

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER



CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Approved By: Council
 Doc Controller: General Manager
 Files: 126 & 152

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1. PURPOSE

The Customer Service Charter will enhance our connection with the community and to ensure we have a system for continuous improvement.

This charter has been developed to comply with Section 339F of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and Section 31 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* (the Regulations).

Independent of statutory requirements, Council is committed to providing high quality, efficient and cost effective services to the Derwent Valley community and intends that this charter be utilised by both staff and customers in setting expectations relating to service delivery and the standards required.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, committee members and representatives of Council and all areas of Council activity.

2.1 Who are Council's customers?

Council's customers are individuals and organisations who reside, work, visit, own, operate and transact business in the Derwent Valley. They are also individuals and organisations who help Council do business including our suppliers, subcontractors and volunteers.

2.2 How often is the Customer Service Charter reviewed?

Pursuant to the Act, the Customer Service Charter is required to be reviewed within 12 months after each Council election.

2.3 Availability

Pursuant to the Act, the Customer Service Charter is available on the Council website and in print from Council Chambers upon request.

3. LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993
Local Government (General) Regulations 2015
Personal Information Protection Act 2004
Right to Information Act 2009

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Complaints Management Policy and Procedures (2020)
Councillor Code of Conduct (2020)
Privacy Policy (2017)

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5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Council's vision and values

Council envisions that by working together, the Derwent Valley will become known for the beauty of its preserved natural environment and the produce and lifestyle it provides for a prosperous and proud community.

At Council, we aim to live our values of *Quality Service, Collaboration, Growth, Integrity and Wellbeing* in everything we do.

Related strategic actions from Council's Strategic Plan [Our Valley 2030](#) are available in [Appendix C](#).

5.2 Customer service standards

Council is committed to providing our customers with quality, courteous, informative and timely service that meets or exceeds their expectations. When interacting with Council you can expect that:

- the matter will be handled promptly;
- your privacy will be respected;
- Council will consult with and listen to you, without making commitments we can't keep
- Council's facilities will be maintained in a safe and proper manner, to ensure your convenience and comfort;
- you will be greeted in a friendly way and Council staff will identify themselves;
- communications will be clear and in plain English¹; and
- Council will work with you to solve problems.

Customer Service Guidelines are available in [Appendix A](#).

5.3 How you can help Council

The quality of the services Council provides is dependent on:

- our ability to perform in the most effective and efficient way;
- the health, safety and security of our staff and representatives; and
- our ability to allocate resources fairly across all aspects of our services.

To enable Council, we ask that you please:

- treat our employees respectfully;
- make appointments to meet with staff;
- provide us with accurate and complete information;
- respect the privacy, safety and needs of other members of the community;
- work with us to solve problems; and
- keep us updated on changes to your contact details.

When customers behave unreasonably, their conduct can significantly affect our success. Council will take appropriate action to manage any customer conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects Council staff and representatives.

¹ Translation services are available through [TIS](#).

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5.4 How do we measure success?

Quality Service

- Council expect a high standard of presentation and performance in the delivery of all Council services;
- Council's facilities are to be maintained in a safe and proper manner and be readily accessible;
- Customers are to be provided with accurate and appropriate information in response to requests and complaints;
- Council practice an impartial and ethical decision-making process, with appropriate provisions for conflicts of interest;
- Customer privacy is to be respected at all times and personal information treated confidentially and
- Council staff are appropriately trained and qualified employees, contractors and/or consultants, to ensure accurate and quality advice and service; and
- Council ensure contractors are in receipt of all relevant permits and authorities prior to provision of service.

Courteous Service

- Council Officers will be respectful, open and honest at all times;
- Council Officers are to be clearly identified in dealings with customers, either by personal introduction, email signature or name badge;
- Council Officers visiting customers' homes are to clearly display their Council identification; and
- Council Officers are to listen to the needs of the customer and make all possible attempts to resolve issues and problems.

