

topstory

October 21, 2008 10:47am AEDT

NSW plans data-centre revamp

Fran Foo | October 21, 2008

THE NSW Government has decided to consolidate its 130 data centres into two facilities in a bid to put a lid on maintenance costs and energy consumption, according to the state's chief information officer Emmanuel Rodriguez.

The rationalisation was expected to be completed in 2021, with the Departments of Health and Education as anchor tenants, he said.

The procurement process will kick-off at the end of next year, with work set to begin in mid-2011.

"We have 130 data centres and counting and migration will probably take about 10 years because there are many factors to consider including energy requirements," Mr Rodriguez said.

"Health and DET (Department of Education and Training), our mega-agencies, have already committed to be anchor tenants for the two data centres."

The NSW Government's CIO office falls under the Commerce Department, which Deputy Premier Carmel Tebutt oversees.

Ms Tebutt was also the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, a boon for the state's data-centre rationalisation initiative, Mr Rodriguez said.

"We're going to push the green agenda as far as we can," he said.

Homework on data-centre reform began about 12 months ago with the state involved in discussions with major suppliers, including Technical Real Estate.

"We'd like to get the best and brightest talent to come along with government to build these data centres," Mr Rodriguez said.

TRE director Stephen Ellis said the state Government's move was timely.

"At the moment there are fragmented facilities housing these data centres," he said.

"Consolidation will deliver more up-to-date facilities, and increase efficiency, security and ultimately consume less power."

Apart from an approved site in Sydney, TRE's proposal to build a \$2 billion, 130,000sqm gas-powered data centre facility across two sites in Hume and Belconnen is still awaiting approval from the ACT's development and environment authorities.

The federal Government also plans to streamline the number of data centres its largest departments and agencies rely on.

British efficiency expert Peter Gershon has found that if current management of the federal Government's 50 data storage centres continued unchanged, it would cost the Commonwealth \$1 billion more than necessary over 15 years. The savings are in line with NSW's expectations.

Meanwhile, People First, the state's ambitious plan to consolidate IT procurement and deliver cost savings of millions of dollars, is on track despite earlier hiccups.

"We have agencies coming to us saying: 'I'm strong in that area or with that vendor and people can piggyback off us and we negotiate for everyone else' ... under the appropriate governance obviously."

For example, the Department of Education manages the SAP master account, Health has Oracle while RailCorp manages Mincom.

Microsoft, though, is a different beast. In the first instance, the account is managed by the Government CIO office with the Education Department as a back-up.

"I won't comment directly on what we're doing with Microsoft, but what I would say is with monopolistic behaviours, the market will always deal with them," Mr Rodriguez said.

"In the case the open-source industry is taking the fight to Microsoft, not us."

People First is set to deliver cost savings of \$565 million by July 2010, he said. "The plan is to remove as much duplication as possible," he said.

Ms Tebutt and NSW Premier Nathan Rees are sponsors of the People First project.

Details on IT spending could be revealed at the state's upcoming mini-budget, but Mr Rodriguez said he had not asked for extra funding.

"I don't think it's the right time to ask for a budget increase ... why (do so) when we could do much more with much less?"

CIO Files: [Emmanuel Rodriguez celebrates one year at the helm as CIO](#)

Copyright 2008 News Limited. All times AEDT (GMT + 11).