

CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

2017-2020



CONTENT

Foreword.....	3
Background.....	4
What the City is aiming to achieve.....	5
Our Services - Statistics.....	6
Consultation	7
Action Plan 2017 - 2020	8
Customer Charter	12
Service Standards	14
Customer Profile	16
Where we are now	20
Customer Survey Results	21
Summary & Issues	23
General customer service trends.....	24
Customer service channels	25
Resolution & Customer Satisfaction.....	27
Appendices	28

The City of Greater Geraldton's Customer Service Plan 2017-2020 is a three-year plan that includes the City's prioritised strategies and actions, which will be implemented to enhance customer service for our residents, ratepayers and visitors.

This is the first time the City of Greater Geraldton has developed a plan focused on the customer experience and the service they receive when exposed to our staff and facilities. The City offers several different ways to interact with customers including: in person, via telephone, email, the web and social media applications and more. With the recent increase in ways to communicate with the public it is critical that the City has strategies in place to meet and exceed customer expectations.

The City has worked with BBB Advisory, customer service consultants, in preparing this plan. BBB Advisory completed an intensive on-site review of City procedures and processes for managing customer queries and these recommendations have been incorporated in this plan.

The strategies outlined in this document have been reviewed by city staff and the community and will be implemented over the next three years.

“ A PLAN FOCUSED ON THE
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND THE
SERVICE THEY RECEIVE WHEN EXPOSED
TO OUR STAFF AND FACILITIES. ”



BACKGROUND

Located 424 kilometres north of Perth with a thriving population of over 40,000 customers – Greater Geraldton has been named one of Australia's regional capitals. The City boasts a prosperous economy and a number of industries including mining, fishing, manufacturing, construction, retail and tourism. As one of Western Australia's top places to live, work, study or invest, Geraldton is the capital of the Midwest region.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The City has a number of strategies in place to support our customers;



City of Greater Geraldton Community Strategic Plan 2017 - 2027



City of Greater Geraldton Corporate Business Plan 2017-2021



City of Greater Geraldton Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2018



City of Greater Geraldton Long Term Financial Plan 2017-2027

VISION STATEMENT

A prosperous, diverse,
vibrant and sustainable
community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Serving today while
building tomorrow

OUR VALUES

Service
Trust
Accountability
Respect
Solidarity

WHAT THE CITY IS AIMING TO ACHIEVE



SERVICE
TRUST
ACCOUNTABILITY
RESPECT
SOLIDARITY



Throughout the life of this three year plan the City aims to achieve the following outcomes:



- Measure and improve levels of customer satisfaction across the City
- Focus on making customer interactions easy and convenient
- Reduce inefficiencies where possible
- Reduce the costs of servicing our customers ensuring better value for money
- Increase and refine service delivery channels to ensure customers have more options
- Embrace new customer service technology and best practice
- Increase employees satisfaction, capability and motivation to provide excellent customer service

REVIEWING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

A regular review of the plan will be conducted and results made available to our customers.



OUR SERVICES – STATISTICS*



Population: **41,223**



26,084 LG electors on the current electoral roll as at 4 April 2017



Number of Rateable Properties:

Gross Rental Value (GRV) Residential **17,785** (**230** in Mullewa)

Unimproved Value (UV) Rural Farming & Mining **1,053** (**308** in Mullewa)

GRV Non Residential **1,440** (**40** in Mullewa)

Exempt **1,510** (**358** in Mullewa)



Value of municipal assets that we provide, renew, maintain

Total value of all infrastructure assets: **\$1 billion**

17/18 Asset Renewal Budget is **\$21.2m**, of which **\$7 million** is grants and contributions.



Length of sealed road network: **800km**



Length of unsealed road network: **1,200km**



140 parks



14 managed sporting facilities



6,200 customer works requests lodged annually



1100 Building Applications approvals



230 Development Applications



1,746 rated swimming pools



800 regular Queen Elizabeth II Senior and Community Centre users
(**4,000** attendances each month)



34,000 Queens Park Theatre patrons annually



Geraldton Library has **12,497** members



Mullewa Library has **117** members



205,000 visits to the Aquarena annually



5,400 visits to the Mullewa Swimming Pool annually



1,000 participants in Youth Programs annually



Over **50** Events annually, (City Function & External Events)



17,000 domestic rubbish collections



2,000 commercial rubbish collections



6,732 registered dogs



1,160 registered cats



700 Paid Parking Bays



126,704 passengers through the Airport terminal (15/16)

**Annual figures are taken from 2015/2016 FY*



To support the development of this Plan a community survey was conducted in May/June 2017 to gather information on individual customer service experiences with the City.

The survey addressed preferred communication/transaction options and gauged where our customers were at with the technology currently available. The survey also gave customers the opportunity to generally comment on their concerns and service experiences with the City.

(Copy attached in Appendix 1)

The survey was available both online and in hard copy at the Civic Centre, Aquarena, QEII Seniors and Community Centre, Geraldton Regional Library, Geraldton Visitor Centre and Mullewa District Office.

The survey was launched with a media release followed by a number of social media posts on the City's Facebook pages that were widely shared to other community group pages. Posters promoting the survey were also on display at key City facilities.

Emails were sent to a wide range of stakeholders including community and sporting groups and known interested individuals inviting them to take the survey. City employees were also asked to participate and share with external stakeholders.

A total of 156 customers responded and the key findings are outlined in Appendix 2.

Following review of the survey responses a community reference group workshop was held on 29 June 2017 to analyse the survey feedback, review proposed future strategies and offer suggested improvements.

The Plan was then circulated to Managers and employees to gain their feedback. Several meetings were held with individual teams within the City to gain more detailed input.

A TOTAL OF 156 CUSTOMERS RESPONDED AND THE KEY FINDINGS ARE OUTLINED IN APPENDIX 2



ACTION PLAN 2017 - 2020

To deliver on the Customer Service Plan the City has created the following high level action plan. The action plan will be supported by detailed annual implementation plans.

YEAR 1: 2017-2018		
	What will the City do?	What will this mean for our customers?
A	Review and update the City's Customer Service Charter.	Charter updated to more accurately reflect customer expectations and what the City can offer.
B	Commence establishment of a centralised Customer Contact Centre at the Civic Centre in Geraldton.	Aim to deliver first call resolution of +75% i.e. customers queries answered at the first point of contact instead of being passed around to multiple staff or having to make multiple calls. Reduce response times. Decrease customer complaints. Increase customer satisfaction
C	Commence taking credit card payments over the phone in accordance with Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council standards.	Provide the option of customers making payments remotely without the need to physically attend the office in person.
D	Commence offering dog and cat renewal registrations online.	Customers can complete renewal applications online at a time that is convenient to them.
E	Review Councillor helpdesk queries and Operational Policy. Currently Councillor queries are responded to within 5 working days.	All customer requests treated equitably irrespective of where they originated. Increased efficiencies for City departments.
F	Review and update the number of methods available for customers to contact the City. Embrace new cost effective customer service technologies.	More options and flexibility for the customers.
G	Source an affordable new customer request management system (software).	Automated processes so queries go directly to the right team/officer first. Reducing response time and increasing customer satisfaction.
H	Undertake a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey and benchmark our results.	Increased understanding of our customer requirements. Target Customer service inefficiencies.



	What will the City do?	What will this mean for our customers?
I	Review the issuing of mobile devices to relevant Officers who can receive their scheduled work requests and update them when completed.	Increased efficiency and reduction of duplicated workloads. Staff have real-time access to information whilst out in the community meaning most customer queries can be answered quicker.
J	Utilise knowledge management software for Customer Service Team so they have access to technical experts information.	Aim to deliver first call resolution of +75% thereby increasing customer satisfaction.
K	Review and update the complaint process and system(s) used to manage complaints.	Efficiently managing customer complaints.
L	Agree inter-department service levels across City departments.	Increased efficiency (internally) and increased customer satisfaction.
M	Undertake Customer Journey Mapping workshop(s) to get a detailed understanding of the opportunities available to the City to increase customer satisfaction.	Improved customer satisfaction. Increased understanding of customer pain points. Increased efficiencies for City employees and departments.
N	Review after hours customer service model, including opening hours for Civic Centre.	Improve after hours response and service.
O	Create Business Continuity Plan that details how the Customer Contact Centre will continue to operate in the case of an emergency or disaster.	Assurance that customers will be able to contact the City and that core services will remain available in the event of an emergency/disaster.
P	Obtain customer service training and nationally recognised qualifications for the Customer Service Team.	More engaged teams and employees providing increased levels of customer service.
Q	Conduct customer service training across entire organisation making customer service everyone's role.	More engaged teams and employees providing increased levels of customer service.
R	Review and consider bringing additional departments and their services into the remit of the Customer Contact Centre.	Increased cost savings due to increased efficiencies and therefore better value for money for customers.

ACTION PLAN 2017 - 2020

YEAR 2: 2018-2019		
	What will the City do?	What will this mean for our customers?
A	Increase the amount of services available online further improving customer communication and enabling 24/7 access to services via an online customer portal	Increased contact options and services made available to customers at a time that is convenient to them. Reduction in number of walk in customers.
B	Review City forms and where possible make these electronic online forms.	Increased service to customers and reducing need to print forms and / or to attend a City office with a completed form.
C	Investigate the potential to provide digital literacy sessions for members of the community.	Increase customers access to online services offered by the City and other organisations.
D	Review options for a customer self service area in the Civic Centre office.	Increased customer satisfaction and increased options for how customers interact with the City.
E	Investigate providing Councillors with information on issues in their wards, progress in resolving and ability to immediately report issues.	Councillors will have up to date information available on what is happening in their Wards.
F	Initiate a detailed call quality program for the Customer Contact Centre.	Increased customer satisfaction with service received from the Contact Centre. Reduce error and rework rates.
G	Review the number of phone numbers available to contact the City with a view to rationalising services.	Increased efficiency and elimination of waste.
H	Actively participate in relevant customer service networks to keep up to date with current best practice and new and emerging trends.	Customers are provided with a modern, efficient customer service experience based on best practice.
I	Participate in customer service benchmarking.	Customers are provided with information on how the City is performing in relation to customer service.



