



# FUTURE-PROOFING HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PREPARING FOR GREATER COMPLEXITY

# FUTURE-PROOFING HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

## PREPARING FOR GREATER COMPLEXITY

Health and community services providers in Australia will need to streamline the way they operate to remain competitive during this current period of industry upheaval.

Individualised funding models such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will increase competition between care providers. An ageing population and the merging of the aged care, disability and community housing sectors will also make it more complicated to offer these services.

These are all compelling reasons for businesses to streamline the way they operate, but will their back-office systems hold them back? Systems for billing, human resources, payroll, regulatory reporting, client management and other functions need to work together in order to automate tasks and simplify planning.

This paper outlines how health and community services providers can improve their back-office systems to save time and money.

### Centralise systems

Not only is the number of health and community services patients in Australia expected to increase as the population ages, but managing them will become more complex.

The Australian disability and aged care services sectors is now structuring under two funding models: consumer directed care (CDC) and the NDIS. Under these regimes, patients can move between aged care and disability service providers, potentially complicating the payment and scheduling of services.

Reducing this complexity will be a challenge for providers that use separate systems to manage billing, service provision and other tasks. Their goal should be to combine these functions, so that staff members can perform numerous jobs – from managing patient records to processing insurance claims – via a single interface.

Another question to ask is whether data is stored in a single repository or separately

at multiple locations. For example, not-for-profit community and health services organisation Carinity previously had separate systems at 27 Queensland sites. Because the data at each site was inconsistent, the organisation could not rely on the resulting reports. Consolidating the data solved this problem.

The challenge is how to bring all this data together. The first step is to move to a single enterprise system that combines various functions. A second step is to implement an electronic content management (ECM) system, which automatically stores important documents in the right place. For example a manager preparing a business case for a new disability service can then find all the files relating to their proposal in one place. An ECM system also stops people without appropriate credentials from opening files.

Routine tasks such as sending business plans or contracts back and forth for approval can be sped up using a business process automation system. It can also make sure the correct versions of documents are sent, as well as send reminders to ensure the correct people approve them.

To achieve all this, systems used for ECM, automation, payroll, business planning and other administrative tasks must all work together.

### Combine data

A long-term business plan should be based on a wide range of data. What is it costing to deliver services and would it be better to outsource them? What does it cost to have a doctor perform procedures in a hospital? How will wages, the cost of facilities and other factors affect business plans?

Health and community services providers might store this data, but might not be able to easily combine it to see a big picture of the business. This task might be even more difficult after a company merger. A unified back-office suite can display all this data in a single interface.



For example, community housing providers might have data about vacant properties, tenants, rental arrears, property maintenance, inspections and property acquisitions. Rather than creating separate monthly reports, they should be able to see at a glance how each area is performing.

How easy is it to compare the performance of different departments? Is it possible to monitor an increase in the number of certain types of patients in a local area, or whether revenue per patient is going up or down?

One way to do this is to create spreadsheets, but as the volume of data increases, this will become more time-consuming. A business intelligence system provides a single screen, sometimes referred to as a dashboard, where managers can see all this.

The overall goal should be to gain a clearer picture of the entire business, without adding more administrative work.

## Empower workers

As competition for patients increases, health and community services providers are being told to improve their focus on the customer. But what does that mean in practice?

Providing information to front-line workers could help them provide better services. A social housing worker can respond faster to clients needing emergency accommodation if they can use a tablet device to find vacant houses or see the tenant's records on a tablet or smartphone.

Seamless mobile access to data can also save time in other ways. For example, field workers can electronically submit timesheets using their smartphone or tablet device, removing the need to return to the office or have admin staff do it for them. If a community support worker can check participant care plans on a tablet device, they might have more confidence negotiating a price during a meeting with a supplier.

Flexible working arrangements should be another consideration. The number of employees working from home might change in the future, and helping them work remotely may improve productivity.

The benefits of mobile working should be weighed against the potential security, training and support costs. Workers might be slowed down by having to connect to virtual private networks or load terminal services programs. Without user-friendly menus that suit small touchscreens, mobile working could cause headaches.

