cyclone

Watercare boosts utility of its field crew's iPad fleet with Jamf

Watercare *An Auckland Council Organisation*

Watercare is New Zealand's largest water utility, servicing the water and wastewater needs of Auckland and its 1.66 million residents.

In addition to providing water and wastewater services, Watercare's maintenance operation, called Maintenance Services Networks (MSN), manages and maintains Auckland's public water and wastewater networks and accounts for 200 of the utility's 900 staff.

THE CHALLENGE

In the early days of MSN, field workers in the maintenance crews relied on paper, radio or phone to communicate with central dispatch and to report on jobs they worked on.

In 2015 Maintenance Services decided to digitise its field force operations. It deployed 200 Apple iPads with ruggedised cases and vehicle mounts. The iPads were equipped with Click Software to handle dispatch and job management.

The iPads were a major leap forward for field force productivity. They offered crews corporate email access, geospatial information systems (GIS) instead of paper maps, timesheets and health and safety information, and a completely electronic job allocation and management system.

"The crews take photos before, during and after the job and attach them to the file so that anyone in the office or afterwards can see what it was that they had to deal with," Watercare's senior business systems specialist Andrew Swain said.

Digitisation did come with one issue: Patches or software updates required physically touching every single device to make the change. As field workers are on 24-hour rosters and some return to base only two or three times a week, it took a month to complete a software update.

Additionally, the inability to keep track of iPads in the field was deemed a corporate risk.

THE SOLUTION

Cyclone Computer Company, which supplied the iPads, saw that Jamf could address Watercare's device management issue.

A sandbox environment was set up as a pilot in August 2017, and Maintenance Services put Jamf Pro into full production within months.

THE BENEFITS

When Maintenance Services needs to build or re-image an iPad, the whole process can now be completed in 15 minutes compared to one hour previously.

Updates and new apps can be pushed out to the entire fleet at once.

Apart from helping keep the devices up-to-date, the capability also allows Maintenance Services to put more useful information at the fingertips of the field force.

"Because they are driving around all day, we've installed an app made for people who go camping, which maps the location of petrol stations, supermarkets, ATMs, and public toilets in the area. We're trying to make their lives in the field a bit nicer, and with Jamf Pro we can do that quite easily," Swain said.

> " **Jamf allows us to actively interact with the user much more in a way that we weren't able to do so before.** "
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> **- Andrew Swain**
> Watercare's senior business systems specialist

Being able to pinpoint the location of devices has proven useful in recovering iPads that are either lost or stolen.

Maintenance Services has also realised additional benefits – Jamf Pro allows the company to display messages on the iPad's lockscreen. This capability is being used to communicate important messages to staff out in the field.

"In the summertime, we put notices on there to look out for dehydration and to cover up for skin protection," Swain said. "Jamf allows us to actively interact with the user much more in a way that we weren't able to do so before."

Swain said that Maintenance Services' ability to realise benefits from deploying Jamf quickly was aided by training from Jamf as well as access to the Jamf Nation community to users and administrators.

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