



Driving productivity by reimagining the dispatch process

Responsible for providing water and sewerage services to homes and businesses across Tasmania, TasWater directs a workforce of 900 people including 127 crews who address around 3,000 work orders every day. By better utilising their asset management and GIS tools, TasWater have reinvented the dispatch process for productivity, safety, and customer service returns.

Formed through the amalgamation of three separate regional water corporations, TasWater's maintenance operations were extremely disjointed, relying on 26 coordinators around the state acting as intermediaries between field crews and the Call Centre. As a result, key resources became desk-bound simply in order to receive and assign reactive works notifications by telephone, to the detriment of safety oversight, technical mentoring and process efficiency.

By redesigning the dispatch process to better utilise the capabilities of the company's Maximo asset management and Esri GIS toolset, TasWater have achieved organisation-wide productivity targets, whilst improving daily attendance and incident response performance.

“The ability to dispatch not only improves the delivery of our work through more efficient means, but also increases the safety of our people and allows coordinators time away from administration to get into the field.”

Bennie Smith – General Manager Service Delivery

The perils of telephone based dispatch

When a pipe bursts or water quality indicates a fault has occurred somewhere in the network, alerts from the public come through TasWater's Devonport based Operations Control Centre.

Before undertaking an organisation-wide productivity review, call centre operators would action these notifications by identifying which one of 26 coordinators was in the best location to respond and contacting them by telephone to pass on details of the service request.

Coordinators would then progress the service request to a work order by finding and assigning a field crew. Without specific information on the real-time location or expected availability of crews, this could be a bit of a hit and miss affair and the time intensive process kept coordinators tied to their desks on the phone.

In addition to the stress and frustration caused by this double-handling of work orders, the process prevented coordinators from overseeing crew performance in the field, mentoring team members and providing essential safety oversight.



TasWater provides water and sewerage services to homes and businesses across Tasmania. Supplying more than 200,000 customers, their vision is to be a trusted and respected provider of essential services that makes a positive difference to Tasmania.

Every day TasWater works to deliver clean, safe and reliable water services by:

- Producing 196 million litres of drinking water;
- Collecting 137 million litres of sewage; and
- Maintaining 6,231 kilometres of water mains & 4,716 kilometres of sewer mains.



Cutting out the middle-man with centralisation

TasWater had previously implemented IBM Maximo to oversee enterprise asset management operations integrated with their Esri platform and the Geocortex WebGIS, to map the location of assets and work orders. They recognised the potential to tap into previously unused capabilities within these tools to improve the dispatch process

As recognised experts in both enterprise asset management and GIS, Clarita Solutions were engaged to explore options, provide best practice advice and architect a solution integrating Maximo and Esri capabilities in collaboration with TasWater's operations, maintenance and IT teams.

Starting with a pilot project in the Glenorchy service region, an opportunity was identified to streamline work processes with a newly formed Dispatch team based out of the Operations Control Centre (OCC) in Devonport. The objective for this team was to assign reactive customer requests to the most suitable Crew based on:

- Priority of the work and its location; and
- Crew availability and their location.

The solution delivered a new Dispatch Start Centre in Maximo which provides dispatchers with information on actions they need to perform. When combined with the GIS dashboard, a unique view was achieved that provides context into the location of work required and proximity of crews who were available to perform it.

Less phone time, more field time

Following a staged implementation, training and change management plan, the new dispatch process was rolled out to TasWater's entire service delivery network at the end of 2017.

The value delivered as a result of this project is measured in terms of:

- **Customer and community:** work is efficiently prioritised based on urgency, location and availability of field crews;
- **Water and environmental:** field coordinators receive real-time data to manage work quality and capability of teams to ensure water and sewage standards are maintained; and
- **People and culture:** the Coordinator is "released" from desk and able to increase mentoring and leadership for field staff, upskilling all involved and building culture and skills for the long term benefit of Tasmania.

"The single biggest advantage for us is that phones are now not ringing all the time," says Tony Willmott, Value Creation Program Manager at TasWater. "Our maintenance teams now have the ability to see what work has been assigned to them for their daily routines, which assists with planning activities to ensure that their travel time is reduced and their time on tools is increased."

This has been a fundamental transformation in the daily pattern of work for coordinators and field crews, which has driven not only productivity gains but also reduced stress and improved morale across the workforce to the benefit of daily attendance rates.

As an organisation TasWater has achieved its productivity targets, and by improving the dispatch process has been able to improve response time performance even with a reduced head count. There is now also less involvement from call centre staff in the dispatch process, freeing them to return to the call queue quicker and reduce customer wait times on the phone.



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