



CASE STUDY

NSW Department of Communities and Justice adopt new storage model with NetApp and Meridian IT

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Communities
& Justice





Formed in 2019, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) brought together and replaced the former departments of Family and Community Services (FACS) and Department of Justice (DoJ). The new look DCJ supports government services targeted on achieving safe, just, inclusive and resilient communities, helping them work together using a more unified and collaborative approach. Central to this method is a focus on prevention and early intervention, backed by faster responses, seamless operations, and ways to cut out duplicated effort.

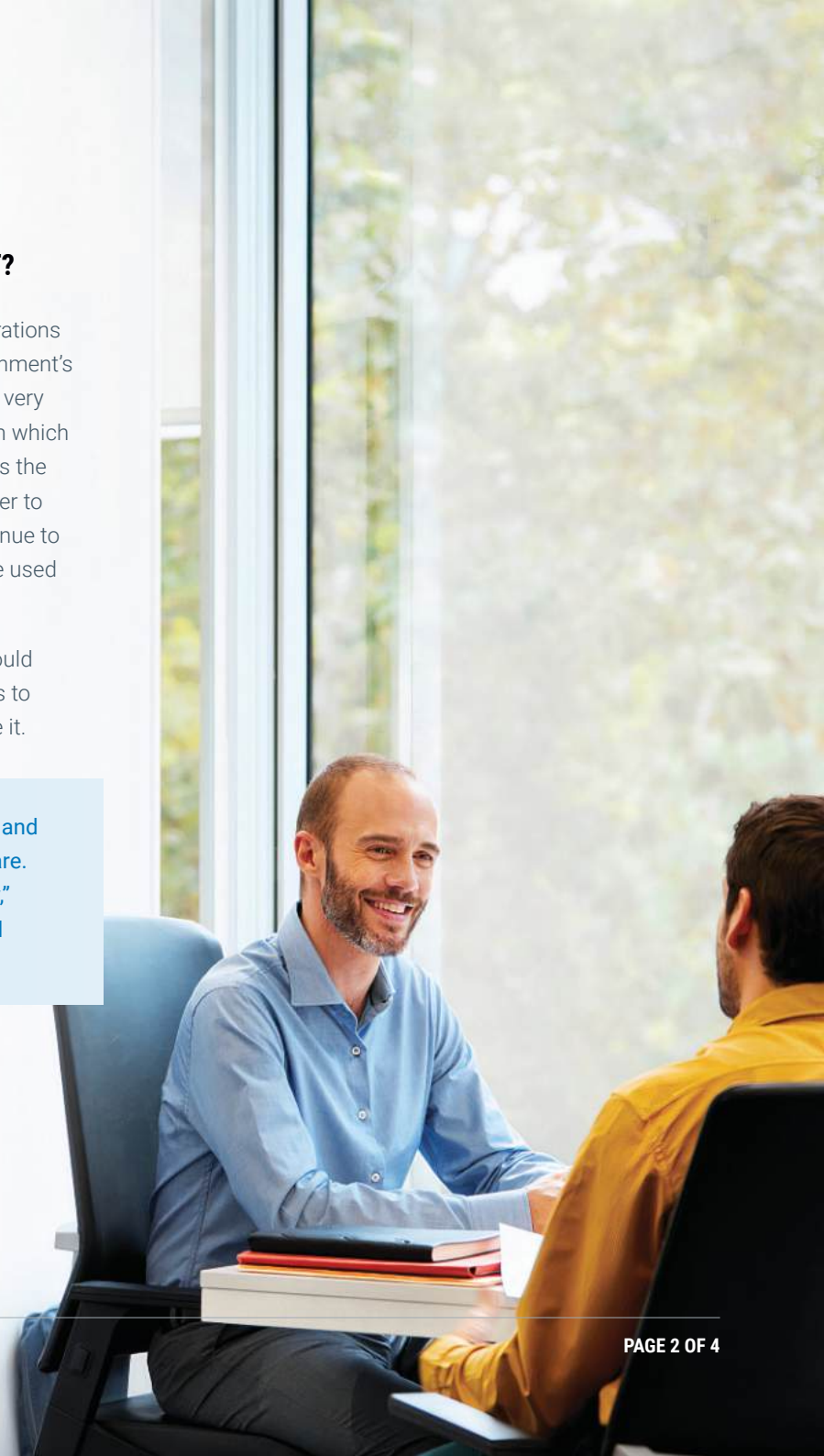
In 2016, the New South Wales government announced its commitment to move away from owning information and communications technology (ICT) assets. Instead, they favour buying in technology services from specialist third-party providers. Having already adopted a cloud ERP and CRM, this was an initiative that DCJ embraced wholeheartedly.

TO INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE, OR NOT?

