

STRATEGY

Corporate Image Communication & Customer Service Strategy



KEMPSEY
Shire Council



Strategy

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CORPORATE IMAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

Kempsey Shire Council's Corporate Image, Communication & Customer Service Strategy will aim to:-

1. Corporate Image Objectives

- a) create a positive and professional image for Kempsey Shire Council through clearly defined roles for Councillors, Management and staff and clarification of Department responsibilities relating to corporate image, communication and customer service within Kempsey Shire Council.
- b) provide guidelines to ensure consistency in activities, communication and customer service within Council.
- c) take advantage of public relations opportunities to build bridges within the community
- d) reinforce the importance of issues and crisis management and planning.

2. Communication Objectives

- a) improve the level of internal and external communication within Council
- b) consult with the community, identify opportunities and methods for effective consultation, encourage public participation and provide feedback to the community.
- c) develop a strong and cooperative relationship with local and regional media and enhance management and staff's media skills

3. Customer Service Objectives

- a) develop a strong customer service focus within Kempsey Shire Council.

This strategy describes methods by which these objectives can be achieved and maintained. Central to the success of this Strategy will be a range of techniques that will involve the community in Council's policies, services and activities.

It is of interest that in our day-to-day dealings with the public, we have the opportunity to advance the image of Council to all stakeholders. The most comprehensive strategy will fail if day-to-day dealings with our stakeholders are less than optimum.

The way in which we answer and respond to phone calls, letters, faxes and emails, combined with our face-to-face contact with customers, has the greatest impact on how Council is perceived in the community. Common courtesy, the ability to listen with interest, a genuine effort to offer help to the customer and using simple English are just some of the methods that can be used to ensure Council's corporate image is protected and enhanced.

Opportunities continually arise for Councillors, Management and staff to be actively involved with residents on joint projects that will benefit the community. This is an extremely positive method of enhancing Council's image in the community, as it is highly visible and emphasises the fact that Council works for, and cares about, its community.

The real essence of public relations and corporate image is common sense corporate interaction with the customer i.e. **communication** – constant, consistent and truthful information disseminated as a genuine act of service. Paramount to this communication process is a strong belief amongst management and staff in Council's Mission Statement and a thorough understanding of Council's Vision and Values.

In short, the success of this strategy is reliant on people (Councillors, Management, staff and our stakeholders) and all forms of communication which will result in the organisation developing a genuine customer focus.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey Pty Ltd, NSW Ombudsman "Better Service and Communication – Guidelines for Local Government", Department of Local Government "Complaints Management in Council's, Practice Note No.9, 1994, Local Government and Shires Association, Bankstown City Council, Hastings Council, Warringah Council, Dubbo Shire Council, Rockdale City Council, Hurstville City Council, Maclean Council, Tallaganda Shire Council, Parkes Shire Council, Mudgee Shire Council, Sutherland Shire Council and Queanbeyan City Council, members of the LGPRA, IAP2 and members of IAP2, Rodney Gray, Employee Communication & Surveys, and officers of other Local Government Areas who have responded to emails and phone calls requesting information on the numerous subjects covered in this strategy.

OVERRIDING PLANS, STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES

The following plans, strategies and principles all have an impact and relate directly or indirectly to the Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy.

Corporate Strategic Plan

- Goal 1:** To facilitate sustainable economic development in the Shire
- Goal 2:** To build civic pride and foster effective social and community relations
- Goal 3:** To ensure Kempsey town is a viable and vibrant economic hub
- Goal 4:** To adequately plan and fund the Shire's infrastructure needs
- Goal 5:** To position Kempsey Shire in the region to actively participate in regional activities
- Goal 6:** To position Kempsey Shire to reap the benefits of its attributes
- Goal 7:** To provide value for money services in the Kempsey Shire.

Management Plan 2006/06

Governance Goal

To direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act and to create, implement and review the Council's policies and objectives and facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

Council's Vision

"The beauty of the natural environment and the country and coastal lifestyles are both preserved and enhanced by an economy of high productivity and employment"

Council's Mission Statement

"We will work with the community to provide high quality services and facilities through excellence in leadership and with consideration for the needs of the environment and of future generations"

Council's Values

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Trust | We earn trust by being honest, respecting differences and by encouraging open communication. |
| Co-operation | We achieve the best for our community through effective teamwork. |
| Service | We value our community by providing quality professional service to all. |
| Innovation | We encourage creative and visionary thinking to achieve sustainable outcomes. |
| Pride | We take pride in Kempsey Shire Council's contribution to our community. |

Integrating Council's Values into the Organisation

The values of an organisation are used to indicate the type of conduct that is expected of employees when carrying out duties on behalf of Council and what customers can expect from the organisation.

Council has adopted the above values as a result of a recommendation from the Values Working Party, a group of staff members who worked through a consultative process to arrive at five values which reflected the aspirations of staff and the organisation.

In adopting a values based organisation, the following steps occurred:-

1. Leadership commitment
2. Values audit & development of aspirational values
3. Build cohesion in leadership team
4. Review mission, vision in relation to values
5. Build ownership across the organisation. (Launch of values at a motivational breakfast – business cards highlighting values distributed; Media campaign relating to the values; Inclusion in Code of Conduct; Values Screensaver, mousepad and mug distributed to staff throughout the organisation; Informal breakfast held to reinforce values in the workplace; Included in each edition of the Community Newsletter and Inbiz, the staff newsletter; Directors provide General Manager with values implementation progress on a monthly basis). This can also be achieved by:
 - a. Leadership Forum to lead by example "walking the talk"
 - b. Strong communication including feedback
 - c. Celebrate 'values' development and adoption with cross organisational launch
 - d. Communicate the aspirational values using various visual aids – posters, mugs/cups, screen savers
 6. Integrate values into all HR practices

There are a number of other initiatives that can be introduced organisationally which will further drive the initiative. These include:-

- The review of existing policies, plans and procedures to incorporate values
- The adoption of a checklist for use with the development of all new policies, plans and procedures which includes a section – "alignment to values"
- The acceptance of the need for the Strategic Team to ensure that values are included when reviewing policies, plans and procedures prior to making recommendations to Manex.
- The need to revisit the mission statement and vision to include the values. If this is undertaken, it is essential to gain consensus across the entire organisation for any suggested change.

ACTION PLAN

1. CORPORATE IMAGE OBJECTIVES

<p>a) create a positive and professional image for Kempsey Shire Council through clearly defined roles for Councillors, Management and staff and clarification of Department responsibilities relating to corporate image, communication and customer service within Kempsey Shire Council.</p>	<p>Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy is updated annually to ensure the document is relevant and the action plan drives performance</p> <p>Assist with the production of brochures, posters, flyers and submissions if requested or required</p>	<p>Customer First Manager</p>	<p>Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy is updated</p> <p>Quarterly Report to Council will be provided on the implementation of the Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy</p>	<p>30/6/07</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>b) provide guidelines to ensure consistency in activities, communication and customer service within Council.</p>	<p>Ensure Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy is updated annually</p>	<p>Customer First Manager</p>		<p>30/6/07</p>

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<p>c) take advantage of public relations opportunities to build bridges within the community</p>	<p>Community organisations are encouraged to invite Councillors and/or staff to attend their regular meetings on an annual basis (or when an issue needs to be addressed). Invitation issued through Council's advertising and /or Mayoral Column.</p>	<p>Communications Officer</p>		<p>September 06 March 07</p>
<p>d) reinforce the importance of issues and crisis management and planning.</p>	<p>Liaise with local schools and provide information on Local Government and Kempsey Shire Council as required.</p> <p>Identify issues of importance and, if necessary, consult with the community to provide a position on the issue using focus groups or other methods</p> <p>Ensure that the Communications Officer is kept up to date with the issue to ensure appropriate communication with the public and media if required.</p>	<p>Communications Officer</p>	<p>All schools in the Kempsey Shire are contacted</p>	<p>Annually</p>
		<p>Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Directors and Leadership Forum</p>	<p>Issues identified and consultation procedures undertaken in line with the Consultation Policy and Procedures</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

2. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Management Plan (Governance Goal) link:-

KEY ISSUES/COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

Level of community consultation

Keeping the community informed of Council's decisions

PROGRESS ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES/COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy is continually updated to provide productive and informative consultation

Internet site to be continually updated with Council's meeting agendas, minutes and publications and hard copies of each document to be made available for public exhibition

a) improve the level of internal and external communication within Council	Maximise external publication of media releases.	Communications Officer	Information distributed and media coverage achieved	Ongoing		
	Research/prepare the weekly Mayoral Column and distribute to Macleay Argus, Macleay Happynings and radio stations				Number of items included in weekly Mayoral Column	Weekly, Wednesday pm
	Research and prepare the weekly Council advertisements and distribute to the Macleay Argus, Macleay Happynings, Community notice board and to individuals /organisations				Number of advertisements prepared	Weekly, Thursday 12 noon

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	Regular media releases highlighting Council's achievements and decisions are distributed.	Communications Officer	Number of media releases published Number of media interviews given (by Council staff with authorisation)	
To produce and circulate publications for internal and external customers	Communications Officer	To produce and circulate:- a) Annual Report b) Two colour Community Newsletters to be published and distributed by letterbox drop/maillout to residents c) Four mini newsletters to be published and distributed via the rate reminder notices. d) A Local Government Week supplement is organised for inclusion in the Macleay Argus - "Connecting Communities" e) Staff newsletter	November 30, 2006 March and August January, April, July and October Local Government Week 31/7 - 4/8/07 Last Thursday of the month	
Council's website/intranet is user friendly, current, meets customers needs and is progressively more interactive. File sizes are continually reviewed to ensure ease of downloading.	Website Administrator	The number of hits on the internet exceeds 75,000 per annum The number of hits on the intranet exceeds 30,000 per annum Three additional interactive online services will be provided	30/6/07	

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	Review the website using web architecture principles to create a more functional structure conducive to organisational needs.	Website Administrator	Blueprint for redesigned website will be formulated after consultation with management, staff councillors and members of the community	30/6/07
	Develop a website strategy to provide a planning framework for the future	Website Administrator	Website Strategy developed to encompass the period from July 06 to June 08	30/3/07
	Develop a short term Marketing Plan for Council's website. Once developed, the plan is to be actioned.	Website Administrator	Marketing Plan developed.	30/9/06
	b) clarify the need to consult with the community, identify opportunities and methods for effective consultation and public participation and set in place a system to gain feedback from the community.	Mayor, Councillors General Manager, Directors and Leadership Forum in consultation with the Customer First Manager and Communications Officer	Communication and consultation is undertaken in accordance with the Community Consultation Policy	Ongoing
	Communications Officer	Number of meetings with Community Groups Information on public display Number of items placed on public display		

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c) develop a strong and cooperative relationship with local and regional media and enhance management and staff's media skills	<p>Organisation to be open to enquiries from the media</p> <p>Provide Media Training for Councillors, Senior Staff and those staff members who have positions that may involve liaison with the media at some level.</p> <p>Maintain regular contact with local broadcast media</p> <p>Implement Electronic Media Strategy:-</p> <p>Develop information file on each of the local broadcast media</p> <p>Visit offices of local Television and Radio stations to meet with their staff annually</p> <p>Initiate phone contact with each television/radio journalist at least once a month</p> <p>Plan and execute television story days</p>	Customer First Manager	Number of submissions received	30.6.07
		Communications Officer	Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted, analysed and reported on	Ongoing
			Number of media enquiries fielded	As required
				Ongoing
				30/6/07
				Quarterly

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	<p>Develop interview protocols</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate media coverage</p>		<p>Protocols developed and implemented</p> <p>Interview tips sheet prepared and distributed to Council spokespeople</p> <p>Record sheet developed and distributed to media monitors</p>	<p>30/12/06</p> <p>30/12/06</p> <p>30/9/06</p>
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3. CUSTOMER SERVICE OBJECTIVES

KEY ISSUES/COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

Providing increasing levels of customer service

PROGRESS ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES/COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Organisational values to be implemented to establish a results driven organisation. Knowledge Management System driven by Customer First Centre to provide results at first contact.

a) develop a strong customer service focus within Kempsey Shire Council.	Customer First Centre to provide an efficient and professional service to internal and external customers.	Customer First Manager and Coordinator	Customer First Centre resolves enquiries in 65% of cases at first contact	30/6/07
			Customer First Centre to conduct 10 call backs to customers per month on specific work undertaken	Monthly
	Complaints are handled in a timely and professional manner	Management and staff	Customer First Centre to conduct 30 telephone surveys per quarter on general customer satisfaction	Quarterly
			Percentage of abandoned phone calls	Ongoing
	Policies and Delegations are prioritised.	Customer First Manager	A reporting mechanism for complaints handling is developed	30/7/06
			quarterly reports on complaints are provided to Council	Quarterly
	Customer First Coordinator	Council policies - average number of days to Intranet (commitment of 7 working days)	Ongoing	

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	To develop a new procedure for the processing of work orders and messages to ensure customer call backs are in line with service standards	Customer First Manager and PIT	New procedure developed and relevant staff trained throughout the organisation	30/12/06
	Customer First Centre is increasingly accepted in the community as a valuable provider of service. Feedback from customers is encouraged.	Customer First Manager	Open days are conducted during Local Government Week and at other times to encourage customers to gain and understanding of the functions of the Customer First Centre	Ongoing.

CORPORATE IMAGE

If image is important for the individual, it is essential for an organisation such as Kempsey Shire Council. Image should be treated as an asset and should be planned, developed analysed and managed along with other valuable assets.

The right image greatly enhances an organisation's sphere of influence and is as important as other assets such as capital, plant and technology.

"The greatest risk to your professional image is the failure to factor image into your business decisions".

Marilyn Mondejar

Many people believe that corporate image is simply the name of an organisation and their logo. It is however, much more than this. It is what makes an organisation special and unique; it expresses an organisation's approach to business, its culture and importantly, its values.

"Corporate reputation and building the brand no longer just matter, they are absolutely essential."

David Komansky, Chairman of Merrill Lynch,
addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos

Corporate image is reflected in everything Council does and it ties the different elements of the organisation together in a unifying way. It can clearly identify the fact that we are the level of government closest to our community and that we are endeavouring to provide the best service possible in an equitable and cost effective manner.

Corporate image is a way of building recognition and loyalty amongst ratepayers and residents of Council and can make employees feel a part of the team.

It is the perception people have of Kempsey Shire Council based on a combination of various communication and personal experiences.

CORPORATE IMAGE DEFINITIONS

There is often confusion when trying to define corporate image. These definitions have been taken from an article by Kenneth Ohlsson based on extracts from "The Corporate image" by Nicholas Ind.



"Corporate Identity

is the accumulation of a company's history and its strategies. It is not easily changed. Most identities evolve gradually over time, but a significant event such as a corporate takeover can change the identity radically. This will include visible symbols such as names, logos, symbols, signs, offices, advertising, letterheads and business cards.

Corporate Image

is the picture a company's audiences have of it. It will be determined by all a company's actions. The problem a company faces is that different audiences will interpret a message in different ways. The management of the corporate image is thus an ongoing task.

Corporate Communication

is the process that translates corporate identity into a corporate image. The identity needs to be communicated to employees, customers, suppliers and shareholders if it is to have any value. The role of design within this is to visually signify what a company stands for."

Council has many stakeholders, all of whom will form an image of our organisation from the communications they receive.

Wherever possible, Council should aim to provide clear, concise and pertinent information to all stakeholders on a regular basis.

INTERNAL CORPORATE IMAGE

Creating a Positive and Professional Image for Kempsey Shire Council

Public relations enables the community to gain an impression of Council and this perception will be the basis for, and the influencing factor in, establishing the Council's corporate image.

Within Council, there is an understanding of the concept of public relations and how it is tied to the projection of the organisation's image. Councillors, management and staff are fully aware that effective communications and sustainable relationships with all Kempsey Shire Council stakeholders are integral to the success of this overall strategy.

Everyone in the organisation has a role to play in public relations and the enhancement of Council's corporate image

The establishment of an image and awareness of Kempsey Shire Council will be based on the provision of a regular flow of information to the community about Council, its activities and aspirations. Media releases will be issued regularly, advertising will be undertaken, newsletters will be produced and the website will be continually updated advising of Council decisions, activities and achievements.

The development of an image should revolve around many things including:-

- community events such as Australia Day, Local Government Week etc
- civic ceremonials/protocol including naturalisation ceremonies and civic receptions
- staff training to help develop a customer service "culture"
- community awards, including Certificates of Merit for sporting and cultural achievement and Staff Excellence Awards
- school education programs
- Council's involvement in community activities and events
- the preparation of professional submissions
- the use of Council's identified corporate colours
- the correct use of Council's logo
- the wearing of Corporate uniform by staff
- the wearing of a name badge by staff in all encounters with the public
- the preparation of cost effective, informative and interesting publications. Surveys and the invitation for public comment, where appropriate, should be included in some of these publications to evaluate stakeholder interest and to promote community involvement
- the availability of presentation folders to selectively present information on request.

Developing Clearly Defined Roles for Councillors, Management and Staff Relating to Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service

i) The Role of the Mayor and Councillors in Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service

The Council as an entity, and each individual Councillor, have important roles to play in raising the profile of Council and achieving good public relations. The following guidelines are submitted:-

- 1 Councillors should respect the role of the media to inform the public and therefore should not expect the media's view to be always positive and in accordance with those of Council.
- 2 Councillors should be mindful of the public nature of their meetings and of the expectations the electors have in respect of their chosen representatives. The Council Chamber is the foundation of the corporation's image; failure to achieve a high level of image in this area will be detrimental to the corporation.
- 3 The Mayor and the General Manager are jointly responsible for media liaison and are the primary spokespersons on matters of Council activity.

ii) The Role of the General Manager and Directors in Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service

The General Manager and Directors should rate the enhancement of Council's corporate image highly in the day to day running of the organisation and its functions.

- 1 The General Manager and Directors should note public relations opportunities (i.e. opportunities to inform the customer of what is happening) on a weekly or even daily basis. They should discuss public relations and issues which may impact on the corporate image of Council with one another at Manex meetings, particularly in relation to the decisions and policies of Council.
- 2 The Mayor and General Manager are jointly responsible for media liaison and are the primary spokespersons on matters of Council activity.
- 3 Council operates an open access policy. Directors (or in their absence, section Managers) may supply information to the media when requested in accordance with Council's various codes, policies and resolutions.
- 4 The General Manager and Directors should be aware that all staff members are a critical component in achieving a corporate image of

which they can be proud. They are the front line in public relations for Kempsey Shire Council and, as such, it is vital that Directors keep staff members under their control fully briefed on policy directions and decisions of Council. Regular team meetings have been set in place to ensure that this communication flow exists. Staff members should be encouraged to strive for excellence in every facet of their work and should be consulted, not only on ways to improve work performance, but also to enhance the corporate image through effective public relations in the work place. A quarterly Staff Excellence Award is in place to encourage this.

- 5 Directors should also ensure that knowledge, confidence, a positive attitude and an appearance that reflects the corporate image are attributes that all staff embrace; not just those in regular contact with the public.
- 6 The General Manager and Directors should ensure that information and objectives are conveyed to staff on a regular basis through informal discussions with work groups, monthly team meetings, Inbiz, memos on pay slips and/or by displaying information in staff rooms and on staff notice boards. The intranet is a valuable tool and can be used as a comprehensive data base of all policies and procedures and an easy access point for forms and general or specific information.
- 7 The development of the Knowledge Management System has enhanced the opportunity for the General Manager and Directors to provide consistent information to staff.

Staff should be constantly encouraged to make suggestions aimed at improving policies and work practices. The General Manager should submit regular reports to Council on prevailing levels of staff morale and the resultant effect on public relations.

iii) The Role of the Customer First Manager in Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service.

- 1 To prepare, develop and review the Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy
- 2 To manage and oversee the implementation of the Strategy

iv) The Role of the Communications Officer in Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service

- 1 To have input into the development and review of the Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy
- 2 To implement those sections of the Strategy and Action Plan which are the responsibility of the Communications Officer
- 3 To receive information from the Council and the various Departments that will, through its dissemination, improve and enhance the corporate image of Council.

- 4 To liaise with Directors regarding all aspects of public relations and the gathering, dissemination and publication of all appropriate information that will enhance Council's image
- 5 To arrange, with the co-operation of Council and each Department, programs and promotional events/publications/advertising to enhance the image of Council.

v) The Role of Staff in Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service

Staff members are at the forefront in liaison with Council's stakeholders. Each and every action that is performed by staff members is deemed to be an act of Kempsey Shire Council. Therefore, the way that staff deal with customers at the counter, in the field, on the telephone and in response to written or electronic requests will reflect on the organisation. As staff members are dealing with Council's stakeholders every day, they are in the best position to recommend changes to Management which will benefit both the customer, in the form of superior levels of service, and Council, by way of time and cost savings.

Clarifying Department Responsibilities Relating to Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service within Kempsey Shire Council

An awareness by the public of the various functions of each Department is essential for an understanding of the services and facilities provided by Council. Each of these functions may be an opportunity for a small or large public relations campaign, which in turn will impact on how Council is perceived in the eye of the stakeholder. Each Department should identify and convey to the Communications Officer their specific corporate image and public relations requirements.

Opportunities exist to gain additional exposure for large or successful projects, details of policy initiatives, innovations or events that may be considered "best practice" in Local Government.

CONSISTENCY

Providing Guidelines to Ensure Consistency in Council's Activities and Communication with all Stakeholders

Consistency is important in the image building process as it sends a message of reliability that will develop a sense of trust in the Council within the community. Consistency results from the persistent and repeated use of proven methods such as:-

Council's Logo

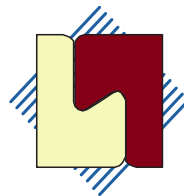
The correct use of Council's logo – one of the following formats can be used depending on the intended purpose.

Design 1



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

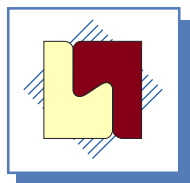
Design 2



This logo is significant as it represents the bond between Council and its community:-

The role of servicing the community requires a strong bond of cooperation between the people and their Council. The symbolism of the logo depicts the interlocking of two components into a solid unit conformed in strength and purpose. The background lineals represent community services, activities and aims and a paralleling of aspirations and ideals with service delivery. In a broad sense, the design enhances the contention that Local Government gains its strength of objective from its closeness to the people.

For general use, this logo is shown at the size recommended for use on an A4 sheet of paper. An exception to this would be if the logo forms a part of a page layout where the logo becomes integral to the design.



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

Corporate Colours

The use, where applicable, of Council's corporate colours in advertising, signage, street furniture, buildings and Council owned items.

Corporate Colours for printing are:-

- Maroon Pantone 202
- Ecru (cream) Pantone 1205 for solid blocks of cream
PMS 1215 for signage powder coating
- Sky Blue Process blue for lineals in logo or PMS 285
Pantone 279 for solid blocks of blue

Corporate Colours for painting are:-

- Dulux Indian Red
- Dulux Cream
- Dulux Greek Isle

Uniform

The wearing of corporate uniform by all staff and a name badge by staff in all encounters with the public.

