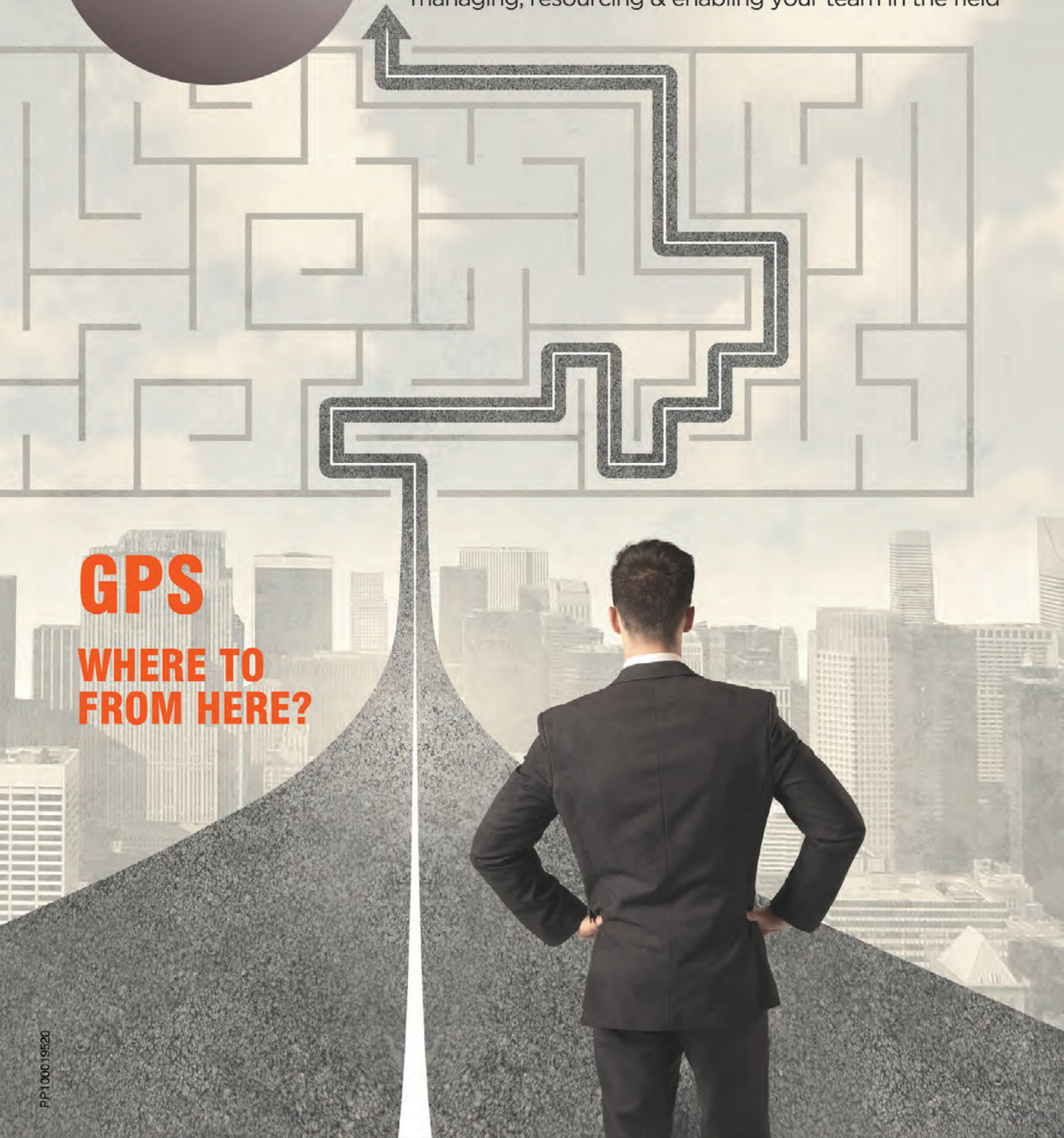




# FIELD SERVICE BUSINESS

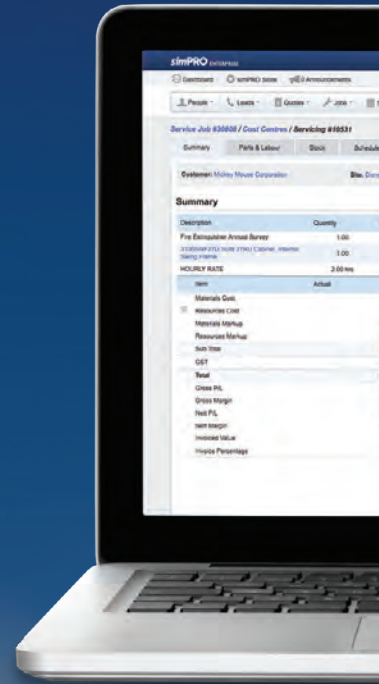
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**GPS**  
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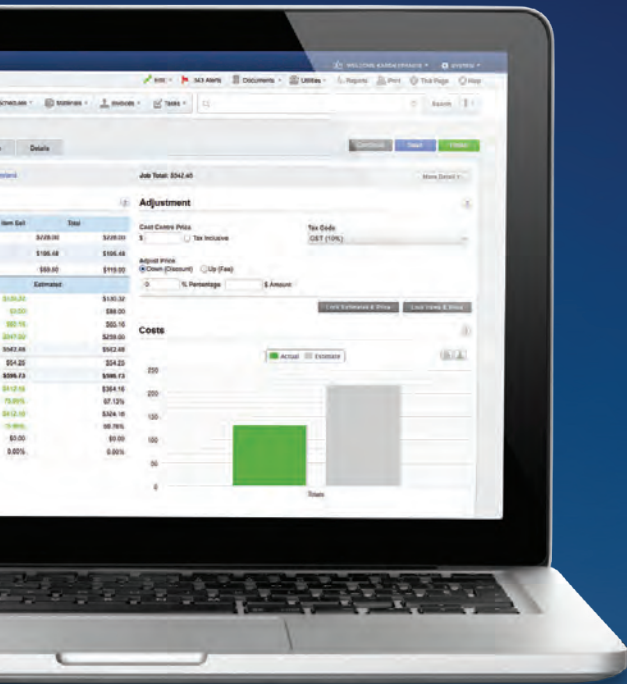
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# WORD FROM THE EDITOR



**A**nd so another season passes - we've officially said goodbye to summer and all the promise it brings. The sense of expectation that comes with the arrival of a new year is well behind us and we've probably already let a resolution or two slide.

I've always found the 'in-between' seasons to be a great time for planning, especially in the lead-up to the end of the financial year. While not exactly akin to squirrels stocking up on nuts for the winter, it just seems easier to consider business goals and objectives without the palaver the silly season brings.

If you're planning on augmenting or upgrading your fleet in the next financial year, this issue of *FSB* should provide some food for thought. Our Commercial Vehicles feature should provide insight from a couple of different angles - not only what to look for when purchasing a vehicle, but what fuel efficiency really means in broader terms.

From a technology perspective, we take a glance at what the future holds for GPS and what technologies and developments are leading the race as the product moves through its life cycle.

We've got some great new products and industry insights from respected members of the field service community as well.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue.

Dannielle Furness

dfurness@fieldservicebusiness.com.au



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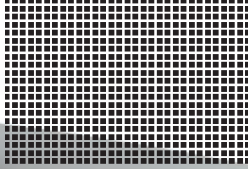
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FEATURE

# WHERE TO NEXT FOR GPS?

*Dannielle Furness*



Not so many years ago, the demise of the standalone GPS was hailed as inevitable. Not so, it turns out, but where is it headed next?

One of the downsides of living in the digital age is our tendency to insist that development of a new technology heralds an inevitable end for its predecessor. While disruptive innovation is very real and in many cases has dramatically changed the landscape, there are just as many scenarios where reality just doesn't meet up with the hype.

I blame the music industry. It's been 16 years since the peer-to-peer internet file sharing service Napster effectively brought the world's major music labels to their collective knees. A decade and a half on, squillions of dollars in legal fees spent (that probably would have been better directed towards developing a new business model) and it is still relatively easy to get your hands on copyrighted material completely free of charge. Ethical issues of illegal downloading aside, the impact this had on the traditional music distribution business was huge. Other industries looked on with a combination of interest and fear - if a company the size of Sony didn't see it coming, then no-one was safe from a shake-up arising from potentially game-changing developments. And so it is that we now panic whenever a faster, cheaper or more accessible version of any technology arrives.

Recent reports suggest that sales of e-readers are in decline, after all that frothing about the death of print. Sure, newspaper sales are dramatically dropping - online is the most logical way to access news - but did it really spell the end of traditional paper books? If so, why aren't e-reader sales on the rise? Maybe we just aren't reading any more.

We heard it a few years back when navigation functionality became a standard offering on smartphones. Take it from someone who has been lost in the backstreets of an unfamiliar city holding an overheated iPhone to the air-conditioning vent in an effort to reduce the temperature enough to resume functioning; there's a lot to be said for using a standalone fit-for-purpose device. Your average pocket multitool will suffice at a pinch, but how many tradies and technicians operate with that one tool alone? I'll tell you how many ... exactly none.

