The fundamental role of police has always been serving the community, to reduce crime, the fear of crime and create a safer society. Maintaining the highest quality of customer service is an integral part of policing and therefore a priority for all employees of the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF).

The NSWPF has an obligation to provide responsive and meaningful customer service to the community and our own work colleagues. Community members are not only important consumers of police services, they are an essential resource for the successful performance of the police role. It has become evident, recently, that the development of a strong and positive relationship between police and the community is one of the foremost objectives of any policing organisation. This principle is not new to the NSWPF as an organisation. To show commitment to these obligations, the NSWPF has developed a comprehensive Customer Service Policy, Customer Service Charter and Customer Service Guidelines which ensure every member of the organisation is aware of their responsibilities.

‘Treat customers the way you or members of your family would like to be treated in your dealings with police. Appreciate the customer’s perspective, take ownership of policing issues, keep victims informed, explain what is going to happen with their inquiry or investigation and communicate effectively.’

A P Scipione APM
Commissioner - NSW Police Force

This article focuses on the NSWPF customer service Policy, Charter and Guidelines, including their application in the performance of all employee’s duties and workplace interaction with colleagues.

Definition of Customer Service

The NSWPF, as an organisation, often makes reference to customer service but what does it really mean to police? Unless they recognise its significance, it is impossible for them to apply this principle in daily practice.

Customer service has been described as ‘a management strategy that focuses on meeting customer expectations and ensuring customer satisfaction, thereby achieving organisational goals’. Wagenheim and Reurink (1991).

Adoption of this principle has the potential to improve the role of police as well as the community’s perception of the service that is delivered. Growth in community confidence may result in a more pleasant, effective and efficient work environment and a decrease in customer complaints.
CUSTOMER SERVICE - A NSW POLICE FORCE PRIORITY

The NSW State Plan

The NSW State Plan sets out the goals, priorities, strategies and benchmarks, which will be the focus of the government until 2016. The State Plan was constructed with an all-inclusive approach to servicing the community and encompasses Priority S8 – Increase Customer Satisfaction with Government Services. The targets set under Priority S8 include the measuring, reporting on and improvement of, customer satisfaction with Government services.

Although the Department of Commerce is the lead agency for Priority S8, it is an expectation that all government agencies will examine and deliver the necessary services in order to increase customer satisfaction with the government as a whole. The NSWPF has responded to its obligations in order to meet State Plan targets, developing a strategy for customer service improvement. This resulted in the establishment of the Customer Service Program Team.

The Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan encourages a customer service based environment where the NSW Police Force can respond to its obligations under the State Plan. It provides an opportunity for police to work together with the community and other stakeholders to further reduce crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Corporate Plan outlines certain key performance areas, in terms of the organisation, which link to customer service. These are derived from State Plan strategies and priorities, which are the overarching guiding principles driving the NSWPF forward.

The ‘Values’ described in the Corporate Plan are all relevant to customer service.

- Excellence - having the highest professional standards and integrity.
- Trust - promoting community faith and confidence in their police.
- Honour - acting with pride and admiration for the policing profession.
- Impartiality - fair and objective decision making without prejudice.
- Commitment - dedication and devotion in the performance of your duties.
- Accountability - acknowledging ownership and being answerable for your actions.
- Leadership - acting as a role model for the community and your colleagues.

The Benefits of Quality Customer Service

All employees of the NSWPF have the opportunity to reap benefits from improved customer service, not just the customers. Benefits may be achieved on many levels, including increased public perception of police professionalism, supervisor acknowledgement of employee excellence and personal satisfaction for employees.

Direct benefits of employing the principles of customer service, for police, may include:

- increased public confidence in the NSWPF;
- lower complaint rates and lower costs associated with complaint management;
- greater recognition of staff; and
- more efficient court proceedings and a positive impact on crime rates through more effective victim and witness management during the investigation and prosecution of crime.

Consultation

The Customer Service Program team has worked to establish a sustainable framework to support the NSWPF in its delivery of improved customer service. To achieve this, the program has:

- researched customer expectations and experiences;
- reviewed customer service standards;
- developed a customer service policy, charter and guidelines; and
- established and implemented measures, systems and processes necessary to support high customer service standards.

The Customer Service Policy, Charter and Guidelines are based on the widest possible consultation, both within the NSWPF and wider community.