Informative Service

- Customers are to be well-informed of all services and amenities provided by the Council;
- Customers are to be advised in advance (where possible) of any disruption to Council services;
- Council are to provide customers with alternative avenues of approach where Council is unable to directly assist the customer;
- Public consultation is to be involved in community decision making processes, where practicable;
- Council are to advise of possible delays during inter-agency and researching activities; and
- Council publications, correspondence, brochures, flyers, websites and notices are to be written in 'plain language' and in a reader-friendly manner.

Timely Service

- Telephone calls to be answered promptly;
- Responses to telephone messages to be made promptly and with appropriate detail;
- Counter service queuing time to not exceed 10 minutes;
- Timely responses to written correspondence are to be provided; and
- Council Officers are to be punctual for arranged meetings and appointments.

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6. SERVICES AND ENQUIRIES

Council Chambers	Circle Street, New Norfolk TAS 7140
Office Hours	9:00am - 4:00pm, Monday to Friday (closed on public holidays)
Postal Address	PO Box 595, New Norfolk TAS 7140
Phone	03 6261 8500 (International phone +61 3 6261 8500)
Email	dvcouncil@dvc.tas.gov.au
Website	www.derwentvalley.tas.gov.au
Submit a request or feedback	Please click here to go to Council's online feedback form.

6.1 How we can help you

To support a safe and healthy community, Council offers the following services:

- Infrastructure construction and management including roads, footpaths, bridges, parks, reserves, sporting grounds, recreational grounds, pools and halls;
- Planning and development assistance and supervision including planning, building, and plumbing;
- Environmental health and public safety monitoring including food premises registration, immunisations, fire hazard abatements, animal control and emergency management; and
- Promotion and support for economic, community and tourism development.

6.2 Service requests and enquiries

If you wish to find out more or request a service, you can contact Council in person at Council chambers, by phone, by email, through the Council website or via the Snap Send Solve app.

Snap Send Solve

Snap Send Solve is a free app for your iPhone or Android device that allows you report issues and provide feedback to Council in less than 30 seconds. You can easily capture and report on common issues such as litter, graffiti, parking, street cleaning and noise.

If you are using Snap Send Solve, please ensure that you include a photograph (where one can be safely taken) as well as the nearest street address to enable Council to identify the exact location and ensure that the correct equipment is dispatched to complete any required work as soon as possible.

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6.3 Connecting with the community

Public forums and information sessions

Outside of Council meetings, Council often holds community information sessions, workshops and opportunities to query or interact with Councillors and key Council staff on strategies, decisions, reports and policy, as well as regional and community development.

Public forums and information sessions are conducted according to the Community Engagement Policy and Framework currently in development, with the intention that this framework shall be endorsed by Council and embedded in Council practices by 2022.

Social media

Council regularly provides community updates on [Facebook](#).

Print advertising

The majority of expressions of interest, public consultation requests, announcements and other news about Council is advertised in the Mercury and the Derwent Valley Gazette, with wider publication sometimes utilised, depending on the nature of the matter.

Right to Information

If you wish to make a Right to Information request from Council please ensure you have consulted the [Right to Information Policy](#).

6.4 Feedback

Council welcome feedback on our services, procedures and facilities.

If you wish to submit feedback please use one of the following methods:

In person at Council Chambers:	Circle Street, New Norfolk TAS 7140 Opening Hours 9:00am-4:00pm, Monday to Friday (closed on public holidays)
By mail:	PO Box 595, New Norfolk TAS 7140
By phone:	03 6261 8500 (International phone +61 3 6261 8500)
By email:	dvcouncil@dvc.tas.gov.au

What happens to your feedback?

If your feedback is a compliment, it will be forwarded to the employee and their line manager or to the relevant team.

If your feedback is a suggestion, it will be forwarded to the relevant manager for consideration and, should the suggestion be found to be practical and feasible, for discussion with staff and potential implementation.

