

Our Story | blueAPACHE Journey Since 1998

Canonical: <https://www.blueapache.com/about-us/our-story>

Details:

Summary

We began in 1998 as a Melbourne technology business run from a spare bedroom in Vermont South, founded by Chris Marshall on the idea that technology should be delivered as a service with accountability for business outcomes. Where our published timeline and its founders' narrative differ, both are shown, and years that are inferred rather than stated are marked.

Key facts

Label	Value
Origin of the business	1997, at a small technology reseller on St Kilda Road, Melbourne, selling Red Hat Linux "Internet-in-a-box" servers with 56k connectivity
Founded	July 1998, from a spare bedroom in Vermont South
Company name	Taken from the handle of the system operator of the Melbourne bulletin board system "Another Dimension"
Early customers in the founder chronology	Intercorp, described as the first customer, and Waste Audit; the first-customer year is inferred
Early managed-services customer	RMS Transport Solutions, placed in 2001 by the founder chronology; earlier managed-service activity is also described
emPOWER brand created	2003, when Facilities Management Services were renamed emPOWER Managed Services
emPOWER Network and emPOWER Cloud built	2010
Ownership	Privately owned; the founder remains Managing Director
25th anniversary	2023

The timeline

Year	Milestone	Basis
1997	Founder markets Red Hat Linux "Internet-in-a-box" servers with	Founders' narrative

	56k connectivity, domain registration and managed web, email and file services on a monthly fee, at a St Kilda Road reseller. Fewer than six customers sign up	
1999 to 2000	Focus on small and medium business: managed Linux internet services and Year 2000 compliance testing	Inferred year
2000	Nomad Telecommunications engages blueAPACHE to build a point-of-sale system integrating supply chain and provisioning across a planned 50-store rollout. The dotcom collapse ends the project's momentum	Founders' narrative
2000	First dedicated office, Level 1, 37 Railway Road, Blackburn	Inferred year
2001	Relocation to 23 Railway Road, Blackburn. James Hendry joins as a fellow stakeholder. The founder chronology places the RMS Transport Solutions Facilities Management engagement here	Founders' narrative; office move year inferred
2002	Grant Fallace joins to lead technical delivery, later becoming a stakeholder	Founders' narrative
2022	Reorganisation creates a business unit focused on Experience, linking employee and customer experience	Founders' narrative
2026	Infrastructure stack build under way in London	Founders' narrative, dated July 2026; year inferred

The early years, 1997 to 2003

In 1997 the founder was working at a small technology reseller on St Kilda Road and began marketing Red Hat Linux "Internet-in-a-box" servers that bundled 56k connectivity, domain registration and managed web, email and file services for a monthly fee. Fewer than six customers signed up, but the model of paying monthly for a managed outcome rather than buying hardware is the one we still sell.

We were registered in 1998. The founder chronology names Intercorp as the first customer and Waste Audit as another early customer, but its first-customer year is inferred. It describes shared Melbourne and Sydney offices and an early focus on managed Linux internet services and Year 2000 compliance testing. In 2000, Nomad Telecommunications engaged us for a point-of-sale system integrating supply chain and provisioning across a planned 50-store rollout; the dotcom collapse ended the project's

momentum. The chronology places the first dedicated Blackburn office at Level 1, 37 Railway Road around 2000 and the move to 23 Railway Road around 2001; those office years are inferred. It places James Hendry's arrival and the RMS Transport Solutions Facilities Management engagement in 2001 and Grant Fallace's arrival in 2002. The RMS description is a milestone in that account, not proof that no earlier managed-services agreements existed. In 2003, Facilities Management Services became emPOWER Managed Services.

Platform ownership, 2010 onwards

In 2010, we built emPOWER Network and emPOWER Cloud and opened our Brisbane office. Owning our cloud and network platforms gives us direct responsibility for how they are managed and delivered.

2010 is the pivot in this history. Before it, we sold managed services on other people's infrastructure. After it, the company operated the cloud platform and the core network its customers ran on, which is what its single-accountability position rests on today. Everything that followed — voice and disaster recovery in 2012, the international points of presence in 2019 and 2020 — extended that platform rather than changing the model.

The United States launch is dated to 2017, and a reorganisation in 2022 created a business unit focused on Experience.

Where the two accounts differ

The published timeline and founder chronology agree on the major 1998, 2003 and 2010 milestones. The first-customer year, early SMB period, Blackburn office moves and London build date include inferred years. The founder account identifies RMS Transport Solutions as an early Facilities Management customer, while the history also describes managed-service activity before that engagement.

What has not changed

Our founders describe our approach as "Our approach is simple. Automation led. Fully integrated delivery."

The founders' narrative describes a monthly-fee managed service proposition in 1997. Nearly thirty years later, the published OUTCOME 2026 programme advertised the national launch of Managed Services. Re-engineered. and the formal introduction of IT Operations Excellence as a Service. Explore our managed service bundles for the current offering.

Related

About blueAPACHE

Leadership team

Our partners

Careers

Managed services

Cloud

Connectivity

Core network and data centre interconnect

blueAPACHE Cloud case study

OUTCOME 2026

Contact

Who founded blueAPACHE and why?

