

1. Purpose

This Shire of Boddington (Shire) is committed to responding to complaints, requests and enquiries in a fair, consistent and respectful manner.

From time to time, the conduct of a complainant may become unreasonable due to the nature, frequency or manner of their contact. This can place an undue burden on staff and impact the Shire's ability to deliver services efficiently.

The Shire has a duty to provide a safe working environment for employees and does not tolerate conduct that creates unacceptable psychosocial or physical safety risks.

This Policy establishes a framework for identifying and managing unreasonable public contact, including behaviour that may be considered habitual or vexatious, while ensuring procedural fairness and continued access to the complaints process.

This Policy replaces the former Habitual or Vexatious Complainants Policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to employees of the Shire and members of the public interacting with the Shire in relation to complaints, requests or other communications associated with Council business.

This Policy does not apply to complaints or conduct matters involving Council Members, committee members or candidates which are managed under the *Local Government Act 1995*, the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*, and associated statutory processes.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Policy	The Shire of Boddington policy titled "Unreasonable Public Contact".
Unreasonable Public Contact	Conduct which, because of its nature, frequency or intensity, creates health, safety, resource or equity concerns for the organisation, employees or other members of the public.
Complainant	A person making a complaint, request, enquiry or raising concerns with the Shire.
Communication Restriction	A limitation or condition placed on future communications with the Shire in accordance with this Policy.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Boddington or their authorised delegate.
Employee	Any employee, contractor, volunteer or authorised representative acting on behalf of the Shire.

4. Policy Statement

The Shire recognises that people interacting with local government may at times be frustrated, distressed or dissatisfied. The Shire is committed to responding to concerns respectfully and in good faith, including where complaints are persistent or critical.

The Shire also has a responsibility to protect employees from conduct that is abusive, threatening,

intimidating or unreasonably demanding, and to ensure public resources are used efficiently and fairly.

Conduct may be considered unreasonable where a complainant repeatedly raises matters already addressed, pursues issues in a manner that does not assist assessment or resolution despite reasonable assistance, makes disproportionate or excessive demands on staff time or resources, refuses to accept documented outcomes, or engages in behaviour that places the health, safety or wellbeing of employees at risk.

Unreasonable conduct may also include aggressive or abusive behaviour, harassment, intimidation, excessive correspondence, unreasonable persistence, or covert recording of conversations where it adversely affects workplace safety, wellbeing or the effective conduct of Shire business.

Each matter is assessed on its individual circumstances, taking into account the nature of the complaint, the history of interactions, any risks to employees, and whether reasonable efforts have been made to assist the complainant.

Where practicable, a complainant is advised of concerns regarding their conduct and provided an opportunity to modify their behaviour before restrictions are imposed.

Management Actions

Where conduct is assessed as unreasonable, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may determine appropriate and proportionate management actions.

Management actions may include:

- limiting the frequency or method of communication
- requiring communication to occur in writing
- nominating a single point of contact
- declining to respond to matters that have already been addressed
- restricting communication about a particular subject matter for a specified period.

In more serious circumstances, the CEO may determine that no further correspondence will be entered into regarding a matter where continued engagement would unreasonably divert resources from other operations of the Shire, unless new and relevant information is provided.

Any restriction imposed under this Policy should be proportionate to the circumstances, consider the least restrictive response reasonably available, be applied for a reasonable period, and subject to periodic review.

Where communication restrictions are imposed under the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Shire is to ensure compliance with all statutory notice and review requirements.

Where restrictions are imposed, the complainant is notified in writing of:

- the reason for the decision;
- the nature and duration of any restriction;
- the expected standards of future conduct; and
- any remaining avenues available for communication or complaint.

Where practicable, at least one reasonable method of communication may remain available.

A person subject to restrictions may make a written request for the restriction to be reviewed where there has been a material change in circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for determining whether conduct is unreasonable and for approving any restrictions or management actions implemented under this Policy.

Employees are responsible for managing interactions professionally, identifying potential unreasonable conduct, maintaining appropriate records, and escalating concerns in accordance with internal procedures.

Statutory Complaints and External Agencies

This Policy is intended to manage the manner of engagement with the Shire and does not replace, restrict or duplicate any statutory complaint handling, investigation or referral functions.

Nothing in this Policy limits a person's right to access formal complaint processes, external oversight agencies or protections available under legislation.

Where a matter involves allegations relating to misconduct, corruption or other legislated matters, the matter is to be managed in accordance with the relevant statutory process and may be referred to the appropriate external authority where required.

Recordkeeping and Confidentiality

Records relating to complaints, communications and actions taken under this Policy are to be managed in accordance with the Shire's Recordkeeping Plan and applicable legislative requirements.

Employees and complainants must not disclose confidential information except where authorised or required by law.

Review

Decisions made under this Policy are to be documented and subject to periodic review by the CEO to ensure actions remain reasonable, proportionate and appropriate in the circumstances.

Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer	
Delegated Authority	Nil	
Relevant Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i> <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i>	
Related Documentation	Customer Service Charter Employee Code of Conduct Council Members Code of Conduct	
Version Control	History	Review Frequency
	Adopted 18 February 2021 (9/21) Amended 23 March 2023 (25/23) Amended 24 June 2026 (70/26)	2 years

Document Control Statement – The electronic reference copy of this Policy is maintained by the Governance Team. Any printed copy may not be up to date and you are advised to check the electronic copy at [Council Policies » Shire of Boddington](#) to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively, you may contact the Governance Team.