Internal consultation initially included focus groups involving more than 200 sworn (constable, sergeant, inspector and superintendent) and unsworn employees from local area and specialist commands.

In September 2008, drafts of the Charter and Guidelines were launched to attain broader feedback from across the organisation. This was achieved by the program team hosting a professional development day for customer service portfolio holders from all commands within the NSWPF. A staff survey instrument was distributed to all attendees to administer at their commands. In total, 2,806 employees (approx 14% of the organisation’s total staff numbers) provided feedback on the draft of the customer service guidelines. This feedback was assessed and further amendments were made.
External consultation involved workshops with groups of people from metropolitan and country areas who’d had recent contact with police. Finally, copies of the charter were sent to approximately 300 private and public sector organisations seeking their feedback as well.

All feedback was integrated into the final versions of these documents that were then published in the Police Weekly in December 2008.

**Charter of Victim’s Rights**

The *Charter of Victim’s Rights* is part of the *Victims Rights Act 1996* and defines how government departments, including the NSWPF, should treat victims of crime. The NSWPF is committed to upholding aspects of the *Charter*, in particular the following key areas:

- courtesy, compassion and respect;
- information about investigation of the crime;
- information about prosecution of accused;
- information about trial process and role as witness;
- protection from contact with accused;
- protection of identity of victim;
- return of property of victim held by the State;
- protection from accused; and
- information about impending release, escape or eligibility for absence from custody.

**Definition of a Customer**

A customer can broadly be defined as any person or agency that assists, utilises or requires the services of the NSWPF. The NSWPF recognises customers as victims, witnesses, the community and its own employees.

External organisations with whom the NSWPF has an interagency relationship, for example, Corrective Services, Juvenile Justice, Roads and Traffic Authority, Department of Community Service etc, are also considered customers.

**Note:** persons who are under arrest, or suspects for crimes, are not considered customers. They are dealt with under the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (LEPRA) and other related policies or procedures.

**Customer Service Charter**

The *Customer Service Charter* is a commitment by the NSWPF to all its customers, including the community and NSWPF employees. The *Charter* outlines for employees, the expectations of the community and the standard of service the pledged by the NSWPF in an effort to enhance relationships and partnerships with the community. Information is also provided in the *Charter* for the community, to highlight the ways in which they can assist the NSWPF to deliver quality service.

The *Charter* consists of four key commitments to our customers:

**YOU SAID “BE ACCESSIBLE”**

**We will:**

- provide 24/7 assistance to all customers;
- through the Police Assistance Line (131 444), provide information on your nearest available police station;
- always give priority to emergencies. If police attendance is required, we will allocate a response priority in accordance with the level of seriousness; and
- be accessible to all persons regardless of their culture, language, age, sexuality, physical and mental ability, locality and socio-economic background.

**YOU SAID “BE PROFESSIONAL AND HELPFUL”**

**We will:**

- listen to you and acknowledge your needs;
- treat you fairly and with respect;
- maintain your confidentiality;
- show care and be accurate; and
- take ownership of your matter if it’s a policing issue.

**YOU SAID “TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION”**

**We will:**

- when attending your incident, provide you with information regarding timeliness;
- explain how your matter will be progressed and why;
- where appropriate, investigate your matter and advise you of the outcome;
- attempt to resolve your matter at the first point of contact, or contact and transfer your matter to the appropriate area or person of responsibility for resolution; and
- tell you when no further action will be required and the reason why.

**YOU SAID “KEEP ME INFORMED”**

**We will:**

- provide a reference number and contact officer for your matter;
- if you are a victim, explain your rights and provide regular updates in accordance with the *Charter of Victim Rights*;
- if you are a witness, offer to provide follow-up information; and
- communicate with communities about issues that affect them, via local media, meetings, forums and committees.
Customer Service Guidelines

Customer satisfaction with the NSWPF is at 63%, compared to the national average of 66%. More than 26% of all complaints received by the NSWPF relate to customer service.

(Professional Standards Command data 2007/08)

To reinforce our understanding of the Customer Service Charter, the Customer Service Team developed the Customer Service Guidelines. These Guidelines provide practical advice that focuses on the most common policing situations, the day to day duties that NSWPF officers perform and provide specific actions to follow. This is the standard of professionalism that is expected of every member of the organisation, irrespective of rank and position, in all customer dealings. Customer service is not just, or only a management strategy. Every NSWPF officer has an individual responsibility to adhere to that management strategy. How can you fulfil your individual responsibilities? By adopting and adhering to good practice, as set out below in the Customer Service Guidelines.