Fonts

The use of consistent fonts in correspondence and fonts and layouts in advertising and publications:-

The font **VERDANA** is the preferred font for correspondence. Either Verdana or Arial font may be used in advertising and contact with media. Arial is a more compact font and using it for longer advertisements may result in cost savings for Council.

Templates

The development of templates for reports, letters and memos ensures consistency in the written word.

Advertising

Advertising continues to be an important means of informing the public of statutory requirements and what is happening in Local Government. It is also a front line tool in effective image building.

The weekly Council advertisements, in both the Macleay Argus and Macleay Valley Happynings, are an essential component in the communication process.

Standardisation of advertising styles to reflect Kempsey Shire Council's corporate image is necessary. Council's brand, the corporate logo, must appear on all advertisements. The use of the same layout and typography enhances the recognition that comes through regular and visually consistent advertising.

An Advertising Strategy has been developed which covers all aspects and requirements of Kempsey Shire Council's advertising and includes samples of advertising layouts. This document is included in the Corporate Image, Communication and Customer Service Strategy.

Print media advertising, television advertising and internet exposure must be linked by common visuals (logo, typography and, where appropriate, colours).

Signage

Signage must be linked to all other visual aspects of Council's functions. Consistency, good design and functionality in the presentation of all forms of signage applicable to Council's operation will assist in attaining instant recognition of Council and enhancement of its image.

A Style Manual has been developed which provides guidelines for all Council signage.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

C 24-8

The Code of Conduct is a large document which prescribes the expected conduct of councillors and staff. It can be downloaded from the intranet. Subjects covered include:-

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Definitions
- 3 Purpose
- 4 Key Principles and Organisational Values
- 5 General Conduct Obligations
- 6 Staff Responsibilities
- 7 Councillors Responsibilities
- 8 Statement of Business Ethics
- 9 Conflicts of Interest
- 10 Access to Information
- 11 Gifts and Benefits
- 12 Use of Council Resources & Equipment
- 13 Alcohol & Other Drugs
- 14 Equitable Treatment
- 15 Discrimination and Harassment
- 16 Outside Employment or Business by Staff
- 17 Public Comment on Council Matters
- 18 Interaction between Councillors and Council Staff
- 19 Councillor Access to Council Buildings
- 20 Corruption, Maladministration, Serious & Substantial Wastage
- 21 Improper & Undue Influence
- 22 Breaches of the Code of Conduct
- 23 Councillor Misbehaviour
- 24 Role of the General Manager in relation to the Code of Conduct
- 25 Role of the Mayor in relation to the Code of Conduct

MEDIA POLICY

“Councillors and Staff: Interaction and Provision of Information To”. (C24.1)

Objective:

To effectively communicate and promote Council’s policies and decisions to the community it serves.

Procedure:

- The Mayor and General Manager are jointly responsible for media liaison and public relations and are the primary spokespersons on matters of Council activity.
- Council will operate an open access policy for media enquiries, with the Mayor, the General Manager and Directors (or in their absence senior departmental Managers) to supply information when requested, in accordance with Council’s various codes and policies.
- Staff members shall refrain from offering any personal comment or opinion on matters of policy.

Public Comment on Council Matters (Code Of Conduct C24.8:17)

Only the General Manager and Mayor may make media comment about Council matters. The General Manager may specifically authorise other staff to make comment within areas under their management. Councillors are not permitted to make public comment on behalf of the Council unless specifically authorised by the Mayor or by resolution of the Council.

Refer Council Policy C24-1

STYLE MANUAL

The Style Manual is maintained and kept by the Director Shire Services. The manual contains information on signage, design and construction styles and colours for corporate signage and building.

EXTERNAL CORPORATE IMAGE

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations is a discipline of management that can greatly enhance the communication process and, therefore, the image of Council. For stakeholders to form an image of Kempsey Shire Council and to gain an appreciation of the organisation as a service provider and resources manager, a commitment to effective and sustainable communication with residents and visitors is required. The Macquarie Dictionary states that public relations is :-

"The practice of promoting goodwill among the public for a company, government body, individual or the like; the practice of working to present a favourable image."

Public relations helps to build an awareness of, and creates an identity for, Kempsey Shire Council through the effective dissemination of information and communication. It is one of the most important tools in building a positive corporate image. On a day-to-day basis, management and staff have many opportunities to offer superior customer service and enhance the corporate image of Kempsey Shire Council.

Our organisation has developed a Mission Statement, Vision and a set of Values which provide clear guidance to councillors, staff and residents on the role of Council, our goals and our desire to work for and with our community. These three statements lay the foundations for everything we do, including the importance of the communication process in achieving understanding and consensus.

Positive dealings with ratepayers, residents, the business community, visitors, government and non government organisations, local government authorities and, importantly, other staff are seen as crucial in determining their perception of our organisation. To be effective, information flow between Council and the community must be two way. Opportunities exist to access this information in normal day-to-day activities including:-

- liaison with the Mayor, Councillors, Management and staff
- attendance at Council and Committee Meetings
- advertising, the Mayoral Column, media releases and media comment
- Council's website and intranet
- the Annual Report, community newsletters, school education kits, Local Government Week and other promotions
- public speaking opportunities, community consultation meetings, focus groups, works inspections and surveys
- staff meetings and information sessions
- letters, facsimile, email, telephone calls and counter enquiries

Providing Comprehensive Information on Kempsey Shire Council and the Role of Local Government to Schools and Educational Facilities within the Shire

A better understanding of the workings of local government, in particular Kempsey Shire Council, can be created through providing information and educational material to school groups.

A program of school tours of the Civic Centre can be arranged during which presentations are made on the role and functions of Council. If schools cannot come to the Civic Centre, arrangements can be made for a staff member and/or a Councillor to go to the school or educational facility and deliver a similar presentation. Likewise, field trips on specific subjects can be arranged.

A "Project Material" section on Council's website has been developed and will be expanded in the future.

An excellent video tape, "It's Your Council", has been produced by the Local Government and Shires Association targeting infants and primary school students. N.B. Presentations can also be made to Service Clubs and community groups upon request.

Local Government and Shires Association has also produced a comprehensive education kit for Local Government studies, "Councils at Work", which has been distributed to all Schools in the Shire.

Local Government Week is the ideal time to target schools as the Local Government and Shires Association updates handouts specifically for this week and provides project material.

CRISIS AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Reinforcing the Issues Management Procedure for Kempsey Shire Council

Identifying issues that may impact significantly on the residents and ratepayers of the Shire enables planning of a response before the event thus making Council's communication with all stakeholders more effective. In dealing with issues, it is vital that decisions taken are consistent with Local Government regulations, be well researched, balanced and the interests of the majority of stakeholders are considered.

"Issues Management is the process by which the organisation can evaluate issues that may impact significantly on it. The issues can then be assigned priorities for appropriate corporate response."

Directors, in consultation with their staff, need to:-

- **Identify**, in advance, issues that may impact significantly on residents and ratepayers. All forms of media, correspondence and other forms of communication should be monitored to gauge public feeling and highlight issues that are likely to impact in a negative way on Council.

At Manex, these issues should be raised and a strategy should be planned to ensure that Council is proactive and ensures that the issue does not become a crisis. By doing this, it will highlight Council's professional management, and ensure that the majority of issues that could prove detrimental to Council's image will not be handled in a reactionary way.

- **Evaluate** and prioritise the issue relative to the impact on Kempsey Shire Council and prioritise its importance against other issues that are raised.
- **Determine** and implement an appropriate response. A media release, interview with the media or communication directly with the effected party/ies may be considered suitable.

An effective issues management procedure will ensure that Council is not seen as being a "reactive" rather than "proactive" organisation. From time to time, an unforeseen crisis occurs and the following steps may help Management to deal with the issue in an effective way:-

- **Take responsibility** for the crisis – this is not the same as accepting blame

- **Recognise** the difference between bad publicity and a crisis and adjust your response accordingly
- Use **research** to determine how best to respond to a crisis
- Recruit and use **third parties** to speak on your behalf when required
- Treat the media as **conduits**, not enemies
- Assume you'll be **sued**
- Watch the **World Wide Web** as closely as other forms of media
- Demonstrate **concern, care and empathy**
- Take the **first 24 hours** very seriously and
- Begin your crisis management **now** by doing the things you need to do to build your reputational assets

These steps are outlined fully in a paper on Issues Management which has been prepared and is distributed annually to Management and Councillors.

Crisis situations also have a significant impact on staff within the organisation. Rodney Gray from Employee Communication and Surveys Pty Ltd has provided "**A dozen tips for communicating with employees at a time of crisis**".

These are general guidelines and will apply in any period of crisis.

1. Be visible and honest throughout and "speed the bad news". Provide frequent face-to-face communication sessions, even if the future is not clear. If you don't know the answers to employees' questions then say so and find out as fast as you can. Guessing or speculating are extremely hazardous - your credibility is at stake. Make no promises unless you are absolutely certain (and even then this is risky as circumstances can change).
2. Communicate process or probabilities. If you don't know what is going to happen, you can tell employees the process you're undertaking (e.g. the ASX is investigating the unusual trading in our shares and will report to the board in a day or so when we will let you know the latest). Or you can outline the various possible futures and the impact of these. You might be able to put a percentage probability on likely outcomes (e.g. with our share price so low there is about a 70% chance we'll be taken over).

3. Share the vision for the future and the hope for the organisation after the crisis. If you can't present a reasonably clear vision for the organisation, you have little hope of engaging employees. Explain how you'll know when you achieve the vision.
4. Listen to employees and understand their specific concerns. Small group discussions are best, ideally run by those who can listen carefully and then speak with authority (i.e. probably senior people rather than immediate managers). Don't guess, ask them - or get someone else to (e.g. survey).
5. Communicate in a timely fashion without delays. Not communicating or delaying information runs the risk that employees will jump to conclusions or find out anyway. In either case management will lose credibility and trust.
6. Increase senior management visibility. When there is bad news it should come from the top of the organisation. So now is the time for executives to spend time in small groups (e.g. visits to regular staff meetings) to explain the vision, strategy and timetable, as well as to listen to staff concerns and answer questions. In addition, you might consider setting up a "hotline" for employees to ask any questions of senior executives. The smaller the organisation the more likely it is that employees expect to meet with senior executives often.
7. Use business issues to explain what is going on - but don't do this (except very briefly) if retrenching staff (when people want to know who's going, when, and how much they get - not why it's best for the business). Never ever, ever blame employees even if they are to blame. You hired them, you trained them, you manage them, and you established the policies and procedures and bought the technology, so you take responsibility. (Remember the outcry when the NSW Government was seen to blame the driver of the train that crashed at Waterfall, or Esso's efforts following the Longford gas explosion.)
8. If there are retrenchments, develop a humane communication strategy. Make it very clear how decisions will be made in regard to those selected to go. Treat everyone, especially those leaving, with dignity, respect and trust. Unless everyone is going this means individual one-to-one discussions. Notifying employees that they don't have a job by way of voicemail, text message, email or public address announcement (all real examples) is not treating them with respect and dignity.

9. Act swiftly and give appropriate attention to employees affected by the crisis. Acting swiftly does not mean those being retrenched should be given a garbage bag or carton and an hour to leave the premises. (The chance of sabotage is extremely remote if you handle people well.) But that people should be told the truth as soon as possible, especially if it is bad news. Appropriate farewells are important to the morale of those staying as you are showing them how they will be treated if they too have to go.
10. Explain "why" at every stage. To keep motivation levels high it is necessary to keep staff informed as to (a) what has happened (b) what is happening (c) what will happen and (c) why this fits the strategy to overcome the crisis. If there is an identifiable "end" to the crisis announce this and, if appropriate, give appropriate thank-yous and conduct tasteful celebrations (e.g. like the celebrations to announce the formal end to SARS in Beijing and Hong Kong recently).
11. Continue to share the vision. You'll need to keep "talking up" the vision continuously - why it is important and what the future holds after the crisis.
12. Share the challenges and priorities. Progress won't always be steady and employees need to know when there are steps forward and back. Priorities may change from time to time and these need to be communicated.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is an integral part of corporate image, public relations and customer service. To be effective, the person sending the message needs to use words or actions that are completely understood by the person receiving the message.

In the past, Local Government tended to use technical jargon, acronyms and/or business terminology, which could lead to confusion and misunderstanding within the community. The receiver was not being considered and consequently, the message was often misconstrued and, in some cases, there was a complete communication breakdown.

A common theme throughout this document is the importance of all forms of communication at all levels of the organisation and the community. Without effective communication, the public relations process ceases to exist, Council's corporate image will suffer and customer service will be ineffective.

Improving the Level of Internal and External Communication within Kempsey Shire Council

Every means possible should be undertaken to ensure that an accurate message is communicated, both internally and externally, on all subjects relevant to Council. Improving the level of internal and external communication is a role for the entire organisation including Councillors, Management and staff. It is a two way street, flowing in both directions, with the aim of increasing levels of knowledge and improving staff morale.

"Good, honest interactive communication is vital to all of our hoped for performance and progress. But realisation of its full potential will require aggressive innovative approaches to construct strong new trusting kinds of partnership between managers and employees to drive all of our enterprises forward to new heights."

Alvie Smith, Innovative Employee Communications

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Rodney Gray, From Employee Communication and Surveys Pty Ltd, has prepared the following Internal Communication Guidelines. He maintains that to be useful, these ten guidelines should be "enforced and reinforced". They provide management with some useful tips to consider to encourage effective internal communication within Kempsey Shire Council.

1. The exchange of meaning.

The concept that communication is the effective exchange of meaning or understanding applies to both formal and informal communication. It applies to communication up, down and across the organisation. Everyone in the organisation is accountable for the effectiveness of their own communication. This especially applies to those who manage others.

2. Open communication.

One of our key values is open communication. We are committed to this goal. Unless something is a commercially sensitive matter it can be (and is expected to be) communicated in a complete, unambiguous and timely manner. Unless told otherwise, managers are authorised to communicate. Management credibility and trust will only come with a demonstrated track record of truthful, open communication. Communication about significant happenings needs to be thoroughly planned. Being too busy is not an acceptable excuse for inadequate or ineffective communication. Care should be taken to decide what requires formal communication and by whom, and what can be communicated informally. Significant information should show who has authorised its release and be released in all locations at the same time.

3. Face-to-face communication.

There is unlikely to be an effective exchange of meaning or understanding unless there is discussion and the opportunity for questions to be asked and answers obtained.

The needs of various internal audiences should be taken into account in planning communication. Some audiences will be satisfied with simple verbal presentations, others will require documentation of significant information. Face-to-face communication includes team leader, supervisor, manager and general manager briefings and discussions as appropriate.

4. Feedback is encouraged.

Obtaining feedback and effective listening are critically important for good communication. Effective communication will only come if communicators at all organisational levels seek out feedback and take appropriate action to ensure that the intended meaning is passed on to the relevant audience. Employees should always be able to say what's on their minds without retribution. We are always committed to acting on feedback, either with clarifying communication or relevant action.

5. Information is not communication.

Written or electronic messages should be supplemented by face-to-face communication as necessary.

6. Local business issues are favoured.

In communicating, favour local issues, especially serious business issues (such as business results, customer feedback, and the future of the business). Communication issues which arise at local level (e.g. cross-functional issues, rumours) should be addressed by those involved without delay. Effective communication requires the active involvement of at least two parties.

7. The team leader is critical.

Important information must be made available to team leaders in a timely manner to enable team leaders to communicate it to their teams. Information should be both cascaded down the organisation and communicated direct to team leaders as appropriate. It is better to over-communicate than under-communicate. Team leaders should make clear what information is available and communicate as requested. Effective team leaders regularly communicate with team members on a formal and informal basis, and actively seek feedback from their teams on the effectiveness of communication with them.

8. Training will be provided.

Training in effective communication will always be available to team leaders, supervisors and managers who request it. Communication materials and support will be provided to managers, supervisors and team leaders as appropriate.

9. Communication will respect individuals.

All communication must be truthful, and the impact and consequences of communication determined in advance and taken into account. It also means effective communication of job requirements and standards, and keeping everyone informed of how they are performing. There should be "no surprises" when it comes to individual performance feedback.

Information provided to any one person should be also provided at the same time to all others involved or likely to be interested.

The special communication needs of shift employees or employees located in remote locations should always be considered. Mischievous communication (e.g. starting or spreading rumours known to be untrue) should not be tolerated.

10. We communicate both positive and negative news.

We are committed to communicating both good and bad news speedily, in advance if possible, even if the full impact of the decision or message are not yet clear. Rumours in the workplace should be addressed with effective communication as soon as is practicable. Communicating on a "need to know" basis, avoiding controversial issues, or delaying communication "until all details are clear" are contrary to this policy.

The ten points above provide a degree of clarity on the ideal methods that can be employed when communicating with staff. Many of these points have been integrated into the following points which are critical to the success of internal communication: -

- I. Knowledge, or the lack thereof, is one of the greatest negative factors affecting internal communication. A full understanding of the workings of Council should be imparted to all new and existing staff. Without this knowledge, staff members are at a disadvantage and may feel uncomfortable in dealings with internal and external customers. Councillors and staff should be given the opportunity to increase their knowledge of Council by training and access to pertinent documents including:-
 - Council Strategies
 - Council and Management Policies
 - Corporate Strategic Plan
 - Management Plan
 - Annual Operating Plan (Budget)
 - Fees and Charges
 - Annual Report
 - State of the Environment Report
 - Transportation Infrastructure Strategic Plan
 - Rolling Works Program
 - Social Plan
 - The roles of each Department and the staff who perform them.

- II. Improve the level of written communication by using simple English that avoids acronyms, jargon and other confusing terminology. Business Educator, Candy Tymson said that "by being aware of the words that you use, what you're actually doing is building rapport with the other person, acknowledging their point of view and creating an environment of mutual respect. A great way to do business."
- III. All forms should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are user friendly. Forms are to be posted on the Intranet and the Knowledge Management System to provide easy access to staff.
- IV. Produce a monthly staff newsletter, Inbiz, which is distributed to management, staff and Councillors on the last Thursday of each month. Input by all staff is to be encouraged.
- V. Regular meetings with staff are to be held and timing for these meetings has been planned to maximise the communication process:-
 - Manex - last Wednesday of month
 - Joint Safety and Consultative Committee – first Thursday of month
 - Council meeting – second Tuesday of month
 - Staff/team meeting within five days of Council Meeting
 - Leadership Forum – third Tuesday of the Month
- VI. Attachments to pay slips are an ideal way to pass important information to all staff members.
- VII. The Induction Process is critical to the smooth transition of new staff into the organisation. The entire process should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is informative and relevant to new staff.
- VIII. Ensure all internal committees communicate information on their activities to appropriate staff.
- IX. Council, Manex and Joint Consultative and Safety Committee Agendas and Minutes are to be accessible to staff.
- X. The email system is used to enhance communication.
- XI. The use of the phone messaging system is to be encouraged to provide callers with a level of service which is professional.
- XII. The Intranet has provided staff with access to pertinent data, including policies, award information, procedures, plans and strategies. It is updated regularly with general information and new developments within the organisation and staff members are encouraged to suggest additional information that may be useful to them and their colleagues.

- XIII. An intranet based Knowledge Management System has been developed providing staff with information on all functions of Council in a user friendly environment.
- XIV. Councillors make use of the pink slip system to communicate with selected management and staff on specific subjects.

ADVERTISING STRATEGY

April 2006

1. OVERVIEW

Advertising in Local Government has both a statutory and a marketing function to fulfill. The Local Government Act, the Roads Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act clearly identify those matters that require public notification. Local Policies may also require that the public be informed of specific items.

Advertising is a key promotional tool for Kempsey Shire Council providing public relations opportunities to both inform and educate residents and ratepayers on Council's services, facilities and functions.

2. WHAT IS ADVERTISING?

a) A definition

The Advertising Association defines advertising as:

"Any paid for communication in media intended to inform and/or influence one or more people"

Advertising is a direct means of reaching a desired audience at a cost and you can control what is included in the message and how and when it is delivered.

b) The difference between advertising and a media release

It is important to understand the difference between an *advertisement*, which is guaranteed placement because Council pays for it, and a *media release*, which runs only if the media outlet deems it to be newsworthy.

There is no guarantee that a media release will be picked up by the media and, less certainty still, that the story will run as you have written it. Most media outlets use media releases as the basis for a story. Generally, they will also seek out alternative viewpoints to provide a balanced story to the public on the issue.

If you have a specific message that *must* be run in the media, for statutory or other reasons, it is advisable to place an advertisement. Do not rely solely on a media release to meet these requirements.

For this reason, advertising is an essential ingredient in a Council's marketing mix, which also includes promotion and public relations.

c) What makes a good advertisement?

Put simply, any advertisement for press should:-

Determine **who the target market is** – ratepayers, residents, community groups, stakeholders, visitors or others.

Use a strong **headline** which clearly indicates what the advertisement relates to. If room permits, mention a benefit or make the headline newsworthy. John Caples, author of "Tested Advertising Methods", has analysed the top ten most commonly used words in successful headlines. They are:-

You	Your	How	New	Who
Money	Now	People	Want	Why

Ensure your **body copy** contains the following:-

Clearly defined **benefits** to the target audience

All vital **facts** are included. A handy checklist is to ask the five "W's" when writing the copy for your advertisement – Who, What, When, Where, Why. All possible **objections** are answered

Use **simple words** that your audience understands. Do not use jargon and acronyms. For example –

Instead of	Use
adjacent to	next to or near to
approximately	about
ascertain	find out
assistance	help
behind schedule	late
beverage	drink
commence	start or begin
currently	now
endeavour	try
in attendance	present or there
manufacture	make
merchandise	goods
prior to	before
subsequently	later
sufficient	enough
terminate	end

Use **short sentences**.

- Include a **call to action** – eg 'Apply today' or 'make a submission by 30 June'
- Use **graphics, diagrams, maps or photographs** if appropriate

- Include a Kempsey Shire Council **Logo** if it is a stand alone advertisement
- Keep the **layout simple** and use an easy to read font such as Verdana, which is Council's preferred font.
- **Typefaces / Fonts** - There are hundreds of fonts to choose from when using a personal computer. The first principle in preparing an advertisement for publication is legibility.
 - Do not use overly ornate fonts. Choose a simply designed, clean type face that is easy to read.
 - Do not mix fonts. Most texts will stand up best with two fonts – one for headings and one for the body text. Prudent use of capitals, point sizes, underlining and bold type will ensure sufficient emphasis.
 - Do not use all capitals in an ornate font as it is difficult to read.
 - **Minimum font size** should be 8.5 which is the standard for most newspapers. Optimally, a font size of 9 or 10 makes it easy for people with a visual impairment to read advertisements.

3. WHERE DOES COUNCIL ADVERTISE?

The majority of Council's advertisements is placed in the local press (Macleay Argus & Macleay Valley Happynings) and is included on Council's website and intranet.

