

Data#3 Customer Story

# Bega Valley Shire Council

*Bega Valley Shire Council Ensures Compliance and Value  
with Data#3 Software Asset Management*

Data#3



# Data#3



## Project Highlight

**The Bega Valley Shire Council noticed a significant difference when conducting a recent review of their environment, unlike before, there were no more surprises.**

## Objective

As the time came to renew its enterprise agreement with Microsoft, the Bega Valley Shire Council conducted a full review and assessment of its licensing situation. By understanding exactly what was in use, and comparing available options, the council could seek the best enterprise agreement for its needs.

## Approach

As a government-funded organisation, the Bega Valley Shire Council views compliance and value as critical elements of its overall IT strategy. For this reason, it conducts a review before renewing its substantial investment in Microsoft licensing. The council chose Data#3 to perform this assessment thanks to a trusted relationship and the provision of highly competitive pricing provided in the quote, as well as an awareness that Data#3 has the considerable experience needed to deliver positive outcomes they sought.

## Solutions & Services

- ✓ Software Asset Management
- ✓ Project Services
- ✓ Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

## Benefits

- A clear understanding of the current license situation in a complex, multi-site environment
- Recommendations on the best Microsoft license options to suit the council's needs
- Prepared to issue a Request for Quote to secure the right license coverage
- Confidence that the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement renewal will ensure full compliance and strong value

## Testimonial

**“Our contact was very responsive – I can pick up the phone and talk any time, or send an email, and always get a quick response. Data#3 has always been really, really good for us to deal with.”**

Thomas Lennon, ICT Co-ordinator,  
Bega Valley Shire Council.

## Bega Valley Shire Council

**“We’d built a relationship with Data#3 over the years, so there was a level of trust there.”**

**Thomas Lennon, ICT Co-ordinator,  
Bega Valley Shire Council.**

## The Background

Nestled in the South-East of New South Wales, the Bega Valley Shire Council (“the council”) area is known for its beautiful coastline, fertile farmland, and production of some of the nation’s best-loved food products. In the 2019-2020 bushfire season, the region experienced heavy loss, and the council plays an instrumental role in nurturing the community through a massive rebuilding project.

From servers to user productivity software, Microsoft technology is essential to the day-to-day activities of the council’s 500 staff. The council’s small, busy IT team follows best practice by commissioning an assessment of its software use and needs before negotiating every enterprise agreement, to ensure it is fully compliant while avoiding any unnecessary spend.

## The Challenge

Whether supporting the community through the aftermath of severe bushfires, maintaining services through the COVID-19 pandemic, or providing essential services such as waste management, the Bega Valley Shire Council’s 500 staff work hard for the local community. The council’s small, but busy IT team plays a key role in enabling the staff to perform at their best. For ICT Co-ordinator, Thomas Lennon, it all comes down to a passion for serving the local population.

*“We do this because we are there to serve the community. If we don’t provide a service to staff, they’re not able to give the best service to the community,”* explained Lennon.

In recent times, the council has faced the impact of massive bushfire damage, followed immediately by responding to a global pandemic. The IT team needed to be ready to step in and handle whatever challenges it faced.

*“The bushfires of 2019 to 2020 opened up a lot of positions with the council, and the grant-funded branch established for this purpose meant an influx of people. Many properties were damaged, resulting in a lot of clean-up work, there was so much to be done, as we were a heavily damaged council area,”* said Lennon.

*“Our team was dealing with that extra load when the COVID-19 pandemic came along, and like any IT department, we had to enable work from home for our staff almost overnight.”*

While working tirelessly to face both ordinary and extraordinary challenges, Lennon said that it is important to still maintain good practice with ongoing needs. The council had previously found it valuable to perform an assessment before renewing its existing Microsoft enterprise agreement, and no matter what else is happening, the responsibility to remain compliant is unchanged. Still, the team was glad to have that work completed before the impact of COVID-19 was felt.

*“Compliance is always important to us. Being a government agency, we make sure we do everything by the books. Before we sign up to a three-year Enterprise Agreement, we are always on the front foot with getting an assessment done,”* outlined Lennon.

