

## QSM Keeps VicTrack in Control with a Service/Support Desk for its Public Train and Tram Transport Operations

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VicTrack is a government business enterprise established in 1997. It owns all land and infrastructure in Victoria used for public train and tram based transport, with the exception of the Spencer Street Station precinct.

VicTrack’s role includes seeking and developing property opportunities in the telecommunications and resources management sectors.

VicTrack’s vast infrastructure includes thousands of kilometers of rail and tram lines covering 16 metropolitan and 7 regional rail routes, and 27 tram routes. These lines are used by public transport operators to provide over 50,000 passenger services a week. They require constant monitoring to ensure that public transport facilities remain in safe and optimum condition.

VicTrack services the telecommunication needs of franchises that operate the public train and tram based transport system. These vary from large bodies such as Freight Australia, Australian Rail Track Corporation, National Express Bayside and Connex Trains, to smaller companies that operate in Melbourne suburbs. “Our day-to-day operations can be very demanding of the applications we use. Altogether, our customers log an average of 2,000 faults a month on a 24 hour 7 days a week basis”, commented Robyn Douglas, VicTrack’s Assets & Performance Manager. “The faults have to be repaired quickly, efficiently and economically to a high standard”, she added.

Originally, the fault reporting was a manual cumbersome system. “What happened was that they would fax the problem to the Fault Centre which would manually allocate it to a certain area and then fax that piece of paper to the appropriate

service centre, and so on”, said Robyn.

Whilst all reported faults were able to be repaired, there were a few unsatisfactory aspects of the manual system. The lengthy response time was only one aspect, but

a big problem was the difficulty in making a detailed analysis to enable, among other things, preventative maintenance to be carried out at the appropriate time.

“If you were looking for a particular analysis on a faulty piece of equipment to enable us to put a system in place to identify other regular faults, we could never make those decisions because we had to sift through piles of paper and find the specific information and history related to the equipment”, commented Robyn.

In addition, with other areas of the transport system moving ahead with new technologies, VicTrack decided it was time to introduce a new automated system. “Our requirements were that the faults had to be automatically allocated to the appropriate section and our customers via the internet, pagers, mobiles and fax machines,” said Robyn. “We also needed a system that could provide detailed analysis and reporting” added Robyn.

During its initial search for service/support applications, VicTrack examined many company products on the market. They then prepared some tight specifications including the requirement that all components had to be installed and running within four weeks. A list of companies were invited to tender. After detailed demonstrations and thorough



*Robyn Douglas, Assets & Performance Manager, VicTrack.*

evaluation, VicTrack selected QSM, one of the world's leading service management solutions from Datawatch Pty Ltd. As well as satisfying its requirement for service level management features, QSM also impressed VicTrack with its highly visual layout and use of 'traffic lights', whereby logged calls are colour coded red, amber or green according to their status against pre-determined service level targets. QSM also offers unique service level target (SLT) functionality with third parties. In the case of VicTrack, SLT1 reflects the agreement set with its customers such as National Rail Corporation while SLT2 is set against external suppliers such as Rail Technical Services (RTS) who carry out maintenance and repair work.

Commented Robyn, "It has a very good graphical display of the information with the ability to tell instantly in the browser what faults have been picked up, what stage they are at, whether they are on hold or have been transferred to another area and what data has been changed. It has the ability to comment on the call subject in a nice crisp way which gives us the opportunity to pick up other information that is a lot harder to put into a single word".

"We actually invoice our customers for logging faults with us, and then we use QSM for a billing system through the additional modules like Q-Flow, Q-Import, Q-Alert," Robyn added.

Not only does QSM allow VicTrack to quickly and efficiently allocate repairs, it enables customers to be kept informed on the status of their work at all times. Through such features as Workflow and the Web Portal, jobs can be followed through the system with feedback provided on their status and time of completion.

With support from Datawatch, VicTrack has recently supervised the installation of QSM for specialist locomotive repairers RTS. This included connecting them to VicTrack's network, providing LAN connection to server, on-line email and the ability to interface module to RTS' website. RTS can therefore examine all components of an engine and highlight indications of



*Bob Cupitt (right), Datawatch's Sales Manager, with Peter Kemp, Managing Director of RTS, at a locomotive maintenance and repair workshop in Port Melbourne.*

wear and tear, and provide management with comments and indications of each locomotive examination.

There are other benefits too, as Peter Kemp, Managing Director of RTS, comments: "One feature we particularly like is QSM's ability to provide a complete and utter snapshot of a locomotive's maintenance history therefore saving our customers considerable amounts of money by deciding to carry out preventative maintenance at appropriate times.

At around \$500,000 per locomotive engine, this feature is a great cost saver in the long run," said Peter.

Other features of QSM which impressed VicTrack were its exceptional ease of learning and use, its smooth workflow and its ability to track down response time and allocate resources. "It has fantastic trend analysis capabilities which allows us to produce preventative maintenance schedules and many performance reports. It's a lot more than just a call logging or fault logging system", commented Robyn.

VicTrack is happy with Datawatch's performance, from installation to the level of support provided. "Datawatch actually spent a lot of time coming in and listening. They really have a good support desk that you can log faults with and get good on-line help. The relationship with us has really been excellent. We have no hesitation in recommending them to other companies", concluded Robyn.



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