

# Creating a better future

## The Sustainable Excellence Journey at Yarra Ranges

Glenn Patterson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Yarra Ranges Council



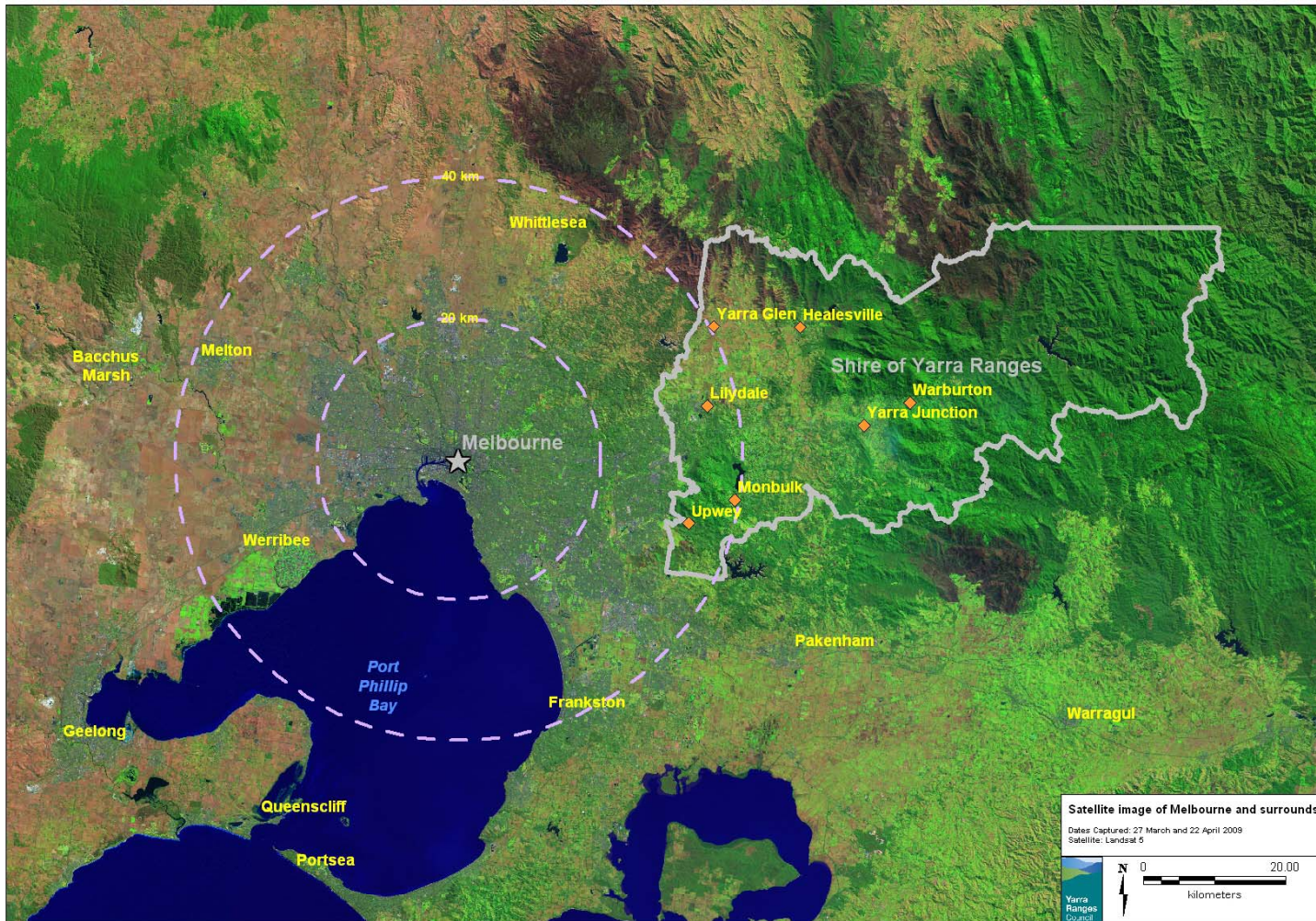
# Introduction

- About Yarra Ranges
- Our destination
- Australian Business Excellence Framework
- Building on what's gone before
- Case study
- Learnings

# About Yarra Ranges

- 147,000 residents
- 2,500 square kilometres
- \$150 million budget
- 850 staff
- 140 different services
- 'Young' Shire
- Slight population growth
- Diverse, dispersed (and some disadvantaged) communities
- 10,000 businesses employing over 35,200
- 2.5 million tourists p.a.
- \$550 million agricultural production

