

CIO Australia: At an infrastructure crossroads? How IT can drive business transformation - blueAPACHE

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Details:

Historical article: 11 February 2021. Roles, infrastructure and commercial statements describe the position reported at that time.

This exclusive virtual CIO roundtable, in association with us and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, outlined how Australian IT executives can drive business-outcome focused transformation, documenting the key challenges ahead and examples of modernisation best practice

As line of business divisions modernise applications and embrace software-as-a-service – aligned to boardroom transformation agendas – IT executives are approaching an infrastructure crossroads. With change on the horizon, organisations are reassessing ageing data centre infrastructure capabilities in the pursuit of enhanced flexibility, control, scale and performance. Yet challenges remain as IT decision-makers balance laying the foundations for future innovation to keep pace with the business, while assessing current risk levels and supporting the status quo.

“Such uncertain times are making it difficult for CIOs to commit to long-term strategies,” outlined Chris Marshall, founder and managing director of blueAPACHE. “In response, businesses must become more agile and align with an infrastructure strategy which allows flexibility, while providing the confidence that IT can respond to market opportunities and challenges with confidence.”

In looking to the months ahead – and as businesses begin to drive innovation agendas to kick-start recovery efforts post-pandemic – IT priorities are changing at pace across Australia, evident by the transformation taking shape at Frankston City Council.

“We operated as a traditional on-premises organisation and the move for our workforce to be largely off-site has changed the way we need to network, manage our applications and drive nimbleness in both the delivery of current services and development,” explained Chris Rathborne, head of IT at Frankston City Council. “With increased focus on speed of services, flexibility and availability, we have had to trim even further our attention to the services that are critical to the organisation and our customers more than ever.”

As highlighted by Rathborne, the focus on becoming a “data driven” business has intensified at the local government organisation, which has in turn renewed emphasis on integration and connectivity, cloud ecosystems and the future of IT infrastructure.

“Workloads across the organisation do fluctuate as do our focus on services and this too has an impact on our data and applications,” he added. “Our data infrastructure needs to remain dynamic which includes how we build our systems and the flow of data from that which supports applications, through to the provision of reliable decision-making data to the executive in order to lead an organisation through change.”

In short, Rathborne acknowledged that elements which the business thought “mattered” must now be reviewed in response to changing market environments.

“While there is a lot that mattered before, and still does need to be looked at, programs of work now need to be leaner than before to ensure the delivery of critical services and adherence to strict and

tighter budgets,” he said.

Meanwhile, Hugues Brun – manager of Global IT Infrastructure at Radio Frequency Systems (RFS) – documented a sharp acceleration in IT infrastructure projects during the past few months, triggered by increased demand for network availability and remote access.

“This has highlighted the strength and weaknesses of IT infrastructure and also created opportunities to push new solutions to keep the business on and human safety at high ranks,” added Brun, in spearheading local modernisation efforts at the Melbourne-based division of the global cable manufacturer.

Delving deeper, such a shift in dynamics also helped reinforce business justification around customer access and information availability, all housed within a secure environment.

“Then our next challenge is to focus on infrastructure change specific to WAN access while ensuring more solutions are consolidated and easily reachable,” Brun outlined. “The most challenging aspect facing CIOs is data availability everywhere, added to the responsibility of making it accurate and secure. Therefore, infrastructure is the first step in ensuring availability and reliability are easily manageable, especially given resource restrictions.”

Moving forward, Brun advised that a sustainable way of following key business trends is to build attractive solutions that can be “easily handled” by end-users.

“In the other words, ensure that people are trained and can make and maintain IT solutions,” he advised. “Training is mandatory to provide two benefits – lighten the solution load for the IT workforce and ensuring the solution aligns with business trends and needs.”

Addressing CIO challenges

Founded in 1998, Australian-owned blueAPACHE was described in the 2021 article as a leading global service provider specialising in the delivery of private, hybrid and public cloud solutions, in addition to security, networking, business continuity and unified communications offerings. Key customers span a range of verticals around the world, including Nous Group, Honan Insurance Group and Berry Street.

“When modernising data centre operations, how much should CIOs invest?” Marshall asked.

“Especially with the current demands being placed on resources.”

With outsourcing representing a viable alternative, Marshall also stressed the importance of incorporating platform flexibility to help kick-start agile agendas across Australia.

“Businesses are seeking a private cloud experience with public cloud economics,” he added, referencing the provider’s emPOWER Cloud which leverages Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) technologies via GreenLake, a consumption-based IT model. “IT can keep pace by choosing a partner capable of supporting evolving business requirements through a comprehensive services catalogue. Our industry-leading suite of solutions is built on a validated reference architecture which helps accelerate time to value for organisations.”