If your feedback is a complaint, please refer to the section below.

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7. COMPLAINTS

If you are not satisfied with a service you have received, you can make a formal complaint over the counter at council chambers, by phone or in writing. Council treats all complaints seriously, confidentially and in a professional manner. [A complaint form is available on the Council website](#), to ensure that all the relevant information is captured.

The internal Complaints Management Policy and Procedures are available upon request but is not necessary to read when preparing to lodge a complaint.

7.1 What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a decision, level or quality of service provided by Council, or behaviour of a Council employee or other representative of Council, which may be investigated and acted upon. This is distinct from a request for service, however a request for service may develop into a complaint where the provision or timeliness of the service is considered unsatisfactory.

Complaints lodged about decisions made within a structured process are not treated as 'complaints,' for the purposes of the complaints management process described in this charter. A structured process is where legislation specifically provides for an appeal, or an internal or external review of a decision.

Complaints against Councillors

If you wish to make a complaint against a Councillor please refer to the [Councillor Code of Conduct](#).

7.2 What is not a complaint?

For the purposes of this charter, complaints do not include:

- a request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for service);
- a request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure;
- disagreement with a Council policy;
- reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure;
- an expression of dissatisfaction with the behaviour of a Councillor; or
- reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances or unauthorised building work etc.

Conflict of Interest

If you have discovered a conflict of interest, please report it to Council at the earliest opportunity. Council will refer the issue to the relevant manager (or the General Manager, if the conflict exists with the relevant manager) in order to find a procedural solution.

Vexatious Complaints

All complaints received by Council will be treated with the utmost seriousness however, if a complaint is found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious or the complainant has insufficient personal interest in the matter, no further action will be taken on the complaint.

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Infringement Notices

If you wish to appeal an infringement notice, please see the [Council Infringement Notices webpage](#) or contact Council.

7.3 Complaints management

All complaints (regardless of how they are received) are sent to the relevant manager. Very serious complaints will be referred to the General Manager, in the first instance.

Managers investigating complaints are to follow Council's Complaints Management Policy and Procedures. The investigation process includes:

- examination of the information already available;
- follow up of any points requiring clarification;
- consideration of Council policies that might have a bearing on the complaint;
- consideration of whether or not the Council is at fault;
- consideration of any necessary action to be taken to correct the faults identified; and
- consideration of a review of Council's procedures to avoid recurrence of a similar complaint.

A chart of the complaints procedure is available in [Appendix B](#).

7.4 Lodging a complaint

When making a complaint, please include as much detail as practicable. It is recommended (but not compulsory) that complaints are made in writing.

To assist with making a complaint, Council has a standard [Complaints Form](#) available on the Council website. If you do not have internet access, a printed copy of the Complaints Form can be provided in print at Council Chambers.

Complaints may also be lodged via the following methods:

In person at Council Chambers:	Circle Street, New Norfolk TAS 7140 Office Hours: 9:00am-4:00pm, Monday to Friday (closed on public holidays)
In person outside Council Chambers:	Through a Councillor or through a Council related event or community engagement activity
By mail:	PO Box 595, New Norfolk TAS 7140
By phone:	03 6261 8500 (International phone +61 3 6261 8500)
By email:	dvccouncil@dvc.tas.gov.au

Once your complaint is received it will be referred to the manager of the relevant department. If your complaint is regarding a manager of a department, your complaint will be referred directly to the General Manager. If the complaint is about the General Manager, it will be referred directly to the Mayor.

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Personal Information Protection

Council customers can expect their privacy to be respected and personal information treated confidentially throughout the complaint management process.

Anonymous Complaints

Council maintains the right to ask the complainants name, address, and telephone number. Anonymous complaints are considered at the discretion of the relevant manager, depending on the seriousness of the complaint and provided there is sufficient information to enable an investigation to be made.

