C3 GROUP
Taking the complexity out of cloud computing for clients.

C3 Group selects the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform, powered by 2nd gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors, as the foundation for its comprehensive cloud services portfolio—boosting performance by 300%.[1]

[1] 300% performance increase estimated based on 600% capacity increase and upgrade from Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors to 2nd gen Xeon Scalable processors.

Australian managed service provider C3 Group partners with small and medium-sized businesses to make IT simple. The company's team of experts manages and supports clients' tech environments so that they can focus on what they do best—running their businesses. Based in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, C3 Group serves clients across the country.

C3 Group's motto is "tech enabling business", and they provide an extensive range of IT services to help keep clients on the right track. In recent years, cloud technology has become a key pillar of C3 Group's services portfolio.

With the C3 Private Cloud, C3 Group gives clients the option of colocation or Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) via shared or dedicated servers, built to suit their needs. The C3 Private Cloud also serves as the foundation for the group's DNS, web hosting, offsite cloud backup, hosted security, hosted telephony services, secure private networks and Internet services.

Brian Townley, General Manager of C3 Group, elaborates: "The cloud delivers unparalleled flexibility and scalability, and is now seen as a mature technology. Internet services in Australia have improved a lot in the last few years, which has made cloud services more accessible and more attractive to businesses. Demand for cloud has never been higher."

C3 Group is continuously innovating and modernising its service portfolio to deliver increased scale, agility and innovation to clients. To meet the surge in demand for cloud services, C3 Group looked to replace its existing hosting platform—a rigid three-tier architecture—with hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI).

"HCI combines compute, storage and networking components with virtualisation software in one box," says Brian Townley. "HCI appealed to us, as we wanted to decrease the complexity and increase the scalability of our data center. We looked at the leading HCI solutions on the market and the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform caught our eye."
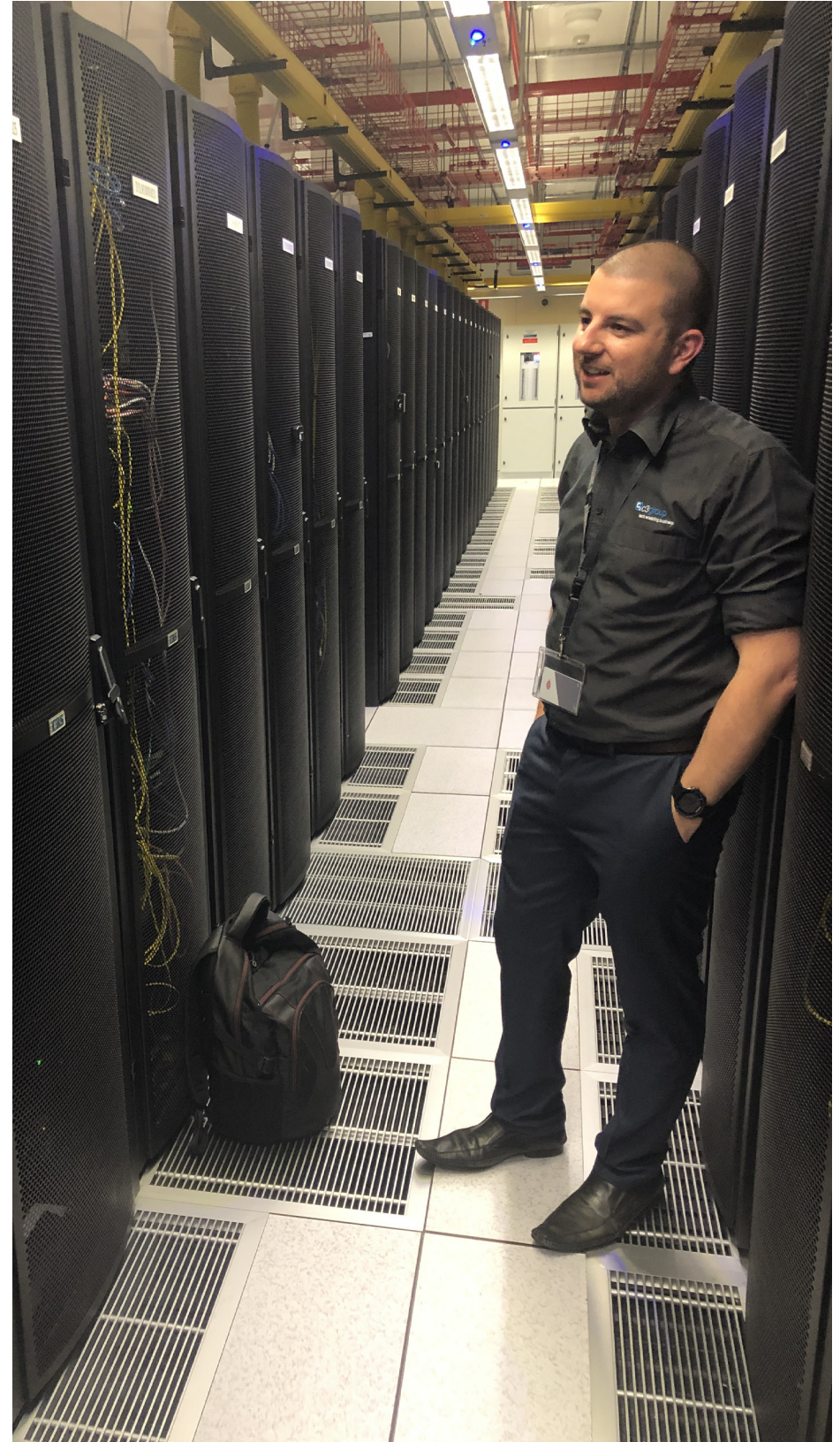
Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Certified Nodes are HCI building blocks that come with Microsoft Windows Server 2019 Datacenter Edition, Microsoft Storage Spaces Direct and Microsoft Azure Stack HCI software built in. Compute, storage and networking are virtualised and pooled across a cluster of Lenovo ThinkAgile MX nodes, making it easy to deploy, manage and scale the infrastructure. Featuring 2nd gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors, the ThinkAgile MX platform delivers consistently high performance and boasts silicon-enabled security built into the processors.