But, every product has a life cycle and a path of change is inevitable, so let's look at some developments that might direct future navigational offerings.

### Developments in camera-based GPS

Researchers from the Australian Centre for Robotic Vision (ACRV) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) have been working towards a world-first camera-based GPS system which will work in any weather or terrain.

Dr Michael Milford is a chief investigator at ACRV. He says that the camera-based system is better than the current technology because it doesn't rely on satellites and it works day and night and in extreme conditions such as storms.

"Current satellite-based systems don't work at all underground in tunnels and often drop out in city areas around tall buildings," he said. "Camera-based GPS offers the potential to leverage extremely cheap mass-produced cameras rather than more existing lasers used on many platforms."

## FEATURE



© raz studio/DollarPhotoClub

PhD student on the project Edward Peperrell explains how the system was used to ‘fingerprint’ locations in South East Queensland, where trials were conducted: “Using a new multiscale image comparison technique, video images of a roadway are stored and then converted to contrast patterns. The camera-based GPS then matches up the location based on the sequences stored in its memory.”

Dr Milford says that the system is also capable of using street imagery databases, such as Google Street View, and other online images from road networks.

“A potential avenue for future work would be to leverage 3D construction or scene understanding techniques and the new research enables the navigation system to recognise the same stretch of road, whether it’s travelling along the same lane as the database images or four lanes over on the opposite side of a median strip.”

### Chemical computing

Late last year we reported on the development of a chemical alternative to GPS, as conducted by researchers at the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa). The team developed a chemical ‘processor’ that reliably detected the fastest way through a city

maze. The process takes advantage of the laws of physical chemistry and practices what is called ‘chemical computing’. A gel mixed with acid is applied to the exit of a labyrinth (the destination), while the rest of the maze is filled with an alkaline liquid. While the acid spreads through the alkaline maze, the majority of it remains with the gel at the exit point. An alkaline solution mixed with dye is then added to the other end of the maze (the entrance) and it then automatically seeks the way to the exit, or the point with the highest acidity level.

Rita Tóth, from Empa’s Laboratory for High Performance Ceramics, explains the benefit of this process: “The advantage of this chemical computer over its electronic counterpart is that it finds all the possible routes virtually in parallel. A normal computer calculates step by step one possibility after another, which takes longer.” Basi-

cally, traditional satnav systems demand a tremendous amount of computational power to achieve the same goal.

### The great indoors ... the final frontier

Admittedly, this one’s been on the horizon for a while now - IT and technology news sites such as BizTech and Tech Radar have been heralding the impending emergence of indoor GPS systems since mid-2013. Seemingly more suited to customer engagement applications (think shopping malls, airports and sporting arenas), accurate, inexpensive indoor navigation is the final frontier and proponents claim it spells good things for tech companies in terms of opportunity. As current GPS technology is not reliable in indoor applications, the development of a successful alternative form could seriously impact on existing navigational technology ... did someone say disruptive innovation?

Regardless of where it goes from here - cameras, chemistry or something that hasn’t even been thought of yet - it’s always worthwhile remembering that technology cycles move at different paces. Today’s ‘next big thing’ doesn’t always make it and just because they say ‘the end is nigh’, it doesn’t necessarily mean it is ... well, not yet anyway.



**There’s a lot to be said for using a standalone fit-for-purpose device.**



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# in the field

## SAFE, EFFICIENT WORKFLOW



With a vast underground network of pipelines, ATCO Gas Australia (ATCO GA) provides natural gas connections to approximately 683,000 Western Australians, including residential, business and large-scale industrial customers. The company owns and maintains a network of over 13,500 km of gas mains and lines, with a service team on call 24/7/365.

ATCO GA implemented a Field Mobility solution that features over 80 rugged Panasonic Toughbook tablets across its mobile workforce, efficiently replacing paper-based processes with a fully automated system.

Alan Dixon, president of ATCO GA, said, "Field Mobility has enabled ATCO GA's large field team to operate more independently, with higher safety protocols and more efficient resource utilisation. Our aim was to reduce response times to incidents through providing more automated and streamlined methods of job record creation, job allocation, work performance recording, job return and job closure."

The Field Mobility system has delivered a real-time, end-to-end solution for job dispatch, management and completion using SAP (ERP), webMethods (middleware), ESRI (GIS), mDrover (dispatch application), EIM (document management) and numerous desktop and remote upgrade/support tools.

Toughbooks have been installed in the fleet of duty vehicles to replace an unreliable mobile fax service. Under the old system, communication was limited to mobile phones and trunk radios. Field crew locations and status were verbally communicated, while job dispatch and management was paper based.

The new electronic system eliminates the need for paperwork. Allocation, receipt and completion of job notifications now occurs in real time, and risk assessments are completed electronically at

the start of each job. Instant messaging allows communication between field staff and the control room.

Dixon added, "The Toughbook Field Tablets were chosen for their rugged capability and have been received very positively by the field team. The tablets support the mission-critical service delivery required by ATCO GA, and have proven to be robust and reliable in the harsh day-to-day environment experienced by crews. They are built to withstand extremes of temperature, with a sealed magnesium-alloy chassis that is resistant to dust and water."

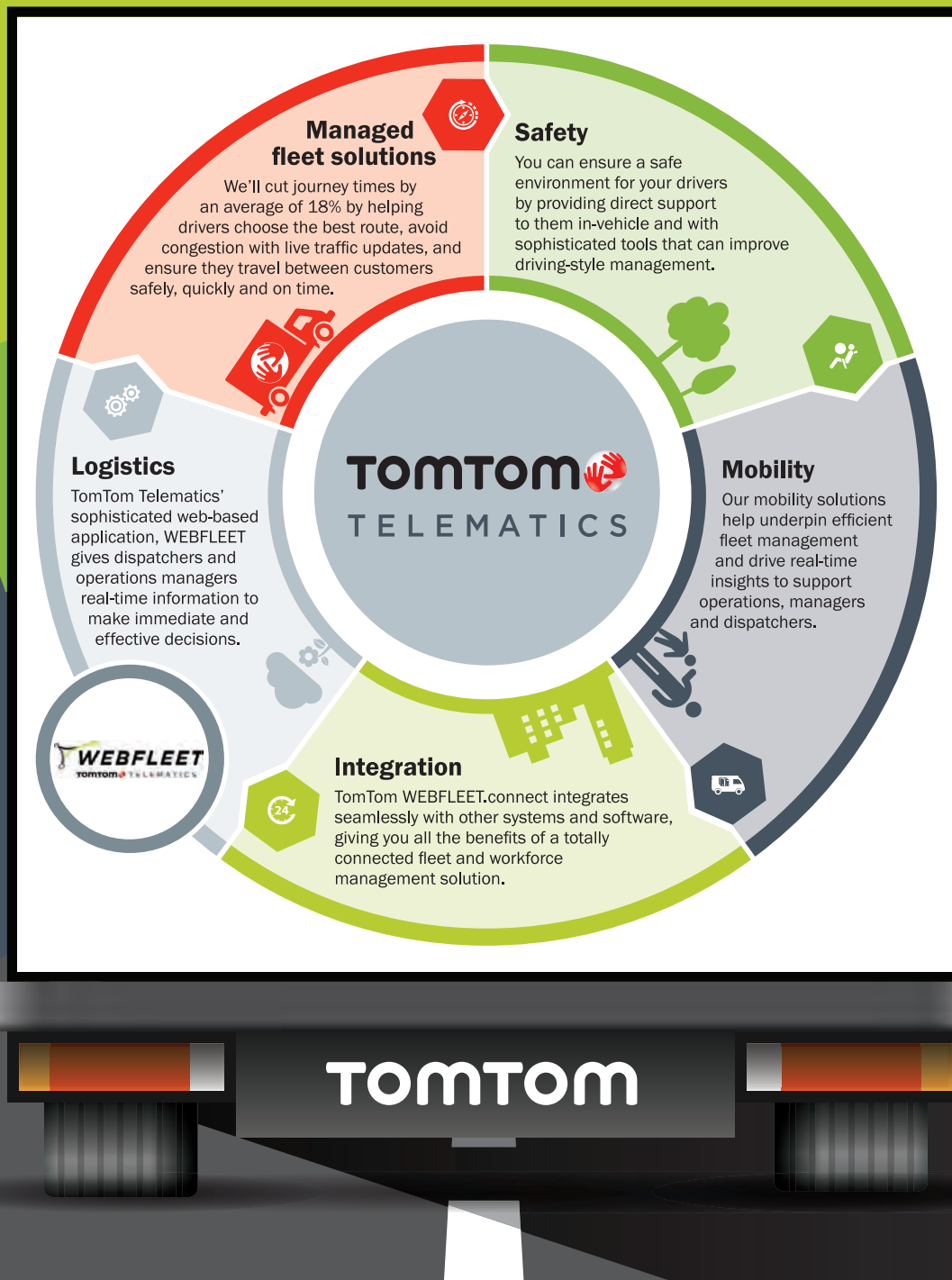
The Field Mobility system incorporates a number of features designed to improve safety, and documents available to field staff via Toughbooks include Dial Before You Dig plans. Procedures and safety manuals are downloaded directly from an enterprise information management system, ensuring the latest version is always accessible. The units feature GIS/Assetview maps that show the location of reticulation assets and all health, safety and environment forms are completed electronically.