7.5 Responses to complaints

Council will investigate and respond to all complaints within 20 working days, except in cases where the matter complicated, requires information from other agencies or research. In these cases, you will be advised in writing of when a response is likely to be given.

In responding to complainants, Council shall provide reasons for its decisions and Council's response will be given in writing.

7.6 Requesting a review or appeal

Appeal to the General Manager

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the departmental complaint process, a review of the complaint by the General Manager can be requested.

Appeals to external authorities

If you are dissatisfied with both the original decision of a complaint and the decision by the General Manager upon request for review, the following organisations manage escalated complaints, where external review is requested:

Organisation	Details
Administrative Appeals Court	Address: GPO Box 354 Hobart TAS 7001 Phone: 03 6165 7136 Email: registry.hobart@justice.tas.gov.au Website: www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/about-us/administrative-appeals-division
Equal Opportunity Tasmania	Address: GPO Box 197 Hobart TAS 7001 Phone: 1300 305 062 Email: office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au Website: www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au Address: GPO Box 822 Hobart TAS 7001

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Integrity Commission Tasmania	Phone: Email: Website:	1300 720 289 integritycommission@integrity.tas.gov.au www.integrity.tas.gov.au
Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania	Address: Phone: Email: Website:	GPO Box 123 Hobart TAS 7001 03 6232 7022 ljd@dpac.tas.gov.au www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local_government
Ombudsman Tasmania	Address: Phone: Email: Website:	GPO Box 960 Hobart TAS 7001 1800 001 170 ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au
Planning Policy Unit, Department of Justice (Tasmania)	Address: Phone: Email: Website:	GPO Box 825 Hobart TAS 7001 03 6166 1429 Unit@justice.tas.gov.au https://www.planningreform.tas.gov.au

7.7 Complaints reporting

The General Manager provides Council with an annual report of the number and nature of complaints received. The number and nature of complaints will also be reported in Council's [Annual Report](#).

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APPENDIX A – CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDELINES

Council uses the following to provide guidance on expected responses to engagement with the public and to identify areas for service improvement.

Emergencies (For immediate assistance please call 000.)

An emergency is regarded as an incident that may threaten life or property or on that may cause environmental harm.

Council-wide Services	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Answer your phone call	As soon as possible
Return your phone call	1 Business Day
Acknowledge your letter or email (Please note that if a detailed reply is required it may take additional time to research.)	1 Business Day
Respond to your letter or email	5 Business Days
Respond to complaints	Refer to Policy
Notify you as soon as practicable if there is a delay on our service commitment to you	As relevant
Provide after-hours service for emergencies	24 hour contact service
Leave a “visit card” with contact details if we call at your residence and you are not at home	On occurrence
Endeavour to refer you to an appropriate service provider, if Council cannot provide the service you require	As soon as possible
A counter service queuing time of less than	10 minutes
Confidentiality of your personal information	Without fail
Ensure that phone messages are communicated with the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name (and Company if applicable); • phone number; • message or reason for the call; • time and date of the call; • the time and date of any relevant action or incident; and an appropriate subject line.	Standard procedure

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Service/Action	Target for Resolution
<p>If receiving a service request from a customer, please note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name (and company if applicable); • phone number; • message or reason for the call; • time and date of the call; • nearest street address; • type of service required; • the time and date of any relevant action or incident; • scope or size of the service required (e.g. If a tree has fallen across the road will it require a chainsaw or a bulldozer to clear the road, if it is a dog issue what size is the dog etc.); and • issue/s caused (e.g. Does the issue create a safety or traffic hazard? Is the issue preventing access to an amenity?); and • ensure the subject line is appropriate so that urgent matters are actioned as soon as possible. 	Standard procedure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records will be added to and maintained as per recommended guidelines 	As relevant
Be punctual for meetings and appointments	Expectation

Animal Control
Please see the Dog Management Policy .

Councillors
Please see the Councillor Code of Conduct on the Council website.