The Customer Service Guidelines outline nine specific areas of customer service, they are:

- telephone and message enquiries;
- front counter enquiries;
- attending an incident enquiry;
- victim follow-up;
- dealing with a difficult customer;
- dealing with customer concerns;
- command responsibilities;
- how commands will be measured; and
- public image professionalism.

Telephone and Message Enquiries

Key actions:

- ensure victims receive an event number;
- ensure messages are followed up;
- use interpreter services and the TTY (text telephone) number where appropriate; and
- try to resolve the customers matter at the first point of contact.

Answer the phone in a professional and courteous manner:

- clearly identify your name, business unit and offer a greeting: “Good afternoon, Constable Jones, Castle Hill Police. How can I help you?”;
- use a personal approach and treat the customer as you would be expect to treated yourself; and
- remember, policing is about helping the community. Providing support and assurance is part of your job.

Actively listen and respond to customer needs:

- you may be the first police officer the customer has ever spoken to, so leave them with a high regard for the NSW Police Force;
- really listen to their words. That will require you to stop what you are doing and pay attention;
- whether you are a veteran or a probationer, apply your skills and knowledge to provide a solution. Many issues can be solved relatively simply over the phone;
- if you are unable to assist a customer, refer them to the appropriate person, section or agency. Where appropriate, give the customer the relevant phone numbers before you transfer their call;
- callers with disabilities or language issues should be referred to either the TTY interpreter services or the Cultural Diversity Team; and
- as a member of the NSW Police Force, you are a leader in the community and the customer will look to you for advice, support and guidance. Provide them with that service.

Exceed customer expectations:

- promote a positive culture in the NSW Police Force and show the customer real service;
- demonstrate a commitment to the caller. They trust you;
- try to understand their concerns. If they’re unreasonable, clarify the issues and make clear to the customer what can actually be done;
- encourage customer confidence and actively address their concerns, even if you’re not the officer in charge of the enquiry;
- if you’re not the best person to address the customer’s call, ascertain who is and facilitate the contact; and
- remember, policing is about helping the community. Providing good advice and support is simply part of your job.

Take pride:

- your commander, colleagues and community count on you;
- your telephone and message enquiry actions (and inactions) with each customer will be remembered for a long time;
- turn a concern into a compliment by taking those extra steps; and
- remember why you joined the Force and reflect that in your actions, internally and externally, every day.

Every NSWPF officer will encounter a complex phone enquiry at some stage of their service. The customer may be confused, frustrated or angry. In those situations it may become difficult to respond in a positive manner.
Some people are rude and demanding. What is a fair response to those people?

‘There are many reasons why people may appear rude or demanding over the phone. On most occasions we are not aware of the circumstances that have led to this behaviour, but it is our job to remain professional and deal with the person’s issue. You should approach the call rationally. Work to calm the person and show empathy towards them as best as you can, trying to understand their situation. If they are offensive, explain that you will terminate the conversation if they continue. If you are considering terminating the call, before doing so ensure the person is not in danger. If the person calls back, explain that you will assist them, providing they act appropriately. Remember, we are representing the NSW Police Force. Our role is to assist people and provide good customer service. At times this may prove difficult; but our professional manner provides a positive view of the NSW Police Force.’

Mr Chris Beatson, Director PAL, Tuggerah

The Customer Service Guidelines do not propose that any member of the NSWPF should be subjected to derogatory or abusive comments, by any member of the public. In such cases police should terminate the phone call. However, it is expected that police will understand that a customer may have had past experiences which are contributing to their current behaviour. A high degree of communication skills are required to produce positive results from what initially may be a negative interaction.

Front Counter Enquiries

Key actions:

• ensure victims receive an event number and a victim’s card;
• use interpreter or disability services where appropriate;
• ensure initial victim follow-up occurs within seven days and that all ongoing follow-up complies with the Charter of Victims’ Rights; and
• try to resolve the customer’s matter at the first point of contact.

Greet the customer at the counter in a professional and courteous manner:

• make them feel welcome at your workplace. Introduce yourself and put them at ease;
• use a personal approach and treat the customer as you would expect to be treated yourself;
• your responsibility is to serve and protect. That should be reflected in your tone and manner; and
• people with disabilities may have difficulty with access or communication, so be flexible to their needs.

