



SGI's Victorian R&D team helps put the 'super' in supercomputing

The story so far:

SGI is a world leader in high performance computing, providing server and storage solutions, professional services and support to more than 6,000 clients around the world.

Founded in 1982, SGI helps Fortune 1000 corporations, research organisations, government and agencies manage complex, data-intensive projects. This means providing the advanced technology tools underpinning analysis for a range of information-rich projects such as weather modelling, the design and manufacture of safer, more efficient cars and aeroplanes and providing technology for defence.

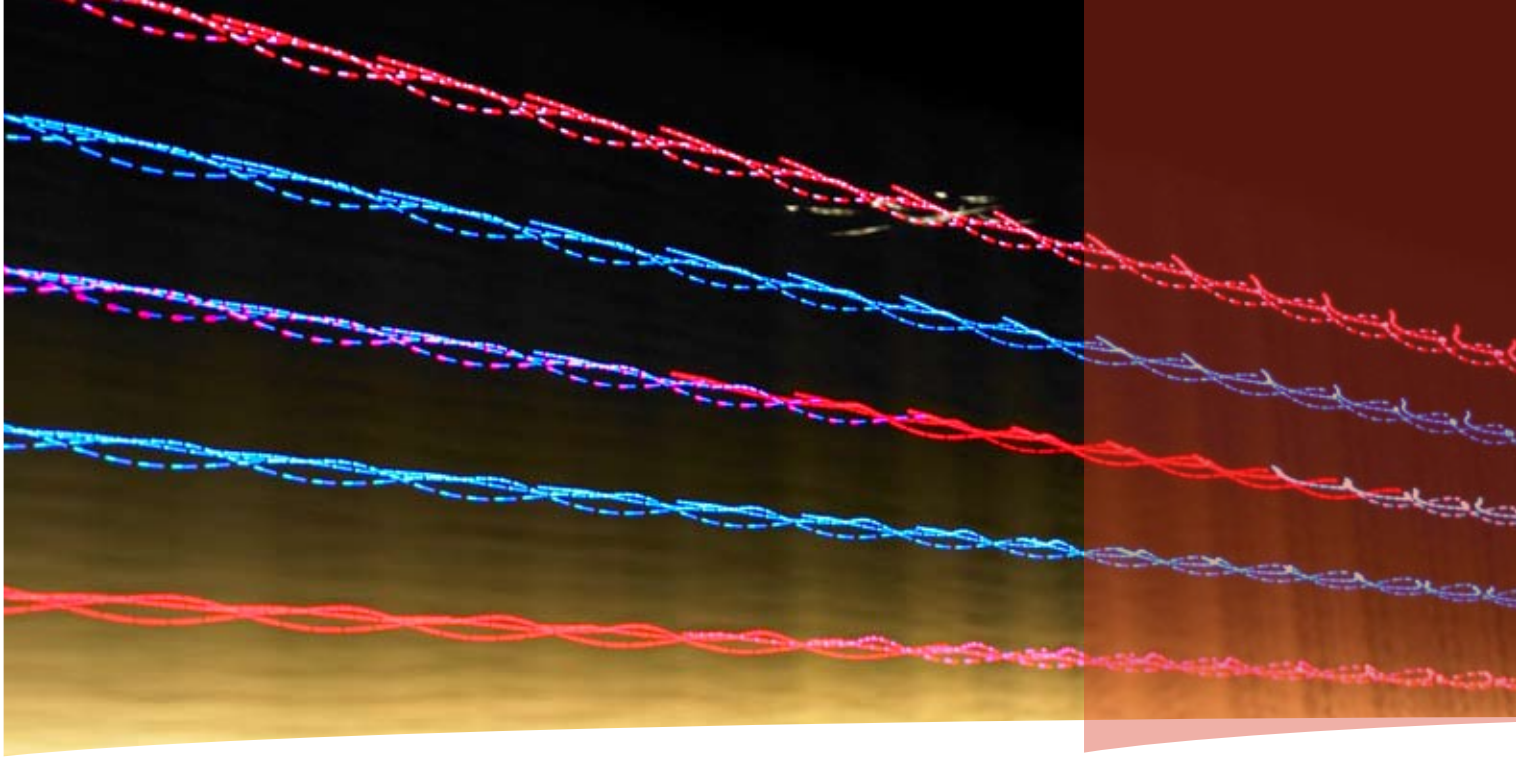
SGI's storage and server solutions have allowed customers to accelerate breakthrough discoveries and foster innovation. As researchers, scientists and engineers continue to look for the technological support to get a competitive advantage in their field, SGI is focused on growing its supercomputer capabilities to support these needs.

Melbourne is one of only three global R&D centres for SGI, with the others located in Silicon Valley and Minnesota. The Melbourne R&D centre develops solutions for clients such as the CSIRO, University of Sydney and Fox Studios locally, as well as international education and manufacturing customers and the United States government.

Headquartered in California, the Americas account for 59 percent of the company's business. Twenty-five per cent goes to Europe and 16 per cent is conducted in the rest of the world. The company has around 1,600 employees in offices worldwide.

Victoria: The Business Case

SGI entered the Australian market in 1988, opening their Melbourne R&D facility in 2003. Starting with only two staff, the company has since grown its Melbourne centre to a team of 30 software engineers, plus contractors, with an additional 40 sales and support staff within the group.



Australian Director of R&D, Mike Gigante, says Melbourne offers a unique environment for R&D. He cites access to a large pool of top talent, including good graduates, lower overheads and a more stable work environment compared with the high churn and poaching culture synonymous with Silicon Valley, as benefits of being Victorian based.

“We have a good record of staff longevity in the Melbourne team. There isn’t a culture of jumping from ship to ship, which makes us very cost effective compared with operations elsewhere. You could effectively double the number of R&D staff here with the same bottom line costs and that’s attractive to SGI.

“The team is just as skilled and smart, but tends to stay in jobs longer and that is critical to our success as it makes us more productive. We also don’t have huge training overheads and are not constantly waiting for people to get used to new environments.

“We’ve been able to grow our team steadily and now we can look to investing in future employees, as well as working with the Victorian Government to raise the profile of ICT as a career. That gives us an opportunity to foster those networks within Australian universities that will continue to give us access to talented graduates.”

Gigante also acknowledges the cost of living is more competitive in Melbourne and the supporting network infrastructure makes it easy to manage client relationships anywhere in the world.

The Future:

Gigante says the Melbourne R&D centre will focus on developing and growing SGI’s high performance computing and data management solutions to support the research needs of its customer base.

“We’re already helping major Australian and regional universities meet their information storage and computing needs. Data volumes are increasing in the technical market and our systems are providing the space to manage climate change modelling, Alzheimer’s research and ground-breaking studies.

“What our customers do is fascinating. It changes the world and we’re very excited to be alongside them finding innovative ways to manage their supercomputing needs.”

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