

Best Value Victoria Annual Report 2004-2005

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background

This is Council's Best Value Victoria Annual Report for 2004-2005 to its community on the application of the Best Value principles. The report highlights the following:

- The range of organizational initiatives and processes being implemented across Council to meet the Best Value Principles and promote a continuous improvement culture.
- The progress in conducting Best Value reviews of each service, in accordance with Banyule's established process, service review framework and timetable for applying the Best Value Principles at service delivery level.

Further information on each Best Value service review is available on Banyule's website in the comprehensive Best Value section (simply log onto 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 2004/05, and
- Future Challenges for 2005/06.

I.2 Best Value Principles

The Best Value legislation (introduced by the State Government in 1999) is based on consideration of the following 6 Principles in providing services to the community:

1. All services provided by a Council must meet **quality & 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.

2. BEST VALUE AT BANYULE

2.1 Application of Best Value at Banyule

There are two key ways in which Banyule has implemented Best Value in order to meet the requirements of the legislation and continue to improve its services to meet the changing needs of our community.

- Organisational level – a range of initiatives and processes that embed the Best Value principles into the life of the Council and promote a continuous improvement culture.
- Service delivery level – a comprehensive Best Value review program for each of Council's services.

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2.2 Organisational Level

Throughout the organisation, a range of initiatives and processes have been developed and implemented that embed 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 detailed below:

2.2.1 Quality & Cost Standards

As part of Banyule's service review process every Service is required to develop Quality & Cost Standards to define the scope of key functions/activities, key tasks and responsibilities, and key quality and cost performance indicators (KPI's).

The draft standards are incorporated in the Best Value Review Document (together with the draft Best Value Council Report and Action Plan), and are made available for Councillor, community and staff comment as a part of the process for each Best Value Service Review.

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

In determining Quality & Cost Standards for the service reviews conducted during 2004/05, Banyule has continued to consider 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 factors (a) – (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, environmental, and occupational health and safety. The implementation of BV Plus ensures that Banyule will receive certification across all service areas to the following Australian Standards:

- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 - Quality Management Systems
- AS/NZS 14001:1996 - Environmental Management Systems, and
- AS 4801:2000 - Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

More than 70% of Council's services are certified, with the balance of services programmed for final certification by December 2005. BV Plus ensures that all Council activities are efficiently and effectively conducted to agreed quality standards and in a safe manner that protects people and the environment. The BV Plus Program complements 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 Practise at Banyule'

Benchmarking

In addition to service specific benchmarking projects undertaken as part of individual 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 result areas (KRAs). These KRAs 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 functions such as advocacy, customer service, responsiveness and community engagement.

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The benchmarking process has fostered the development of service unit regional networks who share information and explore alternative ways of solving common problems or issues.

Regular Community Consultation

In addition to specific community consultation projects undertaken as part of individual Best Value service reviews, Banyule also conducts regular comprehensive community surveys 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 (eg. City Plan, State of the Environment Report, Municipal Strategic Statement and the Municipal Health Plan)
- Demographic information on residents and businesses

To further complement this data targeted consultation projects are undertaken including the following examples in 2004-05:

(a) Community Wellbeing Survey

Market Solutions Pty Ltd recently undertook a survey on behalf of Council to gauge resident perceptions of community wellbeing and their views and feelings about living in their local area (Community Wellbeing Survey, June 2005). Local Government has a crucial role, both directly and indirectly, in improving the wellbeing of its community. Information gained in the Wellbeing survey is enabling Banyule to better target its services and play a greater role in improving partnerships, community building and advocating for the municipality.

