



Credit: Keith Pakenham, CFA

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA



THE CLIENT

Country Fire Authority (CFA) is one of the world's largest volunteer-based fire and emergency services organizations. With approximately 58,000 members — made up of more than 56,000 volunteers, 1,800 career firefighters, community educators and support personnel — CFA helps to protect 3.3 million citizens and more than one million homes and properties across the Australian state of Victoria.

SITUATION

A key driver in CFA's decision to upgrade its critical communications was the Black Saturday disaster in 2009, which devastated parts of Victoria and resulted in Australia's highest ever loss of life from bushfires.

Reviews and recommendations from a Royal Commission set up in the aftermath prompted CFA to look at options for replacing its existing state-wide analog system.

Doug Booth, retired Project Director, CFA Radio Replacement Project, explains: "The previous radios had reached end-of-life, so it was timely to upgrade and ensure the safety of our members was protected with the latest technology. We were also very keen to move into the digital era and harness the benefits of a radio system that was engineered for critical Public Safety communications."

RESPONSE

CFA and Tait worked side-by-side to customize a communications solution that would meet the demanding mission-critical requirements of CFA firefighters and deliver long-term value for money, combined with the flexibility to adapt to future needs.

The solution included the supply of 15,000 customized P25 dual-mode portable and mobile radios, in addition to a 10-year support contract. Tait also implemented a TaitNet P25 digital conventional network, providing state-wide analog coverage initially and allowing CFA to switch to digital operation later when ready.

As part of the solution, CFA sought a number of customizations to the mobile and portable radios to optimize the usability and safety for their firefighters' specific needs, including GPS transmission capability, duress functionality, and a custom user-interface to smooth the transition from the legacy radios.



LOCATION

VIC,
AUSTRALIA



EXPERTISE

EMERGENCY
SERVICES

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- ▶ 140-site P25 analog/digital conventional network
- ▶ 8,500 P25 mobile radios and 6,500 P25 portable radios
- ▶ GPS transmission
- ▶ Project management, deployment services, installation, training and ongoing 24/7 support services
- ▶ Highly customized solution to meet CFA's specific requirements

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- ▶ Support services allow CFA to focus on core objectives
- ▶ More CFA volunteers equipped with portable radios
- ▶ Easy migration: upgrade to P25 digital when ready
- ▶ P25 open-standards provides choice and interoperability which unlocks long-term value



Credit: CFA Strategic Communications

Tait also provided training services to CFA's professional training team, allowing them to instruct and equip members state-wide during the roll-out. To help reinforce learning, Tait developed interactive audio-visual software to provide a custom training simulator for CFA.

OUTCOME

More than 9,000 Tait P25 digital portable and mobile radios have been rolled out to over 1,220 CFA brigades across Victoria as part of the Radio Replacement Project managed by CFA, Tait Communications and local partner AA Radio Services.

For the first time, many CFA rural brigades throughout Victoria now have access to portable radios, providing responders on the fire-ground with reliable communication and the ability to keep in constant contact with incident controllers.

As well as the new Tait P25 portables, Mr Booth says the eventual move to a fully digital P25 network will also bring significant benefits for CFA responders: "The digital platform will allow us to overlay applications such as push-button status messaging and a duress feature — critical tools that will help to ensure the safety of CFA responders."

CFA will also deploy 1,300 transportable bag radios, based on the Tait TM9155 mobile, to key CFA operational members who need the flexibility of a deployable mobile radio in their personal vehicles.

In summing up the CFA-Tait relationship and the Radio Replacement Project, Mr Booth adds the following: "The Tait roll-out has been an extraordinary success...Tait has met all of our requirements on-time and on-budget."

MORE INFORMATION

For news, product specifications, comprehensive technical information and contact details of your nearest Tait service facility, please visit www.taitradio.com



"The Tait roll-out has been an extraordinary success.

With nearly 58,000 members to train, over 1,220 fire brigades to be visited, 5,000 portable radios to be delivered, 4,000 mobile radios to be installed — and 57 different types of vehicles to install them in — it's been an enormous and complex project, but Tait has met all of our requirements on-time and on-budget."

Doug Booth,
Retired Project Director,
CFA Radio Replacement Project