

# Primary Health Network builds gold standard platform connecting communities to care

Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECC PHN) coordinates vital healthcare for 1.3 million Australians. To keep delivering on that mission, they needed a digital platform to match. With Nexon, they found a partner to help build it, ahead of schedule and under budget.



## Connecting care across 130,000 square kilometres

HNECC PHN coordinates healthcare services across a diverse region from coastal towns to remote rural communities.

The not-for-profit organisation works to ensure people can access the care they need - whether that's a GP in a country town, a mental health service on the Central Coast, or a First Nations health provider in the New England tablelands.

"We get government funding to coordinate critical primary healthcare activities," explains Suzzwal Shrestha, Business System Improvement Coordinator at HNECC PHN and PM for the project.

"We commission services and communicate across general practices and allied health practitioners, that's our main business. But we also organise events, manage contracts and support digital maturity across the sector."

With programs spanning aged care, indigenous health, mental health and more, the organisation needed systems that matched the importance of the work and kept pace with growing demand.

## When the system couldn't keep up

Like many health organisations, HNECC PHN had relied on a traditional CRM common across the sector. But as their needs evolved, the platform couldn't keep up.

"The biggest problem was a very outdated system," says Jason Rumianek, IMIT Manager at HNECC PHN. "People just didn't want to use it, it was really slow. The marketing team weren't using it. Our practice support team weren't using it. And the data integration wasn't great either."

The system also lacked single sign-on, offered limited multi-factor authentication and couldn't integrate with other platforms. When teams needed new functionality, workarounds were the only option.

"The biggest complaint from the business was that it wasn't scalable," Shrestha explains. "If someone said 'I want to do this', we needed to find a workaround. It wasn't customisable."

Different teams maintained their own records, making it difficult to present a unified view of stakeholders or ensure data accuracy. Enabling essential care services across a region this size, that fragmentation made the job harder than it needed to be for staff.

## A disciplined approach to transformation

When HNECC PHN decided to move to Microsoft Dynamics 365, they made a strategic choice: start with a solid long-term foundation and build from there.

"This was a significant investment for the PHN. We'd never rolled out enterprise-wide software before, so it was a change in the way we think," says Rumianek.

They split the project into two phases. The first focused on requirements



## At a glance

### Industry

Healthcare, Not-for-profit

### Challenges

- Outdated legacy CRM
- Fragmented data across systems
- No single source of truth
- Limited security and authentication
- System not scalable or customisable

### Solutions

- Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM
- Marketing and events management
- Enterprise-level security
- Managed support and advisory

### Outcomes

- Delivered early and under budget
- 62,000+ records managed
- 60% staff adoption
- 7,000 email subscribers

gathering to establish what they called the "gold standard", everything the organisation needed in an ideal world. From there, they worked collaboratively to define what was essential in the short term and what could be built over time.

"We asked the team: what's our minimum viable product?" Shrestha recalls. "We wanted to establish a continuous improvement cycle, not attempt a be-all-and-end-all solution in one shot."



Nexon's flexibility was key. Once the MVP scope was agreed, the team secured executive and board endorsement, creating clear roles and responsibilities for the implementation.

### Partnership built on clear boundaries

With the scope locked in, the implementation moved through structured sprints. Nexon managed the build and development while HNECC PHN focused on communication to the business, coordinating user acceptance testing and change management.

"The Nexon team was crucial," says Shrestha. "They managed requirements gathering, handled the admin side. If we needed security groups, for example, they'd step in and help. We just reviewed the system; we didn't touch the development side at all."

"That boundary was clear from the very start," Shrestha notes. "We would only start internal customisation once Nexon finished. They were pivotal to all the sprints, requirements gathering, showcasing, data migration and go-live."

For Gavin Leatham, General Manager of Business Solutions at Nexon, this mutual respect and collaboration was key. "When both sides are focused on outcomes rather than individual interests, you get better results. We were both interested in using our energies to deliver something that drove success to improve health outcomes, not sitting in meetings negotiating over small details."

### Gold standard: "The best IT project in 25 years"

The project was delivered ahead of schedule and well under budget.

"On time and under budget is very rare for an enterprise software project," says Rumianek. "It's a testament to Nexon's ability to deliver based on our expectations."

Within the first year, teams managed 62,000+ records in the new system. Of 160 staff, 96 are now active users. The marketing team coordinates communications to approximately 7,000 subscribers, manages around 60 events, and has created more than 200 automated customer journeys.

"The biggest benefit is having one source of truth," says Shrestha. "For the first time, every team is working from the same stakeholder picture, which multiplies efficiency and accuracy across departments. We're even seeing fear of missing out, with new teams wanting to get into the system."

When HNECC PHN undertook their ISO 27001 information security audit, the Dynamics implementation became a showcase for good practice. "The CRM is looked at as a gold standard system in our organisation. In the ISO audit, a lot of the examples I presented were around Dynamics and Nexon's approach, like dev, UAT, prod, change management," Shrestha explains.

For Rumianek, the project set a new benchmark. "In 25 years of running IT projects, this is the best I've ever been involved in."

### Sharing capability across the care network

With the foundation in place, HNECC PHN is already planning future phases. Microsoft Customer Voice surveys will replace the current third-party platform, and an enhanced events portal is in development.

The partnership continues. And for HNECC PHN, the platform that started as a CRM replacement is becoming the foundation for how they run their entire operation.

"The communication and professionalism from Nexon have



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#### Suzzwal Shrestha

Business Systems Improvement Coordinator/PM for the project at HNECC PHN

been exceptional," says Melissa Pollard, Executive Manager, Digital Health & Technology. "Everything was delivered within time, within budget, with genuine mutual understanding. I echo Jason's sentiment, this is the best IT project we've been involved in at the PHN."

### 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.

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