Actively listen and respond to the customer’s needs:

• try to understand their concerns and, where appropriate, use your skills and knowledge to provide a solution;
• promote their confidence in the NSW Police Force as a professional and flexible service provider;
• people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities may face additional challenges in communicating their issues to police. Actively seek assistance and support via interpreter services, ethnic community liaison officers or the Cultural Diversity Team;
• work with the customer to produce an outcome; and
• you are a leader in the community and customers look to you for advice, support and guidance.

Exceed customer expectations:

• demonstrate a commitment to members of your community and show support and professionalism for their issues;
• remember, policing is about upholding the customer’s rights. You are the customer’s advocate; and
• deliver on the promise of good service and strive to develop the customer’s confidence.

Take pride:

• your front counter enquiry actions (and inactions) with each customer will be remembered for a long time. Make those actions count;
• foster a sense of pride between your colleagues and the community; and
• remember why you joined the Force and reflect that in your actions, internally and externally, every day.

Customer Service Practice Tips

Appreciate the customer’s perspective. For most people contact with police is a significant matter regardless of the priority their issues might have from a policing perspective. If you do not keep this in mind you might find that you’re dismissive of a customer when a small amount of information or empathy was all that was required to keep them satisfied.

Take ownership of policing issues brought to you by members of the public until they are resolved or in the hands of the most appropriate person. For members of the community, one of the least satisfactory aspects of contact with an agency is being bounced from person to person. Resolve the matter if you can but, if not, identify the most appropriate person/section and put the issue in their hands - don’t ask the customer to do this for you.
CUSTOMER SERVICE - A NSW POLICE FORCE PRIORITY

Every member of the community who attends a police station to speak to someone has a right to quality customer service. This means the NSW Police Force officer will be polite, introduce themselves, listen attentively and be of assistance depending upon the particulars of the situation. Every issue, even of a low priority should be treated seriously.

What happens when I can’t give the customer what they want?

‘You won’t be able to satisfy everyone, just give each caller your best. If you can’t give them what they want, politely and succinctly explain why. Taking the time to provide an explanation is better than giving them nothing. Give the customer the confidence and support that achieves the best outcome. You’ll feel good and get greater satisfaction, and so will the customer.’

Superintendent Jeff Loy, Commander Campsie LAC

Attending an Incident Enquiry

Key actions:

- ensure victims receive an event number and a victim’s card; and
- ensure victim follow-up within seven days.

Information about timelines and provisions of updates:

- customers call when they need police intervention, and to them every call is urgent. Get as much information as possible to prioritise your response;
- consider the expectations of the customer in relation to timely attendance;
- advise the customer if police will be delayed;
- continue to provide the customer with updates. Do not leave your customer in the dark; and
- remember, the most important thing to do is the job effectively. Once you arrive, make your response the issue.

Respond effectively:

- on arrival listen, look and act. What needs to be done to address the customer’s issues?
- take the time to explain the steps involved and, if possible, gain their compliance;
- deliver what you would expect a police officer to do if you or one of your family members needed help;
- assess what your boss or colleagues would expect you to do and do it correctly the first time; and
- if faced with a difficult situation, try to think outside the square or seek advice from a supervisor.

Exceed customer expectations:

- promote a positive culture in the NSW Police Force and show the customer real service;
- after the initial response is complete, consider secondary issues. Are other actions needed? Should you refer the customer to another area of the NSW Police Force or even to another agency? Assess the customer’s issues and facilitate their requirements;
- demonstrate a commitment to the customer. By your actions, you can either develop their trust or destroy it;
- remember, policing is about helping the community. Providing support and assurance is part of your job; and
- deliver on our commitment to customer satisfaction. Encourage customer confidence and develop relationships with your community.

Take pride:

- your actions (and inactions) with each customer will be remembered for a long time. Make them count;
- turn a concern into a compliment by taking those extra steps; and
- remember why you joined the NSW Police Force and reflect on those reasons in your actions, internally and externally, every day.

What if a customer becomes need and overly reliant on me?

‘While response times are critical, especially in urgent cases, doing the job properly once you’re there is the key. Our core responsibility is to reassure the customer and provide appropriate actions and outcomes. Victims of crime are also our responsibility and we must remain accessible to them and keep informed throughout investigations. However, if you become concerned about a victim or their reliance on you, seek advice from a supervisor. Agencies that can assist with services such as counselling include the Victims of Crime Tribunal and Attorney General’s Department. Remember to maintain a professional distance at all times.’

