



Case Study

Bass Coast Shire Council IT Policy System Implementation

“Adapting our approach to deliver one policy incorporating many standards means we will be able to maintain, and update our system more efficiently. This will also enable us to meet our governance and audit requirements whilst keeping a consistent approach”

Brian Olden - Information Services Manager



About Bass Coast

Less than two hours drive from Melbourne, Bass Coast is a unique combination of unspoiled coastline and picturesque rural hinterland. A popular holiday destination, with quaint rural villages, bustling holiday towns, rolling hills and world renowned surf breaks providing a breath-taking getaway for over three million visitors each year.

Currently the fastest growing area in regional Victoria, Bass Coast has a permanent population of approximately 30,000, although in peak season the population is almost triple that.

Background

Bass Coast Shire Council has over three hundred and twenty active users who access a range of local government applications. Sixty percent of the user population are desk based with a desktop computer and desk phone. Thirty percent of those desk based personnel also use a tablet, laptop or smartphone. It is expected this figure will increase as staff become more demanding in terms of workplace mobility.

In satisfying audit requirements and putting into effect governance improvements, the Bass Coast Shire Council identified the need to update their current ICT strategy which in turn required updating their outdated IT policies.

Challenges

On assessing the project the Council determined a number of challenges and considerations. They included:

- Policy development is time consuming
- All policies needed to meet governance and audit requirements
- Policy content should be delivered in a standard and consistent manner
- A comprehensive project meant creating and delivering 25 policies
- Ensuring the right level of engagement from HR and other council teams was critical

Solution

“With our largest challenge being dealing with the complexities of rolling out 25 policies, the decision was made to engage an outside agency for professional advice. We approached Kaon SecurITy as they had the right experience having worked in the local government IT sector for over 15 years. They have helped other council organizations to overcome similar challenges and meet similar requirements and expectations” says Brian Olden, Information Services Manager at Bass Coast Shire Council.

As a result of the consultation, Bass Coast Shire Council decided to implement one policy and have everything else in the form of standards. The Policy System methodology incorporated the following steps:

- Completion of a questionnaire
- Preparation of first draft
- Onsite review conducted over two days
- Final version delivered
- Implementation guidelines provided
- Maintenance to allow further changes over time

The onsite review process encouraged input from teams within the organization. It proved a great exercise in gap analysis with the IT team and allowed Bass Coast Council to get some clarity on aspects of IT operational priorities. It also proved a worthwhile facilitation exercise for the stakeholders in areas such as HR and Finance on the need for IT policies and procedures, while at the same time providing an opportunity for the review of existing procedures and practices, and the clarification of terms and standards.

Benefits

“By adapting our approach and delivering one policy incorporating many standards we will be able to maintain, and update our system more efficiently. This will also enable us to meet our governance and audit requirements plus keep a consistent approach” Brian comments.

The Policy System has resulted in significant benefits including:

- Easy to use portal based system
- Easy cross referencing to standards information
- A good foundation in terms of the policies built into the system
- Time savings
- Cost effectiveness
- Common standards across the Council
- Good alignment between IT and external auditors

Leadership

Bass Coast's different approach to the policy deployment exercise follows in the footsteps of some QLD Councils. Other Victorian Councils have monitored the process with interest as they look to address some of the challenges and concepts involved in rolling out 25 policies. In finishing the project Bass Coast Shire Council believe it has been a successful test case.

