

How an Australian audit, tax, and consulting firm said goodbye to its VPN forever

Case Study



In a little over 100 years, RSM Australia has grown from a husband-and-wife partnership to a leading assurance and advisory firm of over 1,800 employees providing a broad range of professional services. The company operates 32 offices spanning capital cities and regional locations and is a five-time winner of the prestigious Client Choice Award for Best Accounting and Consulting Services Firm (>\$200m).

How can a large audit and accountancy firm best protect and empower remote workers?

Whether based in clients' offices or taking advantage of flexible work from home arrangements, RSM Australia's staff regularly work remotely. From a technology perspective, this requires a secure, effective, and user-friendly system to enable access to cloud and corporate resources. Enabling such access has in the past proved challenging. Andre Bracetti, IT Manager at RSM Australia, explains: "Our legacy VPN was cumbersome, and the IT team often had to help guide users through the connection process. This became a big problem during the COVID-19 pandemic, when we enabled remote access to the whole firm."

There were also significant challenges with the VPN. For one, it provided wholesale connectivity to the corporate network rather than more secure privileged access. What's worse, connecting via the VPN was not necessary for some applications. Vanessa Wong, CISO at RSM Australia, comments: "There were plenty of tasks people could do without connecting to the VPN, and this obviously created confusion. It was time for us to embrace a zero trust architecture."

Concurrently, the firm was looking to undertake a broader security modernization program, with the goals of increasing control of web traffic and improving data loss prevention (DLP). It therefore embarked on a project to move to a Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) architecture complemented by Security Service Edge (SSE) technology.

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Profile

Industry	Region	Established	Employees
Financial	Australia	1922	1,800+



[Click here to visit RSM website](#)

Challenges

- Cumbersome and inefficient legacy VPN and web gateway
- Security gaps in remote working systems
- Inconsistent user experience for remote workers

Solutions

- Netskope Security Service Edge for secure applications and data
- Netskope Private Access for secure remote access to corporate resources
- Netskope Secure Web Gateway for web security

Results

- Consistent and intuitive remote working experience
- Zero trust security for remote workers
- Improved productivity for remote workforce

Balancing the security books with Netskope SSE

RSM Australia's security team was immediately drawn to the Netskope SSE as the solution to its VPN replacement and broader security modernization needs. Bracetti comments: "What really helped us make the case to the board was that Netskope leads in Gartner's Magic Quadrant for the SSE space for completeness of vision and ability to execute. That third-party validation from a well-respected source showed that we were on the right course."

Today, RSM Australia connects its remote workers through Netskope Private Access (NPA), a zero trust network access technology that delivers fast, secure, and direct access to RSM Australia's applications both in the cloud and on-premises. The NPA capability of the Netskope SSE has enabled RSM Australia to retire its legacy VPN solution completely.

In addition to NPA, RSM Australia uses the Netskope Next Gen Secure Web Gateway (SWG) for inline visibility and control across web traffic and cloud applications. The solution includes the ability to coach users in real time around RSM's security policies.

In the near term, RSM Australia is looking forward to implementing the Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB), and Data Loss Prevention (DLP) capabilities of the Netskope SSE. The former will enable enhanced control of cloud applications, and the latter improved defense against data loss and exfiltration.

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– Andre Bracetti, IT Manager, RSM Australia

From a VPN liability to a zero trust asset

Enabled by Netskope, RSM Australia transitioned from its VPN to a more secure and user-friendly private access network. With NPA in place, RSM Australia's employees enjoy a seamless and secure remote working experience based on privileged and direct access to corporate resources.

According to Bracetti, the key marker of success is that requests to the IT help desk have dried up: "Users just fire up their laptops and can immediately connect to their applications. No matter where they are, they get the same level of protection as if they were in the office, and there is absolutely nothing they need to do—no multi-factor authentication or any other process that adds friction to their experience."

The approach also brings clarity for users. In the past, remote workers needed to decide whether to connect to the VPN or to a virtual desktop solution. Now, all remote work is automatically secured through NPA. There is also no way to circumvent NPA, so security controls are always in force. Wong adds: "Delivering a secure and consistent user experience was the one benefit that really stood out to the executives. With Netskope, IT is in complete control and users are free to focus on their work."

More broadly, Netskope has enabled RSM Australia to embrace a modern SASE architecture, enhancing visibility and protection of web traffic and cloud apps. Throughout, RSM Australia has been impressed with Netskope's team and approach. Wong concludes: "Netskope's reputation for being easy to work with was a key reason we selected the company. Its reputation has proved well deserved and we have a truly great relationship with our Netskope partners."



Netskope, a global SASE leader, is redefining cloud, data, and network security to help organizations apply zero trust principles to protect data. Fast and easy to use, the Netskope platform provides optimized access and real-time security for people, devices, and data anywhere they go. Learn how Netskope helps customers be ready for anything on their SASE journey, visit [netskope.com](https://www.netskope.com).