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Project Success: **City of Kingston**

Project: City of Kingston - Business Continuity Plan - Digital Mailroom Solution

Overview: City of Kingston is a local government area in South East Melbourne and is a diverse community with an estimated resident population of nearly 160,000.

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, Local Government Victoria released a bulletin to local councils instructing that all council venues including libraries and community venues must close indefinitely (VICTORIA BULLETIN 48/2020).

City of Kingston, along with many other Victorian local government offices followed State Government direction and closed Municipal Offices to both public and staff, who moved to work from home for the length of the pandemic. In doing this, City of Kingston Council representatives proactively looked at alternative ways to manage and process their incoming hardcopy mail. Grace Information Management was consulted to provide an innovative solution to digitise the council's hard copy management processes promptly and in accordance with its Business Continuity Plan, in order to continue operating with minimal disruption.

Project Objectives

Challenges: The primary challenge faced by City of Kingston due to COVID-19 restrictions concerned incoming mail that could no longer be received, sorted or forwarded to relevant contacts. The digital solution required would potentially;

- Provide remote access to the council mailbox
- Identify the type of mail received (e.g. applications, rates notices, etc.)
- Forward correspondence to identified relevant contact
- Support a prompt response to customer enquiries within existing timeframes

Goals: The primary project goal for the mailroom transformation at City of Kingston was to eliminate redundant hardcopy mail processes and establish a business continuity solution that would preserve operational processes, service level commitments and timeframes to the Kingston municipality. The goals set out by Grace would provide a tailored solution that included the capability to:

- Open and sort incoming mail items
- Identify incoming mail types
- Collect relevant metadata for file naming
- Identify the sender and intended recipient
- Digitise all incoming mail and establish forwarding criteria
- Archive digitised mail items in a central repository

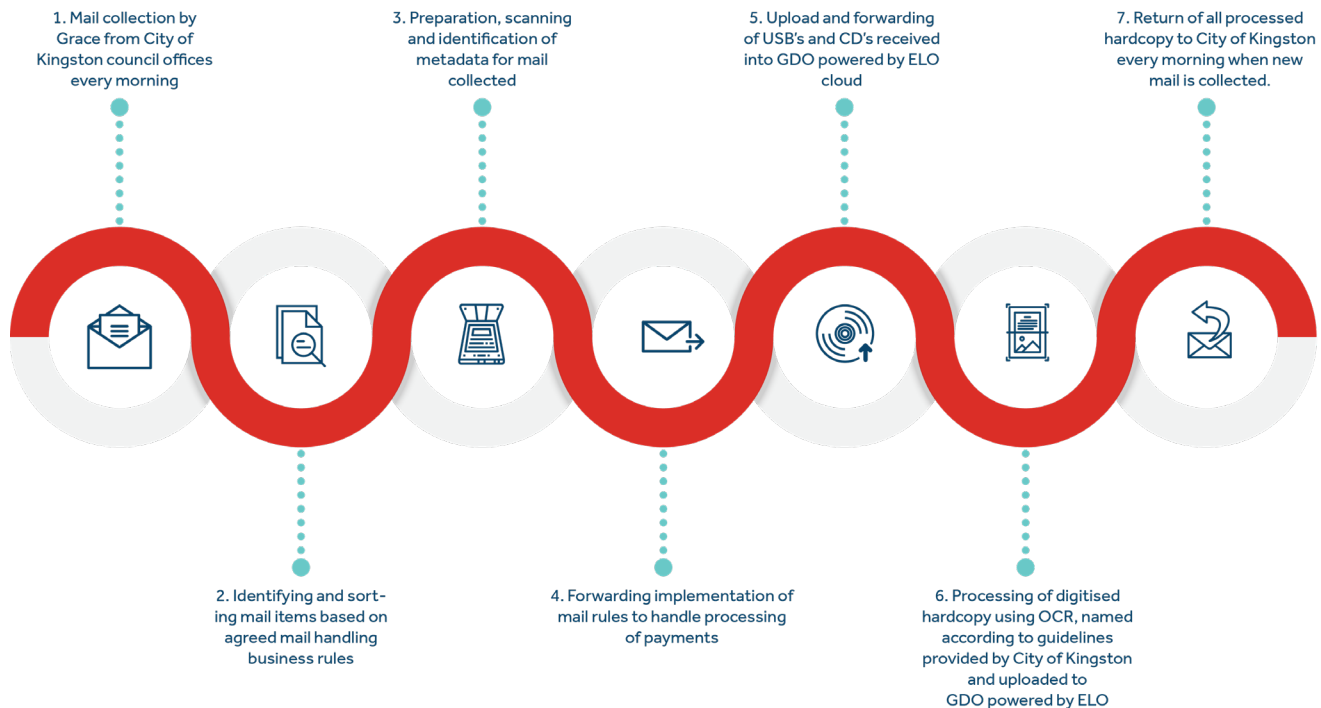
Solution: Grace Digital Mailroom

Grace proposed its' Business Continuity Plan - Digital Mailroom solution to City of Kingston. The case scenario for City of Kingston included digitising processes to cope with at least 70 incoming mail items per day which required systematic processing. Grace initiated the project by working closely with City of Kingston stakeholders to establish a set of "mail handling business rules" and list of metadata that required capturing, to ensure that all mail types were handled correctly by Grace's operators.

Grace also provided City of Kingston with user licenses for access to Grace Digital Office powered by ELO (GDO p.b.ELO). These licenses allow the users to not only access digitised mail items within GDO p.b.ELO but to also bulk download and purge obsolete archives from the system when required, with consideration to information practices.

The implementation and application of Grace Digital Mailroom at City of Kingston would offer a permanent solution to any disruption of manual mail services that may occur in the future.

The workflow set in place to provide a Digital Mailroom solution to City of Kingston included:



Highlights: By utilising Grace's BCP Digital Mailroom solution, impact to the provision of services for City of Kingston was minimal. The implementation of Grace digital solution allowed all processes to continue unimpeded with zero downtime.

Each incoming mail item is digitised and uploaded into the Grace Digital Office portal within 24 hours, ready and available for City of Kingston staff to download the next morning to preserve service level timeframes.

Successful Outcomes:

- ✓ Grace digital solution delivered a guarantee to City of Kingston services to preserve continuity of Council operations during the COVID-19 restrictions.
- ✓ Zero impact to City of Kingston's internal processes and services. City of Kingston is able to continue to meet demands and requirements of their community in line with protective measures set up in response to COVID-19.
- ✓ Hardcopy mail processes were improved significantly through greater alignment of processes as the City of Kingston Corporate Information team now only receive all items electronically.
- ✓ City of Kingston staff have been empowered to continue to perform important functions whilst abiding by government health regulations and requirements.

With the success achieved by utilising Grace Digital Mailroom, City of Kingston is now considering to continue with the information management solution as a permanent procedure post COVID-19 requirements.