



*Centennial Park*

**CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS  
And  
COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY**

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Chief Executive Officer  
Centennial Park Cemetery Authority

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**Date**

October 2009

Policy Review Date:

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**Date**

October 2010

Next Policy Review Date:


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**Date**

Issue Date:


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|   |  | <b>Next Review:</b> | October 2010 |

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## **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS & COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY**

### **PART 1: CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Centennial Park's customers are integral to its success and a strong and viable future. Part of the Centennial Park Cemetery Authority's vision is the provision of a high level of customer service.

The Customer Service Standards and Complaints Handling Policy has been written to ensure staff have clear guidelines and expectations in relation to providing excellent customer service.

#### **2 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

We are committed to achieving excellence and will strive to deliver services in a professional, consistent, coordinated and timely manner. We will respect our customers, colleagues and Board Members, and as an organisation we will endeavour to anticipate, and where possible exceed our customers' needs and expectations.

#### **3 CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE**


##### **3.1 Face to Face:**

- As soon as a customer enters your area, smile, establish eye contact and ask if you can be of assistance.
- It is important to try and establish your customer's name and to use it in your dealings with him or her.
- Staff will be provided with and wear visibly an accredited identification badge. If a customer asks to view details of the identification badge, the staff member will show it to them.
- Leave a calling card with your name and contact telephone number when you call at a customer's home or business.
- Be punctual for meetings and appointments and as well as listening carefully to your customer's questions or requirements, take notes if necessary.
- Once you have established contact with a customer, take responsibility for the action taken. If referred to a third person, follow up to be sure satisfaction has been achieved, or if your service delivery promise cannot be met, contact your customer to apologise and explain.

##### **3.2 Telephone Calls**

- Endeavour to answer your telephone within three rings.
- Answer the telephone with a positive tone and greet your customer with the words "Good morning/afternoon, Centennial Park" or your Team name and state your name. The preferred greeting would also include "How can I help you?"

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- Answer any unattended telephone ringing within your area (and if necessary, within earshot) and:
- Try to ascertain the purpose of the call and either attend to the call, or leave a message including the time of the call, name of the caller, the purpose of the call and a contact telephone number for the intended recipient.
- Use the organisational telephone listing to transfer the call to the appropriate staff member, if available.

### Hints on Telephone Customer Service:


- Listen carefully to identify your customer's needs.
- Before transferring a call to another person, announce the customer and the nature of their request.
- When accepting a call from another department introduce yourself, address the customer by name and briefly summarise the nature of their request.
- Ask for permission before placing a customer 'on hold'. "Do you mind if I place you on hold?" and wait for an answer from the customer.
- Return to 'on hold' customers as quickly as possible to advise the customer on the status of the call. Thank the customer for holding.
- If still 'on hold' after two minutes, take a message, asking for a convenient time to return their call.
- Before closing the conversation, ask if there is anything else you can be of assistance with, then use a positive closing such as "Thank you" or "Thank you for calling", "Goodbye".
- Each of Centennial Park's Teams are responsible for managing telephone coverage in their areas from 8:30am – 5:00pm.
- The speaker function is generally not suitable for an open office environment, however if there is a need for a three-way conversation please ensure the person on the other end is aware that they will be placed on speaker phone.

### 3.3 Email

- Check your email at regular intervals (eg, hourly).
- Aim to acknowledge all electronic mail within one working day.
- Aim to provide a detailed response to all electronic mail within five (5) working days.
- Acknowledge within two (2) working days any emails that you are unable to reply to within five (5) days. Include an anticipated response time and the reasons for the delay. Ensure you respond by this date.
- Make hard copies of emails which need to be retained for record keeping purposes.
- The "out of office" feature should be used when you are on leave. Include details of another person for the customer to contact in your absence.

### 3.4 Correspondence

- Acknowledge all written correspondence within three (3) working days.
- Provide an expanded response to written correspondence within ten (10) days. Include an anticipated response time and the reasons for the delay. Ensure you respond by this date.

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### 3.5 Customer Requests

- Clearly explain to the customer a response time for their request to be addressed or completed. Ensure you respond by this date.

### 3.6 Corporate Standards

- All correspondence is to be prepared and presented in accordance with the organisation's Corporate Standards.

## 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is ultimately responsible for the level of Customer Service provided by the organisation, although responsibilities arising out of the implementation of Customer Service initiatives are delegated to all staff throughout the organisation.

### 4.2 Leadership Team

Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring their teams know, understand, are properly trained and deliver the appropriate levels of customer service. This includes giving staff timely information on their customer service performance.

### 4.3 All Staff

All staff are responsible for implementing the relevant customer service initiatives and pursuing the commitment and standards outlined in this policy.


