

# Tauranga City Council gets tough on outdoor jobs

## CUSTOMER

Tauranga City Council,  
Bay of Plenty



## CHALLENGE

Tough Windows-based mobile computing for  
water engineers and building inspectors.

## SOLUTION

Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 fully-rugged 10.1" tablet: Reliable computing in the field backed by proven support capability.

Tauranga City Council has chosen Microsoft Windows-powered Panasonic Toughpads to equip employees engaged in field tasks with a computing companion capable of handling the rigours of outdoors tasks. With these devices, building and water engineers have a reliable solution which can be depended upon come rain or shine – quite literally.

Located in the Western Bay of Plenty, Tauranga is one of New Zealand's fastest growing cities. The Tauranga City Council (TCC) is responsible for a range of local services for the region's population of over 116,000, including roads, water, sewerage, waste collection, parks and reserves, and libraries. Urban development is managed through the maintenance of a District plan and associated zoning regulations, together with building and resource consents. TCC also owns and operates Tauranga Airport, the nation's fifth busiest.

## SITUATION

Karen Brazier, Project Management Office Coordinator at TCC, explains that water engineers and building inspectors are the primary users of outdoors tablets. "We had used a different brand of tablets prior to moving to the Toughpads, which established the viability of using mobile computing in the field," she says.

The advantages of mobile computing were clear, delivering improved efficiency and easy access to information for workers checking equipment and new buildings for conformity with safety and standards regulations. However, there were shortcomings, as Brazier explains.

"Probably the biggest issue we faced was reliability and support. Once you're dependent on a device, you need it to do the job for which it was selected. While the previous devices met the requirement at the time, they had reached end-of-life and were no longer fit for purpose."

## SOLUTION

When the Council examined the market for suitable devices with which to equip field staff, she says that Panasonic's Windows-powered Toughpad emerged as the best available option. "The biggest factor in the selection of the Toughpad, quite simply, was their toughness. These are devices which are built for working in challenging environments and that left a lasting impression."

**“The sunlight-viewability of the Toughpad was a further significant factor in its selection. The screens are able to be seen even in direct sunlight and our evaluation showed that Toughpads had the clearest screen of any device.”**

Karen Brazier, TCC



That durability is measurable, too. The devices selected by TCC from Panasonic's family of Toughpads, which includes Windows and Android models in a range of screen sizes, is the 10.1-inch Toughpad FZ-G1.

The FZ-G1 10.1-inch pairs a field-tested, fully-rugged durable and light weight design with the latest, fifth-generation Intel Core i5 vPro processor and features which include a rain and glove-sensitive touchscreen; a 13-hour (26 with optional large battery) battery; integrated cellular connectivity and high accuracy satellite GPS. Engineered to withstand the hard knocks,

**TOUGHBOOK**

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drops and spills of real life on the road, the FZ-G1 is built to operate flawlessly in every environment — from intense heat, to pouring rain and freezing temperatures.

With MIL-STD-810G certification, it is capable of withstanding a 6-foot drop, while the all-weather IP65-certified dust and water resistant design is capable of standing up to rain and even partial immersion without missing a beat.

Of course, Tauranga is recognised as one of the sunniest parts of New Zealand, which comes with its own challenges, as Brazier notes. “The sunlight-viewability of the Toughpad was a further significant factor in its selection. The screens are able to be seen even in direct sunlight and our evaluation showed that Toughpads had the clearest screen of any device. This is a major ‘thing’ for people working in the field; you can’t have them ducking into cars every time they need to use a computer.”

This device has a 10.1-inch screen and the Windows operating system makes it particularly advantageous for organisations like TCC as it is easily integrated into existing infrastructure and management frameworks, and runs standard business applications.



**“ We always look at deploying the best solutions for the task at hand. Where the work is outside and requires a dependable product, the solution is Toughpad. ”**

Sara Toomer, TCC's ICT Procurement

## RESULTS

With some 70 Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1s in use by its personnel, TCC today has a reliable and proven solution that its field workers have come to depend upon. Brazier's colleague Sara Toomer, TCC's ICT Procurement Specialist, cites the factors which have made the devices a success: “The Windows platform, their ability to do work in the field and not having to worry about being gentle with a device are appreciated.”

She adds that effective support provided by Sektor and its reseller partners is a further important factor for the success of the Toughpads. “These devices aren't cheap, so it would be costly to carry ‘swap out’ spares; if there are any issues, it is essential to have rapid, targeted support to keep the fleet where it belongs – in the hands of our engineers and inspectors.”

However, over the course of nearly two years, there has been little need to call on support, attesting to the build quality, reliability and proven durability of the Toughpad tablets. “I can't think of a single instance where support has been required,” Brazier notes.

In fact, the higher outlay costs of the Toughpads compared to non-rugged devices in the market is the only drawback that TCC can see; however, the fully-rugged and highly mobile design means these machines remain the go-to for the Council's most demanding work. “We always look at deploying the best solutions for the task at hand. Where the work is outside and requires a dependable product, the solution is Toughpad,” Toomer concludes.

