

CASE STUDY / **VENUESLIVE NSW**

VenuesLive NSW creates unified IT infrastructure with Ricoh

VenuesLive is a leading provider of management and event hospitality services to venues across Australia. In New South Wales its subsidiary company, VenuesLive NSW, operates Stadium Australia in Sydney and Bankwest Stadium in Parramatta. The company also provides catering services for an additional five venues in the state.



The challenge

While the VenuesLive IT team had full management and control of the technology infrastructures at both Stadium Australia and Bankwest Stadium, this control didn't extend to the other five facilities in which the company operates.

"Essentially, each of those venues operated almost in isolation," says Daniel Farrar, General Manager, Digital and Technology at VenuesLive

NSW. "To connect them to our core datacentres located at the two primary venues, we had to rely on a mix of virtual private networks and other connectivity components."

Farrar says if an issue occurred, it wasn't always clear what had gone wrong and what needed to be done to fix it. In many cases the IT team had little choice but to travel to the site to isolate and resolve the problems.

Each venue also had a bespoke configuration with some parts operated by the venue and some by VenuesLive NSW. This made it difficult to have a centralised and standardised approach to management. Also, updates such as software upgrades and security patches could not be easily rolled out when required.

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The solution

Working with long-term managed services partner Ricoh IT Services, VenuesLive NSW mapped out a plan for a new wide-area networking infrastructure that would connect the company’s central Nutanix servers with each of the remote venues.

Ricoh recommended a software-defined WAN architecture built on Cisco Meraki networking equipment. Once the project was fully defined and a business case approved, deployment began in mid-2019 and was completed across all venues by mid-2020.

The company’s three main applications, Task Retail Point of

Sale system, Time Target rostering platform, and UBS Venue and Event Management system run on the Nutanix servers at both Stadium Australia and Bankwest Stadium and are accessed as required at each of the other venues via the SD-WAN. A Microsoft Office 365 platform is also accessed by staff over the network along with a number of other business applications.

The benefits

With the new infrastructure now fully operational, the VenuesLive NSW IT team has noticed some significant benefits.

“We can now view and manage our entire IT infrastructure from a single pane of glass,” says Farrar. “We are able to view the status of every device on the network which

streamlines our management and makes it much easier to respond to any issues that might arise.”

The team can also push changes out from a central location and proactively manage the performance of the environment, which is crucial during large events.

Farrar says Ricoh added significant value during the project. Their vendor-agnostic approach to advice and guidance meant VenuesLive NSW was adopting the technologies that were the best fit for their requirements, and he estimates the new infrastructure has reduced network-related IT operational costs by around 20 percent.

“Because Ricoh has been working with us for an extended period, they have developed a thorough understanding of the challenges we face. This means they are well placed to recommend the best solution rather than pushing equipment from a particular vendor.”

Farrar says Ricoh continues to provide guidance and support to the company, scaling this up and down as each event is staged. He points to the fact that the Ricoh managed services team is relatively small which makes it very agile and able to react quickly when required.

“I am confident Ricoh will continue to be a valuable partner and work with us on future projects,” he says.

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