

Paroo Shire Council

OpenText™ Content Manager helps ensure efficient use of limited resources.



Overview

Serving the Needs of the Community

Established in 1879 just north of the border with New South Wales, Paroo Shire covers an area of 47,714 square kilometers (18,422 square miles) in South West Queensland, Australia. The rich plains and river flats are ideal for sheep and cattle grazing, and played a key role in the Shire's growth as a rural center. Paroo Shire Council is located in Cunnamulla, known for its beef,

lamb, and wool production, along with honey from the blossom of the local native Yapunyah tree, grapes, wildlife harvesting, opal mining, and a growing tourism industry. "Our shire is made up of four communities—Cunnamulla, Eulo, Wyandra, and Yowah—with a total population of just over 1,900 people," explains Anita Wharton, Records Administration Officer and on-site IT contact at Paroo Shire Council. "The Council is responsible for collecting rates and taxes, and providing customer services. We also maintain the local footpaths and landscaping, as well as roads and infrastructure."

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ANITA WHARTON

Records Administration Officer
Paroo Shire Council

Challenge

Addressing Non-Compliance and Escalating Costs

"As a shire, we face a number of challenges when it comes to delivering services to our communities," adds Chris Cowley, Chief Executive Officer of Paroo Shire Council.

"Severe droughts over the years have caused many residents to move away, and the result of a declining population is reduced revenue streams. In addition, we have cost shifts from other levels of government to the local government, which creates pressure to reduce costs while striving to maintain—at a minimum—the level of service that our residents have come to expect."



At a Glance

■ Industry

Government

■ Location

Paroo Shire, New South Wales, Australia

■ Challenge

Leveraging technology to meet the challenges of a large territory, declining population, and reduced revenue streams.

■ Products and Services

Content Manager

■ Success Highlights

- + Replaced out-of-date, legacy system
- + Increased efficiencies with automated workflow
- + Reduced costs and increased user adoption
- + Increased staff productivity with easy, simple-to-use, and intuitive interface
- + Ensured compliance with regulatory legislation governing records retention and disposal
- + Improved level of service offered to community

Solution

"Once Civica, our IT support company, became aware of the problem," adds Wharton, "they recommended that we look at Content Manager as a solution that would better suit the needs of the Shire. Civica gave us a cost comparison which proved that we could achieve compliance and save a lot of money by deploying Content Manager vs. upgrading our old software."

OpenText™ Content Manager is a scalable, integrated document and records management solution that helps meet regulatory compliance requirements and organizational or local government mandates. Policy-based management ensures that records and critical information are securely managed from creation through to disposal. An intuitive user interface—along with advanced Microsoft Office integration—ensures that documents can be quickly registered, processed, and reported on. Built-in workflows ensure that each document is dealt with in a timely manner and that nothing is overlooked.

Results

Achieving Compliance and Reducing Costs

"As a government organization, we're heavily legislated," says Wharton. "We have to comply with the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records. Previously, we had to track every document manually, resulting in us quickly becoming non-compliant since we didn't have the personnel to continuously follow up on each file. It's a good thing we weren't audited, because we probably wouldn't have passed. Achieving compliance would have required that we upgrade our old software which with increased costs and resource implications that we simply couldn't afford."

"But with Content Manager (now part of OpenText™), we don't have any of those issues," adds Wharton. "The software includes an integrated retention and disposal schedule, so all we have to do is set up classifications and allocate them to documents as they arrive and are registered. The software keeps track of each document and automatically archives them according to the regulations, so we don't have to worry about it." "Content Manager also increases compliance with built-in security and tighter control," states Wharton. "Each user has to be authenticated to access the system, and the workflow functionality ensures that we have a complete audit trail for each document. The fact that the content is searchable significantly increases its value to our employees. Now they can quickly search the system to find what they're looking for, even if they don't have all of the background information."

Increasing Productivity and Ensuring Content Manager

"We've seen significant benefits from using Content Manager," says Wharton. "It's intuitive, easy to use, and automated. With everyone trained on the system, we've seen an increase in the amount and value of the information that's being entered compared to the old system. It's also increased productivity since each document is sent directly to the individual responsible for processing it, rather than to the entire department as was previously the case."

"For example, with the old system, incoming correspondence was scanned, registered, and then hard copies dispersed throughout the organization with the hope that someone would pick it up and handle it," explains Wharton. "With the new system, documents are registered and tasked out to staff using Content Manager's workflow functionality. When you log onto the system each morning, Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) Records automatically opens task trays to notify staff what's outstanding and

what needs to be followed up. It is more user friendly than having hardcopy documentation that may get lost and also saves the environment by using electronic media rather than paper."

"Content Manager has allowed us to do away with the mass circulation of hardcopy because everything's in the system," continues Wharton. "And if a document gets assigned to the wrong staff member, it's simple for them to forward it on to somebody else. It's allowed us to reduce the amount of times that documents go missing or aren't followed up with a response."

Accelerating User Adoption

"Our budget didn't allow for us to migrate all of the data to Content Manager," adds Wharton, "so we've changed permissions on the old system to restrict files to view only. If someone wants to edit a document, they have to save it to Content Manager and edit from there. Over time, as users access old files and retention periods expire, we foresee ourselves being able to shut down the old system and have everything reside in and managed by Content Manager."

"The new system has only been up and running for a few months, but already we're seeing an adoption rate of over 60% among users with logins," enthuses Wharton. "We're already sourcing additional licenses as employees see the benefits and our user population increases. Now, everyone is responsible for inputting their own documents and records into the system instead of relying on just one person to do it. That allows us to be more efficient and responsive to the needs of the community."

Simpler, Easier, Faster, and Cheaper

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CHRIS COWLEY

Chief Executive Officer
Paroo Shire Council

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needed," states Wharton. "They also helped us to upgrade to Microsoft Office 2010 to take advantage of the tight integration with Content Manager to increase productivity and simplify reporting. We couldn't do that previously, because the version of the old software that we had installed didn't support anything above Office 2007."

"Deploying Content Manager has made things simpler, easier, and faster," adds Wharton. "It's helped us to increase productivity and ensure that we comply with required legislation. We'll also enjoy longterm savings and be able to stay up-to-date because upgrades are included as part of the support agreement, so we won't end up having the problems that we had before."

Cowley sums it up: "Content Manager has helped us enhance our record keeping obligations to meet our compliance requirements, and the value of the information for the Shire has increased since it's much easier to find and retrieve documents and records from the system. Since we have very limited resources to work with, having an efficient content management system ultimately ensures that we're using our resources as efficiently as possible. This in turn allows the Paroo Shire Council to provide a greater level of service to the community."

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