

CASE STUDY

How Northland Regional Council collaborated with EROAD to improve efficiency



BUSINESS NEED

Northland Regional Council has responsibility for the top stretch of New Zealand, from Mangawhai to North Cape. This large area encompasses diverse geography, and it's a part of the world where the beauty of the landscape is matched only by the sketchiness of the cellphone coverage. With people often unreachable by phone, the council needs a more reliable way to locate staff.

Forty-three pool vehicles serve approximately 160 workers. Some are electric cars but most are diesel powered, requiring the council to pay road user charges.

And although there are plenty of vehicles, the council's previous booking system led to confusion and failed to make the most of vehicle availability, making it difficult for staff to get a car when they needed one.

SOLUTION

With the EROAD system installed in the council's 43 vehicles, the organisation can now see in real time where staff are.

Being able to see at a glance where vehicles are by using EROAD's Activity screen, rather than relying on the cellular network, is reassuring, says Vehicle Fleet Coordinator Tony Bird.

"It helps with health and safety, and we use EROAD as part of our buddy system. Phone coverage isn't the best up here and in the past there were times we didn't know where someone was. It was a matter of waiting to see if they returned or not. Now we know where they are all the time."

And because EROAD's Driver Insight report provides information on individual driver behaviour, the system can be used in conjunction with the council's other driver support initiatives.

"Everyone does a defensive driving course," Tony explains, "and if the information we get from EROAD shows drivers need a bit more help, we can put them through the course again."



"Once a vehicle is returned to the council carpark, it checks itself in and is made available in the pool. Each booking gets coded to a cost centre, which helps us charge back kilometres travelled to the right department."

Tony Bird
Vehicle Fleet Coordinator, Northland Regional Council



Organisation
Northland Regional Council

Industry
Local Government

CUSTOMER BENEFIT

Tony can pinpoint the exact moment he realised Northland Regional Council's existing vehicle booking system wasn't working.

"It was the day I started," Tony says. He's only half joking.

"The system we had in place was difficult and caused confusion. The simplicity of what EROAD offered was appealing."

Tony and the council collaborated with EROAD to develop U Book-It.

"We thought the best way to get everything we wanted was to work hand in hand with EROAD and tell them what we needed. We asked council staff to come up with ideas that would be beneficial, and all the enhancements we suggested were developed very quickly. Staff used to book vehicles out for a whole day instead of just the time they needed them. Now, once a vehicle is returned to the council carpark, it checks itself in and is made available in the pool. Each booking gets coded to a cost centre, which helps us charge back kilometres travelled to the right department. That's important because we work for the community and we have to give them the best value for their dollar."

It's not the only way Tony's counting pennies. Most of the council's vehicles run on diesel and are subject to road user charges, but because of the sort of work councils do, the vehicles spend a lot of time off road.

"EROAD's been a great help claiming back road user charges for the distances we're off road. That's a massive saving to the ratepayer."

Now, with its cost efficiencies – and a few judicious tweaks – the system works the way Tony had always hoped it would.

"We're going to be suggesting little bits and pieces as we go along finding more things that could possibly help," he says. "But it's pretty flawless."