

Children's Cancer Institute boosts research funds through strategic IT partnership

For CCI, every dollar saved on operations means more funds for childhood cancer research. By partnering with Nexon to outsource IT, CCI redirected budget to life-saving research while upgrading digital performance.



When rapid growth challenged the mission

Children's Cancer Institute (CCI) is the only independent medical research institute in Australia wholly dedicated to curing childhood cancer, the leading cause of death from disease in children.

Established in 1976, CCI has grown to nearly 450 staff, with 250 world-class researchers working to save young lives. But this growth brought challenges as Elaine Neeson, Chief Information Officer at Children's Cancer Institute, explains.

"In recent years, we've grown so quickly that we couldn't keep up with our cost base. Our computational biology team alone had grown our data from 40 terabytes to 6 petabytes. We had to find ways to reduce overheads to maximise the research investment."

When a holistic operational review identified opportunities to redirect funds from operations to research, CCI made a strategic decision to transform their IT operations through outsourcing.

Building trust through shared purpose

The relationship between CCI and Nexon began five years earlier, when a trusted technology partner introduced Nexon Asia Pacific for storage hardware. What started as a transactional relationship grew deeper as both organisations got to know each other.

"Elaine and I connected authentically from day one," recalls Nevien Badawi, Chief Sales Officer at Nexon. "She was incredibly open about their challenges

and passionate about their mission to cure childhood cancer. I understood that every efficiency gained and dollar saved meant more funding for research."

When CCI conducted a comprehensive tender for end-to-end IT outsourcing in 2024, they evaluated multiple world-class vendors. Nexon's selection came down to cultural fit and mission alignment.

"With Nexon, we knew from the start we'd be partners, not just another client," says Neeson. "They understood our mission, brought deep not-for-profit experience and were genuinely flexible within our constraints. While they weren't the lowest-cost option, the value delivered through authentic partnership far outweighed this. They have since delivered above and beyond."

Six-week onboarding with zero disruption

The scope of the initiative encompassed a complete IT transformation: hardware, infrastructure, service desk, network operations and, critically, cybersecurity – all while protecting sensitive patient data and maintaining research continuity.

Starting in June 2024, Nexon completed the onboarding in just 4-6 weeks. "We mobilised our entire team because we understood that every week mattered," says Badawi. "Those were weeks that funding could go to research instead of extended transitions."

Guiding the team through the transition proved crucial. Nexon's change management approach focused on personal connection, with the team organising drop-in sessions on each



At a glance

Industry

Cancer Research, Healthcare, Not-for-profit

Challenges

- Rising operational costs and IT complexity
- Managing petabytes of sensitive research data
- Maintaining enterprise-grade security
- Supporting rapid growth from 100 to 450 staff

Solutions

- Complete IT outsourcing with on-site support
- 24/7 SOC and threat intelligence
- Strategic technology advisory and planning
- Microsoft Dynamics 365 for automated grant management

Outcomes

- Significant funds redirected to cancer research
- Board confidence in enterprise security
- Cultural integration – Nexon engineer wins Employee of the Quarter
- AI and genomic data sharing innovations

floor where staff could meet their new IT support crew in person. This personal approach made the difference – researchers saw real partners, not just vendors or contact details.



The integration succeeded beyond expectations. Karl Walker, Nexon's on-site engineer, became so embedded in CCI's culture that staff voted him Employee of the Quarter. "Our Head of People and Culture said Karl embodies our culture as much as our own staff. Most people have no idea he isn't a CCI employee. He's simply part of our team." While Karl provides daily on-site support, he's backed by Nexon's full service delivery team for enterprise-level capabilities.

Accessing enterprise security within NFP means

With a collaborative outsourcing model, CCI gained access to enterprise-level capabilities they could never have afforded on their own.

"To match what Nexon provides in cyber security alone, I'd need a team of ten specialists beyond the budgets of a not-for-profit," says Neeson. "Our reputation depends on protecting patient data. Now our board has complete confidence in our security posture, and we can focus funds on research instead of platforms."

The partnership extends beyond security to business transformation. Nexon is implementing Microsoft Dynamics 365 with Solver to automate grant management, replacing manual administration that consumes precious research time.

"Researchers need to apply efficiently and track grant status instantly, not wait for manual reports," explains Neeson.

Regular strategic sessions help CCI plan for emerging technologies and optimise investments. When CCI recently needed storage upgrades, Nexon's experts refined the approach, saving additional funds while improving capabilities.

With foundations secure, CCI is accelerating innovation

Nexon supports AI deployment across the institute – from Microsoft Copilot for productivity to specialised AI tools for researchers.

"Our computational biology group is building an internal large language model for patient data," reveals Neeson. "We're creating a platform where global researchers can query 6 petabytes of genomic data while maintaining privacy. Nexon is integral to making this vision real."

Supporting the mission beyond IT

Every year, Nexon team members have participated in the 86K for a Cure challenge, representing the 86 Australian children diagnosed with cancer each month. Nexon also sponsors and volunteers at Diamond Ball, CCI's signature fundraising event.

"Even before our formal partnership began, Nexon put their hand up to volunteer at Diamond Ball. We knew right then that they understood why we're all here working so hard – it's a truly inspiring night that makes you cry every time."

The partnership has created unexpected value through Nexon's industry events, providing CCI with platforms to share their story with potential corporate supporters. Neeson has become one of Nexon's strongest advocates, actively referring them to other not-for-profits.

"Nexon goes the extra mile to give us a great partnership, so I'm glad to support them. When you find a partner who shares your mission and has the expertise to help achieve it, you want everyone to know."



Every dollar Nexon helps us save goes directly to cancer research. It's all about accelerating a cure for childhood cancer and supporting our families at the end of the day. That's why I come to work every day.

Elaine Neeson

Chief Information Officer
Children's Cancer Institute

Today, CCI's integrated technology platform supports world-leading genomic research, with the partnership continuing to evolve as needs grow.

For Children's Cancer Institute, curing childhood cancer is not a matter of if. It's when.

About Nexon Asia Pacific

Nexon is an award-winning digital consulting and managed services partner for mid-market, enterprise and government organisations across Australia. We offer clients a uniquely broad suite of solutions requiring 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.



Want to join the mission to cure childhood cancer?

Children's Cancer Institute relies on community support to fund life-saving research. Whether you donate, participate in or sponsor fundraising events or volunteer your time, every contribution helps bring us closer to a future where no child dies from cancer.

Discover how you can help at
ccia.org.au/get-involved

To find out about Nexon, call us at **1300 800 000** or visit **nexon.com.au**

