

## EPA SAVES BIG WITH CAR POOLING SOFTWARE

### Background



The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is an independent statutory authority within the Government of South Australia's Environment and Conservation Portfolio with responsibility for clean and healthy air, land and water that is fit for purpose, protecting communities from unacceptable noise and radiation, and sustainable use of resources. Managing these responsibilities requires EPA staff to have ready access to motor vehicles to effectively perform their duties. Typically, motor vehicles are used by EPA staff for:

- Inspections (e.g. compliance of issued licences) and environmental monitoring activities
- Handling of emergency incidents for contaminations and spillages
- Collecting soil samples (e.g. Goolwa Lower Lakes)
- Transporting special equipment (e.g. radiation equipment for monitoring mines)

### The Challenge

When Digby Beames (Team Leader, Business Support) first joined the EPA in 2003, a challenge existed to better manage the EPA's fleet of 19 shared pool vehicles with the following main goals:

- Reducing the size of the fleet to save money
- Delivering access on a more reliable basis for EPA staff
- Making it easier for staff to book and manage vehicles
- Selecting more optimal vehicle sizes

Simply reducing the size of the EPA's shared vehicle pool without a plan would have failed when you consider the EPA had 5 business units each managing its own separate vehicle pool. As a consequence, the following issues arose:

- Different rules and processes for booking and using vehicles
- Handwritten booking diaries which were difficult to access
- Wasted staff time through poor vehicle booking processes (e.g. imagine having to ring a vehicle booking manager on a different floor in the building several times before you could identify whether a vehicle might be available)
- Inefficiencies through vehicle "hoarding" (deliberately making vehicles unavailable "just in case") and the consequential staff tensions arising from such behaviour
- Clumsy and inflexible systems like Microsoft Outlook which did not easily facilitate different booking scenarios (e.g. request to book multiple vehicles at once)

## EPA SAVES BIG WITH CAR POOLING SOFTWARE

- Poor record keeping and flow on implications (e.g. inability to leverage historic data for future asset return and acquisition. For example, it was discovered with some vehicles that they may have **travelled well under half the maximum allowable distance within a 3 year lease contract!**)
- No confidence from EPA management in the levels of cost savings that might be achieved through reducing fleet size and greater vehicle utilisation within vehicle pools
- No confidence from EPA management in the ability to manage fringe benefits tax (FBT) obligations

### The Solution

The EPA considered using Fleet SA's short term vehicle hire service and conducted a trial which concluded that up to 50 minutes could be added to staff journeys as a result of processes required to book Fleet SA vehicles (i.e. obtain authority card, walk to State Fleet, obtain keys, find vehicle, return to EPA to pick up equipment). This option was deemed to be impractical and plagued by hidden costs.

The EPA then went about determining the suitability of a software package to manage its vehicle fleet. Several products were evaluated but most were deemed to be prohibitively expensive charging setup fees in addition to a per user licence fee, or the systems were relatively difficult to use. The standout product was locally developed software Autocentral, which was selected for the following reasons:

- Quick and easy to book a car and can be used 24/7 (including staff at home)
- Low cost of implementation and high return on investment (ROI)
- Integrates with other EPA processes and systems (e.g. export of data into Excel)
- Highly customisable to suit EPA business processes
- Flexible handling of staff running late or neglecting to report back mileage
- FBT reporting feature
- Vehicle bookings can be printed or exported to Microsoft Outlook
- Extensive reporting
- Robust future development pathway (i.e. expectations of additional features with time aligned to EPA's requirements)
- Vehicle quarantine feature
- Local support and training and comprehensive user guides
- Ease to train other staff in the case of staff turnover

## EPA SAVES BIG WITH CAR POOLING SOFTWARE

### Easily Implemented. Well Supported.

Digby said "From the moment Autocentral was implemented, the EPA has experienced a smooth operation and when the EPA required new features, Datacentric was very accommodating with developing extra features at no additional cost".

### The Benefits and Savings

Since Autocentral was implemented in 2006, the EPA has been able to reduce its motor vehicle shared pool by 8 vehicles whilst simultaneously increasing vehicle utilisation by almost 20%. Based on an average vehicle lease cost of approximately \$8,300 per annum per vehicle, this amounts to **a saving of \$66,400 per annum!**

Further benefits have been realised through Autocentral reporting which helped the EPA determine that a high level of metropolitan travel was occurring and that smaller sized vehicles with greater fuel efficiency could be utilised to accommodate that requirement, not only producing a more environmentally friendly

outcome but further cost savings due to improvements to fleet mix.

Staff have also benefited through having an easier mechanism to book vehicles and through having greater confidence in vehicle availability. Furthermore, the greater transparency and visibility of vehicle use has driven improved behaviour from EPA staff (e.g. less staff taking vehicles home at night or using vehicles inappropriately).

	2006	2010	
Shared Pool Vehicles	19	11	Reduction of 8 Vehicles
Estimated Shared Pool Vehicle Lease Costs	\$160,000 pa	\$90,000 pa	Savings of \$70,000 pa
Vehicle Utilisation	< 50%	68%	> 18% Improvement
Fuel Consumption	Larger Engines	Smaller Engines	Reduced fuel costs Reduced CO2 emissions

In future, the EPA intends to further increase its return on investment in Autocentral by closer analysis of office-to-home vehicle usage, reducing its FBT liability and further reducing its fleet size where possible.

To see how we can help you with fleet utilisation, visit us at [www.autocentral.com.au](http://www.autocentral.com.au)