

# Government Cluster Agency Merges Multiple IT Systems - On Time and On Budget

## A Stark Choice

Peter Richards\* is a senior program manager in a large government department. He was working on a transition project to realign and centralise numerous agency IT systems, following a government decision to merge smaller agencies into clusters. This meant moving diverse IT systems to a single, common infrastructure. It was a complex task, made more difficult due to:

- Multiple legacy systems from multiple vendors
- Different infrastructure platforms with little or no inter-operability
- Numerous unintegrated applications and add-ins
- Multiple agency CIOs and yet a single decision-maker who was the Group CIO.



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**Peter Richards**  
Senior Program Manager

As a result, it was agreed to bring in high level consultants to assist with the migration and integration. In the end, the choice was stark: between one of the largest IT consultancies in Australia and a small IT firm who specialise in infrastructure migrations, Riteway Solutions Group (Riteway). It wasn't an easy choice.



## Big not Better

Richards knew that many government entities choose big partners for difficult IT projects because they think they'll access super-competent experts and lower the risk of project failure. This had not been his experience.

'Large firms tend to bring in the lowest common denominators not the most experienced contractors,' Richards explains, 'which introduces service volatility. I prefer to use smaller firms, especially for jobs like this. They're more accountable, they have better quality people, give higher quality advice and I can pick up the phone and talk to the guy in charge.'

*\*This client can't be named but is available for reference.*





He adds that smaller companies are more responsive too: 'They take on feedback and action it immediately. The big guys never do, so they never improve'.

## Skills, Reputation & Plain-speaking

In the end, Richards chose Riteway; their specialisation in infrastructure migrations, including legacy applications and systems was a good match.

Riteway also had a strong track record of completing complex migration projects on time and on budget, which is uncommon. The deciding factor was a strong recommendation from a CIO with whom Richards had worked at another government agency. He told Richards how impressed he was with Riteway's people and work ethic.



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Richards was impressed, too, with Riteway's founder Matt Carroll. 'He is a no-nonsense, plain-speaking guy. He told us: 'This is what I'll deliver...

This is when I'm going to deliver it, and this is how I'm going to deliver it.' And he did. Quite often in larger companies, that gets watered down. You end up with dead fish but that's your delivery.'

According to Richards, Riteway delivered on their promise. 'I think program delivery is their number one strength,' he says.

## More Than Expected

Richards points out that Riteway had skills beyond moving applications to the cloud or aligning them with the Machinery of Government changes.

They turned out to be good at wider program delivery, including legacy systems and applications, as well as the first step, discovery.

'It's amazing that after years and years, people haven't documented things,' Richards laments, 'so no one understands how they actually hang together. For us, it came down to discovery, which in program delivery terms had nothing to do with the actual technology, but the Riteway guys did it.'

Riteway also worked on the agency's email system, which had been moved to the cloud a year earlier without a backup system in place. That challenge had lingered for a year until one of the Riteway team sorted it out over a long weekend.

## Outcome

'Some vendors you don't want to let in front of your boss,' says Richards, 'but with Matt, no problem. He can talk to my boss or my boss's boss, even represent me in meetings. I know he's got the emotional skills and wisdom not to make us look stupid. You can just throw him at anything, and he'll handle it.'

The project was completed on time and on budget and delivered the specified outcomes, without interruption to agency operations. Richards has since recommended Riteway to another department and is confident that they'll deliver another good outcome.

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