



Whitehaven Coal keeps business and production on track

CUSTOMER
Whitehaven Coal

LOCATION
Australia

INDUSTRY
Energy, Utilities, Oil & Gas



Challenge

- Acquisition of two new mine sites, effectively doubling the company's size
- The need for a reliable ERP foundation to support essential business processes
- Accelerated delivery requirement with many critical dependencies to achieve no business interruptions from Legal Day 1



Solution

- RISE with SAP S/4HANA; SAP SuccessFactors; SAP BTP (Business Technology Platform), MuleSoft; SAP Data Services; SAP Analytics Cloud; Power BI; Azure AD and mobile applications
- Complex program delivery using a hybrid methodology from a project team of 270 DXC specialists including SAP application services, consulting services, system design, training, managed services, organisational change management, data management, security services and program governance



Results

- 2,200+ regional employees (plus 4,000+ contractors) successfully transitioned to new systems with seamless payroll processing and no production disruption
- 150+ mining operational applications integrated
- 400+ suppliers onboarded to maintain business continuity



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Whitehaven Coal (Whitehaven) is a leading Australian producer of high-quality thermal and metallurgical coal. The company helps power regional economies through its contribution to energy generation and steel production.

On Legal Day 1 (LD1), six months after the sale date, Whitehaven needed to ensure safe and stable operations, with a workforce of 2,200+ smoothly transferred and ready to operate the mines.

Whitehaven's high-quality coal is sought-after for its unique properties, including delivering among the lowest carbon emissions per tonne of coal consumed in the seaborne trade.

Whitehaven is renowned for excellence in project delivery, safe operations, and targeted investment in local economies and communities. With the majority of its Queensland workforce located regionally, Whitehaven understands the importance of mining to regional areas and is focused on promoting local prosperity, building local community capacity, and ensuring regional towns thrive.

Rapid expansion

In 2023, Whitehaven announced a strategic acquisition of two regional Queensland mines (Blackwater and Daunia) from BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA). As part of the agreement, an ambitious timeline was set to complete the transition within six months. This

acquisition would effectively double Whitehaven's size (headcount and coal production), necessitating the rapid and robust integration of the new assets into its existing operational framework.

While Whitehaven would inherit the people, mining assets, and operational applications from BHP, none of the underlying group technology systems or remote operations centres were included. On Legal Day 1 (LD1), six months after the sale date, Whitehaven needed to ensure safe and stable operations, with a workforce of 2,200+ smoothly transferred and ready to operate the mines.

Whitehaven recognised it needed to enhance its existing systems to ensure they could manage the complexities and scale of its evolving business, and given the tight timeline there was a need for extra resource capacity to meet this business demand. The strategy was clear: establish a reliable ERP foundation to support essential



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business processes, and engage the right technology partner to help manage the intricate data migration, complex integration, and the change associated with a technology transformation of this size.

Essential foundation

Choosing the right solution was critical, so a thorough market analysis was conducted exploring industry standards and best practices.

RISE with SAP S/4HANA emerged as the optimal choice, offering the latest technology and minimising transition risks by leveraging familiar processes and interfaces. This approach aligned with Whitehaven’s strategic goals while positioning them at the forefront of the industry, with the latest SAP solutions becoming the foundation of existing and future projects.

With a commitment to transition and integrate existing and new systems for the mines as fully operational within the compressed timeline of six months (to meet LD1 requirements), Whitehaven partnered with DXC Technology to manage the complete greenfield implementation process.

Whitehaven’s Chief Information Officer, Nick Zafiris, explained, “The technology component was part of a much bigger program of work – one of 18 different business streams involved in the business transition.

“We chose DXC to support the technical side of the project due to their extensive experience in SAP implementation, application integration, and their strategic vision to navigate this challenging landscape. DXC has a deep understanding of the mining

industry and proven success in merger and acquisition (M&A) environments.

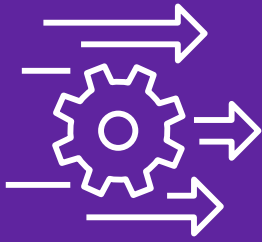
“The team also has a ‘can do’ attitude – rolling up their sleeves to get the job done. That’s very much how we operate at Whitehaven, so the cultural fit was great.”

As part of the initial pitch to purchase the mines, DXC was invited to provide a feasibility study to determine costs and validate that an implementation of this scope could be completed in the required timeframe.

The S/4HANA platform provided the backbone, handling critical finance, supply chain, asset management, and procurement functions, with SAP SuccessFactors integrated for comprehensive workforce management, covering recruitment, onboarding, payroll, and learning management.

Advanced data integration was achieved using SAP BTP (Business Technology Platform), MuleSoft, and SAP Data Services. SAP Analytics Cloud and Power BI provided robust business intelligence and reporting capabilities. In addition, identity management through Azure AD and mobile applications facilitated secure and flexible system access for the 2,200+ transitioning employees.

DXC’s work included program delivery using a hybrid methodology with comprehensive consulting services, new system design, intensive training programs, managed services, organisational change management (OCM), rigorous data management, security services, and program governance. In addition, ensuring seamless data migration from BHP systems required advanced integration techniques and meticulous planning.



The compressed timeline demanded extraordinary efforts, with an integrated team of 270 (at the peak) business, technology and OCM personnel dedicated to completing the implementation on time with a laser focus on scope, zero customisation, and leveraging best practices and iterative methodologies.

The pressure was on

The project's go-live date was non-negotiable, and safe and stable operations at both mines were critical for LD1.

Whitehaven needed to ensure that the 2,200+ transferring employees would start their first day with seamless access to operate the sites, proficiency in navigating new systems, and assurance that they would be paid accurately and on time.

