

# Baptcare

## CASE STUDY



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## Baptcare Connects Vulnerable Australians with Modern Technology Solution

### Objective

Baptcare provides accommodation, family and community services for the most vulnerable people in our society. Although many Baptcare facilities are not revenue-generating, there is a drive to provide technology that will improve the quality of life for tenants.

### Approach

Modern technology which is procured and provided in-house and fully financed by Baptcare, often diverts funds away from other areas. Baptcare reached out to its providers including Data#3 and Cisco, to tour a Baptcare facility, learn about Baptcare's work, and come up with a plan to update its aging technology.

### IT Outcome

- Access to a range of solutions based on Cisco networking technology.
- Updated software and technology for tenants and staff.
- Provision of ongoing technology support.

### Business Outcome

- Improved fixed and wireless networks reduce frustrations for on-site staff.
- Quality of life is improved for tenants when they can connect with family and friends.
- Better education, training and employment prospects for asylum seekers.
- Lower cost of technology provision at Baptcare sanctuaries.

### The Background

Baptcare is dedicated to providing safe, affordable housing for the elderly, homeless, asylum seekers and victims of family violence. For some of these vulnerable clients, Baptcare receives government funding, while for others, it must raise funds via donations.

When every cent counts, it can be hard to find budget for IT upgrades, therefore the existing technology in many facilities was dated. Networks were often based on home-grade wireless hardware which was unsuitable for the task, with staff often finding connectivity frustrating. Meanwhile, tenants were unable to access many modern applications that most people take for granted. Baptcare wanted to enhance the quality of life of its tenants via modern technology – however funding was limited.

### The Challenge

With aging and unsuitable, consumer-grade hardware installed at sites such as its sanctuaries, Baptcare staff and tenants found themselves limited in terms of connectivity. While some online activities were frustrating and slow, Baptcare ICT Manager, Belinda Quirk, said others, such as streaming video content and using Skype, were near-impossible.

*"Technology can be a real enabler in our tenants lives,"* said Quirk.

*"We know that keeping in touch with friends, family and community offers tremendous benefits to our resident's wellbeing, and to make it happen, we had to overhaul the IT environment."*

For any organisation, such an update would be no mean feat – after all, Baptcare manages more than 15 aged care facilities, two sanctuaries plus a number of 'House of Hope' sites. The greater challenge, though, was in funding. Quirk decided a more creative approach was needed, and she invited key contacts at Data#3, Cisco and other vendor partners to work together with her in search of a solution.

*"We wanted to show our key strategic vendors what Baptcare does, and help them understand how our services impact significantly disadvantaged members of our community,"* said Quirk.

*"We visited an existing residential aged care facility (RACF) that is ten years old, then to a newer facility, Brookview in Broadmeadows. Finally, we took them to a sanctuary site for asylum seekers, and explained that funding models mean we break-even or self-fund beds in many sites, and fully fund the sanctuary sites from Baptcare income."*

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Discussions with the team of vendors focused on exploring ways to provide appropriate, modern technology into each site. This would not only improve life for on-site staff and tenants – it would also ease the pressure on an IT department swamped with the support needs of aging equipment not suited to its purpose.

*“The sanctuaries were previously just running personal DSL links that weren’t even business grade. If staff tried to stream video, it made the overall network crash,” said Quirk. “None of it was built to a professional business standard.”*

### IT Outcome

While needs varied at the different sites, Baptcare has started rolling out new networks at its many sites. Based on Cisco technology, and designed and implemented with help from Data#3’s Cisco experts, the solutions provide a reliable, easily supported foundation to support modern applications.

*“With the help of Data#3 and Cisco, we have brought in fully segmented, wireless corporate networks,” said Quirk.*

Baptcare was able to replace donated devices with standard machines built to Baptcare specifications, from its own funding. This allowed staff to harness the benefits of the updated networks to provide a more efficient service.

*“In the past we depended on charitable donations from church members of goods they no longer used. But, now the Sanctuary staff are much more integrated to the Baptcare network backbone standard, and running essential applications like Office 365.”*

Quirk knew it was a strain to support the previous technology, creating an ongoing challenge for the Baptcare IT team.

*“We were not running Baptcare built images on end user devices, and didn’t manage the software on donated devices, so we kept them at a distance until we could manage a full refresh to our standards.”*

### Business Outcome

After touring Baptcare facilities, Data#3 worked with Cisco to put together an offer designed to make acquisition more affordable. The pair proposed that with every purchase made by Baptcare for its enterprise environment, an additional discount would be provided. This discount would be held by Data#3 in the form of a tech fund for Baptcare. When purchases were needed for the Sanctuaries and other facilities, Baptcare could draw from the saved funds.

*“Our partners came back to us with tech funds. For every dollar spent, they take 10 cents and return it through free services. This can be in the form of monthly comms costs, hardware and expertise needed for sanctuaries and any sites with concessional beds,” said Quirk.*

As Baptcare works on rolling out updated networks, the benefits are already apparent. From the elderly to asylum seekers, access to a strong internet connection is life changing.

*“In the past, our aged care residents haven’t had an easy way to stay in touch with family members outside of using a landline or visits. We now have the technology in most rooms for telephony and internet access,” said Quirk.*

*“They have a way to communicate with their loved ones whether they’re here in Victoria, in Australia, or on the other side of the world.”*

For asylum seekers, access to online English language tuition, vocational study and legal support have been important advantages. As with elderly residents, communication with far-flung family has played an important part in their lives.

*“The new technology helps these tenants to remain connected with families who are often being persecuted, living stressful lives where they are threatened day to day,” said Quirk.*

*“It is possible to know family members are safe – and this peace of mind has a strong link to the asylum seeker’s own wellbeing.”*

Importantly, the funding support from Data#3 and Cisco has allowed Baptcare to dedicate its income to its mission of helping society’s most vulnerable people.

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*“By having the support and partnership of strategic vendors, we can take the money and put it into other missional areas,”* said Quirk.

*“The tech fund enables us to invest more in our Houses of Hope, in additional aged care beds, and gives us flexibility to help disadvantaged members of the community. We can help more people.”*

### Conclusion

Taking the initiative to share Baptcare’s work has, said Quirk, paid off by creating partnerships in which all parties work together towards a common goal.

*“By inviting vendors to see how our customers experience us, and how our vendors can impact that experience, we have created strong trusting relationships between us. We are in this relationship for the long term, we all know there will be challenges and bumps along the way, but we are all committed to making it work for the good of our community.”*

Those community benefits have been profound, with Baptcare’s work touching the lives of aged Australians, the disabled, asylum seekers and many disadvantaged groups in more than 40 locations. The fund created by Data#3 and Cisco covers a range of technology needs at Baptcare’s facilities, with wired and wireless networking featuring prominently.

*“The Data#3 team has been amazing – they have a diverse product offering so we can go and work with them for multiple types of services. Whether we need software licences, consulting to fill some skillset gaps, or we have to roll out critical security projects, they’re always there partnering with us,”* said Quirk.



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Belinda Quirk, ICT Manager, Baptcare

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