

# CASE STUDY

## Wollongong City Council



## 'Blew Us Out of the Water'

### CLIENT

Wollongong City Council, NSW



### REQUIREMENT

Agility, the ability to gain insights from data and access reporting.

### SOLUTION

Facility Product Suite

Facility Core Product  
Facility Analytics & Reporting  
Image Capture

### Overview

We had the opportunity to speak with Chris Brown – the Waste Contracts and Commercial Business Manager within Wollongong City Council.

The site Chris works at is called the Whytes Gully Waste Resource and Recovery Park in Wollongong. The site deals with approximately 80,000 tonnes of waste per year and includes a large landfill which has approximately 60 years left on it. They primarily deal with municipal solid waste and have a single dual sided weighbridge at their site.

Chris and the team at Wollongong went to market and ultimately chose Mandalay because the existing solution was not being supported by its own vendor at the time, and it was only doing the bare minimum of what was needed.

Neighbouring councils had spoken highly of Mandalay, not only of the product but of the team too, and without exception everyone Chris spoke to at Mandalay knew what they were talking about, and this gave them as a customer a lot of confidence.

The Mandalay products currently being utilised by this site include the Facility Product Suite, Facility Analytics and Reporting and Image Capture. They have been using Mandalay's software since November 2019.



## The Situation

Wollongong were searching for a solution for about a year and a half before going out to market, but much of this involved getting internal support.

While the previous product was not ideal, it was stable insofar as it didn't break often, despite not providing much benefit. It essentially did the bare minimum, and this is what they came to expect until they found Mandalay.

Wollongong council hadn't made a big investment in technology prior to coming on board with Mandalay, and because of that, there were a lot of unknowns, and most concerns at the time were valid, as they were not really ready for it, largely due to bandwidth and poor mobile coverage. But ultimately these concerns were overcome.



Two things that the IT team was initially concerned about was uptime and responsiveness, but when it became apparent that Mandalay blew the current provider out of the water in both of these elements, they have been happy with the outcome.

## Requirements

When asked what requirements they had for the product and how Mandalay met those requirements, a big factor was having agility to be able to chop and change things, and the ability to draw information out of things they wouldn't have been able to get otherwise.

**Reporting** was also important. Previously they dealt with a system that would spit out a raw data export which was open to a lot of human error and a lot of rework was required, whereas Mandalay just pumps out the reports they need in no time.

The **insights and intelligence** gained through Mandalay has also been a significant improvement. They are now able to draw out the intelligence from the data and communicate that internally. This was something they were unable to do effectively previously.

*'Whenever we reached out to Mandalay for help, you guys over delivered. Everyone listens, makes tangible actions and it validates that we've made the right decision.'*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council

*'The fact that Mandalay liaises with New South Wales EPA and is up-to-date on product classification and regulation, that automatically flows through. It's just saved us a lot of time.'*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council



*'Mandalay is able to provide us with the data we need in order to make those business decisions.'*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council

## Helping Meet Council Objectives

Some of the objectives currently in place for Wollongong City Council is to:

- ✓ Divert as much waste as possible from landfill.
- ✓ Reduce their emissions footprint.
- ✓ Improve education to the community around responsible waste practices.
- ✓ Recovery as much as possible.

With Mandalay's help, they can now track the commodities in and out of the site with a lot more agility than they had in the past, they can draw information on things much quicker in order to make better-informed decisions and track how decisions are working in practice.

Mandalay provides the data they need in order to make business decisions and helps Wollongong City Council invest better because they can get better detail on what's working and what isn't.

## The Challenge

The biggest challenge for Wollongong City Council waste operations was an absolute lack of support and lack of agility from their previous provider. For example, if they needed something changed in a report, even if it was minor like an addition of a column, it would come at an additional cost, whereas Mandalay has provided them with the tools to do this themselves and implement the customisation they need for their reports as standard. Support has been the key thing from Mandalay. A simple thing as making a call and someone picking up the phone has been a big step forward.

