



CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY

2021-2026





CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
INTRODUCTION	6
OUR CUSTOMERS	7
Who are our customers?	7
Defining the customer experience	7
THE CONSULTATION PROCESS	8
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?	9
MATURING IN OUR CUSTOMER FOCUS JOURNEY	10
The last five years – where we’ve come from	10
Evolving customer experience maturity – where we are going	10
Service channel trends	11
HOW WILL WE GET THERE?	15
THE FOUR PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES	16
EASE – We make it easier and simpler to deal with the City	16
RELIABILITY – We deliver a reliable, consistent and high quality customer experience	16
ACCESSIBILITY – We ensure information and our services are accessible to all	16
RESPONSIVENESS – We respond in a timely manner and use feedback to improve	16
ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER CITY OF WANNEROO STRATEGIES	17
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS	18





FOREWORD

I am pleased to share the 2021-2026 City of Wanneroo Customer First Strategy – an extension of our initial Customer First Strategy of 2016-2020.

The City of Wanneroo is strongly committed to being a leader in customer service in local government. With the City's core purpose being to serve the community, we need to continue to adapt and improve by listening to our customers' needs and by providing them with clear expectations of what can be delivered.

The Customer First Strategy, Customer Service Commitment, and supporting internal Action Plan combine to form a comprehensive approach for how the City of Wanneroo will continue to mature the level of service we provide our customers over the next five years.

Customer feedback has been largely positive and a significant number of customer service improvements have been achieved over the past five years through our customer first approach. Some highlights include:

- Providing greater access to our online services through development of various online forms and applications.
- Providing customer service to our community at Yanchep Two Rocks Access Centre.
- Reducing red tape for people who want to do business in the City through the Small Business Friendly Approvals Program.
- Providing skills, training and various tools to support our team members to deliver a quality customer experience to our customers.

We know we must continue to adapt to keep up with changing customer expectations, current trends, and best practice in customer service. We have a diverse range of customers including businesses, residents, and visitors to our beautiful City. By putting the customer at the heart of everything we do, we can design, refine, and deliver an optimised customer experience and strive to be among the best local governments to deal with.

This 2021 strategy is the foundation of our customer focus over the next five years and outlines our future direction and guiding principles to ensure we achieve our goal to provide the best possible customer experience to our community.

CEO

Daniel Simms

INTRODUCTION

Customer service has changed over the last five years since the City of Wanneroo's 2016 Customer First Strategy was endorsed as an internal empowerment document. Trends in service delivery across all industries and sectors including local government has seen changes in customer expectations that have been influenced not only by global and local events but also due to changes in technology.

Our 2021 strategy continues the evolution of the City's commitment to providing our customers with a high-quality experience when connecting with us with an aim to continue the maturity of our customer focus journey.

Furthermore, this strategy involves every team member across the organisation. While technology is certainly part of the solution, it is only an enabler that supports our people in delivering a great customer experience.

To continue to provide excellence in service delivery, the City of Wanneroo must continually review, refine and adapt what we do to keep up with the changing needs and expectations of our customers.

This 2021 Customer First Strategy has evolved to meet the changing landscape of how our customers define good service and is a roadmap for how the City will work to improve the customer experience for all our customers across each area of our business. It guides our people to ensure their operational decisions are aligned with our customer service ambition.

Consultation and feedback from our customers have helped to identify and define the following key principles for the City's 2021 Customer First Strategy:

- Ease – we seek to make it easier and simpler to deal with us.
- Accessibility – we must be accessible and available to our diverse community.
- Reliability – we are consistent and do what we say we will.
- Responsiveness – we respond in a timely manner and track our performance.

Our City continues to grow. The current population of 216,162 (ABS, 2021) people is forecasted to increase by 71 per cent by the year 2041 to 370,273. ¹

To keep up with this significant growth and to ensure we continue to meet the changing needs of our customers both now and into the future, we will remain open to new and innovative ideas when it comes to enhancing the customer experience.

This will include leveraging technology and advancing our digital capability. It will mean identifying ways to make it easier to interact with the City such as enhanced channel options, and will mean looking within to continually review our processes and practices to improve the customer experience.

