

Canberra firm lands \$45m Defence deal



LONG ROAD: Business solutions company JBS was formed in 2001 by Canberra couple Miles Jakeman, above, and his wife Le-Anne. Photo: LANNON HARLEY

By John Thistleton
Business Editor

Landing a \$45 million contract to streamline the Department of Defence's information management caps an extraordinary journey for a Canberra family which began with an emergency flight to Perth.

Business solutions company JBS, which will roll out over three years a new system for 60,000 users, was formed in 2001 by Canberra couple Miles Jakeman and his wife Le-Anne.

Working for a Chinese multinational in Indonesia, Dr Jakeman's youngest daughter Grace was struck with a bladder infection, fell unconscious with kidney failure and was evacuated to Perth for emergency treatment.

"The doctors told my wife and I we shouldn't go back to Asia because

they did not know what caused it, so we came back to Canberra and Le-Anne and I started JBS."

They ran the business from home, coffee shops and clients' offices. Through mergers, acquisitions and rapid growth they created several companies under the Citadel Group.

Although JBS has worked closely with Defence as a strategic partner since 2001, competing for the enterprise content management contract pitted it against multi-national leaders in their field.

Fourteen-year-old Grace is now in good health, but has 50 per cent renal function between her two kidneys and lost her hearing from the medication used to stabilise her.

After the Perth operation, the Jakemans arrived back in Canberra, where Miles had previously attended Duntroon and where Le-Anne has

family nearby. They had no house, no car and no jobs.

The content management contract, the biggest yet for JBS, is believed to be a key initiative under Defence's Information Management Strategic Framework and the Defence 2009 ICT Strategy.

Known internally as "Objective", the content management system will become the largest enterprise content management system in Australia, according to Dr Jakeman.

"In the bad old days everyone had their own personal drives, the system was not very well structured."

Objective would help decision making and record keeping at the same time, and would enable new people coming through to still find information from older people and reduce the need for hard copies.

It would increase information

availability, governance, efficiencies in handling and maximise the value of Defence's information assets to its users.

"Within three years, the department will be managing and storing in excess of one billion electronic objects, such as documents, files and decision records," Dr Jakeman said.

Dr Jakeman spent 13 years in the army's intelligence corps and was seconded to work for ASIO for two years before moving to the private sector.

He said the key to winning this contract was providing value for money.

The contract would create 50 to 60 extra staff for JBS which has offices in Kingston, Melbourne and Brisbane, and would lead it into the systems implementation and intergradation space and more IT outsourcing.