Site24x7

NSW Rural Fire Service

Detailed Insights

During a Dark Period

25,000+
annual incidents

76,319
volunteers

1,996
fire companies

Mission-critical monitoring
Clear visibility of every component

Saving time helps save lives
Site24x7 automation frees up staff time

Responding when needed
Customer support you can rely on

About
The NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer fire department. Its members provide fire and emergency services to about 95% of New South Wales

Location
New South Wales, Australia

Industry
Fire & Rescue

March 2020. For many people, it will be remembered as the month the world woke up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But for Australian firefighters, it finally marked the end of Black Summer.

The Australian 2019/20 bushfire season was one of the worst in living memory anywhere in the world. Thousands of homes and buildings were destroyed and sadly 34 people lost their lives.

And in terms of area burned, New South Wales was the worst hit – leading to a state of emergency being called in December 2019.

From September 2019 to March 2020, fires ravaged many regions of NSW, from the North Coast and the Hunter Region to Sydney, the South Coast and the Snowy Mountains. About 13.1 million acres (5.3 million hectares) were burned, including World Heritage areas and vulnerable ecosystems.

All hands to the pumps

Recalling the events of those black months, Ash Dey, IT Operations Manager at the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS), remarks on the unprecedented scale of what the fire department had to contend with.

A series of fires and incidents on a scale they'd never seen before, it was a very distressing time for everyone involved.

The geographic area of New South Wales stretches to 309,125 square miles (800,630 square kilometres) – over 10% of Australia's land mass.

NSW RFS serves over 99% of that area.

With 1,996 fire companies, 965 members of staff and over 76,300 volunteers, it's the largest volunteer fire department in the world.

But it needed everyone and everything performing to the max during that dreadful bushfire season.

From its brave volunteer firefighters to the apps that play a vital role in identifying and combating the spread of wildfire.

Thankfully, the way NSW RFS had designed its apps and the way it kept them up and running meant they could provide the necessary support. That was a blessing and a lot of it was because they had the ability to scale up on demand.
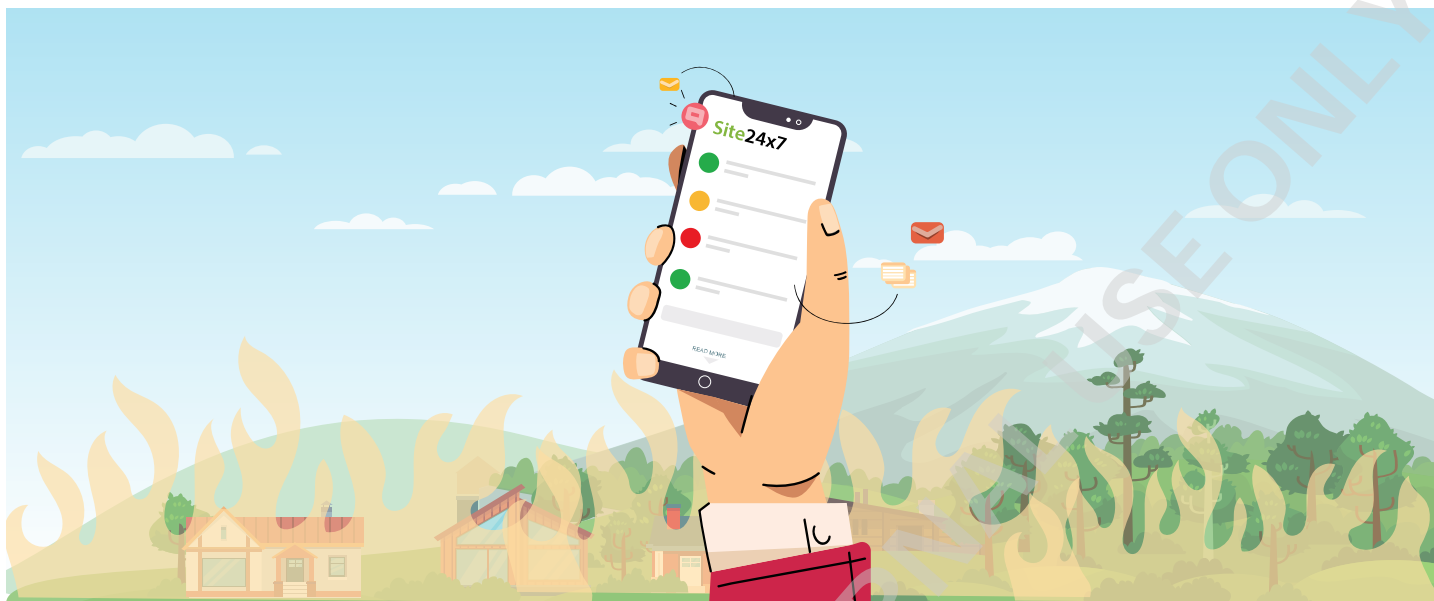
But, no doubt, it was a testing moment for Ash, his team and everyone involved in battling the blaze.