The strategy also recognises industry best-practice and global trends in moving to a broader, more contemporary definition of customer experience as an overarching concept – encompassing traditional ideas of customer service along with recognition of the entire end to end customer journey with the City.

Whilst the City is committed to having customer-focus as a core corporate value, this 2021 Customer First Strategy will assist in embedding a 'Customer First' focus across the City of Wanneroo through a service-oriented lens – putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and how we do it. This perspective aligns with the City's commitment to one culture, one system, one vision.

¹ City of Wanneroo .idcommunity

OUR CUSTOMERS

WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

As the City grows, so too does our external customer base along with evolving expectations of what they want from local government in terms of service and customer experience.

Our customers include anyone who connects with the City of Wanneroo. They are diverse and have different needs and expectations depending on their involvement and connections with the City.

Examples of our customers include:

- Ratepayers
- Residents
- Visitors
- Developers
- Community groups
- Sporting clubs
- State/Federal Government
- Suppliers
- Small and medium-sized businesses
- Business owners
- Community members
- Employees (internal customers), most of whom live in our City
- Partners who help us deliver on our service promise
- Internal staff

DEFINING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

At the City of Wanneroo we understand that every interaction a customer has with us shapes their experience and perception of our brand, whether it be through accessing our services through our website, contacting us by phone or email, or visiting us in person.

The City has adopted the following definition of customer experience in line with global trends, contemporary ideas, and language around customer expectations, service and experience.

Customer experience encompasses the sum of all experiences a customer has with an organisation and its service offerings. Throughout the duration of their relationship with that organisation and the interaction with the organisation's service, systems and people, these experiences impact the customer's perception and feelings of that organisation.

Furthermore, we understand that the "ease" of doing business with an organisation is the #1 driver of how customers perceive their service experience and that "resolution" of their issue or enquiry is the #1 driver of customer satisfaction².

Collectively, these definitions provide a baseline for how we define, design and deliver service to our customers.

"We understand that the "Ease" of doing business with an organisation is the #1 driver of how customers perceive their service experience..."

² Qualtrics
SQM Call Centre FCR Experts

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

In reviewing the City's progress to date and subsequently developing this 2021 Customer First Strategy, an expansive consultation process was undertaken including:

- Community input via:
 - Focus groups
 - Surveys
 - Customer feedback
 - Complaints
 - Compliments
- City team members – direct feedback from various customer-facing staff via focus groups from various different business areas named below that inform, impact, and influence the customer experience. Importantly, these team members are also customers of the City:
 - Infrastructure Capital Works
 - Asset Planning
 - Office of CEO
 - Traffic Services
 - Customer Relations Centre
 - Community Safety and Emergency Management
 - Place Management
 - Corporate Strategy & Performance
 - Customer and Information Services
 - Communications and Brand
 - Place Management
 - Community and Place
 - Office of Mayor
 - Community Development
 - Community Facilities Operations
 - Strategic and Business Planning
 - Waste Services
 - People and Culture
- Research of industry trends and global best-practice including trends in local government across Australia and internationally.
- Data analysis of information gained from leading industry advisers.





WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

Customer Service is a commitment which means each City of Wanneroo team member has a critical role to play in supporting the City's commitment to providing the highest level of customer service to both internal and external customers.

We understand a customer may have several contacts with more than one person from our organisation as well as other touchpoints that may not be with a person – for example, visiting a City facility or accessing the City's website. Each of these contacts or touchpoints has a direct bearing on the customer experience.

Team members are supported in understanding and meeting their respective service obligations relevant to their role. In doing so, we recognise there may be times when team members face unfamiliar or difficult service situations. In these circumstances there are a range of support services and training available to support our people and their wellbeing to maintain a safe working environment including:

- Customer service skills and expectations training across the City to ensure consistency in approach.
- Complaint management and conflict resolution handling skills.
- Mental wellbeing in today's world.
- Acknowledging the unique demands and personal circumstances of our customers and our people due to global pandemics and other events throughout the service experience.

This strategy serves to clearly communicate to both internal and external stakeholders, the City's commitment to providing a positive and consistent customer experience when connecting with all areas of the City.

