

# Country Fire Authority deploys Cisco Unified Communication solutions for agility and scalability from Logicalis

Fire Authority (CFA) is committed to the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases of fire and other emergencies, protecting the citizens of Victoria. Constant reinforcements on fire safety are done through various awareness, education and technical programmes. The agency's internet-based CFA TV provides timely safety information and demonstrates their dedication to become one of the world's largest volunteer-based emergency services organization.

## Challenge

Following the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009 and the establishment of Royal Commissions, CFA intends to expand its communication infrastructure to the next level. CFA envisions a solution that would enhance mobile communication access to firefighters and mobile vehicle during a crisis. Importantly, CFA needs a versatile solution which is easy to set-up, user-friendly and able to provide an uninterrupted response to changing threats, in remote fire-fighting command and control site operations.

Ian Crampton, IT Operations Manager at CFA says, "We needed to bring together a variety of different communications technologies into a single platform. Instead of having five or ten different components at a location, we wanted to have one device on the network rack that was self-contained and easy to manage." CFA also wanted a very flexible solution that could scale and change to accommodate new technologies in the future.

## Solution

Logicalis and Cisco recommended that CFA deploys a Unified Communications solution to support and secure voice, data, video and wireless connectivity. The Cisco® 2900 and 3900 Series Intergrated Services Routers generation 2 (ISR G2s) are used to support the use of rich medias such as video and voice, connected to the agency's WAN while delivering superior collaboration and reliability at the CFA Incident Control Centres (ICCs). Cisco wireless access points at ICCs provides additional mobility and flexibility to CFA wireless network. It's the best way to provide connectivity at some sites where cabling is not viable.

Mike Foreshew, Executive Manager, Technology services at CFA said "Once the design was completed and understood, Logicalis and Cisco pulled together all the equipments very quickly. As soon as we were ready to move forward, the technology was there, tested, proven and ready to go. If we has an equipment issue, Logicalis and Cisco would swing into action immediately to get it resolved, so that it would not impede our implementation."

" We had to develop an architecture that was truly synergistic with the way we ran our incidents. We have a full-time staff of 2000, but 61,000 volunteers at 1300 locations around the state. Our solution lets us support our extended, diversed workforce very quickly and easily. It had to be very simple to use and operate," added Foreshew.



“Before we initiated this project, we had approximately 80 sites connected to our complex WAN. Our new solution has enabled us to add another 200 locations to the WAN, tripling the size.”

CFA, IT Operations Manager.

### Benefits

The new Cisco solution has enabled CFA to extend the reach of its network throughout Victoria, consolidating and improving the infrastructure while providing faster, more reliable performance.

“Before we initiated this project, we had approximately 80 sites connected to our complex WAN,” says Crampton. “Our new solution has enabled us to add another 200 locations to the WAN, tripling the size.”

Incident preparedness has been improved, because the Cisco solution lets CFA support more staff and volunteers in more locations, to better monitor conditions.

Agility is also critical when confronting a natural disaster or other emergency, and the new CFA network delivers a scalable, mobile solution that lets the agency respond rapidly to changing conditions.

“This surge capacity is important, because fire danger can escalate very quickly,” adds Foreshew.

Most importantly, the new CFA network enables the organization to empower its responders with better information, and enable them to work with the community more effectively in emergency situations.

“This initiative is not simply about generating cost savings or reducing headcount,” says Crampton. “It is all about getting better information from the field to the people that manage the response, and to the people who live in the area, as quickly as we can.”

“It’s an insurance policy for the community,” adds Foreshew. “Should the unthinkable happen, our responders will be as prepared as they can possibly be.”

