

Dealing with tragedy poses a major challenge for emergency response services and volunteer organizations.

The Victorian Black Saturday Bush fires in 2009 devastated the communities in Nillumbik Shire Council. In the aftermath of the fires, instant access to quality information was desperately needed by authorities so that they could organize critical services and physically and emotionally support a community crippled by the loss of lives and property.



After the fires passed Nillumbik Shire, there was an urgent need to mobilize response teams and get information on what had happened to survivors and families. Authorities needed to assess fire damage when every house and street number was burned away, manage the enormous task of delivering veterinary assistance to injured stock and wildlife, and arrange disposal of dead animals to prevent disease.

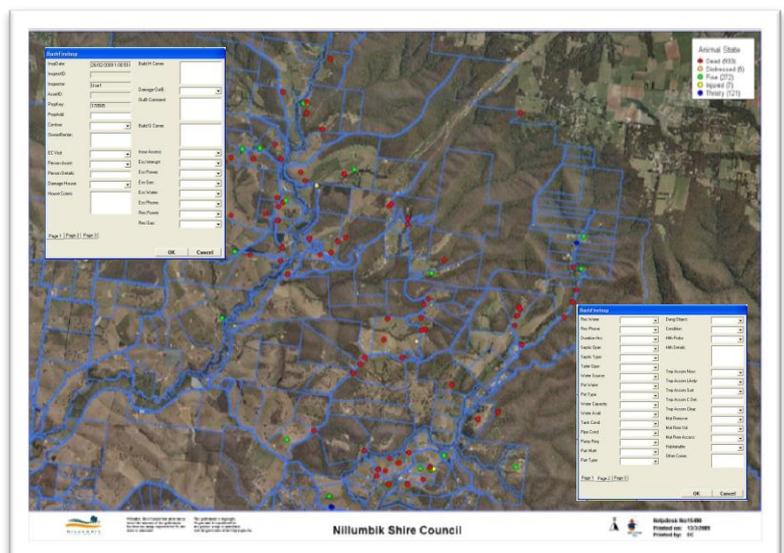


For many years Nillumbik Shire Council has been using a comprehensive Iconyx-designed Workforce Mobility System to enable all of their asset and risk management field work, called Crest. The system has established a new Local Government Authority benchmark for Road Management, and is so flexible it can be used for any information gathering process, from cracks in the footpath to health inspections, while making sure that the data gathered is of the highest quality. When the fires hit, Iconyx and Nillumbik administrators immediately used this system to create new forms for disaster management and these electronic forms were sent straight out to the Council field teams.

Within days detailed reports were streaming into the database to enable authorities to organise and prioritise resources. Sites were located using the Workforce Mobility System's GPS and property maps and data was entered on the spot. The system's reliable offline operation (outside the range of mobile networks) was ideal for working in post-fire conditions.

With full access to up-to-date details of the disaster clean up, the Council was able to tell people what had happened to their homes and farms, let them know the situation of friends and family, and bring a few happy moments by restoring much loved pets to their owners.

Nillumbik's exceptional response to the Black Saturday crisis, supported by Iconyx, was recognised with the **Victorian Spatial Excellence Award for Infrastructure and Construction** in 2009. The Award recognized that the speed at which new forms could be built and deployed using the Iconyx solution was critical in providing the right emergency assistance quickly to people in the midst of an emergency.



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