

Welcome

Welcome to Future Vision 18. For obvious reasons, this issue of Future Vision has a "flavour" that reflects the challenging times we have had to deal with as communities, both in Australia and New Zealand. The natural disasters that have severely impacted both countries, have provided what at times appeared to be insurmountable issues, with regard to service continuity and operational effectiveness.

In every respect however, the health provider sector has risen to these challenges and despite adversity have continued to support their clients and patients very well. There are of course "learning's" that can be drawn from these types of events and this issue of Future Vision focuses on some of these perspectives and provides an opportunity to reflect on our own organisational activities. In addition, two community providers from Christchurch; Cholmondeley and The Cancer Society (Canterbury West Coast) share their experiences.

We also profile the work of Dougal McKechnie and the New Zealand Health IT Cluster and review an interesting web based research initiative being lead by the University of Canterbury Health Sciences Department and it's Director, Dr Ray Kirk.

Enjoy this issue and as always, we welcome your feedback and comments.



Gavin Wright
Chief Executive
Fraame Solutions



When Caring and Collaboration Equals Prosperity

A vision for New Zealanders involved in advancing Health Information Technologies, from NZ's Health IT Cluster. Membership of the Wellington-based Cluster has increased by 42% in the past two years.



Dougal McKechnie, CEO of New Zealand's Health IT Cluster, says "Recent events in Australia and New Zealand have reinforced the power of community – both locally and beyond our own borders – when it comes to times of catastrophe." It's a topical message, and one that is very relevant to health IT. "After devastating floods and earthquakes caused terrible dislocation and have cut swathes through normal routines – access to health services and importantly our health information has been hampered."

Dougal holds to the theory that a well-functioning, efficient health-care system with reduced risk from error comes from a

greater collaboration between all providers and suppliers within healthcare. And health IT solutions play a significant role in achieving this.

"New Zealand has for some time now enjoyed the status of being fairly advanced in our e-health and in the use of IT. So much so that a number of New Zealand-grown solutions are doing very well internationally. However, at the same time there are plenty of governments who have started to invest heavily in health IT. Why? Increasing demands on health-care systems is becoming a significant burden for many countries. There's the rise in long-term illnesses such as obesity, diabetes and cardio-vascular disease. At the same time we have seen incredible scientific and technological advances which enable treatments in areas that wouldn't have been possible a generation previously. These advances come at a cost however. Improved use of information technology in the health care environment has enabled clinicians to be more effective, improved information the health and well being of patients and can lead to improvements in the quality of care provided to those who need it," Dougal says.

For instance, on a micro-scale, efficient use of technology in health supports the confidential, secure sharing of information between say a doctor, and a group of medical specialists who form a virtual team around the patient, so that "as that patient journeys through the health system, there is less time-wasted repeatedly filling in forms or repeating information. That reduces the potential for omissions and error," Dougal explains.

Ensuring our locally-grown health IT offerings are supporting the New Zealand health system in delivering quality care, also aids those companies in doing well in international markets, he believes.

The standard of healthcare in New Zealand is generally highly regarded internationally, he says. So in his role as CEO of the Cluster, he, along with the executive, is now firmly focused on three major themes.

The first is for New Zealand to create an environment which fosters and aids vendors in testing and trialling new technologies and solutions in the health system.

"We all have an interest in developing new technology tools and the increasing – and appropriate - integration of different sources of health information, and the Cluster actively supports initiatives trying to achieve this."

The second is that of growing our health IT companies' off-shore revenue.

"There are only positives in supporting efforts to achieve this – whether it be ensuring large companies like Orion Healthcare or aiding small enterprises with limited resources to enter and grow in overseas markets – ultimately the strength of New Zealand businesses will support the overall growth of our economy. The Cluster has strong links with New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, just as we have with our new National Health IT Board, and we're all together on this," Dougal says.

The third theme is everything to do with supporting and building on the health IT industry's capability. We work in a variety of ways



Dougal McKechnie

helping individual companies to hone the skills necessary to take them to the next level of business growth and expansion.

