INFRASTRUCTURE SHAKEUP

Stats NZ finds silver-lining
in Kaikoura earthquake; fast-tracks
IaaS transformation, with Revera.

revera
CLOUD SERVICES PROVIDER

A Spark
New Zealand
Company

"IaaS means we invest small to build capability and scale it up really fast."

Chris Buxton, Chief Digital Officer at Stats NZ, is on a mission to make his organisation faster on its feet. More speed means shorter data processing times and earlier release of survey information. But the vision requires agile infrastructure to make data more accessible and deliver the analytics capabilities modern customers demand.

"People don't want to wait six months for the results of our surveys – they want data in a matter of days. That's the real world now – and we must operate in the same way," said Buxton.

Stats NZ
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DIGITAL BUILDING BLOCKS

Switching to IaaS

In 2013 Stats NZ took its first steps to a new digital model, signing on Revera's cross-government IaaS Homeland service platform to deliver the March 2013 Census. The move allowed Stats NZ to scale its systems and capacity to manage what is one of the country's largest and most sensitive surveys. Improved flexibility has also paved the way for new digital services offering quick and easy access to information.

The success prompted Stats NZ to adopt additional infrastructure services and retire an on-premise data centre in Wellington. Revera's Homeland data centres in Auckland manage full offsite backups, with additional data volumes stored at other Stats NZ locations.

Quick recovery

Kaikoura's 2016 earthquake shut dozens of local businesses, including Stats NZ's head office in Wellington. While buildings bore the brunt of the magnitude 7.8 quake, the agency's data was largely unaffected.

In the quake's immediate aftermath, Stats NZ recovered some of its vital IT capacity and network connectivity, including critical business services, within days. But with a number of production systems still offline, the lion's share of its infrastructure and core systems were reactivated over the following days and weeks in Revera's Homeland data centre in Auckland.

Back in Wellington, Revera parent Spark built a wireless network to serve the agency's new temporary head office, with Citrix-based Government Desktop-as-a-Service (GoDaaS) providing secure access to critical applications and data.

With the bulk of its systems back on online, Stats NZ activated Revera's Backup-as-a-Service to automate a range of backup and recovery options, effectively 'triangulating' data between Wellington and two other Revera Homeland data centres.

In just three weeks Stats NZ re-established a near-fully functioning IT domain supporting more than 900 staff across the country.

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Fast-tracking transformation

When disaster strikes, organisations must think fast on their feet. People come first, but when everyone is safe and accounted for, focus shifts to business systems. And often the quickest way to re-establish systems is on external networks, which today means cloud.

"The earthquake changed the conversation," said Buxton.

All hail hybrid

Longer term, Stats NZ will deliver IT from a hybrid cloud – a model they believe offers total freedom from the physical location of IT systems.

"So we can't be locked into a single solution, or one way of doing things. We need to operate in the cloud."

"Ordinarily IT assets must be depreciated before they're replaced. But with so many assets removed from the equation, the cost of infrastructure services became neutral – or even cheaper. Building to replace our own data centre is now cost prohibitive."

With core infrastructure provisioned from Revera's Homeland Cloud, Stats NZ has refashioned once on-premise IT to consumption-based IT services. Now they're focusing on efficiency, spending less on developing new capabilities and scaling them up exactly when they're needed. With hundreds of surveys in the field at any one time, Stats NZ makes great use of the granular control that comes with IaaS.

Ultimately the strategy will see Revera manage Stats NZ's core infrastructure and citizen data, with platforms from Microsoft and other public cloud vendors delivering workplace apps to employees, everywhere they work. Government's Desktop-as-a-Service provides the agnostic operating environment to bring everything together.

"We want our people to work from anywhere," said Buxton.

