

Policy Summary

Purpose	To establish Council's principles for identifying and managing conduct that raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues, while preserving legitimate complaint and access rights.	
Scope	Applies to all public interactions with Council and to Councillors, Council officers, contractors, volunteers and authorised representatives responding to those interactions.	
Principles	Council's approach to Unreasonable Customer and Complainant Conduct is underpinned by the following principles: • Open access, fairness and respect • Conduct, not labels • Proportionality and responsiveness • Health, safety, resources and equity • Procedural fairness and accountability	
Roles and responsibilities	Council	Adopts the Policy and sets Council's strategic position.
	Chief Executive Officer	Ensures implementation through the supporting Procedure and governance controls.
	Executive Leadership Team	Supports systematic and consistent application and monitors significant risks.
	Directors and Managers	Support officers and ensure decisions are within authority and proportionate.
	Governance	Maintains the framework and provides complaints, RTI, privacy and human rights advice.
	Officers and representatives	Treat people fairly and respectfully, communicate clearly, keep good records and apply approved strategies.
Review	23 September 2030	
Owner	Manager Governance	

Unreasonable Customer and Complainant Conduct

1. Purpose

People have a right to complain about perceived failings or issues that affect them. Officers and members of the public also have a right to dignity, physical and emotional safety and respect.

The purpose of this Policy is to establish Council's principles for identifying and managing unreasonable customer and complainant conduct in order to protect health and safety, ensure fairness, and support the efficient, equitable and appropriate allocation of Council resources.

The Policy focuses on conduct rather than individuals and preserves legitimate rights to complain, seek information, criticise Council and access review mechanisms.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to conduct arising in all interactions with Council, including customer service, complaints, requests for service, statutory applications, community engagement, correspondence, telephone and digital channels, meetings Council facilities and Council events.

It applies to customers, complainants, ratepayers, applicants, service users, representatives and other members of the public, and to Councillors, Council officers, contractors, volunteers and authorised representatives responding to those interactions. Where a statutory process applies, that process must be followed.

3. Intent

Council is committed to open, accessible, transparent and accountable engagement. Most people interact with Council cooperatively and respectfully, and Council recognises that complainants who are heard, properly informed and treated respectfully are more likely to respond positively, including where an outcome is unfavourable.

Unreasonable customer and complainant conduct is conduct that raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council, its officers, other customers or members of the public. Council will balance individual complaint and access rights with the rights of others and the fair delivery of services to the broader community.

4. Principles

Council's approach to Unreasonable Customer and Complainant Conduct is underpinned by the following principles:

Principle	Description
Open access, fairness and respect	People have a right to complain about perceived failings or issues that affect them. Council will hear, properly inform and treat people fairly and respectfully, while recognising the dignity and physical and emotional safety of officers and members of the public.
Conduct, not labels	Council will avoid labelling people and will respond to observable conduct. Challenging or difficult conduct is not necessarily unreasonable. The issues raised will be considered separately from the person's conduct.
Proportionality and responsiveness	Council's response will take account of the circumstances, likely impacts, merit of the issues raised and human rights compatibility. Strategies will be responsive to the identified conduct and proportionate to its impact and risk. Council will use the least restrictive strategy reasonably available to prevent or minimise the effect of the conduct.
Health, safety, resources and equity	Council will effectively identify and manage conduct that raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council, its officers and other customers and members of the public.
Procedural fairness and accountability	Material decisions will be authorised, comprehensive and timely records kept, restrictions communicated with reasons, and review or appeal provided where appropriate. Statutory rights will be preserved.

5. Outcomes

This Policy is designed to deliver the following organisational and governance outcomes:

- People retain fair and accessible pathways to raise concerns, make complaints, seek information, criticise Council and access review mechanisms.
- The health, safety, dignity and wellbeing of officers, complainants and others are protected.
- Complaint and customer service processes remain fair, consistent, responsive and equitable.
- Council resources are allocated efficiently and appropriately across the community.
- Unreasonable conduct is prevented or minimised where possible and managed systematically, consistently and proportionately.
- Decisions are based on observable conduct, documented reasons, human rights compatibility and appropriate review.

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6. Policy Statement

A person's conduct is not necessarily unreasonable because it is challenging or difficult to manage. Council will separate the person's conduct from the issues raised and respond to observable conduct rather than labels.

The purpose of categorising conduct is to identify conduct that may affect how Council manages an interaction and to support a suitable response. Consistent with the Queensland Ombudsman framework, conduct may be considered by reference to persistence, demands, level of cooperation, arguments and behaviour.

Council will apply a systematic and consistent approach to assessing conduct and selecting strategies. Responses will take account of the circumstances, likely impacts on officers, other customers and service delivery, the merit of the issues raised, human rights compatibility, proportionality and responsiveness.

Council may implement reasonable and proportionate arrangements to prevent or minimise unreasonable conduct, protect health and safety, ensure fairness and support the efficient and equitable allocation of Council resources. Council will use the least restrictive strategy reasonably available.

Significant restrictions on communication, contact, or access to Council premises, facilities or services will only be imposed where reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the identified conduct and risk. Necessary emergency, essential service and statutory access pathways will be preserved.

Council may decline to provide repeated substantive responses to matters that have been appropriately considered and finalised unless materially new and relevant information is provided. This does not limit Council's legal, safety or statutory obligations.

This Policy does not remove or restrict statutory rights. Repeated or unreasonable use of Right to Information processes will be managed under the *Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*. Any concerns regarding frequency or nature of applications made under those Acts will be addressed through the relevant legislative processes rather than through restrictions imposed under this Policy.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Council	Adopts this Policy and sets the strategic expectation that unreasonable conduct is prevented or minimised and managed lawfully, fairly and consistently.
Mayor and Councillors	Support respectful community engagement and refer operational management of conduct to the Chief Executive Officer or authorised officers.
Chief Executive Officer	Ensures implementation through the supporting Procedure, delegations, policies, protocols, training and reporting.
Executive Leadership Team	Supports systematic and consistent application and monitors substantial health, safety, resource and equity issues.

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Role	Responsibilities
Directors and Managers	Support officers, assess or escalate significant conduct, ensure decisions are within authority, and oversee implementation and monitoring of strategies.
Manager Governance	Governance maintains the framework and provides advice.
Officers and authorised representatives	Officers and authorised representatives treat people fairly and respectfully, communicate clearly, respond to observable conduct and keep comprehensive records.

8. Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring and scheduled review will support continuing effectiveness and legislative alignment. Council will monitor significant management and restriction decisions, incident and risk trends, effects on safety and service accessibility, complaints and review outcomes, statutory compliance and relevant external guidance.

9. Related Documents

- Unreasonable Customer and Complainant Conduct Procedure
- Customer Service Charter
- General Complaints Management Policy and Guideline
- Administrative Action Complaints Management Policy and Guideline
- Information Privacy and Right to Information documents
- Human Rights framework and assessment process
- Employee and Councillor Codes of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety framework and incident reporting processes
- Records Management requirements
- *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)*
- *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- Queensland Ombudsman guidance and resources

10. Version Control

Version	Reason/Trigger	Resolution Number	Date
1	New principle-based Council Policy incorporating the Notice of Motion and revised Queensland Ombudsman guidance.	OM2026/09/23.15	23/09/2026

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