"We're largely a nation of small to medium enterprises, and the Cluster has a valuable role in helping businesses understand all aspects of business development and growth whether it be product design and strategy, understanding markets, business growth strategies and as well ensuring companies have the right mix of technical and managerial skills to support their individual aspirations," Dougal says.

"We all have an interest in growing our economy, just as we're all interested in maintaining and improving our own healthcare. Both we believe that can genuinely only be done with collaboration between all participants and stakeholders. That's what we're here to facilitate," he adds.

www.healhtit.org.nz

Keep Calm and Carry On

The importance of planning for one-off catastrophic events

It's a fact that conventional financial wisdom can be applied to the worst, most unexpected scenarios in life. For instance, unforeseeable bush-fires, floods, tornados and earthquakes can be survived better if you've diversified your circumstances.

Diversifying investments minimises your risks. Indeed, most businesses, including health-care organisations would have given some time and credence to this truth over the past few years. We often talk about diversification in business and social settings. Yet other forms of diversification matter too; sometimes crucially. This has become obvious to all those involved in healthcare settings in locations of recent natural disasters – such as the Christchurch earthquake of February 22 this year.

Take a minute to imagine the responsibilities your organisation would still shoulder, in the event of a natural, local emergency. Think of the impact and on-going implications such a disaster would have on your ability to continue providing quality health-care services. It's easy to dismiss the need for risk assessments and contingency plans, and much more advisable to take this seriously. Many Christchurch health-care providers and businesses recently had this thrown into sharp relief.

Health-care provision becomes no small matter in an environment which has suddenly turned to chaos and confusion. Shock can render people incapable of knowing what to do and in which logical order. So it makes sense to not only have a business continuity plan (and a hard copy of this in a different location), but also a basic immediate procedure worked out and talked over often.

While the human element is harder to plan for, (such as individual circumstances faced by staff) certain business structures can be set up right now, which will protect you from traumatic losses. Data-loss, for instance, can be avoided.

Christchurch organisations have learnt the value in having a tailored, automated IT system; one with back-ups held at a geographical distance from their premises. Core functions are then enabled to progress in the virtual world when the actual world around you is falling apart. The sudden nature of a natural disaster can cause vagueness or amnesia about important names, dates, relationships and contracts. However, having data shored up and intact virtually is one eventuality covered off. Every Christchurch business, hospital, and not-for-profit healthcare or community

enterprise had uniquely challenging circumstances to contend with after the devastating Christchurch earthquake on February 22.

For example, two of Fraame's not-for-profit client organisations were immediately physically displaced. Three months on, they still are.

Shane Murdoch, General Manager of **Cholmondeley**, a residential child care facility in Governor's Bay describes the afternoon of February 22, 2011 as "chaotic." The home, established the best part of a century ago as a centre of nurture and education for children whose families are in difficult circumstances, suffered much physical damage during this most recent earthquake. But that wasn't in itself the most disquieting factor.



"We do this job here at Cholmondeley because we like and choose to work with children, and it wasn't pleasant to see the fear they were experiencing."

The children were led to non-damaged classrooms after the quake had struck. Shane managed to have the FileVision office system up and running within an hour of power coming back on after February 22. Whereas, after last year's September quake, just getting hold of people took several days,. Staff were immediately able to phone families, as this time they had in the office hard copies of all details of children in residence. They set to work cancelling bookings, and arranging for children to be returned to their mums and dads. Some parents arrived to collect their children; other children were delivered to their parents that very afternoon.