A GPS feature enables dispatchers to allocate the closest qualified field crew with the required equipment, improving response times and enhancing gas network safety.

The tablets are securely docked via vehicle mounts which also power and charge them. The fully rugged devices are lightweight and have an outdoor-viewable screen and a polariser to reduce reflection. Battery life was also an important feature, with hot-swappable twin batteries extending life up to 6.5 h and enabling battery replacement in the field without shutting down.

Following the success of the project, ATCO GA is planning to continue expansion to maintenance crews across Western Australia.

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# THE ROAD TO EFFICIENCY

Danielle Furness

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Fuel has been a hot topic lately; the cost is up (or down), regional areas are being hit by higher pricing, our nation's fuel security is at risk ... the list goes on.

**W**hile as individuals, fleet managers and business operators we can't exactly affect the dynamics of the international market, we can make vehicle purchasing choices based on fact, rather than assumption, and encourage practices that promote more efficient fuel use, benefiting the environment and ensuring an ongoing stable supply.

In February 2014, ClimateWorks Australia (CWA) released a briefing paper titled 'Improving Australia's Light Vehicle Fuel Efficiency'. CWA aims to facilitate substantial reductions in Australia's greenhouse gas emissions over the next five years and works on a platform of

analysis, engagement and assessment. In short, this means identifying the most efficient opportunities for emissions reduction; partnering with business, government and community to remove barriers to those reductions; and, assessing our national progress to ensure any ensuing goals are being met.

## We're behind the 8-ball

The paper is the result of substantial financial modelling, which we won't detail too deeply here, but it raises some interesting points. Despite the concerted ongoing efforts of government, industry and consumer groups, Australia lags behind most other developed economies when it comes to the introduction of regulated fuel-efficiency (or CO<sub>2</sub> emis-

sions) standards. CWA believes that the successful design and implementation of best practice standards in Australia could realise a light vehicle fleet fuel-efficiency improvement of over 50% within the next 10 years.

The current system in Australia relies heavily on higher fuel prices as a mechanism to encourage new vehicle buyers to purchase a more fuel-efficient option. However, CWA says that evidence suggests a high degree of price inelasticity, meaning that significant fuel price increases are required before a shift in consumer preference is realised. They state that other developed economies use a combination of regulatory standards, voluntary targets, financial incentives



Australia could realise a light vehicle fleet fuel-efficiency improvement of over 50%.



and consumer information to achieve efficiency improvements and that Australia as a nation could learn from that.

### What happens if we don't?

According to CWA, our oil self-sufficiency rates are in decline, so we are increasingly reliant on imports to cover our needs. Combined with an explosion in emerging economy vehicle ownership, now and in the future, we are in a precarious position when it comes to energy security. Again, the efficiency standards are cited as a method for reducing that reliance. Given that the average age of all vehicles on the road in Australia is 10 years, higher than the global average, delaying the development of these standards could lead to 'emissions lock-in', a situation whereby a

larger proportion of vehicles on our roads are less efficient than they would be with the standards in place.

### Hanging off their coat-tails

A range of technologies exist that can be (or already have been) integrated into vehicles to improve efficiency. CWA says that as most of these have been developed to meet with existing or forthcoming legislative requirements in international markets, Australia can benefit because the rate of adoption will be faster and costs significantly reduced.

Some of these vehicle improvements include: direct injection and lean burn, variable valve actuation, downsizing engines with turbo or super charging, dual clutch transmissions, electric motor assist, light-weighting, low rolling resistance tyres and improved aerodynamics. Alternative fuels, such as biofuels and electric/hybrid technologies, also come into play, although penetration of these advances are affected by factors including time required to optimise the production scales, build fleet operator confidence and cost.

### Standards won't stand alone

CWA says that fuel emissions standards alone are not enough and that the introduction of other measures will enhance fuel efficiency overall. Again, they look to the global market for examples of successful campaigns including:

#### *Consumer education*

Consumer attitudes are an effective starting point and labelling schemes that clearly show the running costs and subsequent fuel efficiency of new cars are a valuable way to build consumer awareness. Similar to energy rating schemes already familiar to Australian whitegoods buyers, these provide a simple but effective point of comparison. Additionally, programs that promote eco-driving and car sharing are seen as useful complements to the more formal schemes.

#### *Fuel quality*

CWA recommends a review of Australian fuel quality standards, with a view to mandating fuels compatible with the Euro

5/6 emissions standards. If there is no harmonisation of fuel quality standards, this will impact on the success of importing fuel-efficient vehicles or transferring engine technology into the local market.

#### *Road access pricing*

Congestion is a killer - not only does it make commuting a nightmare, it also impacts negatively on health levels. A road access pricing scheme would see users charged based on distance charged on certain roadways, in an effort to reduce the number of 'low value' kilometres driven. CWA says these types of measures have been introduced in Singapore, as well as parts of the EU and the United States.

#### *Fuel and vehicle fees*

Aligning registration fees with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions provides an effective purchase influencer. In the UK, progressive CO<sub>2</sub> taxation of company cars has been very effective in driving consumer choice, according to the UK Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (as cited by CWA). It certainly makes more sense to align fuel and vehicle fees with emissions, rather than attributes such as weight, and it has the added benefit of encouraging car manufacturers to go beyond compliance of the minimum mandated levels.

### Will fuel even figure in the future?

While there's plenty of evidence to suggest that legislative intervention in some form is required to increase the nation's fuel efficiency, there is a definite whiff of change in the wind. The 2014 Wheels Car of the Year (largely considered as Australia's most influential vehicle award) top five finalists encompassed two electric cars and it was a surprise to many when one was announced the winner in late January 2015. With a range of around 100-120 km before recharge, it's probably not the best option for fleet managers or for long-distance drivers at this stage, but it does herald the beginning of a new era.

Our fuel supplies won't last forever, so making better and more informed choices now just seems like the sensible thing to do.

## DRIVING THE NBN

As a leading telecommunications and information services company in Australia, Telstra offers a full range of communications solutions with a focus on connecting business, government, community and individuals. Part of this is the development and delivery of products and services over the National Broadband Network (NBN), which come online as the network is rolled out nationally.

As part of its sales and marketing strategy, Telstra has designed a walk-in mobile retail shop and demonstration centre, housed in a purpose-built body fitted to the long wheelbase Iveco Daily cab chassis. Telstra National Retail Asset Program Manager Shirley Wienand had tasked Alan Johnson, the Brisbane-based Telstra fleet engineering and procurement representative, to source a suitable vehicle that could be used to accommodate her requirements, which included the ability for the vehicle to be driven on a standard car driving licence. The mobile shops are equipped to allow the public to get hands-on experience of the latest generation telecommunication systems and products available from Telstra.

According to Iveco Key Account Manager Light-Medium Product James McHendrie, some of the features of the Daily that Telstra was looking for included a long wheelbase, light tare weight, drivability on a car licence at 4500 kg, rear wheel drive and a good towing capacity.

Johnson said, "The short delivery lead time from Iveco enabled us to quickly develop our prototype mobile retail units."

Iveco brings its expertise from the medium and heavy truck business into the design of light commercials. The latest engine range is impressive for its performance as well as its fuel efficiency. The ergonomically designed cabin interior demonstrates comprehension of the needs of drivers that work from their vehicle. The Daily provides one of the best workplaces for any vehicle in this segment. While designed to drive like a car, the steel chassis provides the enhanced support, structural rigidity, resistance to stress and long-term durability for any type of body mounting.

Standard safety features include driver, passenger and curtain airbags and daytime running lights, while the design of the front grille increases airflow to the cooling system.

The vehicles will mostly be driving in the harsh conditions of regional and outback Australia so a smooth ride is essential. The Daily features torsion bar front suspension with double-acting shock absorbers, and long-leaf parabolic rear suspension. The dual rear wheel configuration provides good load distribution for increased durability and resistance to wear and tear.

The Daily model supplied to Telstra is the 5017C powered by the Iveco three-litre, four-cylinder diesel engine with turbocharger, intercooler and common rail fuel injection.

The Telstra requirement is for an enclosed body that is fitted out as a tool and test service vehicle with ready access to the equipment from the ground. "We

"The mobile stores have been designed to allow Telstra to promote and demonstrate its products and services in areas where Telstra may not have a retail store presence.

The mobile stores will also be used at promotional, local community and sporting events and in regional areas where the NBN is starting to come online," said Johnson. "The Daily was the best fit variant in the market segment and the only vehicle that met all our operational requirements."

have worked through Telstra's range of applications and operational requirements where the 4WD version could be adapted to suit our business requirements and have gone to the extent of sketching up body styles to suit our applications," Johnson added.