Jin Tang, DCJ's ICT Specialist for Technology Operations and Information & Digital Services, says the Government's timing was perfect for the organisation. "We had a very large footprint in the networking shared file system which was supporting more than 20,000 of our people. As the system was rapidly aging, we had to decide whether to upgrade or buy brand new infrastructure and continue to run and manage it internally. Or pay for the storage used from elsewhere."

It wasn't a difficult decision. New infrastructure would cost DCJ well over \$1M. Plus the operational costs to house the storage, and employee costs to manage it.

“ We are responsible for looking after families and housing, and providing aged and disability care. Our job is to deliver results to our community,” says Tang. “Not compete with commoditised technology businesses”





TAKING STORAGE TO TENDER

DCJ went through the Government's selective tender process to choose their storage partner. "Our criteria were that vendors offer an SaaS (Storage as a Service) model from an NSW GovDC datacentre," says Tang, "and deliver the service we expected. They had to meet our SLAs, have a proven track record, and enable us to reduce costs."

"We chose four or five service providers to tender. We negotiated potential contracts with two of them. Our objectives were to achieve a TCO break-even within the first five years, and still have the right to downsize our consumption within that time - with a guarantee that our costs would go down to match. With the introduction of NDIS, the federal government took over disability care from the state government, so we needed to meet their mandate to downsize the FACS department."

While keen to tender for the provision and management of DCJ's storage infrastructure, NetApp had no desire to manage the data and customer relationship on a day-to-day basis. So they invited Meridian IT, who had a long-standing relationship with (the then) FACS, to partner with them to provide the required managed services.

NetApp and Meridian IT presented DCJ with an operational model to house all file shares (180 terabytes of them) in the Government data centre. NetApp retained ownership of the storage, and Meridian IT provided managed services, invoiced monthly.

CHOOSING NETAPP'S TAILORED SOLUTION

“ Unlike others who only offered a public cloud, NetApp was in the process of installing their Storage as a Service Solution inside our physical data centre (GovDC), which is directly next to us,” says Tang, “and for us to be the anchor tenant.”

"NetApp paved the way for us to adopt a consumption model. We moved from CAPEX budgeting to predictable OPEX. With service provisions within our own data centre, there are no security issues to worry about. And most importantly, because of its physical proximity, the storage service has a very fast response time. The internet connectivity performance issues that impact other organisations don't affect us."

FACS ICT negotiated with NetApp and Meridian IT to build a customised solution, and add specific functionality the DCJ needed.

TAKING AN INTELLIGENT APPROACH TO STORAGE

Tang says moving to the cloud and adopting a consumption-based storage model helped to drive staff awareness and efficiency.

“ Using our old infrastructure, we could approve a temporary spike in demand for data storage during a project. Our new user-pays model means we now take a far more rigorous approach to controlling and rationalising storage consumption - especially when it has a direct impact on our budget.”

Meridian IT's systems and SLAs support Tang's 'take-no-prisoners' approach to controlling data storage - and ensures DCJ keep to their budget. Granular reporting identifies where and how DCJ's storage is used and highlights overly large or duplicated files. This degree of visibility allows DCJ to take action to stay below their consumption threshold.

Tang is thrilled that Meridian IT provides DCJ with a total package. "As well as managing our NetApp storage, Meridian IT provides backup and anti-virus services and support. Their management licence service framework entitles us to one day of technical support a month, so we use that to supplement our internal ICT services - like version upgrades - where we don't have an internal SME."

DCJ is now one of the largest tenants on the NetApp/ Meridian IT SaaS offering.

The NetApp and Meridian IT SaaS model and support has consistently exceeded DCJ's SLAs. And not only do Meridian IT save DCJ money through a highly competitive cost model, they deliver more uptime and better service than an internally managed solution.

A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

Over the years, the relationship between DCJ, Meridian IT and NetApp has gone from strength to strength.

"DCJ have been on our NetApp NSW GovCloud Infrastructure as a Service platform for over four years now," says Matt Hurford, NetApp's VP Solutions Engineering and Field CTO NetApp. "It's been great to see them not only remain with us, but also grow with additional requirements over this time for themselves and the whole DCJ cluster.

“ We're proud to provide DCJ with a best of breed platform which they can rely on daily to serve their data requirements. With the NetApp NSW GovCloud (Community Cloud) via Meridian IT, we aim to provide our customers with an easy to use scalable and affordable compute and storage platform to give them a real alternative to public cloud where public cloud is not the right fit.”

Tang is deeply appreciative of the value of the partnership. "Meridian IT understands how we operate and knows our internal policies and processes. Their knowledge and approach to customer service, combined with NetApp's technology, is a perfect match.

"We have more than just a supplier and consumer relationship with Meridian IT. We are partners in this

together. I think we've learned from one another over the years, and they are always keen to exceed our expectations by looking for ways to do better. They make our life easier.

"DCJ and Meridian IT have a robust, honest and transparent relationship. They have earned my respect as a trusted advisor, and I depend and lean on them. It's always my pleasure to recommend them to others."



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