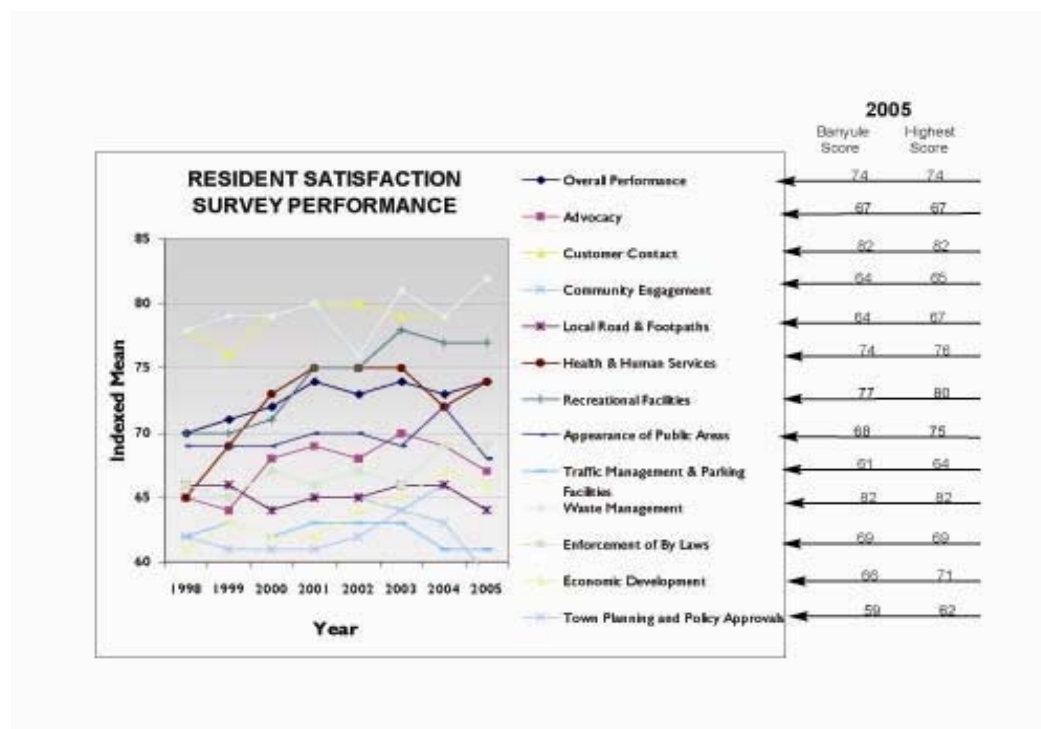
The outcomes of this survey are also being used to inform Council's planning process and will assist in the preparation of Council's new 4 year City Plan (2006 – 2010).

(b) State Government Annual Community Satisfaction Survey

The 2005 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey again produced excellent results for Banyule City Council. The *Indexed Mean* satisfaction result for 2005 for overall performance of the Council was 74, up from 73 in 2004. Banyule is now the highest-ranking Council for community satisfaction in overall performance for all 29 Metropolitan Councils.

The following graph shows Council's performance in this survey since 1998 in key areas of service and overall performance. They also compare Banyule's score for 2005 with the highest score in the Inner Metropolitan region.

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Note: Community Engagement was first measured in 2002

Two service areas had significant increases in Community Satisfaction for 2005. ‘Customer Contact’ and ‘Waste Management’ both jumped from 79 to 82. These are the highest scores ever for Banyule and the highest for all 29 Councils in metropolitan Melbourne.

The ‘Customer Contact’ result recognises the genuine care and commitment that Council staff provide to the Banyule community, whilst the outstanding result in ‘Waste Management’ highlights how well the new Waste Management Service has been accepted. The new system is clearly popular with residents, as well as providing better protection for our environment. Banyule was also No.1 in the inner metropolitan group of Councils for ‘Advocacy’ and ‘Enforcement of By-Laws’

There was a fall in the scores for ‘Appearance of Public Areas’ and ‘Town Planning and Policy Approvals’. The issues that lie behind these results will be looked at in more detail and addressed over the coming months.

The Department of Victorian Communities (DVC) survey results this year, and the consistently high results over the last seven years of the Survey, demonstrate Banyule’s on-going commitment to continuous improvement and meeting the needs of its community.

2.2.2 Responsive to Community Needs

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 have been 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.

