Key Outcomes

2.3 million files

migrated into a governed Microsoft 365 environment

Delivered on time, from commencement in August 2024 to go-live in October 2025.

14TB of council information accessible in one place

The iWorkplace™ Compliance framework guided the migration of 14TB of information into a governed Microsoft 365 environment. Duplicate files were removed before migration, while 42,500 large and legacy files remained accessible through Smart Storage.

Secure external collaboration

A three-tier external collaboration framework, Smart Guest Management for long-term project partners, and a Sharing Hub for controlled public access replaced unauthenticated OneDrive links.

LGOIMA responses back inside the deadline

An automated escalation process alerts managers when response deadlines are at risk. Since go-live, two complaints have been closed without adverse findings.

Fifty-plus staff volunteered as champions

Roadshows visited all nine service centres, and training was mandatory for every staff member and staff chose the name Kākā themselves.

Horizons Regional Council's file shares could no longer support the way the organisation worked. Information Leadership helped migrate 2.3 million files into a governed Microsoft 365 environment, delivered on time and under budget. Staff can now find information quickly, without relying on folder structures or institutional knowledge.

Information Leadership™

horizons REGIONAL COUNCIL

Challenges

Horizons Regional Council first identified the need for a modern information management system in 2011.

By the time the project was funded, HERMAN, the council's on-premises file share, contained 3.85 million files and up to 14TB of content, creating increasing challenges for information access, governance and compliance.

Staff could not reliably find documents, retention and disposal processes were manual, and external collaboration relied on unsecured OneDrive links with no authentication and no audit trail. Anyone who received a forwarded link could access the content. The council was also not compliant with the Public Records Act.

The council had drawn repeated censure from the Ombudsman, both for missing the 20-working-day response deadline and for being unable to locate all records relating to LGOIMA requests. The need for a proper content management system had been on the table since 2011. What finally moved it from a long-standing requirement to a funded project was the accumulation of operational risks: incorrect documents being issued as final versions, requests being missed, and no consistent place to store information.

Solution

Information Leadership partnered with Horizons to build Kākā, a governed Microsoft 365 environment designed with significant input from the staff who would use it every day.

Kākā ran on the iWorkplace™ Compliance framework: a three-tier workspace architecture, automated retention and disposal mapped to a taxonomy built with Horizons' own records team, and the external collaboration framework described above. A custom LGOIMA escalation system was built directly in response to the Ombudsman censure, as a deadline approaches without resolution, alerts escalate progressively to General Manager, then Chief Executive.

