



# West Coast Regional Council reaches its BI goals with Authority Data Warehouse

Reporting across disparate data sets is now easier and faster for this New Zealand council since implementing Civica's user-friendly Authority Altitude Data Warehouse.

Established in 1989, the West Coast Regional Council in the South Island of New Zealand (NZ) covers a large area that includes 600 kilometres of coastline, making it the fifth largest region in New Zealand. Because of its size, geography and dispersed population, managing this area's natural resources can pose significant challenges.

Creating a healthy and economically vibrant region requires the input and cooperation of many. For this reason, the West Coast Regional Council is committed to working alongside its forward-thinking community, making sure its residents know how it makes decisions, and how individuals can influence this process.

Joining the Council in 2022, Blair Keily – Group Manager – Information Services, knew from previous experience, how West Coast Regional Council could achieve the level of strategic reporting that would shift this council from reacting to situations to predicting trends that would have them prepared for anything.

"Having used data warehousing capabilities for over 10 years, I'm a big fan of performing queries and analysis of large data sets, via a data warehouse," Blair said. "This is especially true when it comes to enabling business intelligence (BI) activities like analytics. The insights it offers can truly transform all decision making - from educated guesses to evidence based choices."

"The team at Civica was always extremely helpful throughout this journey and really know their stuff."

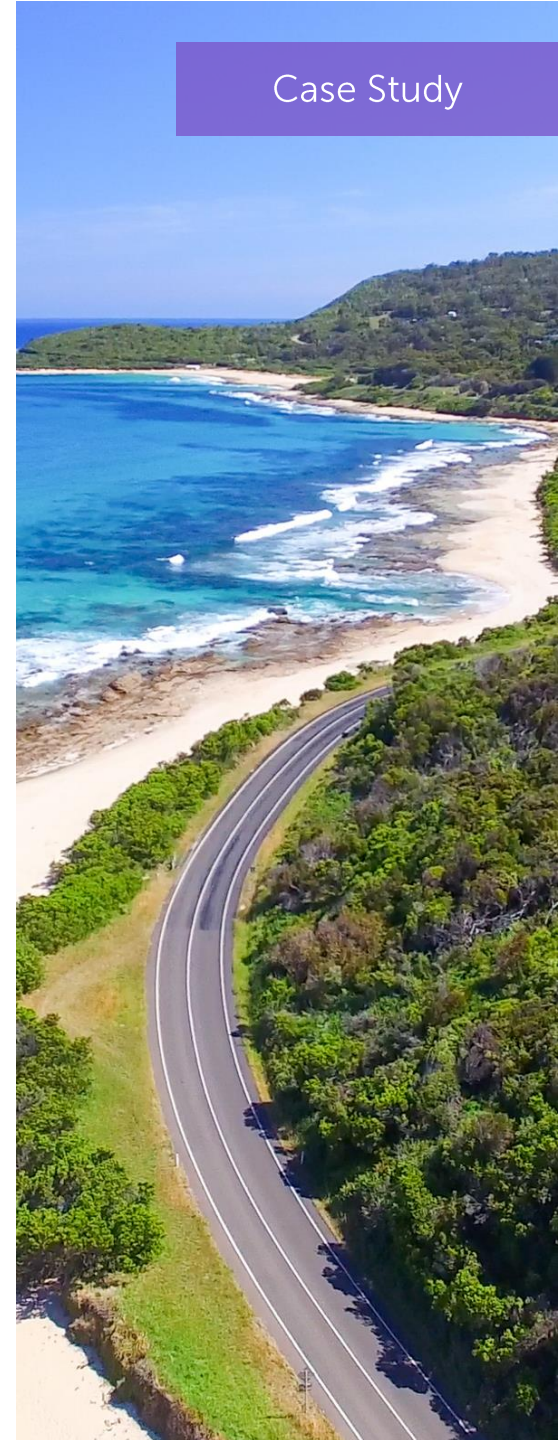
Blair Keily,  
Information Systems  
Manager



With Authority Altitude Data Warehouse, it's already much easier for us to manage our data – therefore more reliable and more usable going forward.

Learn more:  
[Civica.com/authority](https://Civica.com/authority)

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[LGenquiries@civica.com.au](mailto:LGenquiries@civica.com.au)



Blair is not alone, councils across Australia and New Zealand know there is a better way to extract their data, while creating a level of business intelligence that will transform their councils for the better. For this reason, Civica committed to building Authority Data Warehouse from scratch in 2022.

“Authority Altitude Data Warehouse takes all that complex data and converts it into a simple format that’s very easy to consume with plain English naming conventions.”