Council has negotiated an extremely good rate for its regular weekly notices, which are placed in the Macleay Argus each Tuesday and in the Happynings each Wednesday. Advertising placed in the classified section of these publications is charged at a premium rate.

Per Council resolution (December 17, 1996) development proposals, consents and approvals and other statutory advertising *must* be placed in the Macleay Argus, which is a paid circulation newspaper and advertising that is of a more general, community interest nature is to be placed in Council's weekly Happynings advertisement.

Budgetary constraints mean that advertising in metropolitan and regional press, radio, television and external internet sites is limited to items that require significant exposure.

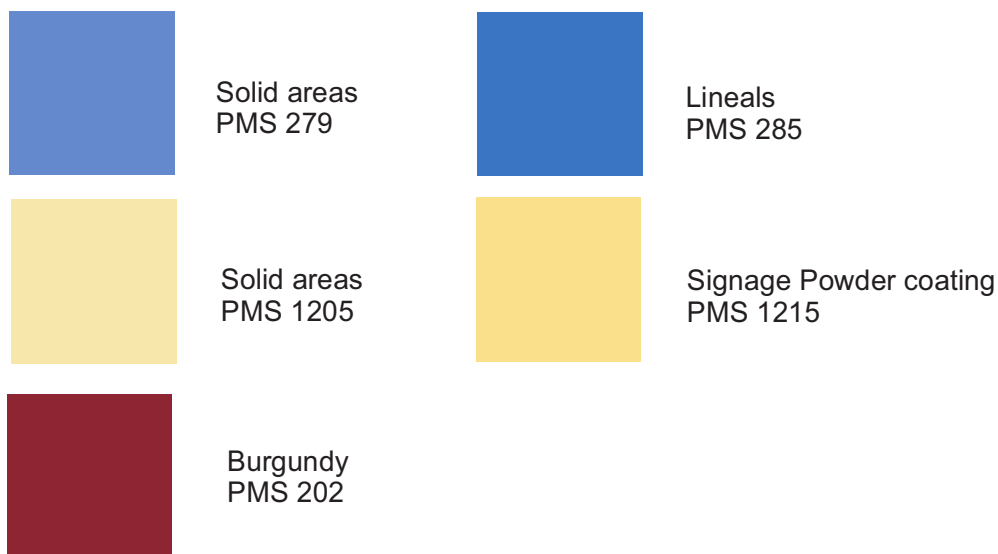
Seek the advice of your supervisor if you are unsure whether your advertising item requires this type of exposure.

a) General requirements

Font - Verdana (in either 10 or 11 point size) was adopted at the Manex Meeting (30 March 2005) as the preferred font for correspondence. Either Verdana or **Arial** font may be used in advertising and contact with media. Please note, Arial is a more compact font and using it for longer advertisements may result in cost savings for Council.

Colour - The best background colour when reading an advertisement is white if the text is black. Cream or off white is the next preference. Legibility is directly related to the degree of contrast between the text and the background.

If a colour advertisement is to be placed, the following corporate colours should be included in the advertisement.



b) Regular weekly advertisements

Council's weekly Macleay Argus and Happynings ads are available to any section of Council that needs to get information out to the public. The Communications officer requires items for inclusion in these weekly ads no later than **9am** the **Thursday** prior to publication, to allow adequate time for collating all items and forwarding them to the newspaper.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED AN ADVERTISEMENT PLACED

Most of Council's advertising is booked with the media by Council's Communications Officer. Staff members requiring advertisements placed are requested to supply (electronically, if possible) details for inclusion in the advertisement to the Communications Officer allowing ample time to meet press deadlines.

The Communications Officer will also need to know the answer to each of these questions before placing your advertisement:

- When is the advertisement to appear? (dates)
- How often is the advertisement to be repeated? (once, twice)
- In which publication[s] is the advertisement to appear? (Argus, Happynings)

You will also need to provide an allocation number against which the costs for the advertisement will be charged. Please indicate how much you expect this advertising to cost (what's your budget?) so that possible over-expenditure can be eliminated before it occurs.

Maps or graphics required for publication need to be of high quality for scanning or the file may be sent as a bmp, jpg, eps or tif.

You do not need to do a lay-out for the advertisement. (See Attachment A for General Advertising Pro-Forma to be included in weekly ad)

a) Stand alone ads

If you need an ad to stand-alone (ie not be part of Council's regular notices) it should be of double column size and include Council's logo. For the classifieds section this logo should be placed at the top left of the ad next to the heading.

(See Attachment H for Stand-alone Advertising Proforma)

Please send your advertisement to the Communications Officer (via email megan.barber@kempsey.nsw.gov.au) if possible as it will save time in the final preparation and booking of your advertisement).

b) Development applications to be considered by Council

Development Applications, which are to be considered at a Council Meeting, will be advertised in accordance with the following Council Resolution (Council Meeting November 21, 2000):-

"That details of Development Applications to be considered by Council be placed in the Macleay Argus on the Friday prior to the Council Meeting".

Sustainable Development Services Department prepares and forwards details of the Development Applications to be considered by Council to the Communications Officer who arranges for a 3 column classified advertisement to run in the Macleay Argus on the Friday before the ordinary Council Meeting. Copy for this ad needs to be received by **12 noon the Wednesday** before it's due to be published. (See Attachment B for Proposed Development Advertising Pro-Forma)

c) Draft Plan or Strategy

To ensure adequate public consultation on draft plans and strategies you will need to combine paid advertising with other media tools such as media releases, the Mayoral Column and, if necessary, other promotional tools (letterbox drops, direct mail etc).

The following minimum requirements apply when advertising Draft Plans and Strategies:-

- Advertising in Macleay Argus and/or Macleay Valley Happynings
- for a **minimum of three weeks**
- Support the advertisement with a Media Release – prepared by the Communications Officer
- Reminder of submission closing date in the Mayoral Column – prepared by the Communication Officer
- Public Meeting

The display of advertised Draft Plans and Strategies should be undertaken in the following way:-

- A copy of the document is to be included on Councils website with a pointer from the front page.

Please note: You will need to supply the Website Administrator with an electronic copy of the document in PDF format, at least a day before the exhibition period begins. Preferred file size is 1MB or less – see Web Administrator for time frames & options on larger size documents.

- A colour copy is to be placed in various locations throughout the Shire including the Civic Centre, Council's libraries and other venues depending on the content of plans
- Additional photocopies of the document should be available at these venues for the public to take home if they desire
- An A3 poster is to be displayed at each venue to draw attention to the fact that the documentation is on display.

A public meeting will be held to coincide with all display of Draft Plans and Strategies. Other options to increase level of consultation relating to draft documents may include, letters to stakeholders, letterbox drops and an increase in advertising – include radio/Mid Coast Observer.

The protocols that Kempsey Shire Council follows for Tenders and/or Expressions of Interest are outlined clearly in Section 55 of the Local Government Act and the Local Government (Tendering) Regulation 1999 and in Council's Purchasing of Goods and Services Policy number 10:5.

Details pertaining to the advertising of Tenders/Expressions of Interest are described below:-

All Tenders will be advertised in the following publications:

Sydney Morning Herald (one issue)

Macleay Argus (minimum one issue)
Other publications when considered desirable or appropriate
Council's website

All Expressions of Interest will be advertised in the following publications:

Macleay Argus (minimum one issue)
Other publications when considered desirable or appropriate
Council's website

Quotes may be advertised in the following publications:

Macleay Argus (minimum one issue)
Other publications when considered desirable or appropriate
Council's website

Tender Numbers

Tender numbers for each Tender are provided by the Records section of Council.

Closing Dates

Tenderers must be given a minimum of 21 days to respond to an Expression of Interest or Tender after the publication of the first advertisement. The submission period is determined by the nature and complexity of the tender. Tender periods may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

Late tenders will not be accepted.

Submission of Tenders

Clause 14 states that:

- (1) A tender must be submitted in writing, by facsimile transmission or (subject to subclause (2)) by electronic means.
- (2) A tender may not be submitted by electronic means:
 - (a) if guidelines are in force under section 23A of the Act with respect to the transmission of tenders by electronic means, unless its submission by electronic means is authorised by, and effected in accordance with, those guidelines, and
 - (b) in any other case, unless its submission by electronic means is effected in a secure form (such as an encrypted document) that ensures that it cannot subsequently be altered.
- (3) Unless sent by facsimile transmission or electronic means, a tender must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.
- (4) If a tender is sent by facsimile transmission or electronic means and printed out on receipt, an appropriate person must place the tender in a sealed envelope immediately after it is printed out.

All Tenders must be lodged in an appropriately labelled, sealed envelope and submitted in the Tender Box located in the reception area of the Customer First Centre.

Quotes and Expressions of Interest for works or services may be received by mail, e-mail or facsimile and must be recorded.

The lowest or any tender is not necessarily accepted. Suppliers submitting tenders and the public are invited to the opening of tenders immediately after closing of the tenders.

The following staff are authorized to open tenders:

Administration Manager (Pat Hanrahan)
Manager Customer First (Marg Mottee)
Finance Manager (Tony Curtin)
Principal Advisor Organisational Effectiveness (Jeff Clegg)
Director Shire Services (Tom Vermeulen)

(See Proforma for Tender Advertising at Attachment C)

e) Positions Vacant/Recruitment

Local Government Act Requirements

Reproduced below are Sections 348, 349, 350, and 351 of the Local Government Act which apply to the recruitment of staff:

348 Advertising of staff positions

(1) When it is proposed to make an appointment to a position within the organisation structure of the council, the position must be advertised in a manner sufficient to enable suitably qualified persons to apply for the position.

(2) If the position is a senior staff position, the requirement of this section is satisfied if the position is advertised at least twice in a daily newspaper circulating throughout the State.

(3) This section does not apply to:

*(a) the re-appointment, under a new contract, of a senior staff member,
or*

(b) the appointment of an employee if the term of employment is for:

(i) not more than 12 months, or

(ii) two or more periods that together are not more than 12 months in any period of 2 years.

349 Appointments to be on merit

- (1) *When the decision is being made to appoint a person to a position:*
- (a) *only a person who has applied for appointment to the position may be selected, and*
 - (b) *from among the applicants eligible for appointment, the applicant who has the greatest merit is to be selected.*
- (2) *The merit of the persons eligible for appointment to a position is to be determined according to:*
- (a) *the nature of the duties of the position, and*
 - (b) *the abilities, qualifications, experience and standard of work performance of those persons relevant to those duties.*
- (3) *In determining the merit of a person eligible for appointment to a position, regard is to be had to the objects of Part 4 of this Chapter (see section 344).*

350 Appointments to which sections 348 and 349 do not apply

Sections 348 and 349 do not apply to:

- (a) *an appointment by way of demotion, or*
- (b) *an appointment by way of lateral transfer, unless the council decides that those sections are to apply to the appointment.*

351 Temporary appointments

- (1) *If a position (including a senior staff position) within the organisation structure of the council is vacant or the holder of such a position is suspended from duty, sick or absent:*
- (a) *the council, in the case of the general manager's position, or*
 - (b) *the general manager, in the case of any other position, may appoint a person to the position temporarily.*
- (2) *A person who is appointed to a position temporarily may not continue in that position for a period of more than 12 months*

Procedure - General Recruitment requirements

Recruitment advertising for approved positions, either internal or external, must be approved by the Human Resources unit prior to the placement of the advertisement and must be in line with Policy 7.3, Recruitment and Selection which states in part:

"As vacancies occur the Manager, in consultation with HR, will assess whether the position needs to be replaced, and if so the method and timing of an advertisement, (this can include internal advertising; newspaper advertising, employment agency placement; website advertising). As a minimum, all positions should be advertised internally and placed on Council's website".

The recruitment process as outlined in REC000 located on the intranet (Communication, Forms, Human Resources) should be followed.

As a guide all permanent positions vacant will be advertised internally (email, intranet and on notice boards) and will also be posted on Council's website. Positions which can be accessed from the existing local labour force in the Shire may be advertised locally unless it is deemed to be appropriate to only advertise the position internally. Ideally, local advertisements should be placed in one or both of the existing Council display advertisements in the Macleay Argus or the Macleay Valley Happynings as these are the most cost effective methods.

If greater reach is required, an advertisement may be placed in the Positions Vacant section of either the Macleay Argus or the Mid Coast Observer at the regular classified advertising rate. This will generate a "complimentary" listing in "The Job Guide", an insert in Regional Publisher Pty Ltd newspapers on the Mid North Coast, the Hunter Valley, Tamworth and the New England.

If a position requires specialist expertise that is not likely to be available locally, the position may be advertised (but not limited to) in the:-

- Local Government Job Directory and/or
- Sydney Morning Herald (placed through TMP Worldwide)
- On the Internet (Council.jobs, Seek or other specialist recruitment sites)
- Career specific publications

In senior/specialist positions, this may be extended to other national newspapers eg. The Australian, The Financial Review, State daily newspapers.

For all positions advertised externally, a copy of Position Description must be available prior to the placement of the advertisement.

All positions vacant advertisements will be placed on Council's Website with a link to the Position Description.

Information – required for a recruitment advertisement

Recruitment advertising should be lodged with the Human Resources Unit accompanied by:

- an approved employment requisition form
- a list of publications where the position is to be advertised
- an allocation number to which the advertising is to be costed
- a short 1 paragraph description of the job
- a closing date for applications if applicable.

The Human Resources Unit will supply recruitment advertisements for placement in the required publications in the following format:

- A position title and number
- A short description of the job
- Contact for additional information
- Contact details for applications
- A pointer to Council's Website for additional information

and may include:-

- Essential/Ideal selection criteria
- Key performance objectives of a role
- Salary range
- A closing date for applications

The following wording should be included in the advertisement:-

"Must be an Australian Citizen (or have Permanent Residency Status)"

The following wording must be included at the bottom of each advertisement:-

"Kempsey Shire is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer"

For positions advertised in publications outside the local area, the following (or something similar) may be added in the opening paragraph:-

"Kempsey Shire Council, located on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, is seeking exceptional people to complement its dynamic workforce. Part of the Macleay Valley Coast, with South West Rocks, Stuarts Point, Crescent Head and Hat Head, the jewels in its crown, the area offers tremendous diversity in lifestyle opportunities and contains some of the best coastline, hinterland and national parks in Australia. If you have the right stuff, this is an incredible opportunity to make your own"

The advertisement may close with the following wording:-

"Kempsey Shire on the Macleay Valley Coast Lifestyle second to none"

Recruitment for certain positions is highly competitive and a positive image of Kempsey Shire Council and the Macleay Valley needs to be imparted to potential applicants in advertisements. Innovative advertisements may need to be used to draw applicants attention to the positions which are currently vacant at Kempsey Shire.

Attachment F – Sample of Innovative Advertisement

Key positioning statements, such as those shown below, can be used in these advertisements.

"Kempsey Shire is a progressive Council located on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Residents love the great climate, the relaxed country lifestyle, the peaceful hinterland and some of Australia's best beaches including South West Rocks and Crescent Head. Make the change today to a better way of life."

"Kempsey Shire Council is a progressive, customer focused organisation which encourages creativity and initiative in its employees. We offer opportunities for career development and

training, great conditions including a 35 hour week and flexible working hours and a lifestyle second to none."

"If quality of life is important to you, then consider this employment opportunity which currently exists at Kempsey Shire Council."

5. MEDIA ADVERTISING DEADLINES AND CIRCULATION INFORMATION

a) NEWSPAPERS

Macleay Argus

Paid circulation bi-weekly newspaper

Tuesday edition 3573 circulation and Friday edition 3,493 circulation in Shire.

The South West Rocks News supplement appears in the Tuesday edition.

Deadline is **12 noon on Thursday** for Council's regular weekly advertisements in the following Tuesdays publication. Advertising copy is prepared by the Communications Officer and emailed to the Macleay Argus office at the above email address in Rich Text Format (rtf).

Deadline is **9am on the day prior to publication** for classifieds in either Tuesdays or Fridays Argus. These advertisements could be for Development Applications to be considered at the next Council meeting or for Positions Vacant which are to appear in the following weeks Job Guide. It is significantly more expensive to advertise in the classified section of the Argus on a Tuesday or Friday than in Council's display advertisement each Tuesday.

Macleay Valley Happynings

Free Weekly distribution - 11950 distribution in Shire.

Deadline is **9am on Thursday** for advertisement in the following Wednesday's publication. Advertising copy is prepared by the Communications Officer and is emailed to the Macleay Valley Happynings office at the above email address in Rich Text Format (rtf). \$276 per ½ page and \$152 for ¼ page.

Mid Coast Observer

Free weekly distribution in the Macleay, Bellingen & Nambucca Shires 18,000 distribution.

Council does not have a regular advertisement in the Observer. To advertise in the classifieds, the deadline for advertising copy is **12 noon** on the **Monday** prior to publication on the Wednesday. The lead time for display advertisements is longer and ads would need to be with the Observer by Thursday of the previous week.

For local advertising, see previous section.

Sydney Morning Herald (and other metropolitan/national press)

TMP Worldwide

7-13 Parraween Street
Cremorne NSW 2090
Phone 02 9908 9011
Fax 02 9953 0578

Email adcommlocalgov@tmp.com

\$17 per line

Tues (Local Government section) \$95.36/column cm + \$100 production charge

Wed (\$97.70/cm), Sat (\$122/cm) or buy 2 get 3rd free.

Deadline is **12 noon on a Monday** for publication in Tuesday's Local Government Section of the Sydney Morning Herald. Advertisements are to be placed through the Communications Officer. The attached form (**Attachment G**) must be completed for all advertisements placed with TMP Worldwide.

Advertising in the Sydney Morning Herald is very expensive so ads must be worded concisely. The size of advertisement may be reduced by directing attention to Council's website for things such as job description, essential and desirable criteria or tender documentation. Ads placed in SMH are usually Single column, lineage with logo at the top.

Positions Vacant advertisements appearing in the Sydney Morning Herald can also be placed on www.mycareer.com through TMP for a \$40 loading fee – please nominate this at time of booking. www.mycareer.com reaches 650,000 job seekers.

Newcastle Herald

Phone 131696

Email: classifieds@newcastle.fairfax.com.au

Best days for employment advertising are Wednesday and Saturday.

Deadline is 12 noon day prior to publication

NSW Government Gazette

Email nswgazette@dpws.nsw.gov.au

Deadline is 4pm each Wednesday for publication on Friday. Advertisements are to be emailed to the above email address.

6. SPECIALIST RECRUITMENT PUBLICATIONS / WEBSITES

a) The Australian Local Government Job Directory Pty Ltd

PO Box 816 Bendigo VIC 3552

Phone 03 5443 9800

Fax 03 5441 3986

Email ads@job-directory.com.au

Contact Barb Davey, Jim Nicholls, Dianne Jack, Debbie Frank, Sue Delikatzi

Deadline is **5pm on a Thursday** for the following week's directory. If a proof of the ad is required the deadline is 3pm. Advertisements are to be placed through the Communications Officer. Ads can be emailed or faxed.

N.B. Place advertisement for one edition only with the Local Government Job Directory as it is a usual practice for them to contact Council to offer a half price advertisement in the following edition. Cost: ¼ page (6cm x 9cm) - \$374; ½ page vertical or horizontal (6cm x 18cm or 12.5cm x 9cm) - \$726; full page (12.5cm x 18cm) - \$968 including GST.

Ideal size for a single position vacant is a Quarter page vertical advertisement with logo at the top

b) SEEK From \$135 per ad plus GST. Seek also offers Advertising Packages priced from \$575 including gst (for a 5 ad pack), \$365 (for 3 ad pack) which offer substantial savings and can be used over a six month period.

Advertisement can be placed directly on their website

<http://www.seek.com.au/advertisers/index.ascx>

Phone 1300 658 700

Fax 03 95105209

Email listings@seek.com.au

c) CouncilJobs.com is a specialist Local Government Internet Recruitment web site operating since 1999 (formerly HeadHunt Online). All ads are emailed the same day to job seekers with matching job search criteria and appear online at [CouncilJobs.com](http://www.counciljobs.com) (30,000+ LG job seekers a month), in [CouncilJobs Weekly](http://www.counciljobs.com) (emailed to some 20,000 readers a week) and highlighted in [Councils Job Watch](http://www.counciljobs.com) - both until closing date. All up cost is \$180 plus GST, with a HOT JOB option for \$30 plus GST. Ads can be lodged on-line at <http://www.counciljobs.com/Advertise.asp>

Tel 02 4975 1700

Fax 02 4975 1766

Email mail@CouncilJobs.com

d) LGjobs –

jobs@lgcentre.com.au

Phone 038534500 or 0385345012

Fax: 0385345112

Email: enquiries@lgjobs.com.au

Website www.lgjobs.com.au

e) HACjobs - email bulletin & website which advertises job vacancies and other opportunities in the Health, Social Science and Community Services field in Australia and New Zealand (cost: \$165 per advert, including GST)

Phone 08 8359 5035

Email hacadverts@emailmedia.com.au

Website <http://www.hacjobs.com.au>

f) NRMjobs - email bulletin & website which advertises job vacancies and other opportunities in the Natural Resource Management, Environment and

Water field in Australia and New Zealand (cost: \$165 per 200 word advert, including GST).

Phone 08 8388 5608
Fax 08 8388 5372
Email adverts@emailmedia.com.au
Website <http://www.nrmjobs.com.au>

g) COMjobs - - email bulletin & website which advertises job vacancies and other opportunities for professional Communicators in Australia and New Zealand (cost: \$165 per advert, including GST).

Phone 08 8359 5035
Email hacadverts@emailmedia.com.au
Website <http://www.comjobs.com.au>

h) Australian Water Association offers a free listing for jobs in the water field

Phone 02 9413 1288
Email joan@awa.asn.au

7. OTHER MEDIA

a) Radio Advertising

Radio advertising is used when there is a need to urgently notify the public of an issue which cannot be covered using the existing Council advertisements in the local press.

Of all the media, radio offers the shortest deadlines. Radio is therefore the ideal choice for placement of advertisements in emergency situations. A minimum of one day notice should be given to allow time for the advertisement to be produced. This time frame can be reduced in times of emergency. Placement of **four to five advertisements** in the **breakfast session** and/or the **morning session** will achieve maximum reach.

NB: Paid advertising is not available with ABC Radio. You may send a community service announcement or media release to the ABC but in these instances there is no guarantee that it will be aired.

b) Television Advertising

Television is seldom used for advertising local government services. The exception to this is when:-

- a business unit of Council has a significant budget to publicise a specific item eg. Caravan parks/Macleay Water
- Council supports a major local event eg. Celebrate the Macleay or
- Council participates in a joint promotion eg. Local Government Week/Waterwise.

Council's contact with Television is generally limited to News stories. TV news journalists are always on the look out for good visual news story.

Contact Council's Communications Officer if you are aware of an appropriate story.

c) Internet Advertising

Council has a website (www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au) and all departments can publicise information freely on this site. A link has been created from the home page for positions vacant within the organisation. In all cases with external recruitment advertising, potential applicants are referred from press advertising to Council's website to access the job description of the position which is being advertised. This is cost effective as the size of the paid advertisement can be reduced. For advertisement placements on Council's homepage, contact the Website Administrator on ext 231.