## Reduce distractions

Many of the scenarios in this paper are easier to achieve using a cloud-based enterprise solution. For example, a business with dozens of branches doesn't need to own

and manage servers and software at each location if it uses a cloud solution. This is because information from each branch is stored centrally, making it easier to centralise processes, run reports and consolidate information.

It might be also easier for field workers to use their laptops, tablets and smartphones if they have a cloud-based back-office solution. Some cloud-based user interfaces are better suited to mobile devices, and software licensing rules might be simpler.

Moving to the cloud can help businesses avoid outages or slow response times that can occur when servers can't cope with extra demand. This is because cloud services can be designed so that more computing power is automatically available when it's needed. This extra capacity can also accommodate new users as the business grows.

A cloud-based back-office solution may also be easier to update when new features are available, allowing businesses to adjust to changing regulations. Look for back-office solutions that include configuration options and don't require additional programming – software updates don't always work with programmers' modifications.

Not all cloud services are alike. One option is to have a managed service provider host a third party's software in the cloud for you. Depending on their level of expertise and the level of support they provide, this can be a good way to offload the responsibility of owning and running technology infrastructure.

Another approach is to engage a software as-a-service (SaaS) provider that both develops the back-office solution and manages the hosting. In theory, this should mean the solution, hosting and support are tightly integrated to ensure a smooth user experience. There is no need for SaaS users to own and manage the infrastructure either.

Security, support and scalability differ between cloud providers, and these factors should be examined closely. Ask if the provider stores each customer's data separately and whether they have earned local security certification, or if they rely only on their hosting providers' security credentials.

## A roadmap for the future

The challenges facing Australian health and community services providers will continue to grow in scale and complexity. Health providers should not only be thinking strategically about their future, but about how they will put changes into action.

A unified, cloud-based enterprise system can enable organisations to adapt for these changes by consolidating fragmented data, reducing administrative responsibilities and helping workers be more productive.



## Police-Citizens Youth Clubs Queensland

By using TechnologyOne's OneCommunity back-office system delivered via the cloud, the Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) Queensland saved \$500,000 in employee and infrastructure costs.

The organisation previously had 54 disconnected branches in metropolitan and regional areas. To process payrolls, administrators at PCYC headquarters had to first collate data from each location. They were able to eliminate this laborious step by centralising the data.

Because the data is now stored in the cloud, employees can save time by using TechnologyOne's Ci Anywhere solution to access systems with their smartphone or tablet device.

## Using TechnologyOne to streamline services

TechnologyOne has developed back-office solutions for Australian health and community services providers for more than 25 years. Our OneAgedCare, OneHealth, OneCommunity and OneHousing solutions centralise data and applications so that administration can be streamlined. They also make it easier to comply with the NDIS, CDC and other local regulations.

Our solutions provide a single interface to simplify the management of procurement, finances, employees, facilities and assets, fundraising, stakeholders, regulatory reporting and the like. The ability to automate day to day tasks is built in.

Business can also work more flexibly and efficiently by using TechnologyOne's Ci Anywhere, a cloud solution that makes our back-office features available on tablet devices and smartphones. Unlike hosted software not designed for the cloud, Ci Anywhere has easy-to-use menus, so there isn't a steep learning curve. It works seamlessly with Microsoft Office 365 too, allowing employees to continue using familiar applications to edit and collaborate on documents.

Importantly, our users receive two major updates to our solutions every year – sometimes with more than 100 new features. These updates take into account feedback from in excess of 150 health and community services providers around Australia that use our products.

We understand that the health and community services sector is changing and are continually improving our solutions to help businesses be more competitive.

[Learn more](#)

[TechnologyOneCorp.com](https://www.technologyonecorp.com)

### About TechnologyOne

*TechnologyOne is Australia's largest enterprise software company, with offices across six countries. We create solutions that transform business and make life simple for our customers. We do this by providing powerful, deeply integrated enterprise software that is incredibly easy to use. Over 1000 leading corporations, government departments and statutory authorities are powered by our software.*  
<https://www.technologyonecorp.com>

TECHNOLOGYONECORP.COM

AUSTRALIA | NEW ZEALAND  
SOUTH PACIFIC | ASIA | UNITED KINGDOM

 **technologyone**  
Transforming business, making life simple