SafeZone

Since 2016 the University of Queensland has been among the most committed advocates of SafeZone technology, using it to improve safety for over 52,000 students and 6,600 staff at three campuses. Now senior security managers at UQ are going a step further and are working with emergency services to pioneer exciting new approaches to incident management on their campus.

The University of Queensland is one of Australia's largest higher education institutions and is consistently ranked in the world top 50 for academic reputation. Its three main campuses and several smaller sites dispersed across the vast Australian state are home to

over 58,000 students and staff, all of whom are kept safe by a team of 60 officers using SafeZone as one of their key operational tools.

Head of security Garry Tyler began working at UQ as a steward 22 years ago and, with his first-hand experience of dealing with both routine calls for help and major emergencies, he is among the most committed advocates of the CriticalArc technology. Thanks to the geographically-precise situational awareness the system provides, his officers are much better equipped to deal with any situation they face on campus.

With UQ competing to build its reputation globally, and to attract the best students, the welcoming and safe learning environment that SafeZone underpins is of vital importance.

"We have three large complex and busy campuses to manage and SafeZone lets us do our job much more effectively. Most importantly it's helping us to create a safe and welcoming environment, which is essential if we are to continue attracting students from across the globe."

GARRY TYLER
Senior Security Manager,
University of Queensland

SafeZone solution

SafeZone is a unified safety, security and emergency management solution which includes a mobile app that lets students and staff ask for help, receive safety advice, or trigger an emergency alert. It lets UQ's security controllers see the precise locations of all checked-in users, as well as the current deployment of active security officers, and will soon include first-aiders and fire wardens, enabling them to coordinate the most efficient response.

Garry Tyler's team has also pioneered advanced operational techniques with the technology. For example, they now overlay the live SafeZone campus map onto an 80-inch LED touchscreen which controllers can write on and annotate, providing an interactive situation board. In the event of an incident, this gives the team effective command and control functionality with the ability to view the availability and location of first responders, coordinate a response, confirm actions have been taken and use SafeZone's mass and geo-targeted communications to provide updates across the entire UQ community – all in real time.

Previously, students had to rely on one of the fixed emergency call points to request help, now it's possible anywhere on campus.

Initially, Garry Tyler's team expected that lone worker safety would be the most important use for the technology, but SafeZone quickly became integral to their operation and delivered far-reaching benefits, improving not just safety but positively influencing the daily engagement between officers and students.

The system proves its value regularly, speeding response during medical emergencies, including sporting injuries, where first aid assistance can be delivered much more quickly than previously possible. It has solved the problem of people being unable to communicate their exact location when they need help, either because they don't know or because they are too distressed to give a clear description.

Using SafeZone in this way the UQ team can now collaborate more closely with Queensland's emergency responders, with major drill exercises being planned for November 2019, and they are also looking to develop partnerships with neighbouring institutions, with the aim of enhancing protection for students and staff visiting other campuses.

Benefits and outcomes

With the challenge of protecting three open campuses spread across vast distances, security controllers at the University of Queensland now rely on SafeZone to let them deliver a consistent experience for students, and the highest-level protection. System benefits include:

- Advanced situational awareness, command and control during incidents
- Supports after-hours working, protecting lone workers and security officers
- Rapid implementation, easy scalability with no extra cost
- Drives collaboration with external agencies and partner institutions
- Enables multiple sites to be supported, with a unified service.

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criticalarc

CriticalArc is a leading technology innovator, designing, and developing the distributed command and control solution, SafeZone, which is revolutionizing the way organizations manage safety and security operations.

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