

High bandwidth cloud services to the not-for-profit community services sector

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited, known as Uniting Vic.Tas, has been formed by integrating twenty-five entities into a single organisation. Since its creation in 2017, Uniting has partnered with VERNet to build a Wide Area Network (WAN) core which will ultimately interconnect 250 or more sites. Seamless, high speed connections into Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services enabled Uniting to deploy an enterprise platform in just four weeks, at scale, to support their 7000-strong workforce.

Across 250 offices and in excess of 500 residential units, Uniting Vic.Tas provides 770 programs and services that people rely on every day. Prior to the merger, these services were delivered over fifteen disparate networks, hindering Uniting's precursor entities' ability to service all sites equitably. VERNet's cost effective, high bandwidth capacity allows Uniting to consolidate their services into the cloud, enabling them to address inequity of service across sites while also benefiting from significant economies of scale. Over the next three years Uniting will migrate in excess of 250 sites to the new network, ensuring the organisation's future capability to undertake life-changing work in the rapidly transforming community services sector.



Our high-speed network enabled by VERNet allows 'at desk' provisioning of PCs and laptops for new starters. Along with Microsoft Autopilot and Intune, it has reduced a 10 hour process to 30 minutes. With almost 1000 machines per annum upgraded, managed or re-provisioned, this is a significant efficiency. It allows more time to be spent supporting staff in their critical work, deploying productivity tools, and further modernising our ICT platforms.

Chris Pivec
Chief Information Officer
Uniting Vic.Tas Ltd

Uniting Vic.Tas works across the full spectrum of community services, intervening early to help people avoid crisis, as well as supporting those who live life on the margins. Their key community services include:

- Aged and carer services
- Alcohol and other drug services
- Business and social enterprise
- Child, youth and family services
- Disability services
- Early learning services
- Employment services
- Mental health services
- Resilient communities services

Challenges

Ageing infrastructure within fifteen disparate networks created inequity of service between sites and significant issues with collaboration post-merger. With the sector shifting towards electronic platforms, Uniting needed to centralise services and adopt an enterprise delivery model. Twenty-five organisations with a total of 7,000 staff and volunteers needed to be integrated quickly and with minimal disruption.

With multiple active directories, email systems, telephone systems, corporate and client applications, the move to a centralised approach is not without its challenges. It is paramount that services are underpinned by a reliable high-performing core network supporting improvements to regional services.

Solution

VERNet custom designed a Uniting Private Network (VPLS) core to interconnect Uniting corporate sites to provide access to high speed connections into the Internet, Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services.

Benefits

VERNet's services have enabled Uniting to smoothly transition to an enterprise business platform. With operations centralised, economies of scale are driving significant savings that can now be reinvested in the provision of modern, sustainable ICT. Uniting has built a cloud service which will gradually replace the local services in all Uniting sites over the next three years. Once all sites are connected, the VERNet core network will support extensive use of video-conferencing, collaboration applications such as Microsoft Teams, and Office 365. Uniting is now significantly ahead of its peers and the industry in terms of both a complete Cloud-first adoption strategy and in maximising its utilisation of the Microsoft SaaS productivity stack.

ABOUT UNITING VIC.TAS: *Uniting works alongside people of all ages in local communities across Victoria and Tasmania. Uniting's services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania. See more information by visiting www.vt.uniting.org*

ABOUT VERNET PTY LTD: *VERNet designs, builds, operates and manages a network that enables educators, researchers, students, and health professionals to exchange ideas and communicate faster. VERNet is the preferred supplier of high bandwidth connectivity to the research and education sector in Victoria providing customers leading edge technology and services for the best value for money. See more information by visiting www.vernet.com.au*