

# Best Value Victoria Annual Report 2008-2009

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

This is Council's Best Value Victoria Annual Report for 2008-2009 to its community on the application of the Best Value principles. The report highlights the range of organisational initiatives and processes being implemented across Council to meet the Best Value Principles and to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

The report also outlines aspects of Banyule's ongoing continuous improvement program that aims to sustain certification standards, best practice performance, and exemplifies the Best Value Principles of service delivery to the community.

Further information on Best Value is available on Banyule's website in the comprehensive Best Value section (simply log onto [www.banyule.vic.gov.au](http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au) and follow links to "Your Council and Best Value"). The following information for each of Council's services is also available:

- Key Performance Indicator (KPI) results;
- Key Highlights for 2008-2009; and
- Future Challenges for 2009-2010.

### **Best Value Principles**

The Best Value legislation (introduced by the State Government in 1999) is based on consideration of the following six principles in providing services to the community.

1. all services provided by a council must meet **quality and cost standards** set by Council (having regard to community expectations, affordability, accessibility, value for money and best practice);
2. all services provided by a council must be **responsive** to the needs of its community;
3. all services provided by a council must be **accessible** to those members of the community for whom they are intended;
4. a council must achieve **continuous improvement** in provision of services for its community;
5. a council must develop a program of **regular consultation** with its community in relation to the services it provides;
6. a council must **report regularly to its community** on its achievements in relation to the first five principles.

## BEST VALUE AT BANYULE

Banyule has implemented its policy and ongoing service review and delivery framework for applying the Best Value principles. This has enabled Council to determine the most effective means of providing service to the community.

Each Banyule service has been subjected to:

- A service review, including:
  - community consultation
  - wide ranging benchmarking activities
  - service planning
- Preparation of a service delivery proposal, including:
  - service objectives
  - Quality and Cost Standards (specification) to reflect the six Best Value Principles
  - ongoing service improvement action planning
  - key performance indicators and targets
- Regularly reporting to the community on achievement against the Best Value Principles.

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Banyule successfully achieved the completion of all Best Value service reviews by 31 December 2005, in accordance with the Best Value program and as required by the legislation.

A range of initiatives and processes have been developed and implemented throughout the organisation to integrate the Best Value principles into the life of the Council and promote a continuous improvement culture. The organisational approach to the application of each principle is outlined below.

## **I. Quality and Cost Standards**

Every service has developed Quality and Cost Standards to define the scope of key functions/activities, key tasks and responsibilities and key performance indicators (KPI's) relating to quality and cost.

Quality and Cost Standards are reviewed and updated annually as part of the Best Value Plus program.

In determining Quality and Cost Standards for each service, Banyule considers aspects such as past exposure to competition under the previous CCT legislation, the service's performance history, consultation and benchmarking results. This approach meets the requirements of parts (a) to (e) of Section 208C of the *Local Government Act*.

### **Best Value Plus Program**

The Best Value Plus Program (BV Plus) builds on the work achieved by each service unit's Best Value review by identifying, controlling and monitoring risks associated with quality, environment and occupational health and safety.

The BV Plus program was designed to assist service units to implement the Banyule Management System and become certified against three key national and international standards of Best Practice:

- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 - Quality Management Systems
- AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004 - Environmental Management Systems, and
- AS/NZS 4801:2001: - Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

All Banyule service units were successfully certified to these standards in December 2005 and achieved organisational recertification in October 2007. The organisation is now undergoing regular external quality, environmental and OH&S auditing to ensure ongoing certification.

The BV Plus Program works with the Best Value process and proactively supports delivery of the key principles of Best Value. This program was recognised with a National Local Government Award in 2005 under the title 'Best Value Plus – World's Best Practice at Banyule'.

### **Benchmarking**

In addition to service specific benchmarking projects undertaken as part of Best Value service reviews, Banyule also utilises the State Government's Annual Community Satisfaction Survey as a reliable and valid measure to compare and contrast its performance against a range of key service areas. These service areas (categories) measure how well Banyule is performing in relation to other metropolitan councils in responding to its community in the delivery of services and key overall governance measures such as advocacy, customer contact, community engagement and overall performance.

The benchmarking process has fostered the development of service unit regional networks, which share information and explore alternative ways of solving common problems or issues. Other relevant service specific benchmarking projects are undertaken on an ongoing basis.

