



Community Living

IDU's SMART BUSINESS SYSTEMS EASE THE LOAD FOR SERVICE ORGANISATION

The Community Living Trust, based in Hamilton, New Zealand, provides support services to people with intellectual disabilities to help them meet their needs and live their dreams within their communities. It operates across the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and greater Midland regions of the central North Island.

With annual turnover of around NZ\$ 20 million, just under 400 employees and close to 700 clients, the Community Living's four-person finance team needs efficient systems.

"After last year's budget process I said that's it, I'm not doing another one like this," says accountant Sharon Muller. "We offer eight services across multiple departments, and the number of spreadsheets was out of hand. The process was very inefficient – when you have to move data from departmental spreadsheets to another spreadsheet to then import into the General Ledger, you can pretty much guarantee that something will end up in the wrong place or out of balance."

In addition, says Ms Muller, "We couldn't analyse anything until we got it into the General Ledger. We were doing a lot of manual work setting up spreadsheets and formulas, and it wasn't helping us see the big picture."

She took her search for a smarter solution to supplier BES IT Systems, who arranged a demo of IDU's idu-Concept budgeting and reporting software.

"We were hooked from the start," she says. "We implemented the system during March – at the same time as starting the annual budget process – and it worked very well. "

idu-Concept offers a web-based view into a central database directly linked to the General Ledger, eliminating the need to compile and collate multiple spreadsheets.

It is also, says Ms Muller, much easier to use: "We have some managers who are less confident around computers and I was nervous about their uptake, but they just loved idu-Concept and found it very exciting. They found it less daunting than a spreadsheet and they enjoy the fact that they can comment on each budget item."

Managers and finance staff alike also value idu-Concept's reporting features, she says. "The data in our reports comes directly from the General Ledger so it's accurate, and managers can drill down to individual transactions if they need to. Once we have completed our next phase, which is to update the GL in real time rather than only at month end, they will be able to see their financials during the month, particularly as each fortnightly payroll is posted."

She notes that staffing accounts for 75% of Community Living's costs, and that "we have every kind of staff you can imagine, working complex shifts that include sleepovers. We make or break our business on the match between the actual number of support hours we provide and the funded hours. Idu-Concept will help us to understand and control that better."

Ms Muller says idu-Concept also gives Community Living the ability to prepare quarterly forecasts, "something that was never achievable with spreadsheets. Quarterly forecasts will give the business greater information about its expected financial results for the financial year. We also plan to use idu-Concept to assist decision making, as it enables us to easily model the financial effects of changes."

About IDU

IDU makes budgeting, forecasting, performance management and reporting tools to simplify financial management. Our flagship product, idu-Concept, provides easy, effective budgeting and financial reporting for medium-sized to large businesses. idu-Concept integrates easily with ERP software, but unlike more cumbersome offerings, idu-Concept can be implemented quickly, requires little or no ongoing consulting fees and reduces budgeting cycles from months to weeks.