



Capturing and maximising tree and parks management data

Problem

2020 was the perfect storm for Manningham Council's Parks Team, with:

- Two significant incidents involving failed trees, one resulting in a fatality and the other injuring a child.
- A coronial investigation found our proactive tree inspection program was limited.
- Storm events resulting in significant increased service demand and the team not being able to meet service level agreements.
- A multitude of paper-based work process leaving information sitting in filing cabinets or inaccessible on local drives and resulting in an administrative burden.
- Safety, risk inspections and audits being completed on a clipboard and visual evidence was not collected.
- An ageing workforce that was retiring and taking all their undocumented knowledge with them.

Technical Solution

TreePlotter (Parks), a field friendly GIS based plotting system was introduced in 2021. Initially the system was used to map and retain inspection data for tree assets, streamline the inspection process, maximise tree planning opportunities and allow the development of a tree risk management program.

The system was scaled up in 2022 to include location and condition data for other park assets, including playgrounds. Polygon layers were utilised to upload maps of landscape and mowing areas.

This year TreePlotter was integrated with Microsoft Dynamics (our CRM), which is an Australian first. The integration provides automatic uploads of customer requests for access by officers in the field and closes CRM cases once the job is complete. It also allows us to prioritise requests that pose a risk to community safety.

Outcomes

The project resulted in:

- Significant improvement in customer response times achieved through improved processes and accessible data. 89% of customer requests are now being completed within service level agreements, compared to 47% in 2021 - even with 1000 more service requests now being received.
- Implementation of a proactive program of regular tree inspections, capturing inspection data and evidence in real time, improving our ability to defend liability claims.
- Improvement in service outcomes with data used to make work rounds more efficient and employee experience by more evenly distributing workload.
- Information being retained and shared within the organisation, with staff recording their local knowledge of parks and open space directly into the system.