

Cbus embraces SD-WAN to power their digital transformation

Client profile

Cbus is Australia's leading industry superannuation fund for the building, construction and allied industries, currently managing over AUD 56 billion in funds for more than 750,000 members. Cbus is a significant investor in the Australian economy, growing their investment interests in both infrastructure and property assets in Australia and overseas.

Which technologies?

- SD-WAN
- Secure Private Cloud
- DDoS Protection Services
- IP Transit Services

Which services?

- Networking Technology
- Infrastructure Consulting Services
- Managed SD-WAN Services
- Security Technology



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We have a lot of our capability in the cloud. Our connectivity is ultra-important because all of our infrastructure, the things our people are actually using, exists outside the perimeter of our network.

Rob Pickering, Chief Technology and Digital Officer, Cbus

Summary

Cbus has undertaken a multi-year transformation program putting in place the technology platforms they need to give themselves the flexibility and responsiveness to meet their member's evolving customer service expectations. Underpinning this digital capability is a secure, private SD-WAN environment designed, deployed and managed with the help of NTT to connect their offices and remote and mobile workforce to the increasing number of cloud resources in use. The SD-WAN ensures they have the high-performance, resilient and secure networking infrastructure needed to meet member expectations and deliver better outcomes for their members. The additional visibility, control and flexibility supports their strategy to move away from a wholesale outsourcing model and develop their own systems, becoming more responsive and self-reliant, adopting a smart sourcing approach to consolidate and deepen engagements with key service providers.

Business need

Creating a network to support a seamless customer experience

In 2018, Cbus embarked on a two-year transformation program to achieve their strategy of providing great member and employee experiences while remaining competitive in a digital world. Leveraging data and technology was integral to the vision of meeting the expectations of members across all age groups and demographics. That included moving away from a wholesale outsourced model, including their reliance on using systems provided by their administrator. Cbus was looking to adopt a more strategic, and targeted smart sourcing approach, deploying significant cloud-based services, and consolidating and deepening the relationships they had with their key service providers. They also planned to bring more of their people, processes and technology in-house as part of building their own domain and technical expertise in order to create a differentiated member experience. That strategy included delivering great employee experience as a key enabler for providing great member services.

“In building the necessary capability and infrastructure to provide highly personalized interactions with our members, one of the first things we focused on was to make sure that the underlying core infrastructure supporting that ongoing transformation was stable secure, reliable, scalable and supportable,” said Rob Pickering, Chief Technology and Digital Officer at Cbus.

This capability would be tested with the surge in member interactions and usage during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Federal Government announced their early release of the super scheme, allowing affected individuals to access up to AUD 10,000 of their superannuation. This also happened while most of Cbus’ employees were working remotely in response to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Solution

Leveraging the SD-WAN to ensure Cbus stays connected

Over a six-month project, Cbus and NTT deployed a fully encrypted private network based on SD-WAN technology to connect all of their offices across Australia. The network utilizes NTT’s IP Transit Services and has multiple diverse failover paths, including 4G, MPLS and dark fiber, to ensure the network’s availability and reliability. The network has been deployed to support connectivity and access to all core services via Cbus’ two data centers, including staff working remotely or connecting via mobile services.

To meet both Cbus’ own stringent requirements as well as their information security obligations as an APRA-regulated financial services entity, 100% of application flows are encrypted all the time, and there is no unencrypted traffic transported across their WAN. Network security is also bolstered by our DDoS Protection Services, ensuring continuous network availability. With SD-WAN, they have zero touch provisioning for any new devices connected to the network, with configurations and policies automatically propagated with centrally defined and managed carriage return and standards.

They utilize our Secure Private Cloud platform to host their SD-WAN management dashboard, giving them complete visibility of the traffic flows and performance of the network. That has enabled them to identify bottlenecks and chokepoints in the network, peak usage periods, and the throughput and performance required for specific services and applications, which are particularly key for its cloud-based infrastructure.

“We have transitioned really successfully for remote working. People picked up their laptops, went home and everything just worked. Our people have been able to work at their full capacity remotely, even doing things like high-volume, secure video calls, powered by our private network,” commented Pickering.

Outcomes

Delivering today and setting the path for tomorrow

Cbus now has the visibility and responsiveness needed to ensure availability and increase capacity as needed of any of the dedicated connections to both Azure or AWS. They can instantly see the impact of any newly deployed services or applications on the network, allowing them to take any necessary steps to improve performance.

There is logical separation on the same physical links and devices, which has allowed them to extend guest wireless connectivity, without compromising existing encryption and security measures. That also means other logical network layers could be added in the future.

Ultimately, connectivity for Cbus has become a reliable, always available utility service for the infrastructure, services and applications accessed daily by members, employers and Cbus staff. The SD-WAN solution is delivering on the promise of their Accelerate transformation program to create a distinct Cbus-owned experience.

“Our people haven’t been constrained in their ability to deliver to our members – at a time when it has never been more important for us to be available to them. We’ve got massive fluctuations in the equity markets, the Federal Government’s early access to super scheme, and a pandemic situation, but we haven’t had an impact on our ability to deliver to our members,” concluded Pickering.

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