

MONITORING SERVICES

CITIZEN REQUEST

INVESTIGATION GUIDELINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	PURPOSE.....	1
2.0	COUNCIL'S CITIZEN REQUEST MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM	2
3.0	GUIDELINE.....	3
	3.1 General Principles	3
	3.2 Responding to Requests	3
	3.3 Investigation.....	4
	3.3.1 Investigation Techniques/Methods	6
	3.3.1.1 Benefits of Contact With the Citizen	6
	3.3.1.2 Research Records	6
	3.3.1.3 Site Visit.....	6
	3.3.2 Choosing Options After An Investigation.....	7
	3.4 Follow-Up	10
	3.5 Confidentiality for Citizens Making Requests.....	10
	3.6 Interpreters.....	10
4.0	DEFINITIONS	12
5.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	13
6.0	ATTACHMENTS.....	14
	Attachment 1: The Associated CRM/MERIT Timeframes.....	14
	Attachment 2: MERIT Citizen Acknowledgment Letter for <i>Monitoring Services</i>	15

1.0 PURPOSE

Councils have a clear obligation to properly record and consider all reports and requests about *unlawful activity*. An effective request handling system is also a good risk management practice. Failing to deal adequately with requests may expose a council to claims for compensation and the expense of litigation.

For the purposes of these guidelines, '*unlawful activity*' is any activity or work that has been or is being carried out:

- contrary to the terms or conditions of a development consent, approval, permission or licence;
- without a development consent, approval, permission or licence and includes unauthorised works and uses;
- contrary to any Marrickville Council policy, guideline OR code that regulates the activities or work that can be carried out in the Council area;
- contrary to a legislative provision regulating a particular activity or work; or
- contrary to the laws of New South Wales in which Council is a regulatory authority.

This guideline also provides general information to assist Council's Officers and in particular Monitoring Service Section staff to fully understand Council's Citizen Request Management (CRM) system and how they need to use the CRM system to ensure Council delivers the best and most consistent service to its citizens.

This guideline is not intended to be a comprehensive investigation manual but provide an overview of the key elements of an investigation.

2.0 COUNCIL'S CITIZEN REQUEST MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM

The Citizen Request Management (CRM) System is a purpose built software package developed/introduced to manage the thousands of requests that Council receives every year. The current system commenced in September 2005 and is generically known within the organisation as either CRM or Merit (after the company that developed the software).

Monitoring Services receives an average of 8,000 requests a year and is represented in two areas within the CRM system. These areas are Ranger Services and Monitoring Services. Ranger Services generally deals with abandoned vehicles, companion animals, parking and usage of Council's public domain. Monitoring Services generally deals with planning, building, health and environmental issues, primarily within the private domain.

The CRM system enables timeframes to be associated with different types of requests. The benefits of timeframes are:

- they give an indication to citizens of the general time to commence an investigation;
- they enable officers to prioritise their work; and
- they give the organisation an indication or measure of a section's performance and what resources may be required to meet the community's reasonable expectations.

The CRM system has been set-up so that Monitoring Services Section requests are initially placed in either the ranger or monitoring allocator, which is dependent on the request type. The associated timeframes are listed in **Attachment 1**.

The principle behind the allocator is that a request remains in the allocator until it is re-allocated to an officer on a *first in, first out* basis (excluding urgent and life threatening requests).

The request is re-allocated to an officer in strict chronological order when that officer is in a position to commence an investigation. The investigation commences within five (5) calendar days from the re-allocation. The investigation is technically deemed to have commenced when the request is re-allocated to an officer.

The officers are responsible for reviewing the allocator on a regular basis for requests they are responsible for investigating.

The use of the allocator in this way enables officers to control their work volume, maintain a manageable workload and provide sufficient time and resources for each request.

When a new CRM request is created, an acknowledgement letter is automatically generated and sent to the citizen. A copy of the acknowledgement letter sent by Monitoring Services can be seen in **Attachment 2**.

Citizen Service Officers perform an integral role in the system by providing and relaying CRM request information to citizens. Accurate/up-to-date officer investigation notes are imperative and allow all users to view the progress or the result of an investigation and avoid unnecessary delays to the citizen and interruption for investigating officer by Citizen Services having to contact them for a status update,

There is a procedure which expands on the CRM system and guides the user through the process of creating and maintaining a CRM request. The procedure can be found on Council's Corporate Information Intranet site under:

[Staff Resources/Computer Tips/Training Manuals/Using Merit CRM](#)

3.0 GUIDELINE

This guideline is directed at the regulation of activities that fall within the sphere of Monitoring Services. This includes (but is not limited to) development activity, pollution control, regulation of health issues, companion animal issues and regulation of the usage of Council's public domain.