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Drainage and Stormwater	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Respond to drainage emergencies	(24 hours per day)
Respond to drainage and/or see page issues (for more information please see the <i>Urban Drainage Act 2013</i>)	(10 working days)

Environmental Health	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Investigate environmental hazards and illegal dumping	5 Business Days
Act in the best interest of public health	Standard expectation
Respond to food complaints (For further information please see the <i>Food Act 2003</i>)	5 Business Days
Inspect registered food premises (For further information please see the <i>Food Act 2003</i>)	As per risk classification <i>Food Act 2003</i>
Respond to urgent environmental nuisances and high-risk public health matters (For further information please see the <i>Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994</i> and the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i>)	24 hours per day After Hours Service centre

Finance	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Payment of accounts	By the due date ²
Respond to rate enquiries	5 working days

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Fire Hazards (Please dial 000 for emergencies.)	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Respond to fire hazard complaints (during permit period)	(3 working days)
Process statutory nuisances	14 days abatement notice from date of identification
Please refer to the Tasmanian Fire Service for details about fire hazards. For fire permits, please call 1800 000 699.	

Graffiti	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Removal of reported graffiti	7 days from notice of identification

Governance	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Publish an annual report.	Annually
Ensure that Council agendas are available online.	4 days before an ordinary meeting or 2 days before a special meeting
Ensure that unconfirmed minutes of Council meetings are available online.	As soon as possible
Ensure that confirmed minutes of Council meetings are available online.	7 days after minutes have been confirmed
Ensure that audio recordings of Council meetings are available online.	5 business days after meeting

² Exceptions may be made where service or goods are awaiting delivery in full, where a scheduled payment has been agreed with the supplier or where an invoice or invoices are in dispute and require correction.

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Roads, Maintenance and Works	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Council will prioritise the safety of customers and staff	Always
Acknowledge receipt of tender or contractor applications	10 working days
Inspect, assess, and respond to requests about road safety issues	14 working days
Notify tender applicant/s of whether or not they have been successful	10 days from close
Waste	
Service/Action	Target for Resolution
Garbage collection (sealed roads only)	Weekly
Recyclable collection (sealed roads only)	Fortnightly
Provide new or replacement wheelie bins	10 working days
Provide tip vouchers for ratepayers	Annually
For additional information about tips and waste transfer stations, please see the Council website .	

If consultation with other agencies is required there may be delays due to matters external to Council operations.

If a delay is known (such as in cases of complexity, matters requiring research or actions requiring multiple agency responses external to Council), Council will ensure that you are made aware that there may be a delay.

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APPENDIX B – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE QUICK GUIDE

Complaint received

- A complaint is received either verbally or in writing; and
- If practicable, the Complaints Form is to be used to collect the relevant information.

Information collated and forwarded

- The staff member or representative receiving the complaint notes as much detail as possible in writing or assists the complainant in filling in the Complaints Form;
- The staff member or representative forwards the complaint to the relevant manager responsible for the function of Council that the complaint concerns; however
- If the complaint is about a manager, the complaint is forwarded to the General Manager. If the complaint is about the General Manager, the Complaint is forwarded to the Mayor; or
- If the complaint is sufficiently serious it may be forwarded directly to the General Manager.

RELEVANT MANAGER

- The relevant manager creates a file for the complaint, confirms the accuracy of the information as recorded, investigates the complaint, writes a response then collates all relevant information and files it under File 151 - Complaints Management.

Response (within 20 days of the receipt of the complaint)

- Responses are to outline the reasons for a decision where contrary to the complainant's wishes;
- Responses are to include advice regarding avenues of appeal (eg to the General Manager, Ombudsman Tasmania or Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet); and
- The response is sent in writing to the complainant and included with all relevant materials in File 151.

GENERAL MANAGER

- Should the complaint wish to appeal to the General Manager, the General Manager will receive the original complaint, relevant documents, investigative findings, response of the relevant manager and the details of the request for appeal; then
- The General Manager will investigate.

