Lánluas

Hutt City Council

How Hutt City Council delivered one of New Zealand's first interim water billing solutions



Lánluas helped Hutt City Council deliver one of New Zealand's first live interim water services billing solutions, including water supply, wastewater and stormwater.

A fast-tracked water services billing transition for Hutt City Council.

Local Water Done Well legislation required water charges to be separated from council rates ahead of the move to a new regional water entity. Lánluas helped **Hutt City Council** design and deliver an interim water services billing solution in **eight months**, on time and on budget.

While some councils have chosen to keep water services in-house, the four Wellington metropolitan councils (Wellington City, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua) took a different path. Building on their existing shared service, they and Greater Wellington Regional Council established a new jointly owned water Council-Controlled Organisation, Tiaki Wai, which took over ownership and delivery of water services on 1 July 2026.

With a permanent billing platform for Tiaki Wai still to be determined, Hutt City needed an interim solution to keep billing and revenue collection running without disruption, covering around 44,000 water accounts, while protecting customer service, data quality and financial integrity.

Lánluas partnered with Hutt City to design and deliver it, guiding the council from strategic design through to configuration, data migration, testing and go-live.

Highlights of the project

One of the first wave of councils in New Zealand to implement an interim billing solution under Local Water Done Well

Delivered in eight months, with an early dedication to key element design and risk mitigation, against a jointly agreed deadline of July 1st, 2026

Smooth, low risk go-live, and a clean pass on independent regional quality assurance

Stable progress allowed scope extension adding self-service Payble payment technology; a customer win no other council in the region took on for go-live.

The challenge we faced

What began as a mid-2027 timeline was brought forward a full year to 1 July 2026, following a regional governance decision to accelerate the transition.

Government approval of the region's Water Services Delivery Plan landed in early October 2025, leaving Hutt City Council just eight months to design, build and go-live; a significantly reduced runway for a project of this potential complexity.

The new entity had no revenue billing systems of its own, so the shareholding Councils agreed to deliver billing on its behalf for an expected two years, while the entity builds its own permanent systems. And as one of the first councils in the country to work through this change, there was no established playbook to follow.

With regional governance across five councils still taking shape, Councils worked initially to agree the approach to be taken. For Hutt City's team, the single biggest challenge was overcoming a compressed timeline, unfolding direction and uncertainty about where to even start.

The solution we offered

The solution offered by Lánluas ran end-to-end; strategy and viable options first, then moving into detailed design, implementation and go-live support.

Scoping options was step one; not jumping straight into a build. Lánluas worked with Hutt City to configure the interim solution within its existing platform, avoiding the cost and delay of creating new licensed solution elements.

Vital to ongoing success was establishing clear governance and escalation early, with regular touchpoints between Lánluas, Hutt City's Chief Financial Officer and Chief Digital Officer to agree big-picture direction before detailed planning began. That relationship, and the escalation pathways it created carried the project through to go-live.

> *"The capability we don't have in-house is what's really helped set us up for success, and Lánluas has provided that. It's the kind of relationship where you can ask anything, and be open and frank about the challenges."*
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> **Jenny Livschitz**, Former Group Chief Financial Officer, Hutt City Council

Because the solution only needs to run for around two years, until the new entity sets up its own permanent systems, Lánluas deliberately steered Hutt City away from the most fully featured option. Rather than a bells-and-whistles build, the team recommended keeping things simple – matching the investment to the two-year lifespan of the solution, not over-engineering it.

A high-level project plan, testing plan and go-live support model were agreed up front, with specialist resourcing brought in at the moments Hutt City needed it most, including dedicated finance and testing support in the lead up to go-live.

"Having the hard questions nailed early was key to the project's planning, and later, its success. We've been able to stick to the plan from day one, which is quite remarkable."

Jenny Livschitz, Former Group Chief Financial Officer, Hutt City Council

The final outcome

Hutt City Council went live on time. There was no undue noise, or issues at go-live, and the team went in with confidence.

An independent regional quality assurance review confirmed that Hutt City was well-prepared and organised. The solution is meeting the new entity's revenue requirements, with no unplanned surprises to date since go-live.

This has:

- Avoided costly new software licensing by leveraging Hutt City's existing environment.
- Avoided rework by getting the design right early, with guidance from Lánluas at each key decision point.
- Delivered entirely remotely, without incurring travel costs.
- Extended scope to add self-service payment technology, a quick-win reducing manual payment processing for customers.

For Hutt City Council, this means a compliant, on-time, on-budget interim solution delivered without unplanned cost or disruption.

For ratepayers, it means modern, self-service payment options (direct debits and payment plan set up) online in minutes.

> **There's still a wave of invoices to come, and for some customers, those first bills will take getting used to. But we've done the work to get here; I've told the team to keep their surfboards close, because we're ready to ride this out with confidence.**

Jenny Livschitz

Former Group Chief Financial Officer,
Hutt City Council

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