

Local Council empowers its mobile workforce

Noosa Shire Council supports its workforce to seamlessly communicate and collaborate anywhere, anytime.



Noosa is recognised as one of Australia’s premier residential and tourist destinations. Since de-amalgamation from the Sunshine Coast in 2014, Noosa Shire Council’s focus has been to build on the area’s strong service industry and to reflect the core cultural and creative values of the local community.

Key to this was the need for an agile and flexible communications system. And it had to be set up within a short time frame. Nexon were able to provide the expertise and support required to implement a seamless upgrade.

Supporting a mobile workforce

Noosa Shire Council faced a big challenge post de-amalgamation. They had to build and manage a complete network and communications environment for their multiple locations and their mobile workforce. Specifically, they required:

- access to infrastructure to run a range of business applications as required
- a hosted Unified Communications (UC) platform
- a hosted email platform.

As with all local government bodies, financial sustainability was a pressure point. The challenge was to provide cost effective services, the ability for customers to have mobile applications in the field and support staff working from home. In short, to add value to the organisation and to customers.

“The primary objective was to get a telephone system up and running in a very short time frame,” explained Justin Thomas, ICT Manager, Corporate Services, Noosa Shire Council.

“We wanted all the features and the flexibility of a Unified Communication platform. Our

challenge was that we didn’t know exactly who would be part of the council until mid-November, and we needed to be up and running by the end of December.”

Managed service eases the pressure

The council brought Nexon on board to provide and manage a hosted Unified Communications platform - Nexon Absolute. Crucial to the decision to partner with Nexon was the complete confidence Justin Thomas and his team had in the company’s specific expertise in this area.

“We trusted Nexon’s expertise in this space and knew that they were focused on what was important to us,” said Justin Thomas. “We wanted something that was very agile. We didn’t want to be talking to a monopoly telco. We explored this but they didn’t have an IP solution that could deliver what we were trying to achieve.”

The managed service provided by Nexon focussed on three discrete areas:

- a hosted Unified Communications platform utilising Microsoft Lync 2013 to replace all existing PABX requirements,
- a hosted Exchange 2013 platform built and maintained in Nexon’s Data Centre, and;
- a fully managed MPLS network to all required Noosa Shire Council sites.

Since the initial implementation of Nexon Absolute, Noosa Shire Council has renewed



At a glance

Industry

Government

Business challenge

The local council needed a new telephony service and the flexibility to expand.

Solution

Nexon Absolute - Managed Unified Communications

Outcome

- Greater functionality with Microsoft Skype for Business
- Improved TCO via a “per seat per month” investment model.
- Guaranteed service via Nexon’s managed MPLS network

its services with Nexon. The Council, with Nexon’s assistance, has now migrated from Exchange 2013 to Microsoft Office 365 for email and is now leveraging the power of Microsoft Skype for Business as part of their managed service, at no additional cost. With 407 users on the platform, the council can scale up or down to meet resident and community needs, while accessing new collaboration features as the Microsoft product suite evolves.

A system that truly supports the needs of staff and customers

Results were immediate and positive with the implementation of a system that truly supports the needs of staff and customers. As Justin Thomas states, "The biggest area of impact has been availability. We don't have to worry about uptime. The system is just running in the background."

Key improvements for Noosa Shire Council include the ease and efficiency with which the system operates and likewise the easy and efficient relationship with Nexon and what a difference it makes having a fully managed service.

"Setting up new offices is easy," commented Justin Thomas. "There's not too much we have to do in terms of setting up new infrastructure. For example, we had a new office for some town planners, all they needed to be up and running were their PCs – they moved and they took the same phone number with them."

Specific benefits the organisation, staff and customers have noted include:

- **Flexible structure and delivery:** Staff can use Nexon Absolute on their mobile phones, meaning they get the same high quality telephony service wherever they are. The flexible payment structure, per user per month, means there is no big outright commitment and CAPEX purchase.
- **Increased visibility and connection:** Presence Function means people can see what everyone else is doing. Rather than calling and waiting, they can see the best option might be to send an instant message or get in touch at another time. This reduces the number of emails being sent and the inefficiency of that. Simple teleconferencing with internal or external parties also helps people connect and collaborate. Skype for Business meetings can be arranged directly from the Outlook calendar with ease.
- **Scalability of use:** When the council first went live, there were only a couple of operators taking calls. This had to be quickly scaled up as calls increased and Nexon Absolute helped manage this easily.

- **Improved user satisfaction:** The Presence Function has a positive impact on end customer experience. Customers get 'passed around' less than they used to as, for example, calls are not forwarded to people that are not at their desk.
- **Cost effective and time efficient process:** From a support perspective, the platform requires very little internal staff and is much more agile than a traditional system. Because the platform is delivered as a fully managed service with simple billing and account management, this saves a huge amount of time in checking and monitoring billing. Costs are transparent and predictable.

Words of advice

"Nexon has a real maturity in project delivery. Catch ups and progress meetings are always well run and followed up. Not all of our vendors have that. You really see the difference working with Nexon."

"Nexon has a disciplined approach to project implementation. They manage the risks and issues."

"Nexon has been responsive to our needs over the last five years and is a valued partner to provide capabilities to support our staff and customers."

"As well as unified communications, Nexon helps us with computing infrastructure, WAN telecommunications, management of network devices and integration of cloud services. They've also helped us with PC deployment systems."

The Vision

Most valuable to the council has been the flexibility of Nexon Absolute in meeting their needs and the high level of trust in Nexon to provide up to date and expert advice. They anticipate similar priorities and benefits as they move ahead with other areas of IT upgrade and investment.

"We're very interested in Microsoft Teams," said Justin Thomas. "We don't have a lot of time to invest in researching that, so will look to Nexon's guidance. We have the technical expertise available from Nexon on tap, rather than having to provide that in-house."

“Nexon takes care of it all for us. They have PABX experience. Unlike some of the others, they are not just an IT company trying to do telephony – they have a much more specific skillset.

Justin Thomas
ICT Manager
Noosa Shire Council

About Nexon

Nexon Asia Pacific (Nexon) is an award-winning digital consulting and managed services partner for mid-market, and government organisations across Australia. We have a uniquely broad suite of solutions to service clients who require end-to-end capabilities coupled with specialist expertise in security, cloud and digital solutions.

Our end-to-end solutions help clients to solve problems, address frictions and accelerate growth. Committed to the highest standards of responsiveness, competency and transparency, Nexon is built on a unique client care model that is fuelled by continuous feedback. With over 400 staff, we employ some of the country's most experienced consultants and empowers teams to make decisions that accelerate change for client organisations.

As a certified and accredited local and state government provider, CREST and ISO-certified, Nexon partners with world-class technology vendors to deliver innovative solutions and service excellence.

We help our clients move from a position of overwhelm to empowerment, looking forward to a more agile and digital future.

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