8. OTHER PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

a) Media releases or Community Service Announcements

Whilst a media release or community service announcement does not meet the definition of advertising used in this Strategy, they continue to be one of the most useful forms of promotion available. For a media release to be successful, the information needs to be newsworthy, interesting and informative.

The newsworthiness of a story is generally assessed by the media using the following 12 factors:

- Timeliness – news is what's new
- Proximity – is it relevant/close to our community?
- Exceptional Quality – how uncommon is the event?
- Possible future impact
- Prominence – does it involve a high profile person?
- Conflict – physical, emotional, ideological
- The number of people involved or affected
- Consequence – what happened as a result of the event?
- Human interest – soft news... warm & fuzzy
- Pathos – sad/hard luck stories
- Shock value – attention getters, used by tabloid press
- Titillation component – sex/scandalous stories

Community service announcements need to be a "service" to the community.

The Communications Officer can advise on content and story angles and produce media releases/community service announcements for Departments as required. Keep in mind the five "W"s as outlined earlier in the Strategy. By answering these questions, the media release or community service announcement will cover all information necessary on a given subject.

b) Posters/billboards/signs

Posters - A quick, effective and targeted method of advertising is to use posters placed in strategic locations. Posters can be used in conjunction with other forms of advertising.

Billboards - require a substantial financial commitment as there is, in addition to erection and signwriting costs, annual or monthly fees to be paid. They can be highly effective if the message to be communicated can be done so with a minimum of words balanced with photographs or graphics.

Importantly, the message must be clear to the passerby as, at a maximum, they have 12 seconds to digest the information presented on the billboard

Regulatory signs - serve an important function for Local Government in their community. They inform and educate and, like billboards, work 24 hours a day.

John Miner, in his book "The Complete Colour Reference Manual", says that the most legible of all colour combinations for posters or signs are in order:-

- black on yellow
- green on white
- red on white
- blue on white
- white on blue
- black on white.

c) Telephone directory

A listing in a telephone directory is a useful form of advertising especially for if people need to contact the organization by phone to access the service being advertised. Additional listings in the white pages, or a listing/display ad in the yellow pages can be a worthwhile method of providing service information to the public. Bold listings have greater impact.

d) Brochures

Brochures, flyers or leaflets, whether produced professionally or in-house, are an alternative form of advertising. They are particularly relevant if:-

- a significant change/project needs to be communicated eg. SWR Water Treatment plant,
- there is a change of regulation that could effect residents or ratepayers eg, Companion Animals Act
- a large quantity of information has to be communicated eg. "Helpful hints for Ratepayers"
- a specific area, such as a village, needs to be targeted

They have the advantage that they often stay in a home or office for an extended period of time. The distribution process is vital and thought should be given to the message you wish to impart and who the target audience is.

Methods of Distribution

- ***Inserted into existing publications*** eg. Macleay Argus, Mid Coast Observer and Macleay Happynings. The widest local distribution is achieved with the Macleay Valley Happynings. 11,950 copies are required for the Happynings, 3,500 for the Macleay Argus and 18,000 for the Mid Coast Observer. The insertion cost is \$70 including GST per thousand for each of these publications.

- ***Distributed via letterbox drop.*** This can be done through:-
 - Australia Post phone 02 6563 8808
To reach all letterboxes in the Shire, both private and business, you would need 12,500 copies. Cost per drop is \$0.11 – total for 12,500 copies would be \$1,375.
 - Neil Monckton phone 0419 283 126 or ph/fx 65668077
(H)***
 - Michelle Foley phone 02 6515223***

*** Charge is usually \$44 per thousand including GST with total deliveries reaching almost 7,200 homes. These services do not cover all of the Shire – areas covered by Neil include Kempsey, Crescent Head, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point, Smithtown, Gladstone, Frederickton, Aldavilla, Macleay Park Estate and Euroka. Michelle does all these with the exception of Stuarts Point. Hat Head is not covered by either contractor.

e) Direct mail

Council has many opportunities to promote their services through existing mailings. Flyers/brochures can be inserted with Rates Notices for a cost effective method of distribution. Check with the Rates Department on the number required for each mailing as it does vary depending on the time of year (around 13,000 Rates Notices are distributed) and there is a cost of \$15 per 1,000 for folding and inserting.

f) Specialist/industry publications

Rarely is advertising undertaken by Council in Specialist or Industry Publications. This is relevant to some recruitment advertising and if tenders or quotations are to be called for specialist equipment. It is used extensively in the tourism industry and in industrial or economic development.

g) Word of mouth

Good word of mouth is the most effective method of advertising and it helps build a good reputation for the organisation. Word of mouth is free, works continually and has enormous reach. The best way to ensure positive word of mouth from customers is to deliver what we promise and by providing exceptional customer service, even in difficult circumstances.

9. CONCLUSION

The guidelines provided in this Advertising Strategy are a point of reference for Management and staff at Kempsey Shire Council to:-

- ensure the Organisation's corporate image is both protected and enhanced
- continually inform and educate Council's residents and ratepayers and
- guarantee Council's compliance with the Local Government Act.

10. MEDIA CONTACT DETAILS

Press

Macleay Argus
Matt Brennan Manager
Dave Coren Editor
Angus Green Journalist
Shellie Brennan (sport)
Neville Thornton Advertising
PO Box 256, West Kempsey NSW
2440
Phone 02 6562 6622
Mobile 0427 626 623
Fax 02 6562 8871
Email
editor.macleayargus@ruralpress.com
mail.macleayargus@ruralpress.com

Macleay Valley Happynings
PO Box 308
Kempsey NSW 2440
Phone 02 6563 1166
Fax 02 6563 1779
Email
mail.macleayargus@ruralpress.com
Contact Sonya Murphy
Manager Matt Brennan
Phone 02 6563 1166
Fax 02 6563 1779
Email
editor.macleayargus@ruralpress.com

Mid Coast Observer
PO Box 268
Kempsey NSW 2440
Phone 02 6562 6577
Fax 02 6562 8871
Email
editor.midcoastobserver@ruralpress.com
Contact Neil Morgan
Editor Dave Coren

Sydney Morning Herald
Urban Affairs Editor – Sherrill Nixon –
sherrillnixon@smh.com.au

Daily Telegraph
Civic Roundsman - Lilian Saleh
salehl@dailytelegraph.com.au
Phone: 968 95314
Fax: 9685313
Mob: 0417 683 397

Daily Telegraph Rural Affairs reporter
Samantha Williams
williamssam@newsld.com.au

Port News
Phone 02 65811 655
Fax 02 65811 616

Town & Country Magazine
Lesley Penfold
\$9.25/cm Classified rate
PO Box 276 Taree 2430
Phone 02 65521988
Fax 02 6551 7115
Email
mail.towncountry@ruralpress.com

Local Government Focus
info@lgovfocus.com.au

Councillor Magazine/
Local Government Newsletter
Editor - Ben Hutchinson
benh@halledit.com.au
hallmark@halledit.com.au

Local Government Focus
03 94169900 Editor - Kathie Jones
info@govfocus.com.au
kjones@lgfocus.com.au

Local Agenda
Anna Cohen
annac@tmte.com.au

Government News
Editor – Jane Garcia
Phone 0285866146
jane@intermedia.com.au

The Land
editor.theland@ruralpress.com
classifieds.theland@ruralpress.com

LG Manager Magazine
national@lgma.org.au

NSW/ACT Local Government
Administrators' Source Book
Editor – Evette Deaves 02 85968676
evetted@publications.net.au

Radio

2MC FM/Star FM
Shop 1/52 Forth Street
Kempsey NSW 2440
Phone 02 6562 1236
Fax 02 6562 8538
19 Short Street Port Macquarie
Phone 6584 0406
News: Phone 02 6584 9200
Fax 02 6584 0406
Email sales@starfm.net.au
Contact
Mike Crowhurst Manager
Nick O'Callaghan News Director
Maureen Moore Sales Manager
Mobile 0418 495 473
Email news@starfm.net.au

Tank FM
PO Box 200
West Kempsey NSW 2440
Phone 02 6562 3009
Fax 02 6562 3344
Email tankfm@tsn.cc
Contact Jim Moulton (President)
65 615147 or 0417 454310

Radio 531
PO Box 920
19 Short Street
Port Macquarie NSW 2444
Phone 02 6584 9344
Fax 02 6584 9644
Email radio531@bigpond.net.au
Contact Peter Rasmussen
Mobile 0410 532 53

Local Government Association
NSW & Shires Association
Media Officer – Michael Ross
Phone 92424042
Fax 92424022
Mob 0419406400
Email michael.ross@lgsa.org.au

ABC Radio (Mid North Coast)
Cameron Marshall Manager
Email kempsey.regional@abc.net.au
51 Lord Street, Port Macquarie 2444
Phone 65881211
Fax 6588 1299
Managers direct line 0427 265 308
Email midnorthcoast@your.abc.net.au
marshall.cameron@abc.net.au
sexton.jennifer@abc.net.au
luisa.rubbo@abc.net.au

Television

Prime Television
Fiona Ferguson Manager
Matthew Clark Journalist
Suite7a 10-12 Short Street,
PO Box 2570
Port Macquarie NSW 2444
Phone 02 6589 9772
Mobile 0427 262 278
Cameraman 0407 325 327
Fax 02 6589 9700
Email matthew.clark@primetv.com.au

NBN Limited
Frances Murphy Manager
Lyn Lelean Journalist (PM)
40 Gordon St, (PO Box 1055)
Port Macquarie NSW 2444 (next to
Library)
Phone 02 6583 2870
Mobile 0428 689 623
Fax 02 6583 2722
Email prtnews@nbntv.com.au

Southern Cross TEN
Suite 4/ 94 William St (Cnr Munster
St),
Port Macquarie NSW 2444
Phone 02 65 841821
Fax 02 65 833743
Email screigh@scbnetwork.com.au
Stephen Creigh Manager
Adam Jackson Journalist
(Coffs Office ph 66522777)

11. CONTACT NAMES FOR ADVERTISING APPROVAL

GENERAL MANAGER	
Recruitment	Peter Garven
Management Plan	Jeff Clegg/Allan Burgess
Customer First	Marg Mottee/ Allan Burgess
SHIRE SERVICES	
Water and Sewer	AnneMaree Burke / Tom Vermeulen
Waste Management	Tom Vermeulen
Tourism- Information Promotion	Guy Whelan/ Tom Vermeulen Kathy Oliver/Robert Pitt
Pools	Tom Vermeulen
Laboratory	Anne Maree Burke / Tom Vermeulen
Roads, Bridges	Manager Works / Tom Vermeulen
Flood Mitigation	Tom Vermeulen
COMMUNITY SERVICES & LIFESTYLE	
Open Space & Recreation	Guy Whelan / Director Shire Services
Goorie Matters	Debra Morris/ Guy Whelan
Cemeteries	Guy Whelan
Aged Housing (Council)	Jenny Colling/ Guy Whelan
Aged Care (Council)	Jo McGoldrick/ Guy Whelan
Street Stalls	Jenny Colling / Guy Whelan
Youth Matters	Greg Hehir/ Guy Whelan
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	
Planning Issues	Robert Pitt/ Tony Blue
Building Issues	Robert Pitt/Ken Ward
Environmental Issues	Robert Pitt /Ken Ward
Economic Development	Robert Pitt/ Kathy Oliver
Ranger Services	Robert Pitt /Ken Ward
CORPORATE SERVICES	
Fleet	Bruce Snape
Airport & Caravan Parks	Steve Read/Bruce Snape
Finance	Tony Curtin/Bruce Snape
Computer Services	Campbell Petterson/Bruce Snape
Administration/Records	Pat Hanrahan/Bruce Snape
Saleyards	Bruce Snape

12. SAMPLES & PROFORMAS

**General Advertising
Pro-forma**

Attachment A

Heading _____

Sub Heading (if applicable) _____

Body copy _____

Council contact details _____

Publication	Run Date(s)	Allocation #
The budget allowed for this advertising is \$		
Authorised by		Date

**Proposed Development
Advertising Pro-Forma**

Attachment B



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

**NOTIFICATION OF CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENTS**

The public are advised that it is intended to consider the following development related issues at the Council Meeting of _____, 2000.
The meeting will commence at 9.30am.

FILE #	APPLICANT	LAND	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Further information on the Development Proposals can be obtained by contacting: the Sustainable Development Services Department
Kempsey Shire Council
Elbow Street
West Kempsey
Phone (02) 6566 3240
Fax (02) 6566 3245.
Email ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au

**Tender & EOI
Advertising Pro-forma**

Attachment C

TENDER FOR (XYZ) - Tender No. XXX

Tenders are invited and will be received up until 10am on **date** for **the supply and delivery of a name and description**.

Tenders, in a sealed envelope clearly endorsed "**Tender No. , Name**" are to be either:-

- submitted to the General Manager, Kempsey Shire Council, PO Box 78, West Kempsey. NSW. 2440,
- deposited in Council's Tender Box located in the Civic Centre Foyer, Elbow Street, West Kempsey

Tenders may also be sent electronically clearly marked with "**Tender No. , Name**" :-

- faxed to 02 6566 3205 or
- emailed to ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au.

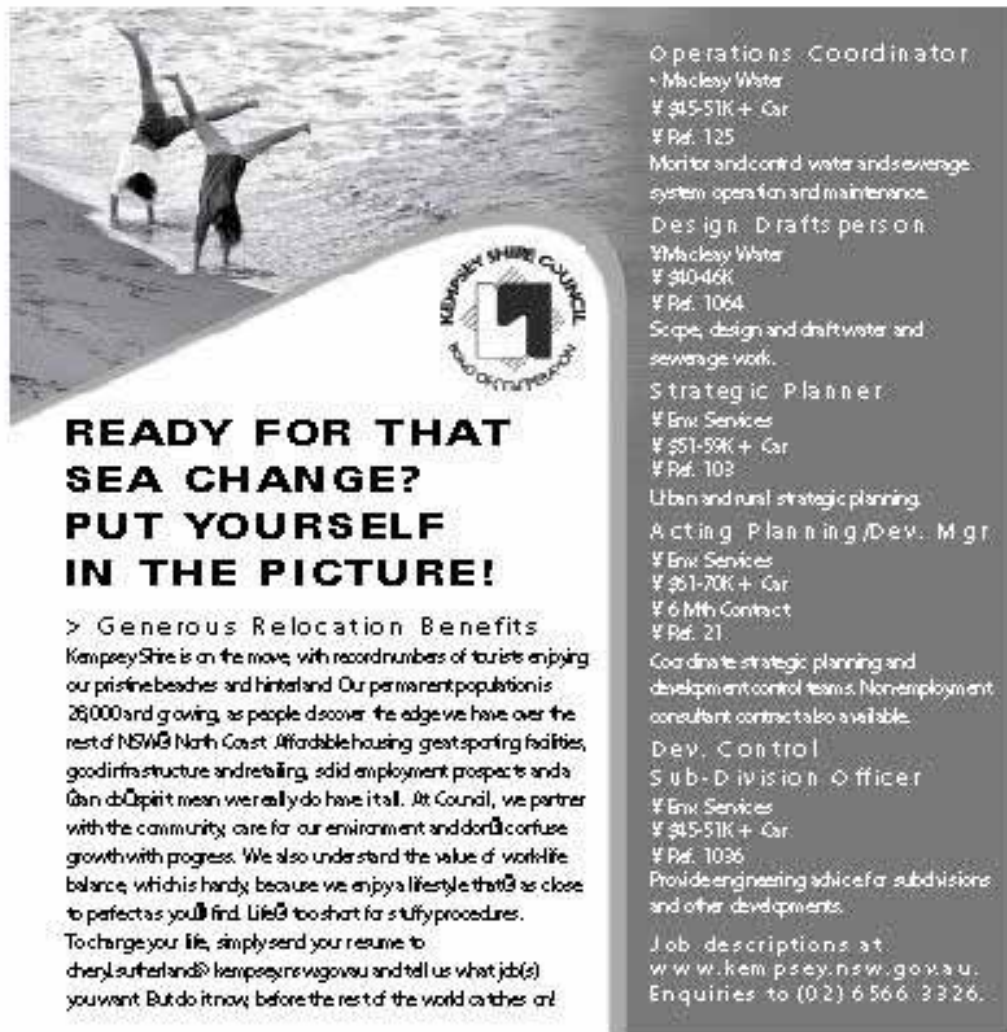
Tenders will be opened immediately after the closing time and members of the public are welcome to attend.

Tenders received after the advertised closing time will not be considered. The lowest price or any other tender will not necessarily be accepted. The canvassing of Councillors will render any Tender ineligible for further consideration.

Tender documentation is available from the **xxxx** Department **for a non refundable fee of \$xx**. A copy of the tender documentation is also available free to download on Council's website – www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au Further information relating to the Tender or Tender documentation may be obtained from **name** on **phone number**.

**Sample of
Recruitment
Advertising
(Innovative)**

Attachment F



**READY FOR THAT
SEA CHANGE?
PUT YOURSELF
IN THE PICTURE!**

> Generous Relocation Benefits
Kempsey Shire is on the move, with record numbers of tourists enjoying our pristine beaches and hinterland. Our permanent population is 26,000 and growing, as people discover the edge we have over the rest of NSW's North Coast. Affordable housing, great sporting facilities, good infrastructure and retailing, solid employment prospects and a Can do spirit mean we really do have it all. At Council, we partner with the community, care for our environment and don't confuse growth with progress. We also understand the value of work-life balance, which is handy, because we enjoy a lifestyle that's as close to perfect as you'll find. Life's too short for stuffy procedures. To change your life, simply send your resume to cheryl.sutherland@kempsey.nsw.gov.au and tell us what job(s) you want. But do it now, before the rest of the world catches on!

Operations Coordinator
- Miscellaneous Work
\$45-51K + Car
\$ Ref. 125
Monitor and control water and sewerage system operation and maintenance.

Design Drafts person
- Miscellaneous Work
\$40-46K
\$ Ref. 1064
Scope, design and draft water and sewerage work.

Strategic Planner
- Env. Services
\$51-59K + Car
\$ Ref. 103
Urban and rural strategic planning.

Acting Planning/Dev. Mgr
- Env. Services
\$61-70K + Car
\$ 6 Mth Contract
\$ Ref. 21
Coordinate strategic planning and development control teams. Non-employment consultant contracts also available.

**Dev. Control
Sub-Division Officer**
- Env. Services
\$45-51K + Car
\$ Ref. 1036
Provide engineering advice for subdivisions and other developments.

Job descriptions at
www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au
Enquiries to (02) 6566 3326.

137x140_Option 1



FAX : (02) 9953 0578 PHONE : (02) 9908 9011
EMAIL : adcommlocalgov@tmp.com.au

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

TMP CONTACT:

COUNCIL CONTACT:

PHONE NO:

COUNCIL ORDER NO:

FAX NO:

NO. OF PAGES FOLLOWING:

**IMPORTANT, PLEASE FILL OUT ALL DETAILS !
ADVERTISING SPECIFICATIONS**

PUBLICATION	SECTION NEWS or CLASS	DATES	LINEAGE or DISPLAY	CAPTION or JOB NO.

1 COLUMN

2 COLUMN

3 COLUMN

COMPOSITE AD

COST REQUIRED

LOGO
REQUIRED

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

SORT (4 LETTERS):

**ON LINE
ADVERTISING:**

Local Govt Career
Centre.....

Local Govt
Package A.....

Local Govt
Package B.....

Specialist IT
Package.....

(individual site) ...

Should you require assistance with the above or any of your advertising needs please contact:

SUE BANFER, SALLY-ANNE JENKINS,
MELANIE SHUTTLEWORTH OR CLAIRE LOMBARD
7-13 Parraween Street, Cermorne NSW 2090

**Press Advertisement
Layout Guidelines**

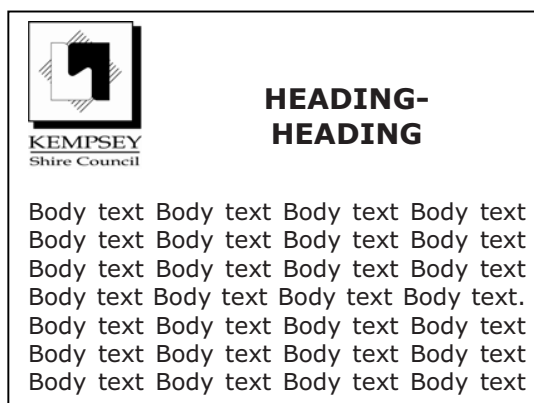
Attachment H

Two layout options are available for stand alone Council advertisements:

1. **Classified Advertisements**

Insert Council logo at the top left of the advertisement with the Heading placed to the right of the logo. Body text to be justified and entire Advertisement to be enclosed with a fine black line.

N.B. Logo (black and white and colour) can be found in the F drive in the folder marked "logo".



2. Display advertisements

The Header below is to be used for display ads. Heading is to be aligned to the left with body text to be justified. Advertisement to be enclosed with a fine black line.

N.B. Header file must be inserted into a document (not opened) and this file can be found at H:\Megan\Council Ads 2002\ Advertisement Header.jpg.



HEADING

Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text
Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text
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**Enquiries to Council's Customer First Centre -
65663200
Visit our website at www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au**

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

ELECTRONIC MEDIA STRATEGY

1. Introduction

Council's award winning Corporate Image, Communications and Public Relations (CIC&PR) strategy has provided the framework for the way Council communicates and consults with stakeholders and the general public.

It utilises communications tools such as media releases, community newsletters, the annual report, press supplements, Council's website, advertising, a regular mayoral column reproduced in local newspapers, and direct mail to keep its community informed.

Council takes seriously its responsibility to use ratepayers money wisely. The provision of value for money services and quality infrastructure rightly takes precedence over allocating substantial budgets for conducting information campaigns through paid advertising.

None the less, Council values good communication with its community and so aims to maximise the dispersal of information it achieves through 'free' media news coverage. One drawback of this strategy is that Council is not guaranteed of coverage and has little control over whether the story runs with a positive or negative slant towards Council. In this respect, it is at the mercy of the media's editors and producers who are the gatekeepers of newsworthiness.

Each year the CIC&PR strategy undergoes a review to identify ways to further improve Council's channels of communication. To this end, the tactics explored here aim at reaching a wider cross-section of people residing in the Kempsey Local Government.

This document develops an approach, in line with the overall CIC& PR strategy, that will enhance the coverage gained by Council through the broadcast media (television and radio).

2. Background and situational analysis

Changing lifestyles have seen many busy people look for more convenient, less time consuming ways to stay informed about local and national current affairs. The news and information provided by the broadcast media delivers immediacy and convenience to its audiences. Most people have ready and easy access to both television and radio. Statistics show that nearly every car has a radio and nearly every home a television set. Strategically, it makes sense for Council to pursue increased coverage via the broadcast media.