Impressed with the simplicity and easy scalability of the proposed HCI solution, C3 Group decided to rebuild its private cloud environment on the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform.

"We have worked with Lenovo for many years now, and our experience of both the technology and the support has always been excellent," says Townley. "We're running mission-critical workloads for clients, so it's crucial that we have local support on hand. Lenovo's 24/7 service offering with four-hour response time was a key deciding factor. Knowing that we can get spare parts and engineers on site quickly whenever issues arise gives us great peace of mind."

C3 Group worked with Lenovo consultants to come up with a system design that met both its current and projected future requirements. Townley recalls: "The dedication of the Lenovo team really shone through. They were very willing to keep tweaking the system design until we were completely happy with it."

Next, C3 Group implemented the nine-node ThinkAgile MX cluster and set about migrating client environments to the new infrastructure. "The implementation went very smoothly," recalls Townley. "Since the nodes come with the Microsoft software pre-installed and pre-configured, getting everything set up in our data center was very straightforward."

Today, the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform underpins the C3 Private Cloud, which in turn supports their extensive portfolio of colocation, IaaS and hosted services. With the Microsoft Azure Stack HCI solution, C3 Group is also able to replicate Azure and Storage Spaces Direct environments on clients' own hardware in their own data centers, with a connection to the C3 Private Cloud for back-up and security services. What's more, the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform offers seamless integration with public Azure cloud services, such as Azure Backup, Azure Site Recovery, Azure Monitor and Azure Update Management.

Townley notes: "We work very closely with clients to determine the best place to host their workloads, be it on-premises, in the C3 Private Cloud or in the public cloud. The Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform gives us the flexibility we need to meet clients' diverse requirements, not just one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter solutions. Having our own private cloud also means that we can provide a complete solution at a competitive price."

C3 Group can also offer its clients extremely competitive service levels. Equipped with 2nd gen Intel Xeon Scalable processors, the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform is a clear improvement on the group's legacy systems. "Thanks to the powerful Intel Xeon Scalable processors, the new HCI solution delivers a 300% performance increase[2]," says Townley. "This enables us to provide an even better service, keeping existing clients satisfied and helping us to win new business."

Lalit Gounder, CFO of Midcoast Trucks, an integrated truck solutions provider, remarks: "Midcoast Trucks partnered with C3 Group in early 2015 to resolve connectivity issues between our various sites. Due to the success of C3 Group's reliable and performant solution backed by excellent service, we have since migrated our primary server infrastructure to C3's Private Cloud offering. We have great peace of mind knowing our business is utilising industry leading technology. Our continued partnership with C3 Group has been very positive for Midcoast Trucks."

[2] 300% performance increase estimated based on 600% capacity increase and upgrade from Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors to 2nd gen Xeon Scalable processors.

Steve Watson, CEO of Steve Watson & Partners, a building code consulting and approvals services provider, adds: "We have been thoroughly impressed with C3 Group's expertise, attention to detail and the extra mile they have gone to in supporting our offices since February 2012. Having presence in multiple states places reliance on our ICT systems to be optimal; C3 Group ensure that we remain a front-runner amongst our competitors. Additionally, C3 Group have assisted with our office relocations, providing a seamless transition with no business downtime. Through C3 Group's Managed Services and Private Cloud infrastructure, we have access to a modern, secure and efficient environment—creating peace-of-mind for our company."

Chris Rainger, IT Manager at Enterprise & Training Company (ETC), a not-for-profit recruitment agency, confirms: "There's nothing like dealing with experts! Before partnering with C3 Group in late 2012, we were struggling with outdated on-premises servers. We had tried partnering with larger commercial companies to help with this, but now being partnered with C3 Group, there's just no comparison."

Townley concludes: "The Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform has all the features we need as an MSP—high performance, high availability and easy scalability. Backed by robust Lenovo technology and round-the-clock support, we are well-equipped to meet ever-growing demand for cloud services."

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