PHILLIP GESTRO

Senior Microsoft Cloud Specialist | Microsoft 365 | Hybrid Identity & Security

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LinkedIn | Professional portfolio

Professional Profile

Senior Microsoft cloud and infrastructure specialist with more than 20 years of hands-on engineering, senior consulting and technical delivery. My experience includes Microsoft 365, Exchange Online and hybrid Exchange, Active Directory, Entra ID, hybrid identity, Microsoft security and enterprise server platforms. I spent nine years advising and delivering client solutions at ECLOUD and seven years as CentrePort's ICT Technical Lead.

At CentrePort I personally completed the remaining Exchange Online and hybrid transition, implemented MFA and Conditional Access, strengthened identity and remote-access security, and led complex hosting and migration decisions. I combine the judgement developed across different clients and technical environments with direct design, configuration, troubleshooting, supplier coordination, testing and operational handover. I also bring Azure hosting and migration planning experience, together with Intune and endpoint-management evaluation and partner-coordinated planning.

Microsoft Cloud & Hybrid Identity

- **Microsoft 365 and messaging.** Hands-on migration and support across Exchange Online, hybrid Exchange, SharePoint Online, OneDrive, Teams and Microsoft 365 tenant services.
- **Identity and security.** Implement and troubleshoot Active Directory, Entra/hybrid identity, Azure AD Connect, MFA, Conditional Access and Defender security controls.
- **Cloud and infrastructure delivery.** Assess and coordinate Azure and hosting options, legacy service retirement, virtualisation, migration dependencies, recovery and support readiness.
- **Client-facing delivery.** Explain technical options, troubleshoot complex platform issues, manage specialist vendors and bring changes through testing and operational handover.

Professional Experience

ICT Technical Lead | CentrePort Limited | Jun 2019 - Aug 2026

Led CentrePort's Microsoft cloud, hybrid identity, server and security delivery while combining direct engineering with technical escalation, supplier coordination and continuity of operational services.

- **Completed CentrePort's Microsoft 365 and Exchange hybrid transition.** Following the initial vendor phase, personally completed the remaining Exchange Online mailbox migration, configured Azure AD Connect and Exchange hybrid services, deployed the replacement hybrid server and retired legacy Exchange infrastructure. Implemented MFA, Conditional Access and Defender security controls. Strengthened privileged access and account-lockout protection, helping identify and block a brute-force attack; investigated and restored a failed MFA control for Remote Desktop Services.
- **Turned security risks into architecture decisions, testing and management actions.** Developed CentrePort's cybersecurity strategy and maturity reviews, translated identity and network risks into practical hardening and remediation, and led CentrePort-side Arctic Wolf managed detection onboarding across six locations. Coordinated independent penetration-testing and network-segmentation readiness, separating delivered controls from proposed work and outstanding decisions.
- **Shaped hosting decisions and led migration delivery.** Assessed cloud, private hosting and infrastructure renewal options against cost, security, resilience and recovery. Recommended the ASI hosting direction and led CentrePort-side technical planning, service-provider dependencies, implementation, cutover and validation.
- **Led the Shed 39 relocation and established CentrePort's digital infrastructure foundation.** Designed the four-rack server-room environment and led the complex relocation of staff and ICT services from two existing sites into Shed 39. Directed infrastructure deployment, specialist suppliers, migration, cutover and commissioning while maintaining business continuity and decommissioning the former locations. The new environment became the foundation for subsequent Private 5G, field-network and workplace improvements.

- **Led CentrePort-side integration of New Zealand's first commercial Private 5G network.** Turned Tū Ātea's network design into a supportable CentrePort environment, leading hands-on integration across existing network and security infrastructure, server-room and fibre readiness, radio-access sites and field connectivity. Coordinated design interpretation, specialist suppliers, testing and commissioning to connect the vendor-delivered platform to the port's operational systems.
- **Converted Private 5G infrastructure into operational services.** Took the vehicle-fleet service from bench build and controlled pilot into production rollout; led the reusable Reefer Tower delivery model and CCTV cabinet and pole deployment standard; and delivered Gallagher-controlled vehicle gate and intercom connectivity. Further CCTV and crane work remained staged within the programme.
- **Modernised operational networks and engineering standards.** Delivered workplace, tenancy and marine-network improvements, including a dedicated network for Rail Isolation. Established field-cabinet, fibre acceptance and testing standards, alongside a dual-contractor model to improve traceability, reliability and delivery assurance.
- **Directed suppliers while retaining technical ownership.** Challenged designs and scope, defined technical work packages and acceptance criteria, coordinated specialist engineers and contractors, and produced clear implementation, troubleshooting and operational handover documentation.