Several factors have influenced which media cover stories more regularly about Kempsey Shire Council. For example, the location of the Regional Publishers office adjacent to the Civic Centre in Kempsey means that the CIC&PR strategy has been particularly successful in gaining regular press coverage for Council.

In contrast, the location of the television offices (NBN, Prime Television and Southern Cross Ten) in Port Macquarie means that it is more difficult to get regular coverage. Television Journalists often have large territories to cover in a relatively short period of time. The distance, combined with television news production deadlines, means that precision planning is required to help the respective journalists get the information they need quickly and efficiently.

The radio stations (ABC Radio, Radio 2MC & Star FM) are also located in Port Macquarie but the fact that interviews can be done effectively over the phone means that coverage is not inhibited by distance.

Relationships between Council and some of the media have, at times, been strained. This situation has arisen because of a breakdown in trust between the parties. Council spokes people have sometimes found themselves 'ambushed' in interviews when the interviewing journalist sidetracks onto other issues without warning. Conversely, the media have expressed concern over lack of accessibility to appropriate Council spokes people. Careful mediation, positive reinforcement and time will be required to ensure relationships of respect and trust are rebuilt and maintained.

3. Strategy Outline

a) Purpose

The overall goal of this strategy is to keep residents and ratepayers informed and to build Council's reputation by increasing the media news coverage received on television and radio by Kempsey Shire Council.

b) Strategy

The main thrust of this strategy will involve building trust (one of Council's values) between the broadcast media and Council. The development of strong relationships between Council's public relations office, Council's spokes people and the journalists/producers of the broadcast media is vital to Council's communication process.

This strategy acknowledges the right of Council's spokes people to be adequately prepared for the topics under discussion in media interviews. It recognises, too, the important investigative role of journalists in reporting the news to their audiences. The protocols established by this strategy will help both groups maintain a mutual respect even when the topic for discussion is difficult or unpalatable.

c) Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are:

- (i) To understand and document the different requirements, styles and story deadlines of each television and radio media outlet.*
- (ii) To build good relationships and trust with television and radio representatives by maintaining regular contact, establishing effective protocols, and acting ethically at all times.*
- (iii) To provide local television and radio personnel with accurate and timely information about Council in a format conducive to their media on specific issues and in general terms.*
- (iv) To ensure Council spokes people are adequately equipped to deal effectively with television and radio media interviews.*
- (v) To monitor and evaluate the coverage received on television and radio so as to identify areas in Council's communication strategy that need further improvement.*

4. Stakeholders

If this strategy is to achieve its aims, several groups will need to be influenced by this plan. These groups, listed below, include representatives of the electronic media and also Council representatives:

RADIO STATIONS

ABC Radio	- Breakfast & Morning announcers
	- News Journalists
Radio 2MC/Star FM	- News Editor
Tank Radio	- News Editor

TELEVISION STATIONS

NBN Television	- News Journalist
Prime Television	- News Journalist
Southern Cross Ten	- News Journalist

COUNCIL SPOKES PEOPLE

Mayor

Councillors (in situations of delegated authority)

General Manager

Directors - Shire Services

- Corporate Services

- Sustainable Development Services

- Managers (in situations of delegated authority)

Whilst it is essential that Kempsey Shire Council achieve the objectives of this plan it is ethically important when dealing with these stakeholders to be open and responsive to their needs as well as those of Council. The end result will be improved relationships and understanding between all parties that can be further developed in ensuing years.

Tactics & communications methods

This strategy will:

- develop the media skills of Council's spokes people;
- increase contact with, and information provided to, the broadcast media;
- and build relationships of trust.

The tactics selected to achieve the objectives of this strategy include the use of information kits, staff training and a more pro-active approach to Council's media relations.

The nature of the broadcast media means that Council must keep its message simple. This type of media is extremely time sensitive and so is not suited to conveying complex messages.

Most news stories in the broadcast media are made up of 30 second to three minute 'grabs'. On radio, this may be an announcer lead-in plus one or two sentences from Council's spokesperson (edited from a 10 minute recorded interview). On television, it may be two or three minutes consisting of the journalist's voice over appropriate footage and edited snippets from a 10 minute interview recorded on camera with Council's spokesperson. Effective communication for broadcast news requires a direct approach that explains the issue quickly and simply.

Alternatively, an investigative interview by a current affairs program such as the ABC's morning program may probe a particular issue at length with the Council's spokesperson hoping to uncover new information. This type of interview rarely runs for more than 10 minutes but requires a knowledgeable spokes person who has answers for both the positive and negative questions that will be asked in this situation.

For this reason, it is vital that Council's spokes people receive appropriate training in media presentation skills and have access to adequate preparation time and rehearsal opportunities (if need be) with the Public Relations Officer prior to their interview. This is particularly relevant if the issue is likely to be a controversial one.

The development of an interview protocol will help both the media and Council spokesperson manage the interview process more effectively. The protocol will help establish the parameters for the interview and will uncover information such as:

- the range of topics for discussion
- the objective and context of the interview
- the amount of time it will take
- when it will be aired (recorded or live)
- the number of people being interviewed and if possible their names

Understanding what each of the media need to create a story will also help Council receive more coverage. Radio and Television have different strengths and weakness therefore each has very different needs and works to different deadlines. Sometimes this may require media releases to be written in a specific style. It may mean Council's spokesperson being available for an interview at a particular time so that the journalist involved can meet production deadlines.

The action plan attached to this strategy addresses this need to understand the different requirements of the specific broadcast media.

As a step towards maintaining good relationships between Council and the broadcast media, Council's Public Relations Officer should initiate regular contact with media representatives that is not necessarily connected to the story of the moment. Apart from building strong relationships, such contact will allow an informal two-way exchange of information that will provide valuable information about trends and opinions in the public arena.

Time is the key commodity around which the programming of the broadcast media operates so another way to build strong relationships with its representatives is to value their time. The planning and execution of television story days, where three or four story leads will be set up in advance are an essential part of this strategy. This will allow the television news journalist to save time by gathering more than one story per trip to Kempsey. In turn Council may receive television news coverage over the next couple of days rather than one story every now and then.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

As the costs involved in employing a media monitoring service are prohibitive, this strategy will seek volunteers from Council's staff to set up a network that monitors the coverage received by Council on the broadcast media.

This monitoring network will not only record the coverage received but also give an indication as to whether the story had a positive or negative slant towards Council.

The number of contacts with the media will also be recorded by the Public Relations Officer to help gauge the effectiveness of this strategy.

All the performance measures for evaluating this strategy are listed in the attached action plan.

Sources

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Kotler, P., Brown, L., Adam, S. & Armstrong, G. (2004) "*Marketing*", 6th Edition, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086

Windschuttle, K. & Elliott, E. (2000) "*Writing, Researching, Communicating*" 3rd Edition, Irwin McGraw Hill, Roseville NSW 2069

'*New Conferences, Interviews and the Media Kit*', prepared by Andrea Duff April 2000 <http://www-p.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/cmm11/newpage5.htm> (accessed 14 April 2003)

'Analysing communications: analysing the media' 1999
University of South Australia Flexible learning Centre,
(accessed 21 February 2003)
<http://www-p.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/cmm11/module1.htm>

'What is news?' 1999 *University of South Australia Flexible learning Centre,*
(accessed 31 March 2003)
<http://www-p.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/cmm11/newpage1.htm>

'What are the Characteristics of news' 1999
University of South Australia Flexible learning Centre,
(accessed 21 February 2003)
<http://www-p.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/cmm11/newpage2.htm>

'Twelve Factors of Newsworthiness' *Cyber College Internet Campus,*
updated 17 January, 2003 <http://www.cybercollege.com/newscrit.htm>
(accessed 14 April 2003)

Developing a Strong and Cooperative Relationship with Local and Regional Media and Enhance Management and Councillor's Media Skills

A strong liaison will be established and maintained with all branches of the media (local and regional and, in some instances, with metropolitan and national media). The media provides us with an important way to reach our external customers. Building a cooperative two-way relationship with the media is vital and to be successful, trust and confidence must be present. To ensure Council's image is improved and protected, the following procedures should be followed:-

1. All media releases will be issued in accordance with a standard media release layout on Council letterhead. See below:

Kempsey Shire Council MEDIA RELEASE

HEADLINE

This format should be used for all Kempsey Shire Council media releases.

The document should be prepared using Verdana font and should include a summary paragraph, concise detailed information and at least one quotation.

All media releases should be sent on Kempsey Shire Council letterhead.

If there are opportunities for photographs or interviews, details of these should be clearly spelt out underneath the contact details. A suggested caption should accompany any photograph submitted.

Media releases may be embargoed to ensure that the story breaks at the same time or information is not available until a certain date.

For Immediate Release

For comment:

For further information:

Phone:

Date:

2. All media releases will be issued through the Communications Office.
3. Managers need to be proactive to ensure the public are kept informed on news and issues that may interest or impact on them. Often, opportunities are overlooked to produce worthwhile media releases as:-

- We are too close to the subject

- We know about it and often presume others do too
 - We are unsure of the items newsworthiness
 - Local Government tends to hide its light under a bushel – show pride in the initiatives, services and facilities that are offered.
4. Clear guidelines have been established as to who may comment to the media. Comment should be structured to project an open, easily accessible Council. Policy C24:1 "Councillors and Staff: Interaction and Provision of Information To Media" states:-
- The Mayor and General Manager are jointly responsible for media liaison and public relations and are the primary spokespersons on matters of Council activity.
 - Only the General Manager and Mayor may make media comment about Council matters.
 - The General Manager may specifically authorise other staff to make comment within areas under their management.
 - Council will operate an open access policy for media enquiries, with the Mayor, the General Manager and Directors (or in their absence senior departmental Managers) to supply information when requested, in accordance with Council's various codes and policies. The name and contact phone number of the staff member available for comment shall be clarified on each media release.
 - Staff members shall refrain from offering any personal comment or opinion on matters of policy.
 - Councillors are not permitted to make public comment on behalf of the Council unless specifically authorised by the Mayor or by resolution of the Council.

Media during Emergencies

In emergency situations, e.g. bushfire and flood, a "Media Relations Team" should be established to ensure that there is a flow of information to the media and residents from a single authoritative source.

In situations that may impact significantly on Council, adequate background information should be readily available. Reacting to negative publicity or issues without planning or background information could exacerbate a situation.

Developing Management and Councillor's Media Skills

A number of councillors and senior staff have previously attended Media Skills Training. Should additional training in this area be required, the Communications Officer can arrange a course to suit specific requirements.

Helpful Media Hints

Media relationship building qualities:-

- Honesty – never provide false information
- Know your organisation
- Fairness
- Reliability – be a reliable source of information
- Helpfulness – be as cooperative as possible
- Accuracy – and check your information sources
- Courtesy
- Availability and patience
- Clarity
- Objectivity – don't slant facts or tell half the story
- Commonsense
- Enthusiasm

The media release

- Writing and distributing a media release does not guarantee airtime or placement in the press or - advertising does
- A media release must be newsworthy eg. If a dog bites a man, it isn't newsworthy – if a man bites a dog, it is. It has to have one or more of the following:-
 - Impact – how does it affect people
 - Timeliness – it just happened
 - Currency – old news is not good – tell me in 10 seconds why I care about this
 - Novelty – biggest, best, weirdest – the "ST" factor
 - Proximity – it happened here
 - Prominence – an important person or thing
 - Human interest – does it make you feel anything?
- Often, only one release on one subject will be aired or printed. Conversely, in a lead up to a major event, stage your releases to gain maximum exposure. Each needs to have a separate focus
- It needs to have a simple, clear message and, if possible keep it short, ideally 1 page. Avoid jargon, acronyms or difficult terms. KISS principle.
- Avoid using the word "but" as it is a negative – use "and" instead.
- Sell the benefits – sell the sizzle not the sausage - W I FM – What's in it for me
- It's not a piece of creative writing – it's a process to ensure the key message is delivered

The Golden Rule

Journalists have a golden rule which provides a clear guideline for all writing for the media.

"I have six friends who serve me true – their names are What and Where and How and Why and When and Who".

WEBSITE STRATEGY

To be developed in 2006/07.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The following procedures are in place to help ensure that communication with external stakeholders is successful:-

- Council should provide information to the general public through their weekly advertisement in the Macleay Argus and/or the Macleay Valley Happynings. (The 2005 Survey showed that 86% of respondents found most of their information about Council from the weekly advertisements).
- The weekly Mayoral Column appears in the Macleay Argus and the Macleay Valley Happynings. This is a particularly effective method of gaining exposure for Council initiatives that do not require technical details to be described or explained. It also provides an opportunity to remind the community of important closing dates, meetings etc to support other advertising and media campaigns. (The 2005 Survey showed that 29% of respondents found most of their information about Council from the Mayoral Column).
- Media releases are to be issued regularly. (The 2005 Survey showed that 29% of respondents found most of their information about Council from the media).
- Council produces two colour newsletters annually for residents. A further four mini newsletters are distributed to ratepayers with their rate reminder notices. (The 2005 Survey showed that 17% of respondents found most of their information about Council from community newsletters).
- Weekly program on Tank FM. (The 2005 Survey showed that 8.7% of respondents found most of their information about Council from this radio program).
- Residents are invited to attend Council Meetings and, if an item is listed on the agenda, may apply to speak during the public forum on that item.
- An up to date and interesting website on Council and its activities is maintained. The site should be used to provide residents with a wealth of information including PDF versions of Strategies and Plans. The site is becoming increasingly interactive. (The 2005 Survey showed that 5% of respondents found most of their information about Council from the website).

- Annually, a Management Plan, Annual Report and State of the Environment Report are produced and made available to the public as required by the Local Government Act 1993. These documents are available on Council's website. Community groups are invited to be placed on a mailing list to receive copies of these documents.
- Consultation with the community is seen as vital as it provides Council with an opportunity to impart information to residents and stakeholders, and, in turn, receive feedback and input from the community. Strategies 6 and 7 of this document expand on the methods that can be used to effectively consult with, and gain feedback from, the community.
- An email mailing list is to be maintained by the Communications Officer and updated to provide an additional method of directly communicating with the public.
- Strategies, LEPs and other documents are produced as required and these are advertised to ensure the public is aware of their content and, where appropriate, invited to make submissions on their content. In the case of draft strategies and plans, minimum requirements have been developed to spell out the minimum requirements for advertising proposed. See Strategy 6. All major documents are to be made available on Council's website.
- Surveys (phone, written, random tracking and focus groups) are to be conducted to provide information and gather information – results of surveys are to be communicated to both internal and external customers.
- Schools are to be provided with information on Kempsey Shire Council and Local Government on an annual basis.
- Direct dial telephones have been installed at Council to facilitate contact directly with staff outside traditional business hours.

Council's Mission Statement, Vision and Values are the cornerstones of corporate image within Kempsey Shire Council. Councillors and staff should be familiar with them and take every opportunity to communicate them and their meaning to our external customers.

CONSULTATION

Clarifying the Need to Consult with the Community and Identify Opportunities and Methods for Effective Consultation

Both the community and Council benefits from an effective consultation process as it:-

- creates a greater understanding and sense of ownership in a project,
- encourages local knowledge and input and
- allays suspicion about local government processes and activities.

In order for a decision making process to be considered fair, the public should be given an opportunity to air an opinion or make a submission and must have the assurance that any submission will be properly considered.

A Policy on Community Consultation was adopted by Council at the meeting of July 9, 2002. A Strategy, Matrix and Checklist have been developed to give Councillors, management and staff suggested guidelines for engaging in effective consultation with the community they serve. These are displayed in the following pages.

In October 2003, this strategy was expanded to include a procedure to notify and consult with the community on matters considered significant by Council. This procedure has been included in the section "When is Consultation Appropriate".

Setting in Place a System within Kempsey Shire Council to Gain Feedback from the Community it Serves

For the community to truly feel involved with Council, it must be regularly given the opportunity to input their ideas into Council's activities. This can be achieved in the following ways:-

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys are conducted, analysed and reported to Council, Management and staff. The results of the survey, and any actions that have been undertaken as a result of the survey, are communicated back to the residents. This step is vital in the feedback process. People will only take the time to complete surveys if they feel their opinions and suggestions are valued, considered and, if appropriate, implemented.
- Customer First Centre, Departmental or issue-based surveys are conducted as required.
- Random Telephone Surveys are conducted as required.
- Random Tracking Surveys are conducted to source information on specific issues as required.
- Focus groups can be used when appropriate to seek detailed information on specific issues.
- A matrix has been developed to outline optimum methods of consultation
- A simple feedback form on Council's Website is available to encourage people who are using the internet to forward their ideas to Council.
- A feedback form is available at the Customer First Centre to assist customers to provide information to Council.
- An interactive poll facility is available on the website to poll opinions on specific subjects.
- The public is invited to make submissions regarding important documents such as the Management Plan, LEP and other strategies.
- A public meeting will be held to coincide with all displays of Draft Plans and Strategies to source feedback and comment.
- The Mayor, Councillors and Management all encourage consultation on a one to one basis when required.

- Residents can take advantage of the public forum that is held at the beginning of each Council Meeting. The issue to be spoken about must be included in the agenda for that Council meeting.
- The CivicView Work Order system provides an opportunity for the public's needs to be recorded and addressed.
- Community groups are encouraged to invite Councillors or staff to attend their regular meetings on an annual basis or if an issue of concern arises.

CONSULTATION POLICY

C24:16

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote community involvement in the planning and decision making processes of Council and to encourage positive relations between Council and the Community
2. To promote open and transparent decision making which is responsive to the needs of the community
3. To identify the needs and issues of residents, ratepayers and those people who are directly effected by decisions of Council through two way communication
4. To increase the awareness levels of community members regarding actions proposed by Council
5. To comply with the Local Government Act, 1993* and with Kempsey Shire Council's Mission Statement**.

** "To provide directly or on behalf of other levels of Government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively;
To facilitate the involvement of Councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and Council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of Local Government."*

*** "Working with the community to improve our country lifestyle through excellence in service and leadership"*

POLICY STATEMENT

Effective consultation with the community is important for all levels of government as it:

- provides the community with a greater understanding and sense of ownership in a project,
- encourages local knowledge and input and
- allays suspicion about local government processes and activities.

In order for a decision making process to be considered both fair and informed, the public should be given an opportunity to air an opinion or make a submission and must have the assurance that their opinions and submissions will be properly considered. The following points are critical to successful consultation:

- Community participation is the right of all citizens
 - adequate resources should be allocated to ensure a suitable consultation process can be implemented and
 - timeframes should be realistic to ensure a satisfactory result.
- Traditionally, community consultation has been limited primarily to controversial issues, particularly in relation to development applications. With increased community demand for involvement in Local Government, Councils are recognising the importance of consulting across a broad spectrum of issues affecting the local community.

In all cases, consultation should be:

- open
- two way and
- ongoing.

To be effective, consultation should occur before Council makes a decision. A Consultation Strategy, which includes a consultation matrix and checklist, has been developed to support this Policy. It can be found on the Intranet. Management and staff are required to refer to this strategy prior to any consultation process taking place.

Date Policy Adopted 9.7.2002
Minute No 2002.574
Date Policy Adopted 5.7.2004
Authority Manex

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The importance of community input is clearly indicated in Kempsey Shire Council's Mission Statement:

"We will work with the community to provide high quality services and facilities through excellence in leadership and with consideration for the needs of the environment and of future generations"

Jill Hannaford, from Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey Pty Ltd states that "community consultation is a means of involving the community in a decision making process by seeking the views, opinions concerns and reactions from the community as individuals or groups. By involving the community, community consultation enables people to understand issues and often to have a sense of ownership in a project."

The quotation below encapsulates this:

"Tell me and I will forget;
show me and I may remember;
involve me and I'll understand." Chinese Proverb

Effective consultation provides the community with a greater understanding and sense of ownership in a project, encourages local knowledge and input and allays suspicion about local government processes and activities. In order for a decision making process to be considered fair, the public should be given an opportunity to air an opinion or make a submission and must have the assurance that this will be properly considered.

The Local Government Act, and the Council charter set forth in the Act, broadly requires that Councils have policies and procedures to ensure that :-

The local community is adequately informed of its activities
Members of the local community are adequately informed and given an opportunity to make submissions to the local Council in writing and/or in person and submissions receive due consideration insofar as they are relevant.

Good practice recommends that the quality of submissions improves if members of the local community get simple advice on framing effective submissions to their Council. The NSW Ombudsman's "Better Service and Communication – Guidelines for Local Government" recommends the following to assist the community with their submissions.

- "Inviting submissions rather than objections in order to reflect the intention to attract comment rather than merely procure opposition
- The considerations the Council will take into account in reaching a decision

- How to get further information relevant to the matter under consideration
- The desirable length of submissions
- The need to provide supporting information when challenging issues of fact
- The need to avoid using intemperate language
- The need to avoid casting personal reflections on individuals including Councillors, staff and third parties
- The availability of submissions for inspection by decision makers and the public and
- A clear statement on the effect of making a submission."

To increase the opportunity of receiving comment on advertised Draft Plans and Strategies, after they have been approved by Council, the following procedure is recommended.

Minimum Requirements for Advertising Draft Plans and Strategies.

- Advertising in Macleay Argus and/or Macleay Valley Happynings for a minimum of three weeks
- Supported by a Media Release
- Reminder in Mayoral Column

Display of Advertised Draft Plans and Strategies

- Copy to be included on Councils website
- Colour copy to be placed in various locations including the Civic Centre, Council's libraries and other venues depending on content of plans (*Mark originals with "For Display Only - please do not remove from the building"*)
- Additional photocopies of the documentation available for the public to take home
- A3 poster to draw attention to the fact that the documentation in on display a this venue

A public meeting will be held to coincide with all displays of Draft Plans and Strategies.

Options

- Letters to stakeholders
- Letterbox drops
- Increase in advertising – include radio/Mid Coast Observer.
- Focus groups
- Information booths

N.B. The following information will help to ensure the process runs smoothly:-

- Staff members are to ensure that ample time is given to the community for comment.
- Staff members are to ensure that plans and associated documentation are available at the advertised locations prior to the advertisement being published.
- Ensure counter staff and the switchboard operators are aware of the items being displayed for comment.

Council's with a deep understanding of the needs and expectations of the local community are able to achieve more effective communication with the local community. Each day, Council is faced with a number of decisions relating to consultation with the community and there is a need to determine:-

- When consultation is appropriate
- What level of consultation is needed
- What methods of consultation will be used
- Who will manage the consultation process and
- How the consultation process will be evaluated

Council has in place existing avenues for community input however, on occasions, there is a need for additional consultation. The Local Government Act, 1993 states that a Council has the following Charter:

"To provide directly or on behalf of other levels of Government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively;

To facilitate the involvement of Councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and Council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of Local Government."

WHEN IS CONSULTATION APPROPRIATE?