	YEAR 3: 2019-2020	
	What will the City do?	What will this mean for our customers?
A	Increase the amount of services available online further enabling 24/7 access to services.	Increased contact options and services made available to customers at a time that is convenient to them. Reduction in number of walk in customers.
B	Review the existing telephone system to determine if it still meets our customer and business needs.	Enhanced customer service experience when customers phone the City. Embracing new technology and industry best practice.
C	Identify all out-going post and develop on-line options where appropriate.	Expansion of customer self-help options and expansion of online options.
D	Review the community survey methodologies and evaluate benefits offered to the community.	Assurance that the City approaches community surveys in the most appropriate and efficient manner.
E	Review inter-department service levels to ensure excellent customer service is being delivered across the City.	The City will operate more efficiently, which will reduce operational costs for our rate payers.
F	Consider options to provide customers with the ability to access their personal information, update details and review transactions.	Customers will have 24/7 access to some of their customer information.
G	Investigate options to promote customer service assistance to other local councils.	Sharing City resources with other local councils and benefiting the larger community. Cost efficiencies.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

OUR CUSTOMER FOCUS

City staff are committed to:

✓	Respecting the diversity of our community
✓	Working with our customers to understand and respond to their needs both now and in the future
✓	Making it more convenient, easier and quicker to do business with the City
✓	Being fair and accountable in our service delivery
✓	Being transparent in our decision making
✓	Providing opportunities for community engagement
✓	Striving for excellence in all that we do
✓	Focusing our improvement efforts on better service for our customers

CONTACTING US IN PERSON

When you visit our offices/buildings we will -

✓	Greet you in a timely manner and provide you with professional, polite and attentive service every time
✓	Ensure all frontline staff wear name badges so we can be easily identified
✓	Treat you with respect, courtesy and dignity
✓	Listen to you carefully and fully consider your issues
✓	Endeavour to satisfy your request at the time of your visit
✓	Ensure that when enquiries of a technical or specialised nature are made which cannot be answered immediately that a detailed message is taken and responded to as soon as possible or an initial response is provided within a reasonable timeframe.

CONTACTING US BY PHONE

When you phone us we will -

✓	Aim to answer the telephone within 30 seconds
✓	Ensure you speak to a real person and not to an answering service / voicemail
✓	Introduce ourselves using our first name and our business unit
✓	Provide a direct contact name and number where necessary
✓	Return your telephone enquiry no later than the next working day
✓	Take personal responsibility for and ownership of your enquiry to reduce transferred calls
✓	Also provide a 24 hour telephone service for after hours or emergency calls



CONTACTING US IN WRITING INCLUDING EMAIL

When you write / email us, we will –

✓	Reply to you in clear, concise, plain English that is easily understood
✓	Aim to acknowledge 85% of your letters or emails within 3 working days of receipt and provide a full reply to you within 10 working days.
✓	If your written enquiry (letter or email) requires in-depth research or follow-up that will take longer than 10 working days, we will acknowledge your correspondence and where possible provide an expected completion date.

CONTACTING US BY FACEBOOK OR TWITTER

All customer contact on social media will be managed by our Corporate Communications Team.

RESPONSE TIMES

Customer Contact Method	Response Times
Face to face	Greet you in a timely manner
By telephone	Aim to answer within 30 seconds Aim to return phone-calls within one working day
In writing	Aim to respond to 85% of queries within 3 working days
By Snap, Send, Solve	Aim to respond to 85% of queries within 3 working days
By web chat	Aim to respond within 30 seconds during business hours

SERVICE STANDARDS

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

You can help us to meet our commitments to you by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | If English is not your first language or you need some help in understanding any of the services the City delivers, we can offer alternative formats and services. |
| ✓ | We will provide accessible information upon request to people with disability. |
| ✓ | Additional information is available on https://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/live/my-community/disability-information.aspx |

HELPING US TO HELP YOU

You can help us to meet our commitments to you by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | Having a note pad and pen by the phone when you call the City |
| ✓ | Providing accurate and complete details when phoning us with any queries |
| ✓ | Contacting the City to make an appointment if you have a complex enquiry or need to see a specific officer |
| ✓ | Phoning the officer nominated on the correspondence sent to you |

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CUSTOMER

When you contact us you can expect to be treated with honesty, fairness, sensitivity and dignity.

In return we expect that you will:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Treat our staff with courtesy and respect |
| ✓ | Not be abusive on the telephone or over the counter towards our staff |
| ✓ | Refrain from any type of malicious threat towards our staff in any City facility |
| ✓ | Be open and honest in your dealings with us |
| ✓ | Understand that the City of Greater Geraldton and its' staff may exercise our right not to deal with you should your behaviour and/or actions be unacceptable |
| ✓ | Understand that the City of Greater Geraldton has a responsibility to report all threats, implied or otherwise, direct to the Police Department |



COMPLAINTS

We realise that sometimes, despite our best efforts, you may not be happy with the way we have delivered a service. We encourage you to bring your concern to us directly so the matter can be resolved promptly. A complaint may be received in person, over the phone or in writing including electronic communication.

A complaint is different to a suggestion, a request for service or a request for information. For convenience, the following definitions are provided:	
✓	Complaint - a statement of dissatisfaction by a customer regarding the unsatisfactory delivery of a product or service offered by Council or the unsatisfactory conduct of Council officers
✓	Compliment - positive feedback about a product or service or Council Officer
✓	Suggestion - suggested service or product improvement
✓	Request for information - an enquiry or request for information about Council services, facilities, policies or procedures
✓	Request for service - request for action to be taken in relation to a service or product

The City manages all complaints in line with established policies and procedures. When a complaint is received and registered with the City, the following action will be taken:	
✓	All complainants will be treated with respect, courtesy and professionalism
✓	If the complaint is received by phone or in person an officer will take all the details from you at that time. If the matter cannot be resolved at that time, an investigation will be commenced within 5 working days. A written response informing you of the decision will be sent to you within 15 working days
✓	If the complaint is received in writing we will acknowledge your correspondence within 5 working days and provide a written reply informing you of our decision within 15 working days
✓	Should you still be dissatisfied with the decision you can apply in writing (letter or email) for it to be reviewed internally by the Corporate Service Manager. A written response informing you of the decision will be sent to you within 15 working days
✓	If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Corporate Services Manager the customer can request that the matter is passed to the office of the CEO for review. An investigation will be commenced within 5 working days. A written response informing you of the decision will be sent to you within 20 working days
✓	Decisions can be appealed via external review by contacting the Office of the Ombudsman of WA. Various publications on how to make a complaint are available on the Ombudsman website.
✓	Please note if your complaint requires in-depth research or follow-up that will take longer than these timelines, we will acknowledge your complaint within those timeframes and provide an expected investigation completion date.

PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION

The City values the privacy of its customers. Unless required to do so by law, we will keep your personal information confidential and not disclose it without your consent.

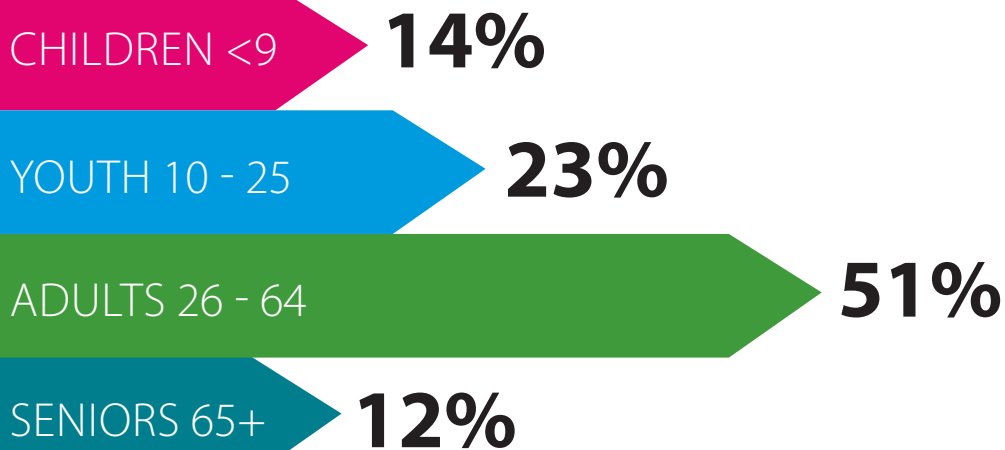
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

The City adheres to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 1992. The City's FOI Co-ordinator will deal with all FOI requests in accordance with the Act and will ensure that requests are dealt with in the most timely and cost effective way. Information about how to lodge an FOI request is also available on our Freedom of Information Requests page. If you are unsure whether you need to lodge an application, please contact the city's FOI Co-ordinator on (08) 9956 6600 or email council@cgg.wa.gov.au

