1666 on your behalf.

Arabic

هام:

تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على معلومات هامة عن بلدية روكدايل. إذا لم تكن قادراً على فهمها، يرجى زيارة مركز خدمة زبائن البلدية على العنوان التالي: 2 Bryant Street في روكدايل من الإثنين إلى الجمعة بين الساعة ٨،٣٠ صباحاً و ٤،٣٠ مساءً، حيث سيقوم موظفو البلدية بتأمين مترجم لك بكل سرور.

كما يمكنك الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية على الرقم 131 450 والطلب منهم الاتصال ببلدية روكدايل على الرقم 9562 1666 نيابةً عنك.

Italian

Importante:

Questo documento contiene importanti informazioni sul Comune di Rockdale City. Se avete difficoltà a comprenderne il contenuto, recatevi presso il Customer Service Centre del Comune a 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale dal lunedì al venerdì dalle ore 8.30 alle 16.30. Il personale del Comune sarà ben lieto di procurarvi un servizio interpreti.

Potete anche chiamare il Servizio telefonico interpreti (TIS) al numero 131 450 chiedendo che telefoni per vostro conto al Comune di Rockdale City al numero 9562 1666.

Chinese

重要消息

本文件載有關於 Rockdale 市政府的重要資訊，如果您有不明之處，請於星期一至星期五，上午 8 時 30 分至下午 4 時 30 分，前來位於 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale，市政府的顧客服務中心。市政府的職員會很樂意為您安排傳譯員的服務。

您也可以聯絡電話傳譯服務處，電話 131 450，並請他們代您致電 9562 1666 給 Rockdale 市政府。

Macedonian

Важно:

Ова документ содржи важни информации за Rockdale City Council (Градската општина на Rockdale). Ако не го разбирате, ве молиме, посетете го општинскиот Customer Service Centre (Центар за услуги на клиенти), кој се наоѓа на 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, од понеделник до петок, од 8.30 наутро до 4.30 попладне. Вработените во општината со задоволство ќе ви организираат да користите преведувач.

Исто така, можете да телефонирате во Telephone Interpreter Services (Служба за преведување по телефон) на 131 450, и да ги замолиме во ваше име да се јават во Градската општина на Rockdale на 9562 1666.

Greek

Σημαντικό:

Αυτό το έγγραφο περιέχει σημαντικές πληροφορίες για τη Δημαρχία Rockdale City Council. Αν δεν τις καταλαβαίνετε, παρακαλείσθε να επισκεφτείτε το Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Πελατών [Customer Service Centre] του Δήμου στο 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή από 8.30πμ - 4.30μμ. Το Προσωπικό του Δήμου θα χαρεί να κανονίσει υπηρεσίες διερμηνέων για σας.

Μπορείτε επίσης να επικοινωνήσετε με τις Τηλεφωνικές Υπηρεσίες Διερμηνέων [Telephone Interpreter Services] στο 131 450 και να τους ζητήσετε να τηλεφωνήσουν στο Rockdale City Council στο 9562 1666 για λογαριασμό σας.

Spanish

Importante:

Este documento contiene información importante sobre el Rockdale City Council (Municipio de Rockdale). Si no la entiende, le rogamos concurrir al Centro de Servicio al Cliente del Municipio, ubicado en 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, atención de lunes a Viernes, de 8:30 am a 4:30 pm. El personal del municipio se complacerá en obtener los servicios de un intérprete para usted.

Puede asimismo llamar al Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes al 131 450 y pedirles que llamen de su parte al Rockdale City Council, teléfono 9562 1666.

Caring for the Environment

— In the interest of protecting and preserving our environment, Rockdale City Council uses Nordset paper for all of its pre-printed paper requirements.

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Introduction

Rockdale City Council is committed to delivering quality customer services and to communicating effectively with our customers and the local community. Council has adopted a Customer Service and Communication policy that reflects this commitment.

The Customer Service and Communication policy:

- outlines Council's commitment to quality service and effective communication
- specifies Council's guarantees of service
- describes the responsibilities of members of the public in their dealings with the Council and the actions that members of the public may take if Council does not meet its commitments as set out in this policy
- provides the basis for a program for improving service and communication between Council and the local community.

Council accepts and values complaints and criticism because such feedback can be used to improve our performance. However, Council will place limits on communication where it becomes abusive of people or resources. This is in the interests of responsible management of Council's limited resources and fulfils Council's occupational health and safety obligations as a responsible employer.

This policy is based on a model policy that has been published by the NSW Ombudsman: 'Better Service and Communication Guidelines for Local Government' (June 2000).

Policy Objectives

This policy will:

- describe the types of situations which may result in Council imposing a limit on communication
- outline the actions Council may take if members of the public do not meet their responsibilities as set out in Council's Customer Service and Communication policy or otherwise become abusive of Council's staff or resources;
- outline the process Council will follow in imposing such a limit
- confirm Council's commitment to using alternative dispute resolution procedures to resolve disputes and conflict quickly and effectively rather than pursuing costly legal action for defamation or threatened defamation proceedings involving Councillors and Council staff.

The Customer Service and Communication Policy also outlines actions members of the local community and other customers can take if Council does not honour its commitments as set out in the policy.

Who can place limits on service or communication and what is the process?

