



KEMPSEY  
Shire Council

## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

14<sup>th</sup> August 2007

<b>GM6</b>	<b>CORRESPONDENCE AND COMPLAINT HANDLING</b>
<b>FILE: 584 AVB</b>	<b>{Folio No. *}</b>

### SUMMARY:

Reporting to Council on outstanding correspondence and complaints for the quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

◆◆◆◆◆

### DESCRIPTION:

Council's Service Standards require correspondence to be answered within 14 days and for complaints to be handled within 10 days.

Recommendation six of the Department of Local Government Report – Promoting Better Practice is, "Reports should be provided to Council on a regular basis on council's complaint handling activities so that Councillors receive information about Council's handling of complaints and correspondence".

The action plan forwarded to the Department of Local Government indicated that it is proposed to report to Council quarterly in August, November, February and May each year.

At the June meeting of Council it was resolved: -

2. *That the information on Councillor requests received and dealt with be included in the quarterly report on the complaints and correspondence handling system.*
3. *That a resource usage estimate be included in this report."*

### CORRESPONDENCE

A report which summarises Council's correspondence handling performance is attached at [\(Appendix B - Page K23\)](#).

The report shows on the left-hand side the Workload indicators, i.e. number of items of correspondence outstanding; new correspondence; and finalised correspondence. It should be noted that these figures refer to all items of correspondence, – not just those which were outstanding more than 14 days.

The right-hand side of the report indicates Council's performance as compared to the Service Standard period of 14 days, i.e. of the 3,178

items of correspondence finalised within the June 2007 Quarter, 90.03% of these were dealt with in not more than 14 days.

Reasons for correspondence not being answered within 14 days include:-

## **General Managers Unit**

*171 items of correspondence finalised during the Quarter, of which 97.08% were completed within 14 days.*

## **Corporate and Community Services**

*1091 items of correspondence finalised during the Quarter, of which 89.09% were completed within 14 days.*

- Administration - A number of Administration letters were from the Department of Lands relating to conversion of old system titles on Council lands and issue of new certificate of titles. Each property needed to be checked for details before document was returned to Department Lands in response.

A number of Administration letters also related to insurance claims where the letters are retained by Admin Clerk for follow up of reports on claims before filing. The letters are shown as outstanding in the correspondence reports until the claim is determined and the case filed in records. Acknowledgement of claims to the claimant does occur on receipt.

- Business Services – Researching response; Awaiting response from other government departments.
- Financial Services - outstanding correspondence statistics adjusted in order to reflect amended finalisation and due date for submission of information requests. 91% attended to within 14 days, 3% 15-28 days and 6% over 28 days. All longer term correspondence addressed during the June quarter.
- Community & Customer Services - Some responses (a minority) require research and responses from third parties. Some C&CS staff require training to remove completed items from their task lists.
- Fleet Workshop – completed dates entered into report late.

## **Sustainable Development Services**

*Of the 1,036 responses sent in the period, 91.6% were completed within 14 days.*

Of the 311 items outstanding at the end of the period, 186 letters were allocated to the Planning Services that was without a manager and two Area Planners.

Of the 311 items outstanding at the end of the period,

- 34 are objections to DAs that have not been determined
- 14 relate to environmental studies / draft LEPs that have not been determined

- 19 refer to matters that do not require a response
- 24 relate to matters replied to by the determination of a the application to which they refer

## **Shire Services**

508 items of correspondence were finalised during the Quarter of which 84% were completed within 14 days. The number of correspondence outstanding was further reduced during the last quarter.

Of the 75 items remaining outstanding at the end of June, 39 of these were outstanding for less than the service standard period of 14 days, i.e. 36 were outstanding for more than 14 days.

Reasons for correspondence not being answered within 14 days include:

- Matters requiring referral to Council for a determination.
- Annual returns / licences that were completed by their due date but not within 14 days of receipt.
- Land acquisition and road opening / closing that required advice or approval from third parties e.g. solicitors or government departments.
- Correspondence relating to lease agreements.
- 21 expressions of interest received relating to the South West Rocks Water Recycling Plant that required detailed assessment.
- Staff vacancies contributed to the capacity to respond to correspondence within 14 days.

## **COMPLAINTS**

A report which summarises Council's complaints handling performance is attached at [\(Appendix C - Page K25\)](#).

In summary the report indicates that during the Quarter 9 complaints were completed, with 78% of these being dealt with in not more than 10 days.

Reasons for complaints not being finalised within 10 days include:

## **Sustainable Development Services**

- Of the 5 complaints completed in the period, 100% were completed within 10 days
- There were 4 new complaints for the period
- There were 4 complaints outstanding at the end of the period

## **Shire Services**

During the quarter 4 complaints were finalised with no complaints outstanding at the end of the quarter.

## **COUNCILLORS REQUESTS**

A report on Councillors requests received and dealt with is attached at [\(Appendix D - Page K27\)](#).

The report shows as follows –

Outstanding Requests at 1 <sup>st</sup> April	-	11
New Requests during Quarter	-	16
Requests finalised during Quarter	-	17
Outstanding Requests at 30 <sup>th</sup> June	-	12

The cost of staff responding to these requests has been estimated at \$208.55 for the April to June Quarter.

**REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- *Environmental*

*Nil*

- *Social*

*Nil*

- *Economic (Financial)*

*Nil*

- *Policy or Statutory*

*Nil*

- *General Manager Comments*

*Nil*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the information be noted.**

.....  
**A V Burgess**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**