



CONNECTED

# CATTLE FARMERS

BGAN CASE STUDY

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## KEY BENEFITS OF BGAN

1. Performance: standard IP at a rate of up to 448kbps with a low latency from 800 milliseconds.
2. Reliability: operates over the Inmarsat L-band global satellite and ground network, with 99.9% availability.
3. Easy to integrate: simple for field teams to set up, integrate and maintain without technical expertise or training.
4. Cost effective: low-cost terminal, low data rate plans with no reconnection fees.
5. Enhanced support: free firmware upgrade over-the-air.
6. Easy to manage solution: remote terminal management, debugging and configuration options.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

McMillan Pastoral Company is a large family pastoral cattle business based in Cloncurry, Queensland. It specialises in the grazing, transporting and selling of cattle throughout the country, as well as the exportation of premium livestock to buyers around the world. The company owns approx. 5million acres across Queensland and the Northern Territory in Australia.

## THE CHALLENGE

The challenges faced running such a large aggregation in very remote locations are numerous. One day you can be brokering high value deals with cattle buyers, accountants and lawyers, the next you could be cashing clean skin cattle (unbranded bulls and cows) to move or sell to market. One of the biggest challenges the McMillan family operation faces on a daily basis is trying to finalise urgent business contracts with exporters from the various remote farm locations, which includes sending and receiving important emails, contracts and documentation. The McMillan's business model relies heavily on cloud business apps such as Xero for payroll and accounting that require a stable internet connection at all times.

When out in the field, McMillan's staff / family regularly face the extremely physical activity of mustering wild bulls, which often entails a combination of helicopters, 4x4 vehicles, horses, motorbikes and trucks on the ground. In an accident or emergency scenario, the team needs

to communicate quickly with emergency services, which could take up to six hours to get to the injured person: something that has proved challenging in the past due to the lack of any local terrestrial communications networks. Additionally, during the wet season heavy rainfall means that farms quickly become flooded if nearby creeks overflow. Properties can become isolated for anything up to six weeks, placing staff and family in potentially dangerous situations.

Due to the remote location of each cattle station, the McMillan's notably lacked a reliable form of connectivity, with no available terrestrial internet, cellular mobile networks or landline telephones. To overcome this challenge, each farm building is equipped with a fixed satellite dish that provides local Wi-Fi internet connectivity. Workers also carry satellite phones for voice communications when they are on the road or out in the field. This approach was unsuitable for the daily requirements of the business and it was negatively impacting the bottom line.

Jane McMillan, Grazier at McMillan Pastoral Company explains: "Although many of our cattle stations use satellite dishes to provide Wi-Fi, it requires the user being in close proximity to the router to maintain a stable connection. However, many of our cattle stations are very large, with people needing to work away from the main building. Similarly, when using the portable satellite phones, each one operates on a unique dedicated number, so we have to rely on multiple different lines for business communications. This is not ideal, as it can lead to serious complications when dealing with customers and associates.

"The monthly contract for our fixed dishes is also extremely expensive and we needed to find a cheaper and more reliable alternative that would allow each member of our team to instantly connect their personal devices to the internet from any location - even when travelling between cattle stations where network coverage is unavailable."





## THE SOLUTION

The McMillan Pastoral Company was keen to find the right partners who could provide a cost-effective, mobile and reliable connectivity solution with a high level of technical support. The McMillans chose GlobalSat a small independently owned family business based in West Ipswich Qld, Australia [www.globalsat.com.au](http://www.globalsat.com.au) (established in 1996). GlobalSat is a key partner of Inmarsat and a leading provider of satellite communications systems and equipment throughout Australia and internationally. The company saw the potential of Inmarsat's BGAN service, which is delivered via the Inmarsat-4 network and offers up to 99.9 per cent availability. Due to the McMillan's need to send and receive important emails, contracts and documentation while on the move, GlobalSat recommended and provided a portable Cobham SATCOM EXPLORER 510 terminal to the McMillan Pastoral company as a trial which ended up being a great success.

The EXPLORER 510 solution enables simultaneous voice and data up to 464kbps which is ideal for connecting any mobile devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets, in regions of limited terrestrial network coverage. The terminal allows internet browsing, email, live video broadcasting, phone services, large file transfers, video conferencing and streaming, and VPN applications from any location, while it is lightweight, compact and ruggedly constructed it means that it can be used in extreme weather conditions, making it a perfect solution for McMillan's graziers. When staff are driving between cattle stations or away from station buildings, they can carry the BGAN terminal to ensure they have unrestricted access to reliable voice communications, SMS text and data from any location, all routed through the existing business phone number. This removes the need for multiple phone numbers and means staff can use their personal devices to maintain seamless business

communications at all times. Jane McMillan comments: "This BGAN terminal is robust and easily portable which makes it perfect for our workers to carry when out on the road or out into mustering camps. We have been using it regularly for fast and secure data and voice connectivity when on the road and out mustering which has meant our teammates can immediately send urgent business emails and then download or print contracts as soon as they are received.

"Our number one priority was for all of our staff to be connected to the internet whenever and wherever it is needed. Not only is this new terminal easy-to-use and cheaper to operate than the fixed dishes and satellite phones, but it is important to know that if one of our team is caught in an emergency situation, they will be able to immediately connect to a reliable communications network and contact the necessary emergency services."

## THE RESULTS

McMillan management has been delighted with the results of the new solution as it has provided a communications solution that can be easily deployed while in the field and making them on par while working in a global market. It is a dependable alternative to the fixed satellite dishes and satellite phones. Whilst trialling the BGAN, the McMillan family business had a far greater level of operational flexibility, as each worker can use their personal devices to send and receive all voice and data communications over a secure internet connection from the cattle stations and muster camps or while travelling between sites. As opposed to the fixed dishes, the company has the option to turn the BGAN connection on and off during business hours and every member of the team can access SMS text messages and missed calls on their own smartphones.

Jane McMillan concludes: "The new solution has been extremely valuable for maintaining relationships with important

clients and ensuring continuity of business processes such as payroll and accounting. There have been many situations where we have needed to quickly sign a contract worth millions of dollars and return it to the client from an area of limited connectivity. Now we have the capabilities to quickly print off, sign and scan a contract in a few minutes, successfully closing the deal and helping us secure millions of dollars' worth of cattle sales and staying in touch. "By routing all communications through the satellite terminal, all follow up correspondence can be conducted using the existing business number for a smoother and more professional client service. Also, as payroll processing can now get done from any location, this has removed the need to undertake long drives - sometimes up to four to six hours - to reach the closest cattle station for an internet connection point. As less driving equates to a more efficient use of resources, reduced expenses and improved sustainability, we are greatly

improving our CSR and operating much more cost-effectively."

There have been numerous situations in which extreme weather has meant that team members have had to make urgent calls to the local emergency services so they can report severe flooding and request support. The portable BGAN terminal has provided McMillan Pastoral Company management with the peace of mind that comes with knowing that no matter where team members may be located, they have a reliable method of communication for any emergency situation.





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