

ProCurve Networking by HP
Blue Care



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Paul Parkyn
CIO, Blue Care

Abstract

Blue Care is one of Australia's leading providers of community and aged care services. The not-for-profit organisation operates more than 260 centres across Queensland, and its employees and volunteers travel more than 31million kilometres each year.

Until three years ago, Blue Care used a mixed bag of network equipment that was provided by a range of different vendors. The distances that had to be travelled to configure and replace devices contributed to increasing IT costs.

Blue Care identified that it needed reliable network devices across all its LANs, and it had to be able to manage every device simultaneously from the Head Office in Brisbane using the one comprehensive software console. After comparing what each vendor had to offer, Blue Care selected a ProCurve Networking by HP solution.

Blue Care is now reaping the networking benefits of this new approach, including improvements in reliability and network management. In turn, improved networking is helping the organisation to control costs, boost IT user satisfaction and innovate more broadly across the entire IT function. Today, the organisation is growing steadily whilst containing costs.

Highlights

Within each of Blue Care's 260 facilities, there is local area network (LAN) that's connected to the organisation's wide area network (WAN). At the smaller sites, each of the LANs comprise four or five networking devices. The largest LANs use up to 20 devices.

Until recently, Blue Care used a mixed bag of network equipment that was

provided by a range of different vendors. This diversity, as well as quality issues with some of the devices, was having a direct impact on network service and the cost of IT. "It was an unreliable, unpredictable environment," said Paul Parkyn, CIO, Blue Care.

In particular, managing such a diverse range of devices was consuming far too much time, and mastering them took even longer. "We had to go through a different process for each product, each model, and vendor. Even at the command line it was not possible to configure them all in the same way instantly," said Mr Parkyn. "Also, each product tends to have its own idiosyncrasies, and it's only through time that an organisation is able to build knowledge of how they all behave."

The reliability of the network environment was another significant issue for Blue Care. "I guess many people might say if a switch goes down, it's not a big deal. Well for Blue Care, it was," said Mr Parkyn. "Let's say you lose a core switch in a service centre first thing in the morning. The result would be lost productivity and possible delays in providing services to our clients."

This sort of experience would be a concern for almost any organisation, but Blue Care's facilities are spread across Queensland - sometimes in quite remote areas - which multiplied the labour and travel costs involved with replacing or manually configuring devices. The combined affect of having 260 quite different LANs spread over Australia's second largest state was unnecessary increases in IT expenditure.

Customer at a Glance

Blue Care is one of Australia's leading providers of community and aged care services. The not-for-profit organisation operates more than 260 sites across Queensland, including nursing homes, community care centres, regional offices and respite centres for the frail aged and people living with their disabilities, their families and carers. Due to the number of facilities that Blue Care must connect to its data centre in Brisbane, Blue Care relies on one of the largest secure WANs in Queensland. Likewise, Blue Care's employees and volunteers travel more than 31 million kilometres each year because of the vast territory that this organisation serves.



The ProCurve Networking by HP solution

In response to this situation, Blue Care decided to bring IT services back in-house while adopting a new model of IT and network management.

Under the new management model, Blue Care measures its IT performance and user satisfaction regularly. The organisation requires the IT Governance Committee to sign off on a rigorous business case before each new investment in IT. No product is selected until Blue Care has documented its needs and formally compared all of its options.

With these systems in place, Blue Care embarked on the significant task of documenting its business needs and rebuilding its IT and network infrastructure. In particular, the organisation identified that it needed reliable network devices across all its LANs, and it had to be able to manage every device simultaneously from the Head Office in Brisbane using the one comprehensive software console.

After comparing what each vendor had to offer, Blue Care found it easy to select ProCurve Networking by HP equipment for this upgrade. The reliability of the ProCurve devices stood out, along with the fact that ProCurve provides its industry-leading life-time warranty as standard. Meanwhile, ProCurve Network Manager Plus provides a common management interface for all ProCurve networking devices.

Blue Care purchased the ProCurve equipment through Corporate Express, while training was provided directly by HP. The massive state-wide roll-out was completely glitch-free. "For each of the HP ProCurve switches that were installed, there were no issues, there were no problems, there were no failures at all," said Mr Parkyn.

Outcomes

Today, every Blue Care site in the state uses a LAN that is built from ProCurve networking equipment. The state-wide WAN links each of these LANs back to the Head-Office in Brisbane. From there, the IT department manages every device simultaneously.

Blue Care is now reaping the networking benefits of this new approach, including improvements to reliability and network management. In turn, improved networking is helping the organisation to control costs, boost IT user satisfaction and innovate more broadly across the entire IT function.

"I have to say that of all the devices that we installed, we haven't had to utilise the HP lifetime warranty," said Mr Parkyn. "We haven't had a single failure, which is pretty good."

Business Results

- Zero device failure rate
- IT budget now fixed despite organisation growth
- Reliable foundation for server-based computing

What makes it work

Hardware

- HP ProCurve Core Switch 5308
- HP ProCurve Core Switch 5304
- HP ProCurve Core Switch 5372
- HP ProCurve Edge Switch 2626
- HP ProCurve Edge Switch 2650

Software, Services & Support

- Lifetime product warranty on most products*
- Software updates, telephone and email technical support**
- Comprehensive network design and configuration services**

Further information on ProCurve networking solutions and products is available at www.procurve.com.

*For as long as you own the product, with next-business-day advance replacement (available in most countries). For details, refer to the ProCurve Software License, Warranty and Support booklet at <http://www.hp.com/rnd/support/warranty/index.htm>. The ProCurve Routing Switch 9300m, ProCurve Routing Switch 9408sl, ProCurve Switch 8100fl and ProCurve Secure Access 745wl have a one-year warranty with extensions available.

