



Case Study

MidCoast Council IT Policy System Implementation

“The on-site review was short and concise, exactly what was needed for an organisation whose IT staff needed to be free to focus on post-amalgamation projects and work, and who saw they had discovered a ready-made off-the-shelf system which appropriately addressed governance, risk and quality concerns”

Nev Finch - Manager Information and Communication Systems



MIDCOAST
council

ABOUT MIDCOAST COUNCIL

MidCoast Council is a newly merged regional New South Wales Council formed through the amalgamation of three prior Councils and one Water Authority. The 900 staff of MidCoast Council provide a diverse range of local government services to a regional residential population of 92,000 over a 10,000 square kilometre service area with a population density of 0.09 persons per hectare, 190 kms of coastline, 3,590 kms of road and 487 bridges. The spectacular beauty and diversity of the MidCoast Council area makes it a region which draws significant tourism.

BACKGROUND

As an amalgamated Council creating significant changes to business processes and technologies, it is important MidCoast Council put in place a central set of policies and procedures. MidCoast Council was formed by NSW Government proclamation in May 2016 through the merger of the former Great Lakes, Greater Taree and Gloucester Shire Council and MidCoast Water.

CHALLENGES

- Consolidating the different sets of policies and operating procedures from each organisation into a central unified system so as to give strong corporate governance for the new entity.
- Mitigate Council risk (both regulatory and technical) plus address legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Enhancing work quality and efficiency through consistent good practice, and establish clear controls to demonstrate regulatory compliance.
- Delivering an outcome in a timely manner whilst having limited resources to do so.

SOLUTION

MidCoast Council entered into a discussion with Kaon Security who had a ready-made off-the-shelf policy system already cross-referenced with those standards relevant to MidCoast Council and therefore addressed several key considerations –

- Saved considerable time: MidCoast Council truly did not have the time to rationalise four different, disparate, inconsistent and, at times, out-dated sets of policies. Resources were already heavily occupied with post-amalgamation work.
- Provided a unifying approach: choosing a ready-made Policy System meant MidCoast Council avoided showing preference for any existing policies from any of the previous Councils merged to form the new Council.

- Policies were already mapped to standards such as ISO27002 which helped MidCoast Council align with security recommendations published by the Australian Signal Directorate (ASD).
- Written in plain English, easily understood by non-technical staff
- Very cost effective
- Technically simple to implement, make accessible, maintain and update.

BENEFITS

The delivery process from Kaon Security was very efficient and incorporated an on-site 2 day workshop. “The whole exercise took approximately 8 weeks to conclude and the outcome was exactly what was needed for an organisation whose IT staff needed to be free to focus on post-amalgamation projects and work, and who saw they had discovered a ready-made off-the-shelf system which appropriately addressed governance, risk and quality concerns” says Nev Finch, Manager Information and Communication Systems. “We would have not been able to produce an equivalent suite of comprehensive policies and probably saved 2 to 3 man years in making this investment”.

Ongoing, MidCoast Council have the ability to keep the contents of their IT Policy System updated by Kaon Security under their maintenance contract. This means key aspects such as advice, policy editing and any changes to the underlying standards in the system are taken care of. This represents a significant saving for the organisation in terms of time, money and effort.

LEADERSHIP

The focus of the new Council entity has been on providing overall consistency following the amalgamation of multiple Councils, through the deployment of new set of unified policies. The new system has provided a high quality standard for IT Policies for the new MidCoast Council.

Our intention is to effectively “market” or “socialise” the importance of these policies to:

- Senior management: to provide MidCoast Council a means to strengthen governance, reduce risk, and put in place more effective compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- IT staff: to provide them with a starting point for prioritising and developing technical procedures to achieve consistent results and reduce the number of reactive support requests.
- To MidCoast Council staff: to successfully and simply show the importance and relevance of these policies, how easily they can be accessed and their plain non-technical language.

