

# East Gippsland Water

Australian Water Corporation slashes time taken to search myriad data types and reduces storage costs with Micro Focus ControlPoint.

## Overview

East Gippsland Water is a government corporation that supplies water services to 25,700 customers, and wastewater services to 21,900 customers in the Australian state of Victoria. It services thousands of square miles, as well as managing millions of dollars of water treatment plants and other facilities. It was created in 1995 and is overseen by the Minister for Water.

## Challenge

Before 2015, East Gippsland Water faced a scenario familiar to many businesses and government bodies around the world—a growing volume of data, rising storage costs, and difficulty finding information quickly.

Locating information involved searching network and desktop drives. This included numerous hours spent sifting through documents created in previous decades by several other water corporations and shire councils, which later merged with East Gippsland Water.

Although the corporation had used Micro Focus Content Manager since 2009 to store and protect important records, it didn't know if there was other data valuable to the organization that wasn't being protected. A lot of data hadn't been identified, says Iain McDougall, East Gippsland Water's Manager of Information and Technology. "Half of the data wasn't known. There was data everywhere," he says.

Important records were stored in spreadsheets, databases, and other ways, but they could also be buried within email conversations or in audio recorded during presentations. These files used valuable storage space, even though it wasn't necessary to keep them all.

One person was responsible for finding important information within all this data—a task that could take up to half a day. When important information was found, there was no easy way to protect it from accidental deletion or from unauthorized access. East Gippsland Water also didn't have a way to quickly supply information in response to freedom of information requests.

The lack of a digital content management system was hampering day-to-day operations. East Gippsland Water uses nine separate water supply systems and delivers services over an area larger than 8,000 square miles. This requires careful management of pipes, wastewater infrastructure, and treatment plants valued at millions of dollars. The corporation must also plan for environmental change to ensure reliable water supplies in the future, and takes part in projects aimed at reducing landfill and achieving other environmental goals. It must also provide five-year budgets to the government. To achieve this, it needs easy, rapid access to information.



## At a Glance

- **Industry**  
Energy & Utilities
- **Location**  
Australia
- **Challenge**  
Reduce time to find records and ensure compliance with privacy laws and data regulations.
- **Products and Services**  
ControlPoint  
Content Manager
- **Success Highlights**
  - + Reduced the time taken to find records, from hours to seconds
  - + Decreased the corporation's data footprint by 30 percent, slowing growth in storage costs
  - + Identified an additional 10 percent of its data that should be stored in a record-keeping system, preventing unauthorized access and accidental deletion
  - + Allowed automated management of records, saving time and lowering the risk of noncompliance
  - + Improved information access for executives, saving time when preparing budgets

**"It manages the complete process. This just wasn't possible with previous systems we had."**

**IAIN MCDUGALL**

Manager of Information and Technology  
East Gippsland Water

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All this must be achieved while keeping water and sewerage bills as low as possible for tens of thousands of residents. This places pressure on East Gippsland Water to operate efficiently.

### Solution

East Gippsland Water turned to information governance integrator FYB, which recognized the need for a method of easily applying record-keeping policies across myriad data types. It needed to shed light on the unknown data—sometimes called dark data. A solution was needed to analyze the contents of the dark data to determine what was no longer needed and what should be kept.

FYB recommended ControlPoint for this data discovery project. This solution is capable of analyzing more than 1000 different content formats, including shared network drives, SharePoint files, Microsoft Exchange repositories, images, audio, video, and social media.

As well showing what sensitive information East Gippsland Water was storing, ControlPoint streamlined the task of protecting it. The software understands context within documents, allowing it to automatically decide whether to keep or delete data. In this way, East Gippsland Water could identify important information in a fraction of the time it would have taken to manually search each network drive.

Another potentially time-consuming task was securing and keeping track of important information. ControlPoint simplified this job by automatically moving this data to the record-keeping solution, Content Manager (formerly Records Manager).

It is now much quicker to find information. Instead of taking hours to search network drives, employees can type in keywords and find a record within seconds. They can search by categories of records, or apply weighting to different words in the search to fine-tune the results. Searches are also repeatable, providing another way to save time.

### Results

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Another of ControlPoint's features is the ability to show what proportion of an organization's data is redundant, obsolete, or trivial. A dashboard displays how much data falls into each of these categories, and the disk space that could be saved by deleting it.

This had a direct financial payoff for Gippsland Water. By using ControlPoint to identify data that could be deleted, the corporation was able to reduce its data footprint by 30 percent. This allowed it to postpone the purchase of additional storage hardware.

Identifying important information was only half the battle—sensitive data such as contracts also had to be protected. This was critical if East Gippsland Water was to avoid falling foul of privacy laws and other data regulations.

Using ControlPoint, the corporation has identified another 10 percent of its data that should be stored in a record-keeping system. Once they are stored within Content Manager, policies can be set on the period the data should be kept for and when it should be automatically deleted. East Gippsland Water can also block users from accessing records if they don't have authorization. McDougall also points out that digital records systems are not subject to human bias.

McDougall expects even more important information to be identified over time. "As we get better at the process, that 10 percent might increase," he says.

The data clean-up has also improved employees' awareness of how to safely store records. For example, the corporation discovered password-reset emails that hadn't been deleted. It then used this information to educate employees about proper procedures. Having better access to data also helped at an executive level. "It brought clarity to the executive team about what's going on from a compliance and management aspect," says McDougall.

One of the advantages of using ControlPoint, says McDougall, is its ability to perform three major data clean-up steps: finding important data, collecting and classifying that data, and managing it in conjunction with Content Manager. "It manages the complete process. This just wasn't possible with previous systems we had," McDougall says.