**For the most up-to-date information, go to www.procurve.com.

This reliability means that Blue Care is no longer incurring travel and accommodation costs in order to replace devices. Likewise, the organisation has eliminated all travel associated with network configuration, thanks to ProCurve Manager Plus. "We're able to monitor and manage all the network switches from Blue Care head office," said Mr Parkyn. "It's a single point of control and it means that the only time that we actually require on-site intervention is if a new device is being installed."

Before these changes, Blue Care's IT costs were increasing each year. Today, the organisation is growing steadily through smarter use of IT investments.

As part of its new IT management processes, Blue Care measures user satisfaction. The organisation logs unsolicited, voluntary feedback and it surveys a random sample of users when they call the help desk for support. Since Blue Care introduced its new approach to IT - including the roll-out of ProCurve equipment and management software - customer satisfaction has increased significantly, "People are saying that the whole network is working well for them," said Mr Parkyn.

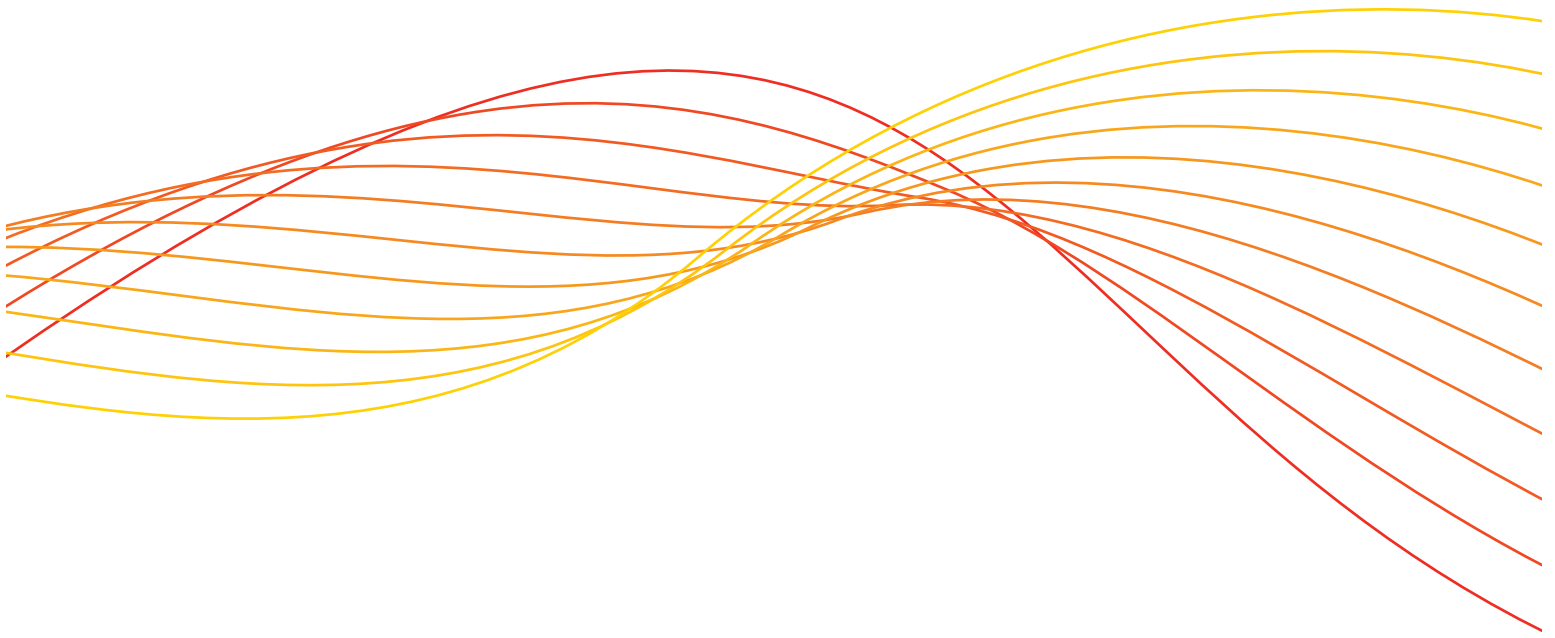
Finally, the new reliable network has enabled Blue Care to transform how it provides other IT services. The company has invested in HP blade server and storage area network technology for its data centre in Brisbane and Windows thin client devices for its facilities. With a reliable network to connect these terminals back to the data centre, Blue Care is now able to centralise its management of applications and services, providing additional cost savings and reliability gains.

"I have to say that the HP experience has been very good. As we start consolidating the data and applications and delivering many of these applications through a server-based computing model, users are positive about their experience, especially in contrast to what they had previously," said Mr Parkyn. "It's about continuous improvement, but you can't achieve that if you don't have reliable infrastructure. The ProCurve equipment is the vital core of that infrastructure, and with it we've been able to start delivering effective IT service to the organisation."

ProCurve Networking by HP

The ProCurve Networking business unit of HP is a supplier of enterprise networking solutions comprising wired and wireless networking products, services and solutions - including WAN routers, Ethernet switches, routing switches, wireless access points and network management applications - which allow customers to build networks based on open standards that meet current and future needs for security, performance and reliability.

The ProCurve Networking Adaptive EDGE Architecture™ is a unique design strategy that creates a secure, mobile, multi-service network by placing intelligence at the edge - where users connect and policies are enforced. This innovative approach creates a dynamic network infrastructure designed to keep up with advancing technology and user needs while protecting business investments.



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