This guideline is not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive investigation manual but provide an overview of the key elements of an investigation. The majority of requests received by Council are relatively simple and routine however can be managed effectively by following this guide.

Where a procedure/guideline already exists for a particular activity, the officer will generally reference both procedures/guidelines. However, if a variation exists between the procedures/guidelines, the procedure/guideline specific to the activity will then hold precedence.

Requests that require an extensive investigation are referred to the Team Leader or Manager to determine an appropriate course of action if a procedure/guideline does not already exist for that particular issue.

3.1 General Principles

- *Proportionality*: ...taking action that is reasonable and relates directly to the actual breach.
- *Consistency*:ensuring that similar issues are dealt with in the same way.
- *Transparency*:ensuring that what we do and why we do it is easily understood and accessible.
- *Helpfulness*:working with businesses or individuals to achieve compliance with the law by being approachable, courteous and efficient.
- *Openness*:by being open about the way we go about doing things.
- *Prioritising*:making sure that resources are targeted primarily to those whose activities give rise to the most serious risk.

3.2 Responding to Requests

All citizens who lodge Monitoring Service requests on Council's CRM system are sent an acknowledgement letter within two (2) working days.

An investigation is aimed to commence within the following time frames:

- Urgent and life threatening matters are investigated as soon as possible following receipt of the request. This means either on the day received or the following day depending on the time the request is received. Examples include: unsafe building works, collapsed buildings, roaming animals and dog attacks, sewage discharges and large scale irreparable environment damage.
- All other requests are generally commenced within the timeframe outlined in **Attachment 1**.
- An emergency out of hours request service is also available and provided by Rangers Services. The type of requests that fall within the definition of '*emergency*' are unsafe buildings (immediate danger to the public) and large scale irreparable environment damage.

The Monitoring Services and Ranger Services officers must ensure that each request which they are responsible for is dealt with promptly and accurately. The officers must place notes on each request as soon as practicable to provide accurate and sufficient details on the

progress of the investigation, as well as justifying any outcome. By doing this, it will enable others to be made aware of the status of each request.

When the officer investigating the request commences the investigation, the citizen who lodged the request is contacted by telephone or visited on-site and advised of such. The officer also gives the citizen an indication of the likely investigation method, an approximate timeframe for the investigation and discuss the citizen's preferred method of contact.

Contact with the citizen and a summary of the information given to the citizen is to be recorded in the associated CRM within five (5) working days of contact with the citizen.

If the citizen requests information to be provided in writing, the investigating officer is to comply with that request within an agreed timeframe with the citizen or three (3) weeks, whichever is the lesser.

Officers should keep in mind that unforeseen circumstances can often affect the timeframes given to citizens. Citizens need to be advised of this at the outset and during an investigation if timelines/expectations for updates are not likely to be met.

The following is an excerpt from the NSW Ombudsman's Enforcement Guidelines for Councils June 2002 on *Managing Expectations*, that Council officers should follow when responding to a request.

Appendix C: Tips for managing complainants

NSW Ombudsman 61

1 Managing expectations

It is important to make sure that a complainant's expectations are realistic. If a complainant develops unrealistically high expectations, they usually end up being dissatisfied.

At the outset, explain to the complainant that council's objectives are to:

- maintain the integrity of the local natural and built environment
- serve the public interest
- give fair and impartial consideration to their complaint.

If your capacity to investigate or take action is restricted by any legal or resource limitations, explain this to the complainant. Make sure you ask the complainant to outline their expectations. If these seem unrealistic, this should be made clear to the complainant at the start of and during the investigation.