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As part of Banyule's focus on continuing to improve its responsiveness, an integrated Place Management approach is being taken to address community priorities and social needs and strengthen its forthcoming 2006-2010 City Plan. The approach is assisting in the effective implementation of Melbourne 2030 planning initiatives, including the Greensborough Project and the Heidelberg & Austin Specialised Activity Centres, development

Council is also continuing to implement the outcomes of the Banyule Integrated Transport Strategy to guide the provision, use and development of transport facilities for the community, and through the Traffic Management Infrastructure Project undertake a range of key traffic management projects to improve traffic flow and safety.

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.

2.2.3 Accessible for whom the service is intended

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

This targeted approach is being complemented by the Council-wide review currently being undertaken of Banyule's Community Inclusion and Access Policy. This review is developing strategies to reduce the barriers that restrict the ability of all members of the community to access Council and community services, facilities and opportunities. A key objective is to identify a whole of Council/whole of community approach to enable the more effective inclusion of people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and other identified priority community groups. The project will also assist in further developing key result areas in relation to accessibility and inclusion for incorporation in the Best Value process for measurement and continuous improvement for each service unit across Council.

A valuable recent initiative to foster better links and information flows with the community has been the introduction of Council's "Out & About" program. Under this program members of the Customer Services 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.

2.2.4 Continuous Improvement

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

(a) Best Value Service Action Plans

Each Best Value service review has incorporated the development of a comprehensive, 3-year rolling action plan for continuous improvement. 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 & Cost Standards and the review of current work practices
- Include actions from key service unit strategies

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- Include a program of ongoing consultation and benchmarking to ensure that the services continue to meet community needs
- Incorporate further service planning
- Complement the service unit actions included in key Council plans, eg. City (Council) Plan, Annual Business Plan, State of the Environment Report, Banyule Health Plan, and the Municipal Strategic Statement

(b) Annual Planning and Reporting

All services that have completed their Best Value reviews go through an annual planning and reporting process to review the past year's performance and:

- Prepare an end of year Best Value report
- Review objectives and determine priorities and key challenges
- Review performance against the action plan taking into account community feedback from ongoing consultation
- Develop an updated action plan
- Review performance against the KPI's and targets and determine any changes to KPI's and targets for the coming year

(c) Performance Reporting and Management System (PRAMS)

Council has implemented a corporate planning, reporting and management system. This provides all service units with a framework for:

- Annual planning
- Integrated reporting and monitoring on achievement of corporate and service unit KPIs and actions

(d) Cultural Initiatives to improve the working environment

During 2004-2005 Banyule has undertaken several key initiatives aimed at improving the wellbeing, commitment, performance, and working relationships of staff across Council. Some of these initiatives include:

- "Working Together Working Better" which provides a values framework for staff to: put the customer first, respect support & encourage each other, innovate and deliver best value, always be accountable, communicate effectively, and work together with the community.
- The "Achieving the Best" program has provided Banyule's staff with a new direction for improving community satisfaction, financial performance, and further strengthening organisational culture.
- The Organisational Cultural Inventory (OCI) developed by Human Synergistics is used to monitor improvements in workforce attitude and behaviour. The OCI explores aspects of the organisation's culture that have the greatest impact on the behaviour of people and the functioning of the organisation. The survey results are plotted on a "Circumplex", which measures how 'constructive' the organisation is compared with the average results for organisations in Australia and New Zealand and to track improvements at Banyule from the previous surveys. A new survey will be undertaken in early 2006.

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2.2.5 Reporting regularly to the community

The Best Value 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 and follow links to Your Council and Best Value). Hard copies are available for viewing at Council's three Service Centres.

Copies of documents relating to Council Reports on individual Best Value service reviews are available for viewing via Banyule's internet site (from the above page under the heading "Best Value Completed Reviews") or from the 'Business Services' team, located at Council's Ivanhoe office (275 Upper Heidelberg Road).

Council also regularly utilises its monthly newsletter the "Banner" to report back to the community on its achievements, including Best Value improvements to services. Each Best Value service review for external services includes a report in the Banner on the key roles, achievements and challenges for the service.

2.3 Service Delivery Level

Banyule has an established policy, service review framework, and timetable for applying the Best Value Principles at service delivery level. This enables Council to determine the most effective means of providing service to the community. The framework model adopted is:

- Each Banyule Service will conduct a service review, including:
 - extensive community consultation
 - benchmarking activities
 - service planning.