Traditionally, community consultation has been limited primarily to controversial issues, particularly in relation to development applications. With increased community demand for involvement in Local Government, Councils are recognising the importance of consulting across a broad spectrum of issues affecting the local community. These issues could include:-

- The future use of land within the Shire
- There is community concern about an issue
- The proposal may have significant impact on the economy, lifestyle or environment of the Shire and its residents
- Government agencies have a stated interest in any policy or plans being considered by Council
- The resolution of an issue may require significant redirection of funds

- Information is needed by Councillors or staff about community needs, priorities or values to ensure appropriate and responsive planning
- Statutory obligations
- Minority or disadvantaged groups having access to information.

The following procedure has been developed to ensure effective consultation with the community takes place on issues which Council believes are significant:-

Council to determine if the issue is considered to be a matter of significance.

IAP2 has developed the following assessment grid, based on the level of public interest and concern, which could help Council to determine if an issue has the potential to become, or is, a matter of significance.

Question	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem?					
What is the level of existing controversy on this or related issues?					
How significant is the potential impact on the community?					
What is the level of significance of the issues to the major stakeholders?					
Number					
Multiply number by this ranking	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
Total for each category					
Total		N.B. The higher the score/average, the more potential for the issue to be classed as significant.			
Average					

Identify key stakeholder groups and or individuals who have an interest in the matter of significance.

There is a need to determine in advance of an issue arising the general interest levels of groups and individuals and to develop a database which can be added to in a more specific way once an issue has been identified. Target listings for generic issues could include development, environmental issues, social/cultural issues, area specific interests, planning, Aboriginal, access, heritage etc.

Extensive publicity is required to ensure that the broadest cross section of the community possible has the opportunity to be identified. Considerable

effort should be made to ensure that the following groups or people are included in the identification process:-

- people who are affected by the existing situation
- people who could be affected by any decision
- people with a strong interest in the issue
- stakeholder groups
- people who may benefit from any decision

NB. To be part of the significant issues consultation process, all identified groups will need to be a constituted body and have publicly elected officials.

Methods to be used in the identification process of stakeholders will include:-

- media releases – opportunities for expansion on the subject through subsequent interviews
- advertisements
- inclusion in community newsletter
- web survey
- calling for submissions and
- compiling a list of known stakeholder groups/individuals (identified by letters, review of media coverage, complaints, referral from other organisations including government bodies).

Determine a position statement from the key stakeholders on the matter of significance.

Invitations are to be extended to identified groups/individuals to participate in the process. Based on input from these groups, a position statement can be developed.

Techniques, including potential benefits and problems, (selected from IAP2 Toolbox) may include:-

Technique	Benefits	Problems
Community facilitation (well trained facilitators)/focus groups	Promotes community involvement Capitalises on existing networks Enhances credibility	Can be difficult to control information flow Can build false expectations Can be expensive and time consuming
Advisory Committees	Detailed analysis for project issues Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading towards compromise	General public may not embrace committee's recommendations Members may not achieve consensus Time and labour intensive
Meetings with existing groups	In-depth information exchange in a non-threatening forum	May be too selective and can leave out important groups
Interviews	Opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum Opportunity to gain feedback from all stakeholders Can be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members	Time consuming Expensive
Mailed surveys and questionnaires.	Input from those who may not attend a public meeting Provides a mechanism for extending a mailing list Provides information from a cross section of the community not only activists Statistics are valuable in determining a decision	Response rate can be low To get statistically valid results, can be labour intensive and expensive. Level of detail may be limited.
Telephone Surveys/Polls	Input from those who may not attend a public meeting Provides input from a cross-section of the public Higher response rate than mailed surveys	More expensive and labour intensive than mailed surveys.

Facilitate a public meeting in an appropriate location, present the key stakeholder's position statements and seek additional community input on the matter of significance.

To gain input from the broadest cross section of the community as possible:-

- ensure that the community is aware of the issue and the consultative process,
- maintain regular and sustained communication with the community
- make the process welcoming, appropriate and accessible
- go to where the public are

- provide feedback to show that the input from the community is valued and
- evaluate the success of the program.

Where an issue is contentious, a public meeting held in advance of position statements being sought from individuals or groups may result in confusion, hostility, conflict and little opportunity for informed discussion. Vocal minority groups or individuals with very strong views may hijack the meeting and intimidate other attendees from presenting their opinions.

Conversely, a public meeting held after position statements and input from the broadest possible range of groups/individuals has the advantage of building credibility, maximising feedback and may even foster a degree of community ownership. Importantly, Council has consulted with the community and is in a far better position to make an informed and considered decision on the issue of significance.

Critical Ingredients to the Success of Meetings

- Adequate publicity,
- an appropriate venue and meeting time,
- a prepared agenda,
- visual aids to define or support position statements and
- trained facilitators.

Council uses the information gathered from the community consultation to make a decision on the issue of significance.

In addition to issues based consultation, Council has the opportunity to involve the community in:-

- Identifying needs and issues
- Exchanging information
- Establishing objectives
- Identifying strategies
- Formulating solutions
- Evaluating council programs and services
- Resolving differences and exchanging feedback.

In all cases, consultation should be **open, two way and ongoing**. To be effective, consultation should occur **before** Council makes a decision.

THE LEVEL OF CONSULTATION NEEDED

The level of consultation varies with the size of the target audience and the nature of the issue/proposal.

TARGET AUDIENCE	
SMALL e.g. community group	Letters Meetings Presentations
MEDIUM e.g. village or town	Newsletters Meetings Presentations Submissions*
LARGE e.g. Shire wide	Advertisements Meetings Newsletters Telephone hotline Comment forms Fact Sheets Submissions*

TARGET GROUP	
PEOPLE DIRECTLY AFFECTED	Letters Leaflets/newsletters Fact sheets Telephone hotlines Meetings
PROFESSIONALS	Submissions * Letters Presentation to organisations/groups Meetings
NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS	Submissions * Letters Meetings Presentations Discussion Papers
OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	Meetings Letters Workshops Submissions * Presentations

* Submissions are ideal for organisations as they provide an official record.

METHODS OF CONSULTATION

There are numerous methods of consultation available to consider including:-

Newsletters	Toll free telephone lines
Letterbox drops	Fact sheets
Mailing lists	Open days and discussion days
Static and staffed displays	Consultation reports
Comment/feedback forms	Sites visits
Surveys and questionnaires	Workshops
On-line forums	On-line chat rooms
Media material	Focus groups
Paid advertising	Information booths/kits
Community liaison groups	Presentations to special interest groups
Public meetings	Reply paid addressed envelopes
One to one discussions	Community representative

IAP2 CORE VALUES

In 2002, Council joined the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). They have developed the IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation for use in the development of public participation processes. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. In addition, IAP2 has also developed a chart which provides suggestions on how to increase the level of public impact on decision making.

As these are considered to be worldwide best practice models, Council should consider the Core Values and Participation Chart when planning any consultation process.

Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2 Participation Chart

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<p>Objective To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions</p>	<p>Objective To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions</p>	<p>Objective To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public and concerns are consistently understood and considered</p>	<p>Objective To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</p>	<p>Objective To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</p>
<p>Promise to the public We will keep you informed</p>	<p>Promise to the public We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision</p>	<p>Promise to the public We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision</p>	<p>Promise to the public We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>Promise to the public To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</p>
<p>Example Tools Fact sheets Web sites Open house</p>	<p>Example Tools Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public Meetings</p>	<p>Example Tools Workshops Deliberative Polling</p>	<p>Example Tools Advisory Committees Consensus Building Participatory decision making</p>	<p>Example Tools Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decisions</p>

MANAGING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

After it has been determined that consultation is required, it is important to:-

- Clarify the purpose.
- Identify who will be involved in the process.
- Establish the best method of consultation to use for each target group.
- Planning. What outcomes do you want? Prepare a clear and concise briefing paper as background information for the public.

- Determine resource requirements. How much do you have to spend?*
- What timeframe is involved?
- Implement the process.
- Seek feedback.

** Consultation processes can be costly as they involve human, financial, material and temporal resources. Potential impact could be:-

LEVEL OF CONSULTATION	NUMBER OF STAFF	WAGES AND COSTS	STAFF HOURS
Low	Four	\$3,000+	20+
High	Twelve	\$60,000+	400+

When appropriate, external facilitation costs need to be factored in to consultation processes involving public meetings and focus group. This can add significantly to the success of public meetings as the external facilitator is seen as fair and impartial and can therefore present the facts and gather the findings in an independent manner.

EVALUATION OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The need to evaluate the success of any consultation process is imperative. You can do this by using feedback forms, quantifying the number of responses, inviting informal feedback during the process and holding a debriefing session at the end of the process.

SUMMARY

Each opportunity for Community Consultation should be considered using the five steps outlined above and summarized below.

- When consultation is appropriate
- What level of consultation is needed
- What methods of consultation will be used
- Who will manage the consultation process and
- How the consultation process will be evaluated

By following these steps, and referring the procedure for dealing with issues of significance, the IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation and Council's Matrix, an effective level of consultation should result.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: *Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey Pty Ltd, NSW Ombudsman "Better Service and Communication – Guidelines for Local Government, Bankstown City Council, Hastings Council, Warringah Council, IAP2 and the RTA*

Community Consultation Matrix

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MATRIX	Advertising	Media Releases	Mayoral Column	Webpage or email	Workshop	On - site Inspections	Surveys and Questionnaires	Public Meeting	Mailout	Letterbox Drop	Displays	Other
Fees and Charges	A, H	M	✓	✓								
Annual Report	A, H	M	✓	✓			✓		Annual Report Mailing List			Tank Radic program
Corporate Strategic Plan	A, H	M	✓	✓	with key stakeholders			✓				Tank Radic program
Community Newsletter	H											Copy included in Macleay Valley Happyning
Major Policy changes affecting the public	A, H	M	✓ selected	✓	✓			✓	to those directly affected			Focus Groups and/or Tank Radic program if appropriate
Council Meetings	A, H			✓								
Minutes and Agendas – ordinary meeting				webpage only								
Council ads	A, H	Selected		webpage only								Available at Reception and Libraries
Plans of Management	A, H	M	selected	✓	If appropriate		If appropriate	✓			If appropriate	Focus Groups and/or Tank Radic program if appropriate
Local Environmental Plans / Development Control Plans (not all)	A, H	M	selected	✓				✓ selected	Selected		If appropriate	Focus Groups and/or Tank Radic program if appropriate

A – Argus, H – Happydings, O – Observer, R – Radio, M – all media, Councilors and selected ratepayers

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL
CORPORATE IMAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2006/07

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION	Advertising	Media Releases	Mayoral Column	Webpage or email	Workshop	On - site Inspections	Surveys and Questionnaires	Public Meeting	Mailout	Letterbox Drop	Displays	Other
Strategic Plans e.g. Youth, culture, aged etc	A, H	M	selected	✓	with key stakeholders			✓			If appropriate	Focus Groups and/or Tank Radic program if appropriate
Change of land categorisation	A, H	M	selected	✓	with key stakeholders	If appropriate If required		If appropriate				
Developments Applications and Approvals	A											
Major Capital Works	A, H	M	selected							If required		
Environmental Notices	A, H	M	selected	✓								
Elections/By-elections	A, H	M	✓	✓								Tank Radic Program
Roadworks or bridgeworks	A, H	If the job will impact on people directly	If the job will impact on people directly	✓						If required		
Road Closures	A, H			✓						If required		
Provision or upgrade of a Shire facility	A, H	M	selected	✓								Tank Radic Program
Changes to services e.g. garbage	A, H, R	M		✓					may be considered to those directly affected	may be considered to those directly affected		
Improvements to Council services or performance feedback	A, H	M	selected	✓			✓					inclusion in Communit Newslette Tank Radic Program
Changes to customer service processes	A, H	M	selected	✓								Tank Radic Program

A – Argus, H – Happynings, O – Observer, R – Radio, M – all media, Councillors and selected ratepayers

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL
CORPORATE IMAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2006/07

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION	Advertising	Media Releases	Mayoral Column	Webpage or email	Workshop	On - site Inspections	Surveys and Questionnaires	Public Meeting	Mailout	Letterbox Drop	Displays	Other
Surveys	A, H	M	selected	✓					consider mailing out with rates notices	Consider this option if cost allows		Tank Radic Program
Emergencies – e.g. Flood	R: A (if time permits)	✓		✓								Direct phone call to affectec people
Community Service Information	H		selected									Tank Radic Program
Events	H											
Grants	H											

A – Argus, H – Happynings, O – Observer, R – Radio, M – all media, Councillors and selected ratepayers

Consultation Checklist

ACTION	DETAIL/SUGGESTED STEPS	
<p>Clarify the purpose</p>	<p>Do you need to consult? What is the purpose of the consultation? Have any decisions already been made? What is negotiable or not negotiable?</p>	<p>√</p>
<p>Identify the participants</p>	<p>Who are the stakeholders? Who should be involved in the process? Do specific population groups need to be targeted?</p>	
<p>Establish the level and method of consultation</p>	<p>Do you want to inform, consult or encourage active participation? What consultation method/s should be used to meet the objectives and to suit the needs of the participants?</p>	
<p>Planning. What outcomes do you want to achieve?</p>	<p>Prepare a clear and concise briefing paper on the subject. What timeframe is involved? Maximise the ability of stakeholders to participate. How will participant's expectations be managed? If a meeting is involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prepare an Agenda ➤ Give adequate publicity ➤ Ensure meeting times suit participants and do not clash with major events. ➤ Arrange meeting in a location which suits the majority of participants. ➤ Prepare visual aids ➤ Use trained facilitators if appropriate 	
<p>Determine resource requirements.</p>	<p>What is the budget? What staff members are involved? Is there a need for a facilitator or mediator? Do you need to hire a venue, caterers?</p>	
<p>Implement the process.</p>	<p>Ensure the consultation outcomes are clearly defined and participants are aware of how decisions reached in the consultation will feed into the overall process. Refer to the entire Consultation Strategy to ensure all items have been considered.</p>	
<p>Seek and give feedback and evaluate the process.</p>	<p>How will the information gained be used? Provide participants with feedback on the progress of the process? How effective was the process? How could improvements be made?</p>	

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Developing a Strong Customer Service Focus within Kempsey Shire Council

Superior customer service continues to be one of the major factors in contributing to the overall success of an organisation and the way it is perceived in the community. In 2004, Council adopted a new Mission Statement that stresses the importance of "high quality services and facilities through excellence in leadership".

Service was also identified as one of the five Values which Council has adopted - "We value our community by providing quality professional service to all".

Council's staff members are now actively keeping data on a range of activities and services. Recording Key Performance Indicators is seen as a critical measurement of improvement as the organisation strives to offer excellent service to customers.

The decision taken by Council in the latter half of 2004 to introduce a Customer First Centre, comprising a "one stop shop" and call centre, was seen as an important step towards service level improvements. The development of a Knowledge Management System has further enhanced service levels as it has provided staff with the resources necessary to answer most customer enquiries at the first point of call.

Task Logs have been developed within CivicView providing staff with an accessible "to do list" relating to inspections, work orders and correspondence.

CivicView Work Orders are another useful tool for staff and a valuable resource for Management. This customer response system allows Management and staff to track the progress of an enquiry and has been designed with a customer service focus –

- discover the issue or complaint,
- produce a work order and then
- act on that order within an acceptable time limit.

Reports are now available and provide an accurate measure of customer satisfaction which can be monitored and compared.

To build a customer service focus within Council, the following points are vital:-

- Management should acknowledge the importance of superior levels of customer service and encourage staff to strive for excellence in this area.

- Staff should be empowered to deal with customer's enquiries in a positive and professional way and be trained in customer service techniques.
- Customer feedback is to be sought through ongoing surveys, focus groups and community consultations. It is impossible to gauge the success of Council's service levels unless this feedback is encouraged.
- The importance of effective communication is to be emphasised, including the best use of email and telephone messaging.
- Staff Excellence Awards are to be continued to recognise those staff members who are delivering service at a level that is beyond expectations.
- Staff suggestions are encouraged to determine new and innovative ways of providing efficient and effective service.

In dealing with Kempsey Shire Council's stakeholders, it is important that management and staff really understand:-

- Council's Mission Statement, Vision and Values
- What the Management Plan and the Corporate Strategic Plan mean to staff directly and in their dealings with the public
- Who Council's customers are
- Customer's needs and expectations when dealing with Council

Kempsey Shire Council's Management and staff, our procedures and practices and our customers are inter-related in the quest for service. When a customer's needs are satisfied beyond their expectations, Council's image is greatly enhanced in the community.

To determine levels of customer satisfaction, it is necessary to gather information from customers and other sources. Methods include:-

- Surveys in each of the departments, covering aspects where there is a high degree of staff/customer contact.
- General surveys to seek information that may relate to the entire organisation's delivery of service.
- Surveys sourcing information on specific projects eg. ascertaining public response regarding the implementation of a MasterPlan.
- Council's computerised Customer Response System (CARE) allows customers to quickly have their request dealt with and a work order produced. With the opening of the Customer First Centre, a call back facility to customers to ascertain satisfaction levels has commenced.

- Performance comparisons with other Councils, through the Department of Local Government's annual publication which focuses on twenty seven (27) key performance indicators across the broad spectrum of Council's activities. The results are a useful tool in highlighting areas in which Kempsey Shire Council excels in, or can make further improvements.
- The development of a system of internal benchmarks aimed directly at improving customer service levels.
- The Annual Report, Community Newsletters, Council's Advertising, Media Releases, the weekly Tank FM program, promotional events, Council's website and the Mayoral Column are all methods used to keep stakeholders informed of the actions and plans of Council. The regular dissemination of pertinent information to the community results in customer satisfaction and an informed stakeholder.
- Public meetings, community consultations and focus groups are other tools to ensure the public is well informed. With information presented in this type of environment, questions can be asked resulting in understanding and satisfaction of the customers needs.
- An on-line poll has been developed to source information from web users on specific items of interest or issues.

Council uses work teams, process improvement teams, benchmarking, agreed service levels and devolving responsibility to staff at the frontline as tools in seeking to provide superior customer service:-

- **Work Teams** – in developing work teams, Council is seeking the support of staff to use their expertise to suggest opportunities for improvement, where appropriate, in the manner in which services are currently delivered. This should result in substantial cost savings and, more importantly, a significant increase in the level and quality of service offered.
- **Process Improvement Teams** –process improvement teams are established each year to review processes within the organisation. Staff members are nominated to serve on these teams and, after careful review, a presentation is made to the Leadership Forum prior to the recommendations being referred to Council's Management Team (Manex) for consideration. This is one way our organisation is striving for continuous improvement - considerable cost and time savings, as well as the introduction of new and better methods of undertaking the studied process, have been achieved since the introduction of these teams.

- **Benchmarking** – is used in most areas of Council and can result in a realistic demonstration of the organisations competitiveness. Staff members have had input into a range of measures so that benchmarking can operate within the organisation. Each month, data is entered into CivicView and the comparative statistics are automatically recorded on the Intranet and used as a motivational tool in team meetings.
- **Agreed Service Levels** – these are key factors in ensuring management and staff fully understand what their responsibility is regarding customer service.
- **Service Level Agreements** - with the development of the Customer First Centre, Service Level Agreements have been developed between the Customer First Centre and each Department of Council. The aim of the agreements is to ensure that every staff member understands their area of responsibility, resulting in significantly improved levels of service and time savings for customers.
- **Devolving Responsibility** – by devolving responsibility to staff, ownership takes place resulting in greater pride and effort in the task at hand. In most cases, superior customer service is a result.

INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

SERVICE STANDARDS

Service standards have been established for Council, the Customer First Centre and the Departments of Council.

Kempsey Shire Council Service Standards

Our Service Standards

Service standards have been created to provide you with the best level of customer service possible:

In all dealings, you can expect to:-

- Be provided with prompt, professional friendly and courteous service
- Be listened to and have your individual needs and expectations responded to
- Be provided with answers to your enquiries and/or to have arrangements made for your enquiries to be addressed
- Have our decisions clearly communicated to you and have the reasons for the decisions fully explained
- Have us accept responsibility for the efficient processing of the business that you have entrusted to us.

When you write to Council, you can expect:

- A reply or an acknowledgement letter relating to your enquiry within fourteen days of receipt
- That your reply will be written in easy to understand language

When you phone Council, you can expect:

- To have your request answered at the first point of contact or, if this is not possible, be referred to the relevant, responsible staff member for an answer.
- If this person is not available, a message will be left for them and you can expect to be contacted by them, or a staff member within their section, within two working days.
- If additional research needs to be undertaken, you will be advised of this and contacted as soon as an answer is available.

When you email Council's mailbox, you can expect:

- A reply within two working days

The Customer First Centre Service Standards

Your initial point of contact with Council

Our Service Standards

When you call in to the Customer First Centre, you can expect:

- That our counter will be staffed during business hours
- To be greeted in a friendly and professional way
- That our staff will wear name badges
- That we will endeavour to minimise waiting times wherever possible

When you phone the Customer First Centre , you can expect:

- To have your call answered within six rings. If you phone when demand for our services is high, you may be placed in a queue to have your call answered by the first available operator.
- To have your questions answered as fully and helpfully as possible
- Our Customer First Centre team to attempt to resolve your request whilst you are on the phone or to put you through to a person who can provide you with more specific information.
- That when we transfer your call, we will pass on any details that you have already provided us with
- To receive a return call from a staff member, either within the Customer First Centre or in one of Council's departments, within two working days if your enquiry cannot be resolved immediately
- If you phone after hours, you can expect a response to your request on the next working day
- That we will leave our first name, department, phone number, times available and a brief outline of the reason for the call when leaving a message for you.

When you visit our website, you can expect:

- That the information is up to date and interesting
- That the site is easy to navigate
- An acknowledgement of your enquiry within two working days
- An explanation of what will happen with your enquiry

To help us to meet these standards, we ask you to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy
- Be honest and accurate when providing information to us
- Work with us to help you solve your problem
- Provide us with feedback on the service we offer

Departmental Service Standards

In addition to the general service standards, each department of Council has specific operational standards that have been linked to performance indicators which are reported directly to the community in the Management Plan:

Correspondence

When you write to Council, you can expect a reply or an acknowledgement letter relating to your enquiry within 14 days of receipt

Complaints

When you make a complaint to Council, you can expect that your complaint is investigated and replied to in 10 working days

Customer First Centre

We will resolve enquiries at first point of contact to Service Level Agreements in 65% of cases

Council Meeting Agendas

We will make the agendas for Council meetings available to the public at least 90 hours before the meeting

Rates and Charges Certificates

We will issue Section 603 Certificates in less than 3 days

Safety Fleet and Depot

We will reduce the total number of staff lost time injuries to less than 12 per million hours worked

Property

We will ensure that the AAAT rating of Council's Holiday Parks are at least maintained at *** for Crescent Head, *** for Hat Head, *** for Stuarts Point and *** for Grassy Head

Water Supply

All water supply failures will be responded to within two hours of being reported

Sewerage Service

All sewerage service system failures will be responded to within 2 hours of being reported

Roads and Drainage

Dangerous road hazards will be responded to within 5 working hours of being reported to Council subject to severe weather or emergency conditions

Dangerous pot holes on sealed roads will be repaired within 7 days of reporting

Council maintained gravel roads will be graded at least once a year

Blockages to Council's drainage system that are likely to cause property damage will be cleared within 24 hours of reporting

Parks Service

We will reply to all requests for work in public parks within 10 working days and undertake approved works within a reasonable time, as resources permit

Rangers

We will respond to complaints relating to environmental quality within 7 days so as to avoid preventable harm to the environment
Building

We will continue to develop procedures to approve construction certificates in accordance with industry Best Practice within 30 days

Development

We will continue to develop procedures to approve development applications in accordance with industry Best Practice within 30 days

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Service Level Agreements have been negotiated between the Customer First Centre and the rest of the organisation. These agreements set the parameters by which we all work and give a clear and concise picture of service expectations and outcomes.