3.3 Investigation

All requests will be investigated, unless:

- the matter has already been actioned/completed and resolved; or
- the Council has no jurisdiction (eg a Scheduled Premises under the POEO Act, dividing fence matters and/or other issues deemed to be a civil matter); or
- the activity is determined to be lawful without an investigation; or
- the officer finds the request to be *frivolous*, *vexatious* or *trivial* in nature; or
- a private principal certifying authority (PCA) is responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions of the development consent, however, *Council will investigate matters where:*
 - (a) *the PCA fails or is unable to appropriately action a matter or where it is in the public interest to do so; or*
 - (b) *the PCA has taken all the action available under the legislation, but the offence continues or re-occurs despite that action; or*
 - (c) *where the request/enquiry relates to Council's property; and/or*
 - (d) *request/enquiry relates to an environmental pollution incident.*

If a decision is made not to investigate a request, the decision must be recorded with clear reasons (reflecting one of the above circumstances) why it was not investigated. The citizen must then be notified by the investigating officer. The decision and the subsequent advice to the citizen must be recorded in the associated CRM.

The exception to this rule is that if the investigating officer thinks that the citizen should not be contacted, then the investigating officer must then discuss this with their Team Leader. Such grounds may include, but are not limited to:

Unreasonable persistence, eg:

- Persisting with a complaint even though it has been comprehensively considered by Council, and even where all avenues of internal review have been exhausted.
- Reframing a complaint in an attempt to get it taken up again.
- Showing an inability to accept the final decision.
- Persisting in interpreting the law or policy in a way that is not in accordance with generally accepted or expert views on the issue and insisting that action be taken accordingly.

Unreasonable demands, eg:

- Insisting on outcomes that are unattainable (eg demanding outcomes that are beyond Council's power to deliver; demanding unreasonable outcomes; wanting to turn back time; unreasonable prosecution of individuals).
- Demanding an apology and/or compensation when no reasonable basis for expecting such outcomes exists.
- Issuing instructions and making demands as to how a complaint should be handled.
- Making unreasonable resource demands, expecting resources in excess of or out of proportion to the seriousness of issue.
- Moving the goal posts – changing the desired outcome.

Unreasonable lack of co-operation, eg:

- Changing the complaint, raising new issues in the process of Council's consideration of it.
- Displaying unhelpful behaviour (eg withholding information; dishonesty, misquoting others; swamping Council with documents).

Unreasonable arguments, eg:

- Holding irrational beliefs (eg seeing cause and effect links where there are clearly none).
- Insisting that a particular solution is the only correct one in the face of valid contrary or alternative arguments.
- Insisting on the overwhelming importance of an issue that is clearly trivial.

Unreasonable behaviours, eg

- Displaying confronting behaviour (eg rudeness, aggression, threats).
- Sending rude, confronting, threatening letters.

*Taken from Practice Note No. 9 – Complaints Management in Councils
(a joint publication by the NSW Ombudsman and the Department of Local Government)*

3.3.1 Investigation Techniques/Methods

3.3.1.1 Benefits of Contact With the Citizen

Generally an investigation commences through either contact with the citizen that raised the concern or a site inspection.

The benefit of contacting the citizen will enable the Council Officer to determine exactly what the issues are, how it affects them, time or length of occurrence/s, whether any other citizens are affected and have they approached the subject directly and discussed their concerns prior to asking Council for assistance .

3.3.1.2 Research Records

Current and historical information obtained from Council records can be invaluable in most investigations. Information sources include property, development and building files (both paper and electronic) and information from Merit, Proclaim (Council's property management database), Exponare (Council's map information database) and DLG companion animals register. For example, research may reveal the following information about both the citizen and the subject premises:

- previous dealings with Council on similar issues;
- plans and photographs of existing structures; and
- conditions of consent.

3.3.1.3 Site Visit

All investigations will require at least one site visit. Ideally this site visit will include both the subject and citizen's premises or the location of the unlawful activity.

The officer's first task is to access the subject premises or location to view and or experience the citizen's concerns. Obtaining the co-operation of the occupant/s of the subject premises is paramount and will hasten any investigation. Information gained at a site visit is invaluable. This information can include the officer viewing the unlawful activity and better understanding the possible negative impacts; taking photographs that help the officer explain the issue/s and; obtaining any information (photographs, maps, plans etc) that citizens, neighbours and/or witnesses may provide.

If access is not available to the subject premises, the officer should attempt to view the subject premises from the citizen's premises or any vantage point (public place and/or private premises with the permission of the occupant) that enables the officer to view or experience the issue raised.

There are always two or more sides to any situation and it is the officer's task to canvass them all. This means the officer will need to talk with as many people as needed for the officer to form a balanced understanding. The officer needs to remain impartial and ensure that objective decisions are made.

If the investigating officer is unable to understand the concern/s of the citizen after they have viewed and/or experienced the issue at the site, the officer must speak with the citizen to clarify the matter.

