

ISS - Royal North Shore Hospital



Background

The \$1.125 billion Royal North Shore Hospital and Community Health Services (RNS) Redevelopment Project in New South Wales, is Australia's largest PPP project to date. By the time it is completed, 53 outdated buildings will have been consolidated into purpose-built facilities – including a new Main Hospital Building, scheduled to open at the end of 2012 – that will expand to meet the region's future healthcare needs, delivering excellence in clinical care, teaching and research.

The 730-bed redevelopment will provide a wide range of new facilities and therapeutic environments including a new Comprehensive Cancer Care Centre, enhanced diagnostic services, and 29 procedure and operating rooms, as well as a new Community Health Centre and, by 2014, a new Clinical Services Building for Women's & Children's Health, a Severe Burn Injury Unit and Acute Mental Health.

From a Facilities Management perspective, the RNS is a challenging project. Service delivery must be streamlined and maintained to the highest possible standard across the existing complex, and transferred smoothly as new buildings come online.

Facility services specialist ISS Australia, which provides soft services to NSW Health, is charged with managing and delivering soft services – everything from cleaning and portering to security - for hospital staff across the site within a rigorous framework of KPIs and SLAs.

As a global service provider, ISS already had considerable experience – particularly in the UK - of FSI's Concept Evolution™ CAFM system, the web-enabled platform chosen to manage and develop soft service delivery for the RNS.

The first phase of the FM project, completed in February 2011 after a six-month development period, focused on gathering information for the system and the development of Concept's™ interfaces with hard FM service delivery system Maximo and the hospital's CARPS radio communications

system. This has created a robust platform for the development of a full abatement system for managing a complex contractual framework of performance targets and KPIs, which will be delivered in 2012.

"We use Concept™ as a self-service portal," explains Julian Foot, National Manager, Systems Solutions at ISS Australia. "Hospital staff request soft services – essentially dealing with moving assets around the hospital – from the Help Desk, which assigns a job to an operative. The alert is sent to a member of the portering staff via the radio network, who then presses three buttons to say when they've received, started and completed the job.

"The hospital operates a very strict service delivery regime. We are contracted to achieve specific performance targets and if these aren't matched, our fee is 'abated'. It's an interesting way of working, in that there is a negative incentive to meet the targets – we aren't rewarded if we exceed them! But Concept™, with its ability to match KPIs with targets, is an essential element in helping us to meet them. Because of the way it is structured and hosted, it will be simple to transfer to the new building in 2012. The system's web accessibility simply means setting up the PCs in the new environment as required."

The Challenge

The main challenges for the project team – which ultimately demonstrated Concept's™ flexibility – were to create a system that would match the exacting criteria of ISS's contract with the hospital, and to understand the complexities of the abatement regime before translating them into processes for the system.

"The regime is a formula, of course, but we were effectively designing the system to match it," says Julian. "And that meant doing things in a certain order, and taking into account the many operational and contractual details. As with any process, you want to achieve a specific outcome, but there are other processes you need to go through to get to the end result.

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“The hospital’s abatement regime was created in a theoretical environment, and that meant we had to address some fundamental questions about how it would work in reality.

“Where would we source the information to populate the system? How could we set up the communications interface between Concept™ and CARPS? Is the system capable of calculating the formula for the abatement output? And last but certainly not least, how would we get the people on the ground to work within the framework? You need to pin down a specification for each part of the formula, make sure the system is robust in that area – and that it’s what the staff require – cost it, make it work and test it thoroughly.”

FSI’s ability as a CAFM system developer was instrumental in helping to address many of these questions but the abatement regime and contractual frameworks brought some specific challenges to the table.

“For example, repeat jobs are more complex within our framework,” says Julian. “In reality, if the Help Desk received a request for 20 blood bags, we would send out a single job for all of them. But the framework required us to enter the request 20 times – once for each bag. Operationally, it’s a different planet.

“Concept™ gives us a trade-off between the contractual and operational requirements. The data gathered in the system can be used to demonstrate the reality, and to see whether the appropriate use of reporting can give you the feedback that tells you if the contract needs adjustment.”

Julian has some good advice for any organisation embarking on a similar project. He says it is vital to carry out a comprehensive analysis of your business’s requirements before proceeding with any degree of implementation.

“What are you trying to do? Too often, you find a CAFM system installed for the sake of having the software rather than to address a business need. The technology has won over the practicalities,” he says. “But it turns out to be unsuitable for the environment.

“Keep an eye on the constantly developing detail. How will you make it work in practice? Will it actually work in the operational framework? Here’s a useful analogy: you might identify the need for a hammer. Fine. But what if it later turns out that you specifically needed a claw hammer? Your needs change constantly.

“Then there’s the infrastructure. A CAFM project isn’t just about identifying the need for a system, choosing the right one and fine-tuning the specification. You need the network, too – not just physically, but one governed by rules about its usage that are enforced. In other words, establishing processes and procedures that everybody follows. “

“It isn’t enough to have everything in place theoretically: the business analysis, the specification, the resilient network, the paper processes and human interfaces, the management support. You also need the rules to be enforced. If one step is missed, the implementation will struggle.”

The Benefits

As ISS Australia looks ahead to rolling out the full abatement mechanism across the RNS, Concept™ is already delivering some important business benefits and helping the company to deliver soft FM services in line with its contractual obligations.

“The hospital is a very challenging, high-risk environment, and the service delivery contract is particularly exacting,” says Julian. “In addition, we’re trying to institute change in a conservative environment. And no matter how brilliant a software system is, it’s a dumb partner! You still need human beings to make the thing work, and that can take time when people are used to doing things in a certain way.

“Concept™ is being very successful. It’s an ally in helping us to manage the contract and the quality of our service delivery, and I’ve been very impressed with its robustness. In fact, I’d say that it’s axiomatic to our service delivery. Basically, Concept™ tells us what’s happening on the ground and enables us to react to it, quickly. It also interfaces very easily with the other key systems.

“FSI have been a very effective partner, both here and in the UK. They’ve been an absolutely vital element in pulling the whole project together. We spent a month thrashing through our requirements with them before starting, and we’ve got an excellent project manager who was able to give them a very clear brief. Everything so far has been achieved on target, and they provide great support.”

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