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Choosing RISE with SAP S/4HANA private cloud eliminated infrastructure concerns and performance issues, allowing the team to concentrate on implementation and functionality. DXC's industry templates and best practices proved invaluable, enabling a rapid, efficient implementation without unnecessary features.

Innovative implementation

DXC challenged the norm to find new ways to complete the usual project methodologies. Defining a minimum viable product (MVP) with baseline functionality for LD1 up front, and adhering to that throughout, was vital.

Collaborating with Whitehaven, the DXC team based the new system on existing structures provided by BHP but always followed best practice guidelines.

Strong communication channels and collaborative relationships were developed with BHP and all stakeholders, and advanced data management techniques were used to ensure smooth data access and integration.

Development was completed in sprints, with many workstreams running in parallel. With large amounts of data, testing time was limited, so the business trusted the data was configured correctly and accurately, and DXC transformed the testing into a combined training and education exercise, saving valuable time and cost.

As one of Australia's largest cloud ERP implementations at the time, the greenfield RISE with SAP S/4HANA implementation was transformational for Whitehaven and set an industry benchmark by being completed in a record-breaking six months instead of the typical minimum timeframe of ten months.

DXC's OCM team played a significant part in delivery, working closely with Whitehaven to ensure business readiness. They worked alongside the design and development teams, maintaining flexibility to adapt as the project evolved. A shift towards more digital ways of working was encouraged, with access to information from mobile phones and other advances providing opportunities for the coal mine workers to operate in different ways.

Bronwyn Edwards, DXC's OCM Lead for the program, explained, "We adapted our usual organisational change method, embedding our teams alongside the DXC and SAP people during design and development to absorb everything they were doing, developing our change plans in the flow of work."

There was no contact with transitioning staff leading up to LD1, so training was developed utilising desktop research regarding demographics, and likely digital capability and literacy of the impacted workforce. DXC OCM team members created and managed interactive SAP training materials, provided in-application guidance, and utilised analytics to improve user adoption and performance.

Doubling business in six months

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The strong collaboration between Whitehaven, SAP and DXC was central to tackling this large-scale digital transformation, creating a robust ERP foundation to support future growth.

The existing operational technology on the two new 24/7 Queensland-based mine sites was integrated into the new ERP, and safe, stable operations were achieved on LD1 without disrupting production or operations.



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Positive employee transition

Whitehaven’s new employees were central to the success of this project. Crucially, ‘drop-in hypercare centres’ staffed by DXC OCM team members, provided the face of Whitehaven for employees. The centres operated 24/7 at both mines for the first two weeks after LD1 and for several weeks after that at reduced hours. 1,500 queries were solved at that first point of contact on site, alleviating additional pressure on help desk service teams.

The human-to-human contact during this major transition was favourably viewed by workers who felt incredibly supported and cared for by their new employer, consistently rating the service 4.9 out of 5 and making a critical impact on success on-site.

Challenges were tackled by leveraging SAP’s technology and best practice with DXC’s solutioning and implementation expertise. The goal to maintain high data integrity and operational continuity was achieved, delivering a range of tangible benefits across all project priorities, with:

- 2,200+ onsite employees (plus up to 4,000 contractors) successfully transitioned to Whitehaven’s new systems with no disruption to production
- Seamless payroll processing for 2,200+ employees
- 150+ existing operational applications transitioned across the mine’s operations
- Coal moving on trains within the first week

- 400+ suppliers onboarded to maintain business continuity
- High data integrity and accuracy maintained, with zero errors reported post-go-live
- A new remote operations centre stood up at Whitehaven’s Brisbane office

The results speak volumes about the skill and dedication of the teams involved and demonstrate Whitehaven’s commitment to strategic growth and innovation.

Paul Canterbury, Associate Partner Industry Solutions, DXC, said, “Working harmoniously with SAP and Whitehaven to deliver the desired outcome, DXC provided the discipline and governance necessary for Whitehaven to achieve its implementation goals within a critical timeline.

“We are immensely proud of this initiative, it sets a new benchmark for rapid SAP implementations and highlights DXC’s exceptional capability in managing complex programs, which helped Whitehaven double its size and transition a large workforce with minimal disruption.

“Key to this success was Whitehaven’s acknowledgement of technology as a critical factor underpinning its business integration, and the early engagement of DXC for a feasibility study.”

Whitehaven’s Nick Zafiris concluded, “Undertaking a greenfield end-to-end SAP S/4 implementation of this scale in just six months was a bold move. It demanded us to challenge ourselves, our processes, and our technology partners, fostering an environment of trust and smart decision-making.

“DXC has proven to be a trusted partner, supporting Whitehaven’s business-critical modernisation and goal to grow our metallurgical coal business, ultimately contributing to helping us achieve a more balanced portfolio.”

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“By doing so, we delivered a solution that exceeded expectations, on time, on budget, and within scope. This achievement reflects both teams’ resilience and dedication while setting a new industry benchmark for rapid, large-scale implementations.

“DXC has proven to be a trusted partner, supporting Whitehaven’s business-critical modernisation and goal to grow our metallurgical coal business, ultimately contributing to helping us achieve a more balanced portfolio. We are immensely proud and thankful to all our partners involved.”

Continuous innovation

Whitehaven’s journey with DXC continues, with managed services and support for the new SAP systems and all of the applications, integration and infrastructure implements, ensuring ongoing optimisation and stability.

With plans to continue investing in technology to optimise operations further and integrate additional mine sites, Whitehaven’s forward-looking approach will ensure it remains at the forefront of innovation in the mining industry.

Learn more at
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