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Toughbooks in Action

Randwick City Council reduces long-term costs and improves reliability with Panasonic Toughbooks

Randwick City Council has equipped its field workers with Panasonic Toughbooks to reduce long-term costs associated with mobile computing, and enable them to offer more effective and efficient services to local residents.

Panasonic Toughbooks (CF-18s and CF-29s) are being used by Public Place and Tree Preservation Officers in parks, gardens, beaches, roads and playgrounds around the Randwick City area, to monitor council assets and immediately log residents' complaints and issues. The Panasonic Toughbooks were selected by the Council's IT Services

and Infrastructure Management departments to provide wireless access to field workers and for their robust design and ability to withstand all kinds of extreme conditions.

"Randwick City is a diverse landscape, from beachside residential areas, open spaces and tourist destinations to industrial developments and port facilities. Council officers can often be caught in the rain, come into contact with dust and dirt from parks and building sites, or sand from the beaches" said Greg Zakrzewski, Information and Technology Services, Randwick City Council.

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“When scoping this project, a view was formed that a standard laptop may not meet our requirements, as past non-rugged solutions were easily damaged in the field conditions our officers worked in. This impacted greatly on officers’ working time, not to mention the cost of repair and replacement incurred every time a notebook was dropped, got dirty, or something spilled over it.”

“Officers are constantly on the go, whether entering information into their notebooks while sitting in the car, or using the Panasonic Toughbooks directly while talking to local residents. Panasonic Toughbooks are small and portable and don’t heat up when sitting on your lap like standard notebooks. Furthermore, they can handle rough treatment such as being dropped or knocked,” said Zakrzewski.

The Panasonic Toughbooks are connected to the Randwick City Council’s network which accesses Councils Online, a corporate information system of core council business functions including Finance, Human Resources, CRM

(customer relationship management), works orders, electronic document management system, assets and payroll.

The Panasonic Toughbook’s broadband modem capability allows council officers to have instant and reliable access to the Councils Online network, where they can manage service requests and complaints, as well as have instant email access whilst on the road.

At the Mahon Pool at Maroubra Beach, daily photographs are taken to monitor algae formations on the rocks to help with cleaning and public safety. The photographs are instantly uploaded to the council network on the Panasonic Toughbook.

They are also used by Tree Preservation Officers as part of Randwick City Council’s Tree Preservation Order (TPO), introduced in 1986 in response to community concern that many trees were being lost through property development and indiscriminate tree felling. The objective of the TPO is to encourage the proper management of trees within the City of Randwick for the purpose of promoting a better environment.

In the future, Randwick City Council hopes to extend the functions of the GIS software to develop a work allocation system.

Randwick City is located in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, covering an area of 36.43 square kilometres and incorporating 13 suburbs plus around 29 kilometres of coastline. It is bounded to the north by Centennial Park, with the Pacific Ocean forming the eastern boundary and Botany Bay the southern boundary. The western boundary is defined by major roads and the line of open space and golf courses developed over low lying land known historically as the Lachlan Swamp and Botany Wetlands.



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