

Burwood takes the ePlanning plunge



Burwood Council started the new year with a bang, diving head first into ePlanning. From 1 January 2020, all Development Applications (DA) for the Council must be lodged online via the NSW Planning Portal. After an intense six months of planning, integration and training, Burwood Council successfully transitioned their systems to ePlanning.

Journey to ePlanning

In July 2019, Burwood Council sought to work with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to align their collective goals of better customer service, transparency of information and increased productivity.

By taking a phased approach to implementing the system, Burwood Council was able to clearly assess their current and future states, successfully integrate with vendors, train staff and communicate with stakeholders.

Staff training on the new workflow and 'Trapeze' software began in November 2019, alongside the commencement of their communications strategy. Phase 1 of the system went live on 13 November.

Communications continued throughout December, along with portal training for staff. Phase 2 went live on 1 January 2020, meaning anyone lodging a development application in the Burwood Council area must do so online through the NSW Planning Portal, provided by DPIE.

"Six months of planning and training have all been worth it. We are excited for our customers and the 24/7 convenience that the Planning Portal brings. Less paper forms and quicker processing times are a win for everyone"

*Kimberly Everett, Deputy General Manager,
Burwood Council*



Gone are the days of filling out paper forms.

GAINS at a GLANCE

A win for both council and customers

- **32** forms have been made redundant
- **81** manual processes reduced to **2**
- **24/7** online access for applicants
- **Significant reduction** in paperwork
- **Decreased** turnaround times
- Estimated **65% reduction** in GIPA requests
- Increased accuracy, automation, and transparency in reporting

Training and collaboration = key to success

A sustained focus by Council on training and collaboration proved to be the key to success.

The project began with initial consultation by DPIE and an ePortal briefing. Council commenced stakeholder engagement and the project approval process. DPIE provided advice throughout the process and connected Burwood with Sutherland Shire Council, who held a demonstration day to give an overview of their own system.

DPIE held a Q&A session for Council staff and stakeholders, while Sutherland Shire gave a peer review of the Council's processes. Training sessions were held on the new software, system integration, and front and back end portal processes.

After the soft launch for integration, DPIE gave a peer review of Burwood Council's procedures manual, and a post implementation review was held.