

Griffith City Council transform payroll with elementTIME



Council-specific workforce management solution makes time and attendance easy for both outdoor and indoor staff.

BACKGROUND

Like many councils, Griffith City Council's payroll processes relied on a mix of manual timesheets, data entry, and manual award interpretation. This manual approach was time consuming for managers and payroll staff, and posed a significant compliance risk for council.

For the payroll team, the focus was on surviving the payrun with the huge administrative burden soaking up all of their time and head space. With many different categories of staff and awards across their workforce, having to interpret every timesheet manually to ensure employees received the correct entitlements placed a considerable burden on the payroll team.

The existing ERP system only provided basic payroll and timesheet capability which simply wasn't up to the task of managing the many different types of roles within council and the associated complexities of awards and entitlements. Records of work were recorded via spreadsheets and paper timesheets, manually approved by supervisors and managers, physically transported to the administration centre before being data entered into payroll manually by the payroll team.

PROBLEM

All this manual activity created a lot of low data quality with many common errors and omissions to be manually resolved by the payroll team; requiring valuable time to be spent chasing managers and staff to rectify. Getting timesheets and approvals completed in time for the payrun was a regular battle with the payroll team spending hours on the phone and email chasing them up.

"So we would have our indoor staff completing the timesheets in an Excel spreadsheet, they would print them out, hand them to their manager, sign them off, and then they would come to payroll processing. The outdoor staff were using big A3 paper timesheets, they were handwriting, all of the hours. So we would collect all of the timesheets, mark them off. And then we'd handwrite all of the hours codes and leave codes onto the timesheets."

Julie Papalia
Payroll Coordinator

“It was hard to be confident that all the entitlements were being calculated correctly with so much data entry and manual award interpretation. That’s one of the things that kept us up at night!”

Shireen Donaldson
Director Economic & Organisational Development

Summary of challenges

- Payroll process was complex, manual, and time consuming
- Many different types of staff with multiple complex awards and entitlements
- ERP Payroll system could only manage a small part of the process
- Lots of risk associated with entitlements and compliance due to manual processes

SOLUTION

Griffith City Council embarked on a project to find a solution to their payroll and award interpretation challenges. They began with extensive research into solutions available in the market and in particular what other councils were using. The top priority was to find a solution that was easy to use and catered to all council staff, managers, and use cases.

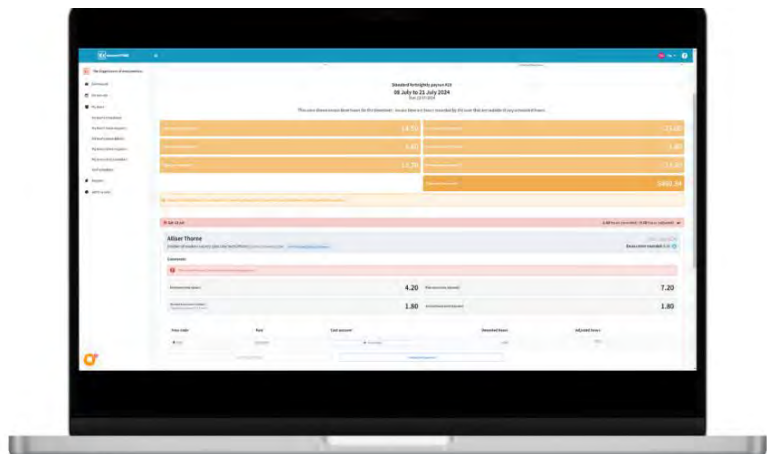
“We needed a solution for all council staff, not just the relatively simple indoor office staff. elementTIME was the only solution we found that could manage the complex outdoor staff use cases and we were able to validate directly with several other councils that were already using it.”

Julie Papalia

It was important to Griffith City Council to choose a local government specific solution that integrates tightly with their existing ERP, document management, and other systems. Being able to slot straight into the existing systems environment with no major changes to infrastructure was important, as reducing manual data handling and improving time efficiency was a major goal of the project.

Solution snapshot

- All council staff (including casuals and depot based employees) now use elementTIME to capture complete records of work, including use of plant, leave, ad hoc allowances, higher duties, and all entitlements.
- Outdoor staff record plant usage and work order costing within a single digital timesheet.
- Staff access elementTIME either online or via the elementTIME mobile app with offline mode.
- All entitlements (ordinary hours, excess-time, penalties, allowances, etc.) are calculated automatically as defined by the relevant awards. This gives staff and managers a level of insight and transparency they previously did not have.
- Managers review and approve timesheets and leave requests in real time; the elementTIME workflow notifications and escalations keeping them on track.
- Payrun is closed in elementTIME and all finalised time, entitlement, and leave data is posted through to appropriate modules within Council’s ERP along with job costing and plant usage data.
- The final pay is then processed within the City’s ERP payroll solution.



