

Status Report

Recommendation 81 from Budget Estimates 2019-20 Report

Remediation of Outmoded Technology



Introduction

Document Purpose

This document presents the status report of the various remediation works of outmoded technology in sites operated by the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and Canberra Health Services (CHS). This report has been developed from a condition assessment that was conducted of all analogue infrastructure across thirty-four sites including the Canberra Hospital and provides a summary analysis.

Background

At ACTHD's appearance at the 2019-20 Budget Estimates Hearings on 20 June 2019, the Select Committee on Estimates 2019-2020 discussed the use of technology in the health sector, in particular fax machines, which led to Recommendation 81:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure Canberra Health Services and ACT Health develop a plan to transition away from the use of outmoded technology such as fax machines and that, by the last sitting day in 2019, the Minister for Health report to the Legislative Assembly on the progress of the transition. In undertaking this transition Canberra Health Services and ACT Health should consult with other medical professionals and address any privacy implications.

The Digital Solutions Division (DSD) met with representatives of CHS to discuss the approach to resolving the matters discussed in the *Report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2019-20 on the Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2019-2020*, and in other Capital Works submissions tabled over the previous year. The discussion highlighted the need to remediate all analogue communications technology that included, but were not limited to, fax machines and analogue telephone lines. An additional driver (i.e. discontinuation of analogue services by Telstra) for these remediation works was identified and highlighted in the Divisional Risk Registers.

At this meeting, DSD also presented an Options Paper summarising the work progressed to date for each telephone service category, possible options to remediate, and costs associated with each option.

No external stakeholders have been consulted at this stage of the works as the remediation of this out-moded technology will be seamless to external stakeholders, with all changes occurring in the background. Currently the majority of external faxes such as referrals are routed through enterprise faxing engines which convert the faxes into a PDF or other electronic document.

ACT Health has recently implemented electronic smart forms for approximately 80 per cent of General Practitioner (GP) practices in the ACT region. This enables GP's to submit a referral form for CHS via their existing practice management system eliminating the need for faxing.

Consultations on the implementation of smart forms with GPs and Practice Managers have occurred along with consultation through the GP Liaison Unit at CHS and the Territory wide GP forum. Further training is available on request from ACT Health.

Approach

The findings and summaries in this report were collated from a variety of project artefacts that were produced using a multi-staged approach designed to capture the condition and function of analogue services to best determine the appropriate remediation solution for each individual service, and ensure that the end user receives a product which best suits their requirements.

The solutions approach involved first investigating the condition and state of all services reliant on analogue infrastructure at each ACTHD and CHS site across the Territory. The review of audit data allowed for inactive legacy services to be filtered out and removed for consideration.

The remaining services were then assessed for function and user requirements which led to the determination of remediation recommendations. Where possible, the recommended solutions include the preference for Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) or NBN solutions for key building infrastructure services such as lifts, air conditioning (HVAC) services, generator monitoring, security monitoring and fire safety systems monitoring. Voice telephony will preference Cisco 8865 fixed handsets, Cisco 8821 wireless handsets or Cisco Analog Telephone Adapters (ATA) for fax services.

Where a tenant is located within a health facility and a responsibility exists for CHS or ACTHD to enable a connection for an internet or telephone service, negotiations will be made with NBN to ensure that a service is made available.

Summary of Audit

The ACTHD and CHS are the site owners (or primary tenant) for approximately 76 locations across the ACT. Investigations were conducted at all sites containing known analogue services across a span of 10 weeks, totalling 350 hours and 460km of travel. This included 86 Telstra telephone (PSTN) services, 161 Telstra CustomNet services and 504 analogue voice gateway (VGC) services.

The condition assessment for each site determined that:

- Current/existing copper lead-in infrastructure is no longer in a reliable condition to support analogue or digital services to most facilities, with exceptions noted for new builds such as the Belconnen, Gungahlin and Tuggeranong Community Health Centres.
- NBN infrastructure has been planned or in the process of deployment for sites requiring remediation. This provides a nationally standardised avenue for services to be migrated to new infrastructure.

- Of the 748 services that were discovered as part of this investigation:
 - 630 services are recommended for cancellation; and
 - 118 services are recommended for remediation.

Remediation Status

Phone Lines and Faxes

670 analogue telephony services (including fax lines) were discovered through the investigative component of the remediation project. A total remediation of 53 services were determined, enabling 617 cancellation recommendations.

The following remediation options were considered:

- Cancellation (for services that are no longer used);
- Remediate to NBN product;
- Remediate to Voice Over IP (VOIP) fixed handsets;
- Remediate to VOIP wireless handsets; or
- Remediate to VOIP to Analogue adaptors.

The following outline the services that were recommended for remediation:

- 18 FAX machines were remediated by utilising VOIP to analogue adaptors;
- 5 paging services were remediated by utilising VOIP to analogue adaptors;
- 6 services were remediated to an NBN product;
- 8 services were remediated to VOIP fixed handsets; and
- 16 services were remediated to VOIP wireless handsets.

The following services were cancelled after consultation with the affected areas, Shared Services ICT and the DSD team:

- 59 fax machines;
- 506 telephones; and
- 52 services cancelled as they had been previously remediated.

All 617 recommended cancellations are being processed. Of the 53 remediations, 22 are yet to be completed and are waiting on ICT infrastructure to be installed.

Messaging Alerts for Fire Safety Systems

Fire monitoring services were discovered to have been previously remediated to a dual GSM solution and were therefore removed from analogue infrastructure. No services were required to be included within this remediation project.

The following remediation options were considered:

- Cancellation (for services that are no longer used); or
- Dual redundant GSM remediation.

No services are to be remediated.

Monitoring Services for Security Systems

23 analogue services were discovered to be supporting security monitoring systems and of these, only 6 were determined to require remediation to a digital platform, the remaining 17 services were found to have been previously remediated or not of ACTHD ownership.

The following remediation options were considered:

- Cancellation (for services that are no longer used);
- GSM remediation; or
- Complete replacement of the security services panel.

The current recommendation is for the installation of a GSM module to replace the existing analogue service. In situations where the panel was too old for a GSM module, the panel would need to be replaced.

Currently, all 6 services are yet to be remediated.

Emergency Lift Lines

A total of 55 analogue services were determined to be related to the provision of emergency phones within elevators. Of these, only 42 were discovered to be currently active and commissioned within a lift and in need of remediation. The remaining 13 services were found to not be in use and were recommended for cancellation.

The following remediation options were considered:

- Cancellation (for services that are no longer used);
- GSM remediation; or
- NBN conversion.

Currently, the 42 services requiring remediation are yet to commence works. Additionally, the cancellation of the 13 remaining services not in use is yet to commence.