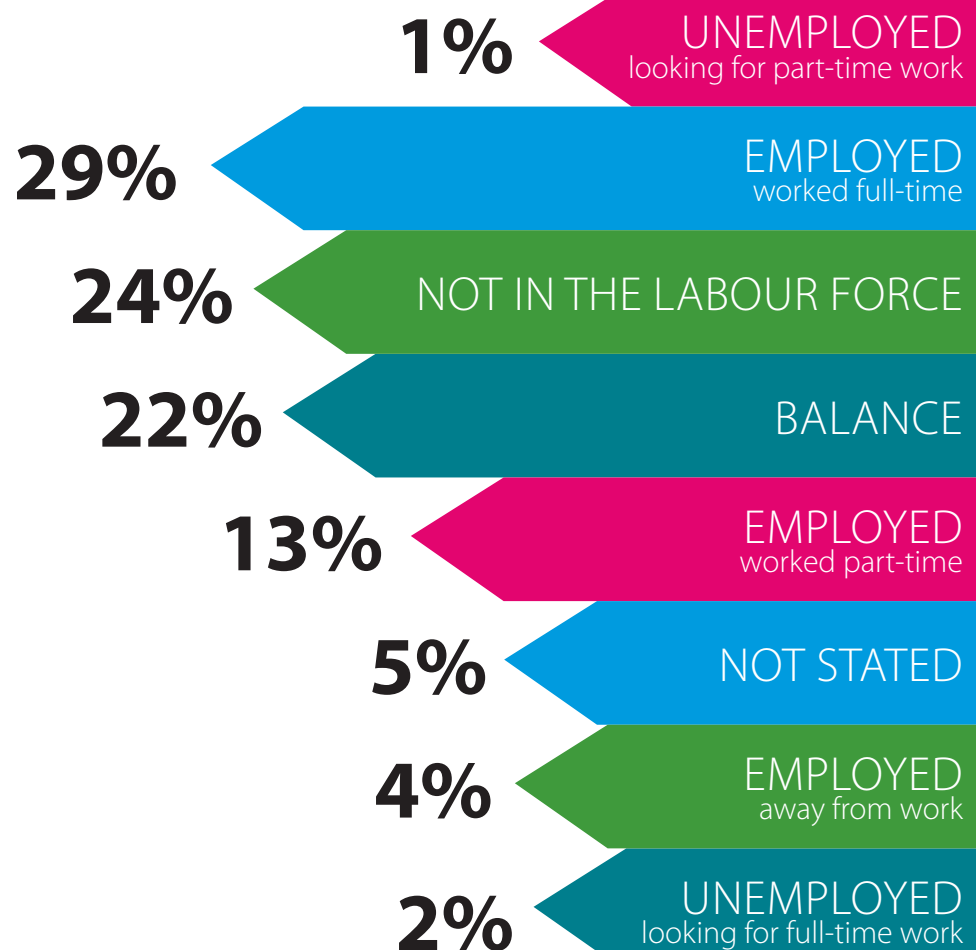
CUSTOMER PROFILE

The City defines our customers as community members, property owners, visitors, businesses, other organisations and levels of government working with the City, and City employees.

C.G.G DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (Source: Census data)



EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (Source: Census data)





HOUSEHOLD WEEKLY INCOME (Source: Census data)

BALANCE

NOT APPLICABLE

ALL INCOMES
NOT STATED

PARTIAL INCOME STATED

\$5000 or more
\$260,000 or more

\$3,500 - \$3,999
\$182,000 - \$207,999

\$3,000 - \$3,499
\$156,000 - \$181,999

\$2,500 - \$2,999
\$130,000 - \$155,999

\$2,000 - \$2,499
\$104,000 - \$129,999

\$1,500 - \$1,999
\$78,000 - \$103,999

\$1,250 - \$1,499
\$65,000 - \$77,999

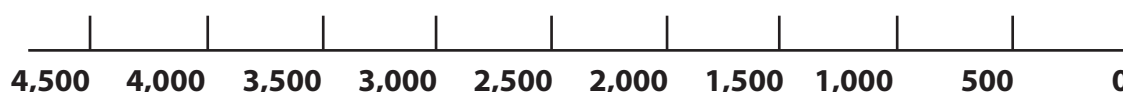
\$1,000 - \$1,249
\$52,000 - \$64,999

\$800 - \$999
\$41,600 - \$51,999

\$600 - \$799
\$31,200 - \$41,599

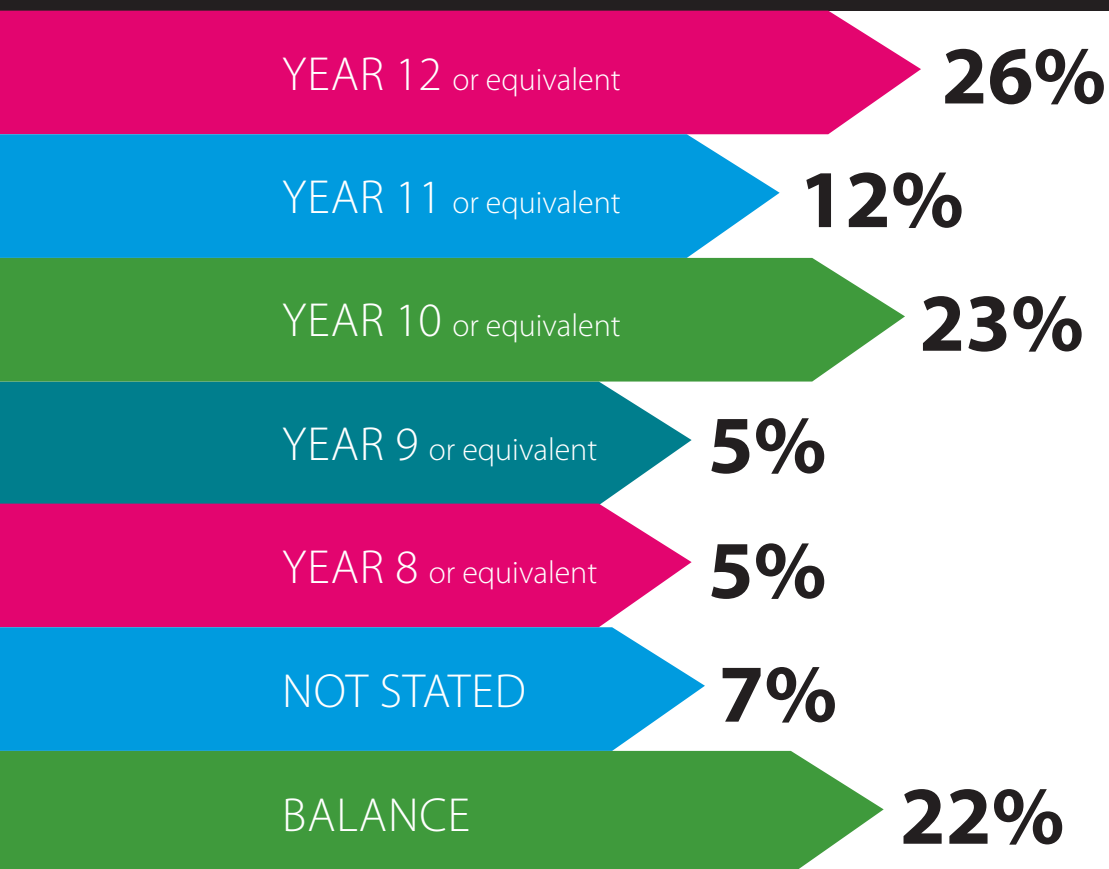
\$400 - \$599
\$20,800 - \$31,199

\$300 - \$399
\$15,600 - \$20,799

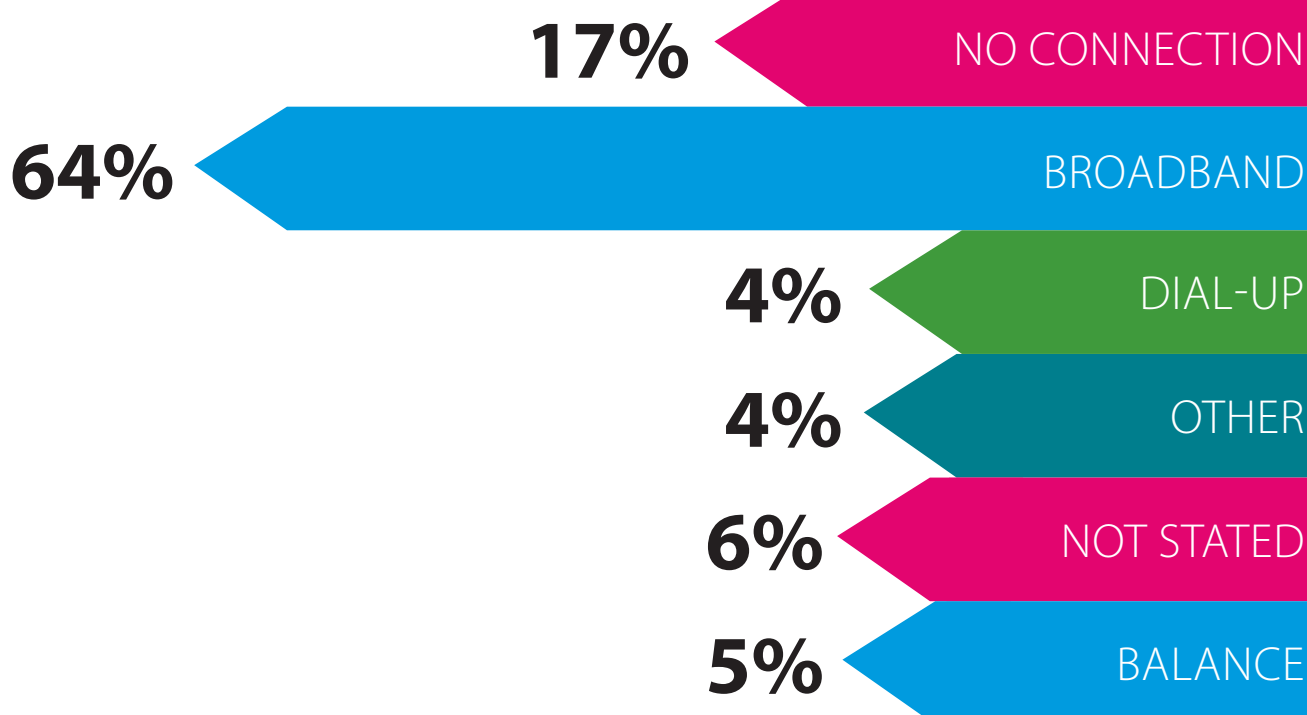


CUSTOMER PROFILE

HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED (Source: Census data)

