Key Outcomes

90%

Classification accuracy in production

Beat the 70–75% target set at the start of the engagement.

11.5 years of manual work, run in daily batches

Classifying this by hand would have taken one person 11.5 years. The engine ran in batches of 65,000 files and was completed in a matter of weeks.

Run by GPSC's own team

GPSC's Information Management Lead ran the classifier herself through to completion. Her review dropped from hundreds of files per batch to a random 20–30 as trust in the model grew.

800,000 property files, one governed archive

Files migrated years ago from an old EDRMS with no metadata now carry classification, retention, and disposal status.

First digital disposal of Property files in 20 years

25–30% of the archive, some 200,000 to 240,000 files, flagged as low or no value and queued for defensible disposal.

At Information Leadership, we help organisations take control of complex information challenges. This case study shows how Golden Plains Shire Council transformed a large archive of unclassified property records into a governed, searchable information asset.

Working alongside Council staff, we used our AI Autoclassification engine to classify almost 800,000 legacy files with more than 90% accuracy. What would have taken one person an estimated 11.5 years to complete was achieved in weeks. The result was Golden Plains' first digital disposal of property records in more than 20 years, improved findability, stronger governance, and greater confidence in the information they rely on every day.

Information Leadership™

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Challenges

Twenty years of property records nobody could sentence, retain, or dispose of.

Golden Plains Shire Council held 800,000 property files in SharePoint, migrated years earlier from an old EDRMS with no metadata attached. Staff could find a document by property. They could not sentence it, apply a retention rule to it, or dispose of it once its hold period had passed.

In more than twenty years of digital record-keeping, the council had never completed a single digital disposal. Classifying the holding by hand, at 90 seconds a file, would take one person 11.5 years, if that person did nothing else.

Solution

Information Leadership partnered with Golden Plains Shire Council to tune an AI Autoclassification engine against the council's own records judgement.

