

Case Study – Sharing the GIS Good Practice Framework Survey results with the Corporate Management Team (CMT)

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Background

The Rural City of Wangaratta

The Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW) is located in North East Victoria. It is approximately 3639sq km in size and has a population of approximately 28000. The main centre is Wangaratta with a number of small rural towns. RCoW is governed by seven Councillors and is divided into four wards.

Council employs approximately 250 FTE staff and support approximately 260 desktop computer users.

GIS Good Practice Framework Survey (GPFS)

The GPFS is an annual Victoria-wide survey commissioned by the Local Government Spatial Reference Group (LGSRG) that aims to benchmark GIS services in Local Government. Divided into five proficiency areas, the survey has been running since 2013 and provides councils with consistent results that are comparable within Council year on year, and between like councils. The survey results enable councils to understand potential areas of improvement, depending on the needs of the council.

As the RCoW is a paid sponsor of the LGSRG, the results from the survey are supplied in a format tailored specifically to RCoW along with comparisons against similar councils. The report is titled GIS Good Practice Framework: Rural City of Wangaratta, Assessment. RCoW has been participating in the survey as a paid sponsor since 2013.

Challenge

The GIS team is seeking investment by Council through the annual budget process to develop and commission a public facing GIS. The public facing GIS would enable the sharing of council information with the community in a user friendly interactive map on Council's website.

In addition, the GIS team are seeking investment to develop a GIS Strategy. The Strategy is to help guide the direction of GIS in RCoW and ensure that future investment is focused on clearly defined business requirements.

A further challenge is that the Council budget has been severely impacted by rate capping and there are limited funds to support new initiatives.

Solution

The annual council budgeting process provides the opportunity to present new initiatives to council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) consisting of the CEO and four directors with the finance manager for budget consideration.

The GIS team, to support the project bids, prepared a brief presentation to the CMT. The presentation included the GPFS results for RCoW for the previous year to demonstrate where Council sits in comparison to other like Councils for the various proficiency areas. The GPFS results were compiled into an easy to read table for the presentation to CMT and focused on the results for 2017, refer Figure 1. The table compares council results to similar sized Regional City average and the State average. The table helped to identify potential improvement areas.

Proficiency Focus Area	Wangaratta	Regional City Average	State Average
Spatial Capability	D	D	C
Core Data Maintenance	B	B	B
Property & Rating Integration	A	A	B
Asset Management to GIS Integration	C	C	C
Community Engagement & Self Service	E	C	D

(Best Grade)				(Lowest Grade)
A	B	C	D	E

Figure 1. GIS Good Practice results – Rural City of Wangaratta

The GPFS result for RCoW in the proficiency area of Spatial Capability is 'D' and below the state average of 'C'. This result was used as an argument for a GIS Strategy that supports ongoing investment in GIS ensuring funds are directed towards clearly established business requirements designed to support and enhance services.

Council's rating for Community Engagement & Self Service is 'E', well below the state average and that of similar sized councils. Public facing GIS can provide the community with easy access to council information and is an investment in self-service. Community members are able to make initial enquiries online or be directed online to view information in a geographic context such as planning overlays, bin collection, road closures, capital work programs etc.

Result

The funding request for the Public facing GIS on council website was successful. The project proposal provided a compelling business case that supports the use of interactive mapping for community engagement. The GPFS results, as presented to the CMT, helped to reinforce the potential of community engagement through GIS applications and the wide adoption of similar technologies across the industry.

The funding request for the GIS Strategy was unfortunately not successful. The Strategy as a piece of work was supported by council CMT however the funding to outsource in the upcoming financial year was not.

The presentation to council CMT provided an opportunity to raise the profile of GIS services and share the GPFS results at an executive business level. The CMT was mostly unaware of the benchmarking of GIS services through the GPFS report. The report generated discussion and a request for the full report from one of the directors.

Quote: Suzanne Fisher – Manager – Customer and Information Services, Rural City of Wangaratta

“Rural City of Wangaratta find the GIS Good Practice survey a valuable tool in understanding how we are performing, not only to like councils but also across the state average. Local Government customers no longer see themselves as “just rate payers” and expect the same level of service and experience as our commercial counterparts and information and technology is the key to bridging this gap. The GPF provides the insights needed to make informed decisions on where we need to invest our time and resources, including investment, to ensure we are meeting these growing customer needs.”