Limits on services from Council and communication with Council will only be applied:

- on the decision of the General Manager or their delegate or the elected Council
- in serious cases of inappropriate conduct
- only if the person concerned has first been warned about the consequences of persisting with the identified inappropriate conduct.

Council:

- will set the limits out in writing and include a statement of reasons for their imposition
- will keep an accurate record of the limit imposed and will, on request, review the limitation after a three month period
- will not impose unconditional limits on communication between Council and any member of the public
- will not impede the statutory rights of the public to information (eg under the Freedom of Information Act, the Local Government Act or the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act).

What situations might result in limits being imposed and what might those limits be?

The following limits will be considered subject to the preconditions outlined above.

- If Council receives correspondence that contains substantial inappropriate content (such as abusive or threatening language or negative personal reflections on individuals), Council may advise the sender that the sender will not receive a substantive reply.
- If a caller to Council uses inappropriate language (such as strong abusive or threatening language or language casting negative personal reflections on individuals), Council staff may terminate the telephone call.
- If Council receives persistent calls from a member of the public during which inappropriate language is used, Council may advise the caller (both personally and subsequently in writing) that in future, business is to be transacted only in writing.
- If a person being personally interviewed by Council staff continues to use inappropriate language (such as strong abusive language or threatening language or language casting negative personal reflections on individuals) or otherwise behaves inappropriately (such as acting in an overtly aggressive or threatening manner), Council may terminate the interview.
- If a person repeatedly addresses meetings of Council on the same or similar issues and, as a result, other members of the public are unreasonably deprived of the opportunity to address meetings, Council may impose limits on the number of opportunities it will give to that person to address meetings on similar issues.

- If following a thorough examination of a complaint and a proper internal review of that decision, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, Council may place limits on further communications with the complainant regarding the complaint (including filing, but not acknowledging, further correspondence that does not raise new information or referring the complainant to an appropriate external agency).
- If Council believes, on reasonable grounds, that information available to a complainant is being provided to Council in a selective way, Council may advise the complainant to immediately pass on all relevant material to the Council so that the matter can be properly assessed. If this is not done Council may decide not to consider further material unless a satisfactory explanation is given to explain why the material was not supplied earlier.
- If a person places what, viewed reasonably, are excessive demands on the resources of Council in responding to continual and extensive demands for information, Council may, if it is satisfied that the resource demands in responding to these contacts are excessive, place specific limits on the manner and/or degree to which it will respond to these demands. These limits may include:
 - ♦ providing information only if Council is under a statutory responsibility to do so
 - ♦ using identified contact people in Council to deal with the matter
 - ♦ using newsletters and the like to distribute information more efficiently
 - ♦ making Council's relevant files available for inspection to the person.
- If a person continually raises new issues with the Council, particularly where these issues are not issues in which the individual has a significant personal interest or does not represent a broader interest group in the local community, Council may, if it determines that the resource demands in responding to these contacts are excessive, place specific limits on the degree to which it will respond to these communications. Such limits may include ceasing to respond to correspondence unless it raises new and significant issues or placing numerical limits on the number of inquiries it will respond to in a designated period.

How can you request a review of a decision to impose a limit on service from Council or communication with Council?

A review of a decision to limit service or communication will only be conducted after a three month period and on receipt of a request from the person on whom the limitation was imposed.

An application for such a review should be made in writing to the General Manager.

If a member of the public remains unsatisfied with the results of the internal review they may wish to pursue other forms of action such as through external agencies or the courts. Council's Customer Service and Communications Policy and Complaints Policy provide contact details for other agencies that receive complaints about councils. The Complaints Policy also provides a summary of the role of the various agencies and the types of complaints that each considers in relation to councils.

Commitment to Alternative Dispute Resolution

Council is committed to minimising any impact on the rights of members of the public to participate in the affairs of Council and to the speedy and cost effective resolution of disputes and conflict.

Council notes that despite its commitment to quality service and improved communications, there may be occasions where conflict between Council (including staff and Councillors) and members of the public escalates to the point where the parties feel the need to resort to legal action such as defamation proceedings or applying for apprehended violence orders.

Legal action is draining on Council's and individual's resources and for this reason Council considers that legal action should be pursued only when all other reasonable and appropriate alternatives to resolving disputes have been attempted.

Council will therefore encourage and assist the parties of disputes which could lead to defamation proceedings or applications for apprehended violence orders, to resolve these disputes through other means (such as by engaging appropriate external mediators). In the case of action taken against Council, Councillors and/or Council staff, Council may contribute towards the cost of any mediation.

Council also supports the use of alternative dispute resolution to resolve disputes and conflicts between members of the community which are related to matters that fall under Council determination (refer to Council's universal guarantee of service, Using Alternative Dispute Resolution Methods).

Other Relevant Council Policies

Council's policies can be viewed at or obtained from Council's Customer Service Centre or Libraries.

The following policies are particularly relevant to this Policy:

- Customer Service and Communication Policy including Guarantees of Service
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Code of Planning Practice
- Customer Complaints Policy

Comments Welcome

Comments and feedback on this policy are welcome and should be directed to Council's Manager - Communication & Community Relations. These can be emailed to customerfeedback@rockdale.nsw.gov.au or sent via the contact details on the back cover of this document.

This policy was prepared by Council's
Communications & Community Relations Unit

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