GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Best Value Report 2018 - 2019

Best Value

The Best Value model is a key component of the Council’s continuous improvement program. Best Value principles allow the Council to benchmark services, assess their efficiency, and gauge the extent to which they meet community needs. The aim is to improve the responsiveness, quality, efficiency, accessibility and value of the services that Council provides to the community.

Best Value aims to ensure local government services are the best available and meet the needs of the community.

Best Value Framework

The *Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act 1999* requires the six Best Value principles to be applied to all Council services. These are:

* Best quality and value-for-money;
* Responsiveness to community needs;
* Accessibility of services to those who need them;
* Continuous improvement of services;
* Community consultation on all services and activities; and
* Regular community reporting on Council achievements.

**Embedding the Framework**

Glen Eira City Council has introduced an organisation wide approach to further embed the Best Value Principles in all that we do and to ensure ongoing success and sustainability in the long term.

Council has an ongoing schedule of improvement projects considering the Best Value Principles in section 208C of the Local Government Act and ensure services:

* remain relevant and aligned with community needs and wants, now and in the future;
* are effective in achieving planned outcomes that meet the community’s needs and wants;
* operate efficiently and are delivered at an affordable cost to the community. Service reviews aim to optimise the use of Council’s human resources, systems, materials, plant and equipment, infrastructure and facilities; and
* deliver long term sustainable financial viability.

Best Value Highlights

Highlights from the financial year 2018/19.

Website redevelopment

Council launched its new website on 27 May 2019. The website was developed following extensive user research and was designed to be intuitive to use and easy to understand. In consultation with the community, customer journey maps were developed to understand our customers’ experience. The customer journey maps led to the creation of three [‘Guides to Glen Eira’](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/) on the landing page to provide information in one location for [**new residents;**](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/guides-to-glen-eira/new-residents-guide)[**new parents;**](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/guides-to-glen-eira/parents-guide) and [**new businesses**](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/guides-to-glen-eira/new-business-guide)**.**

Statutory Planning

The Statutory Planning Department has undertaken a whole of service transformation and as a result there has been an improvement in the average time for determining applications from 89 days in 2017/18 to 66 days in 2018/2019. There has been a consequential increase in decisions made within statutory timeframes from 57 per cent to 70 per cent over these two financial years.  Key aspects of the transformation that have assisted reducing timeframes include digitising the service and setting ambitious KPIs for staff while focussing on achieving great outcomes for customers.  In addition, there has been a focus on good decision making and enabling staff to negotiate with all parties in the planning process to achieve an outcome. This approach has resulted in less applications refused by the department and a consequential reduction in the number of Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) appeals.

(Please refer to [**Know Your Council**](http://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils/glen-eira) for a full list of service performance measures).

Better Approvals Project

Council worked with Small Business Victoria on a ‘Better Approvals Project’. Local business owners were consulted to better understand pain points and strive for a great customer experience. The following key changes were made to support businesses:

* Relevant forms and guidelines were rewritten to ensure they were consistent and easy to understand. (The *Footpath Activities Guidelines* was reduced from a 37 page document to six pages);
* Online application forms, automatic fee calculation and instant approval on payment;
* A ‘Business Concierge’ so that businesses have one council contact for assistance; and
* A dedicated webpage was built.

One significant improvement was the time taken to receive a Footpath Trading permit has been reduced from 100+ days to 11 days.

High Priority transactions

In 2017-18 Council digitised 12 high priority transactions. The transactions were considered as an end-to-end process to deliver a digitised solution with a supporting automated back end process. In 2018-19 Council continued this project digitising further transactions such as Footpath Trading Permits, Asset Protection Permits and Sports Ground Allocations. Digitisation provides more opportunities for customers to have 24/7 online access to services, reduction in waiting times, reduction in paper and printing and improved customer experience.

In addition to digitising our customers’ transactions internal forms were also reviewed. Historical processes were often a print, sign, scan, email process that was both time consuming and frustrating. The processes for 137 forms have now gone live with significant time and paper savings and increased staff productivity.

For more information on some of this year’s benefits please refer to the [Annual Report](https://annualreport2018-19.gleneira.vic.gov.au/).

Service reviews

The following services have been reviewed to provide improved customer experience, better quality services and more efficient and cost-effective processes:

The *Community Grants Program* was reviewed to ensure that Council’s investment of nearly $450,000 per year provides maximum community benefit. The review sought feedback from existing grant applicants and recipients and compared Glen Eira to other councils. Identified improvements led to the introduction of a new grants program of annual Community Strengthening Grants and Partnership and Events Grants and an ongoing Small Grants Program.  These new grants programs complement the existing Facility Hire Grants, Seniors Grants and Three-Year Service Level Agreements.

The tendering process was also reviewed for improvement opportunities and to ensure that our processes were efficient for our internal and external customers.  Key projects identified were; improvements to our tender template and contract documentation, additional resourcing, providing training, and investigation of online evaluation software.

Service reviews scheduled for 2019/20 include:

* Parking and enforcement
* Noise complaints
* Infrastructure assets
* Purchasing

Glen Eira Transforming Together (GETT) Portfolio

In addition to the schedule of service reviews Council has a transformation portfolio of projects that has been independently assessed as sector leading because of its genuine end to end approach. Council is proud to have received recognition in 2018/19 with following awards:

* *LGPro Federation Awards* – Best Innovative Management Initiative for Imagination@work, Council’s platform to collect ideas from staff which led to new initiatives such as the planning activity map and digital visitor sign in.
* *Australian Business Excellence Awards* – CX for customer journey mapping and change management, Employer of Choice and for our GETT portfolio of transformation work.
* *Municipal Association of Victoria MAV Awards* – Collaboration of the Year and Customer Experience Achievement of the Year for digitising our high priority transactions.
* *MAV Awards* – Customer Experience Achievement of the year for Footpath Trading Permits.
* *Australasian Reporting Awards* - Gold Award for the 2017-18 Annual Report and a finalist in the Online Annual Report category.

Projects completed in 2018/19:

* Website redevelopment
* *Channel Strategy*
* ICT transformation – integration architecture, change management, process automations and security uplift
* Data ownership and management model
* Portfolio management framework
* Uplift of resource skills and capacity
* Development of core capabilities

Projects to be undertaken in 2019/20:

* A new community dashboard to provide transparent and timely reporting on Council’s performance;
* A *Customer Strategy* to find new ways to engage and serve the community;
* Improved search functionality on Council’s website;
* A greater digital presence within the community including digital kiosks in activity centres to allow customers to complete transactions and find information about Council;
* Introduction of business intelligence to make more informed decisions to better understand and serve our community;
* Introduction of smart city technology to improve liveability now and into the future.

The projects above provide a sound foundation for Council’s next round of initiatives that are currently underway for delivery in 2019-20.

Reporting to the community

Regular, transparent reporting on Council’s performance can be found in the [**Quarterly Service Performance Report**](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/about-council/our-performance/quarterly-service-performance-report-2019) and further performance and benchmarking information is available on Local Government Victoria’s website [**Know Your Council**](https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/)**.** Council now also [**live streams**](http://webcast.gleneira.vic.gov.au/) all Council Ordinary Meetings to provide the community with transparency to Council and the decision-making process.

Council participates in the annual [**Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey**](https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/about-council/our-performance/community-satisfaction-survey) to identify and respond to community wants and needs. Glen Eira City Council consistently performs higher than the state-wide rating.