



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

8 March 2005

GM5 CUSTOMER FIRST CENTRE
FILE: * AVB

SUMMARY:

To outline to Council the resources needed in the 2004 / 05 year to establish a Customer First Centre.



As part of the restructure adopted by Council was a proposal to establish a Customer First Centre. The role of the Customer First Centre is to provide a one-stop service centre which will: -

- Enhance the image of Council by offering professional, consistent and friendly service to all customers
- Provide ease of access to Council's customers – in person, on the phone or via the website
- Build on the strengths of our departmental staff who are currently offering quality specialist services, advice and support to customers
- Significantly improve customer service by: -
 - ✓ Replacing the multiple counters currently in use
 - ✓ Integrating the cashier function into the counter enquiry process
 - ✓ Introducing a call centre, which will replace the existing switchboard and take all general telephone enquiries
 - ✓ Introducing a consistent system for active customer feedback on work order progress or customer requests

Staff will aim to answer the enquiries of customers at the first point of contact in the majority of cases. Ideally, we will work towards achieving an 80% resolution at first contact however, history tells us that this figure will only be achieved if: -

- ✓ Optimum staffing is in place
- ✓ Necessary systems are available and

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- ✓ The organisation actively supports the Customer First Centre staff members by providing initial and ongoing training and the base information that allows them to answer, with confidence, the majority of enquiries.

In order to achieve the above the Customer First Staff need to be selected now and trained in all facets of Council's operations. They need to be multi-skilled and capable of answering enquiries relating to Rates, Health, Building, Town Planning, Engineering and other services. They need to be trained as cashiers. All staff, when the centre is opened will be required on rotation to handle face-to-face enquiries and to be a call centre operator. Training of staff will take approximately six (6) months. I advised at the last meeting of Council that alterations need to be made to the Civic Centre complex to accommodate the Customer First Centre and an architect has been engaged to draw up plans for Councils consideration.

As well as appointing staff to the positions, systems need to be developed now. Two important areas in this regard are the development of a Knowledge Management System and the development of on-line documentation. I alerted Council in my Restructure Report to the fact that additional resources would be required this year to establish a Customer First Centre.

A Knowledge Management System is a computerised question and answer sheet. Information on all of Council's services needs to be prepared, indexed and cross-referenced. This allows a Customer Service Officer, when asked a question, to be able to access information on-screen regarding the question being asked and then, after reading the information (if necessary), answer the enquiry. Forms need to be developed on-line to encourage customers to deal with Council electronically rather than face-to-face. A face-to-face transaction is far more expensive than an electronic or telephone enquiry.

It is estimated that approximately sixty-nine (69) weeks work will be involved in developing the Knowledge Management System and on-line documentation, at a cost of \$54,500.00.

This work cannot be undertaken within existing resources and additional casuals will need to be employed. The Customer First Centre also requires the employment of one additional staff member as all the current duties cannot be effectively split. The cost of this employee for the remainder of the year is \$8,000.00.

I have examined the 2004 / 05 budget allocations and there are some areas that will not be fully expended in this year and could be reallocated. They are:-

Review Section 94 Plans	\$ 2,730.00	Balance of vote
DCP/Urban Rural Reviews	\$ 5,756.00	Balance of vote

Legal Expenses Development Control	\$ 5,000.00	Total Vote will Not be expended
Implementation Stormwater Management Plan	\$ 5,000.00	No expenditure to Date
Tourism Strategic Plan	\$17,600.00	Included in budget Twice
Computer Expenditure Elected Members	\$18,000.00	Balance not Required this year
Unpaved Footpaths Maintenance and Repair	\$ 4,000.00	Budget currently Underspent
Upper Macleay Picnic Area	\$ 1,000.00	No expenditure To date
Car Parking Maintenance	<u>\$ 4,000.00</u>	Budget currently Underspent
TOTAL	\$63,086.00	

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil

- ***Social***

The creation of a Customer First Centre will provide increased service levels for those visiting the Civic Centre and through increasing electronic payments and applications save travelling costs and time to customers.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

If Council revotes the amounts outlined in the report there will be no adverse affect on working funds.

- ***Policy or Statutory***

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council revote the amount of \$63,086.00 to fund the development of Customer First systems and forms and for the employment of one additional staff member.

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A V Burgess
GENERAL MANAGER