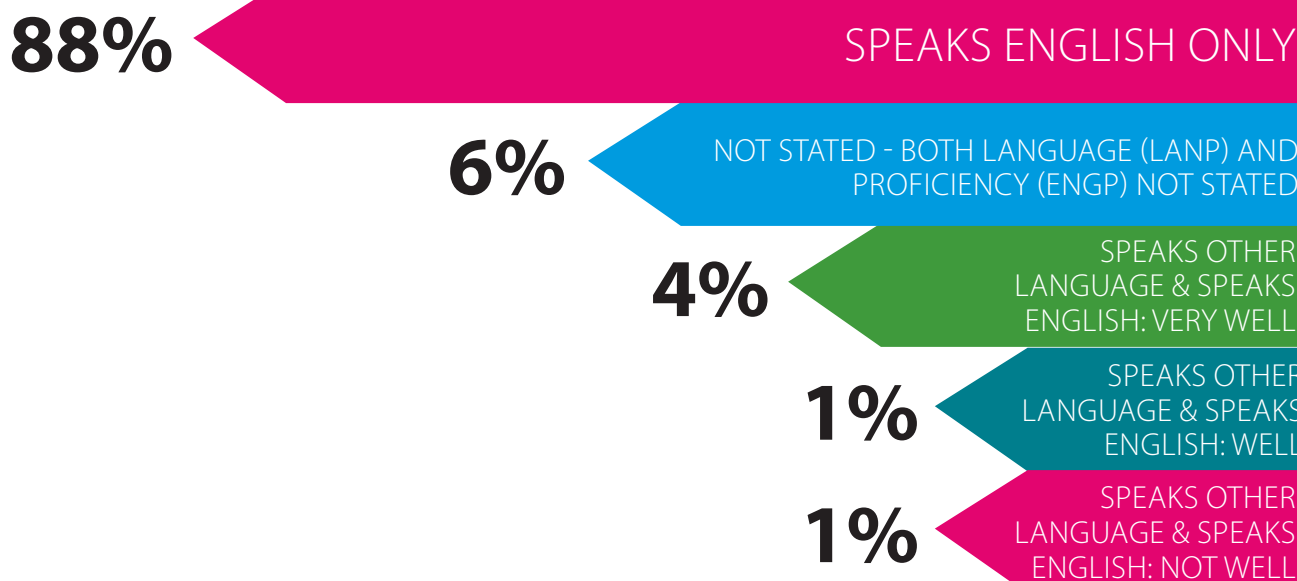


INTERNET ACCESS (Source: Census data)





PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH (Source: Census data)



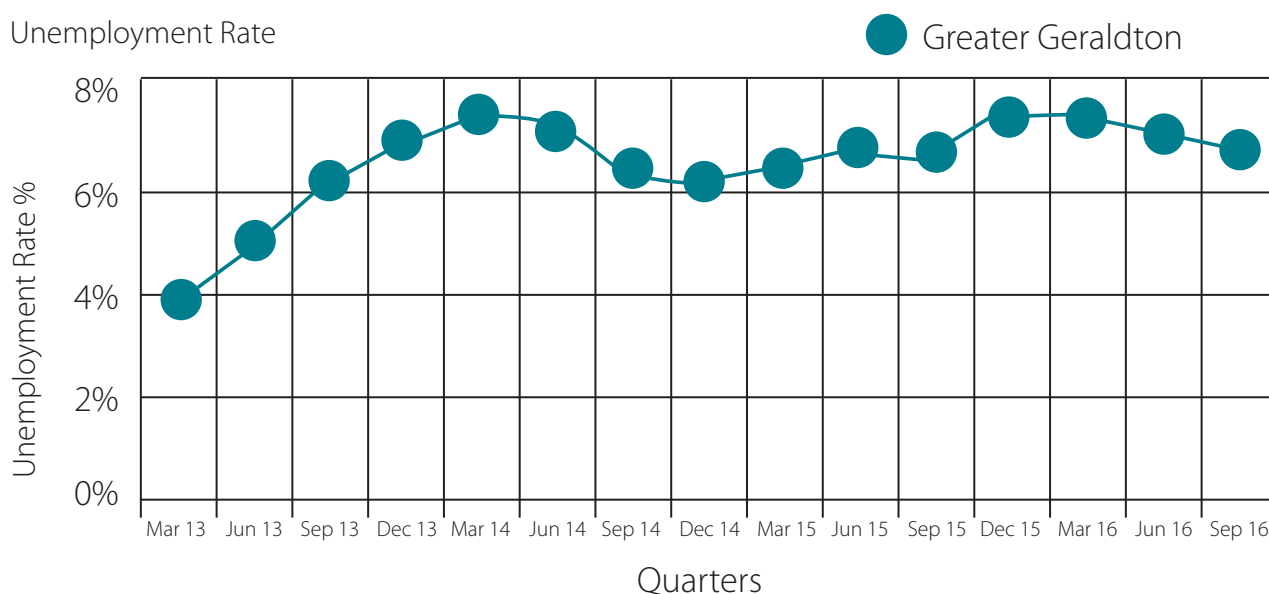
SOCIO ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR AREAS (SEIFA)

Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a suite of indexes that have been created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from social and economic Census information.

A SEIFA low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general. A SEIFA high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general. Across Australia's local government areas SEIFA scores range from 121 (most disadvantaged) to 1,193 (least disadvantaged).

The City of Greater Geraldton (2011 ABS SEIFA score **972** but with Mullewa scoring **941**) has significant socio-economic disadvantage relative to metro Perth (e.g. Canning **1045**, East Fremantle **1106**) – the unemployment chart below shows the trend for the past four years.

Unemployment Rate



Source: Department of Employment Small Area Labour Markets (SALM).
(September Quarter 2016 released December 2016). Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force, Australia, Details, Cat. 5251.0.55.001

WHERE WE ARE NOW

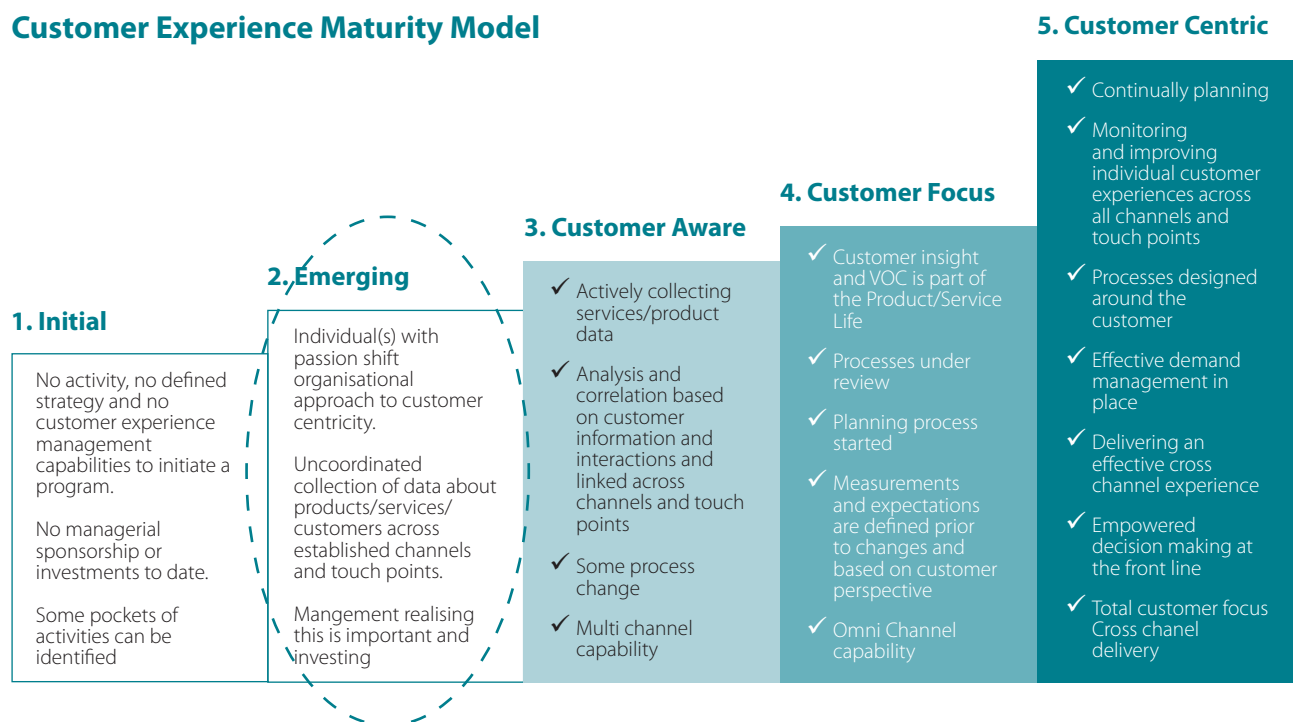
CUSTOMER SERVICE MATURITY

Organisations typically progress through stages of customer focused maturity. This is presented in the diagram below.

The City of Greater Geraldton is currently in an 'emerging' stage, where touchpoints, i.e. where the customer makes contact with the City, are known across the various departments, but generally uncoordinated and inconsistent. Centralising the touchpoints, while ensuring the customer enquiry can be managed at that point of contact is critical to growth in being 'customer aware'. Centralisation of customer touchpoints provides the opportunity for economies of scale, consistency in customer service approach, and visibility of the end to end customer enquiry journey for ongoing improvements. Easy access to, and search for, knowledge to respond to customer enquiries, will be critical to success.

Other touchpoints by city employees with customers exist – such as interactions at libraries and in parks, and the need to provide a consistent customer service approach is necessary. Training across all city employees, customer service statistics, and a common, understood and clearly explained customer service plan to guide those interactions, are the focuses over the next three years.