- Prepare and submit a Best Value Report for Council, including:
 - Service Objectives
 - Quality & Cost Standards (specifications) to reflect the six Best Value Principles
 - an ongoing service improvement Action Plan
 - key performance indicators and targets.

- Report regularly to the community on achievements against the Best Value Principles.

A dedicated team of specialist Best Value practitioners has assisted service units by providing the appropriate level of challenge and guidance throughout the Best Value service review process.

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2.3.1 Best Value Program and Timetable Update

Banyule is on track to complete all of its scheduled Best Value service reviews by 31 December 2005. An update of Banyule's performance against the established current Best Value program and timetable is outlined below:

Service Unit Review	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Functions (The Centre Ivanhoe)	Completed 2 July 2001				
Aquatics (incorporating Council's Ivanhoe Aquatic & Fitness Centre, the Olympic Leisure Centre, Greensborough Pool and Netball Stadium)		Completed 8 Oct 2001			
Information Technology (incorporating IT development and IT Operations)		Completed 6 May 2002			
Waste Management (incorporating Waste Management, Hard Waste, Skip, Operations Depot, Transfer Station & Waste Education)		Completed 17 June 2002			
Parks & Buildings (incorporating Horticultural Services & Nursery, Park Maintenance/Mowing Services, Bushland Management, Tree Care, and Building Maintenance inc. Contract Management)		Completed 17 June 2002			
Development Services (incorporating Development Planning Services, Engineering Services and Building Control Services)			Completed 25 Nov 2002		
Early Years (incorporating Child Care, Family Day Care, Pre Schools, Children Services Resource & Development Officers, and Maternal & Child Health & Family Support)			Completed 9 Dec 2002		
Administration & Laws (incorporating Administration & Governance, Municipal Laws, and Records Management)			Completed 26 May 2003		
Strategic and Economic Development (incorporating Strategic Planning, Economic Development, Environment Planning, Infrastructure & Asset Management, Valuations, & Property Services)			Completed 30 June 2003		
Communications Service (incorporating verbal, written and electronic means of communication)			Completed 30 June 2003		
Financial Services (incorporating financial accounting, management accounting & revenue collection)				Completed 22 Sep 2003	
Youth Services (incorporating youth participation and development, service co-ordination and support, information and referral support, & programs including Jets Studios, LINK-U)				Completed 19 April 2004	

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2.3.1 Best Value Program and Timetable Update (cont.)

Service Unit Review	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/ Dec'05
Customer Service (incorporating service centre operations, call centre operations, customer payment processing/ cashiering, promotion of council services)				Completed 17 May 2004	
Street Sweeping & Cleansing Services (incorporating street sweeping, pits & drain cleaning, public toilet & bbq cleaning, litter collection, dumped rubbish)				Completed 7 June 2004	
Health Services (incorporating immunisation, food safety, and public health)				Completed 21 June 2004	
Leisure & Cultural Services (incorporating leisure service planning, facility development, cultural services, events and festivals, 'Access for All Abilities' program, older adults leisure program, sporting and community liaison)				Completed 21 June 2004	
Aged & Disability Services (HACC) (incorporating service co-ordination, intake & assessment, home care, personal care, property maintenance, respite care, meals preparation & delivery, planned activity groups, senior citizens liaison & support, workforce development, and service development)				Completed 21 June 2004	
Human Resources (incorporating recruitment, training & professional development, induction, industrial relations, employee relations, HR planning & reporting, return to work management, organisational cultural inventory, and personnel administration)					Completed 16 May 2005
Social Planning Unit & Access and Inclusion (incorporating planning for health, crime prevention, community safety, public open space, built environment, together with access and inclusion, social planning, co-ordination of community grants, networking & partnerships, volunteer resourcing, and advocacy)					Completed 20 June 2005
Risk Management					✓
Fleet Management					✓
Major Projects & Infrastructure					✓
Business Services					✓

✓ = service reviews already commenced

