

Centacare Transforms DR Strategy, Improves Cyber Resilience With 11:11 Systems



Catholic Community Services

Challenges:

- Managing an aging disaster recovery solution with hardware that was end-of-life and unsupported
- Mitigating significant risk from a DR environment that was not air-gapped from production systems
- Lacking the ability to perform full, isolated testing of disaster recovery failover procedures
- Facing significant challenges in responding to a potential catastrophic cyber incident like ransomware
- Operating a costly and complex infrastructure that offered little more than high availability
- Struggling with technical solutions that provided data replicas but no viable environment for recovery

Solution:

- 11:11 Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) for Zerto
- 11:11 Cloud Backup for Veeam Cloud Connect
- 11:11 Object Storage for AWS

Benefits:

- Achieved a modern, air-gapped DR solution that is resilient against modern cyber threats
- Gained the ability to fully test disaster recovery failover for the first time
- Cut Azure data storage costs in half by switching to 11:11's S3-compatible storage
- Reinvested savings from legacy licensing into enhanced, immutable backup storage capabilities
- Reduced operational complexity and management burden on the internal IT team
- Secured a true strategic partnership focused on finding the best solution, not just a sale

Profile:

- Industry: Social Services
- Size: Non-profit

Customer Overview

Centacare Catholic Community Services is one of South Australia's largest and most trusted providers of community support. For more than 80 years, it has walked alongside individuals and families through life's challenges—offering services in mental health, domestic and family violence, foster care, disability, family and relationship counselling, homelessness, education and training. Every year, thousands of South Australians turn to Centacare for support, guidance, and hope. For more information, please visit centacare.org.au.

People-Driven Purpose

Centacare Catholic Community Services is widely recognised as one of South Australia's leading providers of social and community support, delivering a broad range of services across both metropolitan and regional areas. Its roots date back to 1942, when it began as the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Over more than eight decades, the organisation has evolved in both name and services, adopting its current identity as Centacare Catholic Community Services in 2024.

Throughout this time, Centacare's commitment to building stronger, more connected communities has continued to deepen. Today, it delivers 63 programs across 36 sites, providing support in areas including disability, mental health, homelessness and domestic violence, family and youth services, counselling, and more. This work is underpinned by an ethic of dignity, inclusion, and respect for all people, regardless of faith, background, or circumstance.

Each year, Centacare supports more than 20,000 South Australians, delivering services with skill, compassion, and tenacity.

Centacare, like many not-for-profit organisations, would not be able to accomplish all it has without also being driven by a culture of commitment and strong internal buy-in. Brenton Denney, for example, is just one of the many people moved to be a part of Centacare's mission over the years. He arrived at the nonprofit a fledgling, fresh-out-of-school engineer. In fact, Brenton's very first job in IT was as a trainee on the help desk at Centacare. But that was nearly two decades ago now, and a lot has changed for both Brenton and the industry in which he built a career. A lot, that is, except his employer.



"I've honestly never had a reason to move on. I wake up every day and enjoy coming to work. What else could I ask for? We all understand that we're here to provide a social service. It's a mission we can all get behind," said Brenton, pointing beyond the glass walls of his office to an adjacent office filled with people.

He continued: "If you survey the team out there, you'll meet a data systems administrator that's been here for 25 years and a network & systems administrator that's been here for 20 years. I've been here for 19 years now, and another network & systems administrator that's been here for 10+. The retention rate across the IT team is ridiculous and I think it's because we all believe in what we're doing. People throw around the term 'work family' a bit loosely these days. But we really are."

Today, Brenton is the manager of ICT services at Centacare and is responsible for the entirety of the company's infrastructure. He's come a long way from the help desk, no doubt. But with each new promotion, Brenton also received a crash course in life at a non-profit, including its common challenges and constraints, budgetary and otherwise. By the time Brenton was given charge of Centacare's entire (aging) infrastructure, it was in dire need of an overhaul, especially when it came to its disaster recovery strategy.

"The infrastructure was never really at the forefront of anything that we did here at Centacare. Essentially, we existed to provide the tools our service delivery staff members needed while working on the front lines," said Brenton. "So, for many years, the company was pretty stagnant from an IT perspective. And after a while, our infrastructure reflected that underinvestment. It was outdated and needed some serious looking after. That's when our journey toward digital transformation began."

For more than 80 years, Centacare and its mission stood the test of time. But, as Brenton quickly realised, in today's digital world, standing still is just not an option.



Taking the Leap

When Brenton took over managing Centacare's infrastructure two years ago, its disaster recovery solution represented a growing and unacceptable operational risk. The underlying hardware had reached end of sale in 2016 and end of support in 2021, raising serious concerns about its reliability and maintainability.

In addition, Brenton and his team were often limited by the constraints of a non-profit's budget, which included a lack of time as much as resources. Ensuring continuity and quality of service for the people who rely on Centacare remained paramount, which meant the team's efforts were largely focused on keeping the organisation running day to day. As a result, there was little capacity to divert resources away from immediate operational needs and toward addressing longer-term business challenges.