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## 2. Responsive to Community Needs

Council is currently facilitating the development of a Community Plan. The development of this plan and the process undertaken to form it will continue to give Council invaluable information that will enable us to better represent our community. Information gathered through the community planning process has informed the development of Banyule's new City Plan for 2009-2013 and is informing the review of Council's key strategic plans.

As part of Banyule's Best Value service review process, emphasis is placed on the identification of intended users and stakeholders of each service. From analysis, the review teams are able to develop a sound consultation strategy for each service review, which considers linkages across services and user/stakeholder groups. The service review process covers a full range of existing consultation sources in assessing and responding to community needs.

Banyule also has a range of strategies in place to provide targeted responsive support to those most in need through their community employment, education and training programs.

Over recent years, the State Government Annual Community Satisfaction Surveys have rated the level of community satisfaction in the Council's performance very highly. In the 2009 survey, community satisfaction with Council's interaction and responsiveness in dealing with the public (Customer Contact) was or amongst the highest in metropolitan Melbourne. Also, Council scored toward the highest levels in 'Community Engagement', 'Advocacy', and 'Overall Performance'. These results reflect the continuing care and commitment of Council staff in providing services to the Banyule community.

Council continues to deliver its 'Out & About' program to foster better links and information flows with the community. Under this program, members of the customer service team (supported by service unit staff) attend community centres and events to promote Council and community programs and services, as well as educate the community on how to best access the services and opportunities available to them. This very successful program has a particular focus on groups who have difficulty in accessing Council information or services, e.g. senior citizens groups.

## 3. Accessibility of Services

Banyule's Best Value process closely examines the accessibility of Council's services to those to whom the services are directed.

Council's approach to accessibility is underpinned by its commitment in Banyule's new four-year City Plan 2009-2013 by the: 'Support a strong, diverse and inclusive community' strategy – Embed the principles of inclusion in the provision of Council services and policy development, to ensure all people within Banyule have equitable opportunities to access resources, services and voice their views. Key priorities for this strategy include:

- Developing partnerships with community, other levels of government and key stakeholders to increase mutual trust, acceptance of difference and a more cohesive community.
- Developing partnerships with community and other levels of government to address social inequalities, for people from low socio-economic backgrounds, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, people with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A range of current plans are also in place to support access to Council's services, including:

- Banyule Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2009-13 (Draft)
- Banyule Community Plan (Draft 2009)
- Banyule Inclusion Policy and Action Plans
- Banyule Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communications Strategy

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- Banyule Connected Culture - Cultural Strategy
- Banyule Recreation Strategy
- Banyule Open Space Strategy
- Safer Banyule: An Action Plan
- Banyule Volunteer Policy
- Banyule Active Ageing Strategy
- Banyule Youth and Family Services Strategy
- Banyule Early Years Plan
- Banyule Aboriginal Heritage Study
- Banyule Library Redevelopment Study
- Banyule Public Art Strategy

In particular, the City Plan includes the following strategic objective:

*Participation: Good Governance – Govern effectively by supporting civic participation, advocating for the interests of the community, and using our resources wisely.*

Banyule's commitment to participation will be achieved by the following strategies:

- Supporting community involvement in decision making
- Encouraging participation in civic life
- Advocating on behalf of the community
- Using our resources wisely.

The Best Value process has assisted Council in consolidating these priorities. The priorities will provide a framework for service units to continue to ensure Council services are accessible for its community.

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## 4. Continuous Improvement

Banyule has a comprehensive continuous improvement program based on its Best Value Plus certification program. Key elements include:

### (a) Best Value Service Action Plans

Each Best Value service review has incorporated the development of a comprehensive action plan for continuous improvement and ongoing service provision. The Best Value Action Plans:

- address the key issues and opportunities for improvement resulting from community consultation and benchmarking programs, the development of the Quality and Cost Standards and the review of current work practices
- include actions from key service unit strategies
- include a program of ongoing consultation and benchmarking to ensure that the services continue to meet community needs
- incorporate further service planning
- provide a listing of service actions that are reported progressively and reviewed each year
- complement key Council plans, e.g. City (Council) Plan, Annual Business Plan, State of the Environment Report, Banyule Health Plan and the Municipal Strategic Statement.

### (b) Annual Reporting and Planning

In addition to the Corporate Planning Program (City Plan and Annual Business Plan), all service units go through an Annual Review process to report on their performance in the previous year and plan their service for the following year. This includes:

- reviewing Service Objectives and Quality and Cost Standards
- completing an End of Year Best Value Report (Action Plan, KPI's, and Summary of Performance/Key Highlights)
- conducting service unit/directorate planning for the next year,
- reviewing performance against last year's action plan taking into account community feedback from ongoing consultation
- reviewing performance against the KPI's and targets and determining any changes to KPI's and targets for the coming year
- determining priorities and key challenges
- developing an updated Action Plan.

