

# Hawkesbury City Council

## Complaints Handling Guide

### Dissatisfied with Council?

Hawkesbury City Council understands that we may not always be able to meet our customer's expectations and that from time to time we may unintentionally fail to provide a service in accordance with our service standards.

Council welcomes feedback from our customers and is committed to working with customers to try to resolve complaints.

Sometimes this may not be possible, and we can advise you of the avenues of appeal that are available to you if you are dissatisfied with Council's response to your complaint.

### Lodging a complaint

You can make a complaint by:

<b>Telephone</b>	(02) 4560 4444
<b>Fax</b>	(02) 4587 7740
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au">council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au</a>
<b>Post</b>	General Manager PO Box 146 WINDSOR NSW 2756
<b>In Person</b>	Customer Service Centre 366 George Street Windsor

**Note:** Some complaints may be accepted in writing only.

### The details you should provide

To help us to process your complaint we would ask you to provide your **name, address, contact details** and a **brief and clear description of the problem**, so that if necessary, we can contact you to discuss your complaint and provide you with written advice on the outcome of your complaint.

### Complaints Handling Procedure

#### The process

Our aim is to work with you to resolve your complaint at your first contact with our staff. If this is not possible, your complaint will be referred to a more senior staff member who will coordinate the investigation of the issues or allegations raised in your complaint.

You will be advised that your complaint has been received and who will be dealing with your complaint. We will investigate your complaint in accordance with the processes outlined in our *Complaints Policy* which can be accessed from our website at: [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/council/policies](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/council/policies).

### Who will investigate your complaint?

#### Customer Service Complaints

Depending on their content, complaints about Council's services or Council decisions will be referred to the General Manager or Customer Service Manager. The General Manager or Customer Service Manager will refer the complaint to the appropriate senior staff member who will investigate the issues raised in the complaint and either provide a report to the General Manager or respond directly to you about the outcomes of the investigation.

#### Complaints about Staff

Complaints against staff, contractors, or volunteers will be referred to the General Manager. The General Manager will forward the complaint to a Council Manager or Director who will investigate the issues raised in the complaint and provide a report to the General Manager on the result of the investigation.

The General Manager will then consider the findings of the investigation together with other relevant information and advise you of the outcome of your complaint.

## **'Code of Conduct' complaints about Staff or Councillors**

Council has adopted a Code of Conduct (based on the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils issued by the NSW Government) which sets out the conduct obligations required of Council staff and elected officials (Councillors).

The Code of Conduct includes procedures for dealing with complaints alleging a breach of the Code. Code of Conduct complaints will be referred to the General Manager who will deal with the complaint in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

The Code can be accessed from our website at [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/council/policies](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/council/policies).

Some complaints may be referred directly to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

### **Will you be advised of the outcome of your complaint?**

You will be contacted by the Council Officer dealing with your complaint and advised of the outcome of the investigation, and where necessary what action has been taken in response to your complaint.

This advice will be forwarded to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. If this is not possible, you will be advised of the reasons and the approximate time frame when the investigation will be completed.

### **What can you do if you are still dissatisfied with Council's response?**

If we have been unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you can request an internal review of the handling of your complaint.

Your request for an internal review will be referred to Council's Public Officer who will appoint a senior staff member to review and investigate the unresolved complaint. The person dealing with the original complaint will not be involved in conducting the internal review.

You will be contacted by the Council Officer conducting the internal review to advise you of the result of the review and any further actions taken in response to your complaint. This advice will be forwarded to you within 15 working days of the referral of your unresolved complaint.

Should you still be dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can take your complaint to an external agency for further review. These external agencies are listed in our *Complaints Policy*.

## **Your Rights and Responsibilities**

To ensure a high standard of service to our customers and to meet our duty of care obligations to our staff, we will apply the following 'ground rules' to our complaint handling process:

<b>The responsibilities of Hawkesbury City Council</b>	<b>Your responsibilities when you make a complaint</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>handling your complaint professionally, efficiently and fairly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>providing Council with a clear idea of the problem and the solution you want</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>giving you reasons for our decisions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>cooperating with Council</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>treating you with respect</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>treating Council with respect</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>determining how your complaint will be investigated, who will handle it and what should be the outcome</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>seeking a further review if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>keeping you informed of our progress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>giving Council all the relevant information you have (or know about) at the beginning</li></ul>



This document contains important information.  
If you do not understand it, contact the  
Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.



### **Hawkesbury City Council**

Address: 366 George Street  
Windsor NSW 2756  
Mailing Address: PO Box 146  
WINDSOR NSW 2756  
Phone: (02) 4560 4444  
Fax: (02) 4587 7740  
Email: [council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)  
Council Website: [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)  
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am-5pm

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