Chris Marshall founded blueAPACHE in July 1998. The founders' story adds that the idea began in 1997 with monthly-fee managed Linux internet servers sold from a St Kilda Road reseller.

Where does the name blueAPACHE come from?

According to the founders' story, the name was taken from the handle of the system operator of "Another Dimension", a Melbourne bulletin board system. It is always written blueAPACHE, lower-case blue and upper-case APACHE.

Who were your first customers?

The founder chronology describes InterCorp as our first customer and Waste Audit as another early customer; its first-customer year is inferred. It places the RMS Transport Solutions Facilities Management engagement in 2001 and describes the relationship through the AUSDOCS 3PL acquisition. Earlier managed-service activity is also recorded, so this does not establish RMS as the first across every definition of managed services. Nomad Telecommunications is described as a major project in 2000.

What is emPOWER and when did it start?

emPOWER is our service brand, created in 2003 when the Facilities Management Services line was renamed emPOWER Managed Services. The emPOWER Network and emPOWER Cloud platforms were built in 2010, and today the brand covers managed services, security, cloud, connectivity, collaboration, procurement, the Microsoft Practice and consulting services.

When did you expand outside Melbourne?

Our published timeline records the London Point of Presence going live in 2019 and the Singapore Point of Presence in 2020. The founders' narrative dated July 2026 also describes a London infrastructure build as under way; it does not give a completion date.

Do you own your cloud and network, or resell someone else's?

We built our own cloud platform in 2010 and own the emPOWER Cloud and emPOWER Network. The emPOWER Cloud runs on HPE infrastructure and is part of Microsoft's Qualified Multitenant Hosted program, and the network core uses Cisco routing, so the platforms are ours, built on partner technology.

Why does this timeline differ slightly from the page?

The accounts describe different milestones. Inferred dates are identified as such, and the RMS Facilities Management milestone is distinguished from earlier managed-service activity.

What were the awards mentioned in the story?

Awards with a body and year are itemised on the About hub page; the "most awarded" phrase is our own wording and is not independently verified here, and no total number of awards is asserted.

Has the ownership changed since 1998?

We describe ourselves as privately owned, with founder Chris Marshall as Managing Director. The founder chronology names James Hendry and Grant Fallace as stakeholders who joined in 2001 and 2002; this history does not establish a complete current ownership register.

What is the single most important date here?

Building the emPOWER Network and emPOWER Cloud moved blueAPACHE from reselling managed services on other people's infrastructure to operating its own, which is the basis of everything it now claims about single accountability.

When were you founded, and where did the business start?

We were founded in 1998 in Melbourne, starting from a spare bedroom in Vermont South with a vision to make enterprise-grade technology more accessible and accountable.

Who founded blueAPACHE and what was his vision?

We were founded by Chris Marshall, who serves as Founder and Managing Director. His vision was to create a technology company focused on customer outcomes, accountability and long-term partnerships, believing that technology should be delivered as a service with accountability for business outcomes, not just technology.

What is emPOWER and how did it develop over time?

emPOWER is our IT-as-a-Service platform. It began in 2003 with the launch of emPOWER Facilities Management, followed by emPOWER Managed Services. In 2010, we launched emPOWER Cloud and built the emPOWER Network. In 2012, the portfolio expanded into voice and disaster recovery services. The October 2026 OUTCOME programme advertised the launch of IT Operations Excellence as a Service, with automation-led operations, real-time visibility and one accountable operating model.

What international expansion milestones have you achieved?

Our London Point of Presence went live in 2019, the same year we received our first ARN Innovation Award. In 2020, the Singapore Point of Presence went live, strengthening our international reach and connectivity capabilities.

When did you reach 100 employees?

We reached 100 staff in 2017, continuing to expand our capabilities and customer footprint.

What awards and recognition have you received?

We received our first ARN Innovation Award in 2019, beginning a period of sustained industry recognition. In 2023, we received the Canalys APAC Innovation Award recognising our leadership in customer innovation. Our current story page reports more than 90 industry awards and describes us as

Australia's most awarded mid-market IT services provider; those are company claims.

What milestone did you celebrate in 2023?

In 2023, we celebrated 25 years of helping organisations improve performance, strengthen security and navigate change through technology, and we also received the Canalys APAC Innovation Award that same year.

What services do you offer today?

Today, we deliver integrated managed services, cloud, security, connectivity, collaboration, procurement, Microsoft technologies and advisory services through one accountable operating model, supporting organisations across Australia and internationally.

What is your mission going forward?

Our mission is to emPOWER our clients to outpace change, turning secure, reliable access into a launchpad for automation, transformation and long-term resilience, remaining committed to helping organisations navigate change with confidence through accountable service, technical excellence and long-term partnership.

What quote did founder Chris Marshall give about your journey?

Chris Marshall, Founder & Managing Director, said: "I'm incredibly proud of what blueAPACHE has become. With the right people by your side, anything is possible. We've come a long way, and this journey is just beginning."