

CASE STUDY

PROGRAPHICS



Department of Environment and Heritage

The South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) has several operational branches that cover operations ranging from biodiversity and botanic gardens through to marine and heritage protection and environmental information. Within the Environmental Information branch is an Image Products Services area where a team of 13 staff provides a comprehensive South Australian Government mapping and aerial photography sales and information service.

Locating an all-rounder

With 30 years working for the DEH, Chris Gilbert, Supervisor of Image Products, has a wealth of experience in the processes and technologies required for aerial photography and map printing. So when Image Products Services moved toward a more cost-effective and efficient photo printing solution, Gilbert and his team were given the responsibility of *finding* that solution.

"We needed wide format colour printers that could deliver true photographic reproductions with an incredible degree of detail," Gilbert said. "We also wanted to provide a one-stop shop where a client could come in to the office, select the required photograph or map then walk out with the product just a few minutes later.

"The day a map is printed, is the day it is out of date; and what we were seeing in our research was that in-house map printing with up-to-date information would be much more efficient and cost-effective than commercial printing," Gilbert stated. "The real challenge, though, was finding printers that could deliver on accuracy, colour gamut, high resolution, reliability and have low operation noise."

A valuable investment

In researching wide format printers that would meet all requirements, Gilbert spoke at length with the staff at Graphic Art Supplies, one of South Australia's leading providers of business solutions to the graphic arts, photographic and allied industries.

The result was a two-stage implementation with an EPSON STYLUS PRO 9600 being brought in for aerial photograph printing and, several months later, an EPSON STYLUS PRO 10600UC for map printing.

Precision and Colour

The demand for reproducing detail and accuracy in mapping is nothing short of crucial, with these products being used by government departments and officials, lawyers, surveyors and the general community. Gilbert said: "When you think of a map that might contain many themes - drainage, water, land



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Chris Gilbert
Image Products Supervisor
Image Products, DEH

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boundaries, streets and vegetation just to name a few - it becomes obvious fairly quickly why precision printing is absolutely critical."



Playing a fundamental role in ensuring the maps exhibit the highest levels of precision are STYLUS PRO 10600UC's embedded technologies, such as the EPSON MicroPiezo Print Head and Variable Sized Droplet Technology. "These are the technologies that really give the EPSON wide format printers a major lead over other printers and, in particular, plotters," Gilbert said. "The ink placement accuracy is incredible."

When the Department first started printing maps using the STYLUS PRO 10600UC there was some initial debate over colour. "We saw that the colours being put down on the maps by the printer were different to those we had been getting previously from other plotters," Gilbert said. "Once we had conducted a thorough review, we discovered that the 10600UC was giving us - for the first time - correctly coloured maps!"

Fast and Silent

In providing an on-demand map printing service for the community and government, the Images Products area prides itself on absolute efficiency - with the STYLUS PRO 10600UC playing a major part. "The service we provide means we have customers in the office regularly throughout the day and - more to the point - waiting in the office while we're printing their map," Gilbert said. "So, the printer's main selling points for us were the quality, speed and quietness of operation!"

With a print speed of up to 20 square metres per hour and incredibly quiet operation, the

STYLUS PRO 10600 is the only mapping printer located in the team's front office. Gilbert commented: "Before Graphic Arts Supplies put us onto the EPSON ProGraphics range, we had been using other brands of wide format printers, which were so noisy that we had to put them in dedicated plotting rooms.

"Now, after the customer selects a map, we use our mapping software to construct it, then send it to the STYLUS PRO 10600UC and give them the final product in only four minutes. It all happens right in front of them."

Photo Quality

"When we brought in the STYLUS PRO 9600 to print the aerial photographs, some of our customers were concerned about the changeover from traditional photo-lab processing," Gilbert explained. "It didn't take long, though, before the high resolution, UltraChrome Ink and photo printing technologies of the printer convinced everyone that the photographic reproductions we were known for achieving were of a superior quality, produced more efficiently and quicker...what more could they want!"

With the STYLUS PRO 9600 for aerial photo prints and the STYLUS PRO 10600UC for map printing, the Image Products area has shown itself to be a prime example of success in the world of in-house, on-demand wide format map and photographic printing. "What we've achieved as a direct result is continued business growth and the provision to our customers of exactly what they need...up to date information printed at a high quality, on-demand," Gilbert concluded.