Response (within 20 days of the receipt of a request for review)

- Responses are to outline the reasons for a decision where contrary to the complainant's wishes; and
- Responses are to include advice regarding avenues of appeal (eg Ombudsman Tasmania or Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet); then
- The response is sent in writing to the complainant and included with all relevant materials in File 151.

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APPENDIX C – SERVICES EXTERNAL TO COUNCIL

If you are experiencing an emergency please dial **000** immediately.

State Government		
Contact/Link		Phone
Tasmanian Government		1300 135 513
Tasmanian Government Directory		
Tasmanian Government Organisations		
Service Tasmania		1300 135 513
Births, Deaths and Marriages		1300 135 513
Child Health Centres		1300 064 544
Community Based Support		03 6208 6600
Community Car	New Norfolk Maydena	03 6208 8500 0429 960 420
Children's Dental Service - New Norfolk		1300 011 013
Community Health Centre – New Norfolk		03 6166 1290
Consumer, Building and Occupational Services		1300 654 499
Family Violence Response and Referral Line (Available 24/7)		1800 633 937
Fire Permits		1800 000 699
Forest Practices Authority		03 6165 4090
Housing Connect (Hobart)		1800 800 588
Jobs Tasmania		
Justice of a peace - Index		
Map – The List (Tasmania)		
Mental Health Services in Tasmania		1800 332 388
Migration Tasmania		
Monetary Penalties Enforcement Service		1300 366 776
New Norfolk District Hospital		03 6166 1300
Non-Emergency Patient Transport (State-wide)	Office hours: After Hours:	1300 513 997 1800 008 008
Parenting Centres		03 6166 1605
Parent Line (Available 24/7)		1300 808 178

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Plants – Neighbourhood disputes	
Red Tape Reduction (Tasmanian Government)	03 6165 5027
State Growth Roads – Maintenance and road kill (Stornoway)	03 6263 3968
Royal Hobart Hospital	03 6166 8308
State Emergency Service	03 6173 2700
Tasmanian Archives + Heritage (TAHO)	
Tasmanian Fire Service	03 6173 2740
Tasmanian Planning Commission	03 6165 6828
Tasmania Police	131 444

Federal Government

Contact/Link	Phone
Australian Government	
Australian Government Enquiry Lines	
Services Australia	
TasTAFE	1300 655 307
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)	13 14 50
University of Tasmania (UTAS)	03 6226 2999

National Relay Service (NRS)

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call us through the NRS.TTY users: call 133 677, and ask for 1300 13 55 13

Speak & Listen users (speech-to-speech relay): call 1300 555 727, and ask for 1300 135 513

Internet relay users: connect to the NRS via the [National Relay Service website](#) and ask for 1300 135 513

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

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Contact/Link	Phone
98.9 TYGA FM (Derwent Valley Community Radio)	03 6261 2888
Aurora Energy	1300 132 003
Bee Removal	Lorraine Donnelly 03 6239 0001 Rod Wright 0447 001 884
Cat Centre (Hobart)	03 6278 2111
Community Car	New Norfolk 03 6208 8500 Maydena 0429 960 420
Community Transport Services	1800 781 033
Corumbene Care	03 6261 2744
Derwent Valley Autumn Festival	0400 281 317
Derwent Valley Community House	03 6261 5230
Granton Hall	03 6263 3588
Kids Helpline (Available 24/7)	1800 551 800
Lachlan Hall	0437 626 138
Life Line Tasmania (Crisis hotline – Available 24/7)	13 11 14
The Link Youth Services (Ages 12-25)	03 6231 2927
Molesworth Hall	03 6261 2514
Snake Rescue and Removal	0414 064 972
Ptunarra Child and Family Centre	03 6261 7222
Volunteering Tasmania Inc	1800 677 895
Wasp Removal	03 6273 8209
Westerway Hall	03 6288 1373