



Education

# Keeping things **simple** with HCI

Catholic Education,  
Diocese of Wagga Wagga

CEDWW saves time, effort, and floorspace by simplifying IT operations with Lenovo ThinkAgile MX for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI.

Lenovo

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# Who is Catholic Education, Diocese of Wagga Wagga?

Catholic Education, Diocese of Wagga Wagga (CEDWW) serves 24 primary schools and five secondary colleges in the Riverina region of New South Wales, Australia. A 1,500-strong team of staff supports a community of around 9,000 students.

CEDWW is committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for its students, educating the whole child so that they can grow academically, spiritually, physically, and emotionally in communities that are focused on welcome, faith, service, and learning.



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# The Challenge

With 29 schools spread across 80,586 square kilometers, keeping operations running smoothly is a significant challenge for the IT team at CEDWW. Previously, the organization ran primary school operations from its head office in Wagga Wagga, while secondary schools had their own IT infrastructure on site. When the time came to refresh some of the hardware at its head-office data center, CEDWW took the opportunity to radically rethink its IT architecture.

Phillip Baaten, Senior Technical Services Officer at CEDWW, recalls: “The hardware refresh prompted a period of self-reflection. We took a long, hard look at how we were doing things and realized that our existing three-tier infrastructure no longer cut the mustard. We had too much hardware on the ground, which resulted in massive management and maintenance overheads. We wanted to consolidate and simplify, without losing resiliency.”

# Embracing a **unified** **approach**

Following a six-month evaluation period, CEDWW selected Lenovo ThinkAgile MX for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI. The hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) solution combines computing and storage into a single system, enabling CEDWW to host virtualized workloads in a hybrid environment that unites on-premises infrastructure with Azure cloud services.

As the first step, CEDWW installed two Lenovo ThinkAgile MX3530-F appliances configured as single software-defined cluster at its head-office data center. CEDWW's IT team completed the installation independently, with Lenovo on hand to answer questions and help resolve any issues.

## **Hardware**


Lenovo ThinkAgile  
MX3530-F Appliance  
Lenovo ThinkSystem SR650

## **Software**

Lenovo XClarity Integrator  
for Microsoft Windows  
Admin Center  
Microsoft Azure Stack HCI  
Microsoft Windows Admin  
Center

## **Services**

Lenovo Premier Support



CEDWW has since begun to install two-node ThinkAgile MX3530-F clusters at the five secondary schools, too. CEDWW has completed three installations so far, with the remaining schools due to come online in the next year. “We were able to complete the latest installation in just half a day,” notes Bradley Merchant, Senior Technical Services Officer at CEDWW.



**“Lenovo Premier Support services have been fantastic whenever we’ve needed help. The team is responsive and proactive. In fact, it’s one of the best post-sales support experiences we’ve had from any vendor.”**

