



“Project Overview”

Wellington Shire Council
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

Wellington Shire Council is the third largest municipality in Victoria, covering an area of 10,924 square kilometres and is home to over 42,000 people spread across more than thirty different communities.

Extending from the Great Dividing Range and Victoria's High Country to the Bass Strait, the Wellington region has some of the most productive grazing land in Australia. In addition, Wellington has a diverse local economy boasting oil and gas production industries, manufacturing, government, defence, construction and retail industries.

The council employs over 450 staff in a variety of roles servicing the local community, from general administration, to garbage collection to library services.

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Phillip Phillipou
Manager Information Services at Wellington Shire Council



A 387 Flemington Rd, North Melbourne.
P 1300 881 641
E sales@icomm.com.au
W www.icomm.com.au



THE CHALLENGE

Time for an upgrade

"Prior to working with IComm and employing Skype for Business, Wellington Shire Council had an outdated PABX phone system," said Phillip Phillipou, Manager Information Services, at Wellington Shire Council. "We had very old communications technologies in place across the council, which led to organisational inefficiencies and frustration on behalf of staff who had to use the legacy telephony systems on a day to day basis."

As a council, Wellington Shire recognised that in order to better meet the needs of its community and enhance the council's service response and overall staff satisfaction, there was a need to upgrade its telecommunications technology. It was also a good time for Wellington to undergo an upgrade in the lead up to its planned relocation to modern new offices.

"To get a better insight into the communication technologies available to organisations of a similar scale to ours, we undertook a series of visits to other organisations who were already using advanced communications solutions," said Phillip. "From this we took away some critical learnings that meant we were able to implement a solution within Wellington that could accommodate a mobile and flexible workforce."

THE SOLUTION

Wellington Shire Council needed a communication technology that was going to be flexible but also provide all staff access to communications and resources around the clock. The council partnered with specialist public sector IT consultants, IComm, to explore best fit technologies.

Skype for Business best fit

"Wellington Shire Council partnered with IComm based on their history of successful VoIP telephony deployments," said Phillip. "We were looking for a partner who could prove they were efficient in the delivery of the project and that already had a strong reputation in the local government space."

Following an extensive audit of possible solutions with IComm, Skype for Business was identified as the communications technology that would best meet the needs of Wellington Shire Council.

Getting staff out and about in the community

"We found Skype for Business would improve our staff's efficiency and by allowing personnel to get out in the field more," said Phillip.

"By making our staff less restricted and desk-bound it would lead to better customer service delivery to our community."

Skype for Business allows organisations like Wellington Shire Council to easily connect their teams anywhere – be it on the other side of the municipality, the office next door or in the city. The system can enable connection on opposite sides of the country or anywhere around the world. It allows organisations to better facilitate mobile communication as workers can collaborate within their Microsoft Office documents using instant messaging, screen share, voice chat or video call, along with staging virtual meetings – all of which improves organisational knowledge sharing, consultation and ultimately improves worker efficiency.

THE BENEFITS & RESULTS

"With Skype for Business, staff now have the ability to listen to voicemail on the go and we're not having to type in pin numbers to our desk phone all of the time," said Katy Leighfield, Coordinator Media and Public Relations, at Wellington Shire Council. "It's been very useful as well for staff like myself who are out and about a lot. I don't write notes and then have to come back and type them up in an email anymore. I can actually have a conversation and write the meeting notes there and then and email them before I've even left the meeting. It's a time saver, it's fantastic."

The rollout and results

To rollout the new Skype for Business solution, IComm worked closely with Wellington Shire Council to develop a project scope and design prior to implementation. The deployment of Skype for Business within Wellington Shire Council took six months.

"We worked closely with IComm around the adoption of this new technology and in addition to implementation, they provided the support around our training," said Phillip. "I'm happy to say that they were able to deliver the project on time and under budget."

The new technology solutions deployed within Wellington Shire Council have led to changes in the way staff interact with each other and work together on shared projects for improved outcomes.

"Skype for Business has been really easy to understand and learn how to use," said Katy. "We used to call numbers, we used to have to look up our colleagues in a phone directory and then type in the number from the directory, which was prone to human error and inefficiencies. We don't need to do that anymore."

We call people. We call names instead of numbers now, which changes the way that we do business because it means that fellow workers, get to know each other better as people and what their roles are within the organisation. It's a more personable way of doing things."

"Skype for Business has improved my working life and overall productivity," continued Katy. "For example, I can be reviewing a document on my computer and within that document I can make a telephone call, or I can video conference or instant message the person who wrote the document to discuss any areas that need clarification. So rather than having to stop what I am doing, going and picking up the phone, looking up a telephone number, and then dialling – I can call the person directly from within the document no matter what program is being used."

100% staff satisfaction

Since implementing Skype for Business, Wellington Shire Council has seen overall improvements in the way staff interact, collaborate and communicate with one another.

"Recently, Wellington Shire Council conducted a post relocation survey," said Katy. "A question asking for feedback regarding our new technology systems including Skype for Business received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 100 per cent of staff saying that jobs involving the new technologies are easier."

In addition to improvements in staff operational efficiencies and employee morale following the new technology deployment within their organisation, Wellington Shire Council has also experienced real costs savings from the upgrade.

"Skype for Business has allowed us to better improve our operations and integrate staff and services – be those people and activities located out in the field, or in the office," said Phillip. "Skype for Business has helped Wellington Shire Council reduce hard costs in areas like printing and toner, along with significantly reducing our telecommunications costs. Importantly, these are all savings that are returned back to the community, which is a great outcome for council."