# About Yarra Ranges



# Our destination

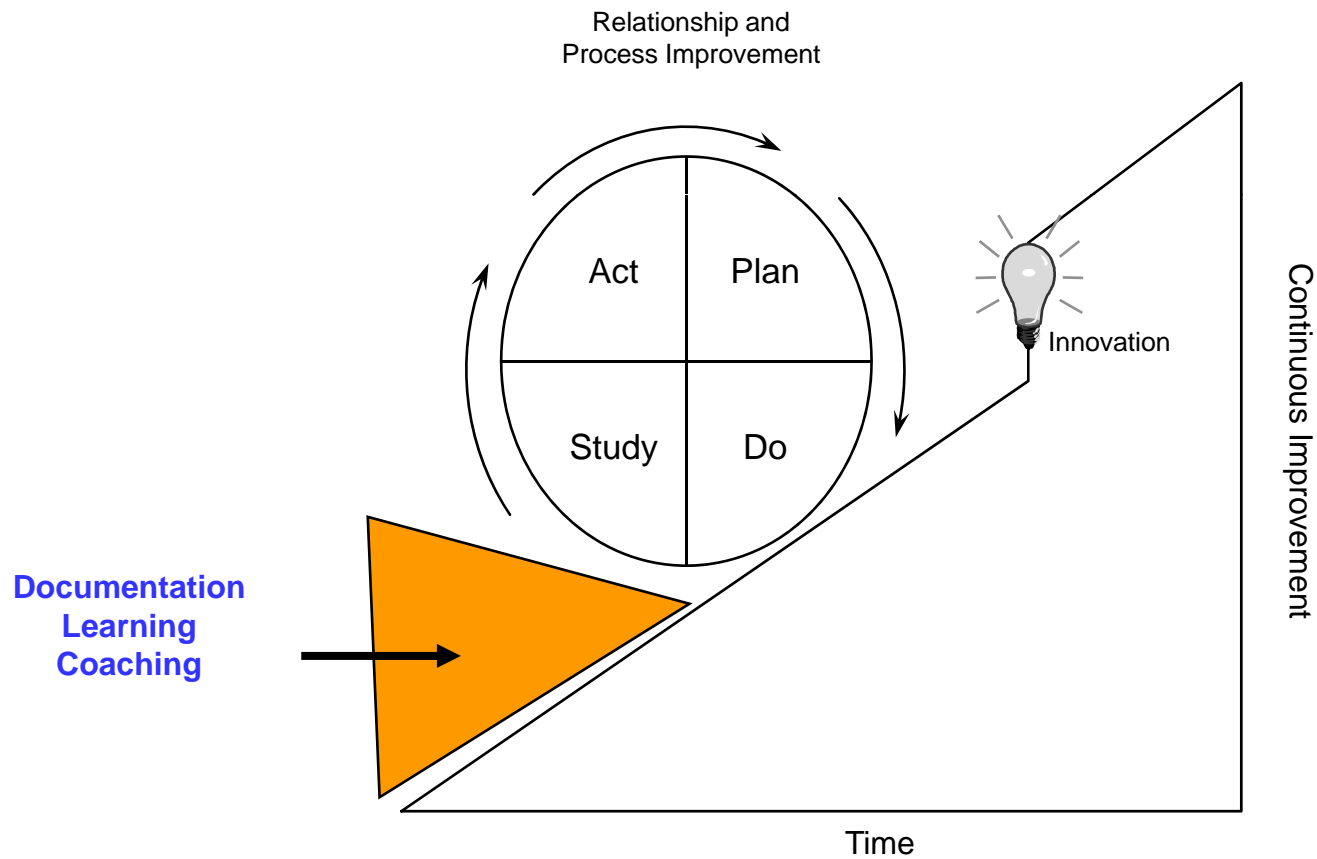
Yarra Ranges is a **high performing** organisation providing great **service** to its communities:

- The customer is the focus of everything
- Our leadership is inspiring and innovative
- Our systems are dynamic, adaptable and responsive
- This is a great place to work and live
- We love the diversity and beauty of Yarra Ranges
- We work in partnership with our community

# Business Excellence Framework



# Sustainable Improvement



# Building on what's gone before

- 'Branch Out' Leadership Development Program developed innovative ideas
- 'Walk in my shoes' program continued
- Good Ideas Survey – 50 implemented
- 'Sustainable Excellence' to support existing Sustainability Framework
- Organisational Self Assessment process has identified strengths and opportunities for improvement

# Getting the journey started

- Exec. Team – raised awareness and garnered support. Same for Crs.
- Training of two PDSA teams in August 2008 - Planning Services and Capital Works Project Management

Lessons learned from this initial PDSA program were that:

- The tools and techniques underpinning the framework are well-designed, flexible and relevant for our environment
- There are resource implications in doing the work effectively
- Ongoing organisational support, training and mentoring in applying the improvement techniques is required to ensure a consistent approach
- Proper scoping of CI projects critical to success.