The following is an excerpt from the NSW Ombudsman's Enforcement Guidelines for Councils June 2002 on *Doing Site Inspections* and *Good Record Keeping* that Council officers should follow when investigating a request.

Appendix B: Tips on conducting enforcement investigations complainants

Doing site inspections

8.1 Good preparation

Good preparation is very important. Consider carefully what you need to know before you visit the site. For example, you should be familiar with any relevant conditions of consent or licence conditions, the relevant legislation that may have been breached and the legislation under which any formal enforcement action may be taken.

You will need to make notes to support judgements on key issues like impact on amenity.

8.2 Good record keeping

It is extremely important to keep good clear records of site inspections. Your notes should include:

- The time and date of the inspection.
- Precise details of where you went, what you saw and who you spoke to.
- What other information you obtained, including a record of any photographs taken, documents or other physical evidence obtained.

Do not take too long to make this record. Accuracy is very important and the longer you leave it, the more scope there is for inaccuracy.

All site notes are to be recorded on the relevant CRM within five (5) working days.

During the course of an investigation, if the officer believes formal interviews or statements are necessary for the possible use in legal proceedings, the officer is to first discuss this with the Team Leader or Manager if a procedure/guideline does not already exist for that particular issue.

3.3.2 Choosing Options After An Investigation

There are a range of possible outcomes at the conclusion of an investigation.

There are a number of alternate approaches (that can be used in conjunction) which should be considered. For example, the officer could decide to:

- refer to an external agency for further investigation due to their particular expertise (eg WorkCover);
- take no action on the basis of a lack of evidence or it's not a matter that falls within Council's jurisdiction or some other appropriate reason that must be documented (eg a technical breach has been identified but no amenity impact is substantiated. The officer uses their discretion to take no action);
- counsel the responsible person/s to educate them on the relevant Council requirements (eg permissible building work hours);
- negotiate with the responsible person/s and obtain some undertakings to address the issues of concern arising from the investigation (eg allow person adequate time to submit a Building Certificate application to address minor illegal building work);
- issue a letter requiring work to be done or activity to cease in lieu of more formal action (eg letter to owner requiring an unauthorised residential use of a factory premises to cease within twenty-eight (28) days, or penalty infringement notices to be issued);
- issue a notice of intention to serve an order or notice under the relevant legislation and then serve an appropriate order or notice (Local Government Act [LG Act] ss.124-128; Environmental Planning and Assessment Act [EPA Act] s.121B; Companion Animals Act etc); or
- issue a notice requiring work to be done under various/appropriate legislation.

Typically, the officer will decide whether or not to pursue formal legal action. This may be as a result of a more moderate approach being ignored or that it is appropriate to proceed directly to a legal solution. For example, the officer could decide to:

- issue a penalty infringement notice;
- take proceedings in the Land and Environment Court for an order to remedy or restrain a breach of the relevant Act or Regulation (s.673 LG Act, s.123 EPA Act);
- seek injunctions from the Land and Environment Court or the Supreme Court;
- issue a summons in the local court; or
- take proceedings for an offence against the relevant Act or Regulation (s.691 LG Act, s.125 EPA Act, cl.5 POEO Act, Companion Animal Act etc).

The options will differ where different pieces of legislation are used, but the principles of application (natural justice) should remain constant.

Whilst these approaches recognise that Council may use discretion in the process, Council is also obliged to uphold the law, including compliance with relevant administrative law principles (eg acting fairly and equitably), and acting in the greater public interest.

Where appropriate, a measured approach to ensure compliance will be adopted in the first instance. Businesses and individuals will be given the opportunity to discuss and work towards remedying the non-compliance before formal action is taken, unless immediate action is required.

In choosing the option or a range of options to remedy non compliance an officer must consider the following:

- **Could the unlawful activity be carried out lawfully if development consent or an exemption from development consent was sought?**
In these circumstances, Council will be less inclined to proceed with legal action especially if an owner actively and positively attempts to resolve the situation.
- **Are the breaches technical or inconsequential in nature with no aggravating circumstances?**
Consideration will be given to the material implications that the breach might have on the interest of any party, as well as any detrimental affect on the amenity of the area or the environment in general.
- **Could the non-compliance be easily remedied by some action on the part of the person/s responsible?**
In general, Council will attempt to ensure compliance by informal means. However, there is a need to balance the public interest in enforcing the law wherever possible to solve the non-compliance at a reasonable cost.
- **Has the unlawful activity created a health, safety or environmental hazard?**
Consideration should be given to the degree of detriment or risk to a person/s health and safety and the environment.
- **Are the unlawful activities or works carried out on a heritage item and did they adversely affect the heritage significance?**
In most cases, Council's Heritage Adviser will be consulted in assessing the detriment to the natural or built environment.

