



Data Platform **CASE STUDY**

Spinal Life Australia exceed business continuity expectations by partnering with WARDY IT in their transition to the cloud

About Spinal Life Australia

- Established in 1960
- 800 employees
- Disability Services 
- www.spinal.com.au

Based in Brisbane, Australia, with offices in Townsville and Cairns, Spinal Life Australia is one of Queensland's leading providers of services and support for people with spinal cord damage and related physical disabilities. Spinal Life Australia's vision is for people with spinal cord damage to live in an equitable, inclusive, integrated community, independently able to access every aspect of, and contribute to, their region. Staff include physiotherapists, personal support workers and occupational therapists.

Client Challenge

In the lead-up to the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland in 2016, disability service providers across Australia knew their industry was in for a major shakeup. For decades, the disability services sector operated under a funding model where government funds were provided directly to disability service providers. Under the NDIS, government funds go directly to clients, who can choose which service providers they want. The NDIS gives people with disabilities greater consumer choice, thereby making the disability service provider market more competitive than ever.

For Spinal Life Australia, the introduction of the NDIS sparked a review of its operations, including its IT infrastructure, with the goal of preparing the organisation for the many NDIS related challenges and opportunities ahead. This coincided with their long-held recognition that they were due for a major hardware refresh. Spinal Life Australia has multiple sites across the State and with the NDIS changes looming, the IT team needed to ensure that they could continue to support the organisation over the next few years, enabling people to work from any device, anytime, anywhere - without complexities.

Many of Spinal Life Australia's core business applications, were under performing. Rather than focusing on tasks that benefit their members and clients, the IT team found themselves concentrating on matters that were preventing the organisation from fulfilling its mission which was a distraction from the primary business.

As a remote site, the Townsville branch was impacted most by the dysfunctional infrastructure. With the NDIS beginning its Queensland rollout in Townsville, it was critical that the Townsville branch had the infrastructure in place that would enable it to maximise its engagement with the National Disability Services Agency.

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We needed to be on the front foot, without the new infrastructure this wouldn't have been possible. We couldn't be distracted, we needed solid foundations to support the business to grow and meet the needs of our clients into the future.

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*Matthew Linscott
CIO
Spinal Life*

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The WARDY IT Solutions consultants knew exactly what they were there to do. They understood our goals and they provided exceptionally good advice and delivered exactly what we needed.

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*Matthew Linscott
CIO
Spinal Life*

Client Challenge (cont.)

If Spinal Life Australia did not take action to refresh its infrastructure, the IT team would have been fighting issues with the environment on a daily basis. The frustration of their users would have continued on an upward path; they would have faced some serious issues in their day to day dealings with the NDIS and their ability to focus on their clients would have been greatly reduced.

An overhaul of Spinal Life Australia's technology infrastructure was required to fix existing problems and future-proof the organisation.

The Solution

WARDY IT Solutions was contracted to manage the migration from SQL Server 2008 on-premise to SQL Server 2014 in the cloud, as part of the wider project of moving to an infrastructure-as-a-service environment. WARDY IT Solutions installed and configured the new servers in two separate data centres. This high-availability, always-on solution was seen as the best option for Spinal Life Australia in its pursuit of a stable, flexible, reliable and secure system for data storage, analysis, management and reporting.

Before the migration to the cloud, Matthew Linscott, CIO at Spinal Life Australia felt there was a gap between IT's capabilities and the business expectations when it came to disaster recovery. WARDY IT Solutions designed and implemented a failover strategy using SQL Server 2014 which has enabled Spinal Life Australia to meet and exceed the expectations of the business.

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The critical elements of our business applications now have resilience. If the server in our primary data centre goes down, it will failover with no disruption for the business.

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– Matthew Linscott, CIO, Spinal Life

Prior to the migration, disruption could last up to 5 days, now issues are resolved within 24 hours and often go unnoticed by the business.

One of the key imperatives for Spinal Life Australia was the delivery of a consistent business application user experience for all workers - any time, any place, anywhere. Achieving this had not been possible with the organisation's previous infrastructure, but became a reality with the new SQL Server environment in the cloud.

Once the new infrastructure was in place, WARDY IT Solutions rolled out their award winning Virtual DBA service - a 24x7x365 remote database administration service providing a cost-effective way for Spinal Life Australia to meet the day-to-day challenges of monitoring availability, performance and administration of their critical SQL Server databases following the significant infrastructure investment.

About WARDY IT Solutions

- Established in 2005
- 65 employees
- Information Technology
- Australia & USA
- www.wardyit.com

WARDY IT Solutions are Australia's leading SQL Server and Business Intelligence specialists. The company creates solutions that enable businesses to maximise returns on their investment in knowledge management. Through the extensive use of Business Intelligence, WARDY IT Solutions help their clients to realise the best possible dividend from their data assets.

WARDY IT Solutions have received numerous industry accolades, most notably the prestigious Microsoft Global Data Platform Partner of the Year in 2013. The organisation is recognised internationally for their innovative solutions, training skills and unwavering commitment to education and furthering the interests of the broader Microsoft SQL Server community. WARDY IT Solutions deliver:

- Project Delivery based on time and resources
- Consultation and Gap analysis
- SQL Server database design and programming
- Support services
- Managed Services and Business Intelligence Solutions
- Business Intelligence Consulting, including strategy, review, design and implementation of Business Intelligence Solutions

The Implementation

The SQL Server migration project was carried out quickly and seamlessly. The success of the project was largely a by-product of the specialist expertise and experience of WARDY IT Solutions' consultants, who gained a solid understanding of Spinal Life Australia's business and technical requirements prior to the solution deployment.

For ongoing SQL Server support via the Virtual DBA service, WARDY IT Solutions worked with Spinal Life Australia to develop a support policy upfront, so the team don't need to be involved in day-to-day decisions regarding their servers.

The Outcome

From the outset, Spinal Life Australia was confident that WARDY IT Solutions could deliver on its promises, and this confidence was validated with a solution implementation that resolved pre-existing issues and laid the groundwork for Spinal Life Australia's future prosperity.

The WARDY IT Solutions SQL Server migration project was undertaken in accordance with industry best practice and, as such, has not undergone any revisions since the new servers were deployed. All Spinal Life Australia's management and staff now have the same – and an improved – user experience irrespective of their role or location, providing efficiency and productivity gains across the organisation.

System performance issues have reduced dramatically, allowing Spinal Life Australia to sharpen its focus on the ongoing attainment of its strategic goals.

The SQL Server migration project also delivered new economies of scale for Spinal Life Australia – a significant development that will enhance its ability to not only remain viable but compete successfully in a fundamentally altered disability services industry landscape. These economies extend to the Virtual DBA service provided by WARDY IT Solutions. Spinal Life Australia are able to leverage the services of highly experienced DBAs as and when they need it. This ensures around the clock access to primary business applications such as Carelink+ along with workforce management processes. Moreover, the 24x7x365 SQL Server support service is costing them less than what it would to hire a DBA in-house.

“ WARDY IT Solutions are proactive, they analyse the logs and act on what's there without me having to be involved. It's more than just a monitoring and alerting service – they are engaged in ensuring the smooth operation of our systems. WARDY truly deliver on their promises. ”

– Matthew Linscott, CIO, Spinal Life

With an eye towards the future, Spinal Life Australia anticipates an expansion of its use of WARDY IT Solutions' services, likely in the areas of reporting, Business Intelligence and systems integration.