Assistant Commissioner Paul Carey APM, Commander Professional Standards.
Victim Follow-up

Key actions:

- ensure victims receive an event number and a victim's card; and
- ensure victim follow-up within seven days.

Steps to follow:

- victims are our special customers. Each should be treated fairly and openly in accordance with the Charter of Victims Rights and the Police Handbook;
- explain to the victim and their supporters the process of an investigation, what's required of them and what you will do to support them;
- keep victims and witnesses informed during the process. Record telephone numbers and secure email addresses to ensure you can easily keep in touch. Older people may prefer face-to-face contact and you should try to be flexible to their needs;
- provide victims and witnesses with realistic expectations. Police know offenders can get bail and that matters can be dismissed at court. While this is acknowledged by you, for your customers it is often the first experience they have had with the criminal justice system. By explaining to them how the system works and why things happen, we can foster realistic expectations; and
- consider appropriate referrals. Speak with your supervisors and duty officers about how to best manage victim issues.

Monitoring victims:

- as the investigating officer, you should contact victims within seven days and canvass any concerns they may have and ensure ongoing follow-up complies with the Charter of Victims Rights;
- be alert to any threats or dangers they may face and use your skills and resources to manage those risks;
- your managers will audit victims of crime at random to measure the command’s effectiveness in its support. Tell your victims this may occur and respond swiftly when they call or ask for support;
- while you may know the justice system, most victims probably don’t. Find out what support they might need in dealing with the system and facilitate all reasonable requests;
- prevent reoccurrences - think about measures that will help your victim from becoming a repeat victim;
- if your victim is vulnerable (through language, culture or environment), speak with your Crime Management Unit about repeat victim strategies;
- always protect your victim from further exposure or risk; and
- most importantly: never identify a victim or reveal personal details to any party without authorisation.

Exceed customer expectations:

- always promote the positive aspects of the NSW Police Force and show victims real support;
- after the initial response is complete, consider any secondary issues facing the victim. Are they vulnerable to further harm and what actions can you take to reduce the risk?
- other agencies, both government and non-government, can support victims through a range of issues such as compensation, counselling, expenses or advocacy;
- demonstrate the NSW Police Force’s commitment to the victim by your actions; develop their trust; and
- remember, policing is about helping the community. Support and assurance is part of that job.

Take pride:

- deliver on your commitments, encourage customer confidence and develop rapport with victims and witnesses;
- consider what your boss or colleagues would expect you to do and offer it at the first occasion;
- your victim follow-up actions and inactions with victims will be remembered for a long time. Make them count; and
- turn a concern into a compliment by taking those extra steps.

In addition to the above steps as prescribed by the Guidelines, The Victim’s Rights Charter makes specific recommendations about the treatment all victims should be entitled to. They are:

- a victim who is a witness in a trial for the crime should be informed about the trial process and the role of the victim as a witness in the prosecution of the accused; and
- a victim should, on request, be kept informed of the offender’s impending release, or escape from custody, or of any change in security classification that results in the offender being eligible for unescorted absence from custody.

My victim needs help but I'm not a social worker. What should I do?

‘As a police officer or employee you won’t be able to fix everyone’s problem. What you can do is be an effective monitor of people and their concerns. If you sense that more should be done, arrange for other more qualified police or agencies to help. A contact list of appropriate agencies and resources should be available at your workplace. If not, advise a senior officer. Use the resources available on the on the NSW Police Force Intranet or seek further advice. Engage those best qualified to help victims with closure or support.’

Detective Superintendent Geoff Beresford,
Commander Homicide Squad
Corporate Spokesperson - Victims of Crime
CUSTOMER SERVICE - A NSW POLICE FORCE PRIORITY

Dealing with a Difficult Customer

Key actions:

• ensure you are always professional and helpful with customers;
• listen to and acknowledge customer enquiries; and
• tell the customer when no further action can be taken and why.

Identifying a difficult customer:

• no matter what you do, there will be some customers you will not be able satisfy and there are many reasons for this. In dealing with these people, always remain objective, professional and calm;
• to test if a customer is being reasonable, look at their issue and not the person. What may seem small to you can be significant to them; and
• if you can’t satisfy a difficult customer, seek advice from a senior officer and record your actions appropriately.