### (c) Performance Reporting and Management

An integrated Corporate Information Database (CID) has been implemented to facilitate the management of actions for service units and the organisation.

This provides all service units with a framework for:

- integrated reporting and monitoring on achievement of corporate and service unit actions
- developing Action Plans on-line, as part of the Annual Reporting and Action Planning Process
- undertaking other sophisticated service unit analysis and planning.

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## (d) Cultural Initiatives

Council is committed to developing and implementing innovative human resource strategies that promote staff development, achievement and wellbeing. To achieve this, Banyule has continued to implement a range of key initiatives and programs including:

- The 'Working Together Working Better' program which provides a values framework for staff to: put the customer first, respect support and encourage each other, innovate and deliver best value, always be accountable, communicate effectively, and work together with the community.
- An Organisational Cultural Inventory program to support the growth and development of our organisational culture through development strategies that focus on achieving agreed and accepted values and behaviours.
- Corporate Continuous Improvement meetings that provide the opportunity for staff to share information on current projects, experiences and lessons learned and to access industry expertise and innovation.
- Council is honing its prioritisation processes by focusing on a program where all key decisions are focused.
  
- S= Strategy
  - Achieving outcomes based on the priorities as set out in the City Plan
- P= People
  - Assuring the people resources are focused motivated and aligned.
- P= Performance
  - Ensuring strategy results in targeted performance for improving the outcome for the community

### **Continuous Improvement - Ongoing Program**

The organisation has developed an ongoing program to sustain certification, best practice performance, and address the Best Value Principles. This program incorporates the next stages of Best Value and Best Value Plus.

The objectives of the Continuous Improvement Program include:

- Continue to effectively apply the Best Value principles (and meet the Best Value Legislation).
- Maintain our Best Value Plus certification and provide strong and sustainable continuous improvement to ensure future success.
- Continue to meet the changing needs of the community/customers.

Key components of the Continuous Improvement Program include:

- An ongoing review of our Banyule Management System (Management Review process) to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the system
- Key priorities and actions as highlighted in Banyule's City Plan and the internal Annual Business Plan
- Corporate and Service Unit Annual Planning and Reporting
- Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) Meetings and Senior Management Group meetings to promote information sharing and learning
- Internal and External Audit Programs to identify and address improvement opportunities

These components, together with a range of corporate and service specific initiatives, ensure continued improvement of service delivery and performance.

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In addition, the ongoing continuous improvement program also identifies key organisational improvement and significant innovation opportunities, and provides a flexible approach to respond to organisational challenges, needs and priorities. Some of the key initiatives involve the delivery of the Conquest Project which involves the assimilation of all of Council's major IT frameworks products into a single integrated work platform.

## Sector-wide Approach

Banyule also played an important role as part of the Best Value Practitioners Interest Group in partnering with Local Government Victoria and the Best Value Commission, in the development of the Best Value Victoria Guidelines.

## **5. Regular Community Consultation**

In addition to specific community consultation projects undertaken as part of individual Best Value service reviews, Banyule also conducts community consultation and stakeholder forums prior to developing or revising corporate policies and strategic plans. It also draws on other current community consultation data sources such as:

- State Government's Annual Community Satisfaction Surveys
- Key Council plans and strategies (e.g. City Plan, State of the Environment Report, Municipal Strategic Statement, Municipal Health Plan, Cultural Strategy and the Recreation Strategy)
- Demographic information on residents and businesses
- A comprehensive Household Survey was conducted in April 2008 which has added to our knowledge of our Community.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) – in conjunction with the Migrant Resource Centre, focus groups were held with identified community groups to better understand particular needs and the delivery of Council's services.
- Greensborough Project – extensive consultation and information sessions conducted in relation to assessing and developing this project with community input and feedback.

