

Better connectivity and tools improve outcomes for childcare provider

A need to migrate to the nbn™ access network created an opportunity for the childcare provider operating across the eastern states to improve overall connectivity and significantly enhance internal communications and engagement with parents.



For more than 120 years KU Children's Services (KU) has helped shape the lives of Australians by providing early childhood and pre-school education. Whilst they have stayed true to their core mission, they needed to adapt to the times especially in providing digital and technology services. These new services allow a geographically distributed business to run efficiently, encourage better internal collaboration and enhance communication and interaction with parents.



The situation

A first attempt at digitisation led to an unstable connectivity environment, subject to outages, with locked-in proprietary services.

The impact on the business was that they were not able to realise expected improvements in efficiency, productivity and communication. In addition, new tools to enhance stakeholder engagement were underutilised due to frustrations with connectivity.

The KU IT team identified the need to move from their existing provider, and launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) with 5 components:

- 1 Relocation of VM servers from a hosted environment into the cloud;
- 2 WAN and carriage services for central offices, and 140 childcare centres;
- 3 Managed telephony, network and support services across the estate;
- 4 A mobile device and tariff package upgrade;
- 5 Support for regulatory compliance for data held by KU, including data residency in Australia, redundant data backup, and enhanced cyber-security measures.

Recognising the variety of components within the EOI, interested parties were invited to bid for part or all of the required solutions.

Nexon were introduced to KU by a key stakeholder and based on their track record were invited to participate in the EOI.

Through the EOI process Nexon were perceived as "innovative and affordable". KU noted that Nexon's key difference was that they proposed solutions not products. Their professional, knowledgeable staff were interested in solving the problems that KU had, not just offering a price list.

The solution

Nexon introduced their Next Generation Managed Services model to KU and created an innovative fit for purpose solution for components 2 and 3 of the EOI based on their MPLS network.

They proposed the adoption of Skype for Business as the solution to improve communications across KU's multiple sites.

Nexon's high performance managed network services combine best-in-class technology with seamless carrier access to create agile, robust and scalable network environments. Their Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) service offers a secure, scalable and cost-effective Wide Area Network (WAN) solution for private telecommunications networks.

At a glance

Industry

Early learning/childcare provider
Not for profit organisation

Business challenge

Poor wireless network and broadband connectivity, outdated telephone systems, and the inability to support modern cloud-based applications were major business obstacles. This resulted in an inability to drive improvements in productivity, efficiency and parent engagement.

Solution

Roll-out of a managed, secure, high speed, high performance WAN, including nbn™ access network service migration, with enterprise networking hardware on site supporting 4G backup VPN, integration of cloud-based services including Skype for Business for telephony services.

Outcome

Significantly improved local bandwidth leading to greater adoption of tools to better communicate with parents and staff, a smooth transition programme that minimised downtime, and greater organisation wide efficiencies.

Key outcomes

- 120 childcare centres migrated to higher bandwidth nbn™ access network services
- Migration of all ADSL sites as the nbn™ access network becomes available over time
- The KU head office sites in Sydney and Fitzroy were migrated to symmetric Ethernet access services
- All Internet access is centralised and security policy managed
- Skype for Business rolled out for all 345 users across KU, of whom about 180 use the Skype for Business telephony solution as a deskphone on a daily basis
- Significant improvement in bandwidth and connectivity
- Large media files – including video – can now be easily uploaded to Storypark (a digital diary for parents) and made available to parents, greatly reducing staff time spent uploading
- Seamless migration process compared to 80% migration failure rate from previous provider
- Managed upgrade of firewall to introduce content filtering
- Significantly improved telephony – especially for field based teams – through the adoption of Skype for Business
- Widespread usage of Microsoft cloud tools including OneDrive, SharePoint and Skype For Business leading to enhanced efficiency and collaboration
- Reduction in downtime due to superior technical support from Nexon account management team

The benefits

Better bandwidth: improving parent interactions

The old solution provided limited bandwidth and weak wireless coverage across the KU Childcare Centres, which meant that tools performed poorly.

The Storypark app provisioned on iPads across KU's centres allows educators and support staff to maintain a digital diary for the children in their care. They can upload and share stories, images and video footage with the child's parents. Whilst Storypark was appreciated by parents, the poor bandwidth in centres meant it was time consuming for staff to upload to the app - and took time away from other activities.

The considerably improved bandwidth now offered means that file uploads – even large video clips – can take place in seconds improving efficiency and encouraging greater use of the service.

“The staff Storypark experience has been significantly improved by the Nexon implementation through considerably increased connection speed.” said Mark Matovina, KU's IT Manager

Cloud empowering service improvements

Like many businesses, the next phase in KU's digitisation journey was to move to cloud-based services. Their existing supplier held them back.

KU receive advantageous software licensing from the Microsoft Enrolment for Educations Solutions as a registered educational institution. Their previous connectivity solutions provided neither the bandwidth nor the infrastructure to support these solutions.

KU have a strategic technology goal to move to SaaS (Software as a Service) licensed products wherever possible. Their experience shows that SaaS free up IT Support time to move from diagnosing and fixing issues to supporting better use of tools and resources, improving efficiency and communication.

After deploying the Nexon solution, Skype for Business is now the main communications tool used, and other services like OneDrive and SharePoint have been deployed successfully.

KU's IT team are now investigating other services they can implement like Microsoft Teams through Nexon. Teams will provide better access to chats, virtual meetings and calling tools, which should significantly improve collaboration especially in a business-like KU with a considerable number of remote sites.

Improvements in reliability, reducing risk

The installation of reliable connectivity infrastructure in centres was a key component of the EOI. The cordless telephones supplied by Nexon are supplemented by repeaters featuring an inbuilt wireless LAN access point.

This enhanced the wireless coverage in each centre, enabling cordless telephones and iPads to operate throughout each facility, improving availability and connectivity.

“In the instance of an emergency or making contact between centres, there is an improvement in reliability, reducing risk” commented Mark Matovina.

A true managed service provider

“They have delivered every single thing they offered to us”, said Mark Matovina.

He noted that the Nexon team includes an account manager, a migration manager, and technical support staff who are knowledgeable

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Mark Matovina
IT Manager, KU Children's Services

and empowered to diagnose and correct issues as they are raised, including walking non-technical staff members through trouble shooting and problem resolution.

“it continuously impresses us that if we have a technical issue... we can get someone on the phone and typically get it resolved within the day.”, added Mark Matovina.

Partnering for the future

As they prepare to take the next steps on their digital transformation journey, KU know they have made the right choice to help deliver their cloud and digital strategy:

“We now think of Nexon as partners, not suppliers” noted Mark Matovina.

In the short term the migration of childcare centres over to the nbn continues with Nexon's support. Looking ahead, KU are excited by new SaaS services that are enabled by the enhanced coverage and connectivity delivered by Nexon and are updating their strategy for the next three years.

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.

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

Pointedly structured and culturally driven to deliver the highest standards of responsiveness, competency and transparency, our integrated solutions and close client relationships help propel organisations forward. For expertise, delivered with care, clients can look to the future with Nexon.

To find out about Nexon, Call us at **1300 800 000**, email us at enquiry@nexon.com.au, or visit nexon.com.au