



Penrith City Council Strives for Management Excellence

Penrith City is one of the regional cities of greater Sydney recognised in the State's metropolitan strategy. It covers 405 square kilometres and is located 50 kilometres west of Sydney's CBD. Penrith was incorporated as a municipality in 1871 and has grown from a few thousand residents to the current population of over 176,000. Total assets of the council are \$963 million, while its net equity stands at \$870 million. Penrith City Council employs around 1,000 people of which approximately one third are indoor staff, one third outdoor staff and one third are involved with childcare. In 2004/05 the council received an AA credit rating from Standards and Poors, which was upgraded to AA+ in 2007.

In 2002, Penrith City Council concluded that its commitment to its vision was being hindered by its current lack of an integrated strategic and management planning system. The council knew they had a strong strategic and management planning approach, but no system to bring all the various aspects together. There was also an understanding from within the council that new and innovative ways were required to help drive the strategic vision for Penrith forward. While having excellent functionality in some areas, the incumbent systems had certain limitations and the risk of reliance on specialist staff to produce hardcopy reports was deemed worthy of attention. Also, access to information was difficult and not readily available to either councillors or the public and processes were slow and labour intensive.

In order to overcome these limitations and enhance its capability to implement its strategic plan, Penrith City Council recognised that a leading-edge corporate planning system was needed. It was however, fundamental to council that the system work in harmony with existing planning and reporting and not change the culture or operations of the organisation.

Penrith City Council's objective was to effectively produce strategic and management plans, along with detailed project and activity plans as well as associated reporting. The Council required online reporting to replace its current hardcopy reporting and there was a strong desire by the Council to provide staff with an improved user experience and to increase productivity and skills in both planning and performance reporting. TechnologyOne's performance planning solution was selected. This performance planning solution was deemed to be the most efficient and effective and delivered the most flexibility for the Council.

Integration and ease of use were key decision factors. Council saw this solution as the best choice because it could be deployed via a web browser, enabling the system to fit seamlessly with both the intranet and Internet which meant that staff working remotely could maintain access. Its flexibility and ability to adapt to the Council's needs, along with its compatibility with the Council's Microsoft SQL Server platform, were also integral to the selection process.



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