GCOMM

CONNECTED WORKFORCE, **A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH**

Social Futures partner with GCOMM for strategic technology solutions which enrich social inclusion and collaboration.

Traditional solutions
are no longer suitable for
a collaborative workplace

Eighteen months ago, before engaging with GCOMM, Social Futures had a small and limited IT infrastructure based out of 2 office locations, comprising of all servers and infrastructure in one, and critical business operations including finance, HR and marketing in another. There was a VPN tunnel between the two, and any staff based in other locations around Northern NSW accessed services through a remote access gateway.

Industry: Not for Profit / Social Justice
Employees: 300+
Geographic presence: Northern NSW
Website: socialfutures.org.au
GCOMM services: Secure Private Network, Cloud PBX, Cloud Backup, Professional Services
Customer since: 2016

Social Futures work to cultivate communities in regional Australia where people are equally valued and included, through supporting individuals and families to take control of their lives and live well.

> " *"It was very simple, basic and the organisation was just about to expand very quickly so there was no way the system was going to cope,"* Reid Hutcheson, IT Manager at Social Futures

CHALLENGES

- Social Futures' rigid IT infrastructure did not support scalability

- Staff could not access applications and data needed to work in a timely manner

- People were bound to a desk because that was the only way to access company data

The network had no standardisation - some staff had to contend with poor 4G, and others ADSL connections, and compete with other users for bandwidth to access remote applications needed to perform their work. Lack of central management of the corporate network meant that troubleshooting and isolating issues was near impossible, causing even more frustration to staff and IT. Due to the network configuration, key staff including management and strategy teams needed to work together in a single location to collaborate and access the critical data they needed to direct the organisation.

A solution to empower social inclusion and team collaboration

After discussing the situation with GCOMM's Solutions Experts and Consultants, Social Futures' objectives were to architect an enterprise-grade secure private network, to connect all their locations and staff to improve the way they access systems, the ability to collaborate and work together more effectively. "The organisation is built on social inclusion and communication so having that ability across the whole organisation, to pull them all together was a really big focus," says Hutcheson. The IT department faced a daily struggle to simply provide support to the organisation, the GCOMM solution aimed to drastically simplify the environment to make administration and support easily manageable. Steve Cannard, Solutions Consultant, comments that GCOMM needed to build a foundation for the growth of the company that was coming, fast.

Social Futures were given a short time frame of only a few months to connect all existing locations as well as find additional office space, and setup functioning branches. GCOMM laid out a roadmap and delivery plan to meet these special requirements. "That short timeframe to do the solution plan, design, and get the services in place was fantastic," says Hutcheson. Within 4 months, 80% of the sites had premium Fibre or Wireless technologies deployed to create a centralised, secure private network, with Cloud PBX and Cloud Backup services operational.

The GCOMM Cloud PBX has been a differentiating factor for Social Futures in their communications strategy. *"Being able to get the communication simple and easy, not having to manage multiple different phone systems from different providers and also mobiles. Getting consolidation of all of that was a really important factor,"* says Hutcheson.

In addition to the original network rollout, Social Futures have engaged GCOMM in an O365 migration and support solution. Today, 95% of workstations are managed centrally through Group Policy, enabling simple and fast workstation configuration and support to all users.

Social Futures and GCOMM: a strategic partnership

The GCOMM solution has been in place for over a year now and it's given Social Futures' IT department the ability to support and manage their devices and users far more easily across every location. Staff have been able to make better use of the systems and applications investments available to them.

Since deployment, 75% of staff have been migrated off the hindering remote desktop solution which has drastically improved user experience and staff efficiency. Social Futures has seen an 83% reduction in support calls related to remote access, as staff no longer need to compete for bandwidth to access apps and data.

"We had already gone out to a couple of other providers, namely Telstra and Optus... GCOMM came in a lot cheaper."

Having the flexibility for staff to move around the office locations or work remotely was a critical goal for the organisation. Executive management are now able to move around the different locations, and stay on the network, never missing a beat. The key strategic staff have been able to spread out to accommodate essential work-life balance, and continue to collaborate seamlessly. "That has been a big benefit, being able to get the staff to collaborate a lot more by being on the same network has been a big win for us," says Hutcheson. Social Futures' staff run many programs and services across Northern NSW, they now have the ability to move around, coordinate and collaborate to more effectively service their communities.

The region which Social Futures operates in has restricted availability of providers with reach to those locations. Using GCOMM's extended reach and partnerships with the largest carriers in Australia as well as boutique providers meant that we could craft a unique, customised solution that other service providers simply cannot.

Focused on client outcomes, GCOMM helped Social Futures to meet their tight deadlines and coordinate with multiple providers and contractors to deliver the solution when they needed it. As a not-for-profit organisation, cost was also an important factor in decision making for their technology provider.

After taking the time to understand the priorities and requirements, GCOMM crafted a solution designed for optimal value to the organisation and its clients. "We had already gone out to a couple of other providers, namely Telstra and Optus... GCOMM came in a lot cheaper," says Hutcheson.

As a strategic partner, we engage with Social Futures to look at their entire IT environment, their organisational goals, and provide value-based solution recommendations. Our consultants could see the frustration with existing communications and data backup solutions, and worked on a solution to suit their needs.

> " *"It's been great having conversations with Steve. The previous solution we had – that provider was very much holding onto those systems and making it very difficult to get any control and knowledge about what was going on with our backup, so with Steve (we) very quickly had a lot of information about the product and what we could do with it, it was really beneficial,"* says Hutcheson.

Our Solutions Consultants lay out a set of recommendations to further improve the environment based on the extensive solutions range we offer. We have a roadmap available for future technology implementations based on the organisational strategy.

The highlight of the GCOMM experience for Social Futures, and a fundamental focus of our business, has been unmatched technical and consultative support. "The response time and the support we get whenever we put a request through, the attention to detail from the engineers especially from the support side has been fantastic. That has been a big differentiator for us because previously with different ISPs it has been really slow and hard (to get the support) level and the attention we need as an organisation," says Hutcheson.

GCOMM is a multi-award winning Australian technology company. Our purpose is to provide businesses with strategic consulting to empower them to thrive in tomorrow's digital world. It is through ongoing innovation that we have continued to provide our clients with best-of-breed technology solutions. We combine our strong network foundation, engineering capabilities and partnerships with leading technology vendors to enable our customers to transform their business.

Get in touch today to speak with a GCOMM Solutions Consultant about your business objectives.

Need help?

Call us on **1300 221 115** or contact your **GCOMM Account Manager.**

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