**Iveco Trucks Australia Ltd**  
[www.iveco.com.au](http://www.iveco.com.au)



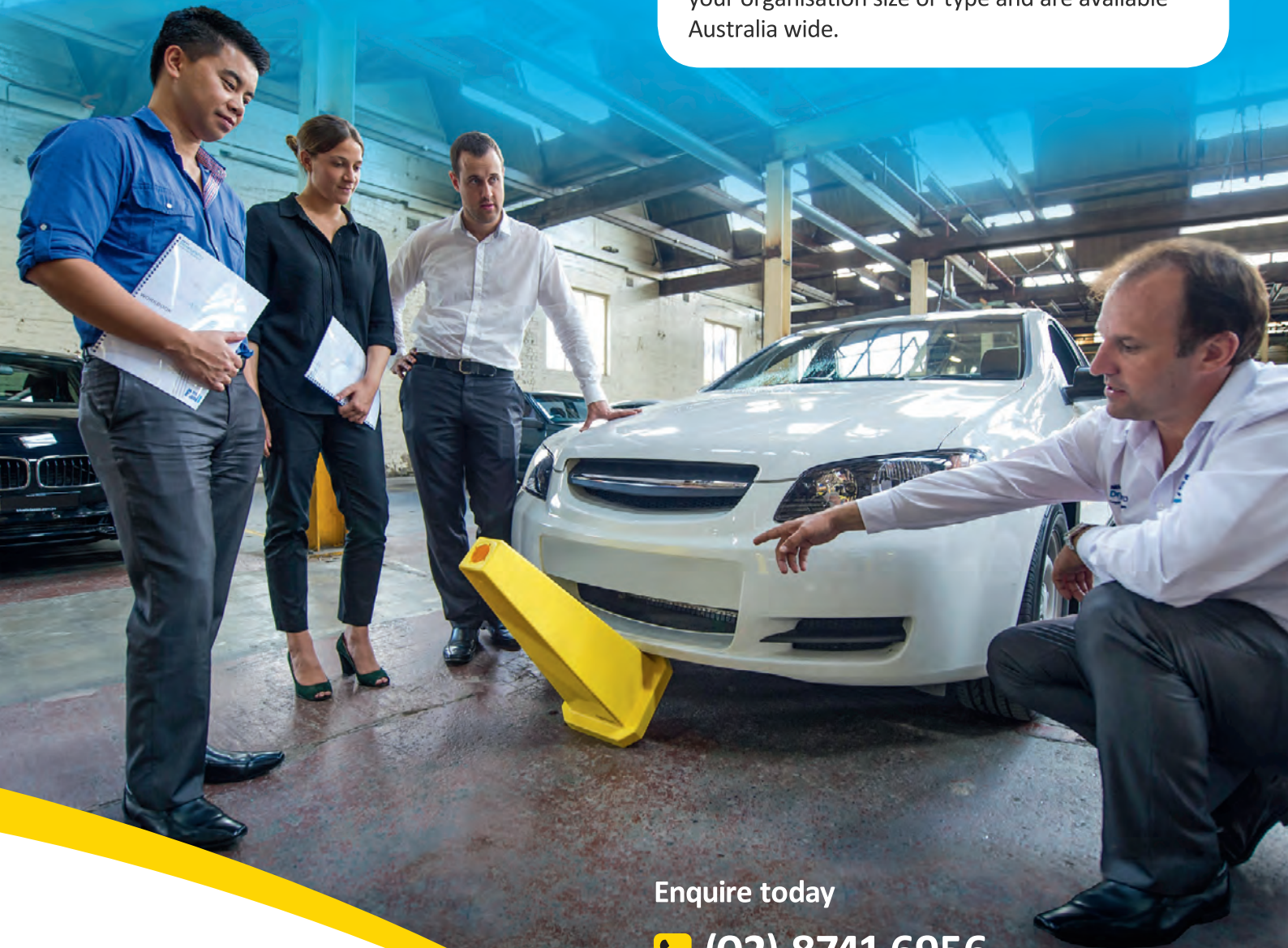
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# PRODUCT WATCH

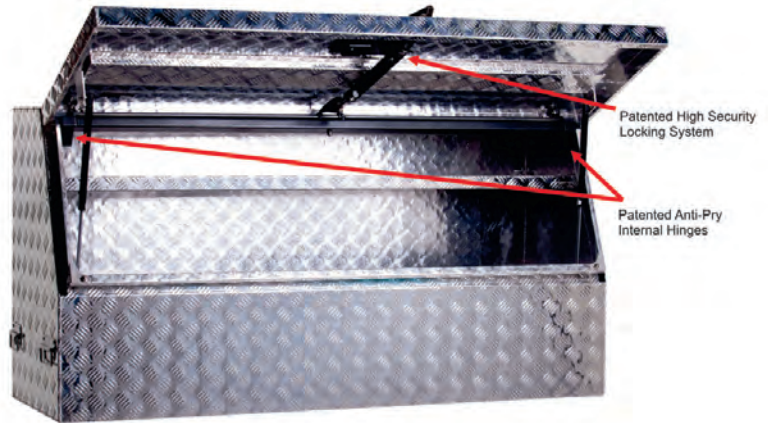
## PORTABLE JUMP START KIT

The PowerOn portable jump start kit from Powered Life is suitable for charging car, boat and bike batteries up to 20 times from a full charge.

It includes a built-in safety LED torch, with an output of 86 lm and a throw of up to 100 m. The torch features three illumination modes: torch, strobe light and SOS, and the emergency light lasts up to 120 h on full charge.

The PowerOn also operates as a power pack, capable of recharging any 5 V/1.2 A USB chargeable device from its 12,000 mAh battery pack, meaning out-of-charge mobile phones are a thing of the past. Smaller than a set of jumper leads, the PowerOn is suitable for travel applications.

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## HIGH-SECURITY STORAGE SOLUTIONS

1-11 has released the Australian-designed TOUGH Lokaway range of high security storage. TOUGH Lokaway includes anti-pry bar technology, known as Lokaway Swing 'n' Slide doors, which allows the door to interlock against the body of the storage box, providing extra security.

Each unit includes a 6-leaf safe lock for added security against tampering. Truck boxes are offered in aluminium or white powder-coated steel and site boxes are also available with optional heavy-duty castors. The entire range features fully welded construction and delivers a robust storage solution with good security.

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## VEHICLE CHOICES FOR FIELD SERVICE

Ute, tray-top, service body or van? Selecting the right vehicle for field service is driven by many factors.

**T**oday's fleet manager is faced with a range of options when deciding on the perfect vehicle for field service technicians. Economics, ergonomics, safety and resale value all play a part.

### The era of specialisation

The Australian-invented utility - the ute - was adopted by the Americans and renamed the pickup truck. Utes offer a great general-purpose vehicle configuration that serves the needs of people who have to carry small bulky and/or dirty loads and want the driving experience of a conventional car. Perfect for transporting the odd hay-bale around the farm and dropping the kids off at school in town.

Vans, on the other hand, started out as delivery vehicles and people carriers. Kitted out with racks, shelving, bins and drawers, they can become excellent technicians' and tradesmen's workhorses. They are particularly popular in Europe,

with its colder and wet climate and smaller travel distances.

Highly task-specific vehicles have been around for a long time, including ambulances, bulk liquid carriers, hearses, fire trucks, etc. As industries mature, they become more specialised. The evolution of the modern service-body is a sign of the increasingly sophisticated and specific demands of the field-service technician and highly mobile tradesman.

Vehicles adapted for use by field service technicians can be arranged in a size/cost/complexity/customisation spectrum from station wagon, to ute, tray-top, service body and van. The scale continues to trucks featuring cherry pickers and more.

### Selection criteria

Apart from obvious size and fit considerations, there are ergonomics, handling, ride comfort and crash safety requirements. Purchase price, running and fit-



out costs, ease of repair and resale value will also drive the purchasing decision.

Owner-operators will have different priorities from fleet operators towards a vehicle's ability to be used for personal reasons, including carrying multiple passengers, towing caravans or boats, or being reconfigured to carry camping and outdoor gear.

Load restraint compliance is being increasingly enforced, and the ratio of tools, spare parts and one-off loads also plays a part in deciding how much fixed racking and shelving, versus cargo area, is required. Cargo can be odd shapes; shed dirt, dust and mud; and can give off noxious and dangerous fumes. Everything not tightly secured becomes a deadly projectile in an accident.

Risk management and liability reduction are high priorities for fleet operators, and anything that can be done to reduce those is a big plus. Good design takes the human element out of decisions and actions and makes it an intrinsic part of the set-up. Making load and storage decisions automatic reduces the company's exposure to potential claims.

A low centre of gravity (roll centre) makes for a safer ride and better handling, as does well-engineered load distribution.

Good operator access limits the amount of stretching, heavy lifting and climbing. By presenting tools, parts and loads at optimum heights, fatigue is reduced and productivity and safety increased. A better and more productive working environment has fewer injury claims. Big access steps and well-placed handholds make potentially dangerous tasks simple and safe.

