

Paper, People and the 2028 Deadline

How small regional councils lose time to manual administration — and a practical path to win it back.

COREXLAB RESEARCH, OCTOBER 2026

15,700

pages of council records reviewed

188

documented issues

**30 June
2028**

Civica Practical: no new releases after this date

Three things the records show.

01

The manual work is visible in councils' own words.

Business papers, audit plans and annual reports describe paper timesheets, actions tracked by hand and claim evidence that doesn't line up. Nobody had to guess; the councils wrote it down.

02

A system deadline is coming.

Civica Practical gets no new releases after 30 June 2028. Councils on it are choosing replacements now, and the data migration lands on teams that are already stretched.

03

The fix sits between existing systems, not in a new big system.

Most lost time is in the gaps: paper in the field, spreadsheets between finance and assets, evidence on phones. Small tools that capture work once and pass it to the systems you already run close those gaps without a large project.

Four forces landing on the same small teams.



Compliance

Reporting keeps growing. Quarterly budget review returns to the Office of Local Government are mandatory from the September 2025 quarter, and meetings must be livestreamed under the 2026 Meetings Regulation.



Audit scrutiny

The Audit Office's 2025 local government report found the same control gaps across the state.

71

councils with
system-access
weaknesses

63

councils with
inaccurate asset
registers



Disasters

Recovery claims now go through the NSW Reconstruction Authority's SmartyGrants portal. Claims are cut when photos, dates and invoices don't line up.



Workforce

Key finance and records roles sit vacant for months. The admin doesn't stop; it moves to whoever is left.

Where the time goes.

Each pattern appears in at least two of the three councils we studied, in their own published documents.

EXHIBIT 1 Councils showing each pattern (of 3 studied)

Manual governance tracking		3 of 3
Paper field admin		2 of 3
Disaster claim leakage		2 of 3
System change plus vacancies		2 of 3
Disconnected asset data		2 of 3

Source: Corexlab review of 2025–26 public documents from three western NSW shires.

FINDING 01 · 3 OF 3 COUNCILS

Manual governance tracking

Audit committee actions, risk items and council resolutions live in Word tables and spreadsheets, re-typed into each meeting's report.

FINDING 02 · 2 OF 3 COUNCILS

Paper field admin

Timesheets, leave forms and plant returns are filled in on paper. Office staff chase the missing ones and key the rest into payroll.

“Too much time is wasted on chasing information.”

Council business paper, 2025

FINDING 03 · 2 OF 3 COUNCILS

Disaster claim leakage

Flood damage claims are cut or rejected over evidence: invoices dated before the flood, missing photos, costs that don't reconcile.

\$2.9m in rejected flood damage claims

Council annual report, 2024/25

\$4.99m awaiting reconciliation

Council business paper, 2025

FINDING 04 · 2 OF 3 COUNCILS

System change plus vacancies

Finance systems are being replaced while finance and records roles sit vacant, so migration work lands on the people left.

FINDING 05 · 2 OF 3 COUNCILS

Disconnected asset data

Asset registers aren't linked to finance or mapping, so condition, cost and location are reconciled by hand.

Capture → Connect → Comply.

Fix the gaps between systems in three steps. Each one is useful on its own, and each builds on the last.

EXHIBIT 2 A practical path that sits between existing systems

Step 1

Capture

Record the work once, where it happens: a phone app for crews, dated and located photos, online forms instead of PDFs.

Step 2

Connect

Send approved data to the systems you already run (payroll, finance, records, assets) as an import file or through an existing API.

Step 3

Comply

Build the audit trail as the work happens: claim evidence packs, action registers and meeting reports from the same data.

Works alongside your existing systems.

We don't replace your finance or records system. The pilot captures the work, then sends approved data to the systems you already run, as a file they can import or through an API they already offer.

Civica	MAGIQ
TechnologyOne	Your records system

Changing finance systems? It keeps working.

The pilot holds its own data and sends an export to finance. If you move to a new finance system, we change the export. Crews and supervisors keep using the same app.

05 WHERE TO START

Take the paper out of timesheets, flood claims and audit actions.

Small, fixed-price software pilots for councils with 50 to 200 staff. Built to sit alongside the finance and records systems you already run, and priced under the tender threshold.

Paper timesheets, leave forms and plant checks

Crews fill in paper sheets in the field. Someone in the office chases the missing ones, then keys the rest into payroll.

What we build: A simple phone app for crews: timesheets, leave and pre-start checks, approved by supervisors and exported to payroll. Works offline and syncs when back in coverage.

Flood-claim evidence and reconciliation

Disaster recovery claims need photos, dates, invoices and costs that line up. When the evidence is spread across phones, inboxes and spreadsheets, claims get cut or rejected.