### 4.4 Staff Customer Commitment

- In all my dealings with customers I will listen carefully, be respectful, fair, courteous and mindful that I represent the Centennial Park Cemetery Authority.
- I will treat everyone as my customer including my fellow staff members and Board Members.
- I will listen carefully and make every effort to understand my customers and address their needs by asking questions and confirming details.
- I will respect confidentiality and be discreet where possible.
- Once I have dealt with a customer, I will take responsibility for follow-up actions, and keep my customer informed on the progress of their request.
- I will reply to all messages, including telephone messages, as promptly as possible (usually within 24 hours).
- I will acknowledge complaints as an opportunity to put things right or improve our services.

## PART 2: COMPLAINTS HANDLING

### 1 INTRODUCTION

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Centennial Park recognises the importance of complaints to the organisation and regards them as opportunities to correct or improve our services. Complaints provide the organisation with an opportunity to gather information and improve on a variety of services, service delivery methods, and customers' needs and expectations.

**2 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

The Chief Executive Officer is committed to providing a high level of Customer Service for the Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, and is ultimately responsible for the level of Customer Service, although responsibilities arising out of the implementation of the Complaints Handling Policy are delegated throughout the organisation.

**3 IDENTIFYING A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the organisation or its representatives, that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected. This includes complaints about service that has been, or should have been delivered. Complaints can originate from members of the public, Board Members, contractors, industry partners or staff.

All staff are empowered to handle complaints in the first instance and it is preferred they are dealt with promptly at the initial point of contact.

**4 MATTERS FOR ATTENTION**


Matters for Attention (MFAs) are Centennial Park's internal system for recording, measuring and following up customer complaints. MFAs are recorded by staff and coordinated by the Administration Receptionist, who distributes them to the appropriate staff members for action. It is recommended that once action is completed, the person making the complaint is contacted to ensure the action taken is satisfactory.

**5 COMPLAINTS INVOLVING A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AUTHORITY**

There are many representatives of the Centennial Park Cemetery Authority. Complaints of this nature are handled differently depending on the representative involved.

- a. Staff member:** This may relate to how a staff member has behaved or undertaken their responsibilities. All complaints regarding a staff member must be referred to the Chief Executive Officer and handled according to the accompanying procedure.

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**b. Board member:** This may relate to how a Board member has conducted themselves or undertaken their responsibilities. All complaints regarding Board members are referred to the Board Chairperson and handled in accordance with the Code of Conduct Policy.

**c. Contractor:** This may relate to how a contractor has conducted themselves or undertaken their responsibilities. All complaints are referred to the Manager responsible for the specific work being undertaken by the contractor.

## 6 COMPLAINTS GOVERNED BY LEGISLATION OR STATUTORY REVIEW

The Authority is limited in its power by policies and/or legislation. When a customer complains about a problem which exceeds the Authority's jurisdiction, they may be referred to an external source.

It is important that the complainant is provided with details of the relevant body and policy and/or legislation to assist them to understand the Authority's role.

## 7 COMPLAINTS DISCLOSING PUBLIC INTEREST INFORMATION

Any complaints which disclose "public interest information" that a customer believes, on reasonable grounds, is or may be true are to be handled in accordance with the Whistleblowers Policy.

Information that may be disclosed must be of public interest and includes:

- Any adult, body corporate or government agency that is/was involved in illegal activity; substantial mismanagement of public resources; conduct that causes substantial public risk to health, safety or environment; irregular/unauthorised use of public money; or


Maladministration by a public officer of official functions.

## 8 INTERNAL REVIEW COMPLAINTS

Sometimes complaints regarding a decision about a policy, procedure, service or fee require a formal application to be lodged. All attempts will be exhausted before this process occurs.

## 9 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Occasionally complaints will be received which require records to be researched and information of a personal nature to be assessed to establish whether the information may be released. These complaints are to be forwarded to the Freedom of Information Officer for follow up and forwarding of a response in writing to the complainant.

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**10 NATIONAL COMPETITION COMPLAINTS**

Any complaints received in relation to the Authority’s activities under Competitive Neutrality are to be handled in accordance with the National Competition Policy (NCP).

**11 PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

Every effort should be made to resolve a complaint and respond to the customer within three (3) working days, though earlier resolution is preferable.

A customer may register a complaint in writing or verbally. If the complaint requires an internal review or is against a staff member, the complaint must be submitted in writing, and an audit trail documented where appropriate.

The principles of natural justice will be observed. This means processes will be fair, equitable and reasonable. All parties will have access to relevant information and are able to respond where relevant.

Staff should assess the impact or risk to the Authority, the community or the individual when dealing with a complaint. If there is a likelihood of publicity, the Chief Executive Officer should be notified immediately.

Customers retain the right to contact the Ombudsman, seek legal advice and refer their matters to the court with any type of complaint.

**12 RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Leadership**

Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring their teams know, understand, are properly trained and deliver the appropriate levels of customer service. This includes giving staff timely information on their customer service performance.

**13 REFERENCES:**

- 13.1 Charter
- 13.2 Code of Conduct Policy
- 13.3 National Competition Policy
- 13.4 Freedom of Information Statement
- 13.5 Electronic Records Management Policy

**SIGNED:** .....  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_