Nobody wants their tools, parts or cargo damaged or stolen. Thieves are opportunistic and will exploit a lack of security or operator attention and quickly snatch anything of value. Is the work done at

the vehicle or away from it; is it mainly used as a packhorse, or does it have to provide working areas as well? The latter requires lights, solid bench space and the ability to mount hardware (eg, vices, pipe-cutters, etc). Does the work area need some protection from the elements in the form of swing-up doors or a retractable marquee?

All vehicle types offer many customisation options - it is very important to resist the urge to include every option, as gross vehicle mass (GVM) limits must be respected, not just for legal reasons, but to provide a safe and stable ride and reduce wear, tear and running costs.

There are different styles of service bodies: 'saddle bag' ones that drape over the chassis and tray-top mounted ones that open right up and provide a work area, task lighting, shade and some protection from the elements.



### All vehicle types offer many customisation options.

#### Working requirements

The optimal choice of vehicle is driven by many factors: some obvious, some less so. We've determined that such factors generally fall into one of four categories: general criteria, cargo and carrying, working and driving.

#### General criteria

Things to consider in this category include comparative vehicle cost, resale

value, minor smash repairs, fitout costs, vehicle signage capability - bonnets, doors, sidewalls etc, work vs personal use and commercial risk. Commercial risk should factor in things like load compliance. For example, a ute attracts high commercial risk as load compliance is completely operator dependent, whereas service bodies deliver a lower commercial risk as a well-designed vehicle means that loads are carried and restrained properly.

#### Cargo and carrying

The cargo and carrying requirement encompasses a range of classes: load restraint compliance, load/cargo/tool access, long loads, load security, load safety, waterproofing, general security and load contamination from dust, fumes and leaks. Vans tend to score well in most of these categories, although limited entry points can pose the occasional problem.

#### Working

Working criteria are specific to working with and in the vehicle - can it be used to operate any of the tasks required by the tech, is there ladder access, does the vehicle provide weathershielding and how does it react in terms of general wear and tear?

#### Driving

Finally, driving considerations need to be assessed. These include steering and handling, ride quality, long-distance driving, rollover centre, air conditioning, off-road capability, driver visibility and crashworthiness, all of which vary from body type to body type.

XL Service Bodies has compiled a complete matrix outlining the performance of each of the four vehicle body types against the 27 judging criteria, to provide a starting point for vehicle purchasing decisions. It's not intended as a definitive guide, but should be used as a checklist to prompt questions when evaluating options. It can be downloaded at [www.xl.com.au](http://www.xl.com.au) - under the Info page.

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## FIELD SERVICE PRIORITIES FOR 2015



*Sumair Dutta - Chief Customer Officer, The Service Council*

While it's still in the early part of 2015, it feels justified to make predictions on field service trends for the upcoming year. Luckily, I have access to a broad community of professional field service leaders who offer insights into their future field service plans. We recently surveyed 180 individuals who have offered the following observations on their top five focus areas for 2015:

1. Process control and review - We recently published research that found 65% of organisations were consistently reviewing field service processes. However, most reviews were done with a focus on productivity enhancement and cost control. Interestingly, we now see more assessments focusing on revenue improvements and customer satisfaction levels. More so, we are seeing organisations regard their key processes (appointment booking, dispatch, field visit and follow-up) as vital nodes of the field service delivery system and better grasp the interconnected nature of these processes. Simply put, companies are looking for a more linked field service organisation.

2. Talent - Surprisingly, 66% of respondents from our end-of-year survey said they are able to meet workload needs with current resource levels. That said, 55% indicated that the volume of field service work has risen, and there is the looming retirement crisis in the coming years. The biggest areas of focus in the space of talent management will be training and knowledge management. Over the longer term, we see an increased focus in hiring as organisations look to support a changing profile of field service agents.

3. Field service execution - Our definition of field service execution is tied to the delivery of work once it is in the hands of the field agent. To improve a day in the life for these agents, organisations are looking to:

- remove administrative paperwork and move to mobile applications
- build a formalised plan to capture and share service knowledge
- provide increased customer history information in the field

- develop/acquire new training tools and learning platforms

4. IT infrastructure for field service - While the buzz around IT in field service is wearables, we anticipate that most organisations will focus on the tools necessary to enhance field service execution (see point 3). There will be a focus on linking field service functions via automation, mobilising field workers with information and providing means to train workers. We anticipate a greater push towards better business intelligence and predictive analytics in order to reduce the reactive component of field service businesses. Within the wearable sphere, we do see an emerging interest in video to support field service resolutions, so organisations are looking at mobility tools and technology that provide a seamless flow of video between the field and the service back office.

5. Call appointment, dispatch and scheduling - In confirmation of point 1, organisations are much more aware of the impact of poor call management and dispatch on field service performance. Typical call effectiveness metrics (time on call, ease of appointment setting, appointment window, etc) are ineffective if the subsequent field service visit is incomplete due to the wrong technician being scheduled or the lack of required parts. Everything is connected and organisations are recognising this more and more. In fact, in improving their perfect field service visit rate, organisations cite the following as two of the top four strategies:

- More intelligent schedule and dispatch
- Increased triage at call and appointment management

One might say that a prediction list without mention of the Internet of Things (IoT) is incomplete. In the field service space, the IoT is not a new revelation. Most enterprise-level organisations we speak with have already invested in connected machines and are reaping the benefits. Will they continue to evolve their investments? Sure. Connected machines will play a significant role in enhancing the proactive nature of service operations and this continues to be a major focus area for service-focused organisations.

# Rental vs Purchase

## Why rental is more cost effective than ownership

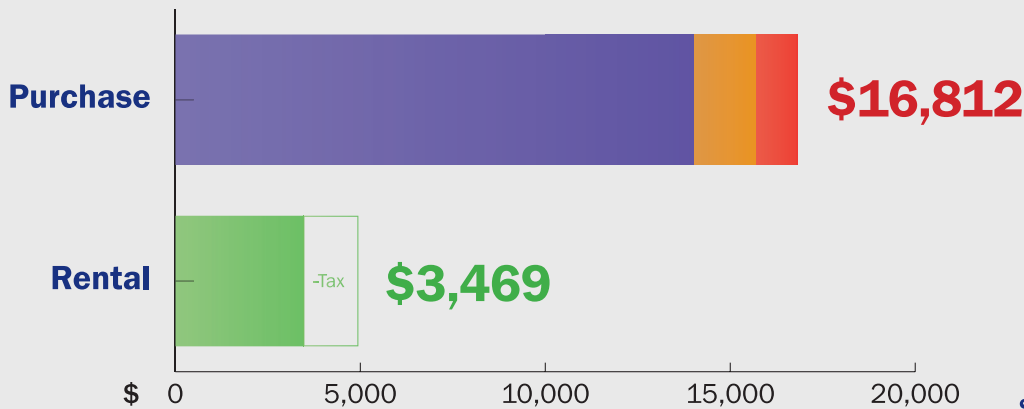
When weighing up whether to purchase or rent, it is clear that the benefits of rental far outweigh the cost of ownership. Not only does rental save you money, but it's the smarter business option, providing you with greater flexibility and control. At the end of your rental period, simply return the equipment and upgrade to a newer version, it's that easy!

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- ✓ Avoid obsolescence
- ✓ No depreciating assets
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Fluke DSX-5000 Cable Analyser 1 GHz Class FA

Please see the chart below which illustrates the benefits of rental over ownership for the Fluke DSX-5000 Cable Analyser 1 GHz Class FA



Figures displayed represent costs at the end of the **first year**.  
All rental rates quoted are based on a 3 year period



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## It's not rocket science.. it's **Rental!**

## LONG ARM OF THE LAW GETS MOBILE

Acer has successfully rolled out the largest deployment of Windows 8 tablets in Australia to Tasmania Police, replacing a fleet of 1100 desktop computers - including 600 Windows XPs that were at end of life - and 200 in-car mobile data terminals.

The imperative for Tasmania Police was to increase the number of hours per shift its officers spent in the field. It was also important to use its overtime budget on core policing activities rather than completing deskbound administrative tasks.

Police selected the Acer Iconia W511. In the largest deployment of Windows 8 tablets in Australia, it undertook a phased, six-month rollout from a pilot at its Training Academy to all 1- to 2-man stations and then to the completed fleet of 1044 devices allocated to all 73 stations in the state.

“During the 6-week pilot, from the 37 tablets issued, we estimated 280 hours cut from administration. That efficiency equates to 37 working days plus 43 hours in overtime. In dollar terms we saved \$2600 from the pilot alone,” Hutcheon confirmed.

Officers now have secure access to all police systems, allowing them to quickly pull up driving licence details and make a field ID.

Statements from witnesses and victims of crime, as well as accident and crime reports, were previously written by hand at the scene and then transcribed at the station. Now, they are largely completed in the field.

Hutcheon explains the benefits: “This is not only avoiding duplication of effort but keeping more officers out in the community for more of each shift, rather than returning to the station to do unproductive paperwork. With the devices in hand, there is less wasted time. Officers can file reports while they wait for, say, a tow truck to arrive at an

accident scene. And the Iconia’s touch screen is proving its worth in capturing electronic signatures so that witnesses and victims no longer have to go to a police station to sign typed up statements.”

