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Accounts Payable Automation for Warrnambool City Council

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL

Warrnambool City Council implemented an accounts payable automation solution that led to the elimination of labour-intensive manual data entry and empowered staff. Lánluas provided the team with the necessary skills to manage the AI-powered automation solution in-house confidently, yielding an impressive ROI with a rapid payback period.

Warrnambool City Council, like many councils, is a bustling hive of activity

Day-to-day operations include managing an enormous amount of supplier invoices – within the realm of 30,000 per year! The organisation needed a clear and simplified system for managing these invoices and wanted a way to alleviate strain on its overloaded accounts payable team.

Lánluas reviewed the brief and recommended implementing Datamation™ – an AI-powered optical character recognition (OCR) and customisable connector integration solution developed by Lánluas. This accounts payable software solution would enable the internal team to automate accounts payable processes by having relevant data extracted from invoices and imported directly into TechnologyOne.

A clever automated system delivered along with appropriate team training measures means that Warrnambool City Council can now confidently manage its load of supplier invoices. This has enabled the accounts team to take on additional tasks and have better confidence in the data being processed.

Highlights of the project

Removed the need for time-consuming manual data entry

Freed up Council staff time so they can contribute to more high-value work

Equipped the team to manage the automation internally with confidence

191% estimated return on investment over the first five years

The challenge we faced

We knew that Warrnambool City Council would benefit from business process automation in the accounts payable department, as it was manually handling thousands of invoices every month. Its accounts payable automation solution at the time wasn't fully integrated, and the data extraction rate was sitting at around 50-60%. This left a lot of the accounts processing work to be input manually by team members who could have been spending their time on more high-value work involving critical thinking.

The existing accounts payable automation solution was broken, and our consultants needed to investigate the best way to fix it. This required assessing the Council's needs, proposing the right local government software solution, and solidifying the integration with TechnologyOne.

The solution we offered

Before our team could implement the proposed Datamation™ solution, we conducted an initial scoping and process documentation session to map validations and business rules. After collating the required information, Lánluas recommended that Warrnambool City Council turn to an AI-powered OCR solution.

An OCR works by reading documents (whether scanned, digital, or photographed) and extracting relevant data and information from them. This saves time and eliminates the risk of human error involved in manual data entry.

The accounts payable automation solution recommended by Lánluas also uses artificial intelligence (AI) technology. It not only extracts and interprets data but also learns how to do so more efficiently as it goes. Just like a human, it gets faster and more accurate over time.

The second part of our Datamation™ solution bridged the gap between the OCR component of the accounts payable automation solution and TechnologyOne. Datamation™ enabled Warrnambool City Council to feed the data extracted directly into TechnologyOne, to then be used within the Council's existing system infrastructure. Our consultants customised the Datamation™ connector to suit the needs of Warrnambool City Council.

The Datamation™ dashboard is designed to flag documents that can't be imported for whatever reason, so team members can manage them as needed.

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Lánluas provided us with excellent consultants who worked to understand our issues with current processing and provided a solution that we are still utilising. The improved processes allowed the accounts team to take on additional tasks, keep up with the increase in demand of invoices and have a better trust in the data with a significant decrease in risk around banking details of suppliers.

Sarah Bubb-Dempster

Financial Services – Team Leader
Warrnambool City Council

The final outcome

After configuring and implementing the recommended accounts payable automation solution, our team conducted key user training and provided comprehensive training documentation on the Datamation™ solution. This has meant that the Warrnambool City Council team is now equipped to manage the solution internally.

As a result of our work, the organisation doesn't need to rely on manual data entry, and efficiencies have been boosted significantly. In fact, the council is saving a significant amount of money with the ability to utilise its team's skills in more high-value work. The initial payback period has been an impressive 5.8 months, and the estimated 5-year return on investment is 191%.

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If your organisation wants to explore business process and accounts payable automation services like Warrnambool City Council did, **Contact Lánluas** to discuss how we can help.