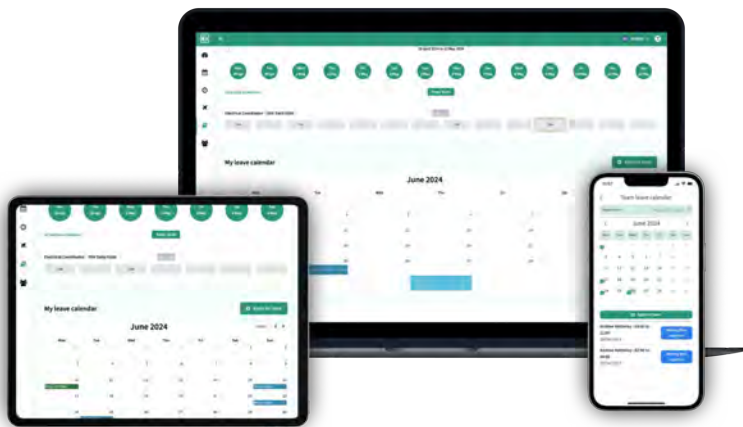
APPROACH

Getting things running

The implementation was led from start to finish by Adroit consultants and Griffith City Council were surprised how smooth the system deployment process ended up being. The key points of integration were set up early in the process, with Adroit leading the process and needing very little effort from the IT team.

The implementation started by focusing on understanding the City's needs and requirements, understanding the different types of staff, how they work, and their associated awards and entitlements. This process enabled council to work through different internal perspectives and viewpoints to ultimately develop a consistent, shared understanding of the entitlements across all stakeholder groups.

With this foundation in place, the system could be quickly configured so that the progressive onboarding could begin.



Staff were onboarded progressively in groups with the City rolling elementTIME out to their teams in a phased approach and at their own pace. As the payroll team became more familiar with elementTIME and how the data flowed through to other key systems, the rate of onboarding increased.

With each successive onboarding group, the efficiency gains were realised. The capacity of the payroll team actually increased as elementTIME eliminated the significant manual activity of the old process.

RESULTS

“So elementTIME basically brought our payroll department into the 21st century.”

Julie Papalia

The elementTIME solution has become the foundation for increased workforce compliance, visibility, and understanding of how the staff work and how council meets its obligations to accurately calculate and pay entitlements in line with the awards.

With all staff and managers using elementTIME, accountability has increased dramatically – staff and managers are empowered and accountable for their record of work and the associated entitlements and penalties. Understanding of the awards has increased and staff are much more aware of how their work practices impact on costs to council and the specific jobs they work on.

“Every single employee is responsible for their own record of work. They fill out their own timesheet - they can submit their timesheet any way, even if they're not at work, they can do it at home, then the responsibility goes to the manager. So the manager goes through that timesheet and they approve it and they approve leave. If it's wrong, it's not payroll's fault. It just pushes that responsibility back onto employees and managers, which is how it should be.”

Julie Papalia

Payroll team

From a payroll team perspective, there has been a significant reduction in effort and time to process the fortnightly payroll. This efficiency gain has also significantly improved business continuity as the payroll team can easily cover for each other as they can perform all actions at each stage of the process.

elementTIME has enabled much faster and more efficient collaboration between staff, managers and payroll; negating much of the wasted time that previously occurred when timesheets are returned for further clarification or information.

“All of the workflows are built into elementTIME. Everything's in the system. We can see exactly where it's up to. We can see who is waiting, and their timesheets. If we see that there are a bunch of timesheets that haven't been approved, well then we can say OK, where's their manager? We look at the manager and it shows they're on leave. OK, let's reassign them. So we can jump in and reassign timesheets, we can reassign leave applications to other managers. Just by a couple of clicks of the mouse. We say this person's away reassign it to this person.

Julie Papalia

The elementTIME implementation process went beyond the simple implementation of software, and the Adroit approach factored in the people and process aspects of the City's needs. The project highlighted a number of policy discussions/issues to deal with which were progressively addressed once the system was live. This was the start of a culture of ongoing evaluation and enhancement of award compliance and payroll process to drive effectiveness and improvement across the organisation.

“We found through the process we essentially did a whole audit of the whole payroll process and award interpretation. Through that a lot of things came to a head that needed to be sorted including things like award misinterpretations and things that have gone on for years. The transparency and the accountability has definitely shifted back to managers and then to directors and the GM where it should be.”

Shireen Donaldson

BEYOND PAYROLL

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About elementTIME

elementTIME is a council-specific time, attendance, and award interpretation platform built specifically for Australian councils that integrates directly to existing council systems, including ERP and EDRMS platforms.

Feature summary

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| ✓ Timesheets | ✓ Payroll |
| ✓ Leave | ✓ Rosters and schedules |
| ✓ Complex award interpretation | ✓ Advanced work-order costing |
| ✓ Tightly integrated with key council systems | ✓ Plant usage and costing |



For further information and resources, visit us at www.elementTIME.com