Consulting and Enterprise Assignments

Senior Technical Consultant | ECLOUD | May 2010 - Jun 2019

Held responsibility for client technology strategy, infrastructure, cybersecurity and operational support across government, health regulatory, industrial, education and commercial organizations. Worked directly with senior leaders while remaining closely involved in technical design, implementation, escalation and recovery.

- **Combined consulting with hands-on engineering.** Designed, built, migrated and supported Microsoft server and collaboration platforms, Active Directory, Exchange/Microsoft 365, virtualization, hybrid hosting and enterprise networking. Troubleshot complex identity, application, platform and operational dependencies for clients.
- **Designed and validated regulated cloud solutions.** Led government and regulatory cloud design work, built off-network proofs of concept, resolved architecture and integration issues and progressed solutions through security-risk, governance and design-authority review.
- **Advised a broad client portfolio.** Supported an All-of-Government agency, health professional regulators and industrial and education clients, alongside a portfolio exceeding 300 private-sector organizations. Developed technology roadmaps, risk-based priorities and practical investment and delivery recommendations.
- **Explained decisions and transferred knowledge.** Translated technical and regulatory requirements into clear recommendations, implementation plans and operational guidance; coached engineers and users, drawing on earlier Microsoft Certified Trainer experience.
- **Managed commercial and supplier decisions.** Worked with executives, finance teams and providers on business cases, RFI/RFP inputs, procurement, contracts, licensing, hosting and support choices, identifying delivery risks and challenging unclear costs or ownership.
- **Connected security advice with service recovery.** Prepared cybersecurity strategies, security-risk and privacy assessments, cloud-readiness reviews and business-continuity plans. Supported practical security improvements and commercial-client ransomware response and recovery.

Enterprise Contract Assignments | Comsmart via ECLOUD | Dec 2014 - Jun 2019

Recurring assignments undertaken while employed by ECLOUD, totalling approximately three years across Revera, NZX, CTAS and CentrePort, alongside work for Comsmart direct clients.

- **Delivered enterprise infrastructure projects.** Worked with architects and application vendors to implement secure data-centre, virtualization, Microsoft server and Revera Apollo local-cloud platforms, taking designs through build, integration and technical validation.
- **Built and integrated Microsoft application services.** Hands-on builds and troubleshooting across Active Directory, Windows Server, IIS, SQL Server, Certificate Services and Remote Desktop Services; resolved identity, network, vendor and application dependencies.
- **Improved operational security and supportability.** Reviewed technical builds, implemented Group Policy and privileged-access hardening, investigated complex infrastructure faults and contributed clear delivery and handover records.

Earlier Career

- **Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand | IT Administrator (2007 - 2010).** Led public-facing practitioner-registration platform infrastructure and managed technical support, planning and suppliers for health regulatory operations.
- **TelstraClear | Microsoft Windows Systems Engineer (2006 - 2007).** Delivered enterprise Active Directory recovery and migration work and supported Microsoft, Citrix and communications platforms.
- **BOSIT | Network Engineer (2004 - 2006).** Designed, implemented and supported Microsoft systems, networks, wireless and backup services for Wellington clients.
- **Avonmore Tertiary Institute | Microsoft Certified Trainer (2004).** Delivered Level 5 and Level 6 computing-support training, preparing adult learners for Microsoft, CompTIA A+ and Network+ qualifications. Held Microsoft Certified Trainer status for three consecutive years and taught MCSA material to people already working in the IT industry.

Technical Skills and Delivery Expertise

Hands-on Microsoft platforms: Microsoft 365, Exchange Online and hybrid Exchange, Windows Server, Active Directory, Entra ID, Azure AD Connect, MFA, Conditional Access, Defender for Office 365 and Defender for Identity.
Cloud and workplace delivery: SharePoint Online, OneDrive, Teams, Azure hosting strategy and migration readiness, VMware/Hyper-V, identity security, recovery, operational support; Intune and endpoint-management design/evaluation.

Qualifications and Professional Development

National Diploma in Computing Engineering (Level 6). Historical certifications include MCSE, MCSA | Messaging, MCP, Microsoft Certified Trainer, CompTIA A+, Network+ and Linux+. Passed Microsoft exams SC-100 (Cybersecurity Architecture) and MS-500 (Microsoft 365 Security Administration). Technical Writing and Train the Trainer certification through Auldhouse.