The other challenge was the infrastructure. Their infrastructure wasn't really ready for it at the time. For example, if they needed a new CCTV camera, they had to go to them and obtain another old model. They were locked into one type of outdated hardware with their previous provider. Mandalay is more agnostic when it comes to this, which has worked well for Wollongong.



*'Mandalay has systematically been working through all our issues and has been very responsive.'*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council

Unfortunately, hardware continues to be a major limiting factor, and because of that they haven't really run with the system as much as they believe they can. Mandalay are currently in the process of helping with issues surrounding the traffic lights and boom gates onto the weighbridge at the site which Chris notes is a symptom of the aging infrastructure, not the software. Once the hardware and infrastructure problems are fixed, Wollongong looks forward to realising even more of what Mandalay's software has to offer.

Ultimately, Chris Brown believes that Mandalay has been a worthwhile investment because it would be very easy for Mandalay to turn a tricky problem back on them to figure it out, but at every stage Mandalay has gone above and beyond to help.

## The Solution & Benefits of Working with Mandalay

Wollongong City Council acknowledges that Mandalay's catchphrase of being a waste company rather than a weighbridge company has truly been demonstrated. The team can ask Mandalay's support team obscure questions and they typically have an answer, which is hugely valuable to these operations.

The consistent updating and iterative nature of the product as well as the software being constantly improved and refined makes for stand-out benefits.

Mandalay enables Wollongong to better track and make decisions around activities that they weren't able to perform previously.

When it comes to applications used the most, the team lives in ticketing and web-based reporting because these functions help them address issues that are raised at the weighbridge. Chris says it really comes down to the front-line stuff providing value to the team.

Wollongong does acknowledge that their infrastructure is still not where it needs to be, therefore a lot of the potential of Mandalay is still yet to be realised. Chris Brown is confident that the benefits they already see will be magnified even further when the right infrastructure is in place.



*"I view that as a measure of success. Just the ability to ask questions and get help when needed."*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council

Positive relationships have also been a key benefit of working with Mandalay. Their team has full confidence that if they have a concern, they can call Mandalay and every effort will be made to resolve or at least provide an update.

## The Outcome

Chris believes that Mandalay has been a worthwhile investment. The amount of time saved by not manually doing things or compensating for things that should work but don't, from a salary perspective alone, has paid for itself.

The product enables them to do things they never would have been able to do before. For example, Wollongong are doing a lot of manual separation of metal from public drop-off. In the past, that would be absorbed into broader landfill statistics. But now they can point to it and say that investment has provided a specific return, therefore showing the value in investing further in it.

Chris and his team have been using facility insights within Mandalay to improve their stakeholder engagements. The speed at which their team can draw data out (to feed finance or project deliverability etc) that's both accurate and reliable, does a lot for them as a business and gives them legitimacy.

The data obtained through Mandalay has been helpful in refining their operations as well as helping with workforce planning, because they now have greater transparency over peak times at weighbridges.

Mandalay has also allowed them to expand their offering to commercial customers such as engaging with larger customers to do things like store their tare weights and provide feedback to them on their chain of responsibility obligations, which the previous product couldn't even scratch. Ultimately Mandalay and the data the software is able to provide is giving internal and external customers a lot more confidence in them as a business.



## Key Learnings & Advice

Chris's advice for anyone in a similar situation who may be considering Mandalay is to get to know the team. Like any team, the people they deal with from Mandalay all have their own strengths. He encourages other councils and waste teams to engage with them and don't be afraid to ask the obscure questions. Approach Mandalay with your high priority challenges and just see what they have to say.



*'We have a number of peculiar things here in Wollongong that I don't believe any other council does, and anything we put in front of Mandalay, it was never a no. We wouldn't have gotten that help if we didn't ask questions and so I'd encourage people to just ask questions.'*

Chris Brown,  
Waste Contracts  
and Commercial  
Business Manager  
Wollongong City Council

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