CASE STUDY

NEW SOUTH WALES RURAL FIRE SERVICE

THE CHALLENGE

Due to Australia's mostly hot and dry climate, bushfires can unfortunately occur frequently and impact large geographical areas. Although the New South Wales (NSW) Rural Fire Service has a large amount of volunteers, the process of contacting them across a variety of devices in a timely manner was difficult—especially with many of them located in rural areas.

As a service that responds to fires and many other emergencies, response time is critical, and lives, property, and livestock can depend on it. In order to improve response time and mobilise staff and volunteers, NSW Rural Fire Service needed a system that would be able to efficiently contact responders.

THE SOLUTION

In order to communicate more effectively to fire brigade volunteers and staff, NSW Rural Fire Service implemented the Spok™ Messenger critical alerting solution across its 52 networks. Now when a fire is reported to a district, dispatchers use Spok Messenger to send pages to responders. Groups are set up for the different brigades to message multiple people at once, and messages can also be sent to operations staff within the organisation.

"We needed a reliable communication solution that we could trust every time," said Manoj Dahiya, Manager of Communications Systems for NSW Rural Fire Service. "We really appreciate the fact that [Spok] Messenger gives us the ability to message to a variety of devices depending on each volunteer's preferences."

NSW Rural Fire Service is currently connecting to volunteers on pagers from Spok as well as smartphones via SMS texting.

OVERVIEW

NSW Rural Fire Service was formed more than 100 years ago and is headquartered in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. As the world's largest fire service, it has 2,100 fire brigades and 143 rural fire districts that include 72,000 volunteers. NSW Rural Fire Service covers 95% of New South Wales, and its services include response to fires, natural disasters, motor vehicle accidents, and other civil emergencies.

INDUSTRY

Emergency Services

BUSINESS DRIVERS

- More efficient notifications of emergencies to responders and staff
- Messaging across multiple device types
- Speed volunteer response times to emergencies

SOLUTION

Spok® Messenger critical alerting

RESULTS

- Fast and efficient alerting on pagers and smartphones
- Automatically update warning signs for public awareness and safety
- Complete audit trail of communications

> "New technology can often confuse people, but the simplicity and convenience of [Spok] Messenger makes it easy to adopt and alleviates stress for future technological advances."

Manoj Dahiya
Manager of Communications Systems

THE RESULTS

Spok Messenger has provided the NSW Rural Fire Service the ability to optimise their communication system, which is key for any emergency service organisation. In addition to being able to send messages quickly, they can send individual or group pages depending on the situation. This allows staff and volunteers to be simultaneously notified and not waste valuable time.

Spok Messenger also helps to effectively communicate with the general public. The NSW Rural Fire Service is using the solution to automatically deliver up-to-date information on digital fire-warning signs in the community. These indicate a low, medium, or high risk of fire.

"In addition to the technology and the efficiencies it brings, the fire service is pleased with the ease of use and ability to train new message senders," said Dahiya. "New technology can often confuse people, but the simplicity and convenience of [Spok] Messenger makes it easy to adopt and alleviates stress for future technological advances."

With the help of Spok Messenger, the NSW Rural Fire Service is now confident with the communications between staff and volunteers. They can speed response times and provide safer communities.