Every frontline police officer in Tasmania is now supported by the latest Acer mobile productivity tools. It is the only jurisdiction in this country to not only provide a device per officer but to use them as a replacement for its desktops. The Iconia W511 solution features an Intel Atom dual core processor, a 10.1” HD LCD multitouch screen, 2 GB memory, 64 GB solid-state drive, docking keyboard and Windows 8 operating system.

**Acer Computer Australia Pty Ltd**  
[www.acer.com.au](http://www.acer.com.au)

Jason Hutcheon, Acting Inspector of the Business Improvement Unit at the Tasmanian Department of Police & Emergency Management, said: “We needed a single device that would be suitable for all officers, in all situations. They needed efficient, online access to all administrative and reporting functions whether they were in the station or in the field.”

Tasmania Police’s mobility requirements stipulated a robust, 3G-enabled device with proven long battery life - it had to operate through a 10-hour shift without recharging.

A keyboard docking facility was essential. Officers carry out a significant amount of administration work and do many hours of typing each week. They needed access to ergonomic, full-sized keyboards at the station.

From a thorough analysis of available devices, Tasmania



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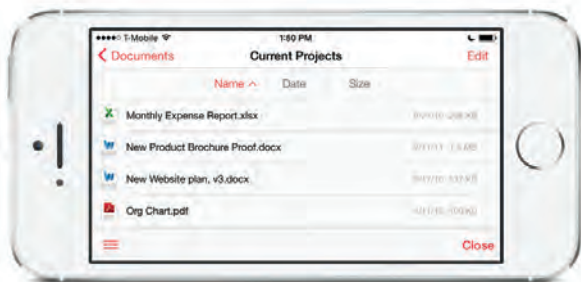
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**E:** [info@ridgebackbodies.com.au](mailto:info@ridgebackbodies.com.au)

# PRODUCT WATCH

## REMOTE DESKTOP CONNECTIVITY

Parallels Access ensures productivity while on the move, allowing users to run and access applications they need on a variety of platforms.

The software allows access to a laptop or PC back in the office, enabling users to travel light with only handheld devices. Originally developed for the iPad, version 2.0 makes remote access available for Android phones and tablets, as well as other iOS devices. Users can centrally assign, manage and secure remote access to desktop computers - at home or work.



Any file or document can be remotely accessed via a handheld device, including Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Files are optimised for the handheld device's screen - which means no zooming, pinching or formatting issues.

Parallels  
[www.parallels.com.au](http://www.parallels.com.au)



## FANLESS IN-VEHICLE POE CONTROLLER

The NUVO-3100VTC is an Intel 3rd Generation Core i7/i5 fanless in-vehicle controller from Neousys Technology. The product supports standard voltage, PGA-type i7/i5/i3 processors for flexible CPU installation. The unit is designed for in-vehicle applications. It supports 8-35 VDC input and has ignition power control to operate with a 12/24 V car battery. Four onboard 802.3at PoE ports make the product a suitable platform for mobile NVR.

The embedded computer features dual SATA ports with RAID support and one hot-swappable HDD tray, delivering robust data integrity and convenient storage access. It features E-Mark certification for in-vehicle requirements.

The I/O functionality includes Gigabit Ethernet, 4 x USB 3.0 and 2 x USB2.0 ports, 2 x SATA, VGA/DVI, COM ports, mini-PCIe and isolation DIO. The product has an ultracompact size of 210 x 165 x 59 mm.

Backplane Systems Technology Pty Ltd  
[www.backplane.com.au](http://www.backplane.com.au)

# Improve the productivity of your field service staff



UDC Mobile provides an easy to use, economical solution for collecting data from your field service workers using their existing smartphones or tablets.

### The Benefits

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## NOT JUST FOR NAVIGATION

GPS systems can be incredibly useful in allowing companies to ensure their fleets are working to maximum efficiency. In the professional sense, they are more than just navigation equipment.

**H**owever, implementing and maintaining such a system can be complex. These real-life applications show how efficiency gains can be achieved using GPS both on and off the road.

### Southern Tyre Services

Southern Tyre Service (STS) is a mobile tyre fitting and repairs provider operating across Sydney. The company wanted to maximise productivity and efficiency of its vehicles on and off the road and was searching for a solution to facilitate this. STS was looking to increase the number of jobs its mobile tyre fitter vehicles could attend per day and to improve customer service by providing accurate ETAs for clients. Other priorities were to improve driver safety and mechanical wear on vehicles by reducing fuel and mileage, as well as minimising the number of accidents and infringement notices.

To meet these objectives, Forum Group's fleet division, Forum Fleet, installed the TomTom Telematics LINK 530 Track and Trace systems as well as the PRO 7150 Navigation system with traffic updates. The LINK 530 and PRO 7150 devices provide a range of options that help improve overall vehicle management by providing driver IDs and detailed tracking. TomTom Telematics also provides drivers with an accurate GPS system that helps them to navigate and reduce their time spent in traffic delays.

Southern Tyre Service now has 15 of its vehicles installed with Forum Fleet's telematics solution. Since April 2013, the implementation has seen an increase of two additional jobs per vehicle per day, or 30 jobs per day in total. The fleet management solution enables the company to accurately record fuel and maintenance costs as well



**The office team now has full visibility of the drivers.**

as keep a close eye on its vehicle and driver health and safety requirements.

By overseeing areas like fuel use and vehicle maintenance, Southern Tyre Service has reduced its overall fuel consumption by 10%. The on-road benefits extend to the backend operations with a 7% reduction in communication costs through minimised phone bills as well as providing more time for employees to focus on other jobs, in turn, improving staff productivity.

The office team now has full visibility of the drivers and their pending workloads, which has improved the management of staff and reduced employee overtime by 5%.

**Sheen Towing Service**

Sheen Towing Service is a vehicle towing and salvage company based in Bayswater, Victoria. In expanding the business's presence across Melbourne, Sheen realised it needed to address several areas among its fleet to successfully grow operations.

It was critical to have maximum visibility of driver location when responding to job call-outs. By implementing a system that could help track its drivers' whereabouts, Sheen could examine how to improve its overall productivity and increase the number of jobs that it could take on. As the company was looking to expand its operations, it required a system that could provide greater control to simultaneously manage multiple jobs in different locations.

Forum Fleet determined the ideal solution should comprise the TomTom LINK 530 and TomTom PRO 7100 systems to provide greater visibility and ease of dispatching Sheen vehicles to job sites. The LINK 530 and PRO 7100 devices are systems to help improve overall vehicle management by providing driver IDs and detailed tracking. This allows account managers to see where their vehicles are at all times. TomTom Telematics also provides drivers with an accurate GPS system that helps them to navigate and reduce time spent in traffic delays.

Since June 2013, when Forum Fleet installed the TomTom Telematics system in 12 of its vehicles, Sheen has seen a 30% increase in the number of jobs it is able to undertake and a substantial decrease in vehicle downtime. The fleet management solution enables the company to accurately record fuel and maintenance costs as well as keep a close eye on its vehicle and driver health and safety requirements. By overseeing areas like fuel use and vehicle maintenance, it has been able to significantly reduce the associated costs across its vehicle fleet.

As the TomTom Telematics solution is cloud based, Sheen Towing Service can fully customise its fleet reports from anywhere in the world while allocating and monitoring its drivers on the job. This visibility has also seen the company achieve 100% accuracy in reconciling invoices and employee timesheets, further improving backend operations.

**Forum Group**  
[www.forumgroup.com.au](http://www.forumgroup.com.au)

# PRODUCT WATCH

## CLOUD PLATFORM FOR FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Trimble has introduced its new cloud-based platform for field service management - Trimble Horizon. It will be the core platform for a suite of solutions and services. Built on Trimble's robust hosting and infrastructure framework, it supports the following capabilities: Solutions - Trimble's cloud-based solution suite which includes Work Management, Fleet Management and Driver Safety; Mobility - mobile applications and tools for better empowerment, data sharing and collaboration in the field; Connect - web services to enable seamless integration; and Insight - business intelligence and analytics tools.

Trimble Field Service Management  
[www.trimble.com](http://www.trimble.com)



## REMOTE VISUAL INSPECTION INSTRUMENTS

Olympus IPLEX RX and IPLEX RT industrial videoscopes allow an engineer or technician to view components of a machine in situ or to see inside confined spaces. Consisting of a small camera mounted on a length of cable, the devices incorporate light sources into the tip of the probe, as well as motors to move the LED and lens assembly.

The camera and cable connect to a portable base unit and images are viewed directly on a compact 6.5" built-in, anti-reflective, daylight-view monitor or plugged into a larger separate monitor. The head of the device is threaded through an opening and as the camera moves it provides a real-time image of the environment. While images can be viewed in real time, data can also be recorded for review at a later date, allowing technicians to search for faults, cracks, bubbles or other flaws which may lead to future equipment failure.

