

# CASE STUDY: Tauranga City Council



Despite having one of the smallest local authority land areas, Tauranga has the sixth highest population density in New Zealand. The city is 10<sup>th</sup> largest in population terms, and growing at the rate of more than 50 people a week.

Consents Manager John Gibbons-Davies recalls compliance previously relied on someone remembering what the conditions were and when water monitoring results or reports were due for supply to the regional council. "If the conditions required reporting on a five-yearly or even longer basis, and that person had left, there was a very high probability that no-one would know anything about it. "People come into an organisation, build up a large amount of knowledge and information, and when they leave ... with the best will in the world, there are going to be on-going problems because they inadvertently take that with them.

"Staff turnover will always be a major issue in local bodies, and affects responsibilities to regional councils for councils' own consents. Probably the main reason it is not dealt with in regional councils is because of staffing levels and they are still perfecting their own databases and systems." At Tauranga City, each project manager was previously responsible for their own projects' consent compliance. John says regional councils are now expecting - and enforcing - a greater degree of compliance on the part of city and district councils. This led to the establishment of his position.

"One of the major benefits of CS-VUE is that it is designed to retain corporate knowledge. When I leave, whenever that may be, I just [simply] change the destination for the email notifications." John advises colleagues at other local bodies to investigate what CS-VUE can achieve. "Even if you don't do it in the short-term you have to seriously consider it, as it is such an extremely useful management tool."

"One of the reasons we chose CS-VUE was because it has the functionality to allocate those responsibilities to individuals, as well as providing an electronic trail of reports, and it can also store those documents. This in turn would then provide for enhanced management reporting.

Continued overleaf...

## Consent compliance despite complexity and staff turnover

Tauranga City Council's challenges in managing compliance with its own resource consents were typical of a large provincial city.

Consider hundreds of consents involving thousands of conditions, with compliance requirements varying from twice-weekly to annual or even less frequently ... add in responsibilities across several departments plus inevitable staff turnover.

► **“We began looking for a consent management system.**

We needed something that had a time-based notification ability, so we could put the details into a database and it would remind you when something needed to happen rather than finding out after the deadline had passed.”

**John Gibbons-Davies - Consents Manager, City Water  
Tauranga City Council**

“When each clause and sub-clause is entered, it is numbered according to its original consent number, and an individual staff member can be given the responsibility for an individual clause and notified when it is due.”

John says he knows of one business which has decided to use a document management and archiving system to hold consent information. He predicts that organisation will subsequently see the decision as “a massive mistake”. “The system they have opted for doesn’t do anything to remind people when compliance data is due, or allow for management of responsibilities. It is simply a document archiving database.”

He says even small local bodies with fewer consents should consider CS-VUE. He says trying to manage even small numbers of consents with inappropriate software creates more problems. “One spreadsheet would probably suffice for one consent which has minimal conditions. But with even one consent, all a spreadsheet does is display information. The information is not available at the same time to other people, and there’s no allocation of responsibilities or reminders.”

John says he is impressed with CS-VUE staff: “They are great people to work with - very proactive.” He says the licence contract is thorough and guarantees all information in the database remains the property of respective council or business users.

CS-VUE was co-developed by Andrew Stewart Ltd, Environmental Consultancy and Resource Management specialists who also provide full outsourced resource consent compliance services: [www.andrewstewart.co.nz](http://www.andrewstewart.co.nz)

For further information about Tauranga City Council visit: [www.tauranga.govt.nz](http://www.tauranga.govt.nz)