

Harbor's guiding expertise simplifies Colin Biggers & Paisley's move to Elite Cloud

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Sam Sofianos, Chief Information Officer, Colin Biggers & Paisley

Colin Biggers & Paisley (CBP), a leading Australian law practice with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, has completed a strategic transition from its on-premises Elite 3E system to Elite Cloud. With a proud legal history of 125 years and a multidisciplinary practice serving domestic and international clients, CBP has a reputation for being an early technology adopter. The practice's existing Elite 3E system had been in place for over a decade, and while functional, it required modernisation to align with its cloud-first strategy.

Enhanced data security drives move to the cloud

Several factors drove the migration. CBP recognised that security in the cloud would be superior to what they could provide internally. Moving to the cloud also allowed CBP to free up internal resources, enabling the team to focus on more strategic and business-related projects rather than backend maintenance.

Sam Sofianos, Chief Information Officer at CBP, explains, "Security in the cloud surpasses what we can provide

for these applications, which gives our clients greater assurance that we are protecting sensitive data and information as best as we can."

Another key driver was the simplification of system upkeep, eliminating the need to manage software upgrades, patch servers, and perform ongoing infrastructure maintenance.

Despite the clear advantages, the transition posed challenges, particularly around managing integrations, handling customisations, and ensuring a seamless go-live experience. CBP needed a trusted partner with deep expertise in Elite implementations to help them navigate these complexities.

Harbor consultants embedded as part of implementation team

Harbor, known for its extensive experience with Elite 3E implementations, was selected as a key partner for the project. CBP had previously worked with Harbor on its on-premises Elite environment, making them a natural fit for the transition. "I have had fantastic experiences with the Harbor team helping us support Elite on-prem," Sofianos noted.

Throughout the project, Harbor played a crucial role in ensuring the migration was successful. They worked alongside CBP and Elite to manage integrations across trusts, disbursements, vouchers and time loads, overseeing some transitions to the cloud while keeping others on-prem. Before the actual migration, Harbor ensured that all integrations were adjusted correctly and functional. They also supported project management, partnering with CBP's internal project manager to meet critical deadlines and mitigate risks. Their expertise was invaluable in identifying potential pitfalls and ensuring a rigorous testing process.

CBP had relatively few customisations, but those they did have were multifaceted. Harbor's deep understanding of the Elite 3E cloud implementation process enabled them to navigate these challenges effectively. They assisted CBP in ensuring that all critical system modifications were handled correctly before the transition. Harbor also played an instrumental role in go-live execution, supporting CBP's development efforts, handling configuration and security tasks, and ensuring a seamless launch of the new system.

One of the key aspects of Harbor's approach was its integration into CBP's team. Says Sofianos: "Harbor was an extension of our team. They weren't external consultants; they weren't a third party. They were part of our team."

Smooth transition leads to business as usual

The project, which commenced in May 2024, successfully went live in January 2025 with minimal disruption to CBP's operations. The migration was executed efficiently, and Harbor's expertise ensured that integrations, customisations, and reporting functions worked as

expected from the outset. CBP has experienced no major issues post-go-live.

The transition to Elite Cloud aligned CBP with its broader cloud-first strategy, improving security, operational efficiency, and future scalability. With Harbor's support, CBP successfully modernised its practice management system, ensuring long-term stability while preparing for future growth. Sofianos summarises the practice's experience by stating, "With both Elite and Harbor on hand to help us with the application, we are prepared if any issues arise."

Harbor continues to support CBP with application management services after implementation.

"We retain Harbor's services to help us with the continuous improvement of our Elite environment so we can maintain the best level of service to our lawyers and finance team." Harbor assists with enhancements, release testing, and workflows and provides strategic advice on issues such as integrations across cloud and on-premises systems.

By leveraging Harbor's expertise, CBP has positioned itself for a more secure, efficient, and technologically advanced future, reinforcing the importance of having a trusted partner in large-scale system transitions.

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Harbor is a globally integrated team of strategists, technologists and specialists focused on helping law firms, corporations, and their law departments achieve breakthrough outcomes. We are also helping to steer a legal industry in the midst of turbulent change. We navigate alongside our clients and partners, providing salient insights, scalable resources, and seasoned advice.

Colin Biggers & Paisley

A legal practice with a rich history, founded in 1900, Colin Biggers & Paisley is an Australian based legal practice with offices in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, advising local, national and international clients.