"Thanks to a committed and quick acting team, we managed to hold it together very well," Shane says. "If we learnt anything from the first earthquake it was that the children want to be with their parents or caregivers at a time like this. If mum and dad had lost their home and had to stay at a Welfare Centre, it didn't matter. They just wanted to be with each other

Administration-wise, Shane is thankful the IT data-base systems are backed up off-site, (outside the CBD cordon) and that he was quickly able to arrange a temporary new 'home' for the children at Living Springs, a well-resourced outdoor education facility also on Banks Peninsula. Post quake more psychological support for the children has been accessed. Prior to the quake Cholmondeley had embarked on developing an adventure based learning programme (ABL). "I'm pleased to say that we have been able to get back to business as usual very quickly. The programme development is progressing well and strategically we are on track despite everything", Shane says.

The staff and children are currently enjoying the wonderful natural light and flow of the facilities at Living Springs, while they await



Cholmondeley Children's Home

a decision on whether their residential facility will be re-built or repaired.

"We are really fortunate that there's a lot of enthusiasm backing up what we do from the Canterbury community, so while there's urgency about the future of our buildings, we have huge support from Canterbury. We are totally confident Cholmondeley will continue as normal into the future." Shane says..

www.cholmondeley.org.nz

The Canterbury/West Coast Division of the Cancer Society

also faced very stressful circumstances after February 22. Three of their core locations were de-activated as a result of the quake. The main office at 246 Manchester Street is inside the cordoned-off area, as are the Society's central city flats which accommodate cancer patients. Fortunately, their Daffodil House residence in Papanui Road was not badly damaged, so patients were transferred there from the CBD.



Elizabeth Chesterman, Divisional CEO, believes in geographically dispersing back-ups for data, but points out that even the far afield Ashburton Cancer Society centre was 'red-stickered', which came as a shock discovery.

The society locally swung into action, attempting to get the branch's 0800 number diverted to Wellington, the minute this became possible. Even making this change was no doddle however, as "the system which diverts calls was also located into the CBD, so was initially not functioning," Elizabeth says.

Fortunately the society's accounts staff-member was able to work from home once an office computer had been extracted from the Manchester Street office, and so staff were paid without delay.

Since the quake, the society's local branch has focused on offering a reactive service only. Group programmes are currently off the agenda. Working from a base in a motel bedroom, the branch is still able to arrange accommodation for those patients (from the FileVision data-base) who have not had their procedures and operations diverted to other hospitals such as Wellington or Dunedin.

While there was very limited accommodation in Christchurch itself, the Cancer Society hired a minivan and transported Timaru people up to Christchurch on a daily basis rather than have them stay in Christchurch.

"The demand for our services hasn't diminished in any way. We've been busier than ever," Elizabeth adds.

www.cancersouth.org.nz

Both Cholmondeley and the Cancer Society's Canterbury staff would have been incredulous, had they been forewarned of such an earthquake possibility. Christchurch, New Zealand seemed like the safest, most stable of places in the country, and everyone thought that the major earthquake risk had come and gone away again.

The take-home message? Plan for it. Talk and consult about your own unique circumstances and responsibilities until you have an iron-clad risk profile and business continuity plan in place. It might never happen. But then again it might.

Health Services Assessment Collaboration (HSAC)

HSAC is a research initiative that was established in June 2007 by Dr Ray Kirk, Dr Adele Weston, and Dr Sarah Norris and is based at the University of Canterbury. It works under the umbrella of the Health Sciences Centre, University of Canterbury which fosters health-related interdisciplinary initiatives within the University and beyond.



Dr Ray Kirk

HSAC prides itself on providing expertise in Health Technology Assessment (HTA). The collaboration reviews clinical and economic evidence relating to health care. This information is used by others, including the New Zealand Ministry of Health, to make decisions about health purchasing, policy and practice.

An Australian HTA company, Health Technology Analysts Pty Ltd is the collaborative partner in this initiative. This Sydney based consultancy offers a range of HTA services to Australasian and international clients.

Co-Directors Drs Ray Kirk, Adele Weston and Sarah Norris and their research teams bring together expertise in HTA, epidemiology, health economics, health services evaluation, medicine and public health.

Exposure to a wide audience: "The website has provided the means for HSAC to disseminate its expertise in Health Technology Assessment to a wide audience locally, nationally and internationally and has relevance to health professionals and the general public" says Ray.