What we build: Dated, located photos and costs recorded against each damaged asset, with the evidence pack built as the work happens, ready to lodge with the NSW Reconstruction Authority in SmartyGrants.

Audit and action items tracked by hand

Audit committee actions, risk items and council resolutions live in Word tables and spreadsheets, updated by hand before every meeting.

What we build: One register with owners, due dates and reminders, and the meeting report produced from it.

A 6–8 week pilot, with one clear measure.

01 · WEEK 1

Scope and agree the measure

We spend time with the people who do the work, such as a crew, a supervisor and payroll. Together we pick one problem and write down one success measure, for example timesheets reaching payroll in two days instead of ten.

02 · WEEKS 2–6

Build with real staff

A working tool goes to a small group of staff early, and we improve it each week from what they tell us. You see a demo every week.

03 · WEEKS 7–8

Measure and decide

We measure against the number we agreed and give you a short written report. Then you decide: roll it out, extend it, or stop.

Fixed price, under \$50,000

Under \$50,000 sits below the \$250,000 tender threshold, so it's bought through quotes under your procurement policy.

What digital timesheets could give back.

Move the sliders to match your council. The estimate counts office time spent chasing, checking and keying paper timesheets.

EXHIBIT 3 Time and cost recovered per year from digital timesheets

~350

hours recovered per year

~\$21,000

in staff time per year

Illustrative estimate — validate with your own figures. Assumes a fortnightly pay cycle (26 timesheets a year) and counts office time spent chasing and keying paper sheets. Shown with 40 staff, 20 minutes per timesheet and \$60 an hour.

Prove it small, then carry it across.

EXHIBIT 4 From a 90-day pilot to the new finance system

● NEXT 90 DAYS

Prove

Pick one process, such as timesheets. Run a 6–8 week pilot with one crew and one success measure, at a fixed price under \$50,000.

● MONTHS 4–12

Extend

Roll out to more crews, then add the next process, such as claim evidence or action tracking, on the same foundation.

● 2027–28

Carry across

When the new finance system goes live, we change the export. Crews and supervisors keep the same app, and the history comes with it.

Who you'd be working with.

Australian business

Corexlab Pty Ltd, ABN 81 668 487 189. Sydney office at 622 Harris St, Ultimo NSW 2007.

Sydney-led, delivered from Dhaka

A senior lead in Australia, with our engineering team in Dhaka. It's how we keep pilots under \$50,000.

Australian data hosting

Council data is stored in Australia, unless you choose to keep it on your own servers.

On-premises option

Prefer to keep data on council servers? We can install the pilot in your own environment instead of hosting it for you.

Essential Eight-aligned

We build and run pilots in line with the ACSC Essential Eight controls.

Insured

We hold professional indemnity and public liability insurance. Certificates of currency are available on request.



I'm a Sydney-based engineer with nine years of building production software, including the U-Send logistics platform and the Roaming Audit telecom auditing platform. I lead our team across Sydney and Dhaka, and mentor students in UTS's Software Development Studio. On a council pilot, I'm your contact from the first call to the final report.

Razu Ahammed

Founder, Corexlab

❖ 10 FAQ

Common questions.

How do we buy this without going to tender?

The pilot is a fixed price under \$50,000, well below the \$250,000 tender threshold, so it's bought through quotes under your procurement policy. We'll send a quote with the scope and success measure written out, ready to attach to your purchasing paperwork.

Does this replace our finance or records system?

No. The pilot sits alongside them and sends approved data across as an import file or through an existing API. Nothing in your core systems is changed.

How do you handle security?

Access is role-based, and every change is reviewed by a senior engineer before it's released. We'll complete your security questionnaire before the pilot starts, and we're happy to work with your IT provider.

Can it run on our own servers?

Yes. If your council would rather keep data in-house, we install the pilot on your own servers and your IT provider keeps control of access. We agree the setup in week 1, before any build starts.

Who owns the data and the code?

You do. You can export your data in full at any time, and the custom code is kept in repositories you control.

What happens after the pilot?

You decide. If it met the measure, we'll quote to roll it out to more teams, either as a fixed-price stage or a monthly support arrangement. If it didn't, you keep the code and data and we part ways. There's no lock-in and nothing renews automatically.

METHOD NOTE

This report draws on about 15,700 pages of public documents from three western NSW shires: 2025–26 business papers, annual reports, audit plans and policies. We added statewide sources from Audit Office NSW and the Office of Local Government. Each of the 188 issues links to its source page. We don't name the councils; we report patterns. Three councils is a small sample, so read the chart as a pattern, not a statistic.

Start with one process.

We'll talk through the problem, how a pilot would work at your council, and roughly what it would cost.

Book a scoping call

or email reach@corexlab.com

30 minutes with a senior engineer to discuss your scope, risks and next steps. No obligation.