



**Baw Baw Shire Council**  
**Customer Excellence Strategy**  
**2018-2021**

## Introduction

Baw Baw Shire covers an area of 4031 square kilometres and has an estimated population of 48,479<sup>1</sup>. This Shire is growing rapidly with 13.1 percent<sup>1</sup> increase in population between the 2011 and 2016.

Community expectations of local government are also increasing. Rising use of social media means that the community can easily express dissatisfaction if the experience does not meet their expectation. This is aligned to the growing perception of residents as 'customers', rather than merely ratepayers, who expect the same levels of service from government as from commercial transactions<sup>2</sup>.

The Customer Excellence Strategy outlines actions to assist in achieving Baw Baw Shire's Council Plan 2017-2021 Mission;

*Leaders in delivering quality, innovative and community focused services today that make a difference for tomorrow.*

## Our Customers

Baw Baw Shire Council defines 'customers' to incorporate everyone with whom we deal. Customers include our residents, local businesses, visitors, community groups, internal staff, government and non-government agencies with whom we interact.

## Our Customer Excellence Vision

To provide exceptional, efficient, accurate and timely customer service in a friendly and approachable manner. Adapting to modern and effective customer service processes whilst upholding good old fashion customer services values and providing flexible options of customer service for all our customer.

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>2</sup> **Source:** KPMG Local government – a challenging future (2017)

## Overview

Our Customer Excellence Strategy supports the delivery of the Organisational Excellence objective outlined in the Baw Baw Shire's Council Plan 2017-2021.

The strategy charts the direction Baw Baw Shire will take to achieve our customer excellence vision:

*To be developed*

Set out in the strategy are the priorities and objectives for the next three years to move closer to achieving our vision.

### Priority 1 - Customer First

Objective: Customer is at the centre of all service delivery.

### Priority 2 – Timely Service Delivery

Objective: We will meet or exceed our established service timeframes.

### Priority 3 - Accessible Services

Objective: We will increase the number of ways customers can interact with us.

### Priority 4 - Continuous Improvement

Objective: Measurement and feedback drive continuous improvement.

Supporting the strategy is the implementation of the organisational Culture Plan and our Digital Roadmap.



## **What does the data tell us?**

The way customers interact with Baw Baw Shire is changing. While phone remains the primary method, with 66% of customers choosing to call us, 18% of customers now choose to interact with us online using our website. Online has seen a major increase from just 6% in 2017 and with the launch of our Live Chat service is predicted to increase.

While our customer excellence strategy cuts across the organisation, it is clear from the data that improving the experience online for our customers must be a focus. However, no matter the way a customer chooses to contact us, they expect us to be easy to deal with, understand and resolve their queries promptly, and treat them as an individual, not just another transaction.

## **Implementation**

Our Customer Excellence Strategy will be implemented over 2018-2021. Like our Council Plan 2017-2021, this strategy will be updated annually to reflect progress on our initiatives, and the addition of new initiatives as we move closer to realising our vision.

*To be developed*

## Customer Excellence Strategy Initiatives 2018-2019

### Priority 1 – Customer First Initiatives

Historically, customers engaged with local government through processes and systems designed to service the organisation, and not the customer. Whether intentionally or not, customers would face a series of mazes to navigate to receive service.

Baw Baw Shire will put the customer at the centre of all that we do.

Initiative	What does success look like?	By when
Develop and implement 'Customer First' training program across the organisation.	All staff trained in 'Customer First' approach.	June 2019
Redesign internal processes to focus on the customer experience and outcome.	Customers experience a single Baw Baw Shire rather than a collection of individual directorates.	June 2020
Redesign our website to be service focussed.	Measurable increase in website traffic and self-service options.	June 2019
Create an online option for all services.	Customers can complete all transactions online 24 x 7.	June 2021

### Priority 2 – Timely Service Delivery Initiatives

Meeting timelines is key to delivering a positive customer experience. Baw Baw Shire has an established Customer Service Charter that outlines our timelines for service delivery.

Baw Baw Shire will meet or exceed our established service timeframes.

Initiative	What does success look like?	By When
Launch our Customer Service Charter.	All staff made aware of our established service timeframes.	July 2018
Transparently report our performance on our website.	Customer service charter metrics available on our website to track our performance.	August 2018
Pilot the use of automated chat bots to provide 24x7 service.	Chat bots available for high volume customer enquiries such as 'what is my bin day?'	June 2019
Introduce mobile technology for our urban operations staff.	Increase in service performance by working smarter in the field.	June 2019

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>What does success look like?</b>	<b>By When</b>
Benchmark our top-10 customer processes and implement actions to improve turnaround times.	Top 10 processes show a measurable improvement in turnaround time.	June 2019

### **Priority 3 – Accessible Services Initiatives**

Across industries, 81% of all customers attempt to self-service before contacting an organisation<sup>3</sup>. Providing multiple ways to interact with council allows the customer to use their preferred method.

Baw Baw Shire will increase the number of ways customers can interact with us.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>What does success look like?</b>	<b>By When</b>
Implement self-service options for our top-10 customer inquiries.	All staff trained and aware of our established service timeframes.	June 2019
Implement new phone system.	Customers will not wait more than 30 seconds before being answered by a staff member 80% of the time.	Sept 2018
Investigate the provision of increased opening hours during peak periods.	Business case presented to Council for the increase of hours at our customer service centres during peak periods.	June 2019
Continue to promote the use of Live Chat on our website.	Increase in usage of Live Chat.	June 2019
Implement online booking services for using your community facilities.	Customers can book and pay for the use of community facilities online.	December 2019

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<sup>3</sup> **Source:** Harvard Business Review Jan-Feb 2017 Issue

## Priority 4 – Continuous Improvement Initiatives

Commercial organisations continually need to improve their services and processes to remain competitive. Local government should be no different where a culture of continuous improvement leads to more efficient and effective services.

Baw Baw Shire will use measurement and feedback to improve the customer experience continuously.

Initiative	What does success look like?	By When
Implement 'Net Promoter Score' <sup>4</sup> methodology as a way of measuring customer experience incorporating feedback mechanism into our contact methods (phone, face-to-face, website and live-chat).	Net Promoter Score measured monthly and actions taken each month to improve our experience continually.	December 2018
Implement coaching program for front-line customer service staff.	Measurable improvement in our net promoter score.	December 2019

## Realising Our Vision

Baw Baw Shire is committed to achieving our customer excellence vision. By placing the customer at the centre of what we do, realigning our processes to be customer focussed, providing customers with easier ways to interact with us and continually and transparently measuring our progress, we believe that our vision is achievable.

We know that actions speak louder than words and so we look forward to our customers experiencing the continual improvement in our customer service performance.

## Adopted

This policy was adopted by Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: SatMetrix, What is net-promoter score? (<https://www.netpromoter.com/know/>)