Professional Design and Access: The site is professional with tabs that provide easy navigation across the site.

Cost Savings: HSAC's publications are freely available to download from the website. This has enhanced access to the documents and reduced costs to both HSAC and the end users.

Dissemination of Knowledge and Expertise: HSAC is a member of the International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment and is profiled on the INAHTA website. 46 member agencies from 24 countries have access to HSAC's profile and can link directly to the HSAC website.

Ongoing visits: Web stats indicate that traffic and activity to the site continues to grow.

www.healthsac.net

Succeeding through Adversity Here's how it helps to plan to do just that.

Never mind whether you're an optimist or a pessimist. Planning never goes astray, regardless. To all those who had businesses in Christchurch's central business district on February 22nd this year, this will resonate as wisdom. If you are a realist, you may not have to learn this the hard way.



Peter O'Callaghan of Wyndarra Consulting, expert proponent of corporate governance and risk management based in Victoria, Australia, is the first to suggest that every enterprise needs a plan. Forward thinking and judicious action now can avert disastrous consequences for your business at some time in the future, even when there's devastation in every other sense – in the form of a natural disaster.

It's important to note that 'unforeseen' never needs to equate to 'unplanned-for.'

Even magnitude 6 or 7 earthquakes beneath key CBD buildings, emanating from previously faceless fault-lines – can be dealt with effectively.

Granted, loss of life is nothing less than tragedy, and can never be 'dealt with' neatly. But lesser tragedies, such as business interruption, can be minimised with the benefit of forethought and forward planning.

Unknown factors will always be a part of natural disasters. No-one absolutely knows what time of day a disaster will strike, and from what exact angle, which buildings will be affected, or how many staff will be in certain locations. But it will always hold true that automating whatever can be automated, (via great information technology systems) and having back-ups off-site and preferably at a geographical distance, are prudent things to establish.

When it comes to the basics of a business continuity assessment, the important things are just that basic. But do we do them? Like having an off-site, up-to-date list of all staff, their phone numbers and addresses, and information to hand such as whether each can work from home, should the necessity arise.

Other important pieces of data to have backed up and off-site are these: your list of key customers you will need to be in constant contact with during a crisis, contacts for alternative suppliers of critical equipment, and key intellectual property.

Here at Fraame we had the forerunner earthquake of September 4 2010 to hone our business continuity plans. But did we realise

it was a forerunner, rather than the more disastrous event? No. Remember, nothing vaguely even like this has happened here in the past century! But it served as a wake-up, all the same. We lost about a week and a half of business time, given that we occupied (in September) beautiful old civic offices in Manchester street, which didn't stand up well. Very fortunately, we were eventually given a few minutes to extract computers and files.

Since that day in 2010, Fraame has spent both time and resources in 'virtualising' the company. In other words, we've realised our business needs to be able to completely operate in the absence of centralised administration. We've installed the software and the telecommunications which allow us to access every record, contract and detail, virtually. So when the recent February earthquake happened, we could start to operate our core business more quickly from differing locations, within a couple of days.

Think about this event happening to you. Would you be able to access not just your email, but your crucial business administration functions such as payroll processes? Would you be able to make contact with clients and they with you? Would the communication be effective? If you physically didn't have access to your office, would the legacy of what you do be retrievable? Or totally lost?

So not only do businesses need IT which will be entirely remotely accessible; but they need a full and up-to-the-minute replicated copy of data somewhere geographically removed from the main office.

In the end, certain responsibilities for implementing pieces of business continuity plans fall to staff members. How will they cope in such an emergency? Are there things you can do to ensure they can continue psychologically with working in changed circumstances? How can your business dealings be kind and caring to staff and their families at times of crisis? Going the extra mile, humanly speaking, reaps huge rewards.

So – from Fraame and Wyndarra to you...plan for it! It may never happen. However, it just might.

www.wyndarra.com

www.fraame.com



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