Customer Experience Maturity Model



CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS



SERVICE
TRUST
ACCOUNTABILITY
RESPECT
SOLIDARITY



The City has participated in the following customer satisfaction reviews;

- Customer Service Benchmarking Australia Mystery Shopping Report Q4, 2014
- Customer Service Benchmarking Australia CMT Benchmarking Report Q4, 2016

Customer Service Benchmarking Australia Mystery Shopping Report 2014

	CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON		COUNCIL SECTOR	SECTOR BENCHMARK
	Apr-Jun 13	Apr-Jun 14	Apr-Jun 14	Apr-Jun 14
Customer Service Grid Scores				
Getting Through	91	82	67	92
Service Delivery	79	78	83	97
Overall Service Index	169	160	150	172
Connect Time (Secs)				
Average Connect Time	11	15	47	7
Greeting Skills %				
Salutation	99	96	91	100
Council/Department Name	99	98	92	100
Agent Name	98	99	98	100
Offer to Help	37	42	61	100
Sign Off	97	97	98	100
Average Greeting Skills	86	86	88	100
Agent Manner %				
Interested / Warm / Attentive	74	74	84	100
Businesslike / Unemotional;	18	23	15	0
Total Acceptable	93	97	98	100
Uninterested / Curt	1	1	1	0
Too Laidback / Easygoing	6	2	1	0
Total Unacceptable	7	3	2	0
Enquiry Resolution Skills %				
Clarified Needs	68	88	91	100
Good Product Clear Resolution	82	88	88	100
Provided Clear Resolution	83	92	93	100
Courteous / Helpful	83	89	94	100
Average Enquiry Resolution Skills	79	89	92	99
Communication Skills %				
Matched Rate of Speech	88	94	95	100
Used Correct Grammar	98	99	100	100
Patient / Tolerant	85	90	93	100
Avoided Interrupting	94	97	97	100
Developed Rapport	71	74	85	100
Maintained Contact	93	91	88	100
Projected Confidence	86	90	92	100
Avoided Slang / Jargon	95	99	99	100
Average Communication Skills	89	92	93	98
Comparison:	3+ Points Better	3+ Points Worse	No Change	

CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE BENCHMARKING

Australia CMT Benchmarking Report 2016

City of Greater Geraldton 2016

61%

Overall Satisfaction
with the entire experience
with the council

City of Greater Geraldton 2016

59%

**First Contact
Resolution**

City of Greater Geraldton 2016

37%

**Net Easy
Score**

Council Average 2016

62%

Council Average 2016

58%

Council Average 2016

41%

FIRST POINT
OF CONTACT

INTERACTING WITH
THE DEPARTMENT

SERVICE
DELIVERY

OVERALL
SATISFACTION

Satisfaction with
Email

59%

CMT Avg 2016
53%

Satisfaction with
Call Centre

71%

CMT Avg 2016
79%

Satisfaction with
Phone

63%

CMT Avg 2016
65%

Satisfaction with
Service Delivery

60%

CMT Avg 2016
69%

Satisfaction
Overall

61%

CMT Avg 2016
62%

Satisfaction with
In Person

40%

CMT Avg 2016
48%



SUMMARY

The customer service survey results are acceptable, however there is room for improvement. The City intends to strive for excellent customer service and to exceed our customers' expectations and this Plan will assist us to do so.

ISSUES

The City receives feedback via Customer Service Benchmarking Australia surveys indicating that 61% of customers are satisfied overall with their city interaction (against an Australian Council average of 62%), however this indicates that 39% are overall dissatisfied and represent opportunities for improvement. This Customer Service Plan is developed to deal with the following key issues identified:

- Customers are often passed around a number of staff before their query is answered;
- Some customer contact is not recorded or performance managed;
- Inconsistent procedures and availability of information exist;
- There is a limited number of channels to access services;
- Existing technology is inadequate for current and future business and customer needs;
- Customer contact points for simple enquiries are high cost; and
- Staff are not supported to answer queries outside their own service area.



CUSTOMER SERVICE TRENDS

The following information explains the current customer service trends globally. We have considered each of these and the likely implications for the City when preparing this plan.

1. TELEPHONE SELF-SERVICE

Whilst telephone self service usage (automated digital or voice activated transactions) is declining, it remains a popular method for simple transactions such as account balances or for obtaining timely information such as power outages and flight timetables. Often this is preferred when online or face to face is unavailable to the customer (e.g. no physical access to computers or wifi). Typical telephone self-service options for local government only offer static real time information relevant to customers without computer or Wi-Fi access, such as unexpected road closures, waste pick-up changes to days or times, event changes due to weather.

2. ONLINE SELF-SERVICE

Supporting the desire for ease of access to information, obtain products and request services, is the increase in online usage and transactions by most age groups, and where internet access is reliable and available. Increasingly this is being accessed by tablet or phone devices although computer access remains strong – so necessitating the usage of technology platforms that apply seamlessly across formats.

The ability to apply, change, amend and pay online for rates, animal registrations, development approvals, parking infringements and other fees is expected by Australian customers, given the prevalence of similar functionality across other industries.

The ability to book halls or parks, renew library books and check out e-books online, and to book and change appointments for inspections is similarly expected given it is commonplace for enquiries as simple as booking a hair appointment or a massage. Of course the ability to search online for relevant information is also expected – with a search engine that is 'Google-like' in its simplicity and intuitive capability.

Under unexpected situations where the community is impacted (such as storms, fire, event cancellations or changes), the city website can present a reliable 'go-to' place for community members to obtain up to date information. The older-fashioned method of using radio broadcast for Council messages is becoming outdated in many regions due to the immediate and easier access to online message capabilities and social media.

3. MULTI-CHANNEL AND OMNI-CHANNEL COMMUNICATION

The Australian consumer is relatively comfortable with a wide range of channels of communication, however many examples exist where companies have offered a wide range only to find that they are not fit for purpose. The failed introduction of video-chat at Toowoomba Regional Council is one example of poorly considered technology introduction with very low take-up rates and poor return on investment due to not understanding customer behaviour.

Most Councils offer a range of communication channels that are targeted to consumer needs including in person, in writing, and by phone, email, web chat, SMS message, digital applications and social media. A lack of integration of information from these channels into back office systems (e.g. payment systems, customer management, library book renewals, hall bookings or ticketing systems) increases workload, error rates, timeframes to take action and reduces the capability for tracking of customer-requested work.



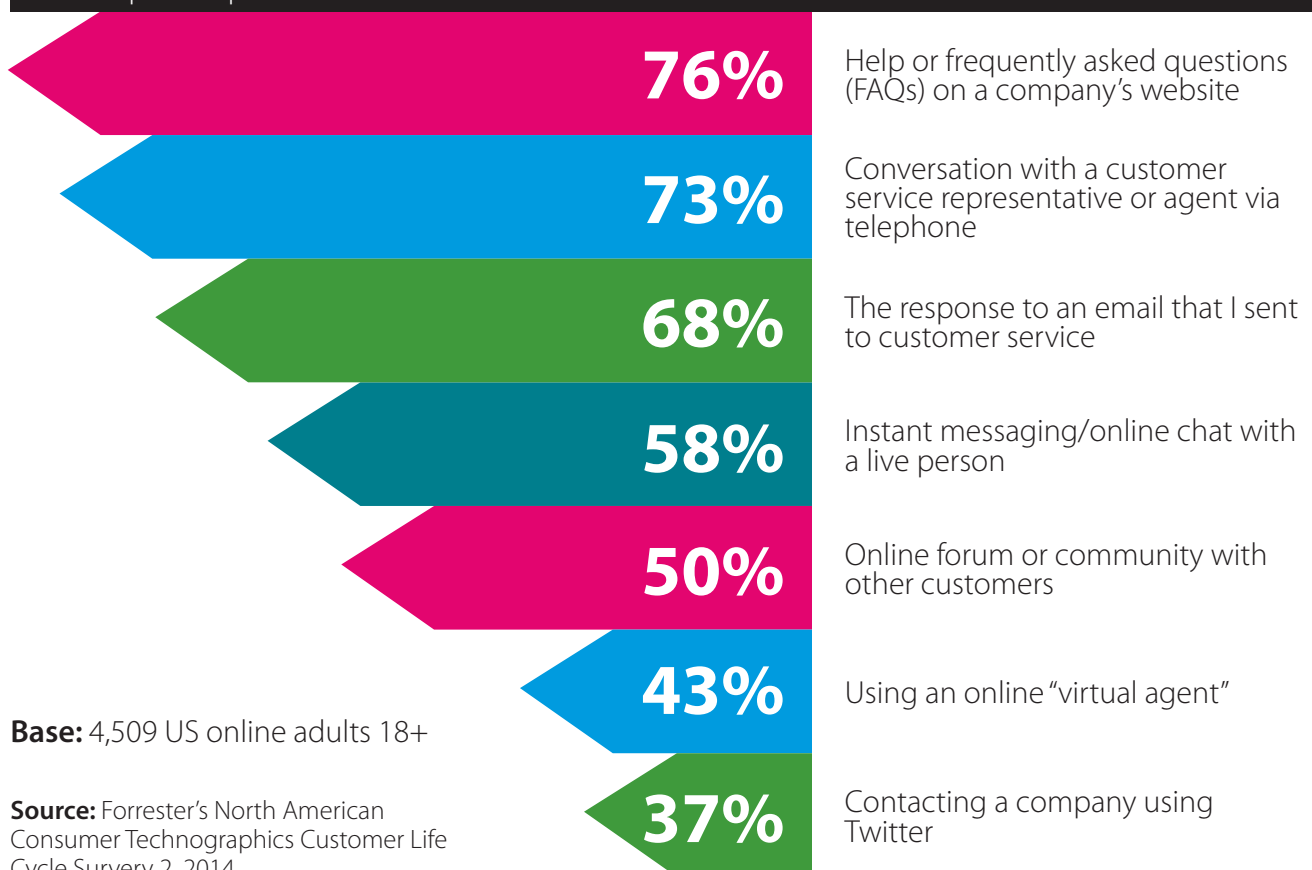
Whilst highly desirable, few companies are currently offering a full omni-channel experience – where activities partially undertaken in one channel are transparent and integrated across other channels. For example, a new application for a dog registration commenced online by a customer could be saved and completed seamlessly over the phone or in person without re-starting the application.

Technology solutions however need to consider this capability which is likely to be common-place in the next 5-10 years.

While the following tabled data is USA based, Australia is typically either similar or further advanced in its acceptability and application of digital channels. Forrester's research is known for its applicability and reliability and therefore presented here. This research replicates many other research that similarly shows the high prevalence of consumers to access multiple channels to solve a single problem or questions.

