



# Not so candid cameras

By Michael Brown

LIKE most sectors of the economy, the waste industry is facing tough economic conditions at the moment, and it is in these times that innovation in automation and productivity flourish as operators are driven to reduce operating costs by adopting new technology like smart camera systems.

Video technology from the security field is becoming a key element in the effective and transparent replacement of manpower across a range of applications, from patrolling and static security, to weighbridge manpower. Melbourne-based Australian Security Rentals (ASR) is a leading player in this space.

The business started in 2001 with a project to cut security operating costs at an outdoor vehicle storage site. Eight years later, with no losses or damage to the site's high value assets, the client has enjoyed labour savings around the \$1 million mark thanks

to the adoption of an ASR remotely managed camera system.

From the vehicle storage market, ASR has grown over recent years and is now working with some of the biggest names in the waste and recycling market, such as Thies Services and CMA Recycling. ASR is pushing the boundaries of what security services can provide to waste operators by introducing a continual stream of camera system innovations specifically tailored to the waste

industry's challenging requirements.

Plenty of companies install security camera systems, so you may ask what's all the fuss about? The answer is that when using an ASR solution, the cameras are online and pro-active. Connected 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ASR's VideoControlRoom, Australia's first dedicated video services centre, an ASR camera system reports live on intrusion events, allowing the control room operators to warn

intruders off with public address.

Obviously a voice booming over the loudspeaker saying, "hey you in the balaclava, we can see what you're doing and there's a guard on the way" is a more effective way to deter crime than simply recording images of how the security breach happened, which generally only allows the site operator to see what went wrong well after the damage has been done.

The same pro-active infrastructure

## Benefits

The benefits of VideoControlRoom's interactive security management solutions for waste companies include:

- OH&S risk mitigation for staff
- Cut static guard costs with after hours managed access
- Process control (monitoring who's dumping what and where)
- Public address/time and attendance
- Weighbridge interface for transaction auditability
- Vehicle tracking
- Employee property protection (such as personal vehicles parked up on site after hours)
- Manless site management
- Monitoring lone workers



## Interactive security management at Thiess

At Thiess' Rocklea transfer station, which is also the Queensland head office for its waste division, Australian Security Rentals has installed a remote monitored camera system consisting of intruder camera traps and weighbridge cameras. The yard security replaces patrolling manpower of a night, and a security guard/weighbridge attendant during operational hours.

Working off the same "authorised persons database", both Thiess Rocklea Reception and the remote monitoring centre can grant access to vehicles entering the site, recording registration details and driver names for auditing purposes. All traffic and transactions can be audited thanks to continually recording number plates and entry/exit lane overview cameras.

A pilot product is also set to automate access control further via integration of licence plate recognition technology with a database of authorised vehicles allowed into the site.

Thiess management can remotely view sites from 3G laptop cards, allowing them greater insight into operations. This allows regional managers to control sites, even from an airport lounge.

Waste management facilities can be dangerous environments with many OH&S risks to staff, contractors and customers. ASR's interactive management solutions help mitigate the risk by providing a live view into hazardous areas, all from the safety of head office.



allows operators to handle after hours access requests via full remote control of the site's alarm, access control, automatic gates and lighting.

### **False alarms or real intrusion?**

Different security applications require different types of equipment. A security "camera trap" effectively combines a high-resolution camera with a motion detector – which means it basically works along the same principles as a National Geographic camera traps for filming wild animals.

When the target moves into the camera's field of video, an alert pops up in the video control room and the operator can 'reply the alarm', easily ascertaining the cause. Camera traps therefore take the guesswork out of remote intrusion detection, eliminating common false alarms such as wayward cats tripping the alarm. Eliminating guesswork as to what set off the system also helps avoid the "boy who cried wolf", factor where operators may begin to assume an incident is more likely to be a false alarm than a sign of real trouble.

Another technology with applications in the waste industry is Licence Plate Recognition (LPR). While any camera can view or record a licence plate, only a true LPR camera can 'read' a

licence plate. Designed with excellent light compensation so the camera can clearly view a licence plate at night, with a car's headlights on, LPR cameras and the systems behind them have become affordable in recent times.

When a camera reads a licence plate, a server then takes the video and turns it to text. That text can then be fed into a weighbridge and access control system. This speeds up weighbridge transactions and can create a more seamless experience for contractors, visitors and staff entering a site.

As many people have recently viewed on mainstream television news, today's thermal cameras are capable of detecting even a one degree difference in body temperature, which is handy for screening passengers passing through Australian airports who may have an infectious disease.

Applying this thermal camera technology to the waste industry can provide the ideal weapon for the detection of outdoor fire threats. With after-hours fires a major concern for all landfill operators, having a system in place that can identify the threat before the flames really take hold is an excellent way to manage fire risks.

**More information available at**  
[www.videocontrolroom.com](http://www.videocontrolroom.com)

