

Lismore City Council

A mobile forms app to clean up the maintenance process



SimbleMobility

Greater Lismore covers an area of 1,267 square kilometres stretching from North Woodburn in the south, to the village of Nimbin and the Nightcap Ranges to the North, and from Clunes in the east, to Bentley in the West. Lismore is situated on the banks of the Wilsons River and the busy Bruxner Highway, providing easy access to the Pacific Highway and other major transport links.

Lismore City Council owns and maintains various utility and parks assets and hundreds of kilometres of drainage, roads and footpath infrastructure. Work crews undertake different maintenance tasks on these assets and infrastructure i.e. preventative maintenance, cleaning, concreting, pothole patching, inspections and minor and urgent works. The field recordkeeping and maintenance management in place was paper-based which was both inefficient and inaccurate in recording and delivering the required information to those who need it.

MAKING MAINTENANCE MORE MOBILE

Lismore City Council recognised the potential of streamlining the data collection processes used by field staff and supervisors, allowing them to spend less time in the office attending to paperwork and more productive time in the field controlling works and improving WHS standards.

Simble worked with Lismore City Council to understand their approach to water and waste management and demonstrated how they could use electronic processes to provide field staff with smart, intuitive forms across different device types. A pilot for mobile services that provided online forms capability to water and waste water field services personnel was launched. The purpose of the pilot was to demonstrate the process of capturing information anywhere, anytime using a mobile device. This pilot also provided direct integration into the Lismore City Council Mex application and demonstrated significant efficiency gains with field services business processes.

CLEANING UP THE WATER AND WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Following a successful pilot, the team from Simble provided Lismore City Council with a solution built using the Blink Mobility Platform and Simble Adaptors to support logins, profiling and interaction into the Mex Work Order backend system. Implemented forms include Pre-Vehicle checks, Work Orders, Risk Inspections, Timesheets and Leave Requests. These Blink Forms, flanked by Answerspace interactions, provide relevant personnel the capability of logging in with their credentials and thereby accessing the forms and Work Orders which are assigned to them on their mobile device, allowing completion and submission of these forms while still in the field.

FULLY TAILORED END-TO-END SOLUTION

The forms are connected to a back-end controller that provides information and data shaping submissions. The business logic which represents the controller's behaviour is fully tailored to the customer's requirements, including look and feel. The back-end system is comprised of a secured virtual machine that resides on the Lismore's



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Water And Waste Systems Supervisor
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DMZ and is locked down to the traffic of the Blink Mobility Platform. The controller, having been designed in PHP and running under a secure instance of apache, was designed in a fully object oriented fashion allowing a clean, robust and modular design framework to allow the rapid addition of further form types without impacting on the existing production and test based controllers in operation.

A CLEANER SOLUTION IN THE LONG TERM

Rather than employ additional staff to ensure data entry was accurate and complete, or build a single, device-specific app in-house, Lismore City Council chose the power of the Blink Mobility Platform on which to build their corporate mobility strategy. According to Matt Potter, Water and Waste Systems Supervisor at Lismore City Council, “The solution presented by Simble to leverage the power of one platform to provide mobile solutions for both internal (inspection and HR forms) and external (ratepayer services) users that could integrate into our existing IT systems was an obvious choice.”

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY FOR FIELD STAFF

The unique capability provided by leveraging the Blink Mobility Platform enabled Lismore City Council to mobilise their online forms in a rapid timeline, across all internet enabled mobile devices and tablets with one project. Field staff are now able to carry out their duties, completing all requirements on a single mobile device while out in the field, even when out of telecommunication range. Supervisors have also been freed of the many staff co-ordination issues allowing them more time in the field to assist with actual maintenance tasks.

Automated pre-filling and post-filling of form data was another key value that saved the field force personnel from having to manually determine field selections and associated ancillary calculations. Furthermore, the solution has removed the need to manually sort form submissions for storage in TRIM (a repository that Lismore used), as each form is saved automatically at submission.

MOBILE FORMS ENSURE 100% WHS COMPLIANCE

Matt Potter is delighted with the outcome: “Now that all forms are completed fully on the mobile device, a 100% completion target has been reached with regards to Work Health and Safety compliance. We now also have the ability to easily track outstanding work orders with job instructions issued and received via our mobile devices while we are still in the field.”

Following on from this success, Lismore City Council is now in the process of rolling out many more Smart Forms to mobilise their processes across other council departments, including Parks and Gardens, Roads, Rangers, Building and Planning and Water. Many of these forms are based on standard forms created by Simble and made available to councils to adopt and deploy on an as-needs basis. Lismore City Council has chosen to have staff trained in order to do these minor adaptations in-house with guidance from Simble developers, as well as create new forms themselves.



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