



Aeris Resources

A Sundata IaaS Case study



Streamlining IT to focus on core business

There are two features of Australia's mining and resources industry that all operators must contend with – frequent mergers and acquisitions, and the need to manage operations over huge distances, often into geographically remote locations. Aeris Resources is no exception.

In 2013 Aeris relocated its corporate office from Perth to Brisbane, however at the time the majority of its IT hardware remained in Perth due to contractual commitments. In 2015, the hardware contracts expired and management grasped the opportunity to review the company's IT infrastructure strategy. The end result has been to adopt a subscription model in preference to owning and operating IT hardware, leaving the Company free to focus on their core business whilst retaining the flexibility to respond quickly to future changes, and opportunities.

About Aeris

Aeris Resources Limited is one of Australia's five largest independent copper producers by volume, with multiple mines and a 1.8 million tonne per annum processing plant at its Tritton Copper Operations in NSW.

The Challenge

At the end of 2015, Aeris was left with ageing hardware and the pending expiration of the data centre agreement in WA.

Aeris wanted to locate their IT infrastructure on the East Coast, closer to the corporate office and mining operations, but were keen to escape the three-yearly hardware refresh cycle. With the nature of their business making future developments, mergers and acquisitions a distinct possibility, having the flexibility to scale and adapt to change without costly IT oversight was a key requirement.



COMPANY:

Aeris Resources (ASX: AIS)

LOCATIONS:

QLD, NSW & SA, - Australia

INDUSTRY:

Mining & Metals

DESCRIPTION:

Aeris employs 250+ people across its operations and is targeting copper production of 27,000 tonnes in FY18. The company is focused on maintaining a lean corporate structure and building on a culture of operational excellence to grow into a mid-sized, multi-mine operation.

SUNDATA SOLUTIONS:

- IBM PowerCloud IaaS
- Strategic Advisor

Solution

The Aeris management team knew of Sundata through previous engagements and approached Managing Director Kon Kakanis for advice on their options to relocate and update their IT infrastructure. Sundata presented the pros and cons of on-premises, datacentre hosting and Infrastructure as a Service options. Through this process, Aeris identified that retaining IT on-premises was a costly option and required specialised expertise, which ran contrary to their strategy of outsourcing non-core activities. IaaS was identified as the preferred model as it shifts the burden of owning and maintaining the IT platform to the service provider, mitigating risks and freeing the business to focus on the applications central to their success.

Sundata's PowerCloud solution was selected as a highly flexible, cost effective and resilient IaaS platform delivering enterprise class features for small and medium business. Residing in NextDC facilities in Brisbane and Sydney, PowerCloud leverages NextDC's best-in-class facilities with multi-layered security and 24x7 monitoring to ensure maximum uptime.

Working with One Technology as provider of day-to-day support for Aeris operations, Sundata now manages the PowerCloud platform infrastructure from hardware up to and including the virtualisation layer, with regular

"Sundata was able to look at the big picture, explain the options to us in plain English, and justify why the proposed solution represented the best fit."

- Narelle Wynn, Project Coordinator

localised backup and recovery. Security services were also deployed in the form of a hosted firewall, providing a full Unified Threat Management suite including anti-virus, IPS, application control and web filtering.

Aeris Project coordinator Narelle Wynn says it was Sundata's strong reputation and consultative approach, focused on analysing the pros and cons of all the options before recommending a path

forward that gave her company the confidence to make the change away from owning and operating their core IT infrastructure in-house.

"Sundata shares our values and business ethics," she says. "It has meant that the inevitable hurdles encountered in a project like this have been dealt with promptly and fairly."

Outcomes

While some benefits will be proven over time, Aeris have begun to reap the returns forecast when they set out on the IaaS path:

- Agility to scale as business demands and add new features over time;
- Access to enterprise grade hardware hosted in a Tier 1 Data centre;
- Eliminating the disruptive and capital intensive hardware refresh cycles; and
- Regaining the freedom to assign internal resources away from IT and back to the task of managing and growing a successful mining operation.

Since becoming fully operational in the hosted environment, Narelle says the streamlining of operations is producing significant cost savings along with productivity gains boosted by a faster, more stable centralised IT infrastructure. Sundata's approach engenders confidence that the platform is being professionally managed and maintained, while bundling backup and security services with the IaaS platform delivers peace of mind that company interests are protected against cyber threats.

"We now have a standards based IT platform that serves as the umbrella for all our operations," Narelle says. "No matter what we may inherit through company acquisitions in the future, we will be able to bring new operations on board and be confident in reaching business-as-usual performance quickly."