



EA NETWORKS, CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND



THE CLIENT

EA Networks is a locally owned co-operative network company based in the Mid Canterbury region of New Zealand's South Island. EA Networks owns and operates the area's electricity sub-transmission and distribution network, delivering power to 20,000 customers via 3,200 kilometers (1,990 miles) of distribution lines.

The company also owns an advanced fiber optic communications network, which offers broadband internet services. In addition, EA Networks operates a successful contracting business that supports their electricity and fiber networks and provides services to residents and businesses.

SITUATION

EA Networks focuses on delivering safe and reliable electricity and fiber network infrastructures that support their community and the local economy. They employ a large field services workforce with 80 staff.

Worker safety is crucial at EA Networks. Electricity linesmen must be able to communicate with each other when restoring service after a storm, making routine repairs, or deploying new services.

As not all staff live or work within EA Networks' LMR coverage area, a solution was needed to make sure workers stay safe and connected when on the job, no matter where they are.

RESPONSE

To increase the connectivity of its workforce while out in the field, both inside and outside of the vehicle, EA Networks equipped their vehicles with Tait Unified Vehicle. Tait Unified Vehicle provides the extra connectivity by creating a mobile vehicle-area-network that enables radio and broadband connectivity, including LMR, cellular and WiFi.

Staff can connect their smartphones to the Tait Unified Vehicle network with Remote App to use PTT communications over the radio network, eliminating the need for an extra portable radio.

**CANTERBURY
NEW ZEALAND**

LOCATION

UTILITIES

EXPERTISE

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- ▶ Tait Unified Vehicle
- ▶ Tait PTTtoX Service
- ▶ Auto Bearer-Switching
- ▶ Remote App for PTT functionality on smartphones



The Tait PTTToX Service extends EA Networks' Push-To-Talk radio communications to cellular coverage, automatically detecting the status of the LMR bearer to decide whether to change to cellular, or back again.

OUTCOMES

The ability to make and receive calls in as many places as possible directly impacts the safety of workers and efficiency of operations. By choosing to equip their trucks with Tait Unified Vehicle, EA Networks expanded their coverage area to now also include cellular networks.

This is especially valuable to EA networks, as maintenance jobs would often see workers needed in areas outside of their LMR coverage areas.

Tait Unified Vehicle also enables workers to use their cellphones to communicate reliably and securely with colleagues through the talk-groups and channels they are familiar with.

The Remote App feature also limits the extra devices staff has to carry, enhancing Worker Safety by not weighing staff down with extra equipment when carrying out repairs and maintenance work up high in power poles.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- ▶ Tait Unified Vehicle creates a vehicle-area-network that enables radio and broadband connectivity, including LMR, cellular and WiFi
- ▶ Smartphones can be connected to the Tait Unified Vehicle network for PTT communications over the radio network
- ▶ Tait PTTToX Service extends EA Networks' Push-To-Talk radio communications to cellular coverage
- ▶ Automatic bearer switching for continuous communications through familiar talkgroups and channels
- ▶ Staff stays connected in more places with less equipment, enhancing worker safety

“When we need to roll vehicles outside our radio network coverage area to assist other networks during events such as storms, Tait Unified Vehicle with PTTToX keeps staff connected to the control room and each other.”

Myles Connew, Operations Manager, EA Networks