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION FOR PROCESSING COMPLAINTS RELATING TO COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Kempsey Shire Council will ensure that every complaint is: -

- Received courteously,
- Investigated fully and
- Acted upon quickly and appropriately.

Complaints should be documented and the complainants are to be kept informed of the progress and the outcome of the complaint.

"Complaints are an opportunity to improve customer service in all areas of Council's control."

The Complaints Management Policy, and this procedural information, ensure that Council staff has access to a consistent and transparent process for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints.

- All written and verbal complaints will be recorded and investigated by staff as soon as practicable but in not more than ten working days.
- Anonymous complaints will not be acted upon unless the General Manager or his delegate considers that the complaint warrants investigation.

Kempsey Shire Council is committed to improving or correcting its processes, operations or service levels as a result of valid complaints. Staff are authorised, in consultation with their manager, to institute immediate remedial action within budgetary allocations and current policy. Corrective actions outside these parameters must be referred to the General Manager.

Council will not respond to letters or emails that are personally abusive or threatening and will terminate such phone calls immediately. These complaints will be registered in the CivicView "*Customer Services Management*" system but will not be responded to or investigated by Council.

Policy C24:15 outlines fully the steps that are to be taken if an individual's behaviour strays beyond acceptable limits.

Likewise, complainants who have had their concerns fully investigated by Council but who still continue to complain about these same issues will be recorded but may not be responded to or investigated.

A complaints and compliments procedure has been developed to assist customers to understand the process that is involved when making a complaint or submitting a compliment to Council – *Appendix A*. This procedure will be advertised twice each year and copies of a document, containing the procedure, will be available from each reception area of Council.

Responsibilities

Staff are to be made familiar with this Policy so that they are prepared to receive complaints whether presented in person, in writing or by telephone. They will listen courteously, record the complaint accurately, investigate thoroughly and initiate appropriate action promptly. At all times, staff should act within Council's Code of Conduct. Training in the "*Customer Services Management*" system is essential to the success of this Policy.

Staged Responsibility for Investigating and Resolving Complaints	
Stage 1	Where possible, customer service staff or team leaders for outdoor staff will be in a position to resolve many complaints of a minor nature at the counter or in the field.
Stage 2	If they are unable to resolve the complaint, the complaint is to be referred to the relevant Supervisor or Manager of the section
Stage 3	If still unresolved, the complaint is to be referred to the Director of the relevant Department
Stage 4	If the Director is unable reach a resolution, the complaint is to be referred to the General Manager
	N.B. Stage 5 and 6 are options for complainants to explore if the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by management and staff.
Stage 5	If the complaint is still unresolved, the matter can be referred to the Mayor if the complaint does not relate directly to staff.
Stage 6	Five courses of action are available to the complainant if he/she is still unhappy with the result. Contact can be made with: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Ombudsman • The Department of Local Government • The Anti Discrimination Board • The Independent Commission Against Corruption • The Privacy Commissioner

Recording Complaints

All complaints must be recorded and tracked using the Customer Service (CARE) module of CivicView ("*Customer Services Management*"). N.B. It is the responsibility of the staff member handling the complaint to record the information in the "*Customer Services Management*" system of CivicView. **The work order number is to be recorded on any documentation that is to be filed so there is a link for future reference.**

- **Written Complaints** are to be registered in the Records section of Council and forwarded to the designated officer for investigation. An acknowledgement will be forwarded to the complainant. Upon receipt of the complaint by the designated officer, they are to register the complaint in the "Customer Services Management" system.
- **Verbal Complaints**, as a general rule, are to be registered in the "*Customer Services Management*" system by the person receiving the complaint. For outdoor staff, the complaint is to be referred to the team leader who will make note of the complaint and then either personally enters it in the "*Customer Services Management*" system at the end of the day or request that support staff enter the complaint into the system. Staff may use their discretion as to the need to formally record feedback or complaints of a minor nature that can be resolved immediately and to the satisfaction of the complainant. If the complainant requests that the complaint be documented or if the matter has the potential to become an issue (legal, safety or risk related), the complaint **must** be registered.
- **Email Complaints**, whether received at the main Kempsey Shire Council email address or at an individual staff member's email address, are to be forwarded to the Records section for registration and distribution for processing. Upon receipt of the complaint by the designated officer, they are to register the complaint in the "*Customer Services Management*" system.
- **Comments Form on Website** – *Appendix C* - Council's website, www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au, features a request for feedback from customers. The complainant emails the form automatically to the Website Administrator. Registration and processing is the same as for email complaints.
- **Competitive Neutrality Complaints** shall be registered and referred to the General Manager for resolution. A substantial response for all such complaints shall be provided within one month of receipt of the complaint. An acknowledgement letter will be forwarded to the complainant upon receipt of the competitive neutrality complaint.
- **Customer Feedback Form** – *Appendix B* – a form has been designed to assist people submitting complaints, suggestions or compliments. The form is easy to complete and has space for a diagrammatic representation of the issue if required. The form should be forwarded to the Records section for registration and distribution for processing. Upon receipt of the complaint by the designated officer, they are to register the complaint in the "*Customer Services Management*" system.

Timeframes

Ideally, complaints are to be investigated and resolved in no more than ten working days. Some complaints however, may be involved and require lengthy research. If this is the case, the complainant should be contacted and informed of the progress of the investigation.

The Investigation

The depth of investigation is determined by the nature and complexity of the complaint but should include:

- Check if there have been any previous complaints from the complainant or with reference to this particular issue
- Contact the complainant to clarify the complaint, seek information on the outcome sought and explain the investigation process. Ensure that the complainant is aware of what will happen next, how long it will take to respond, who will be dealing with the complaint and provide them with a contact number.
- Examine any relevant legal and administrative issues which may relate to the complaint
- Gather all relevant documentation relating to the complaint
- Talk to staff members who may have been directly or indirectly involved in the complaint
- Once the information has been gathered, resolve the complaint.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved, refer the complaint to the person who represents the next stage in the process:
 1. Customer service staff
 2. Supervisor or Manager
 3. Director
 4. General Manager
- Advise the complainant of the outcome/s. Explain any action that is to be taken to remedy the problem, ask if the customer is satisfied and explain the methods for recourse if the customer is dissatisfied.
- Document the decision and action in the "*Customer Services Management*" system
- Importantly, ensure that any follow up action is initiated and completed.

N.B. In the case of competitive neutrality complaints, a substantial response is to be made to the complainant stating that the complaint has been resolved by:

1. Providing more information to enable the complainant to have a more accurate understanding of competition policy
2. Council investigating or reviewing its business activity or
3. Making a change to Council's business practice

Dealing with Difficult Complaints

The NSW Ombudsman recommends the following course of action when dealing with difficult complaints.

- Separate the merits of the issue being raised from the merits of the person raising the issue and make judgements only about the issue raised.
- Ensure that you are scrupulously professional in your dealing with the complainant
- Ensure a review of the way the complaint was handled is undertaken
- Communicate the results of the review to the complainant
- Carefully assess each new communication for any new information.

Dealing With Aggressive Customers

The NSW Ombudsman provides the following advice for staff when dealing with aggressive or threatening customers.

Rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour may include rude or otherwise vulgar noises, expressions or gestures, verbal abuse of either a personal or general nature, threatening or offensive behaviour, physical violence against property or physical violence against a person.

In all dealings, every effort should be made to put aggressive people at ease and encourage them to calm down.

However, if the behaviour continues, the person should be advised that such behaviour is totally unacceptable and the following procedure should be implemented:-

Telephone

If rude abusive or aggressive comments or statements continue, the staff member may:

- a) Warn the caller that if the behaviour continues, the conversation will be terminated
- b) Explain to the caller that staff are obliged to note any threats and report them to their supervisor
- c) Terminate the conversation if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues after a warning has been given

Where a conversation is terminated, the staff member is to report the incident to their manager as soon as possible.

Interviews/Face to Face

If rude abusive or aggressive behaviour continues, the staff member may:

- a) Warn the person that if the behaviour continues, the interview will be terminated
- b) Involve their manager/supervisor in the incident
- c) Terminate the interview if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues after a warning has been given
- d) Request that the person leaves the building

Where an interview is terminated, the staff member is to report the incident to their manager as soon as possible.

Correspondence

If, in the opinion of the General Manager, any correspondence to Council contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to the sender and no further action will be undertaken. Alternatively, a letter shall be sent from the General Manager suggesting that future letters in this manner will be referred to Council's solicitor.

Violent Behaviour

Staff members are to remove themselves from any situation and notify their Manager where there is any sign of extreme violence or aggression. In this situation, the Manager is advised to call the Police immediately.

Adequate documentary records, including entering the incident as a complaint in the CivicView Customer Services System, must be kept on these incidents.

The General Manager also may decide to advise the person that:

1. All future contact with Council must be in writing
2. Future dealings will be only be dealt with by a nominated staff member after an appointment has been made or
3. Access to Council will be limited in future

A Solicitor's letter may be used to formalise point 3 and to clarify reasons for the actions, which have been taken and provide alternatives for future contact if absolutely necessary. In extreme cases, an AVO may be taken out.

If any of these three steps are taken, Council is to be notified as soon as possible and information relating to the situation be forwarded to the ICAC, Department of Local Government and the NSW Ombudsman for information.

Reference: NSW Ombudsman – Dealing with Difficult Customers, May 2001.
A link to this document has been provided for staff on the Intranet. A number of NSW Council's have also provided some guidance on this issue.

Exceptions

If a complaint involves **allegations of corruption**, it is to be referred immediately to the General Manager for investigation and, where appropriate*, for action under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, 1988.

** The Independent Commission Against Corruption Act defines corrupt conduct as dishonest or partial exercise of an official function by a public official. It must involve:*

- a) a criminal offence under NSW law or any other law which could apply in the particular circumstances or*
- b) a disciplinary offence which could lead to a disciplinary action under any law including regulations or*
- c) reasonable grounds to dismiss or terminate the services of a public official.*

The Act requires Council's General Manager to report suspected cases of corrupt conduct to ICAC.

If a complaint concerns **alleged breaches of pecuniary interest** under the Local Government Act 1993, the complaint is to be referred to the General Manager unless the complaint relates to the General Manager. In this case, the complaint will be referred to the Mayor. The General Manager or the Mayor will investigate the complaint and, if necessary, refer the complaint to the Department of Local Government. The complainant would need to be identified and, if possible, the complaint verified by statutory declaration.

If a complaint **alleges criminal actions**, then the matter is to be referred immediately to the General Manager unless the complaint relates to the General Manager. In this case, the complaint will be referred to the Mayor. The General Manager or Mayor shall investigate and refer the matter to the NSW Police Service where appropriate. Legal advice from Council's solicitor may be sought prior to these actions being taken.

If a complaint is received relating to:

- **A Councillor** - the complaint is to be referred as soon as possible to the Mayor
- **The Mayor** - the complaint is to be referred as soon as possible to the General Manager
- **The General Manager** - then it is to be referred as soon as possible to the Mayor***
- **A Director** - the complaint is to be referred as soon as possible to the General Manager ***

- **A Manager - in** the first instance, the complaint is to be referred as soon as possible to their Director. If it cannot be resolved, the complaint can be referred to the General Manager***
- **A member of staff - in** the first instance, the complaint is to be referred to their Manager. If it cannot be resolved, the complaint can be referred to their Director who in turn may refer it to the General Manager***

*** If applicable, the complaint is to be handled in accordance with that person's contractual arrangements with Council and the provisions of specific legislation as described previously.

No complaint about the conduct or performance of a member of staff shall be either investigated or responded to by that member of staff.

Failure to Reach a Satisfactory Resolution

When a complainant is not satisfied with the investigation of their complaint, they are to be advised of the review mechanisms available to them. These include referral to: -

- The Office of the Ombudsman
- The Department of Local Government
- The Anti Discrimination Board
- The Independent Commission against corruption
- The Privacy Commission

Reporting Outcomes

When the complaint has been resolved, it is vital that the officer responsible completes the entry in the *Customer Service Management System*.

Performance indicators relating to complaints are to be included in the Management Plan and reported on in the Annual Report.

Confidentiality

In relation to a complaint against an individual staff member, there is a need to ensure confidentiality at all times.



DEFINITIONS

A **complaint** is defined in the Department of Local Government's Complaints Management in Councils as:

"An expression of dissatisfaction with Council's policies, procedures, charges, staff, agents or quality of service presenting the opportunity to improve in these areas."

A request for service or information is not seen as a complaint unless a significant measure of dissatisfaction and/or anger is involved.

A **complainant** is a person who makes a complaint to Council

A **competitive neutrality complaint**, according to the Department of Local Government, is defined as:

- a) *A complaint that Council has not met its requirements under the Policy Statement on "Pricing and Costing for Council Businesses – A Guide to Competitive Neutrality". This includes a concern that Council has not established and effective complaints handling mechanism in relation to such complaints, or*
- b) *A complaint that Council has not abided by the spirit of competitive neutrality in the conduct of business activity.*

Corrupt Conduct means dishonest or partial exercise of an official function by a public official

An **external complaint** refers to a complaint received by staff from outside the Council

An **internal complaint** refers to a complaint by one staff member about another staff member.

The **designated officer** is the staff member who is responsible for the area of Council activity to which the complaint relates or the staff member to whom the complaint is referred for resolution by the General Manager or Director. If the complaint relates to the conduct of a staff member however, then that staff member must not be appointed as the designated officer.

The **Public Officer** is the Director Corporate Services.

A formal **response** to a complaint should outline: -

- a) The action that Council has or will take in relation to a complaint together with a time frame within which that action will occur or
- b) The reasons why Council is unable to take action in relation to the complaint or
- c) That the complaint has been referred to an external body and the reasons for that referral.

A **resolution** to a complaint means solving the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Information contained in this document has been adapted from the Department of Local Government "Complaints Management in Council's, Practice Note No.9, 1994 and Complaints Management Policies provided by staff from Maclean Council, Tallaganda Shire Council, Parkes Shire Council, Mudgee Shire Council, Sutherland Shire Council and Queanbeyan City Council.

Further information on Complaints Management can be obtained in the following documents: -

- *Local Government Act 1993 chapter 13 Pecuniary Interest*
- *Local Government Pecuniary Interest Tribunal
(www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/pit.htm)*
- *Protected Disclosure Act 1994*
- *ICAC "What is Corruption?" and "Reporting Corruption
(www.icac.nsw.gov.au)*

APPENDIX A: KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Customer service is important to Kempsey Shire Council. Complaints, suggestions and compliments are valuable sources of information to us as they help our organisation to understand the needs of our customers and put plans in place that will help us to offer improved service levels. Our Policy states: -

Kempsey Shire Council recognises that any complaints received provide the organisation with an opportunity to identify and resolve issues of concern raised by members of the community. This helps Council to:

- Improve accountability to the community;
- Demonstrate a commitment to Customer Service;
- Identify areas, which need improvement;
- Plan appropriate projects and services; and
- Obtain valuable feedback.

Council will ensure that every complaint is:

- Received courteously
- Investigated fully
- Acted upon quickly and appropriately and
- Processed according to consistent standards for privacy, timeliness, fairness, natural justice, cultural diversity, special circumstances and accessibility.

Council will endeavour to prevent similar complaints from re-occurring in the future and will seek to re-establish positive relationships wherever possible. However, some complaints, despite the best efforts by all parties, may remain unresolved and these cases will be dealt according to the guidelines provided in the NSW Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Tool Kit.

Compliments, relating to staff and/or Council's services and facilities, are valued as they help us to assess service delivery levels and provide valuable feedback to assist with forward planning. Council will acknowledge all compliments.

Complaints and compliments will be accepted in person, in writing, by facsimile, over the telephone or via email.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WISH TO COMPLAIN?

The process is easy and the choice is yours. You may present your concern to Council by: -

- Phoning us on 6566 3200,
- Calling in to the Civic Centre, Elbow Street, West Kempsey
- Emailing us on ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au
- Faxing us on 6566 3205
- Completing the comments and suggestions form on our website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au
- Completing the attached Customer Feedback Form
- Writing to us at Kempsey Shire Council, PO Box 78, West Kempsey. NSW. 2440.

TO WHOM DO I ADDRESS MY COMPLAINT?

Council's three departments are responsible for the management of: -

CORPORATE SERVICES

- FINANCE – Rates, Debtors, Accounts, Purchasing, Contractors, Stores and Financial Reports.
- ADMINISTRATION – Records, Governance, Risk Management and Civic Centre Management.
- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- SAFETY FLEET & DEPOT – Fleet, Depot, Workshop and Safety.
- PROPERTY & MARKETING - Caravan Parks, Saleyards, Airport, Trade Waste, Property Development and Business Marketing.

SHIRE SERVICES

- WORKS – Roads, Road Signage, Bridges, Waste, Stormwater, Flood Mitigation, Council Property Maintenance and Footpaths/Cycleways.
- COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICES - Gardens & Open Spaces, Community Services including Aboriginal, Youth & Aged Care Services, Library, Swimming Pools, Civic Maintenance, Noxious Weeds, Cemeteries and Tourism.
- MACLEAY WATER - Water Services, Sewer Services and Asset Management.
- DESIGN & STRATEGY - Design and Asset Management.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- TOWN PLANNING - Development Control and Strategic Planning.
- HEALTH & BUILDING - Environmental Health, Building Services and Ranger Services.
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Fostering Business.
- ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS - Rehabilitation Works, Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy Implementation and Floodplain Management.

Trained staff are employed to oversee these functions and to assist you with your concerns, which relate to that Department. Most complaints can be resolved by talking directly to a staff member in the appropriate Department. If staff are unable to answer your query, they will refer you to the Manager of the section involved. If your concerns are still not allayed, an appointment will be made for you to speak to the Departments Director. If a satisfactory resolution can still not be reached, you may then be referred to the General Manager. If you are unsure which Department to contact, phone Council on 6566 3200 or drop in to the reception area in Administration; our staff will be happy to provide you with guidance. In some circumstances, you may choose to discuss your problem with the Mayor or one of our Councillors.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I MAKE MY COMPLAINT?

If your concern cannot be resolved in the Department immediately, your complaint will be fully investigated. This will require our staff to: -

- Analyse all the information available and source additional information if necessary
- Refer, or seek clarification from Council Policies and/or the Local Government Act
- Prepare a report
 - Outlining details of the complaint
 - Making suggestions to improve or correct problems identified and
 - Recommending changes to Council's Policies and/or procedures to avoid a recurrence of the problem in the future.

Once the complaint has been fully investigated, you will be contacted with the result. Ideally, we will strive to resolve all complaints within ten working days however, some issues may require involved and lengthy research. If this is the case, we will keep you informed of our progress on a regular basis.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE RESULT?

If Management or our staff has been unable to help you with your concern, you have the right to appeal to Council's Mayor if the matter does not relate to a staff member. An appointment will be made for you to discuss the issue with the Mayor or, if you feel more comfortable, you can outline your complaint in a letter addressed to the Mayor.

The Mayor will review all aspects of your concern and notify you of the outcome.

If you believe your concerns have still not been adequately addressed, you may refer your complaint to: -

- **The Ombudsman** (investigates and reports on complaints about the conduct of a NSW agency or their employee, including both government and some non-government agencies). Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney. Phone 02 9286 1000. Free call 1800 451 524. Fax 02 9283 2911. E-mail nswombod@nswombudsman.nsw.gov.au
- **The Department of Local Government (NSW)**, Investigations and Review, Level 2, 5 O'Keefe Avenue, Nowra NSW, 2541. Phone: (02) 4428 4100, Fax: (02) 4428 4199, E-mail: dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au
- **The Anti Discrimination Board** Level 17, 201 Elizabeth St, Sydney, NSW, 2000, Phone: (02) 9268 5555, Freecall: 1800 670 812, Fax: (02) 9268 5500
- **The Independent Commission Against Corruption.** The Independent Commission Against Corruption exposes and minimises corruption in the NSW public sector. It does this by conducting investigations and hearings, providing corruption prevention advice and informing and educating both the public and private sectors, and the community. Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. Phone: 02 8281 5999, Freecall 1800 463 909. Email: icac@icac.nsw.gov.au
- **The Privacy Commissioner** handles complaints about the release of personal information. GPO Box 6, Sydney NSW 2001. Phone: (02) 9228 8199.

Comments & Suggestions

Council is always interested in your comments as they help us to keep in touch with you, our customer. We would appreciate it if you would share your thoughts with us by completing this simple form.

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Fax

Mobile

Email

Do you wish to: (Please Select)

- Make a Suggestion
- Ask a Question
- Report a Problem
- Compliment our Staff

Please enter your comments below:

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CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

Superior customer service continues to be a major factor contributing to the overall success of an organisation and the way it is perceived in and by the community. Fostering effective community relations has been identified as one of the six goals in Council's Corporate Strategic Plan; a key measure in achieving this is to provide our customer with friendly and efficient service.

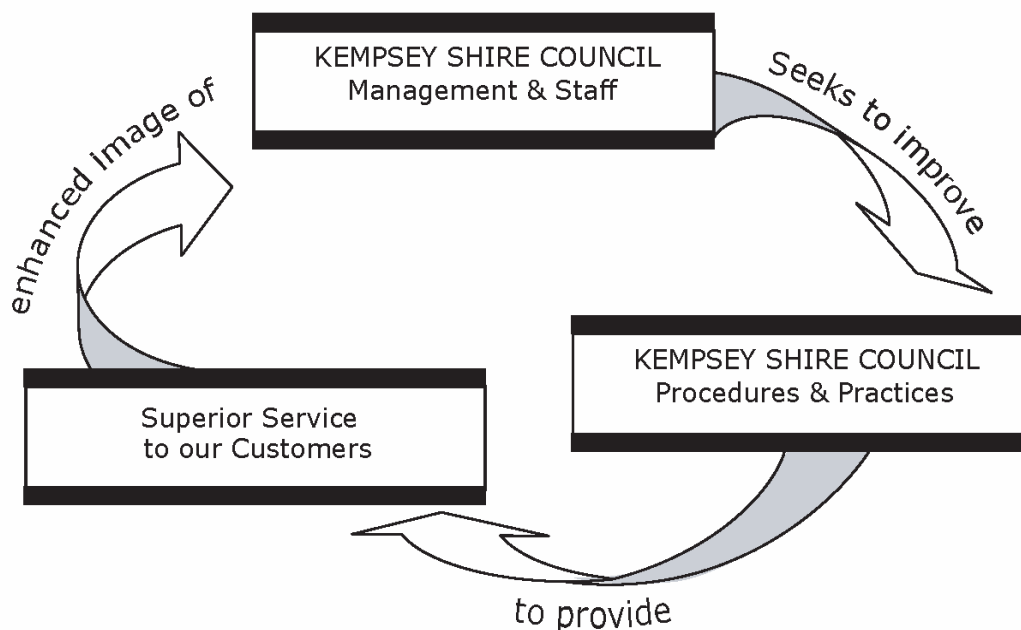
Kempsey Shire Council's Mission Statement clearly indicates its desire to provide customers with a high level of customer service:

"We will work with the community to provide high quality services and facilities through excellence in leadership and with consideration for the needs of the environment and of future generations".

