



Nobles takes to the cloud

About A Noble & Son Ltd

As Australia's leading supplier of lifting and rigging solutions, A Noble & Son Ltd (trading as Nobles) designs, manufactures and supplies customised lifting solutions to the gas, oil and mining sector across Australia and Southeast Asia.

With a head office in Adelaide and a national network of 17 branches, Nobles is committed to developing innovative, customised solutions that meet a client's particular need.

Established in 1911, the family-owned business has undergone significant expansion over the past decade and has firm plans for further growth to meet rising demand for its quality products and advisory and design services.

In addition to the design, supply and installation of solutions, Nobles offers TECHINSPECT, a complete lifting equipment data management system that tracks the testing and required maintenance of customers' equipment. The business also offers safety certification and training.

The Challenge

As a long-established business with complex IT requirements, Nobles had sought out locane's technical expertise and advice for more than a decade.

Due to a period of significant business growth, Nobles had outgrown its existing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application.

Nobles was committed to exploring the options available for its infrastructure, including moving data to a public or private cloud. This was at a time when the cloud was a relatively new concept.

If the new platform were to involve public cloud, Nobles had strict requirements about the availability of an Infrastructure as a Service environment as the ERP application was critical to the core operation of the business. Over a calendar year downtime could not exceed nine hours, with a single event only permitted to disrupt availability for a maximum of four hours.

The hosted environment also needed to offer flexibility to allow Nobles to scale services up or down in line with its changing requirements, and Nobles IT department required continuous remote administrative access to the private virtual environment. Provision also needed to be made for rapid disaster recovery of critical business systems.



The Solution

For Nobles, the solution for a new platform lay in locane's Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) offering, which is underpinned by Cisco network and server elements and NetApp storage technology. The locane architecture allows for rapid provisioning of server capacity to suit Nobles' business needs.

This was identified after engaging locane to explore the relative benefits of all platform options.

In transitioning to IaaS, applications have been categorised according to their level of importance within the business. Those deemed 'business critical' received additional protection by being copied to locane's secondary data centre should rapid disaster recovery be required. Capacity and performance at the primary and secondary data centres is all identical so that the IaaS performance does not diminish in the unlikely event of switching to the Disaster recovery site.

The Benefit

The flexibility of locane's Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) offering allowed Nobles to stage the migration of systems and ensure the required level of protection was provided for each element transferred to the hosted environment.

An asset management database, domain controller and backup and new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) testing environment are now housed on IaaS, with plans to move email across in the near future.

Nobles IT team no longer needs to devote time and capital to maintaining and upgrading base IT infrastructure, and can ramp the IaaS up or down according to the business' changing requirements, while accurately predicting infrastructure funding needs.

While they retain autonomous administrative access to the hosted environment and control of all systems from the operating system level upwards, base infrastructure management and administration to the virtual machine layer is provided by locane. This allows Nobles IT team to concentrate on delivering services that align with and deliver high value to the business.

Cloud allows Nobles to reallocate resources to support business growth

The Nobles IT team recognised that its existing infrastructure, which had been managed and maintained in-house by Nobles, would need to be upgraded to underpin a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application.

Following a comprehensive tender and evaluation process, locane was selected to provide Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) with disaster recovery support.

Nobles' applications were prioritised according to their level of 'business criticality' before being moved to the hosted environment. The flexibility associated with locane's IaaS offering, which includes Cisco server and network components and NetApp storage, has served Nobles well. It allows the business to allocate applications to different service tiers according to an evaluation of the application's 'criticality' against the required level of protection and cost associated with locane's service. Those services considered 'critical' have been replicated to locane's secure secondary data centre to provide rapid recovery times in the unlikely event that the primary site becomes unavailable.

“Making this transition has been easier by having locane manage it. Nothing is too hard for them and they will always go out of their way. We can always rely on them as a service provider.”

Greg Carlson, IT Manager

A Noble & Son Ltd

The approach to migrating each system was carefully planned to reflect the differing requirements of each system and every agreed deliverable has been met, including strict requirements on availability and continuous remote administrative access.

IaaS infrastructure, has been sized to precisely meet the requirements of applications, ensuring that only the necessary capacity is obtained and used. Nobles IT team also can adjust the amount of computing resources available to each application. This has been particularly helpful in establishing test and development environments and subsequent scaling up of infrastructure for load testing. It also allows Nobles IT management to accurately predict infrastructure funding requirements, providing greater financial certainty to the business.

Each key system is running in purpose-built data centres on enterprise grade infrastructure with best practice management. The storage solution from NetApp protects data at multiple levels including via RAID dual parity (RAID-DP) configuration. The system also benefits from cloud security services provided by Cisco and NetApp.

locane has also played an integral role in Nobles' disaster recovery processes, with joint testing undertaken to validate the disaster recovery process. Such testing is now repeated annually and Nobles is working with locane to develop shorter recovery times for key applications through a combination of replication at both application and storage levels.

Why locane?

With more than 14-years of experience, we are one of South Australia's largest independent ICT solutions providers. We have a reputation for delivering innovative, value for money solutions.

We offer an integrated range of services and expertise to meet the ever-changing technology needs of business.

Our approach is different. We focus on the delivery of tailored ICT solutions that add value and deliver real results to business.

Our focus is about finding the right ICT solution for each business. We offer reliable, flexible ICT systems to help our clients manage their current and future needs.

Benefits of Nobles partnering with locane

locane is technically capable, proactive and responsive

All deliverables and project requirements have been met, including strict criteria on Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) availability and minimum downtimes

Strong communications, flexible and quick turnaround on requests for increased servers, storage, memory and licensing

Complementary Services

Other services available on locane's secure infrastructure platform include:

Disaster recovery

Backup, recovery and archive

Licensing

Burst to cloud

Self service provisioning

Teamed with locane's range of ICT Managed Services, locane IaaS provides comprehensive, tailored ICT solutions

Our Managed Services extend to:

Monitoring, management, maintenance and reporting of all ICT infrastructure including server, storage, network and security devices

Onsite engineering

Service desk