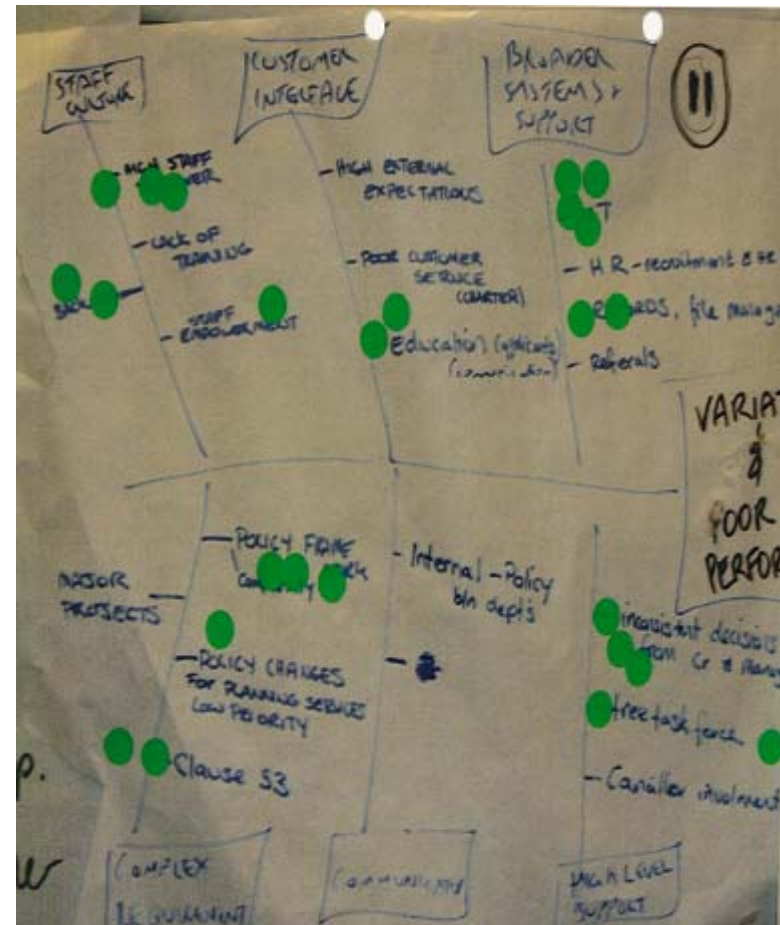
# Sustainable Excellence - Program Devt

Sustainable Excellence program gathered strength with the implementation of:

- BLAST training in each directorate to raise Sustainable Excellence awareness
- An Organisational Self Awareness project by a cross-organisational OSA team. The OSA outcomes provided a clear diagnosis of organisational performance and identified the **Customer and Market Focus** and **Process, Management and Innovation** categories as areas that require focus over the next year.

# Case Study: Planning Services

- 2000 applications per year (second highest in State)
- 27 staff
- Complex planning scheme
- High staff turnover and low morale
- Poor customer service



# Case Study: What's been done?

- Application, lodgement and allocations processes simplified
- Application referrals process to other authorities streamlined
- New pre application process and improved information for applicants about what's required
- All documentation re-written
- Technology improvements – systems and tools
- New web page with sample applications, more on line functionality
- Stakeholders tested new processes

# Case Study: Outcomes

September 2008 - January 2010:

- Planning applications completed within 60 days improved from 50% to 64% over 15 month period (stretch target is 80%)
- 'Live' applications decreased from 950 to 455 (lowest on record) over 15 months
- Reduced staff turnover
- Staff satisfaction high (87% engagement in Oct 09)

# Sustainable Excellence – next phase objectives

- Consolidate the momentum gained to date
- Extend Sustainable Excellence understanding across the organisation
- Achieve synergies with organisational initiatives such as the Customer First, IT and People strategies
- Achieve real and sustainable improvement outcomes

# Next steps

Continue to embed Sustainable Excellence across the organisation:

- Further develop the Yarra Ranges CI methodology and toolkit
- Implement OSA outcomes
- Create process improvement teams – support Customer First and Information Management Strategies (corporate) and areas identified in business planning process
- Develop process mapping methodology
- Develop further internal facilitators
- ‘Free’ the cultural barriers to innovation and improvement
- Align everything to sustainable excellence
- Change conversations to change mindsets about improvement

# Success factors

- Build on what's gone before – respect that
- Develop a robust evidence base
- Push 'low hanging fruit' OFI's through, where deeply entrenched poor practice
- Actively engage your people in change
- Ensure senior leadership models new behaviour and removes barriers to higher performance
- Focus on people, leadership development and the customer

# Innovation mindset

- Be preoccupied with your organisation's improbable future, accepting the reality of current challenges
- Believe you can inspire your people to embrace a better future
- Develop your key innovation influence - the mindset of your people
- Develop a “dare to do and to try” mindset
- Beware of perfectionists
- Consider the whole rather than the pieces
- Find time to work on the system
- Help your people find their voice and use their good ideas
- Steal good ideas shamelessly
- Identity the long levers for change. Make effort count

# Finally....

Marian Wright Edelman:

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

# Questions

