

Strategic Advisory Case Study

Security strategy advisory and strategic benchmarking for a major agency

Summary

A major Australian government agency (the “Agency”) required an industry-aligned and risk-based view of its cyber security strategy. Foresight assisted the Agency in designing and implementing a strategic benchmarking review which addressed key considerations ranging from governance to investment. Using a consultative approach, Foresight’s strategic advice integrated inputs from the organisation’s strategies, risk assessments, industry security standards and outcomes from the strategic benchmarking review. The output highlighted key themes supported by analysis and actionable recommendations, which were used to secure funding and sponsorship for upcoming initiatives. The engagement sponsor indicated the work was of exceptional standard and has since re-engaged Foresight.

Our client’s challenge

As a government body reliant on outsourcing and operating within a complex environment, the Agency faced unique challenges in synthesising its security strategy.

Against the backdrop of these challenges, the Agency developed numerous strategic documents. However, as some strategic objectives conflicted, the Agency lacked a clear direction in relation to its cyber security strategy. To gain clarity on its strategic outlook, the Agency sought to understand how it compared with other public and private sector clients within the industry.

Scope of engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to develop an industry-aligned and risk-based advisory report on the Agency’s cyber security strategy. To deliver this outcome, the following activities were to be undertaken:

- A strategic benchmarking exercise was required to understand industry best practices for cyber security investment prioritisation, fostering a culture of cyber security awareness, as well as managing strategic concerns. The findings from this exercise were to be consolidated within a strategic benchmarking report.
- A review of the client’s existing security strategy was required to understand its key focus, strategic risks, and department structure. Based on the outcomes of this review as well as the strategic benchmarking exercise, a strategic advisory report was to be developed.

These activities were required to be completed within a narrow timeframe to meet the Agency's internal deadlines.

How Foresight helped?

Foresight adopted an integrated and collaborative approach throughout the journey.

Foresight commenced the engagement by gaining an in-depth understanding of the organisational context. This was achieved by reviewing the Agency's security documentation including its corporate plan, technology strategy, as well as its security strategy which encompassed its cyber security strategy.

Foresight gained insight into the external environment which impacted the operation of the Agency by liaising with other organisations. To further understand industry best practices, Foresight analysed cyber security frameworks including NIST.

Once an understanding of the internal and external environments was developed, Foresight engaged with the Agency's stakeholders to conduct a strategic risk assessment. These stakeholders were also consulted during strategic planning workshops to identify key focus areas of the Agency's cyber security strategy.

The findings from these exercises informed the development of an industry-aligned and risk-based view of the Agency's cyber security strategy.

The outcome

Foresight provided the following deliverables:

- *Strategic benchmarking report*, detailing key themes and industry trends.
- *Strategic advisory findings and recommendations report*, analysing the Agency's key focus and strategic risks, core recommendations and materials to support their practical implementation.

The above deliverables were presented to the Agency's executives who were highly impressed with their quality. It was noted the deliverables were beneficial, both strategically and operationally, as they identified the Agency's strengths and weaknesses and initiatives tailored to these characteristics. Foresight also received positive feedback on the deliverables from representatives of third-party managed service providers. Testament to the quality of work delivered, Foresight was engaged to provide additional services.

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