



Case Study

DeltaPAE

How DeltaPAE Scaled Security Without Scaling Headcount with Cliffside

I feel like I've got a great cybersecurity team when I've got Cliffside. They leave no stone unturned.

Leah Christiansen
Security Manager, DeltaPAE

- Extended 2-person security team to enterprise capability
- Enabled Secure by Design approach for Cloud Migration
- Built ISO 27001/2-aligned governance framework
- Enabled business growth without security bottlenecks
- Provided 24 x 7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) services

Introducing DeltaPAE

DeltaPAE operates a coal mine and power station on the NSW Central Coast, employing 350+ people across operations.

For years, the company ran under a straightforward strategy: maintain existing operations until end of station life. However, new ownership changed everything.

The new owners had a clear focus on growth. They planned to extend the asset's operational life beyond original projections, win business outside the core operation, and modernise infrastructure to compete in evolving energy markets.

This shift created an immediate challenge: how do you transform a business built for maintenance into one built for growth, especially when your entire security team is just two people?

"We went from seeing out the end of our station life to pushing well past it," explains Leah, DeltaPAE's Security Lead. "When you're in that position, you shift from making a business last to growing it. With IT, you're changing infrastructure, getting new technology. You've got to up your game in security."

The answer came through Cliffside, which now handles everything from cloud security reviews to vendor challenge to governance framework development.

"It feels like you're working with a teammate within your organisation," says Leah. "They're integrated as part of our team."

The Challenges Faced By DeltaPAE

Transformation without resources

DeltaPAE's new growth strategy demanded massive technology change across cloud platforms, infrastructure modernisation and managing concurrent major projects. "We had minimal resources in our team," Leah explains. "I usually take a strategic view and drive our cyber projects. But I needed to be hands-on. I couldn't be across all elements."

No governance framework

DeltaPAE practiced good security across systems patching as they came up, controlling key access points and monitoring threats. However, nothing connected these practices into a coherent framework. Without frameworks, security couldn't scale.

Cloud security expertise gap

DeltaPAE's transformation centred on cloud adoption, and new platforms meant new architectures, new risk profiles, new security requirements. "We're producing a lot of change. A lot of products are coming in," Leah notes. "I can't review every single one of them."

Vendor accountability

DeltaPAE works with sophisticated third-party technical teams with strong reputations, but even good vendors need to be challenged. Without technical depth to scrutinise vendor proposals, DeltaPAE risked accepting suboptimal designs or paying for unnecessary features.

Strategic capacity

DeltaPAE had strong strengths in strategic thinking and driving long-term improvement. However, transformation demanded tactical execution across technical reviews, project integration, vendor meetings and documentation. It was hard to manage both arms with existing resources.



The Cliffside Solution

A partnership, not a vendor relationship

Most security vendors operate at arm's length. They deliver reports. They send recommendations. They invoice.

Cliffside, however, is embedded into DeltaPAE's operations.

"They're quite integrated as part of our team," Leah explains. "It's not just a standalone service that comes in to check, advise, and give you a to-do list. They're actually integrated from a technical standpoint."

"I could reach out to any one of the team and they would respond straight away with help and assistance."

On top of building a trusted partnership, Cliffside also supported DeltaPAE's cybersecurity needs through:

Comprehensive gap analysis

Cliffside started with a thorough examination of DeltaPAE's security posture with a detailed analysis of gaps, risks, and opportunities. "They came in, did a massive gap analysis, set strategic pillars for us to reach. Almost like targets to reach to get certified in the future if that's what we wanted to do with ISO 27001 and 2," Leah says. The analysis covered governance frameworks, security processes, control implementation, risk management, and compliance readiness.

Cloud security reviews

As new platforms entered DeltaPAE's environment, Cliffside provided technical scrutiny. "We're producing a lot of change this year. A lot of products are coming in. I can't review every single one of them. We've been using them to review our cloud solutions from a technical standpoint," Leah explains. "Then I get the overall kind of say, yay or nay." Each review examines architecture and design security, access controls and identity management, data protection and encryption, compliance with internal standards, and integration with existing security controls. The division of labour works, with Cliffside handling deep technical analysis whilst Leah maintaining strategic oversight. Neither becomes a bottleneck.

Project integration

Cliffside attends stand-ups for DeltaPAE's major projects as active participants asking the right questions. "They've positioned themselves in the regular stand-up meetings for major projects," says Leah. This solves a critical problem: Leah can't attend every meeting for every project, but security can't be an afterthought. Cliffside provides that representation, ensuring security gets considered when decisions are made instead of being discovered after implementation.

Governance framework development

Cliffside helped DeltaPAE build formal governance frameworks aligned to ISO 27001 and 27002 standards. "We did a lot of good security practices, but nothing was wrapped up in a governance framework. Now we have those frameworks stood up. It makes things official," Leah explains. The frameworks provide consistency, auditability, scalability, and improvement.



Cybersecurity is like a team sport. I feel like Cliffside are the best to have on your team. I would definitely highly recommend them.

Leah Christiansen
Security Manager, DeltaPAE

Conclusion

Building capability without building headcount

DeltaPAE's journey with Cliffside demonstrates how growing businesses can scale security capability without scaling headcount.

● Embedded security capability without the recruitment lag

Most organisations struggle to recruit cybersecurity specialists. Cliffside provides immediate expertise across multiple security domains, without the recruitment delays, training periods and learning curve you expect when you hire. Additionally, gain skillsets spanning a variety of security domains for multi-faceted projects.

● Strategic partnership, not transactional service

With a partnership-first mentality, Cliffside integrates into operations that works more like an extended team than an external consultant to work together on problems, review progress collaboratively, and adjust direction as business needs evolve.

● Long-term development of security maturity

Security maturity takes time. Cliffside will help to establish governance frameworks, embed processes into daily operations, shift organisational culture, and continuously improve as threats evolve. Quick fixes create temporary compliance. Sustained effort creates lasting capability.



Want to scale your security capability without scaling headcount?

If you're facing business transformation with limited security resources, Cliffside can help. We provide embedded security expertise that integrates into your operations, enabling growth without creating bottlenecks.

Visit cliffside.com.au or contact us to explore how we can support your security journey.

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