MATURING IN OUR CUSTOMER FOCUS JOURNEY

THE LAST FIVE YEARS – WHERE WE’VE COME FROM

While all organisations globally are maturing in their journey to being customer focused, the City of Wanneroo has progressed over the last five years with noticeable steps forward in:

- Embedding customer service as a key corporate value.
- Implementing corporate customer service standards.
- Providing customer service training for all City team members including new team members.
- Recruitment interview questions including questions around core values, including customer service.
- Enabling payments to be made online – and experiencing a 30 per cent increase in online activity in 2020.
- Continual development of online applications and forms, such as for fire permits, payments, animal, and building & planning application approvals.
- Implementing a visitor management system at the Civic Centre.
- Implementing a Personal Information Privacy Policy.
- Developing application software, such as a new Swim Schools mobile app.
- Providing additional public WiFi hotspots, starting with the Civic Centre amphitheatre.
- Extending the opening hours of libraries, Cockman House, Buckingham House and Animal Care Centre.
- Implementing a hearing loop in the Civic Centre to support our hearing-impaired customers.
- Implementing electronic rates notices.
- Providing customer service at City of Wanneroo events and other service centre locations such as Yanchep Two Rocks Access Centre.
- Improved readability of rates notices by splitting the rates & State Government charges.
- Improving the intake of the owner and occupier roll.
- Implementing a new payroll self-service kiosk for our staff.
- Improvements made to existing Customer Request Management (CRM) System.
- Reducing red tape for people who want to do business in the City through the Small Business Friendly Approvals Program.
- Providing skills, training and various tools to support our team members to deliver a quality customer experience to our customers.
- Redesigning service to support our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as through “Call and Collect” and “Send Print Collect” services at libraries.
- Providing a variety of rate payment options as mediums to ease financial burden imposed upon City ratepayers.

EVOLVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MATURITY – WHERE WE ARE GOING

The next five years will see the City move further along the road to customer service excellence. As we emerge from the foundation phase where customer service was seen as the primary responsibility of some business units, we want to move to a level of awareness and understanding that the customer experience is a critical consideration in decision-making for all business units.

Through our evolving maturity, we see:

- Increased easy, low-effort digital acceptance for even more connections (payments, transactions, following up and problem solving).
- Elevated sensitivity towards personal data security, while balancing the desire for open data and transparency.
- A growing community appetite for sustainable and renewable solutions in energy, transport and communications, driving changes in customer service solutions (e.g. paperless and contactless transactions).
- Improvement in providing accessible communications to our diverse community.
- A greater customer demand for easy access using different devices to growing the range of communications channels – delivering a knowledgeable service with personalised, easy and simple transition between channels that are consistent in tone, content, navigation, capability and functionality.
- The desire to observe and capture the voice of the customer at key touchpoints.
- An uplift in the skills of our people to contemporary service interaction standards – reflecting the changing needs particularly related to empathy and enquiry resolution.
- All areas of the organisation becoming more engaged and aware of the customer needs.
- Core value of ownership for improving the customer experience.
- More operational decisions being based on customer focus value improvements.
- A recognition of how changes in society such as working from home and the global pandemic have impacted our business and service offering and those of our residents and businesses.

SERVICE CHANNEL TRENDS

Our customers have a range of options when connecting with the City. These currently include:

- **In person** – by attending the City of Wanneroo Civic Centre, Clarkson Library Customer Service desk or other service locations (for example, our Libraries and Community Centres and Yanchep Two Rocks Access Centre).
- **On-site visits** – where our staff will meet with you in person at your place of residence, in the community or at a location convenient to you.
- **Via the telephone** – through our Customer Relations Centre or directly with our staff.
- **Online** form submissions via our website.
- **Via digital channels** and services – by accessing the City's website, social media channels & apps and eRates.
- **In writing** – which also includes email.

Today's customers have a range of options when it comes to interacting with providers across various sectors. They rightly expect to be able to access products or services via their preferred channel (channel of choice) and via their preferred device (device of choice) which differ by time of day, enquiry type and where they are. Research is showing emerging channels of messaging (SMS text) from a handheld device, and chatbot and live-chat to support online activities, are increasing in acceptance for enquiry types. Usage of laptops, computers and tablets are more likely to be used during office hours and to provide information or documentation, whereas handheld devices are more likely to be used for time-sensitive, more detailed or problem-solving enquiries (e.g. reporting issues or following up on progress of action or enquiry).