*“We have been audited in the past by Microsoft, and it is nice to have the assurance that we have done everything within good conscience to get it right. We can tell Microsoft we have done an assessment with their partner, and that we have done everything recommended.”*

## Bega Valley Shire Council

**“Data#3 can give insight around licensing changes, make recommendations around our workflows, look at what we’re using, and show where we could be better off.”**

**Thomas Lennon, ICT Co-ordinator,  
Bega Valley Shire Council.**

## Business and IT Outcomes

The council engaged Data#3 to provide Software Asset Management Services, in order to complete a full assessment of its licencing position and needs. Choosing an experienced partner was, said Lennon, a high priority.

*“We’d built a relationship with Data#3 over the years, so there was a level of trust there. We knew Data#3 would get the job done based on them doing similar work before. You want to know you have a good relationship when going through a rigorous process, that you are not going to be left in the dark or provided with wrong advice.”*

After an initial kick-off meeting, Data#3 used a utility that ran unobtrusively in the background of the council’s environment, gathering information about software use over the course of two weeks.

*“This captured the lion’s share of what was needed, but some locations are not on the LAN, such as childcare centres, so we couldn’t rely on the agent for everything. Data#3 gave us templates to capture information accurately from those sites, which made it a simple process. It was mainly hands off, but because there were little bits of information to capture manually, it proved useful to dedicate a resource to the project from my side – if they just did it when they had some spare time, we may not have got all of the information,”* explained Lennon.

Because the council has followed best practice in performing such assessments before each Enterprise Agreement renewal, Lennon was pleased to note that there were few surprises.

*“It was pretty much as I expected because it is a regular process. When we conducted a review for the first time, years ago, there were more surprises, but this time there was nothing from left field. Still, it proves useful, because the assessment will identify anything we are using that we weren’t taking into account, and at other times, tell us if we have a software application installed that has never been used. The process prompts these conversations around the organisation, so it is about far more than just running a utility,”* said Lennon.

Once the information was gathered, it was analysed and reviewed. One of the most useful elements of the process for the council was having a software licensing expert consider the best options to fit the council’s unique usage pattern.

*“Data#3 can give insight around licensing changes, make recommendations around our workflows, look at what we’re using, and show where we could be better off. Practices have changed with licensing, especially when it comes to our servers. Historically, we were charged per server, then multi-CPU’s came in and then virtual machines on physical servers, so licensing has changed with technology, but with our assessment, we know we will keep getting the best deal,”* explained Lennon.

Armed with the resulting recommendations, the council was able to confidently finalise the software licensing required for the agreement renewal.

*“Ultimately, we were able to get the best value, which is absolutely important when deciding how to spend public funds,”* commented Lennon.

## Bega Valley Shire Council

**“The Data#3 team know what they are doing, they have done this a thousand times with a thousand customers.”**

**Thomas Lennon, ICT Co-ordinator,  
Bega Valley Shire Council.**

## Conclusion

Employing best practice by conducting a software assessment before renewing an enterprise agreement pays off in two keyways. First, it prevents the potential financial penalties, loss of reputation and damaged reputation associated with non-compliance. By taking responsibility, the council is acting ethically, and maintaining its standing as an organisation that does the right thing. Secondly, the council can use the resulting knowledge to ensure that there is no waste in its software expenditure.

To make the most of a commissioned software assessment, Lennon advises that it is valuable to get an initial understanding of what needs to be done.

*“Having an independent understanding gives you a time advantage, and puts less strain on both yourself and the vendor, streamlining the whole process. When I asked for quotes for an assessment, it was evident from the confidence and conviction of the responses who knows what they are doing, and who has been through this before. Data#3 gave a full breakdown of what the project involved, and this aligned with both our own past experience and Microsoft’s recommendations, showing that they know what they are doing. It made for an easy decision,”* said Lennon.

*“The Data#3 team know what they are doing, they have done this a thousand times with a thousand customers.”*

Lennon cited responsiveness as another important success factor. In a busy and complex environment, his team cannot spare time to chase technology partners for information that is not forthcoming.

*“Our contact was very responsive – I can pick up the phone and talk any time, or send an email, and always get a quick response. Data#3 has always been really, really good for us to deal with.”*