

## NT Department of Education complete rollout of their next generation, school management system



A unique challenge of distance with 152 schools spread over a million kilometres.

Facing challenges that few other education management bodies encounter, the department is responsible for more than 34,000 students in over 152 schools spread across a geography of 1.421 million km<sup>2</sup>. Many of these schools provide vital education for rural and Indigenous communities.

Schools in the Northern Territory had previously used a decentralised client/server based student management system. Although this system met the needs of the schools for over 10 years, the department's vision to engage new technologies and provide the Territory's schools with a modern-day solution was the driving force in partnering with Civica in 2012.

According to Simon Jones, Managing Director of Civica Library & Education Solutions, "the Northern Territory presents many challenges for an organisation looking to develop and deliver a school management system. This is particularly the case when you consider the geographical size of the territory, the remoteness of many of its schools and the need to cater to what is in some cases a transient community."

### Outcomes

- ▶ Legacy school administration system replaced on budget, and without disruption to schools
- ▶ 34,000 primary and secondary students managed through a central data system
- ▶ Student data is now easily tracked from school to school helping mobile communities of remote NT

"The partnership with Civica, coupled with the committed and capable members of my team, enabled a very cost effective migration and implementation which also provided learning and development opportunities for department staff. The end result has been the smooth delivery of a very complex project with little or no disruption to schools and students."

**Satpinder Daroch,**  
Chief Information Officer  
Northern Territory Department of Education

## A staged rollout

The contract was awarded in May 2012 and comprised of a number of stages. The completion of Stage 1 in April 2014 resulted in five schools successfully migrated from the legacy system to the new solution. One of the key objectives for the project was for the Department of Education to become self-sufficient in the day-to-day operational management of the system, including change management and the migration of the schools.

"The process was to take 10 schools and transition them onto the new system each fortnight. By March 2015, 134 primary schools were operating on the new solution and feedback received from the school community was outstanding."

Simon Jones  
Managing Director, Civica Libraries & Education

"The department actively engage school users for feedback on the solution, which results in occasional functional modifications to the system to suits the schools' needs," says Jones.

After the first 80 schools were rolled out by Civica, the migration process for additional schools was handed over to the Northern Territory Department of Education's own team. Senior Program Manager, Tess Lontoc, advised "This was a very collaborative process. Our team was involved in every step of the process, from reviewing specifications and testing the software, to training and supporting end users at schools. We then took on the implementation and migration of schools, once the process had been established by Civica."

The remaining primary and secondary schools were migrated in subsequent stages of the project and the integration of third party systems were also established.

According to Simon Jones, the rollout was slower at the secondary level because the product is more complex. The Northern Territory Department of Education understood that for a project of this size

and complexity to succeed, more time was required to transition the larger secondary schools.

There are now over 150 schools using the new system across the Northern Territory and more than 1,200 users accessing the system on any given day.

## Co-design and collaboration a core element

In addition to Civica's software, the overall solution also integrates with a number of third party software applications. Many aspects of the solution required additional development and localisation to meet the unique requirements of the Northern Territory. The end result is a software solution which provides a suite of modules, data analysis and reporting tools, which is centrally managed in a single database. This all ensures the highest quality of student information being available to both the Northern Territory Department of Education and its schools.

According to Ronnie Kearns, Civica's Contract Manager, who managed and delivered the project, a key aspect that made the solution a huge success was the integration of Civica's Central Person Technology.

The Central Person Register and Central Person Store enables integration with the Department's Online Registration and Enrolment system and supports the identification of duplicate student records through complex matching algorithms.

"This technology is extremely useful as it can improve the accuracy of data as students move between schools", said Kearns.

## Key benefits

- ▶ **Entirely web-delivered with extensive cost savings in ICT hardware & software management**
- ▶ **Intuitive and powerful reporting and analysis tools to help inform improvement strategies**
- ▶ **Secure online access available anytime anywhere and on various devices**
- ▶ **Quick & easy to use interface, significantly reducing staff workload & staff training**
- ▶ **Software upgrades are applied once centrally, saving time and money**
- ▶ **Parameters managed centrally, ensuring data consistency across the whole jurisdiction;**
- ▶ **Efficiently integrates other third party systems via web services**
- ▶ **An efficient way to input and capture all student data in one central system.**