There are clear opportunities for City of Wanneroo to improve upon our existing channel options. This will include improved access to digital services and creation of additional channel options.

These improvements need to offer the following benefits and support the City of Wanneroo's guiding principles around customer experience:

- Making it easier to deal with the City
- Enhance accessibility and availability
- Drive efficiencies across the organisation
- Support automated and simplified workflows

- Improve service levels
- Reduce complaints.

It is worth noting that the channel options available to customers along with their experience via their chosen channel has a direct impact on the customer experience. Where possible, we seek to provide service via the customer's channel of choice for their different enquiries and activities, rather than limiting that choice to what the City has in the past offered.

The demand for enquiries to be managed across devices and channels will drive the increased need for consistency in processes, information, capability and visual rendering, along with omni-channel capability enabling movement between channels and devices seamlessly and at whim.

Industry research³ illustrates that customer expectations around channel options are evolving due to a range of factors, including their experiences when dealing with other organisations and advances in technology. The City of Wanneroo is committed to embracing and adopting best-practice channel and technology solutions to meet these expectations.

With technology as an enabler, these digital solutions can include:

- Live chat.
- Webchat Bot – with Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Expanded scope, functionality, and capability of social media channels.
- SMS.
- Messenger app notification systems.
- Asynchronous messaging utilising a wider range of platforms e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook messenger and text.
- Video conferencing for meetings with customers e.g. Zoom.
- Maturity of processes and capability around capturing data to complete requests online i.e. to replace paper or web-based forms and utilise robotic process automation (RPA) for simple routine processes.
- Integration of all of the above to enable customers to seamlessly move between channels while maintaining continuity of conversation/information flow – referred to as omni-channel.

We also acknowledge the customer's experience of the City of Wanneroo typically starts well before they call us or visit one of our service centres – their bin is collected, they venture to a dog off-leash area, interact with a road worker when crossing the street, or a cleaner or gardener in the park.

The customer's device of choice influences their channel options and by extension, their choice of channel.



We also acknowledge the customer's experience of the City of Wanneroo typically starts well before they call us or visit one of our service centres...

³ Forrester
Gartner





HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

FOUR PRINCIPLES

Customer consultation and feedback accompanied by research around industry best practice and a review of our journey as a maturing service-driven organisation, has helped to shape and define the following key principles for the City's 2021 Customer First Strategy.

These principles support the City's intention to provide the best possible customer experience consistently across every connection we have with our customers.

They are summarised here and expanded further on the following pages with a range of supporting strategies to help realise the respective intent. These are critical aspects of our service offering that we know our customers most value when dealing with the City.

Ease

- We seek to make it easier and simpler to connect with us.
- We look at what we do from the customer's perspective and seek to remove barriers and complexity.

Accessibility

- We must be accessible and available to our diverse community from the physical location of our service centres to our digital solutions and the formatting of documents.
- We ensure equitable ease of access to services.

Reliability

- We do what we say we will.
- We provide a consistently positive experience that our customers can rely on.
- We communicate openly and operate transparently.
- We make informed decisions and provide valued customer-focused services.
- We keep personal customer data secure.

Responsiveness

- We respond in a timely manner.
- We are open to feedback.
- We measure our performance around customer satisfaction and resolution of issues.

INTERNAL ACTION PLAN

In addition to the four principles, this 2021 Customer First Strategy is supported by the internal Customer First Action Plan.

The Action Plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure relevance and currency in supporting the continued implementation of the Customer First Strategy.

Each activity links to a strategic goal providing a clear line of sight to how it supports the overarching strategy.



These principles support the City's intention to provide the best possible customer experience consistently across every connection we have with our customers.

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Each principle below is accompanied by a range of supporting strategies. These strategies help to define how we will deliver on these intentions.

EASE

We make it easier and simpler to deal with the City

STRATEGIES

- Design processes and procedures with the customer in mind.
- Drive continuous improvement and creative solutions for an improved customer experience.
- Remove barriers to service.
- Reduce effort for our customers to connect and interact with us.
- Make it easier to do business or to start a new business.
- Put the customer at the heart of everything we do.
- Enabling the customer to personalise their service experience.