- **Would it be in the public interest?**
Some of the issues that should be considered are:
 - Has the unlawful activity justifiably affected a significant number of people?
 - Would enforcement action impact unreasonably on certain population groups, particularly disadvantaged or marginalised groups?
 - Are there any genuine and justified circumstances of hardship affecting both the citizen and the person or corporation subject to the complaint?

- **How long has the unlawful activity been occurring and is enforcement action statute barred?**
A time limit might or existing use rights might apply that prevents Council from taking legal action.

- **Have previous warnings been issued?**
If the investigation reveals that a previous warning has been issued and the non compliance is not resolved, a more formal approach may be more appropriate.

- **Has the person responsible been educated about Council policy and unlawful activity? (that is, did the person know their actions were unlawful?)**
When deciding whether to take an educative approach, consideration will be given to issues such as the level of contrition shown by the subject of the request, whether they have previously been warned as a result of this or similar behaviour, and the level of intent shown.

- **Are the costs of enforcing likely to be prohibitive for the nature of the offence?**
Consideration should be given to the relative costs and benefits of taking formal enforcement action as opposed to taking no action or taking informal action. Council's action should be commensurate with the seriousness of the *'breach'*.

- **Is the condition of development consent not being complied with unreasonable or ambiguous?**
A condition of consent that is unreasonable or ambiguous can be unenforceable.

- **Would a draft local environmental plan or amendment make the unlawful activity or work legal in future?**
If there is a draft LEP that would make the unauthorised use legal, consideration should be given to deferring any enforcement action.

- **Is there any doubt over the evidence or the offence?**
Consideration should be given to whether the collected evidence clearly identifies an actual breach. Council should not take untimely or unwarranted action.

- **What are the chances of a success if challenged?**
Council should consider the likelihood of a successful appeal or court challenge against the proposed enforcement action.

- **Has the person or company who carried out the unlawful activity had an opportunity to provide representations or submissions on the matters?**
Council should consider all elements pertaining to the circumstances of the case leading to the non-compliance. If the process is being used as a delaying action or there has been a blatant attempt to break the law, appropriate enforcement action will be instigated without delay. If it is

determined that enforcement action is required, it will be taken in accordance with existing procedures and legislative processes. In taking enforcement action, Council must recognise that the statutory process also provides avenues for representation and appeal and thereby natural justice principles will still be observed.

3.4 Follow-Up

At the conclusion of the investigation and when the officer has determined what action/s if any will be taken, the officer will contact (telephone is acceptable) the citizen who raised the request and advise them of the outcome. If the citizen requests advice in writing, the officer should comply with the request.

If the citizen's telephone number is not known or the officer is unable to reach them, the officer is to advise them of the outcome in writing.

If there are no contact details, a response is not required.

The conclusion reached and the advice to the citizen (or otherwise) will be documented by the investigating officer on the associated CRM.

The request will only be finalised when the officer has resolved the issue or is satisfied that the criteria in Section 3.3 has been met.

3.5 Confidentiality for Citizens Making Requests

Officers are not under any circumstances to reveal details of citizens who have lodged a request or complaint with Council.

It is acknowledged that in some instances it may be obvious who the citizen is by the nature of the request. The person who is the subject of the investigation may suspect this and ask the Council officer. The Council officer cannot confirm these suspicions in any way.

Council recognises that some regulatory breaches can only be effectively identified through complaints, and the benefit of having the identity of a complainant known to Council enables the complaint to be properly investigated. Accordingly, Council endorses the protection of citizens who provide Council with information relating to law enforcement and public safety and acknowledges the benefit of maintaining confidentiality of complainants to the integrity of the complaint handling process.

Council officers are committed to the protection of confidentiality of complainants, however, it is acknowledged that in some instances, the nature of the complaint leads the subject of the investigation to suspect the identity of the complainant. In investigating complaints, Council officers will not disclose the name or source of a complaint relating to law enforcement or public safety unless authorised by the complainant.

3.6 Interpreters

English

If you would like help with any information in this publication, please come to Marrickville Council's Citizens' Service Centre at 2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham, or phone 9335 2222. The Translator Interpreter Service is also available.