Figure 2: Consumers Increasingly Use Self-Service Channels for Customer Service

Percent of US online adults who have used the following customer service channels in the past 12 past



Base: 4,509 US online adults 18+

Source: Forrester's North American Consumer Technographics Customer Life Cycle Survey 2, 2014

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRENDS

4. DIGITAL CHANNELS (INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA)

Social channels are increasingly common across all industries / sectors for consumers to self-solve community problems (e.g. transport for events or unexpected conditions) and as an excellent real time voice of the customer – their issues, pain-points, pleasure and surprise are evident in each post – whether that be on Twitter, Facebook or other social media sites.

There are many stories of customers in younger age groups now using digital and social channels in preference to face to face, email or telephone, for two-way interaction with Council. This behaviour moves the focus on digital channels from a one-way viewing (typically marketing related) to a two-way communications focus (typically focused on problem solving).

The real value of social media, which is especially relevant for local government, is how it allows organisations to actively engage with the community.

The City has a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Given the rapid pace of change in this area organisations need to continually review how these channels are utilised to serve customers.

5. MOBILE APPLICATIONS (APPS)

Many customer service vendors offer some mobile service capabilities, but mobile applications remain an afterthought. With high penetration of smartphone accessibility among all Australians, including in the Greater Geraldton area, mobile applications offer great growth opportunity for excellent customer service at a competitive price.

“Snap, Send, Solve” is typical of the expected mobile applications channels customers expect to be able to use to communicate with Council and have their issues and observations handled reliably. With over 600 Australian and NZ authorities using it, this is an easily understood requirement. However manually transferring this data into a ticketing system which then lacks visibility and progress feedback to the customer is an inefficient implementation model.

Customer feedback below (as presented on www.snapsendsolve.com.au), easily demonstrates the value of fast response and progress updates.

Given the customer comfort level with the use of smartphone technology, increasing usage of applications rather than websites to communicate to Council is expected to grow, and the tolerance for website navigation on smartphones is reducing with the advent of purpose built applications and progress updates.

6. WEB-CHAT AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The high volume of website usage as a first point for resolving enquiries and gathering information is expected to remain high in the next 5-10 years. Given its low business cost/contact and ease of access for consumers, the requirement for up to date and easy to search customer information across 24x7 becomes increasingly relevant.

Encouraging customer usage of the website includes keeping customers on that channel of choice. Web-chat is utilised as the optimal method to assist customers on the website.

The challenge for Council is to identify which website points are of highest value to the customer and Council and how can they best be supported by web chat or by additional or better online information.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is an even lower cost of supporting customers online where questions and concerns can be supported through structured automated responses.



7. RESOLUTION & CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Global research is indicating a direct relationship between customer satisfaction with enquiry interaction and resolution of that enquiry.

That is, if an enquiry is not resolved, then it is highly unlikely that the customer would be satisfied with the interaction. On the flip side, where a customer's enquiry is resolved, they are more likely to feel satisfied or neutral about that interaction.

Well established contact centres can achieve very high levels of first call resolution where the customers query is resolved at first point of contact. Customers are searching for easy access to have their enquiries and transactions fulfilled. Ease is also recognised as a key driver of customer loyalty.

8. PROACTIVE AND PRE-EMPTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE ENGAGEMENT

Customer service engagement that relies on customer context, connected device information and predictive intelligence to generate proactive or pre-emptive experiences is emerging.

Predictive outbound communication which notify customers of key events of interest such as flight schedule changes, bank balance changes or the arrival of a bill, are now commonplace.

In Councils, this translates to outbound notification of animal registration renewals, bin pick up days, rates bills, book returns. It also translates to advice of events that may be of interest and community forums.

9. JOURNEY ANALYTICS

It's no surprise that a recent study showed that over 58% of companies inconsistently measure or fail to measure their customer's cross-channel journey.

Broader measurement programs across communication channels and touchpoints will enable understanding of the cost and success of end to end customer journeys and pinpoint areas of pain that can be addressed.

It will also allow the City to derive insights from their customer behaviour which they can use to better personalise experiences. Typically these programs form a part of a program that reviews all key customer touchpoints, gathers data and draws insights, then prioritises areas for improvement.



ATTACHMENT

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY 2017

The City of Greater Geraldton is developing a Customer Service Plan for the City. This survey gives you the opportunity to tell us more about how you would like to communicate with the City so we can improve our customer service to the community.

1. When you contact City of Greater Geraldton, which of the following methods do you use, please tick as many as are applicable to you?

	Always	Sometimes	Never
• Visit The Civic Centre office on Cathedral Avenue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Visit Mullewa District Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• By Telephone: 08 9956 6600 (Civic Centre)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• By Telephone: 08 9956 6643 (Mullewa)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• By Telephone: direct to a specific department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Website: www.cgg.wa.gov.au	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Snap Send Solve App	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Web-chat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Email: council@cgg.wa.gov.au	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Did you know the City has online web-chat (online real-time messaging service) available for customer requests?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Would you consider using this in the future?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. Did you know the City takes payments online now for Building Permit Applications, Debtor Payments Infringements, QPT tickets and Rates.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Would you consider using this in the future?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. Which additional payment services would you most like to have available online? For example online dog and cat registrations, additional bins etc.



5. Did you know the City has a Snap, Send, Solve App for customers to use to report issues and request

Yes ☐

No ☐

Would you consider using this in the future?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6. Many companies now send information to their customers electronically, rather than posting out paper copies. If the City offered this service, would you choose to receive information in this way?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, why not?

7. Would you like to communicate with the City by SMS text message?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, why not?

8. Do you have access to a Smartphone?

Yes ☐

No ☐

9. Do you have access to the internet?

Yes ☐

No ☐

10. If the City offered a self-service kiosk (similar to a bank where you have access to a computer in our office and someone to assist you with your online transaction), is this a service you would use?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, why not?

APPENDICES

11. If you could access personalised information on your council account using a secure account number (similar to banking) would you use this?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, why not?

12. Please enter any additional ideas you have for how the City can improve its customer service in the below space.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender

Male ☐

Female ☐

Age

15-24 ☐

55-64 ☐

25-34 ☐

66-74 ☐

35-44 ☐

75-84 ☐

45-54 ☐

85-94 ☐

95+ ☐

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Are you interested in participating in a half-day workshop to discuss the results of this survey and how they will be used to improve customer service at the City?

A small gift will be provided to each participant.

Yes ☐

No ☐

If you answered yes to the above question please provide us with your contact details.

Contact Name: _____

Email Address: _____

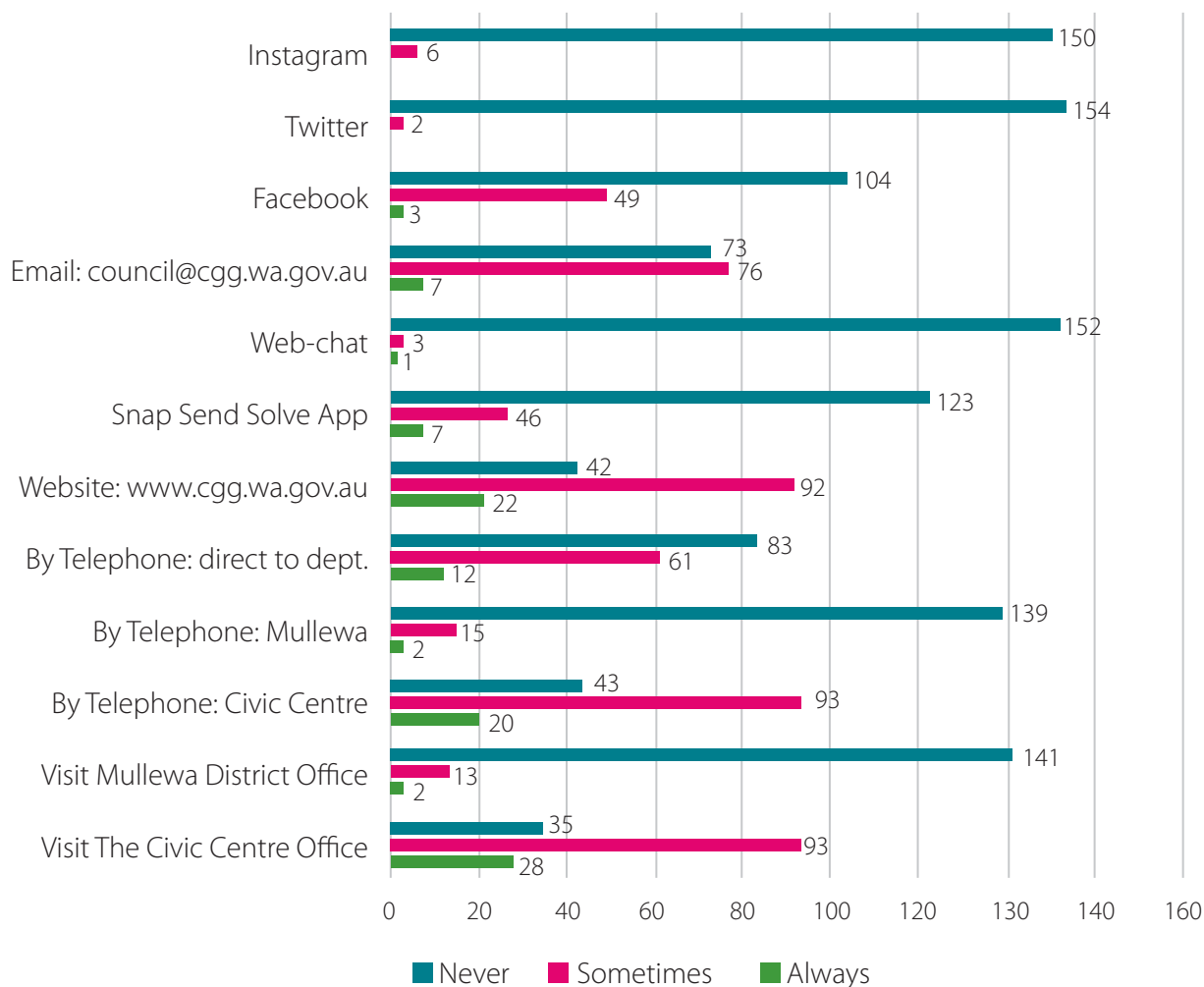
Phone Number: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this customer service survey.