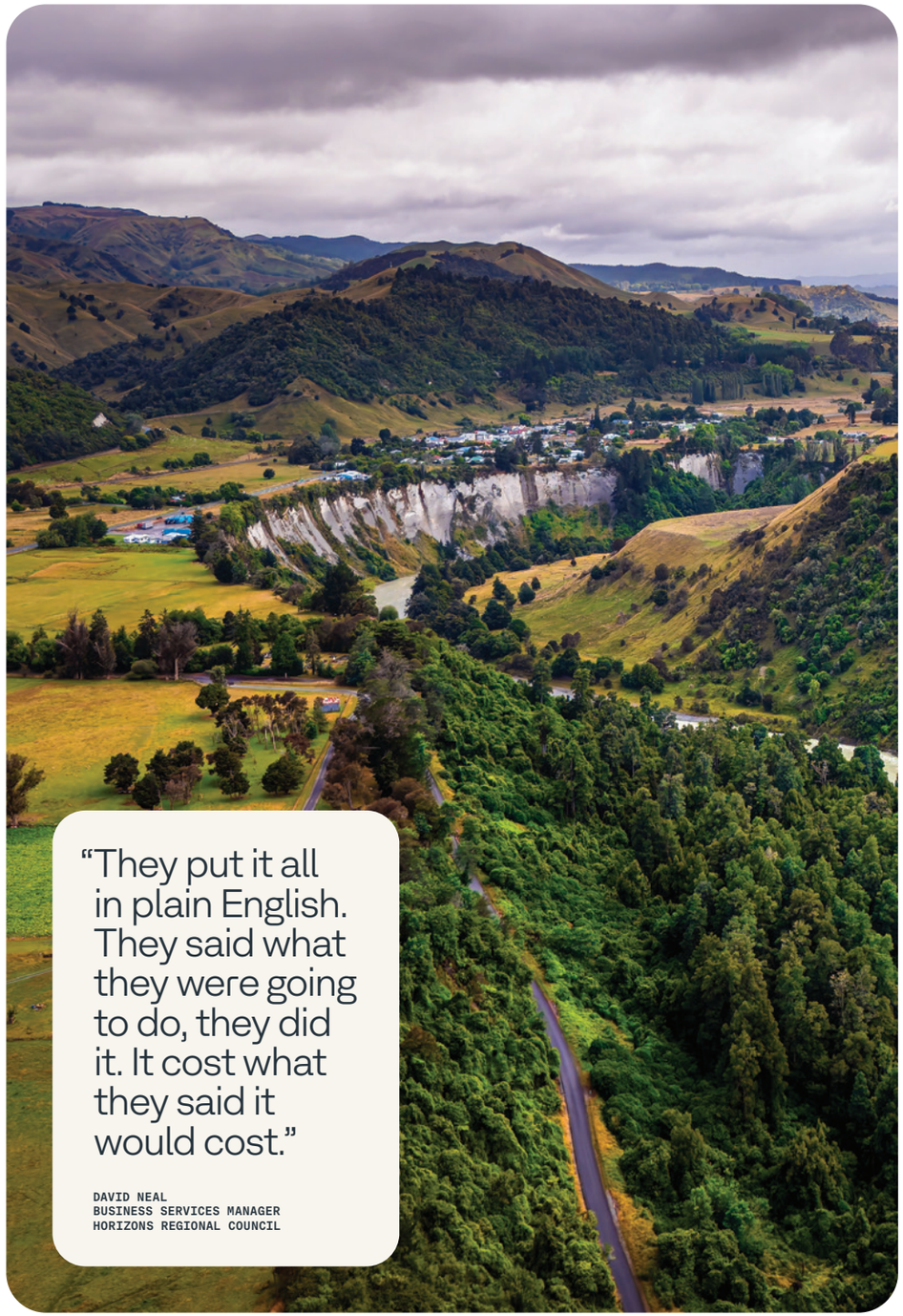
"People don't want it going to the Chief Executive." Brenda Balmer, Corporate Information and Records Team Leader, Horizons Regional Council

The project was delivered collaboratively, with Horizons staff building part of the environment themselves to develop in-house capability and confidence.

"Building it ourselves gave us a better understanding of SharePoint and how we could help ourselves without relying on a vendor." Brenda Balmer, Corporate Information and Records Team Leader, Horizons Regional Council

Roadshows were held across all nine service centres well before migration began, giving staff time to understand how the new environment would work and what it would mean for them. Training was mandatory for every staff member and tailored by function, addressing lessons learned from an earlier Horizons system rollout where optional training undermined adoption. Staff surveyed their own workspace requirements and chose the system's name by vote: Kākā, Keeping All Knowledge Accessible.

More than fifty staff also volunteered as champions, helping support adoption within their teams and service centres.



"They put it all in plain English. They said what they were going to do, they did it. It cost what they said it would cost."

DAVID NEAL
BUSINESS SERVICES MANAGER
HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Results

2.3 million files migrated on time and under budget.

Prior to migration, duplicate content was removed and older information was segmented into Smart Storage, where it remained accessible through a SharePoint interface. This reduced the volume requiring migration while ensuring information remained available when needed.

Over 2.3 million files were migrated from HERMAN into SharePoint Online as part of the programme. The project commenced in August 2024 and went live in October 2025.

Nine formal scope variations were raised and approved through the Project Control Group, with additional funding agreed before work commenced on each item. Staff surveys confirm the gains: fitness-for-purpose rose 77%, search capability rose 22%, with a 23% combined improvement across trust, confidence, and compliance over the 14-month project.

Since go-live, Horizons has received two LGOIMA complaints. Both were closed without adverse findings. A governance group continues to meet weekly to prioritise and manage a 75-item enhancements register, ensuring the platform continues to evolve after go-live.

"You couldn't really search in HERMAN. You had to already know where something could be and then search in that area. Whereas now you can search the whole thing."

HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS TEAM MEMBER

Ready to transform Information Management? Get in touch today!

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CASE STUDY

Keeping All Knowledge Accessible at Horizons Regional Council