RELIABILITY

We deliver a reliable, consistent and high quality customer experience

STRATEGIES

- Develop measures to track performance and consistency of the customer experience.
- Follow-through on commitments.
- Promote customer experience as a whole-of-City responsibility.
- Operate transparently and communicate openly.
- Secure our customer's personal data.

ACCESSIBILITY

We ensure information and our services are accessible to all

STRATEGIES

- Improve physical and digital access to information and services, including the formatting of documents.
- Provide service in the customer's channel of choice via their device of choice.
- Optimise technology to enhance accessibility and the customer experience.
- Ensure open and frequent communication and keep customers informed.
- Ensure Service Centres are located to provide ease of access to our diverse customer base.
- Seek feedback on how we can improve service and accessibility.

RESPONSIVENESS

We respond in a timely manner and use feedback to improve

STRATEGIES

- Advocate in the customer's best interest.
- Create opportunities for feedback & suggestions on how we can improve.
- Communicate our customer commitment and be clear about what we can and cannot deliver.
- Track our performance against customer expectations.
- Actively participate in, and support, a Voice of the Customer (VoC) program.
- Seek feedback on Customer Experience (Ease) and Customer Satisfaction (Resolution).

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER CITY OF WANNEROO STRATEGIES

The 2021 Customer First Strategy is aligned with the City's strategic vision – a welcoming community, connected through local opportunities and City's purpose statement – to create a strong community with local opportunities to participate, be active, feel secure, contribute and belong.

This 2021 Customer First Strategy also aligns to the following City of Wanneroo Plans, Strategies and documents.

- Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031
- Strategy Community Plan Goal 7 – a well governed and managed City that makes informed decisions, provides strong community leadership and valued customer focused services
- Corporate Business Plan 2021/22 – 2024/25
- City of Wanneroo Customer Service Commitment
- Social Plan 2019
- City of Wanneroo Corporate Values
- City of Wanneroo Code of Conduct
- People Plan
- Place Framework 2018
- Communications Strategy 2019-23
- Brand Strategy 2019-23
- Data Governance Framework
- Smart Cities Strategy
- Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Policy and Management Procedure
- Personal Information Privacy Policy



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

We will monitor how the City of Wanneroo delivers on this 2021 Customer First Strategy and regularly assess how well we are delivering on our customer commitment in the following ways.

INTERNAL ACTION PLAN

The Customer First Action Plan is subordinate to this strategy and is a critical tool in monitoring our progress. The plan is reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with customer expectations and the City's strategic priorities. Activities link to strategic priorities ensuring a clear line of sight to this strategy.

Our performance is further measured through the City's Performance Development Review Conversation and Service Planning process.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer Satisfaction is to be measured across all our Service Centres and facilities, tracking service quality and the customer experience. We measure customer satisfaction as a reflection of what we are doing well and what we are not doing so well. This in turn identifies improvement opportunities.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

The City of Wanneroo encourages customer feedback across critical touch points to identify opportunities to improve our current processes and/or the quality of our service delivery. We seek feedback via our community committees, reference groups and advisory groups, surveys and regular community and business perception forums. We value feedback received via social media channels and complaints. Complaints relating to service delivery are reviewed in accordance with the City's Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Customer Relations Centre captures data on abandoned telephone calls, internal transfers, and average call, wait and hold times as well as Average Speed of Answer (ASA) or Grade of Service (GOS). We identify trends and gaps in performance in delivering on our Service Commitment including speed of resolution as a key driver of customer satisfaction, and ease of doing business with us as a key driver of customer experience.

Leaders assess team members and business units on how well they are performing against agreed customer service standards and provide coaching and development where required.

CONTACTS

We measure our success via analysis of Customer Request Management (CRM) data around customer contacts including number of requests, resolution rates and customer satisfaction. We track contact volumes by channel and enquiry type. By analysing customer contacts and our response timeframes, we can identify gaps in performance, processes and ultimately identify priorities for improvements.





Developed by Customer & Information Services

City of Wanneroo
23 Dundobar Road
Wanneroo WA 6065

Delivering service excellence