PARTNERING TO DELIVER A BETTER EXPERIENCE FOR CUSTOMERS

Case study of the NZ Transport Agency

Transporting New Zealand

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) supports Kiwis to move safely and effectively about the country. 1,450 staff across 14 offices (and a network of agents) help manage 11,000 kms of state highways, provide services like driver or vehicle licensing, and offer information about travelling safely on New Zealand's roads.

Millions of visitors use their core website (www.nzta.govt.nz) every year, accessing a huge volume of information - more than 15,000 website pages and 90,000 documents. The NZTA have been at the forefront of the New Zealand government's push to make it easier for people to access core services digitally.

Improving the customer experience

Paul Giles, NZTA's Manager Communications Channels Services, leads the function responsible for the organisation's websites. NZTA wanted to refresh their core website to meet the needs of its stakeholders, while building a sustainable way of continually improving their customers' digital experience.

"One of the first things that we did was understand what our customers actually wanted from our digital channels and build with that in mind. When you go to our website the three biggest things that people want to do are a transaction with us such as register their vehicle, look for traffic information or find information around driving safely."

Paul says the focus was making it as easy as possible for people to engage online. "We get the biggest impact if we allow people to easily complete a single task (such as licence their vehicle). What happens is that people come back multiple times to do a task, rather than browse around and hope to find things. That easy experience is a core principle for us."

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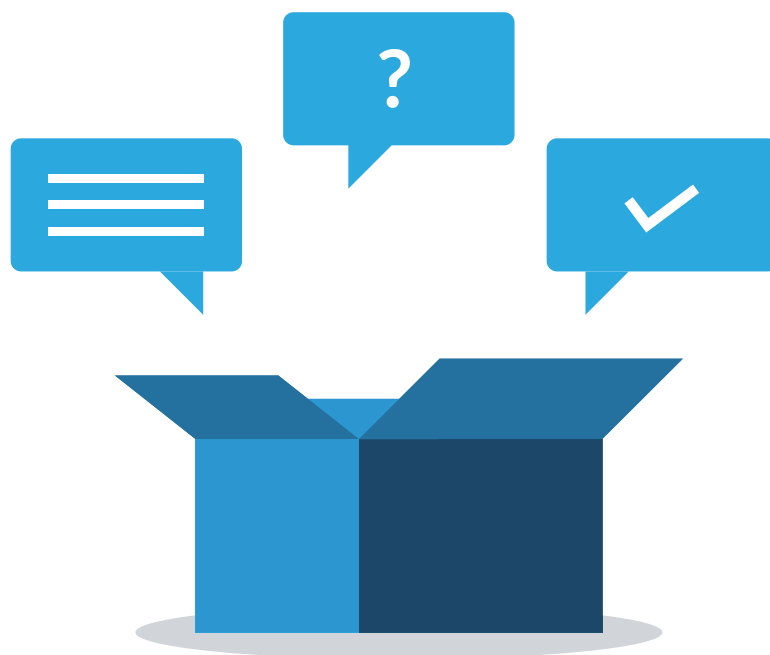
NZTA also wanted to be able to streamline their web technology. "A goal was improving the business efficiency of hosting our digital channels, merging it all into one so that we can manage and maintain that efficiently."

NZTA also looked at new platform options such as SharePoint from Microsoft, and the common web platform (CWP) based on SilverStripe's technology.
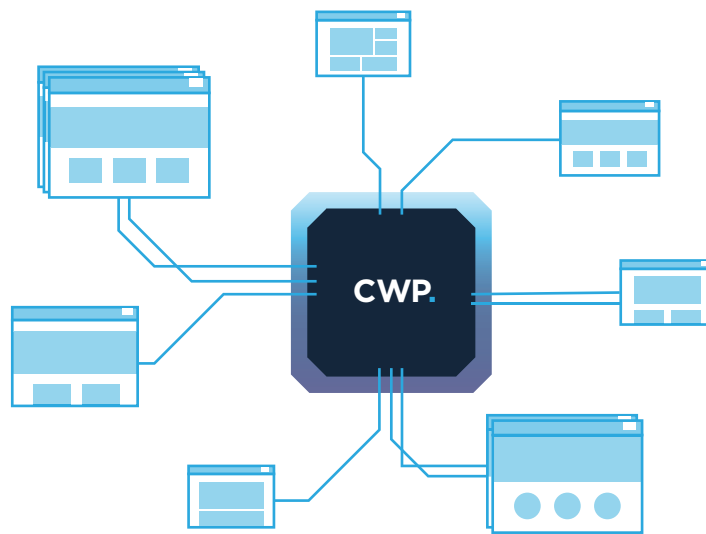
Being such a strategic decision for the organisation, NZTA conducted a thorough process to select a new digital platform and supplier, says Paul.