"As IT managers, we spend most of our time being reactive and putting out spot fires," explained Brenton. "Being innovative is much easier said than done. It's really hard to discover better ways of doing things because that takes time and effort. You actually have to leave your office and investigate new technologies. You need buy-in from your IT staff. You need buy-in from your executive team. It's much easier to renew or refresh what you already have, but that doesn't drive the business forward."

Instead of maintaining the status quo, Brenton took the road less travelled, embarking on a journey to modernise Centacare's systems. To do so, he needed to find a solution that could keep their mission moving forward, minimise expenses, and protect their infrastructure now and into the future.

With the help of a few trusted technology advisors, Brenton took a risk-based approach to assessing Centacare's infrastructure and quickly identifying its most vulnerable components. Besides being out-of-date, Centacare had a DR environment that was not isolated from production. A direct Layer 2 link connected the two sites, meaning a cyberattack could expose the organisation to ransomware or other threats. And once inside, attackers could easily infect primary systems and their backup environment—rendering both useless.

In other words, Centacare had a disaster recovery solution in name only. That's when Brenton turned to 11:11 Systems to help the company move beyond simply solving short-term problem after short-term problem. He wanted to take a leap and drive the business forward. What followed would force the team to reevaluate and, ultimately, transform how Centacare saw and achieved cyber resilience.

"Our partnership with 11:11 Systems represents the biggest shift in thinking—from an IT perspective, at least—that Centacare has ever undertaken. It's certainly the biggest leap into the future the company has ever taken technologically in its 80-year history. It's really no small feat," said Brenton. "There were moments when I'd consider everything we were investing into this digital transformation initiative and think, 'I really need this to work. It must be a success.' In the end, we took the leap and put our faith in 11:11 Systems."

A Different Type of Process, a Different Type of Partner

The partnership between Centacare and 11:11 Systems began with a simple, yet existentially complicated question: "Why?"

Brenton, who was on the receiving end of the question, remembers the moment quite vividly—not just because it was the first time a potential partner had asked it, although it was. But, also, because it wasn't just a question. It was a potential challenge. A challenge that Brenton would come to appreciate.

"Every other provider we spoke to started by asking what we were currently doing and then proposed a solution that replicated it. That might have fixed the hardware issue but not the network or resilience problems," said Brenton. "Instead, 11:11 began by asking a simple but powerful question: 'Why are you doing it this way?' No one else challenged our thinking like that, and it led to a broader conversation about doing it better, not just differently."

According to Brenton, the 11:11 team recognised that Centacare needed to move beyond a simple hardware refresh and fundamentally change the way it looked at business continuity. He was quick to point out the consultative approach the 11:11 team took, which immediately distinguished itself from the other vendors. In fact, 11:11's willingness to challenge Centacare's assumptions is what ultimately sealed the deal on their partnership.

"11:11's process was very different compared to the others we'd been through," said Brenton. "They didn't just want to help us solve a technical problem, they wanted to help us rethink how we approach resilience, risk, and recovery."

This collaborative dialogue helped Centacare and 11:11 design a solution that truly met the organisation's needs. Another key moment in the process was when 11:11 highlighted a critical flaw in other proposals.

As Brenton explained: "The 11:11 team pointed out that those other technical solutions didn't necessarily give us somewhere to recover to, they just gave us a replica of our data. And that hit me. Because what good is your data in a disaster scenario if you have nowhere to recover to?"

Through these conversations, Centacare opted to implement a combination of 11:11 Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) for Zerto, 11:11 Cloud Backup for Veeam Cloud Connect, and 11:11 Object Storage for AWS. This multi-faceted approach provided a modern, secure, and air-gapped DR environment capable of withstanding a catastrophic even like a cyberattack. It also provided Centacare with more than just a copy of its data. It now has a fully functional recovery environment.



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Brenton Denney, Manager of ICT Services at Centacare Catholic Community Services

True Resilience, True Partnership

What solidified the partnership, however, was the different approach that 11:11 took throughout the process. “They weren’t just selling a product, but they cared about helping us do what’s best for our organisation,” said Brenton.

The impact of partnering with 11:11 Systems has been transformative for Centacare, delivering significant improvements in resilience, operations, and cost optimisation. The organisation has been able to cut storage costs in half and reduce operational complexity, freeing Brenton’s team up to focus on more strategic, mission-aligned initiatives.

Today, the success of this project has blossomed into a lasting strategic partnership, which continues to grow. 11:11 acts as a trusted advisor and true partner, helping Centacare further develop its DR policies and navigate unrelated industry challenges, like VMware renewals. It’s a strategic alliance ensures that Centacare is not just prepared for today’s challenges, but is also positioned to adapt and thrive in the future, with a resilient and scalable infrastructure ready for whatever comes next.

“If there was ever a testament to how much we valued the working relationship with 11:11 Systems, it’s this: We’ve since engaged them for Backup as a Service as well,” said Brenton.

He continued: “This remains the hardest project I’ve managed, but also the most fulfilling and exciting in terms of the capability it brought to Centacare. The technology that 11:11 employs is simply amazing. When I first started working in IT, I never could have imagined having this type of resilience capability. If you tried explaining it to me back then, I would’ve said it was impossible.”

THE RESILIENT CLOUD PLATFORM



MODERNISE



PROTECT



MANAGE