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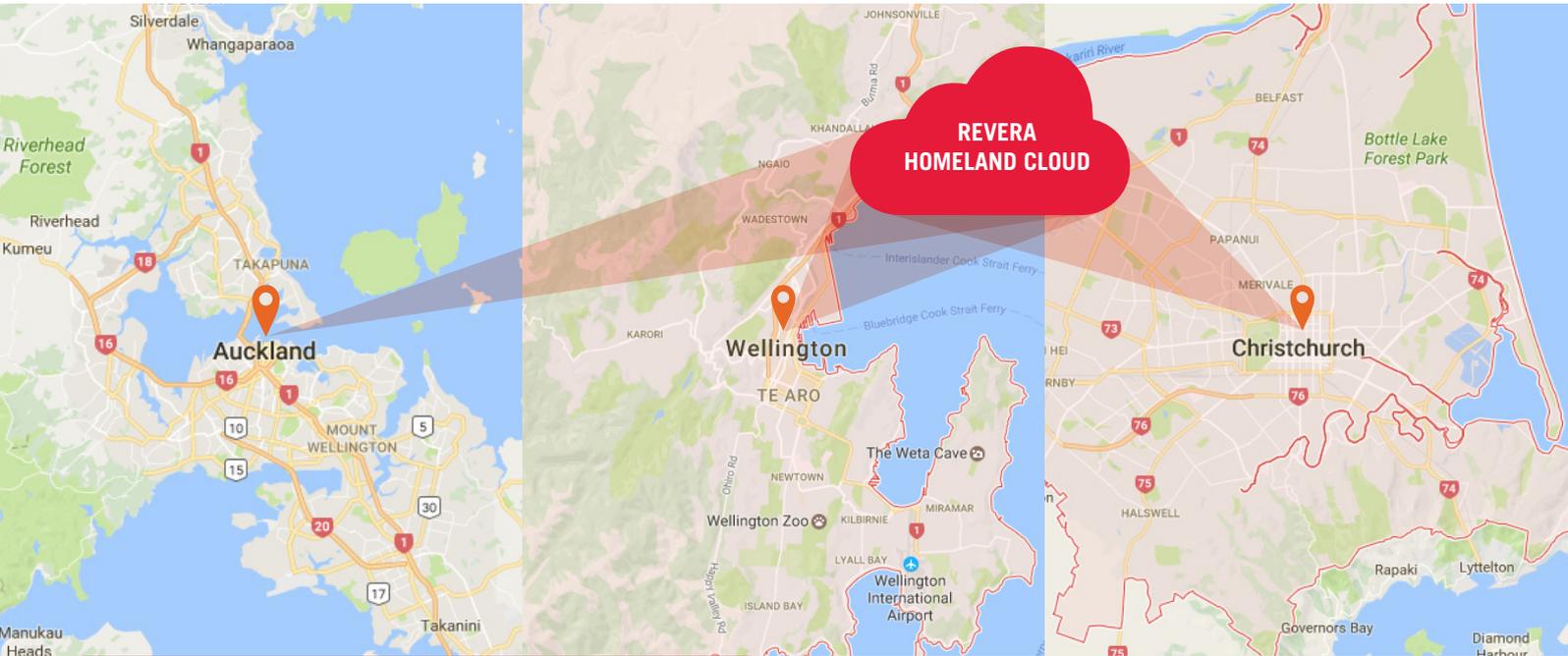
REVERA HOMELAND CLOUD AT STATS NZ

Control

With 100+ surveys in the field at any one time, Stats NZ can build new capabilities and scale them up and down at the right times.

Lower risk

Stats NZ's critical IT infrastructure and citizen data is secured in a Revera Homeland data centre in Auckland. More than simply relocation, agency systems are protected by a network of Homeland data centres, with Revera's Backup as a Service providing additional protection.

Cost transparency

IaaS is more transparent, providing Stats NZ with a clear picture of costs and how future activity impacts budgets.

Focus

With the heavy lifting of infrastructure off its hands, Stats NZ focuses on the things that really matter – delivering data and insights to customers.

Speed

IaaS was the principal reason why Stats NZ was able to re-establish its entire IT domain in less than three weeks. The service backbone also simplified the quick introduction of new services, including Revera Backup-as-a-Service, which was deployed across both Stats NZ's existing systems and its IaaS environments within five days.

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LEARN MORE

ABOUT REVERA HOMELAND CLOUD IAAS

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