Several reasons drove the ultimate choice of SilverStripe and the Common Web Platform (CWP), says Paul. Cost competitiveness was a baseline, particularly the ability to start with an existing platform and share and reuse as they went. "SilverStripe were also stronger on the experience they've had with other government agencies, with an understanding of how to guide them through these processes".

The CWP is a "Platform as a Service" for New Zealand Government websites. SilverStripe is contracted by the Department of Internal Affairs to provide the platform. It provides a bundle of technology and services that enable government agencies to quickly, cost-effectively and safely build highly functional websites to service their stakeholders.

For more info about CWP visit:
www.cwp.govt.nz

Increasing agility

While the SilverStripe content management system (CMS) underlying the CWP has been key to building a strong digital platform that allows customers to engage more easily with NZTA, the introduction of an agile approach was also a crucial benefit, says Paul.

"SilverStripe invested extra time and resources to make sure agile methodology would work for us. It was a good process that got a lot of people in our organisation engaged, from what predominantly a waterfall shop," says Paul.

Paul said it was a fundamental shift from trying to lock down all requirements from the beginning, "We decided to be completely open with SilverStripe about project budgets and what we wanted to achieve, and then figure out what was realistic. SilverStripe were equally transparent about how they operate.

"It really builds that trust and transparency, which I found that to be unique. SilverStripe treated us like their client but it didn't try to 'manage' our expectations, they were transparent."

Making digital happen
in the public sector

Paul says by using an agile approach they actually launched the site as a beta over a six-month period, putting services live progressively, receiving feedback and then improving them. "That meant throughout the cycle of the project if we saw some feedback coming in on our beta site we could get those changes made because we were still in flight on the project, rather than in final delivery."

"The speed of which we can respond to situations by working with SilverStripe is a key benefit, for example the need to provide road information online during the recent Kaikoura earthquakes."

"In the case of the Kaikoura earthquakes, traffic to the NZTA site spiked as visitors wanted information on road closures and alternative routes. It was quickly noticed that the road closures could be presented more clearly on existing maps. NZTA worked with SilverStripe to roll out a UX improvement without affecting the site and continuing to deliver critical information and we did it fast."