**Phillip Baaten**

Senior Technical Services Officer, Catholic Education, Diocese of Wagga Wagga

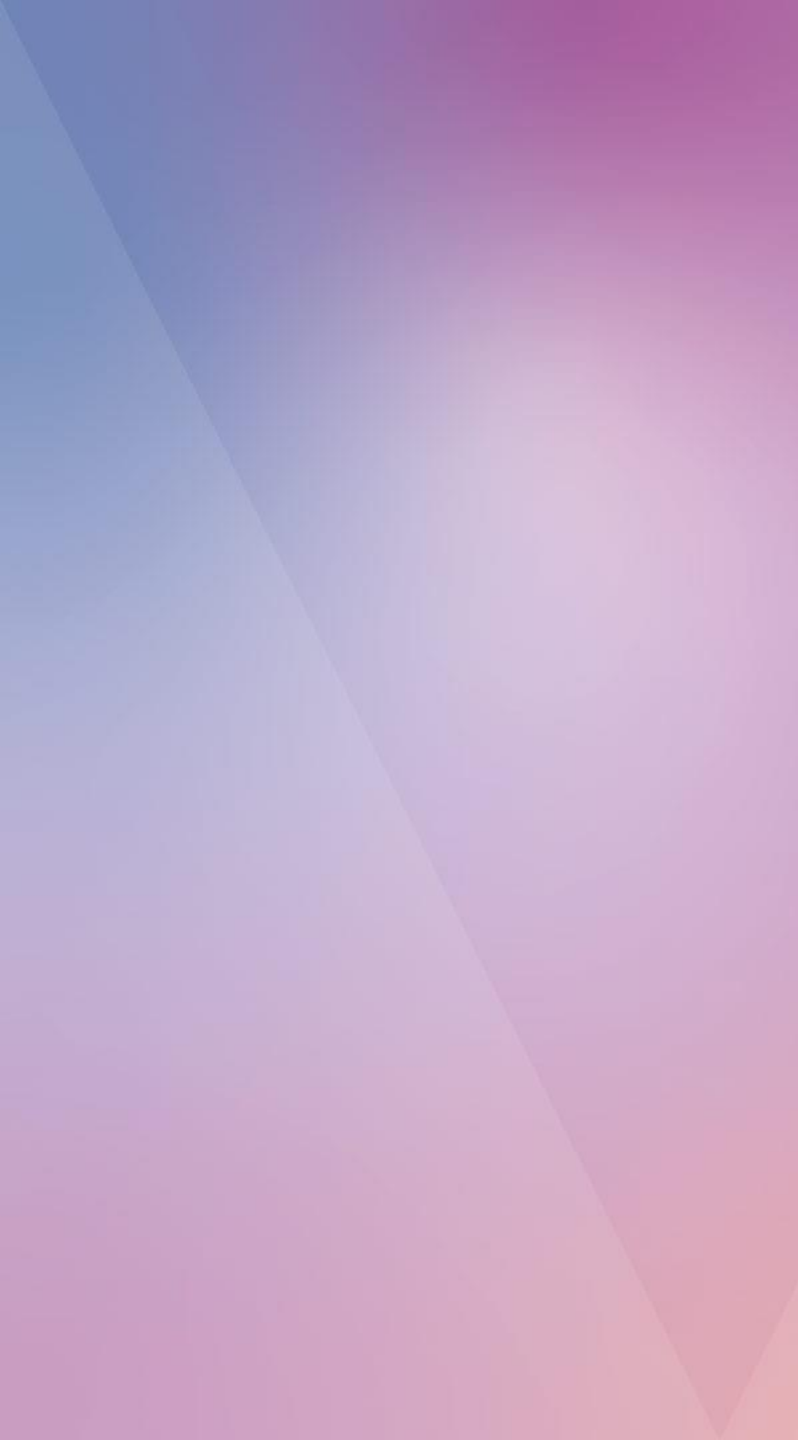
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## Results

By moving to Lenovo ThinkAgile MX for Azure Stack HCI, CEDWW has successfully consolidated and simplified its IT landscape.

Bradley Merchant confirms: “We’ve eliminated close to 100 servers for primary school operations alone. And we’ve freed up a lot of rack space at secondary schools, saving 5U per rack on average. Having less physical hardware to maintain saves us a lot of time and effort, and it contributes to lower power and cooling costs too.”

- ✓ 100 server reduction for primary school operations
- ✓ 5U per rack saving
- ✓ Huge performance increase
- ✓ Single point of control



Tight integration between Lenovo XClarity and Microsoft Windows Admin Center gives administrators a centralized point of control, enabling them to remotely manage servers via single web-based UI. “I was at a conference recently and was able to log in from my laptop and get a full overview of vulnerabilities and patches and run some checks remotely,” says Phillip Baaten. “Management is so much easier now.”

Bradley Merchant adds: “We’re really happy with the quality of the hardware, too. We haven’t had a single unscheduled outage and the performance is incredible. We opted for MX3530-F appliances with all-flash storage, and the secondary school technicians were blown away by the speed. They were using old DAS with mechanical drives before, which were so slow that users sometimes had issues opening files. Now everything runs super-fast.”

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**“With Lenovo ThinkAgile MX for Azure Stack HCI, we have achieved our goal of simplification. Our workload hasn’t reduced, but we’re achieving substantially more. Instead of spending time on routine server maintenance, we’re doing more value-added work on security and analytics, for example.”**

**Phillip Baaten**

Senior Technical Services Officer, Catholic Education, Diocese of Wagga Wagga



# Why **Lenovo**?

While weighing up the options for its IT architecture, CEDWW came across Microsoft Azure Stack HCI.

“Right away, we knew we wanted to move forward with Microsoft Azure Stack HCI,” says Phillip Baaten. “It offered an ideal way to consolidate virtualized workloads while maintaining resiliency, and it aligned with our cloud strategy. Finding the right hardware proved to be more of a challenge. Most of the vendors we spoke to didn’t know much more about HCI than we did! Lenovo impressed us with their technical knowledge and made us feel like we were in safe hands.”

Since engaging Lenovo to support its HCI transformation, CEDWW has implemented several more data center systems. This includes four Lenovo ThinkSystem SR650 servers as domain controllers and four additional ThinkSystem SR650 servers to underpin its enterprise backup solution.

Bradley Merchant concludes: “We’re big fans of Lenovo technology and the way that they do business. We feel like a valued partner.”



# How do you simplify IT without losing resiliency?

Consolidating the IT landscape with a hyperconverged  
infrastructure from Lenovo.

[Explore Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series](#)