

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
28 JULY 2008**

ORDER OF THE DAY

ORDER 1	SERVICE PROMISE
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	DAVID YEOUART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ASSETS & SERVICES
AUTHOR:	JACK CRAWFORD, MANAGER CUSTOMER SERVICE
FILE NO.:	
ATTACHMENT:	SERVICE PROMISE 2008-09 (PRINTED LEAFLET)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the City of Port Phillip's Service Promise for 2008-9 and adoption of the strategy for its publication and ongoing development.
- 1.2. The Service Promise contains 32 separate commitments covering the ten service areas most valued by the community.
- 1.3. The content has been developed based on community research, councillor feedback and management and staff input.
- 1.4. Performance against the service promises will be measured and reported to Council quarterly.
- 1.5. The implementation of this customer service strategy will have significant community benefits in improved service delivery and customer satisfaction.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. Improved and effective service delivery is a critical element underpinning the Community and Council Plans and, in turn, the internal Business Plan.
- 2.2. Customer research has identified the core services that are consistently the most important to the community. These are:
 - 2.2.1. Street & beach cleaning
 - 2.2.2. Civil infrastructure, maintenance & construction (i.e. roads, footpaths and drains)
 - 2.2.3. Waste management
 - 2.2.4. Parks and open spaces
 - 2.2.5. Community Care

- 2.2.6. Family & Children's Services
- 2.2.7. Parking Management
- 2.2.8. Planning & building services
- 2.2.9. Library services
- 2.2.10. Customer contact (i.e. our frontline customer service)
- 2.3. There is a clear community expectation that services provided by local government will be efficient, responsive and effective. Community expectations of service quality are influenced by each individual's service experiences in the broader community. The service performance of Council needs to meet those expectations.
- 2.4. The central strategy is to make a series of public commitments to the community about the service levels of the most important services.
- 2.5. The benefits of adopting this approach are that:
 - 2.5.1. The service promises constitute a public commitment about the level of service to be delivered by Council;
 - 2.5.2. They assist in setting reasonable community expectations;
 - 2.5.3. They provide an internal focus on the services that are most valued by the community
 - 2.5.4. They provide a powerful vehicle for ongoing service improvement, as Council's performance against the targets will be tracked and reported publicly.
- 2.6. A more detailed set of service promises with supporting documentation is still under development and will be available online by 1 September 2008.
- 2.7. It is intended that the Service Promises be reviewed and updated annually.

3. RECOMMENDED OPTION

- 3.1. It is recommended that Council endorse the publication of Council's first service promise. Adoption is recommended on the basis that the development of a public service promise has demonstrable benefits to both the community and the organization.
- 3.2. Those benefits are increased community satisfaction with Council and improved internal efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.3. Customer charters are relatively common in both the public and private sectors but are most effective when the promises relate to the most important service areas, rather than just general aspirations of good service.
- 3.4. The promises need to be specific and measureable in order to have public credibility and drive internal behaviour.

4. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Social Pillar	The Service Promise methodology is a central element of Council's customer service strategy. It is targeted at real, measurable service improvements as experienced by individual members of the community. Those services include specific initiatives in the Community Care and Family & Children's portfolios.
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To build a just, resilient, healthy and inclusive city with equitable access to responsive and relevant services and resources.

Economic Pillar	It is important that residents feel that they receive value for money from the payment of their rates. These service initiatives focus on the areas most valued by the community, as identified in market research.
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To promote effective stewardship of the council's assets and promote positive economic development within Port Phillip that also supports the council's social, cultural and environmental goals.

Environmental Pillar	Council wants to match community aspirations in making the city a better place in which to live and work. The service promises cover specific environmental areas such as street & beach cleaning, parks & open space and planning services.
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To foster a liveable and attractive urban environment that uses fewer finite resources

Cultural Pillar	Council services deliver broad benefits to the community such as improved amenity and access. The Service Promises explicitly attempt to match community aspirations with practical service delivery. The ultimate measure of success will be the extent to which the community is satisfied with our performance against our promises.
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To foster conditions that allow communities within Port Phillip to express, experience and enjoy diversity of values, beliefs and aspirations

4.1. Policy and legislative implications

- 4.1.1. Improved service delivery by agencies is a key strategy of the Victorian State Government. It is also a key theme in the Community Plan and Council Plan.

4.2. Risk implications

- 4.2.1. Over time, failure to provide services that reasonably match community expectations will lead to increased customer dissatisfaction with Council, lower community engagement,

adverse media publicity, reduced internal efficiency and lower staff morale.

4.3. Resource implications

4.3.1. Nil. Service improvements will be built into annual Department Action Plans as part of the standard budgetary processes.

5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Internal

5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- All Councillors
- Senior Executive Team
- All Department Managers
- Relevant staff from across the organisation

5.1.2. A series of Council briefings took place between September 2007 and March 2008 to consider the service promise strategy and review the key Council services. Editing suggestions from Councillors have been adopted.

5.2. External

5.2.1. The content of the service promises is, in part, based on external market research. This includes:

- (1) Monthly customer satisfaction surveys conducted by NWC Research commissioned by Council.
- (2) Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey conducted by Wallis Consulting on behalf of the Department of Planning & Community.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1. It is proposed that a printed leaflet containing the service promises, together with a message from the Mayor, be distributed to all ratepayers with the 2008-09 rates notice in late July/early August.

6.2. An outline of the service promises will be published in the September issue of *Diversity*.

6.3. The service promises will be included in relevant Council publications, including the new resident pack.

6.4. More comprehensive information about the core service promises will be available online by 1 September 2008.

6.5. A suite of performance measures will be finalized and results reported to Council each quarter.

7. COMMUNICATION

- 7.1. The key messages which are contained in the Service Promise are:
- 7.1.1. We are serious about improving service and meeting community expectations
 - 7.1.2. To ensure we meet our promises, we will track our performance and report our results publicly.
 - 7.1.3. A key performance measure will be the level of satisfaction of the community with our service delivery.
 - 7.1.4. Each year we will review our promises and update them to keep pace with community expectations and our performance.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. That the Council endorse the Service Promise 2008-09 as outlined in the printed leaflet (Attachment 1).