A key goal of adopting the CWP was streamlining their web technology
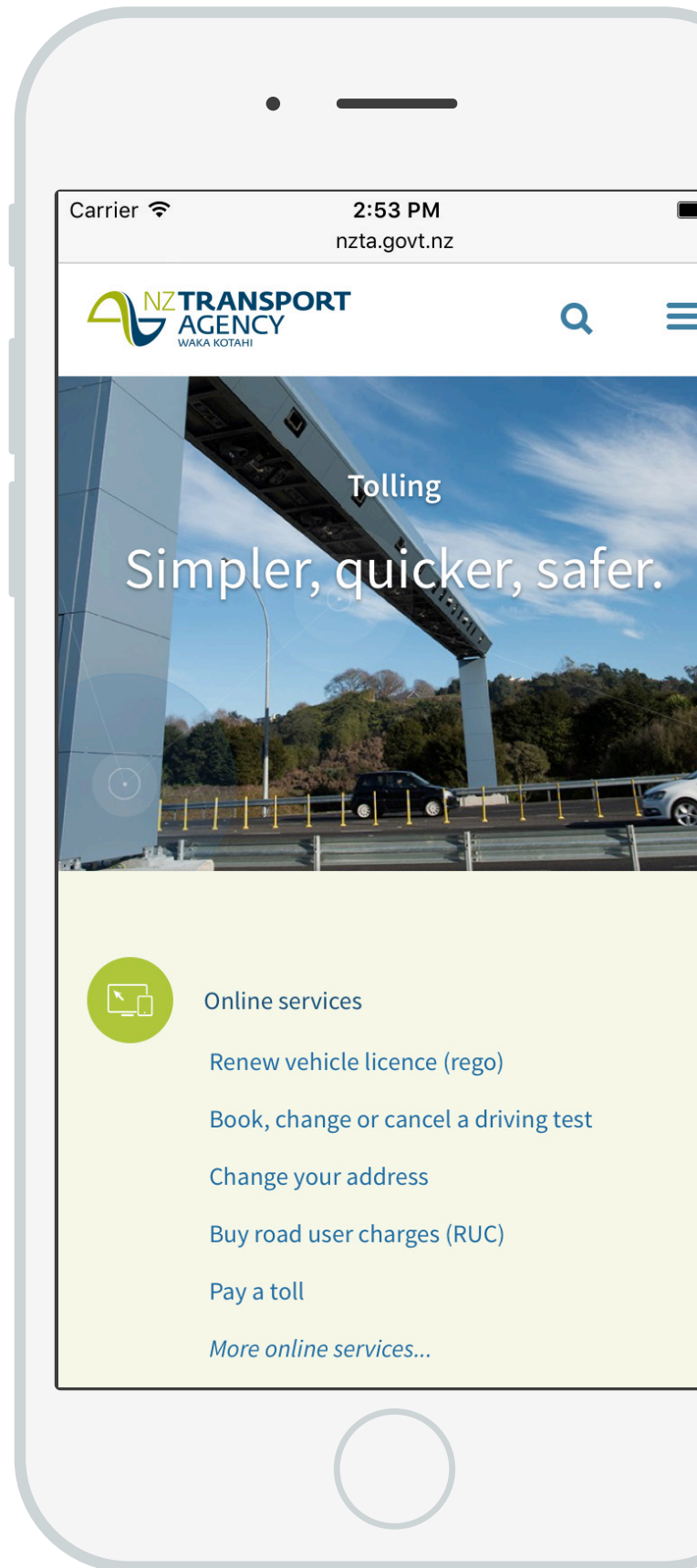
"SilverStripe recognised this was an important situation and an important customer requirement so they worked out of hours to get it working within days. They prioritised it because they have taken the time to understand what is really big for NZTA," says Paul.

A key goal of adopting the CWP was streamlining their web technology, says Paul. "The NZTA has had a number of websites all running off different technologies and consuming resources across the organisation to maintain them, so we have been running through a systematic programme of integrating them within the (SilverStripe) system." Paul says the strategy is either include them in the core NZTA website or create a sub-site with SilverStripe.

"Every time we bring in a new website, inevitably there is a new functionality we need to build. And because we build it in the same CMS that runs all of our other sites, it means we can go to other groups and see if they might want to use it in their area. It really capitalises investment made in functionality."

...it means you can go to other groups and say hey did you see such and such and you might want to use it in your area.

Fast internal engagement

Being able to stand up a secure and interactive internal website in two weeks is the kind of exciting project SilverStripe's technology and approach enables, says Paul. Using CWP, SilverStripe were able to integrate with NZTA's authentication system to provide secure staff access, a mobile interface and the ability to respond to information posted. "What we noticed was the engagement was so much higher and there was a lot more readership across the content on that site, on the journey to work and the journey home from work," he says.

"SilverStripe were extremely responsive in terms of building that for us with tight time frames. For them, it wasn't just a technology project that they needed to get out the door, they were trying to understand what we were trying to achieve as well."

"An important outcome has been the business efficiency of hosting our digital channels. Merging it all into one so that we can manage and maintain them more efficiently."