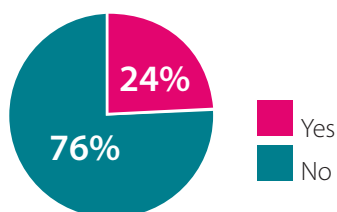


APPENDIX 2

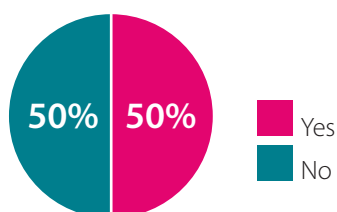
1. When you contact City of Greater Geraldton, which of the following methods do you use, please tick as many as are applicable to you?



2. Did you know the City has online web-chat (online real-time messaging service) available for customer requests?

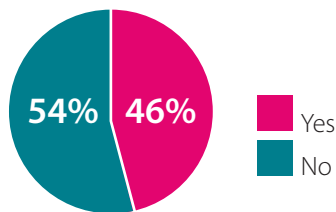


Would you consider using this in the future?

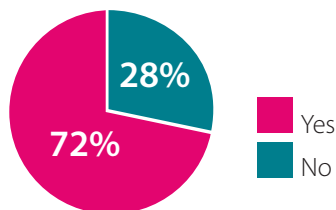


APPENDICES

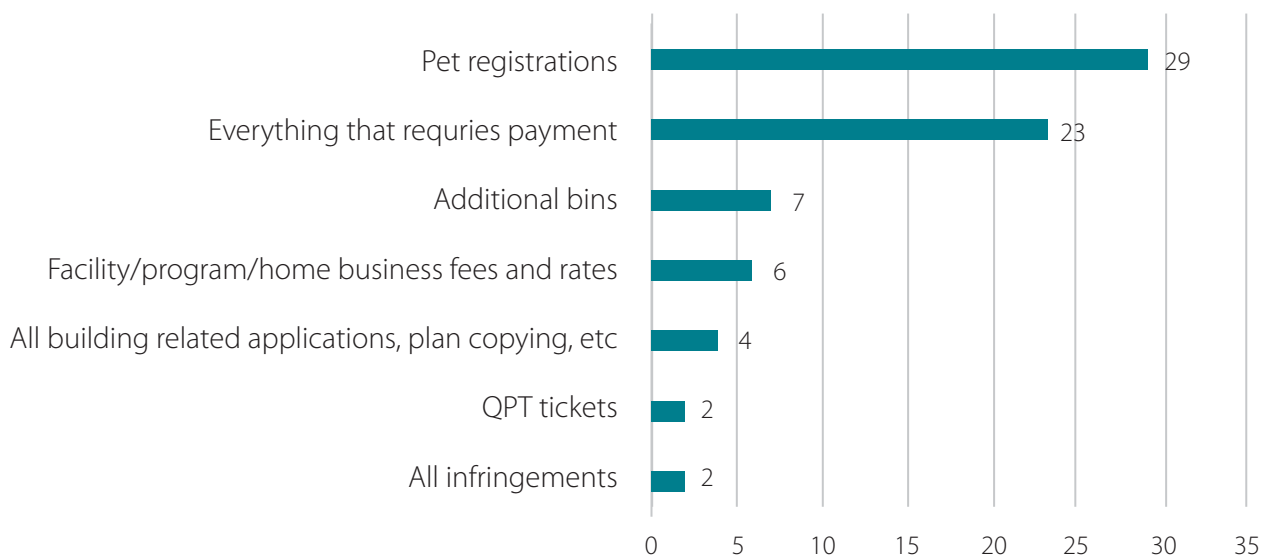
3. Did you know the City takes payments online now for Building Permit Applications, Debtor Payments, Infringements, QPT tickets and Rates?



Would you consider using this in the future?

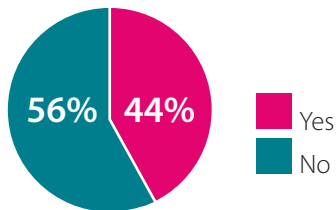


4. Which additional payment services would you most like to have available online?
For example online dog and cat registrations, additional bins etc.

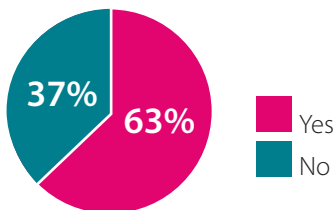




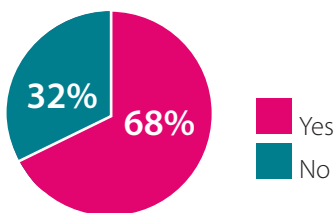
5. Did you know the City has a Snap, Send, Solve App for customers to use to report issues and request services?



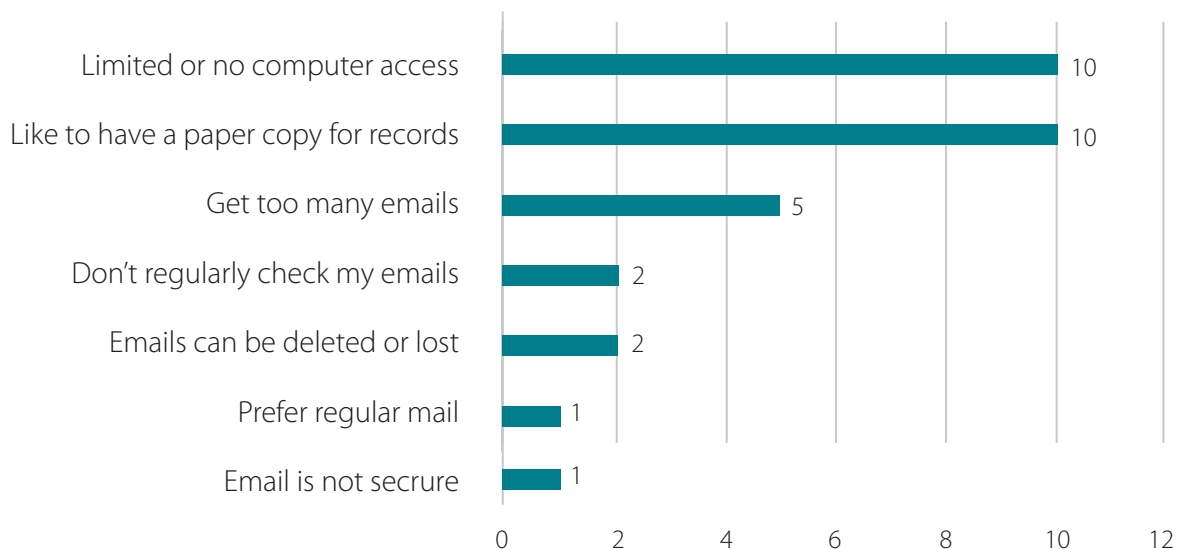
Would you consider using this in the future?



6. Many companies now send information to their customers electronically, rather than posting out paper copies. If the City offered this service, would you choose to receive information in this way?

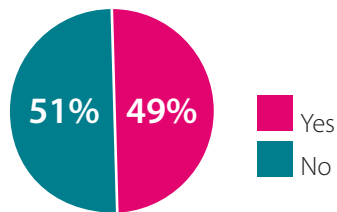


If no, why not?

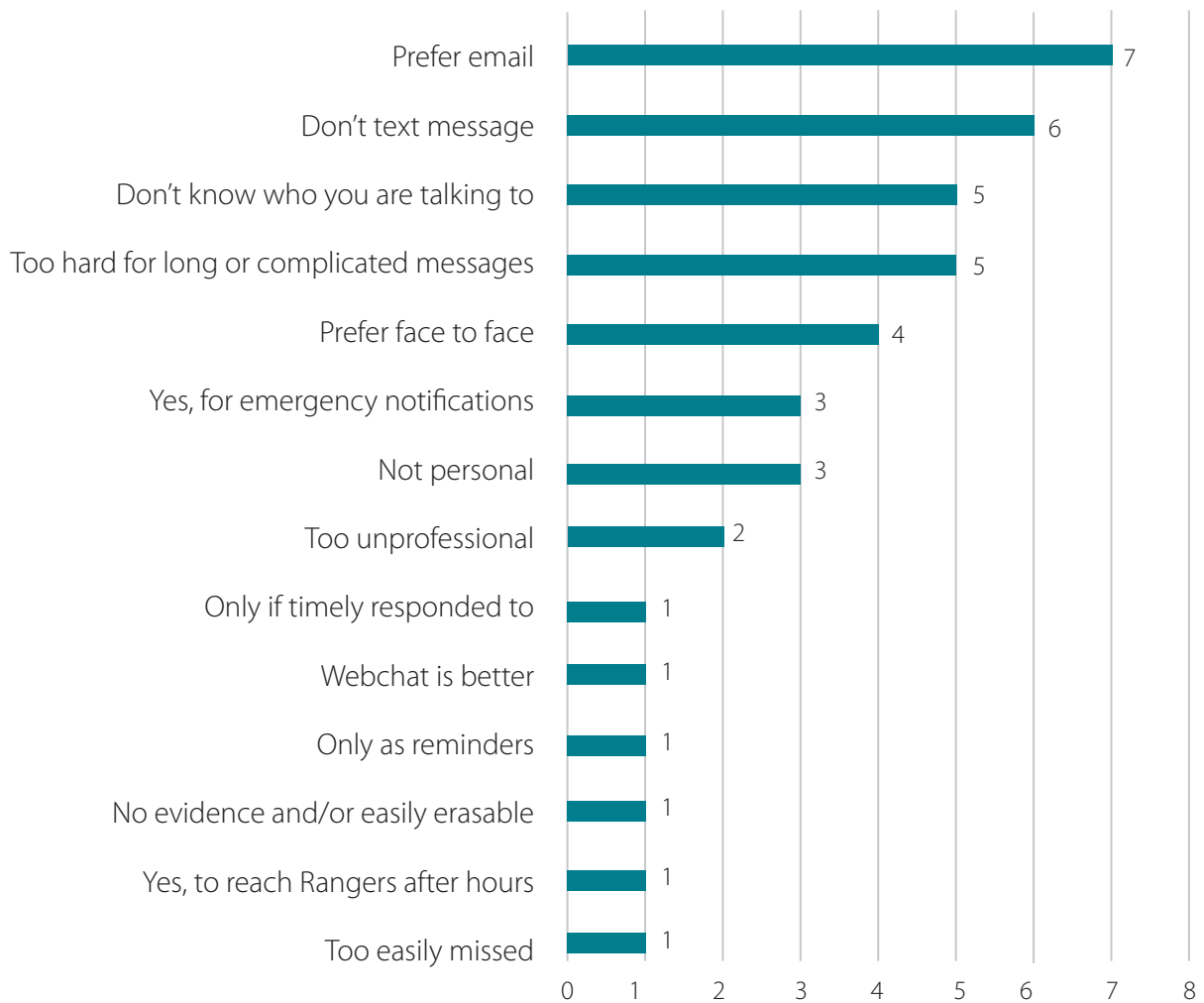


APPENDICES

7. Would you like to communicate with the City by SMS text message?

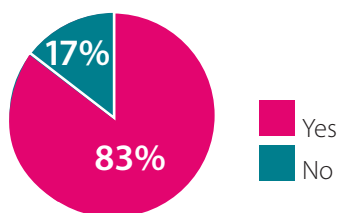


If no, why not?