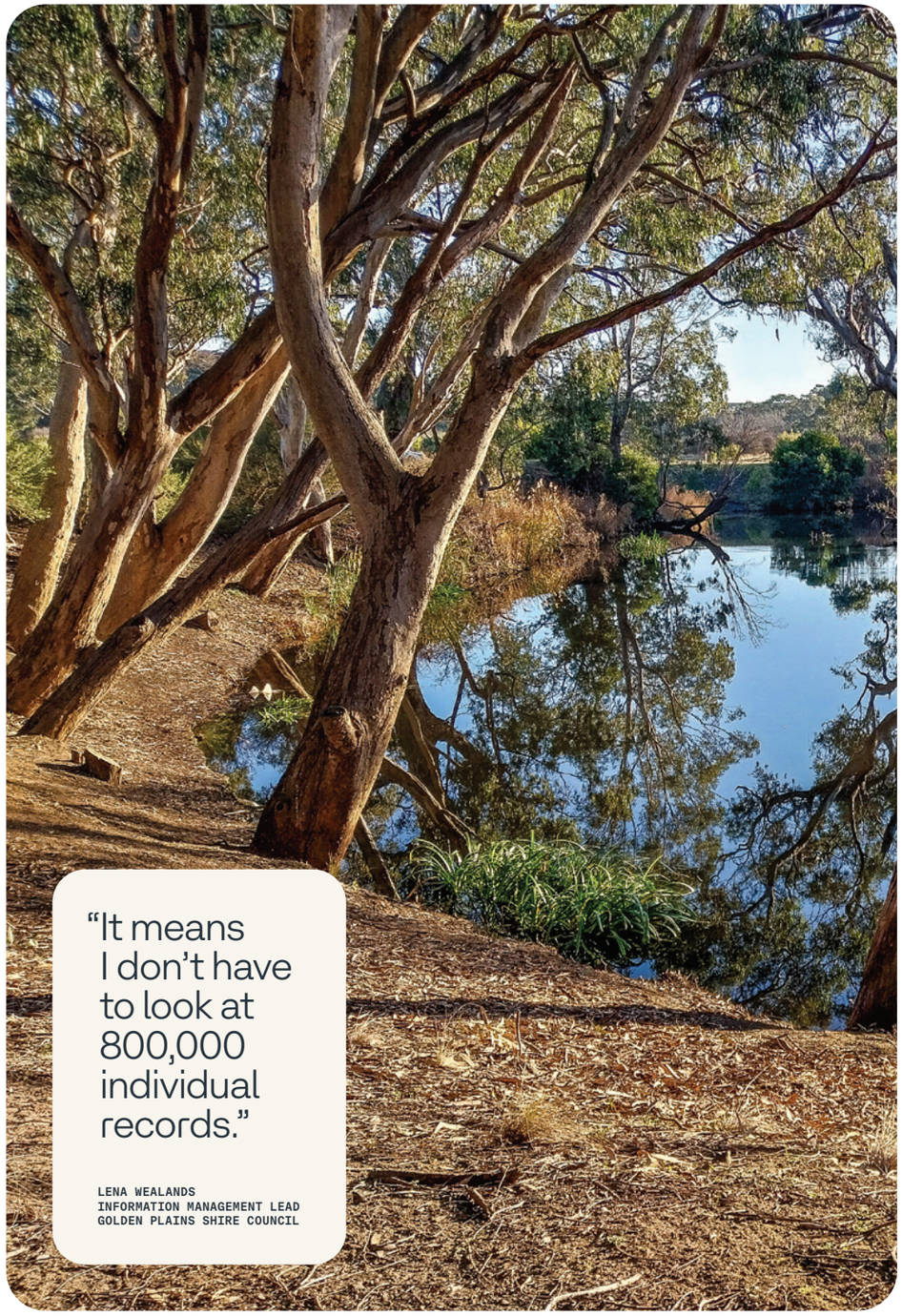
The engine is Azure-hosted. It reads each file, classifies it against the council's own rules, and returns the metadata. GPSC started with a proof of concept, priced low enough to approve without a full business case, roughly in line with what the council already paid for SharePoint storage.

The core of the work was the informing document, a structured expression of the council's own classification judgement, built iteratively with its Information Management Lead, Lena Wealands, at the centre.

She opened individual pilot files, confirmed classifications, and refined the language, sometimes spending ten minutes on a single file to work out enough context to make a call.

She got there. Delivery ran in three gated phases: setup and tuning against two batches of 1,000 files, a first production batch of 50,000, then rolling 65,000-file batches, run daily by GPSC's own team until the full archive was classified. Each phase ended in an explicit go or no-go, review the results, then choose to proceed.

What began as an overwhelming records challenge became a practical, council-led programme with lasting information management benefits.



"It means I don't have to look at 800,000 individual records."

LENA WEALANDS
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT LEAD
GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

Results

GPSC has completed its first digital disposal action in more than twenty years.

The engine classified all 799,554 property files, effectively the full 800,000-file holding, running at 90% accuracy in production. Between a quarter and a third of the archive, some 200,000 to 240,000 files, was flagged as low or no value and queued for defensible disposal, without the formal sign-off that permanent records require.

Staff now find property records by type and by council activity, not by guesswork.

A rates officer can see at a glance that a building record sits outside their scope. FOI responses are faster because the metadata says what a record is before anyone opens it.

The model is reusable. GPSC's Manager ICT estimates at least 60% of the informing document would transfer directly to another Victorian council. Inside GPSC, the same approach could classify another million files across shared drives and other migrations.

"If you have unclassified files, this is an engine that is going to do it for you in a much more efficient and effective time than you're going to do in any other way. There's a light at the end of the tunnel that's not an oncoming train."

ANDREW DOWNIE, MANAGER ICT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

Ready to tackle your backlog of legacy records? Get in touch today.

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CASE STUDY

AI Autoclassification: How Golden Plains Shire Council Classified 800,000 Property Files

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