“Councils have been asking for a data warehouse for a while,” Kristian Larsen, Reporting & Analytics Product Owner at Civica said. “No longer will authority users have to report over the top of Authority directly - which is tricky, it can involve

getting your head across hundreds of Authority tables, working out how the tables are linked and deciphering the abbreviated codes.”

Blair agrees. “It makes it so much easier; you can pretty much give it to anyone within council who understands how to connect to a database, and they can start building reports,” Blair said. “Before Authority Altitude Data Warehouse – you wouldn’t do that.”

It’s early days for this NZ council when it comes to using Authority Altitude Data Warehouse, having only recently implemented it but already a dashboard is up and running, generating three separate reports that the council is calling the ‘core set’.

“The implementation has been very simple as far as we’re concerned.”

The hard part was at Civica’s end – which is good. The only glitch we had was from our end and that was a minor one that involved data validation. The good thing was we could instantly see why one of our reports didn’t match up and fix it immediately.

Now everything lines up very nicely, that’s given us a confidence boost regarding how things are going to work moving forward.” Blair said.

For West Coast Regional Council, their choice of data warehouse solution was an easy one.

“We were attracted to Authority Altitude Data Warehouse because it’s integrated with and managed by Civica to support Authority - it’s not a third-party tool managed by another vendor,” Blair explained. “This makes the interface much simpler because Civica is doing the hard work, managing the ETL for us – which was not the case when it came to our previous solution. Authority Data Warehouse was always the primary option.”

To gain maximum value from the implementation of their new data warehouse staff will be trained on how to use Power BI while also undertaking financial literacy refresher courses to better understanding of the general ledger (GL) hierarchy that will give them the skills to extract the data they need.

“The dashboard we’ve built includes GL hierarchy information so staff can decide what they want to include, such as which year and which period,” Blair said. “Some basic KPIs and charts will also illustrate how we are tracking. We’ve also included a decomposition tree that they can browse through -making it easier for people to find what’s where.”



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## Managing security

Being able to tailor the security to the needs of their council is paramount for Blair and his team. Limiting access to certain data sets such as payroll data needs to be tightly controlled to not only ensure privacy but also compliance obligations.

“At the moment we have two logins to help differentiate who has access to what, Blair said. “As we move from the executive level down to team leaders, we will be refining those permissions and the logins, to ensure we have it right.”

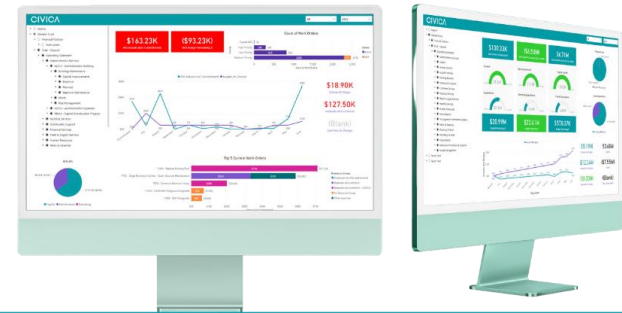
“The Power BI tool is great and can be used throughout the council, but you still need to be careful who has access to what. Compatibility with Power BI is central to our overall reporting strategy so we can present all the relevant information from our Power BI cloud infrastructure.

## Time Savings

Across the business, the time saved by being able to quickly build a Power BI report using Authority Data Warehouse is immeasurable. Blair knows that this user-friendly solution will make it so much easier and faster for his colleagues to build the reports they need. The alternative in his opinion is not even worth considering.

“We would never attempt to try and create a Power BI report directly over the Authority database,” Blair said.

“The time and resources required would be exorbitant – we simply don’t have the resources to implement and maintain that approach,” he said. “The expertise required to learn all the database schema, and understand it, while trying to validate data is a task we aren’t keen to undertake. This is without considering that after any update, the schema would be changed, and you would be back to almost square one – which would not be a great feeling.”



Authority Altitude Data Warehouse dashboards

### Conclusion:

After identifying gaps in their old reporting systems last year that impacted this council’s ability to access the information they needed, the organisation was ready for a new approach to their data. Blair has now remedied this situation to ensure that both the senior leadership team and the councillors will now get the clarity – through up-to-date usable data, they require to perform their jobs properly

“The first part of being a good manager in an organisation is having the information you need and the visibility of how things are going and where you are at,” Blair said. We didn’t get that from the previous systems. I’m now confident that Authority Altitude Data Warehouse is going to do this for us.”

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