Arabic

إذا رغبت في مساعدتنا بأية معلومات في هذه المجلة، فمرحبا بك في مركز خدمة الجمهور التابع لمجلس مدينة مارريكفيل (Marrickville Council's Citizens' Service Centre) الواقع في 2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham أو الاتصال بنا هاتفيا على الرقم 9335 2087. خدمات الترجمة الفورية متاحة للمتصلين.

Greek

Αν επιθυμείτε περισσότερη βοήθεια με οποιοσδήποτε πληροφορίες σε αυτή την έκδοση, παρακαλούμε να επισκεφθείτε το Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Πολιτών του Δήμου Μάρικβιλ στο 2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham, ή τηλεφωνήστε στο 9335 2083. Διατίθεται επίσης η Υπηρεσία Μεταφραστών και Διερμηνέων.

Portuguese

Se você desejar ajuda com qualquer informação desta publicação, por favor dirija-se ao Centro de Serviços ao Cidadão da Câmara de Marrickville, no endereço 2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham, ou telefone para 9335 2084. O Serviço de Tradução e Interpretação também está disponível.

Mandarin

如果您对本期内容有任何疑问，请前往 Marrickville 市议会的居民服务中心，地址：2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham，或致电 9335 2086。我们还能提供翻译和口译服务。

Vietnamese

Nếu quý vị muốn được giúp đỡ về bất kỳ thông tin nào trong số xuất bản này, xin hãy tới Trung Tâm Dịch Vụ Công Dân (Citizens' Service Centre) của Hội Đồng Thành Phố Marrickville ở số 2-14 Fisher Street, Petersham, hoặc điện thoại số 9335 2085. Dịch Vụ Biên Dịch và Thông Ngôn cũng sẵn có

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- Frivolous**..... Not serious or sensible in content, attitude, or behaviour. Unworthy of serious or sensible treatment.
- Trivial**..... Of little importance; petty or frivolous.
- Unlawful Activity**..... Is any activity or work that has been or is being carried out:
- contrary to the terms or conditions of a development consent, approval, permission or licence;
 - without a development consent, approval, permission or licence and includes unauthorised works and uses;
 - contrary to any Marrickville Council policy, guideline and code that regulates the activities or work that can be carried out in the Council area;
 - contrary to a legislative provision regulating a particular activity or work; and contrary to the laws of New South Wales in which Council is the regulatory authority.
- Vex**..... To anger or annoy.
- Vexatious**..... Vexing or tending to vex.

5.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This guideline has been adapted for Marrickville Council from:

- the *Enforcement Guidelines for Councils*, published by the Office of the NSW Ombudsman, June 2002
- North Sydney and Warringah Councils' Compliance and Enforcement Policies.
- Practice Note No 9 – *Complaints Management in Councils*, revised July 2009. (A joint publication of the NSW Ombudsman and the Department of Local Government)

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: The Associated CRM/MERIT Timeframes

Monitoring Allocator Group	
Building	42 days
Health	42 days
Planning	42 days
Environment	42 days

Rangers Allocator Group	
Abandoned Vehicle	42 days
Other	14 days
Parking	2 days
Cat	14 days
Dog (attack)	1 day
Dog (barking)	14 days
Pollution	2 days

Attachment 2: MERIT Citizen Acknowledgment Letter for *Monitoring Services*

Reference:

Date

Citizen's Name
Address

Dear Sir/Madam,

PREMISES:
MERIT REQUEST / ENQUIRY NO:

Receipt is acknowledged of your recent enquiry regarding the above premises.

Your enquiry will be reviewed by Council's Monitoring Services Section and following this review an investigation will be undertaken. The investigation may comprise a file search, an inspection and/or interviews with persons important and relevant to the enquiry. Council will notify you if your enquiry needs to be addressed by another agency or another section of Council.

It should be noted that Council does not necessarily deal with enquiries in a strict chronological order and considers matters in terms of critical indicators, such as environmental pollution, fire and food safety, public health and safety (immediate danger), building safety and the like.

As Council receives a large number of enquiries, matters may take up to forty-two (42) working days before commencement of the investigation. This period complies with guidelines issued by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Should you require any further information, please contact Council's Citizens' Service Centre on 9335 2222 and quote the above Merit Request/Enquiry Number.

Yours faithfully,

Kim Anson
General Manager