



WISE Employment secures a more scalable, reliable future in Azure

WISE Employment, one of Australia's leading not-for-profit (NFP) employment services providers and a dedicated employment agency for the Australian Government's Disability Employment Services (DES) program, has transformed its digital operations by moving from legacy on-premises infrastructure to a secure, modern cloud environment with Azured.

WISE Employment is proud to support Australians living with disability and disadvantage, helping those who may otherwise be excluded find meaningful work. It provides the Australian Government's Workforce Australia employment program in New South Wales (NSW), South Australia (SA), Victoria, and Western Australia (WA), and offers DES services in NSW, SA, Tasmania, Queensland (QLD), Northern Territory (NT), and Victoria.

WISE Employment complements its government-funded employment services with a range of additional programs and services which are free to eligible job seekers and employers. Migrating its core systems from on-premises infrastructure to Microsoft Azure has improved stability, scalability, and compliance significantly across its organisation, reducing potential disruptions to its provision of services to the community it serves. The transition

has also empowered WISE Employment's internal team to manage and optimise its environment with greater confidence, laying the foundation for future innovation.

Jason Rogers, general manager, information services, WISE Employment, said,

"This was probably the smoothest migration I've seen in 36 years. WISE Employment's internal team had never done anything like this, and Azured's mentoring, patience, and ability to explain things without condescension made the difference.

"WISE Employment is a not-for-profit, not an IT organisation, so it was crucial to work with a partner who understood that and didn't force unnecessary complexity."

This is a common scenario across the NFP sector. Many organisations operate on lean budgets and legacy systems, yet are under immense pressure to deliver highly secure, always-on services. Business continuity, compliance, and reliability are essential, even while foundational infrastructure is being transformed.



A fast transition needed to realise business value

WISE Employment faces strict compliance obligations and limited resources to manage its IT infrastructure like many NFPs, especially those that work closely with government agencies. Its systems were due for renewal and legacy hardware failures were causing weekly outages that impacted internal teams and customers alike. The additional risk of failure of its business-critical platform, Tunnel, which is used by 80 per cent of staff, was also unacceptable.

WISE Employment needed a trusted, cost-effective partner that could deliver a secure solution without requiring major in-house resourcing uplift. It went to market and selected a co-bid from Telstra and Azured, with Azured responsible for the Azure migration, network modernisation, and cloud infrastructure.

Jason Rogers said, "Microsoft Azure was the obvious path forward for the business, though the team needed help to do it right. Azured designed everything around best practices, stood up the environment, and supported the team every step of the way. Most importantly, Azured gave the WISE Employment team the tools and knowledge to operate confidently in the cloud."

One critical benefit was stronger access control. The new environment removed unauthorised local server access and enforced proper permissions, letting WISE Employment maintain security, compliance, and control of its environment while gradually introducing new capabilities without relying on physical restrictions. It also gave the organisation visibility over who had access to what, reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised configuration changes and improving compliance.

Jason Rogers said, "With Azure, no one can just jump on a server and make changes. It's a more secure, better-governed environment, and Azured has made sure it's set up correctly. WISE Employment's systems are performing faster than expected, and the team can now scale resources up or down as needed."



Delivering the next-generation not-for-profit

The project was originally scoped as a lift-and-shift migration, though it evolved into a more modern, value-led transition. Azure deployed scalable Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) offerings, implemented cloud-native firewalls, and introduced a new virtual private network (VPN) to maintain connectivity if legacy hardware failed. These improvements were delivered alongside core infrastructure and identity services.

Azure maintained a flexible and pragmatic approach throughout the project, listening to internal constraints, adjusting timelines to avoid disruption during peak operational periods, and refactoring elements where necessary to meet compliance without overengineering the environment.

Jason Rogers said, "There were delays on the WISE Employment side, including a change of project sponsor and some internal redevelopment. However, Azure was patient the entire way through and never pushed the team, never raised variations, and still got the job done under budget. That's rare in this industry."

The technical improvements have been substantial. WISE Employment's services are now running more reliably, core systems are performing faster than expected, and fine-grained access controls have been introduced to prevent staff from making changes outside of approved processes, which has tightened security.

Azure also helped WISE Employment reduce unnecessary infrastructure by decommissioning one of three unused infrastructure clusters that had been pre-provisioned for application deployment. This has saved the business up to \$10,000 a month in ongoing costs.

An unexpected outcome that has improved productivity across the organisation is the faster performance of WISE Employment's business-critical Tunnel application, which now runs better than it did on-premises. Azure's monitoring and scaling capabilities also let WISE Employment right-size its environment post-migration, removing underused services and reducing costs without compromising performance. The result is a significant improvement in efficiency across the business.

Jason Rogers said, "Some of WISE Employment's systems were crashing weekly before the migration. Now, they're stable, secure, and scalable. Having the VPN in place also means that employees stay connected to the cloud, even if something goes wrong in the old stack."

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A measure of success

Success wasn't just about delivering a project for WISE Employment, it was about building internal capability. No prior experience in cloud environments meant the team relied on Azured to demystify Microsoft Azure, support learning, and explain how and why changes were made. The result is a long-term relationship built on transparency and trust.

Jason Rogers said,

"The project might be finished, though the partnership hasn't ended. WISE Employment still meets with Azured regularly, and the support is always there. Azured listens, adapts, and offers real advice. WISE Employment is already looking at future optimisation projects with Azured because they've proven they're the right partner for the job."

Plans are already underway to migrate more services from Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) to PaaS, and to move off hybrid identity into a fully cloud-native Entra environment.

Azured is also assisting with a future integration between Entra and WISE Employment's new human resources (HR) system.

Through Microsoft Azure, and with Azured's guidance, WISE Employment now operates in a more secure, high-performing environment and has the internal confidence to grow with it. The organisation can scale services as needed, reduce operational risk, and remain focused on what matters most: helping Australians who need it most find meaningful work.



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