The IPLEX RX incorporates patented WiDER (Wide Dynamic Extended Range) image processing technology, a system that increases the background signal and allows less light to be used, reducing flaring and wash-out.

Olympus Australia Pty Ltd  
[www.olympusaustralia.com.au](http://www.olympusaustralia.com.au)

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# PRODUCT WATCH

## ROADSIDE AND CONSTRUCTION SITE PROTECTION

The Ironman Hybrid steel and concrete safety barrier system is the first fully crash-tested and approved, non-anchored temporary barrier system available in Australia. Ironman Hybrid is economical and simple to deploy with individual sections that easily connect together. Two men can unload a truck using a forklift, front-end loader or crane to deploy a full load in less than 45 min. With up to 100 m of barrier easily transported to site on the back of a semitrailer, the logistics cost for operators and hire companies is greatly reduced as the number of trucks required is a third that of the number required for concrete-style barriers.

Ironman Hybrid is a concrete ballasted steel barrier system that requires no anchoring. The design has been tested to NCHRP350 TL-3 (100 km/h) and the results show that it has similar deflection performance to concrete systems, but with the durability and portability of steel. The barrier system has been assessed and accepted by Austroads Safety Barrier Assessment Panel (ASBAP) as well as each of the state-based road authorities. Ironman Hybrid is claimed to have demonstrated excellent impact vehicle stability during testing at different speeds and impact angles.

With an estimated working life of more than 15 years, Saferoads' latest safety barrier delivers a low cost of ownership and an extended revenue potential for contractors or hire companies.

Saferoads Pty Ltd  
[www.saferoads.com.au](http://www.saferoads.com.au)





### COMPLETE MORE JOBS IN LESS TIME WITH REDUCED ADMIN COSTS

**myFLO** allows you to complete more jobs in less time.

**myFLO** is an electronic work order management system for service-based businesses that have service technicians in the field.

**myFLO** is designed to streamline your workflow to improve information flow between office staff and field staff.

**myFLO** helps your business work smarter by reducing operating expenses, improving service response times and increasing service capacity.

Enjoy the benefits:

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- Increase your profitability
- Paperless workflow

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## WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT

A recent survey of over 8000 field service customers has uncovered how industry technology trends impact on the decision to hire plumbers, exterminators, cleaning contractors and other residential service providers. Results show that the residential services market is ripe for businesses that adopt integrated software and why those that don't will get left behind.

**T**here are a plethora of available options for home service providers when choosing a software solution for their business. While many allow customers to do things such as track technician arrival times and pay bills online, customer preferences are rarely considered a part of the software selection process.

To learn more, US-based field service tech group Software Advice (a Gartner company), conducted a survey on the effect of such software on the customer experience. The results will help residential services companies understand which capabilities can not only improve the customer experience, but even encourage customers to choose one provider over another.

The report suggests that field service companies - particularly the small to midsize residential service providers - lag behind other businesses when it comes to technology adoption. A 2014 Software Advice study discovered that 54% of software buyers were using manual methods for business management.

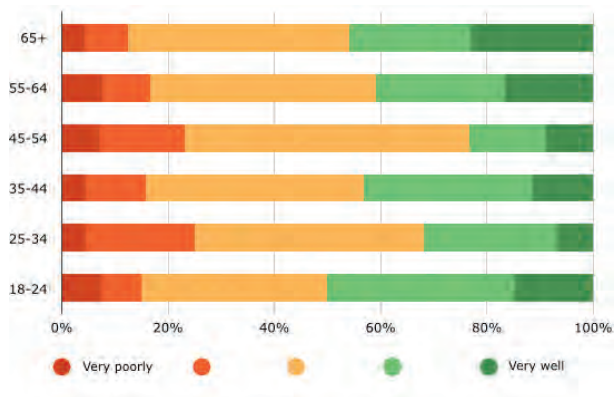
When selecting software to integrate into daily operations, improving cus-

tomers' experience is just as important as considering current business needs, and software selection can influence current and potential customers' choice when selecting a service provider.

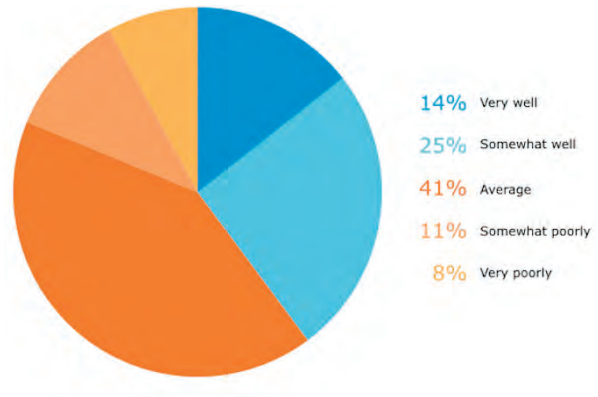
### Technician tracking technology important

58% of survey respondents indicated that the use of technical tracking technology would increase their likelihood to hire that company. The ability to track the arrival time online, rather than relying on a traditional window of arrival, is a big plus from the customer perspective.

The survey results suggest that the old-school method applies to bigger businesses such as utilities and telcos, but that smaller businesses can be more precise in scheduling given proper management and the right software. The report quotes Sam Pillar, CEO and co-founder at business management software provider Jobber, as saying: "So long as you have a good handle on how long the services you provide take to do, then you can schedule your field resources effectively - pretty much guarantee that they're going to be where you say, on time."



Software effects on hiring residential service providers



Customer perception of residential services software use

Pillar suggests that geofencing capability is a great starting point, as the technology literally acts like a digital fence, enabling businesses to set boundaries for service, create alerts on entry and exit and to automatically notify the customer when their technician is nearby.

He explains, “If you’re scheduled to do a job at 2 pm, but at five minutes to two, you’re still 10 miles away, you’d be able to automatically send a text message to the customer saying you’re going to be a little late.”

There are operational benefits with such technology as well, says Pillar: “If a technician claims to be on a job and the customer says they weren’t, you can verify this; or if they get in an accident you can see exactly where they were.”

### Provision of a portal

The second strongest positive impact on a respondent’s likelihood to select a particular company is access to an online portal for self-service tasks such as scheduling and bill paying. However, the presence of a portal is also the most negatively impactful capability. The implication here is that properly implementation adds to the customer experience, whereas a poor execution detracts from it.

The polarising results warranted further examination of the data, so respondents were asked to identify specific preferred portal functionality. 55% said they would use online bill payment more than any other function and exactly half said they would use online scheduling.

This creates opportunity for mobile platforms that connect customers to individual providers and suggests that these platforms are capable of generating market disruption in the same vein as Uber does for taxi customers, particularly for businesses without online payment and scheduling capability.

Only 29% of survey participants listed GPS tracking as useful in a customer portal, which seems at odds with the findings around technician tracking. It may be that customers prefer a stand-alone technician tracking function, given the generally complex navigational nature of customer portals.

### Beyond customer-facing functionality

In an effort to understand customer perceptions on software use, respondents were asked about how well service companies leverage technology to improve the customer experience. 41% indicated that service providers do an “average” job, yet a combined 39% claimed their provider does the job “somewhat well” or “very well”.

So, it seems that more customers have a positive experience with a service provider’s software than a negative one. The report suggests that building great technology for businesses to use in serving their customers means that it stays out of the way - the end consumer shouldn’t really notice it is there.

If the proper use of software is invisible, it’s probably very apparent when a provider is not using software properly; processes tend

to be slower and more inconvenient. Pillar says: “The end consumer sees the benefits in more efficient work; an industry that is overall, faster and more competitive; and, ultimately, they should start seeing greater price competitiveness as a result, because [providers] are able to do more with less.”

### The future

As more residential services businesses switch over to software, customers’ perceptions may change. To encourage a positive change, businesses must ensure they’re offering some sort of technician tracking capabilities, as well as an online customer portal that features efficient, easy-to-use online bill pay and scheduling. Failure to do so could soon result in a loss of market share to tech-savvy up-and-comers. However, doing this correctly could have bountiful results. With so many mid-level responses amongst our survey-takers, the residential services market is ripe for businesses to adopt technology that pushes average experiences into positive ones.

### Report methodology

To find the data in this report, Software Advice conducted a three-day online survey of seven questions and gathered 8169 responses from random adults who have used residential services within the United States. All survey questionnaires undergo an internal peer review process to ensure clarity in wording.

### Software Advice

[www.softwareadvice.com/field-service](http://www.softwareadvice.com/field-service)

# PRODUCT WATCH

## BLUETOOTH TYRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM

FOBO Tyre is an advanced tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS) that uses Bluetooth 4.0 technology to communicate with Android and iOS devices, providing notification to drivers when tyre pressure reaches unsafe levels.

The system comprises four tyre sensors, one in-car unit and an app. It installs in less than 5 min, without any specialist knowledge. A single user can monitor up to 20 cars, making it particularly useful for fleet managers. The intelligent in-car monitoring unit provides additional facility for warnings, ensuring that users are alerted to unsafe tyre pressure, with or without their mobile phone.