Recognise problems and address them:

• on certain occasions difficult customers will try to provoke a response. Don’t fall for their attempts to unsettle or coerce you;
• be alert to any threats or dangers to you or the organisation through your responses (such as litigation);
• managers will audit some difficult customers so ensure information is properly recorded and noted by other police; and
• your best defence against a difficult customer is to remain professional.

Exceed organisational expectations:

• a calm, reassuring approach will generally disarm even the most difficult of customers, and realign the situation;
• always focus on and promote the positive aspects of the NSW Police Force;
• use your skills to and knowledge to diffuse difficult situations;
• turn a concern into a compliment by taking the extra time to explain an issue and provide clarity; and
• difficult customers remain customers, until they cross the line.

Take pride:

• as a professional police officer or employee, you set a standard for the community to follow;
• you are trained to deal with emergencies and crises so you are more than capable of dealing with a difficult customer; and
• your actions even with difficult customers, will be remembered for a long time. Always be accountable the only person who can diminish your integrity is you.

Where do I draw the line with difficult customers?

‘While you must be professional on every occasion, you’re not expected to be ridiculed, belittled or abused by anyone. Once you believe a customer has overstretched the mark, advise them immediately. If that doesn’t have the desired effect, after making sure the person is not in any danger, professionally remove yourself from the situation and make a record of the events. While you won’t win everyone over, you must always demonstrate that you have done or attempted to do, to the best of your ability, the right thing.’

Chief Superintendent Steve Cullen,
Public Order and Riot Squad

Dealing with Customer Concerns

If a customer’s concern is not a complaint, take the time to listen. This simple courtesy will often be enough to resolve their problem. By listening carefully you may be able to clarify an issue, policy or legislative question or simply pass on relevant information.

If the customer needs to speak to a particular officer who is not available, find out when they are next rostered. If possible, try to solve the issue yourself.

If necessary record their concern appropriately with a notebook entry. It is in everyone’s interest for you to address the concern before it becomes a complaint. If unsure, consult your supervisor immediately.

Receiving a compliment:

When a customer wishes to provide a compliment or letter of appreciation regarding a NSWPF officer or section, record all the details and thank them for their call. Complete a report with the relevant compliment information and forward it to the officer’s immediate supervisor and commander. This ensures the work of the NSWPF is recognised and acknowledged accordingly. Ensure all compliments are forwarded for the attention of the subject officer.

Receiving a complaint:

Ensure that you comply with the Police Act 1990 and report the matter immediately to your supervisor. Refer to the Complaint Handling Guidelines, available on the Professional Standards Command intranet site.

The importance of recording concerns:

When a customer wishes to leave a message for an officer who is unavailable, ensure it is appropriately recorded so the call can be returned.
Consider using the station pad to create a note that requires the officer’s signature. If this is not available and the call is linked to the case, event or intelligence report, consider notifying the officer by creating a linked or unlinked job in COPS.

If you must send an email, include a copy to the officer’s immediate supervisor.

**Command Responsibilities**

**Commanders and managers should ensure:**

- all staff in customer service areas are appropriately trained, skilled and resourced to deliver, review and evaluate customer service, including access to and use of survey tools and ability to monitor satisfaction ratings in the business plan;
- appropriate systems including Command Management Framework and satisfaction surveys are established in accordance with local issues;
- uniform service is provided to all customers regardless of culture, language, disability, socio-economic background, disadvantage or minority;
- that appropriate funding is provided to resource local community engagement and communication strategies including Community Safety Precinct Committees and customer service satisfaction surveys;
- that appropriate messaging systems are established to capture customer requests, concerns and feedback and that these systems are monitored for compliance;
- all Customer Service Charter measures are assessed by senior management teams to ensure effective design and customer service delivery;
- senior management teams regularly monitor trends in customer service complaints and concerns to identify individuals or teams requiring additional training or remedial guidance; and
- establishment of a compliments register and protocols for recognising and awarding local excellence in customer service.

**How Commands will be Measured**

**Our measures will be finalised at the end of the Charter consultation process. They will be specific and designed to drive continuous improvements in customer satisfaction.**

Our measures will apply not only to our external customers but also to internal customers. Therefore all staff in specialist and corporate service commands will be held accountable for their customer service performance levels.

