

Brisbane City Cats were down, but not out



The Transdev work vessel 'Tenacious' helped to repair damage and restore services

In January 2011, Brisbane was attacked by devastating floodwaters which crippled many industries and people alike.

Brisbane's world-class river ferry system was one of its victims.

Six active ferry terminals were destroyed by the floods and consequently all services were halted whilst the entire City Cat fleet were moored safely away from the raging river.

It was predicted that it would be six weeks before things were likely to be back to normal with the service.

Not if Rob Mulrine, Fleet Maintenance Manager, Vessels and Infrastructure at TransdevTSL/Brisbane Ferries had anything to do with it however. He contacted Wayne Beak, Technical Director at EMS for advice on how to ascertain damage and debris levels surrounding the remaining terminals.

Knowing exactly what was needed, EMS proposed the Simrad StructureScan Sonar which was quickly fitted to Transdev's work vessel 'Tenacious' and put into service.

Mr Beak said: "With its unique technology, the StructreScan reveals

important structures such as wreckage and other flood shifted matter up to 76 metres on each side of the vessel for faster, wider area surveys. This was perfect for Transdev's role as they could inspect in and around the terminals where they couldn't get the vessel."

Mr Mulrine said: "Through the use of this equipment we were able to quickly identify submerged objects to allow removal by Brisbane City Council contracted Cranes and Barges.

"We were also able to verify water depths at each of the ferry terminals and along the track which our vessels travel in normal operation.

"Scanning of the river bottom continued for some weeks as it was soon realised that the debris was continuing to move with the tide.

"With the assistance of the sonar equipment we were able to continue to update the debris positions and ensure that the route was clear to commence services on the February 14," Mr Mulrine said.

The ferries' return to operation was an important milestone in the flood recovery and bringing welcome relief to inner city transport dramas.

A flotilla of 15 CityCats and eight CityFerries triumphantly cruised the Brisbane River on Sunday, February 13, to show the city they were back in business, just 35 days since the Brisbane River floods shut down all river services.

Onlookers on the river banks and bridges cheered and waved, as the fleet, which carries up to 18,000 passengers daily, made its historic return. At the time of printing, eight terminals were as yet not in service.

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