Paul concludes, "The value SilverStripe offers begins with their partnership approach and them wanting to work with us to achieve really good business outcomes. Ultimately it means that our digital customer experience is improved."
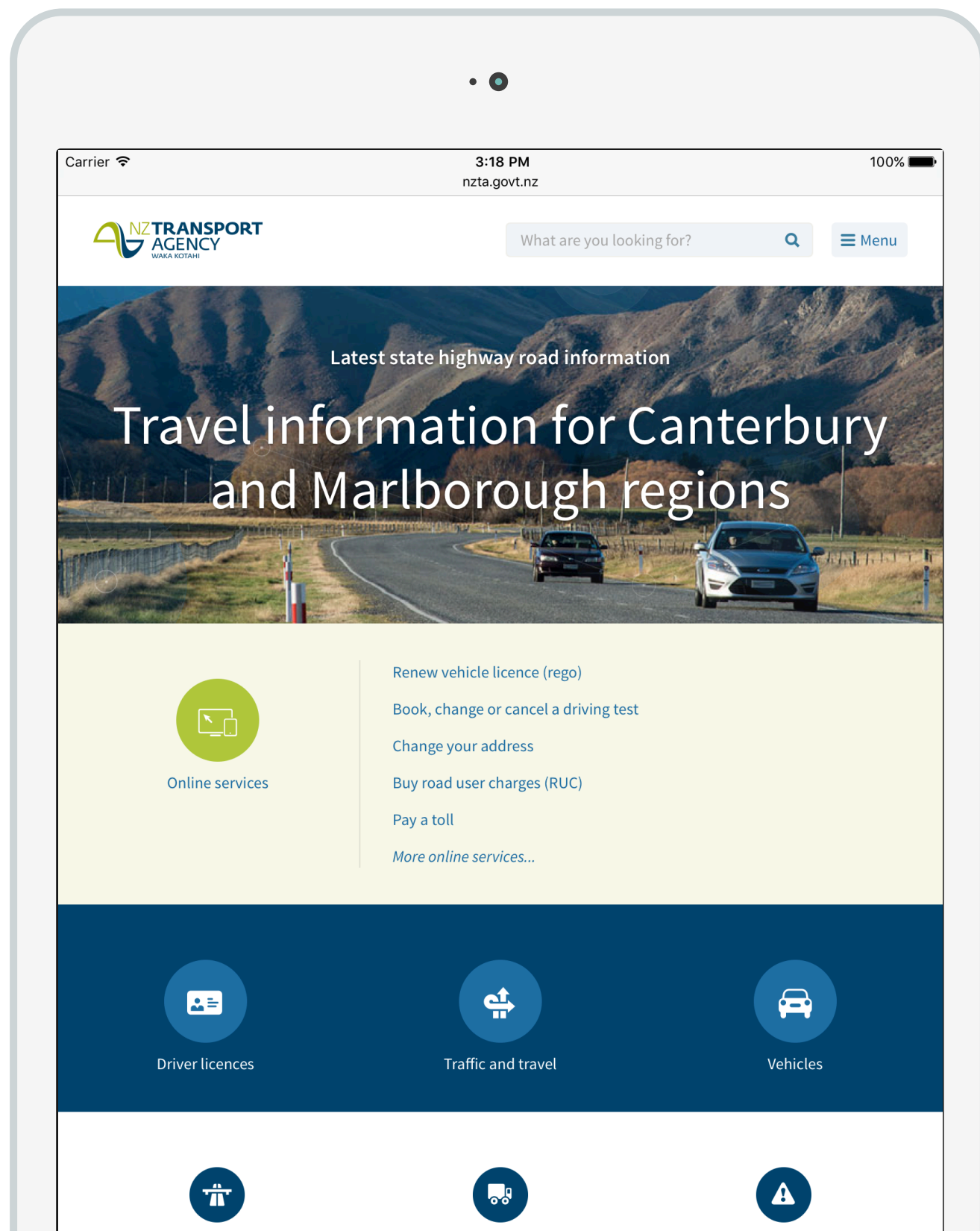
Next steps

SilverStripe delivers Digital Transformation through an Agile mindset.
Get your Digital Transformation journey started today!

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