

How Toshiba technology is helping meet the needs of the aged care boom

When Archbishop Mowll's wife, Mrs Dorothy Mowll, had the vision to provide a home for retired clergy and church workers back in 1959, she probably had no way of knowing it would grow into one of Australia's leading aged care service providers.

Sydney based Anglican Retirement Villages (ARV) has steadily developed and grown since its inception and now provides a wide choice of accommodation and service options to more than 6000 residents and clients.

Employing more than 2,000 staff, ARV owns and manages 34 retirement communities and currently has several major projects under construction, with more in planning and development across the greater Sydney region.

The work of ARV continues to be part of the Anglican Christian Mission. Their focus is practical and pastoral care and service provision to older people.

ARV is proactive in researching the needs of (the aged community) (older people) in order to provide facilities and services to meet their expectations. Whether it be home-based services or larger apartments with modern design features, security and a range of activities, ARV actively encourages positive ageing, giving (their clients) (older people) and their families the flexibility to make the lifestyle choice that is right for them.

Rob Binskin, ARV's Manager Information Technology has been with the organisation for the past four and a half years.

Before joining ARV, Mr Binskin was IT Manager for the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children for some six years and prior to that, working for a major international corporation.

He says that it is really great to work for organisations that have heart.

"We're really here to make a difference to people's lives, it's not just about enhancing shareholder value," said Mr Binskin.

He says that his role is really about helping the organisation move from a very low technology base to where they can use technology to improve their services in a more cost effective way.

"Over the last ten years, the aged care industry has moved from a paper based, almost cottage industry type arrangement through to what is now a very big business," he said.

There has been a degree of consolidation in the industry according to Mr Binskin and for larger organisations like ARV there is a real drive to create efficiency so that they can provide better services.

He says that with the huge baby boomer demographic bubble at or nearing retirement age, he can see there will be even more growth in the aged care sector.

"This ageing group of people is going to eventually need some level of care," said Mr Binskin.

He says that technology has made a huge difference to the aged care industry.

"Technology is providing us with things such as electronic care plans which up until recently was a manual paper based system," said Mr Binskin.

"We've just built a new facility over at Castle Hill which has Wi-Fi voice over IP wireless network right throughout the facility, which we're currently using for telephony and nurse-call messaging."

He said that, in the future, the wireless infrastructure will enable their care staff to access real time information about a resident from a PDA or laptop.

"Because the data will be in an electronic format it will enable us to be more efficient. As well, the electronic gathering of resident data will assist us with best practice planning and better measurement of resident care."

One of Mr Binskin's major achievements has been to rationalise the organisation's office equipment.

"When I first came here we had pretty much one of everything. I made the decision that we would reduce the supplier pool to just one key supplier or partner.

He said this decision was based on a number of reasons.

"First of all, it allows you to deal with one person. That means that you only have one set of drivers the IT people have to look after and through volume purchasing, you can actually drive prices down," he said.

"About four years ago, we went out and had a look at a number of different vendors. With Toshiba we liked what we saw so we decided to trial them."

He said that it was the way that the Toshiba people described the support and the way that they would look after them as a customer attracted him most.

"Toshiba were by far the best of any of the vendors that we spoke to regarding our requirements," he said.

"Now we've got about 55 Toshiba e-STUDIO



Rob Binskin, IT Manager at ARV with Neil McLeod, Account Manager at Toshiba at the new site with the Toshiba eSTUDIO 3520C installed at the newly opened Brian King Gardens Village

multi function devices (MFD's) spread across all of our different facilities."

He said the fleet of Toshiba e-STUDIO's ranged from 28 page per minute mono MFD's through to full colour MFD's up to bigger 85 page per minute systems.

"Applications for the e-STUDIO's range from producing newsletters for some of the villages through to scanning of paper based documents into electronic files.

Of course we have retired our costly stand alone printers as everyone now prints to the Toshiba MFD's."

He said since standardising with Toshiba's e-STUDIO range their copy and particularly printing costs have been greatly reduced.

"Neil McLeod from Toshiba has been fantastic to deal with and I now think of Toshiba as more of a partner than a supplier. Neil has been very pro-active in finding us the right solutions for our requirements."

He said that the donation by Toshiba of one of their LCD Flat Panel televisions to their new 248 bed facility through their charity arm Foundation for Aged Care showed just how positive the partnership had become. ■

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