Once finalised, these performance measures will be incorporated into existing corporate systems, including:

- individual performance reviews, including the Commissioner’s and those undertaken as part of the Career Management System;
- the NSW Police Force Corporate Plan (already in place);
- all command business plans and reviews;
- Command Management Framework;
- customer service surveys;
- internal and external audits and other quality reviews;
- customer service data available from our IT systems; and
- ongoing analysis of our performance in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing.

Some examples of specific customer service measures include:

- number of customer service complaints relating to telephone or message responses, front counter and counter enquiries, failure to follow-up victims, including cases and events;
- number of inappropriate referrals to PAL;
- use of interpreter and ethnic community liaison officers; and
- results of the Customer Service Satisfaction Survey.

**Public Image Professionalism**

**Uniform:**

Our uniform is important for a number of reasons, including:

- as a symbol of authority and unity;
- so we can be recognised and look professional;
- to establish rank;
- its historical significance; and
- as a condition of your employment.


Officers should ensure they are correctly dressed and well groomed at all times when on duty. Uniforms must be in good repair, neat, clean and well pressed. Shoes and boots should be clean and polished and kept in a serviceable condition. This is especially important at high profile events where the highest standards of presentation are expected.
CUSTOMER SERVICE - A NSW POLICE FORCE PRIORITY

Service dress uniform should be worn at court, on ceremonial occasions, when working in an office or when directed.

Working dress uniform is worn by police performing duty in a frontline or first response capacity.

Outer garments (e.g. uniform jackets and jumpers) are optional and can be worn at each officer’s discretion.

Hats should be worn at all times when not in the station or a police vehicle. They should not be hung from appointment belts, trouser belt loops or pockets. Baseball caps can be worn only with the working dress uniform or specialist overalls.

Hairstyles and grooming:

Whilst in uniform, hair should be neatly groomed and comply with regulations. Extreme hairstyles, radical/unnatural/combination colours and stepped cuts are not permitted. Hairstyles should not interfere with the wearing of service headdress.

All male personnel should be clean shaven at the commencement of a shift unless wearing a beard or moustache. These should conform to policy and be neatly trimmed. If you wish to start a beard or moustache, you must do so only while on leave or otherwise absent from duty. A minimum three weeks’ growth is necessary before resuming duty.

Jewellery, watches and piercings:

While on duty, only wrist watches, engagement, wedding and eternity rings and approved emergency medical bracelets may be worn. A single, conservative ring is also permitted.

No earrings, visible trinkets, jewellery or piercings of any kind should be worn while in uniform.

Personal hygiene:

All staff must present for duty in a clean, hygienic manner and all effort should be made to maintain hygiene through a shift.

Embellishments:

Ribands, decorations and medals to which a member is entitled should be clean, neat and tidy and worn in the correct order of appearance. Listed below are the only badges authorised to be worn on a police uniform and these should be positioned in accordance with departmental policy:

- water police anchor;
- the aircrew badge (pilot or observer);
- peer support badge;
- mental health intervention team badge; and
- gay and lesbian liaison officer badge.
First impressions matter:
The NSW Police Force is a professional organisation and the way you present yourself is extremely important, whether in person, on the phone or even when communicating via email. You must be professional in all aspects of your work, including appearance, attitude and grooming.

Uniforms have a strong psychological influence on members of the public and serve as a mental shortcut for identification, respect and compliance. Research consistently shows that the police cap conveys more authority than any other part of the uniform.

Wear your uniform with pride:
Also, be conscious of your body language. HOW you say something and the WAY you say it is just as important as WHAT you say.

Leadership and respect:
As members of the NSW Police Force we should always lead by example. From constable to the commissioned ranks, this approach will help to provide effective customer service and maintain our image as a professional organisation.

Every member should strive to:
• be a role model;
• provide a model of best practice in regard to dress, grooming, professionalism and attitude; and
• be a mentor to junior staff.

You should also:
• address colleagues from sergeant and above by rank when junior staff are present; and
• always address by rank when in public.

Acknowledgment
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Customer Service Training
During 2009/2010 all employees of the NSWPF are required to attend Customer Service Training. This training will be conducted by Customer Service Duty Officers or EDO’s, over a full day.

Customer Service duty officers and managers are also offered the opportunity to undertake the recognised Certificate IV qualification from the Customer Service Institute of Australia.

In the case of Commanders, assistant Commissioners and Directors they will receive their training from the Customer Service Institute of Australia.

For further information on the Customer Service Program:
Visit the customer service web page on the intranet located in hot topics or email: #customer.