

CASE STUDY

Auckland Council



INDUSTRY
Public Sector

KEY OUTCOME
Deployment of Multi-Cloud

Long-term partnership helps Auckland Council navigate path from early-stage IaaS to hybrid cloud and ITaaS endgame.

Public cloud delivers ever more of the world's digital horsepower, but it doesn't provide all the answers. In fact, private clouds and in-country infrastructure platforms feature prominently in what is known as hybrid cloud, as large organisations arrange technology workloads in places that deliver best return on investment.

Thirteen years ago, CCL (then Revera) was contracted to provide application and infrastructure support services to North Shore City Council, sparking a relationship that placed CCL at the heart or thereabouts of Council's critical infrastructure.

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DIRECTOR OF ICT
Auckland Council

Three years on, CCL’s engagement expanded to All of Government IaaS – a move that would extract IT systems from 16 legacy data centres running Auckland’s newly-amalgamated councils and consolidate 2,300 servers to around 1,500 VMs situated on CCL’s IaaS platform.

The move to a virtual infrastructure established a clearer picture of Council’s assets and costs, further helping to fine-tune applications and data newly unhitched from legacy infrastructure, enabling Council to shift workloads and scale confidently.

Pivoting to hybrid cloud

After more than halving its 1,000-plus applications, Auckland Council in 2017 launched a programme of work with CCL to further optimise and right-size its technology within a multi-cloud model.

The initiative put hybrid cloud in the spotlight, specifically AWS and Microsoft Azure, All of Government IaaS, and Council’s private VMware environment, delivered from CCL’s data centre in Takarua, Auckland.

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The right price is rarely the lowest price

The on-demand nature of cloud services positions the council to pick and choose services for best value. However, despite public cloud’s low per-unit pricing, Council’s in-country platforms remain competitive, thanks to the economics of a private VMware environment that delivers browser-based services to any device, Denvir said.

Application performance is another factor which for the moment keeps the lion’s share of Council’s core applications local. “The most important thing is performance at the application layer. VMware enables us to standardise across all

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vendors, then apply functionality and tools to provide a view of how apps are working on behalf of our customers,” Denvir said.

First steps in the public cloud

With the bulk of application and infrastructure modernisation completed, CCL stepped up to help Council stage the first of its applications and several websites in Microsoft Azure and AWS – work that also serves as a proof of concept for future migrations and the launchpad for specialised software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings geared for Council’s SAP platform.

Background technical support off the back of CCL’s three-year CSP partnership with Microsoft will help steer environment design and assist the delivery of additional Microsoft Azure cloud technologies to Council’s platform. Over the top, CCL’s cloud provisioning and management control system CloudCreator puts a single window to Council’s AoG and public cloud platforms.

“Public cloud removes cost and complexity, especially when big platforms like SAP are involved,” Denvir said, pointing to newly developed feature enhancements to registry capabilities within Council’s SAP platform.

“Once you have an agile platform, complexity that drives attachment to large enterprise systems is reversed. Functionally that traditionally sits within ERP is now available in the cloud,” he said.

Future API integration and microservices architecture will open doors even wider to software vendors in its ecosystem.

Ushering in the age of innovation

Large government organisations are naturally risk averse, but that doesn’t have to stifle innovation. In fact, Auckland Council’s ICT strategy identified innovation as a key driver to ensure it delivers exponential value to the wider organisation.

Hybrid cloud is front and centre, driving Council towards its broader vision for ITaaS on the back

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of an agile platform to support a slew of innovation programmes designed to address megatrends, emerging technologies, and business issues.

“We are moving away from the risk averse gatekeepers of ICT services to fast followers who embrace innovation as a core value,” Denvir said.

Co-design and co-delivery through partnerships is an essential lever on connecting ICT with Council’s broader innovation strategy.

Partners for the job

Modern organisations have scaled back investment in niche technology skills, leaving the job to specialist providers who are better positioned to keep pace with new and changing technologies in their domain of expertise.

However, the shift makes large end-user organisations more reliant on impartial advice and a shared understanding of drivers and goals, Denvir said.

“We’re learning to work in a new environment just as our partners are learning to work with us in the new environment. At some point Google will emerge in our landscape with a compelling offering, and we need to be flexible enough to ask: What is the best place and the best return on our technology investment?”

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About CCL

CCL enables Aotearoa to adapt and thrive in a digital future by bringing home the best of global technology, delivered with true tech expertise and a Kiwi touch. We help New Zealand organisations super charge their cloud infrastructure, their IT operations, and their workplaces, driving greater success now and in the future.

Spark Business Group

