



New South Wales Rural Fire Service

State fire prevention service uses Adobe® Intelligent Document Platform to eliminate the costs and delays of labour-intensive, paper-based procurement process

NSW Rural Fire Service

- The State of New South Wales' rural fire prevention service
 - Location: New South Wales, Australia
 - Size: 69,000 staff in 2,000 locations
 - Founded: 1997
- www.bushfire.nsw.gov.au

Industry

Government

Solution

Forms Automation and Management

Products Used

- Adobe Form Designer
- Adobe Form Server
- Adobe Workflow Server
- CHRIS Payroll System
- Microsoft Access database
- Windows NT®
- SunSystems Financials

In Partnership With

- Indigo Pacific, a distributor of Adobe server solutions in the Asia Pacific region, excluding Japan
 - Location: Sydney, Australia
- www.indigopacific.com

Organisation Profile

The New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) in South Eastern Australia is the world's largest fire service, with approximately 69,000 volunteer firefighter members. It provides emergency services to more than 90% of New South Wales. NSW RFS worked with Indigo Pacific, an Adobe Solutions Partner, to deploy Adobe document process management and forms creation solutions to increase the speed with which procurement requests can be fulfilled for rural firefighters and support staff.

Challenges Faced

Improve procurement turnaround times

Every month, the NSW RFS' Sydney Head Office procurement department manages more than 1,500 requests from more than 2,200 rural fire brigades for items as diverse as fire engines and paper clips. Traditionally, these requests were made using paper forms and often took weeks to be processed. The challenge was to find a solution that sped up the process while supporting a largely non-technical audience.

Automate administrative tasks

The NSW RFS employed four purchasing staff to manage its procurement function. This time-intensive job involved collating and managing thousands of paper forms, manually sending acknowledgement forms, ensuring budget holders were entitled to make requests, managing purchase orders with suppliers, and ensuring the appropriate support documents were completed. Simple acknowledgement of the request and initial approval could take up to two weeks.

Improve integration between databases and applications

The procurement process involved a cross section of NSW RFS databases and applications—from payroll to HR to finance. For NSW RFS, the challenge was to find a solution that could interact with SunSystems Financials, a Microsoft® Access database, and the CHRIS Payroll System amongst others.

Success Strategy

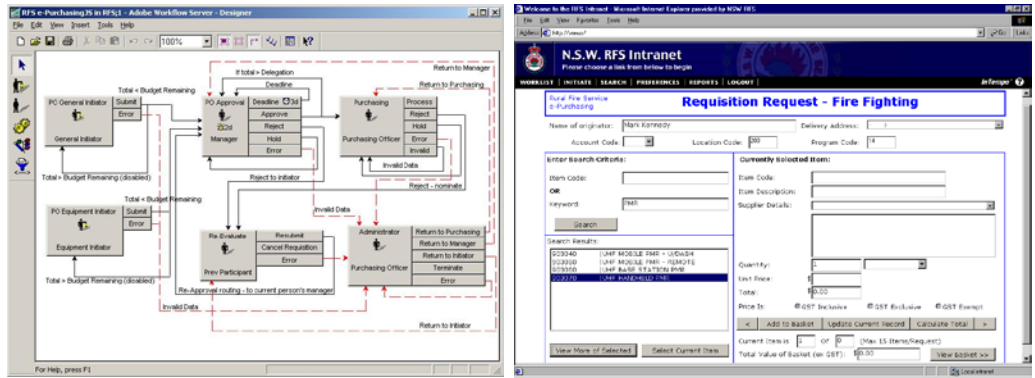
With the help of Adobe Solutions Partner Indigo Pacific, NSW RFS developed and installed an online, forms-based procurement system. Within six months of initial development, the Adobe solution was rolled out across the state.

The solution was built using Adobe Form Server, an intelligent data capture product that creates and publishes Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) forms via web browsers. By selecting a web-based form product, NSW RFS was able to provide an instant requisition facility to its more than 69,000 firefighters spread across rural New South Wales.

Indigo Pacific used Adobe Form Designer to develop an online XML-based form that resembled its paper-based predecessor. This form is automatically integrated



Using Adobe solutions, New South Wales Rural Fire Service staff complete forms online and electronically request more than 15,000 items from a central procurement database of more than 25,000 suppliers. The required approvals are then managed electronically, with purchase orders issued automatically. Previous paper-based processes that took days to complete can now be done in minutes.



“The Adobe system’s integration with our core systems has streamlined our operations and reduced procurement overhead. At the end of the day, this means our brigades can spend their time supporting their communities—not chasing extra pairs of boots.”

Mark Kennedy,
Contracts officer,
New South Wales
Rural Fire Service.

with back-end systems, such as SunSystems Financials, to determine budget approval during the requisition and provides almost instantaneous acknowledgement. It is also integrated with an extensive procurement database to provide information on more than 15,000 products from more than 25,000 suppliers. Once staff members submit their forms, Adobe Workflow Server creates an authorisation and builds a schedule for routing the form to managers for sign-off.

Once signed-off, approved documents are saved instantly to SunSystems Financials. Next, Adobe Central Pro Output Server takes acknowledgement output from SunSystems, and generates a purchase order template using data from NSW RFS’ customer relationship management (CRM) system which is sent to suppliers by email, fax, or letter as appropriate. A trackable Adobe PDF document of the request is also saved for reference purposes.

Benefits

- Speed procurement turnaround times
- Automate administrative tasks
- Improve integration between databases and applications

NSW RFS staff now request items from central procurement with confidence. Requests which previously took weeks to be actioned can now be made in minutes. More importantly, rural fire stations are now having their procurement requisitions fulfilled in a shorter timeframe, which means boots on the feet of volunteer firefighters in a matter of days, not weeks or months.

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform eliminates the wasted time and data errors that previously occurred as employees keyed data from paper forms into back-end systems. In addition, electronic forms are easier to process as the NSW RFS doesn’t have to deal with illegible hand writing. NSW RFS has also built additional information into the forms (such as budget approvals, available product selection options, and serial number tracking) to speed up request validation and further eliminate errors. This is achieved through automated integration with other NSW RFS databases and applications.

In addition to improving procurement times and reliability, the Adobe solution is saving NSW RFS thousands of dollars in paper, printing, postage, and staff costs, not to mention reducing the environmental impact of the paper-based procurement process.

According to Mark Kennedy, contracts officer, New South Wales Rural Fire Service, the system links all parts of the procurement ‘chain’ together. “The Adobe system’s integration with our core systems has streamlined our operations and reduced procurement overhead. At the end of the day, this means our brigades can spend their time supporting their communities—not chasing extra pairs of boots,” says Kennedy.

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