

MOBILISING SYDNEY WATER'S INSPECTION SERVICE

WITH XPLORE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY



INSPECTOR ON A SERVICE CALL WITH MOTION BY XPLORE TABLETS IN HAND



Company **Sydney Water**
Industry **Utilities – Field Service / Inspection**
Location **Sydney, NSW, Australia**

BACKGROUND

Sydney Water, Australia's largest water utility, provides drinking water, recycled water and wastewater services to more than four million people in Sydney, Illawarra and the Blue Mountains. Sydney Water's Plumbing Inspection and Assurance Service (PIAS) is responsible for \$20 Billion worth of assets across the region, ensuring quality service delivery by licensed plumbers and drainers by administering the NSW Plumbing Code of Practice.

CHALLENGE

A mobile system to automate 50,000 annual field inspections

Changes in the Water Industry Act required a new approach to plumbing regulation, and Sydney Water needed to better accommodate plumbers certifying to their customers that their work complies with codes and standards. Sydney Water needed to change its focus from pipes to plumbers and from inspections to auditing plumber performance.

With over 120 filing cabinets filled with hundreds of thousands of 'current' property folders located on multiple sites and plumbing inspectors self-managing inspection times, inspectors spent considerable yet necessary amounts of time in the office. So, in 2007, with 50,000 annual inspections and hundreds of thousands of supporting archived property folders, PIAS and their business team sought a new approach to the administration of its plumbing regulation and inspection management.

It sought an automated field solution that was lightweight, durable and would provide full PC functionality to manage multiple applications. It also wanted the chosen solution to have the capacity to schedule inspections centrally, monitor OH&S and improve overall business capability.

SOLUTION

Motion by Xplore Tablet PCs configured with a Retriever Communications mobile inspection application.

Sydney Water's previous experience with an external supplier for the Love Your Garden program brought them back in touch with Retriever Communications who was engaged to build a field tablet-PC based mobile solution supported by centralised scheduling. After exploring several different types of mobile computing devices, Sydney Water chose the Motion F5 by Xplore Tablet PCs as their solution platform.

BENEFITS

Field productivity improvement of up to 30%

Job information and site diagrams updated in real-time

Full PC functionality

Converted paper-based process to fully electronic documentation

Centralised scheduling of inspections

Centralised monitoring of safety and the ability to provide real time updates with customers

"The mobile application allows our field inspectors to spend more time in the field conducting inspections. It has considerably reduced the paperwork and delivered real productivity gains."

*Phil Rayment
Program Manager, CCRD, Sydney Water*



Rugged and lightweight, the highly mobile tablet PC with a full screen and outdoor viewing capabilities, integrated handle for portability ease and rugged design to handle the bumps and drops associated with highly mobile workflows as well as exposure to dust and water were the ideal choice for Sydney Water's field personnel.

The new Plumbing Inspections and Assurance Service (PIAS) application on the Motion F5 is built around a centralised scheduling system that allows better delegation, processing and reporting of inspections. Each inspection application is selectively assessed against risk criteria. The inspection is allocated to the appropriate inspector based on time requested, skill level required and geographic location. This gives the inspectors more time in the field completing inspections. There is now a more flexible approach to managing workload whilst improving the plumber's quality of works, and ensuring they certify the work they do.

All of an inspector's work can now be managed through the inspector's field computer, including on-site risk assessments for occupational health and safety requirements. By providing inspectors with immediate access to plumber and job information they can quickly respond to Occupational Health and Safety clearance to enter sites.

The Retriever application is able to capture a variety of information on the large format Motion by Xplore tablets. The inspector can enter all results, take site photos and email them back for technical support, generate non-compliances and enter mileage to cover vehicle run sheet records.

RESULTS

The task of field plumbing inspections became simplified

Sydney Water now has a single point of contact for booking inspections. It can focus more on compliance training and professional development for plumbers as opposed to daily data entry tasks. The document processing has now been streamlined and the inspectors have opened visibility to plumber and job information including current license and inspection fees, permit to work, diagrams, approvals, requirements notices, previous inspection results, non-compliance details and the certificate of compliance.