



Case Study: Centacare NENW

Transforming social service delivery in
regional NSW

Centacare NENW



Who are they?

Centacare New England North West (NENW) has supported individuals, families, and the community with social services since 2001. They have established a strong footprint in rural and remote communities within the New England and North West NSW region. With funding from both the Federal and New South Wales governments, Centacare NENW provides quality assistance services to those in need, including counselling and psychological support; family, workplace, and property mediation; education and skills building for children and adults; support for people with a disability; and support for people living with mental illness.

The challenge

Centacare NENW's data and applications were hosted on-premises in Tamworth on a number of servers that were reaching their end of life. The ageing infrastructure was causing a number of problems, which prompted a discussion about a journey to the cloud.

"We had a lot of problems with connectivity and delivering bandwidth to end users in our sites across the New England North West region, many of which are very remote. It was difficult for our staff to perform their roles and help the people most in need.

"With our on premise servers out of warranty, maintenance was becoming increasingly difficult. The risk of failure and downtime was high," said Alex Byrnes, ICT Manager, at Centacare.

"Limited access to cloud providers and expandable storage meant we were running manual backup processes. Failure would have resulted in hours if not days of downtime due to waiting for parts, restoring data and rebuilding systems," said Alex.



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A gateway to better IT

Centacare NENW, a long-time Telstra customer for connectivity, engaged Telstra to help them realise their cloud vision. Telstra delivered a Next IP network and Cloud Gateway solution for simple, secure connectivity to Centacare's AWS and Azure cloud environments all from one location.

"Telstra's Cloud Gateway is a fast, flexible and reliable product," Alex says.

"We now have scalable, high-bandwidth connectivity from our private network directly to our AWS and Azure cloud environments. We can spin up new environments when we need them and no longer have the same concerns about maintaining servers. New servers launch when they are needed and with no capital outlay. Most importantly, we can store and transmit our client data securely"

"I now have a lot more visibility into the network: I can see how we are using it and I'm able to allocate resources where they are needed. We have lowered our costs and risk factor, while also increasing our reliability and security, and we are now delivering better experiences to our clients."

Increasing the reach and impact of social services

Centacare NENW's journey to the cloud has transformed the way the organisation can deliver social services to remote clients.

"Our teams can connect to central resources in the cloud, which means staff can be more productive in all our sites across the region." Alex explains.

It helps us to do so much more. The flexibility of Telstra's cloud solutions enables us to stay on top of the latest technologies and experiment in more efficient ways to work."

During 2016's severe drought, Centacare started to loan iPads with 4G connectivity to farmers and have video conversations via the BlueJeans solution.

"The technology has had a real impact on how we deliver vital services to the community," says Mr Fergus Fitzsimons, CEO of Centacare NENW. "

Face-to-face contact with our clients can often require significant travel - four or five hours is not uncommon. Now we have the ability to use video conferencing for easier and more frequent contact. We can help more people in the same amount of time."

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Alex and the Telstra team also used the fast, flexible connectivity to Centacare's cloud services to deploy a telematics solution.

"We use Teletrac Navman to monitor vehicle locations, utilisation and provide cost-centre reporting. Frontline staff no longer fill out a manual logbook, and fuel expenses can be automatically reconciled without retaining dockets. It helps to minimise the administration burden on our staff as they cover the huge New England North West region," says Alex.

There is also an important staff safety function: the connected vehicles come with duress functionality for case workers.

"It's another way that we are using technology to keep our staff safe and improve the services we can provide to our community," Alex says.

Contact your Telstra account representative for more details.

Australia

1300 telstra (1300 835 787)
telstra.com.au

International

☎ Asia +852 2983 3388 Americas +1 877 835 7872 EMEA +44 20 7965 0000 Australia +61 2 8202 5134
✉ Sales tg_sales@team.telstra.com Channel Partners partners@team.telstra.com 🌐 telstraglobal.com