Key projects conducted in 2008/09 include consultation relating to:

- Progression toward the development of Banyule's first Community Plan has occurred over the last twelve months - through extensive community consultation and input from more than 900 individuals and 35 local community groups. The purpose of a Community Plan is to identify the community's vision for its city as we move towards 2020. In doing so, it seeks to articulate the things that need to change to achieve that preferred future, as well as the things the community values now that should be retained for the future. An important feature of the Community Plan is its ownership and development by the community, and that the community accepts responsibility for its implementation. Local government can contribute to an important advocacy or linking role in this regard.
- The following key plans which are being reviewed in line with our new City Plan and are due for release in 2009-2010:
  - Banyule Health and Wellbeing Strategy – provides key direction and actions to achieve social and health sustainability. The four year strategy is supported by an annual action plan, and has been developed in partnership with participating agencies and our community.
  - Environmental Sustainability Strategy – sets the policy direction for achieving environmental sustainability in Banyule. This key strategic document provides guidance and direction for supporting action plans that are reported via the annual State of the Environment Report.
  - Municipal Strategic Statement – provides a framework for land use and development in Banyule, and for land use and development provisions in the Banyule Planning Scheme.
  - Economic Development and Employment Strategy – provides key directions and actions to facilitate a thriving and sustainable local economy.

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Refer also to the consultation details in the Corporate Governance section of the Annual Report.

## **Banyule's new City Plan 2009-2013**

In preparing Banyule's new City Plan 2009-2013, opportunity was given to the community inviting comment and input. As part of the development of the plan, Councillors and senior staff also participated in the planning process that reviewed this input. The development of this City Plan has been informed by the information gathered through the community planning process.

Community consultation is an important component built into Council's City Plan strategies to ensure Council continues to meet the changing needs of our community. Key priorities include:

- Developing partnerships with community, other levels of government and key stakeholders to increase mutual trust, acceptance of difference and a more cohesive community.
- Developing partnerships with community and other levels of government to address social inequalities, for people from low socio-economic backgrounds, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, people with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Working in partnership with the community and key stakeholders to influence solutions that will address safety concerns and experiences of crime or accidental injury in Banyule's social, built and natural environments.
- Working with community organisations, other Local Government Authorities, State Government and Federal Government in pursuing environmental sustainability for Banyule.
- Adapting to climate change by exploring different models for the provision of sport and recreation facilities in a drier climate future, for the benefit of the community, which may include: Working in partnership with community sporting clubs, commercial operators, sporting associations, and relevant public sector land management authorities, in exploring joint use opportunities.
- Working in partnership with the community and State Government to support and facilitate neighbourhood renewal across Heidelberg West.
- Working in partnership with the community and State Government to deliver safer and more efficient transport links within Banyule and the region.
- Continuing to identify and build on partnerships between local businesses, educational bodies, training providers and community groups to enhance training and employment opportunities for residents and businesses.
- Advocating for greater choice and access to employment, health and community services and quality public spaces and places.
- Advocating for partnerships that encourage social/community enterprises and 'hubs' for social capital development.
- Seeking appropriate partnerships to leverage opportunities for our community that create broader employment opportunities offering, stronger and more diverse social fabric, and quality of life experience (e.g. Church/ State/ Commerce/ Community/Education/Charity).
- Advocating for partnerships that encourage social/community enterprises and 'hubs' for social capital development.

In particular, the City Plan includes the following strategic objective:

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Banyule's commitment to participation will be achieved by the following strategies:

- Supporting community involvement in decision making
- Encouraging participation in civic life
- Advocating on behalf of the community

## **State Government Annual Community Satisfaction Survey**

The 2009 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey again produced good results for Banyule City Council. Across the 13 categories measured, Banyule's results were at, or above the median level for 10 of the categories when compared to all councils in the Inner Metropolitan Group. Banyule was equal highest or amongst the highest performing Inner Metropolitan Group for the categories of: Customer Contact, Community Engagement, Local Roads and Footpaths, Health and Human Services, Waste Management, Enforcement of Local Laws, and Overall Performance.

The Customer Contact, Community Engagement and Advocacy results recognise the genuine care and commitment that Council staff provides to the Banyule community and the continuing high result in 'Waste Management' indicates the ongoing acceptance of an introduced waste management system that is popular with residents, as well as providing better protection for our environment.

Banyule will continue to identify and address opportunities for improvement in all categories measured, in particular where results were not equal to or better than the highest results in the group.

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) survey results this year and the consistently high results over the last ten years of the survey, demonstrate Banyule's on-going commitment to continuous improvement and meeting the needs of its community.

## **6. Reporting regularly to the community**

This Best Value Victoria Annual report is included as part of Banyule's Annual Report document and is also available on Banyule's website in the comprehensive Best Value section (simply log onto Council's home page at [www.banyule.vic.gov.au](http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au) and follow links to Your Council and Best Value).

Council also regularly utilises its community newsletter the 'Banner' to report back to the community on its achievements, including Best Value improvements to services.