In running a private cloud offering in the form of our emPOWER Cloud, Marshall said we can support customers during innovation and growth projects, removing the added roadblocks associated with ageing underlying infrastructure running modern applications.

“We are accountable for every aspect of the application delivery supply chain, from hosting and managing the application environment to ensuring excellence in end-user experience,” he added. “Customers also have assurance that cloud costs will not outpace business revenues because we deliver solutions as-a-service with monthly charges based on consumption.”

In a move designed to enhance scale, elasticity and agility of price-points, we recently selected HPE to upgrade emPOWER cloud infrastructure, delivered as-a-service via HPE GreenLake. From a technology perspective, the foundation of the infrastructure is built on HPE Synergy composable infrastructure and HPE Primera mission-critical storage, providing high availability, performance and scalability benefits in the process.

“Most importantly,” added Marshall, “HPE GreenLake ensures that we have capacity ahead of demand without the need for large CAPEX investments – reserve capacity is always available, but we only pay for what is used. “HPE GreenLake puts blueAPACHE infrastructure costs in line with revenue coming from our customers. We don’t have over-provision systems ahead of time like before, and when we do need to expand infrastructure, it’s now much faster and easier.”

With new cloud infrastructure managed by HPE GreenLake, Marshall said we are free to place 100 percent of engineering talent towards serving customers and meeting hybrid cloud outcomes, backed by dedicated support managers, strategic consultation and on-site operation services.

“We are completely accountable for the solutions we deliver to customers and having HPE GreenLake here for areas such as systems management and capacity planning is another level of governance to help us be accountable,” Marshall added. “This allows us to just focus on our business without worrying about our platform infrastructure.”

[Click here to view the article](#)

What is the topic of the CIO Australia article featured on the blueAPACHE blog?

We discuss how Australian IT executives are approaching an infrastructure crossroads and how IT can drive business-outcome focused transformation. It was published in an exclusive virtual CIO roundtable in association with us and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, documenting key challenges ahead and examples of modernisation best practice.

Who are the key participants quoted in this CIO roundtable article?

The 2021 article quotes Chris Marshall, then founder and managing director of blueAPACHE; Chris Rathborne, head of IT at Frankston City Council; and Hugues Brun, manager of Global IT Infrastructure at Radio Frequency Systems.

What challenge did Chris Marshall highlight for CIOs and long-term strategy?

Chris Marshall noted that uncertain times are making it difficult for CIOs to commit to long-term strategies, and that businesses must become more agile and align with an infrastructure strategy that allows flexibility while providing confidence that IT can respond to market opportunities and challenges.

How has Frankston City Council's IT approach changed according to Chris Rathborne?

In the 2021 article, Chris Rathborne described the shift from an on-premises organisation to a largely off-site workforce, with renewed emphasis on networking, applications, integration and cloud ecosystems. He explicitly called for dynamic data infrastructure and leaner programmes that could deliver critical services within stricter budgets.

What infrastructure challenges did Hugues Brun of Radio Frequency Systems describe?

Hugues Brun described a sharp acceleration in IT infrastructure projects driven by increased demand for network availability and remote access, which highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of IT infrastructure. He identified data availability everywhere—along with accuracy and security—as the most challenging aspect facing CIOs, and stressed the need for infrastructure changes around WAN access and consolidated, easily reachable solutions.

How did the 2021 article describe blueAPACHE?

It described blueAPACHE as an Australian-owned provider founded in 1998, delivering private, hybrid and public cloud, security, networking, business continuity and unified communications. It named Nous Group, Honan Insurance Group and Berry Street as customers at that time.

What is emPOWER Cloud and how does it relate to HPE GreenLake?

emPOWER Cloud is our private cloud offering, which leverages Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) technologies via GreenLake, a consumption-based IT model. Chris Marshall said businesses are seeking 'a private cloud experience with public cloud economics,' and that the suite of solutions is built on a validated reference architecture that helps accelerate time to value for organisations.

What infrastructure upgrade did the 2021 article describe?

It described an emPOWER Cloud upgrade using HPE Synergy composable infrastructure and HPE Primera storage, delivered through HPE GreenLake. This is a description of the 2021 platform, not a specification for every current service.

What benefits does HPE GreenLake provide to you according to Chris Marshall?

Chris Marshall said HPE GreenLake ensures we have capacity ahead of demand without needing large CAPEX investments, since reserve capacity is always available but they only pay for what is used. This puts our infrastructure costs in line with customer revenue, eliminates the need to over-provision systems in advance, and makes expanding infrastructure faster and easier. It also allows us to place 100 percent of engineering talent toward serving customers and hybrid cloud outcomes, backed by dedicated support managers, strategic consultation and on-site operation services.