As each FOBO Tyre sensor is locked to a specific owner's FOBO cloud account, the sensors can not be re-used in the event of theft. The use of proprietary mechanical nuts lessens the likelihood of theft, but the app will send automatic notification to the user should the sensor be identified as missing.

FOBO Tyre  
[www.fobotyre.com.au](http://www.fobotyre.com.au)



## MOBILE DEVICE CASES

Urban Armor Gear (UAG) is bringing a sleek Mil-Spec drop-tested case for the Microsoft Surface Pro 3 to Australia and New Zealand. The lightweight case has an integrated kickstand and a rubber core with bumpers that deflect impact from daily wear and tear, as well as occasional hard falls. The company has also announced a wide range of similarly styled cases and folios for other devices including the iPhone 6/6 Plus, iPad Air, iPad Air 2, iPad Mini, iPhone 5/5s and Samsung Galaxy S5.

Available in Black (Scout) and Red (Rogue), the one-piece case offers UAG's unique blend of FrogSkin technology (for assured grip in wet or damp conditions) with an impact-resistant tactile backing. In addition to rubber core and protective impact bumpers, UAG is also best known for the juxtaposition of its feather-light case with lasting durability. Each UAG case, including the Microsoft Surface Pro 3, exhibits UAG's distinctive form-fitting construction, with easy access to all buttons and ports - guaranteeing minimal added weight, as well as unobstructed functionality. The UAG case for Microsoft Surface Pro 3 is compatible with the Microsoft Pro Type Cover Keyboard and features an integrated, lightweight, aluminium, adjustable, 5-position kickstand for added convenience.

Urban Armor Gear  
[www.urbanarmorgear.com](http://www.urbanarmorgear.com)

## CORDLESS HAMMER DRILL



The CDRA8850H 1/2" 18 V Lithium Cordless Hammer Drill from Snap-on Tools has been designed to maximise performance, with the 4.0 Ah lithium battery lasting 33% longer than previous models.

The drill features a 1/2" single sleeve steel chuck with carbide jaws. A digital microprocessor controls a variable speed switch, which maximises performance, runtime and durability. The 22-position clutch with 2-speed gearbox provides torque control for the correct application and the overmoulded ergonomic cushion grip absorbs vibration and reduces user fatigue.

A bright 1 W LED illuminates the work area and a stainless steel motor screen keeps debris out of the motor, extending the life of the tool.

Snap-On Tools Aust Pty Ltd  
[www.snapontools.com.au/industrial](http://www.snapontools.com.au/industrial)

# PRODUCT WATCH

## FOUR-PROOF PROTECTION FOR IPHONE 6

LifeProof has introduced four-proof (water, dirt, snow and shock) protection for iPhone 6.

Crafted to be the thinnest, lightest, most protective iPhone 6 case available, the case complements Apple's streamlined design. The built-in scratch protector keeps the display brilliant without inhibiting touchscreen functionality and every device feature is accessible and full functionality remains intact, including Touch ID.

LifeProof  
[www.lifeproof.com](http://www.lifeproof.com)

## MOBILE WORKFORCE TECHNICIAN APP

Trimble has introduced FieldMaster Technician, a downloadable mobile application that empowers mobile workers in the field with advanced collaboration tools and the ability to access and update information in real time for improved effectiveness.

FieldMaster Technician allows service organisations to optimise workflows and improve service delivery by getting technicians to the right place at the right time with the information they need to do their job correctly the first time. It is integrated into Trimble FSM's cloud-based solutions and offers key features including allowing mobile workers: to instantly locate and contact nearby co-workers for assistance, to find the fastest route and navigate to key locations, to manage their time and log activities throughout the day and to view historical job information. It also permits capture of photos and signatures on-site, providing an efficient means of project documentation.

Trimble Field Service Management  
[www.trimble.com](http://www.trimble.com)



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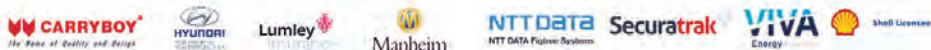
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Thank you to AFMA's Corporate Partners





## DRIVE THE ROAD TO SUCCESS WITH DATA ANALYTICS



*Matt Minor, Director - Marketing & Product Management, Navman Australia Pty Ltd*

**W**e live in the information age. Our access to data is now virtually limitless, but raw statistics are rarely of use. The key to success is making sense of that information; turning facts and figures into useful signposts that can guide you to better business results.

How often have you relied on your intuition to make important business decisions? Have you ever felt nervous and unsure about the decision and wondered how your company will benefit?

Now imagine using clear, actionable data to make intelligent decisions and enhance your company's operations for today and tomorrow with a click of a button - this is possible with analytics. By using analytics, you can sort through data and pull out the important details to inform intelligent business decisions.

Over time a business can collect a large amount of data - sifting through this manually can be time intensive and cause headaches when trying to find specific information. This doesn't have to be the case. With a business intelligence solution incorporating analytics, sifting through your data can actually save time and money by finding the information you need from multiple data sources within the company. This analysed data can deliver actionable strategic insights and the ability to ensure

the company is operating efficiently, productively and safely.

The right business intelligence solution will enable you to publish data in real-time reports, customisable to suit your organisation's policies and targets. For example, one company which implemented a business intelligence solution used it to analyse its fuel consumption, fuel spend, idling and utilisation of its vehicle fleet, and made improvements. Using the data it was also able to improve set key performance indicators (KPIs) and gain insight into the results of policy implementations.

With real-time interactive access to information you will be able to build KPIs that will assist in improving your company over time. If a fleet manager was able to monitor a fleet's idle time for example, they would gain key insights that inform ways to minimise the unnecessary idling and fuel costs.

By reviewing the size of the fleet, the fleet manager can analyse and pinpoint which vehicles are not being used effectively and look at ways to improve this. If four vehicles are travelling the same journey every day they can look to minimise the activity down to one or two vehicles.

By using data analytics you can also gain insights and the ability to compare an individual's performance from one week to the next. These insights will help monitor behaviours and trends within your company, and the opportunity

to fine-tune operations to ensure individuals are meeting their targets.

With the help of data and analytics, the company in the example above implemented a KPI to measure time in over-speed as a percentage of each journey. It saw a 79% reduction in over-speeding in just a few months.

Data can also be used to develop performance management schemes with specific scoring systems, allowing you to determine a system to reward individuals that meet their targets.

The insights accessible with business intelligence can also assist in managing safety across your fleet. If your company policy is for drivers to travel a certain number of standard hours in a week, you can easily access this information and, based on findings, implement methods to manage this process and avoid fatigue. The information can also be used to gain insights into other safety rules specific to your company.

By applying analytics to data with a business intelligence solution, you will gain a competitive advantage by making more informed decisions for your company.

Not only will the data collected assist with managing performance, it will also assist in gaining predictive intelligence to make important decisions that impact the bottom line and the future of the company.

# TALK FROM THE TOP

Like an old song that you keep hearing, we have been saying for some considerable time that our industry is in a mode of constant change. At the risk of repeating ourselves, this still holds true but in some ways we did not imagine.

There is no doubt that much structural change is coming our way with the ceasing of local production, which we see as affecting new pricing as well as residual values. Add to this the recommendations (whether adopted or not) by both the productivity commission's report and the yet-to-be-announced review of the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*, and you can see why we have such an opinion.

One interesting aspect we find is that, on occasion, the path the change takes can be completely in the opposite direction than first thought. For example, it wasn't too long ago that the biggest issue facing fleet managers was the spectre of rising fuel pricing due to demand from China and India straining supply.

The only question, it seemed, was how high and how quickly it would rise. Yet today, we have lower and continued falling fuel prices with no-one knowing just how they will fall. While good news, it still adds to uncertainty in controlling the fleet and its costs.

What will offset this good news will be the falling value of the Australian dollar. Not being economists, we sometimes get a bit confused as to the benefits espoused from having a much lower dollar.

At the moment, there are many who say this is a good idea. What we see is that the cost of imports will rise and if we are a net importer, then will this push up the costs for business?

There are many challenges facing our industry in the year ahead, many of which will be in the spotlight at the upcoming 2015 AfMA Conference and Exhibition (Melbourne, 14-15 April). Over two days, we will deliver a comprehensive program of plenary sessions, workshops and discussion groups designed to cover the most relevant issues, from safety to emission reductions, global trends to best practice models. It's the annual industry event that those responsible for managing fleets cannot afford to miss. Hope to see you there. Visit [www.afma.net.au](http://www.afma.net.au) or call 03 9866 6056.

*Marja Thompson is the Executive Director of AfMa. She has held senior management roles in the Recruitment and Transport industries in both Europe and Australia. Marja has been an integral part in the development and growth of the association from its inception in 1995.*



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The XL-LSB and the Isuzu N Series combination is the logical addition to a service vehicle fleet that is looking for value, practicality and safety. Ergonomically designed to work in harmony with the human body offering three points of contact to enter the centre aisle and overall lowered box design allows operators and tradespeople to safely reach items stored in the top shelves; access to ladder racks is achieved whilst two feet remain on the ground!

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