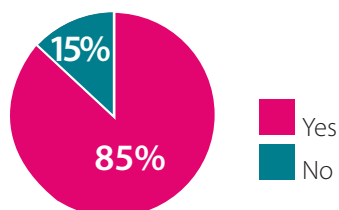




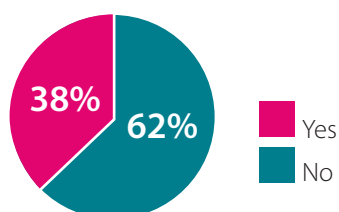
8. Do you have access to a Smartphone?



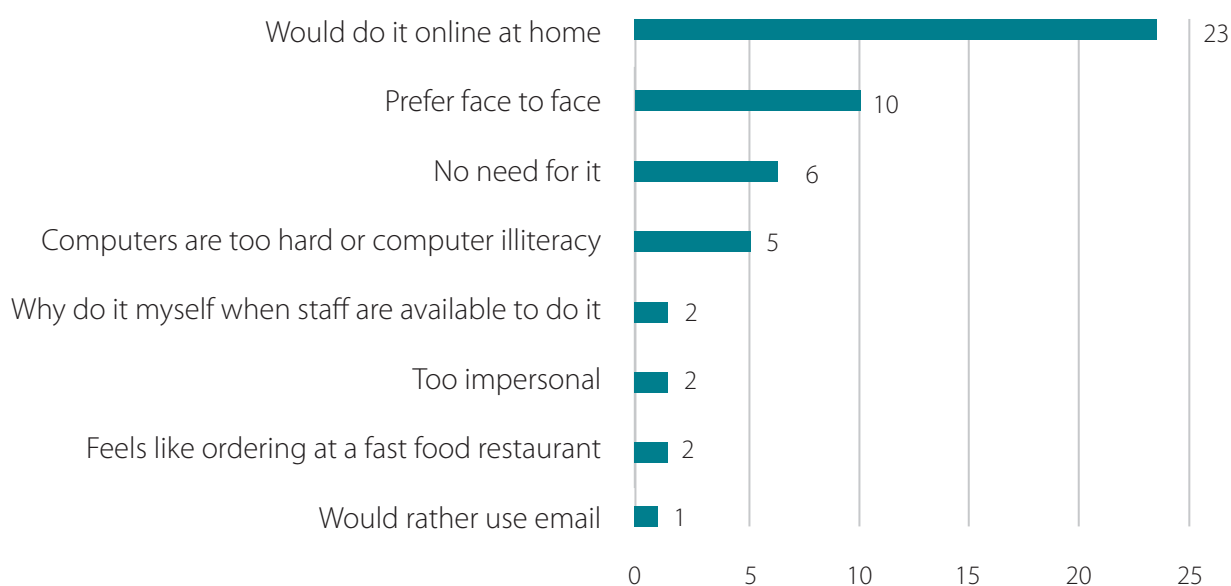
9. Do you have access to the internet?



10. If the City offered a self-service kiosk (similar to a bank where you have access to a computer in our office and someone to assist you with your online transaction), is this a service you would use?

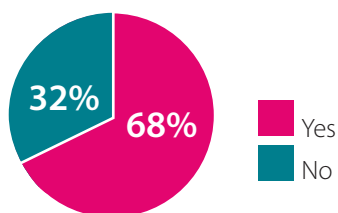


If no, why not?

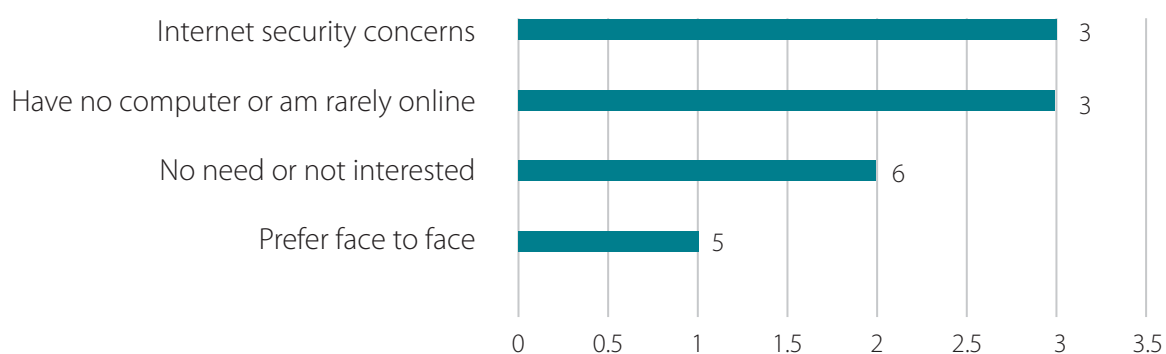


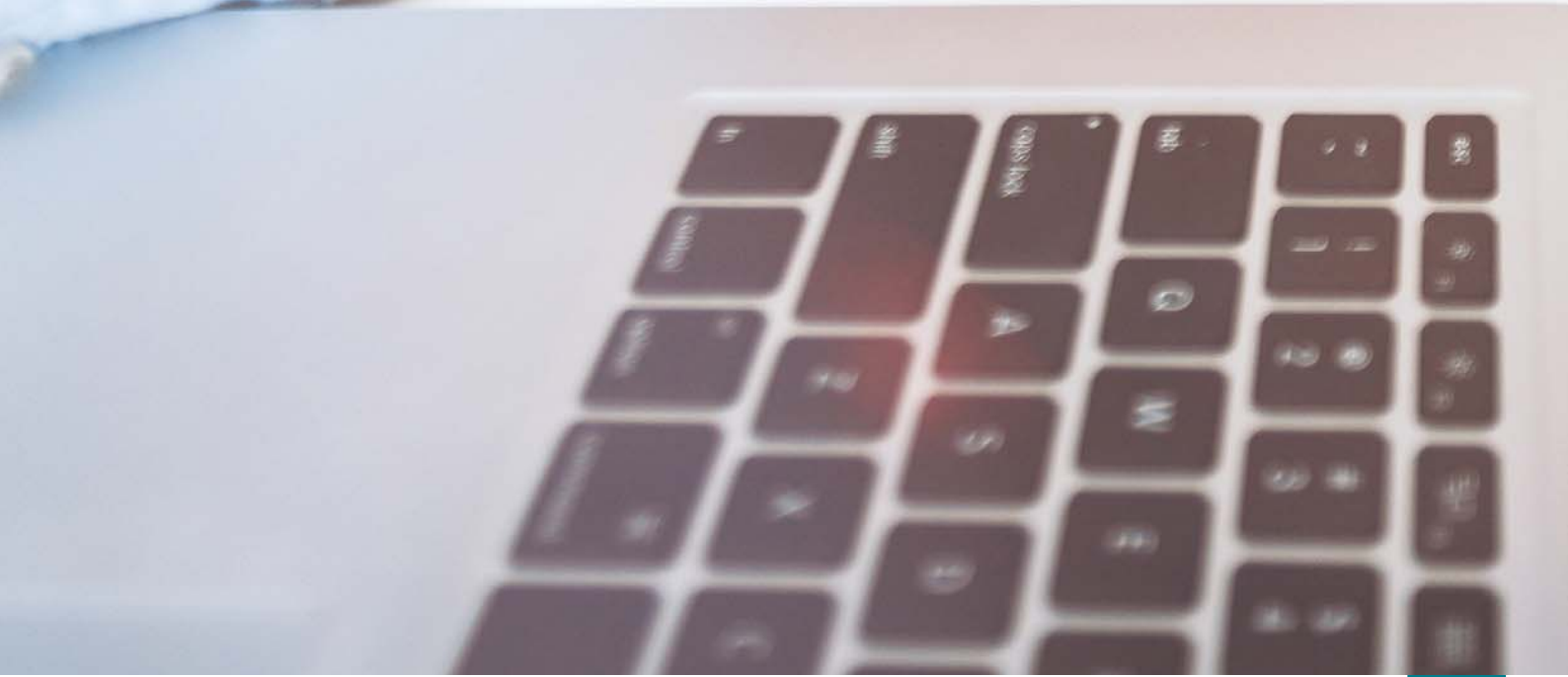
APPENDICES

11. If you could access personalised information on your council account using a secure account number (similar to banking) would you use this?



If no, why not?





**GERALDTON:**

City of Greater Geraldton Administration Centre
63 Cathedral Avenue
Geraldton WA 6530
Phone: 08 9956 6600 | Fax: 08 9956 6674
council@cgg.wa.gov.au

MULLEWA:

Mullewa District Office
Corner of Thomas and Padbury Streets
Mullewa WA 6630
Phone: 08 9956 6643 | Fax: 08 9961 1206
council@cgg.wa.gov.au