Our service ethic is further reinforced with "service" being one of Council's five Values:

"We value our community by providing quality professional service to all".

A second value, "cooperation", is integral to our customer service ethos. Everyone involved, everything we do and every process we use impacts on customer service within the organisation. Councillors, management and staff, our procedures and practices and our customers are inter-related in the quest for service. When a customer's needs are satisfied beyond their expectations, Council's image is greatly enhanced in the community.



Components required to advance a customer service focus within Council include the:-

- Acknowledgement by management of the importance of superior levels of customer service
- Encouragement of all staff to strive for excellence and to make suggestions for improvements to processes and procedures
- Importance of recognition of staff for offering superior service levels
- Empowerment of staff to deal with customer's enquiries in a positive and professional way
- Need to source feedback to establish customer satisfaction levels and to benchmark with other Councils and service providers to provide realistic comparisons as to service levels offered
- Significance of effective two way communication
- Establishment of work teams and process improvement teams

As part of an organisational restructure in 2004, Council made a determination to establish a single location Customer First Centre towards the end of 2005. This decision acknowledged the concerns regarding accessibility and the inconvenience ratepayers and residents experienced transacting business with the existing multiple location offices at the Civic Centre.

Central to the success of the Customer First Centre is the development of a Customer Service Strategy that aims to build a strong "customer first" culture within the centre and the organisation based on:-

- Clearly defined customer service objectives
- Achievable performance indicators
- A Customer Service Charter
- Agreed Service Levels
- Comprehensive complaint handling procedures
- Support for front line staff through:-
 - the development of effective systems and procedures and ongoing training
- Evaluation methods to determine satisfaction levels and to assist with forward planning.

1. Customer Service Objectives

Clearly defined objectives are central to any strategy and are the catalyst that drives performance and establishes understanding within any team.

In determining performance, the Customer First Centre team's operating objective is to provide a "One Stop Shop" for customers and, at the same time, optimise resolution rates at the first point of contact.

Resolution rates can only be calculated after Service Level Agreements between the Customer First Centre and each Department are established.

The aim of the agreements is to ensure that every staff member understands their area of responsibility, resulting in significantly improved levels of service and time savings for customers.

The overarching customer service objective is defined:-

*To develop a strong customer service focus within
Kempsey Shire Council.*

The four Customer First Centre specific objectives outlined in the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan link to this broad aim:-

- i. To improve customer service within Council*
- ii. To develop achievable performance indicators for the Customer First Centre*
- iii. To provide enhanced support for Customer Service staff members*
- iv. To evaluate documentation, processes and procedures to improve service delivery within Council and the Customer First Centre*

A number of actions and performance criteria, designed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff members within Council and the Customer First Centre, are highlighted in these Action Plans.

Customer Service Guidelines, for both indoor and outdoor staff members, have been developed. These simple guidelines provide staff with recommendations that will enhance the interaction and communication process with customers. **Appendix A.**

2. Performance Indicators

Performance indicators have the power to motivate and encourage staff to improve processes, procedures and customer service levels. However, they can also have the opposite effect if the indicators are not "SMART":-

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic and
- Time-bound

Every section of Council is now actively keeping data on a range of activities and services. Graphs are displayed on the Intranet, and management use the graphs and reports to establish trend lines and stimulate suggestions amongst staff for improvement.

The performance indicators contained within the Customer Service and Corporate Image, Communication and Public Relations Action Plans focus on clearly defined improvements to the level of customer service offered to our customers.

Within the Customer First Centre, performance indicators will be both general and customer service specific and may include:-

- Waiting times
- Abandonment Rates
- Productivity ratios – phone calls/CSO
- Receipts per CSO
- Resolution rates

3. Customer Service Charter

A brochure, outlining Council's Customer Service Charter, is available as a handout or to download from Council's website. **Appendix B.** The brochure contains information on Council's :-

- Vision, Mission Statement and Values
- Agreed Service Levels
- Avenues of communication
- Complaints and Compliments Policy and
- Contact details.

4. Agreed Service Levels

The following Agreed Service Level has been developed in consultation with staff and defines service level expectations.

"Kempsey Shire Council's staff is committed to providing the highest level of service to you, our customer. In pursuit of this ideal, our staff has agreed to:

- Provide you with prompt, professional friendly and courteous service
- Listen to you and respond to your individual needs and expectations
- Provide you with answers to your enquiries and/or make arrangements for the enquiries to be addressed
- Communicate our decisions clearly and explain fully the reasons for them
- Accept responsibility for the efficient processing of all business entrusted to us."

5. Complaint Handling

Policy 24:17, Complaints and Compliments Policy - Council Activities outlines the broad objectives in relation to complaints handling (P134) and a procedure for handling complaints (P 105) are available to provide guidance to staff. At all times, staff should act within the guidelines set by Council's Code of Conduct.

6. Staff Support

To achieve optimum levels of customer service, staff must be supported with effective systems and procedures and have access to pertinent training to ensure that they are up to date and informed. Knowledge is a powerful tool as it:-

- builds self assurance and professionalism in staff members and
- can engender a sense of confidence and trust in a customer

Effective Systems and Procedures

The range of systems and procedures available to staff as they strive to meet their customer service objectives include:-

- a Knowledge Management System to enhance service levels, providing staff with the resources necessary to answer most enquiries at the first point of call.
- Service Level Agreements, designed to ensure that staff members are fully conversant with what is expected of them during any service transaction.
- the intranet, a valuable source of information on a wide range of topics.
- Task Logs, that have been developed within CivicView to provide all staff with an accessible "to do" list relating to inspections, work orders and correspondence.
- CivicView Work Orders. a useful tool for staff and a valuable resource for Management. This customer response system allows management and staff to track the progress of an enquiry and has been designed with a customer service focus which enables staff to:-
 - discover the issue or complaint,
 - produce a work order and then
 - act on that order within an acceptable/agreed time limit.

The need to embrace the concept of continuous improvement relating to systems and procedures will be fundamental to the Customer First Centre.

Ongoing Training

Training is vital for all staff members in the organisation. With the advent of the Customer First Centre, the majority of face to face and phone contact will be made directly between the customer and the Customer Service Officer. For this reason, the Customer First Manager will undertake to arrange regular training sessions on all facets of Councils operations for Customer First Centre staff members.

7. Evaluation Methods

It is said that if you can "measure it, you can manage it". To be effective, the evaluation process needs to include:-

- clear performance criteria
- the requirement to employ a systematic procedure to gather relevant and accurate data and
- the commitment to weigh the findings against that defined criteria

The logic behind an evaluation process includes the need to:-

- choose the most effective method or technique,
- determine how the information sought could be measured and
- consider why the evaluation process should occur

In short, it is about looking critically at what is happening in any given project and making a judgement about its value, worth or benefit. It is imperative that staff members understand that evaluation is an ongoing, positive process and should not be seen as a threat or a source of criticism.

In essence, it is not about blame or fault, but about highlighting what works well and providing opportunities for improvement to occur if the process:-

- falls short of a customer's satisfaction and/or
- involves an ineffective process or procedure.

Areas that can benefit from evaluation in a customer service environment may include:-

- Service behaviours and attitude
- Knowledge of the organisation, facility and/or service
- Expertise in use of equipment
- Compliance with Council Policy and guidelines
- Physical factors such as display, housekeeping, cleanliness, neatness and
- Telephone response times

Based on the purpose of the evaluation and the kinds of information needed to be sourced, the evaluation process can be either goal, process or outcomes based.

Determining Satisfaction Levels

To ascertain levels of customer satisfaction, it is necessary to determine the:-

- source of the information:
 - Councillors/staff/employees
 - customers/residents/ratepayers
 - documentation
 - other sources

- method to be used:
 - surveys/questionnaires
 - CivicView work orders provide Customer Service Officers with the opportunity to place a call to a customer on completion of the job resulting from a work order to determine satisfaction levels
 - performance comparisons with other Councils and service providers
 - internal benchmarks aimed directly at improving customer service levels
 - public meetings, community consultations and focus groups.
 - feedback forms
 - on-line polls
 - mystery shopping/observation
 - documentation

Forward planning

The information gathered as a result of an evaluation is extremely beneficial for management with forward planning activities. It has the power to clarify program goals, processes and outcomes, and the resulting comparisons provide data to assist with decisions that impact on efficiency and cost improvements to service delivery mechanisms within Council.

8. Customer First and Service

The Customer First Team will be empowered with the resources, skills and support systems to embrace the challenges and responsibilities that are faced by Local Government front line service providers. Team members involvement in the comprehensive training program and the process of developing a Knowledge Management System will provide them the tools to answer the majority of questions posed by customers at the first point of contact.

For customers, whose time is valuable, the Customer First Centre means that:-

- questions on Council activities can be answered quickly
- problems can be dealt with more efficiently and
- payments can be made at one location.

Through the promotion of phone, on-line and alternative payment options such as BPAY and POSTbillpay, customers will be provided with options for their transactions including the convenience of undertaking their business from home.

American Motivational Speaker and Author, Barbara A. Glanz, stated that since 1973, studies have been done on what customers really want, and the results have been the same every time.

Customers say they want four things:

"1. Friendly, caring service -- Customers want to be treated with courtesy and respect. They want to feel that they are important.

2. Flexibility -- Customers want you to jiggle the system for them and their individual needs. They don't want to hear "no"; they don't want to hear all the things you've done for others; they want you to creatively figure out a way to get them what they want or need.

3. Problem-solving -- Customers want the first person they speak to, to solve their problem, not the supervisor or manager.

4. Recovery -- When the organisation or an employee has made a mistake, the customer wants them to apologize, fix the mistake, do something extra, and follow up. They want it to be taken care of quickly and to their satisfaction. Note that this can become an opportunity to create a loyal customer by recovering quickly and creatively."

Drawing on this information, and considering our customer service charter, values and objectives, staff in the Customer First Centre will work as a team, providing support and encouragement for each other with ownership of overall objectives.

Personal and team aspirations

As a team, we wish to create an environment that is:-

- positive and welcoming – with staff who work as a team and strive to be:-
 - friendly and cheerful
 - kind and considerate
 - responsive
 - empathetic and thoughtful
 - willing
 - supportive
 - enthusiastic and encouraging
 - knowledgeable
 - reliable
 - loyal, dedicated and conscientious

- professional – with staff taking into consideration:-
 - overall image
 - operating standards and access to appropriate technology to enhance service without losing personal interaction between Customer Service Officers and customers
 - dress code and appearance
 - phone manner
 - attitude and personality
 - experience and competence
 - consistency in provision of information and decision making
 - customer focus
 - flexibility and multi skilling
 - acceptance of responsibility for personal actions
 - pre-determined service levels and
 - strategic planning, to take into account changing customer service demands and continuous improvement techniques.

9. Conclusion

This Strategy, and the accompanying Action Plan, will provide staff with a clear direction to achieve the determined objectives.

Appendix A - Customer Service Guidelines for Kempsey Shire Council Staff

Indoor Staff

Fostering effective Community Relations has been identified as one of the six goals in Council's Corporate Strategic Plan. A key measure in achieving this is to provide our customer with friendly and efficient service. The following points will help make your role in providing great customer service easy.

- Acknowledge the customer as soon as they enter with a smile and a greeting. Attend to them as quickly as possible or, if you are already serving another customer, indicate that you will be with them shortly.
- If answering the phone, try to do so before the fourth ring. As customers using the phone cannot see you, they are often unaware that you may be extremely busy and can become quite agitated if left holding for too long. For all external calls (identified by two quick ringing tones, as opposed to the single extended ringing tone for internal calls), use a greeting and identify your department or section and yourself to the caller. eg *"Good Morning, Rates Department, this is Karen."* Immediately, the caller knows that they have made contact with the right section of Council and knows to whom they are talking. It is also a good practice to jot down the caller's name so that you can use it in the conversation.
- Wear corporate uniform and a name badge.
- Listen to what the customer wants and ask questions to help you understand issues that may require clarification.
- Use positive responses – "yes", "I can do that", "I understand what you are saying", and "thank you".
- If you are unable to help with a specific issue, ask an appropriate person to assist or for advice.
- Always see a complaint as an opportunity – listen carefully and offer a solution or set in place an action that the customer will see as a step towards solving the problem.
- Importantly, treat customers, as you would like to be treated yourself.

Outdoor Staff

Fostering effective Community Relations has been identified as one of the six goals in Council's Corporate Strategic Plan. A key measure in achieving this is to provide our customer with friendly and efficient service. As an outdoor staff member of Council, continuing to offer good customer service is easy if you consider the following points.

- Say "hello" to residents or business owners if they are walking in the area that you are working in.
- Wear the uniform that is supplied so that people can readily identify you as a Council employee.
- Provide the customer with information on planned work in their area. This should be done in person prior to commencing the work. Call in to the house/s or business/es that will be effected by your works and explain:-
 - what is to be done
 - how it is to be done
 - and how long it will take to complete the job.
- If the customer is unavailable, leave a note in the letterbox or under the door. Your Team Leader can arrange for a note to be printed. Your customer will really appreciate this simple service.
- Apologise for any inconvenience that the work may cause.
- If a resident or business owner chooses you to make a complaint to, either about the job you are working on or some other Council function, complete the Multi Purpose Report Form in your truck. Make sure you take down the customers name and phone number so that the relevant person can get back to them. When you have completed the form, give it to your Team Leader to action.
- Always put yourself in the customers shoes.

Appendix B - Customer Service Charter Brochure
(Words only)

Our Customer Service Charter

Kempsey Shire Council is committed to providing you with prompt, professional friendly and courteous service. We are constantly striving to improve the levels of service offered to our customers and open two-way communication is actively encouraged.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Council's **VISION** defines the expectations of our community:-

"The beauty of the natural environment and the country and coastal lifestyles are both preserved and enhanced by an economy of high productivity and employment"

Our **MISSION STATEMENT** responds to those community expectations:-

"We will work with the community to provide high quality services and facilities through excellence in leadership and with consideration for the needs of the environment and of future generations"

Our **VALUES** provide the framework for the way we wish to operate our business:-

Trust *We earn trust by being honest, respecting differences and by encouraging open communication.*

Co-operation *We achieve the best for our community through effective teamwork.*

Service *We value our community by providing quality professional service to all.*

Innovation *We encourage creative and visionary thinking to achieve sustainable outcomes.*

Pride *We take pride in Kempsey Shire Council's contribution to our community.*

Agreed Service Levels

Council's staff is committed to providing the highest level of service to you, our customer. In pursuit of this ideal, our staff has agreed to:

- Provide you with prompt, professional friendly and courteous service
- Listen to you and respond to your individual needs and expectations
- Provide you with answers to your enquiries and/or make arrangements for your enquiries to be addressed
- Communicate our decisions clearly and explain fully the reasons for them
- Accept responsibility for the efficient processing of all business entrusted to us.

Let's Communicate!

Effective two-way communication helps everyone. We try to make it as easy as possible and are constantly looking at ways to improve our communication and consultation. If you would like to suggest a new, different and cost effective way of communicating with us, please drop us a line at PO Box 78, West Kempsey. NSW. 2440; fax us on 6566 3205; or email us ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au

Listed below are just some of the methods we use to communicate and consult with you.

- Weekly ads and the Mayoral Column
- Regular media releases
- Tank FM program - Mondays at 10.10am
- On-site inspections, workshops and public meetings relating to specific subjects
- Community committees
- Letterbox drops and mail-outs
- Displays at events e.g. Kempsey Show, Celebrate the Macleay
- The production of documents including the Annual Report, Management Plan and the State of the Environment Report - all of these, and many other documents, are also available on our website
- 6 community newsletters produced annually
- Our website - www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au
- Council's email mailing list
- Opportunities to provide feedback including submissions, on line forms, on line polls and feedback forms
- Surveys...and lots more.

And don't forget... you are invited to attend Council meetings and you can apply to address Council on an issue that is on the agenda. If this is not convenient, think about inviting a Councillor or staff member to attend a community meeting with which you are involved.

Complaints And Compliments

Council has adopted a Complaints and Compliments Policy relating to Council Activities which aims to improve customer service and to develop a procedure to effectively and consistently manage complaints in relation to Council activities, receive compliments and present management and staff with the opportunity to:

- Provide a high level of service and satisfaction to customers who may have expressed dissatisfaction with Council
- Identify areas of Council's services which may require improvement
- Utilise compliments to assess service delivery levels
- Strengthen public support for Council and improve its public image in the eyes of the community
- Provide a means of checking that Council is complying with the National Competition Policy

In conjunction with this Policy, Council has prepared a brochure for residents to assist them should they wish to lodge a complaint, make a suggestion or offer a compliment to staff. The brochure answers the following questions:

- What should I do if I wish to complain?
- To whom do I address my complaint?
- What happens after I make my complaint?
- What if I am unhappy with the result?

Copies of this brochure, "Your Guide to Making a Complaint, Submitting a Suggestion or Offering a Compliment", are available at all reception counters of Council or can be downloaded from our website - www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

How To Contact Us

There are a variety of ways that you can contact Kempsey Shire Council:-

- In person - call in to the Customer First Centre, Tozer Street in West Kempsey between the hours of 8.30am to 4.30pm on weekdays excepting public holidays.
- By phone - call 02 6566 3200 between the hours of 8am and 5pm weekdays and our Customer First staff will transfer you to the correct department. For after hours emergency calls, phone 1300 663 211.
- By mail - Kempsey Shire Council, PO Box 78, West Kempsey. NSW. 2440.
- By fax - 02 6566 3205
- By email - ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au
- Via the internet - www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL
CORPORATE IMAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2006/07

For full contact details on the following Council facilities, please phone:-

Libraries

- Kempsey - 02 6562 6656
- South West Rocks - 02 6566 5044
- Stuarts Point - 02 6569 0289
- Hat Head - 02 6567 7654

Visitor Information Centres

- Kempsey - 02 6563 1555
- South West Rocks - 02 6566 7100

Economic Development - 02 6566 3100

Community Care Centres

- Kempsey - 02 6562 6799
- South West Rocks - 02 6566 5964

Swimming Pools

- Kempsey - 02 65624742
- South West Rocks - 02 6566 6787
- Crescent Head - 02 6566 0466
- Gladstone - 02 - 6567 4630

Kempsey Waste Transfer Facility - 02 6562 2042

Kempsey Regional Saleyards - 02 6562 6332

EXTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

COMPLAINTS POLICY C 24:17

OBJECTIVES

To improve customer service and to develop a procedure to effectively and consistently manage complaints in relation to Council activities, receive compliments and present management and staff with the opportunity to:

- Provide a high level of service and satisfaction to customers who may have expressed dissatisfaction with Council
- Identify areas of Council's services, which may require improvement
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- Provide a means of checking that Council is complying with the National Competition Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Kempsey Shire Council recognises that any complaints received provide the organisation with an opportunity to identify and resolve issues of concern raised by members of the community. This helps Council to:

- Improve accountability to the community;
- Demonstrate a commitment to Customer Service;
- Identify areas, which need improvement;
- Plan appropriate projects and services; and
- Obtain valuable feedback

Council will ensure that every complaint is:

- Received courteously
- Investigated fully
- Acted upon quickly and appropriately and
- Processed according to consistent standards for privacy, timeliness, fairness, natural justice, cultural diversity, special circumstances and accessibility to all.

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL
CORPORATE IMAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2006/07

Council will endeavour to prevent similar complaints from re-occurring in the future and will seek to re-establish positive relationships wherever possible. However, some complaints, despite the best efforts by all parties, may remain unresolved and these cases will be dealt with according to the guidelines provided in the NSW Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Tool Kit.

Compliments, relating to staff and/or Council's services and facilities, are valued as they help us to assess service delivery levels and provide valuable feedback to assist with forward planning. Council will acknowledge all compliments.

Complaints and/or compliments will be accepted in person, in writing, by facsimile, over the telephone or via email.

Date Policy Adopted
Minute No

8th April 2003
2003. 355

**LIMITING ACCESS TO STAFF AND INFORMATION BY MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC POLICY C24:15**

OBJECTIVES

To set guidelines to allow Council to limit public access to staff and information where an individuals behaviour strays beyond acceptable limits.

POLICY STATEMENT

Public access to information is through staff via:

- a) Public Counter
- b) Telephone
- c) Correspondence

Complaints and criticism are legitimate and potentially constructive aspects of the relationship between Council and its local community. They are a valuable means of reflecting on the operations of the Council and improving both those operations and the quality of the Council's relationship with the local community.

Anger is an understandable and, to some degree, an acceptable emotion on the part of members of the local community frustrated with the actual or perceived misconduct or inaction of the Council. It is an emotion that needs to be properly managed so that effective service can be delivered, communication can take place and Council staff members and Council facilities are not put at risk. It is unacceptable to unconditionally deprive any member of the local community of the right to have their complaints and concerns examined or to use the services and facilities provided by the Council.

Staff when dealing with a difficult customer should ensure that they avoid inflaming matters by using defamatory or otherwise derogatory language.

Where staff are unable to satisfy a difficult customer or where the customer uses language or engages in threats/accusations that are considered unacceptable or where the complaint has been investigated and found to have no substance the customer or matter should be referred to their Manager. Where the Manager is unable to satisfy the customer or if the threats/accusations or language are made against the Manager the customer or matter is to be referred to the Department Director and finally to the General Manager.

The General Manager will report the severity of the conflict to Council with a recommendation to restrict staff access to the customer: -

- a) over the public counter
- b) by telephone
- c) by correspondence

Where it is deemed necessary to impose limitations between Council meetings the Mayor and General Manager are delegated authority to do so but such action is to be reported to Council for endorsement. Prior to Council imposing limitation on a customer the customer is to be warned that limits will be applied unless the specified unacceptable behaviour ceases.

Any limitation to access to staff and information by the customer will be for a maximum period of three months at which time the situation will be reviewed by Council.

Date Policy Adopted: 11 December 2001
Authority: Minute No. 2001.1152

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Excerpts taken from a brochure produced for distribution to customers.

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AGREED SERVICE LEVELS

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