

BEST VALUE AND COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY POLICY

Policy Number:	2.2.6
Approved by:	Council
Date Approved:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	December 2026
Applicable to:	Councillors, Council employees and temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants engaged by Council
Responsible Officer:	Manager Corporate Finance
Related Policies:	Nil
Related Documents:	Wellington Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
Statutory Reference:	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Australian Consumer Law and Fair-Trading Act 2012</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i>

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Wellington Shire Council's commitment to best value and competitive neutrality.

THE POLICY

Best Value

Implementation of Best Value Principles requires the Council to ensure that:

- all Council services meet quality and cost standards in accordance with section 106 of the *Local Government Act 2020*;
- all services provided by Council must be responsive to the needs of the community;
- all Council services are accessible to those members of the community for whom the services are intended;
- all Council services achieve continuous improvement in the provision of services for its community; and
- the Council consults regularly with the community in relation to the services it provides.

When applying Best Value Principles, the Council may take into account:

- the requirement to review services against the best on offer in both the private and public sectors; and
- an assessment of value for money in service delivery; and
- community expectations and values; and
- the balance of affordability and accessibility of services to the community; and
- opportunities for local employment growth or retention; and
- the value of potential partnerships with other councils, the State Government and the Commonwealth Government; and
- potential environmental advantages for the Council's municipal district.

Council commits to incorporating Best Value Principles into its daily operations by integrating best value into its continuous improvement program. It also commits to reviewing all of its services as part of its annual planning cycle as well as during the development of strategies that support the achievement of community and organisation goals.

Council commits to involve management, staff and the community (where appropriate) in the conduct of any best value service reviews.

Outcomes arising from Best Value service reviews will be implemented in accordance with the relevant conditions of Council's current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, specifically per clauses relating to introduction of change and best value processes.

Competitive Neutrality

Competitive neutrality refers to the principle that government-owned and privately owned businesses should compete on a level playing field, without any unfair advantages or disadvantages due to government ownership.

Wellington Shire Council is committed to implementing a Best Value and Competitive Neutrality Policy and will apply a **competitive neutrality** measure to a "Significant Council Business":

- to the extent that the benefits to be realised from the application of the Competitive Neutrality Measure outweigh the costs; and
- where the application of the competitive neutrality measure is in the public interest.

Where Council applies a competitive neutrality measure, it will select the **competitive neutrality** measure that is most appropriate to the particular significant Council business in question.

Wellington Shire Council is also committed to documenting the application of **competitive neutrality** measures to significant Council businesses or businesses that may be deemed "significant". In doing so, Council will:

- consult with and inform the community about the process of implementing a competitive neutrality measure to a relevant Council business;
- inform the community about the outcome of any application of a competitive neutrality measure; and
- investigate, document and respond to complaints alleging non-compliance by the Council to the implementation of a Best Value and Competitive Neutrality Policy or improper business practices.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Date of Next Review updated to: December 2024.
1.1	December 2023	Date of Next Review updated to December 2024.
1.2	December 2024	Date of Next Review updated to December 2025. Minor grammar update. Competitive Neutrality: Inclusion of a definition of the principle.
1.3	December 2025	Removal of requirement to report regularly on best value principles. Date of Next Review updated to December 2026.