Monitoring in a mission-critical environment

How would Ash describe the role that NSW RFS's apps play in fire prevention and mitigation?

"They're mission-critical."

If one of their apps isn't available, that potentially means the community is at risk from bushfires and other types of fire activity they handle. Ultimately, that could lead to people losing their property — and to people losing their lives.

One of the challenges facing NSW RFS was they needed to have clear visibility of every single component. Of each and every app.

But that was something their previous monitoring tool struggled to handle.

Which was why NSW RFS turned to Site24x7.

Clear visibility and monitoring with Site24x7

A few years back, NSW RFS adopted a strategy to opt for a cloud-based solution wherever possible and practical. As part of that strategy, they moved from on-premises to four cloud-based monitoring platforms, including Site24x7.

> "Whatever it is, it needs clear visibility and monitoring from our end. So that's why we used Site24x7."
>
> **Ash Dey – IT Operations Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service**

As you would expect with an operation where performance levels are a matter of life and death, Ash and his team took time to evaluate Site24x7. It wasn't only a question of whether it could do certain jobs. They also needed to look at the total cost of ownership:

- How much would it cost?
- How would they deploy it?
- How would they upgrade it?

> "We have probably gone very fast with Site24x7."
>
> **Ash Dey – IT Operations Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service**

They concluded that Site24x7 was fit for purpose and suited their requirements for infrastructure monitoring.

They started with Server Monitoring. But as they began to get to know the product, they soon realized there were quite a few features that were useful for them: monitoring AWS cloud services, VMware, network infrastructure and AppLogs.

And now, within the space of less than two years, NSW RFS has scaled up its Site24x7 licensing from about 100 to 2,000 monitors.

Site24x7 automation frees up staff time

When you're dealing with emergencies, it can be hard to see things through the lens of a return on investment.

Because when someone's life is at stake, you can't put a monetary value on that.

But even for an emergency organization like NSW RFU, you still need to look for ways to optimize your budget and how you spend it. Particularly when, as a small governmental organization, you have only limited funds.

There's always room for improvement and Ash says, that having partnered with Site24x7, NSW RFS is definitely better off today in terms of its overall investment spent on monitoring.

And for Ash, the great advantage of Site24x7 is the array of automations available within its tools.

He doesn't have to train his users to learn lots of things. Nor do his staff need to spend much time on maintaining Site24x7.

And that definitely saves them valuable time and effort, as well as saving them money.

Site24x7 IT Automation provides the functionality to automatically run certain corrective actions such as restarting servers, clearing up disk space, or rebooting an EC2 instance.

With automation in place, staff can feel assured a problem will be cleared automatically, leaving them to concentrate on mission-critical work.

Knowing you're being listened to

What does Ash like most about Site24x7? Our customer support.

He feels there's always someone listening and watching whenever he needs help. Always someone from Site24x7 ready and willing to respond. Be that on our forum or one of our back-end developers.

> "
>
> *That is one of the greatest features. Your interaction with the customer. That is fantastic.* **Ash Dey – IT Operations Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service**

Ash is also impressed with how the feedback he provides has been incorporated into making improvements to Site24x7's product.

His team often needs to dig deep into various digital things. What impresses him is that when he's provided helpful feedback, he's seen a lot of that then being put into action by Site24x7.

Again, it comes down to being willing to listen to the customer.

Plugging into customization and flexibility

As for the product itself, Ash loves the Business View feature within the dashboard. At a high level, he can present to any users within management. Again, it comes down to being willing to listen to the customer.

He's also a big fan of Site24x7 AppLogs. He likes the flexibility you get through direct access to customizable data via AppLogs. He can present any information that's required by the fire department

> " *"AppLogs is one of the great tools within Site24x7. It provides very detailed insights into whatever we want. "*
> **Ash Dey – IT Operations Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service**

The team use quite a few cloud-based apps. One of the challenges they faced in the past was they didn't know how many users were logging into their app.

But by collecting their entire logs from identity management tools, AppLogs gives them access to how many users there are, which apps they're accessing and when.

And Ash loves how Site24x7's custom plugins allow you to develop your own code and integrate it with Site24x7.

> " *"Just develop your own code, plug into Site24x7, use the custom plugin, and there you go. So simple."*
> **Ash Dey – IT Operations Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service**

Because of the custom plugins, NSW RFS can really dig down into the details they need.

And when it comes to fighting fires and saving lives, it can be the details that make all the difference.

Dig down into the details and gain mission-critical insights with Site24x7

About Site24x7

Site24x7 offers unified cloud monitoring for DevOps and IT operations. Monitor the experience of real users accessing websites and applications from desktop and mobile devices. In-depth monitoring capabilities enable DevOps teams to monitor and troubleshoot applications, servers and network infrastructure including private and public clouds. End user experience monitoring is done from 100+ locations across the world and various wireless carriers.

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