

Customer Success Story

Consultant helps mining company cut remote monitoring costs by 80%

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John Carson
Senior Hydrogeologist



ConsultCorp* is a global group which provides practical solutions for companies involved in mining, infrastructure, energy, urban growth and natural resources. In this case, its client was a major mining company.

High cost and risk

The mine's location was the first challenge, being situated in inaccessible, mountainous terrain which was out of 3G and 4G network coverage and right next door to sensitive environmental areas.

As part of its environmental governance commitment, the company needed to monitor groundwater levels at seven sites around the mine, monitoring continuously but collecting data once per week.

To meet this requirement, ConsultCorp sent two of its people to site each week. This was costly for its client and risky for ConsultCorp's people, especially in extreme weather which was known to include snow.

Expensive or outdated

As the senior hydrogeologist, John Carson said, 'We looked at a few options at the time, but none fitted our needs. Radio transmission meant setting up and maintaining a string of stations over kilometers of rough terrain, which was out of the question cost-wise, and the other satellite-based systems used outdated technology that needed a lot of tinkering to make work.'

**This client has asked for names to be changed for privacy reasons*



Elegant, smart and fast to install

Carson decided to call Thermofisher Scientific, a leading provider of specialist equipment, who recommended Pacific Data Systems, who had been developing monitoring systems for three decades. At the time, PDS was developing satellite-based system called SatVue which was based on advanced technology and was an off-the-shelf 'plug & play' device.

As Carson says, 'SatVue looked like exactly what we needed - elegant, smart, fast to install, up and transmitting in seconds and cost-effective to run. More than that we could be involved in its final design, which was very valuable.' ConsultCorp worked with PDS's R&D team in the final stages of development, and ended up choosing the SatVue bore model for its mining client.

True to specs

Carson's role has since changed and it was another Senior Hydro-geologist, Justin Laird, who oversaw the implementation of the new SatVue system across the client's seven sites.

Laird said that, although it needed a little fine-tuning beforehand to convert pressure readings to water levels, the actual SatVue installation was very fast: 'It took only about five minutes, most of which was the physical installation. The SatVue device took seconds to work: we just hit the power button'.

80% reduction in costs

Looking back, Laird is quick to point out the impact of automated remote monitoring for his mining client. For him, it wasn't just a matter of money, but one of safety too.

'We used to send two of our guys out every week and they'd take a whole day to get around all seven sites. Now it's costing us less than \$30 a month for satellite. Including the initial capex, that's a saving of over 80%, and our guys aren't being put at risk anymore, too.'

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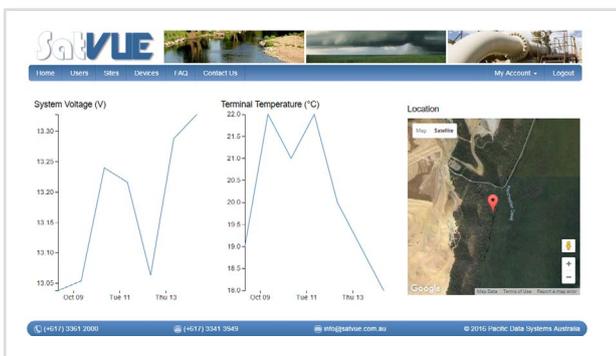
Justin Laird

Senior Hydrogeologist

'SatVue does what it says'

Laird says that the device does exactly what PDS said it would and the payback was spot on too: 'Satvue does what it says – reliable, continuous cost-effective monitoring – and the payback was under three months just as PDS said'.

Laird expects that site visits won't be a thing of the past entirely, but will be reduced by 99%. He expects that ConsultCorp will probably visit the sites every two years to replace the batteries, but feels it's a small price to pay, in comparison to the expense and risk of the previous routine.



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