

STAFF REPORT

TO: Communications Subcommittee
FROM: Communications Adviser
DATE: 23 March 2011
REFERENCE: C797
SUBJECT: Communications Activity Report – RFN11-03-01

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Communications Subcommittee of the communications activities undertaken during January and February 2011.

2 INTRODUCTION

January and February are traditionally the quietest months for communications activity. This year was a little different with extreme weather events in Golden Bay and the knock-on effects of the earthquake in Christchurch. These two events have required additional communications activity to be undertaken, however, the majority of this has been through Council's 'business as usual' communications channels and as such has not impacted too significantly on overall hours or spend.

Wider interaction with communities, albeit in some instances led by the Community Boards, has been an increasingly relevant theme. The interaction is being achieved through a number of vehicles; newsletters, public meetings, website, the seeking of feedback, community association interaction and spending more time with the local media. The interaction and response will increase as the expectation grows and will ideally attract a greater number of people to form a relationship beyond the immediate issue confronting them.

With the increased expectation externally and the willingness of staff internally to communicate more, the need for a consistent managed community engagement plan has become an imperative. To this end following the March Communications Subcommittee meeting there will be a workshop for the Subcommittee members, Council communications staff and communication providers to identify the principles and priorities of such a plan. The plan will then be worked through internally to ensure that not only are legislative requirements are met, but also the capability and planning can be managed and delivered within the expectations being created by the plan.

3 PUBLICATIONS

3.1 Newsline – The Mag

One issue of Newsline was produced in January and two in February. All were 12 pages and were produced and delivered on time with no reported issues. The 11 February issue contained a questionnaire regarding the Murchison Service Centre, its function and opening hours, which was inserted into 150 Murchison only issues of the publication.

New to Newsline for 2011 is the Community Conversations page, which runs once every two issues to correspond with the Community Board meetings. The page highlights the key outcomes of the Community Board meetings and is supported with quotes from the Community Board Chairs. Feedback has been very positive from the Community Boards and from residents.

Resident associations have been encouraged to supply the minutes of their meetings so that they can be reported on - so far only the Sandy Bay and Marahau Association has done so. It is envisaged that once this story is reported there may be interest from other associations previously talked to.

There have been a number of issues regarding the non-delivery of Newsline, particularly to addresses served by Rural Post and Post Office boxes within stores, as the Newsline has been regarded as 'Junk Mail'. Post Shop managers and Rural Post agents have now been spoken to and informed that the Newsline meets the legal description of a newspaper and should be treated as such.

3.2 Mudcakes and Roses

The latest edition was published in February and continues to go from strength to strength (if feedback, demand for advertising and community group interest is anything to go by).

There were a number of changes in the February edition:

- Council's logo is now more prominent on the front cover and is supported with the strapline 'Proudly brought to you by Tasman District Council – supporting our region's communities and their interests'.
- Council's logo is now more prominent on the inside front cover and is larger, in comparison to other sponsors, reflecting the amount of money put in by Council.
- The inside front cover also has cover shots of Council's other community recreation publications and the text 'Mudcakes & Roses is part of the Tasman District Council's family of community recreation publications'.
- Pages 11 and 12 were paid for advertising feature (advertorial) which gave advice on the ACC funding changes for hearing loss and also promoted the services of Hearing Plus audiology. Mudcakes and Roses is at its maximum advertising ratio, but with so many organisations still wanting to use the publication to promote their services and products we are working through more creative ways of adding their message whilst still ensuring quality, valued editorial. Advertorials will not become the norm for the publication but it was a good fit in this instance.
- There was a new 'Noticeboard' section added to the What's On pages. This section highlights events or activities in greater depth than the What's On listings. This new section will be monitored to make sure that it is working and adding value.

4. MEDIA RELEASES

Media releases sent out during January/February were:

January 2011

- Moutere Water User Committee Meeting
- Applications for Community Art Projects Close 10 February 2011
- Severe Weather Warning for Tasman District
- Motorbike and Scooter Training Available
- Pohara Boil Water Notice Lifted
- Aorere River Repair Work Passes Test
- Light to Medium Rainfall Forecast for Tasman District
- Council and Communities Work together to Rectify Flood Damage

February 2011

- Tasman and Nelson Open Arms to Cantabrians
- Council to Seek Validating Legislation
- Water Restrictions to Remain in Place
- Young New Zealanders Make a Difference
- Dry Summer Brings Water Restrictions
- Effective Communication with Adolescents Workshop
- Music at the Library Survey
- The Takaka Waste Water Treatment Plan is Now a Community Affair
- Occupation Agreement in Ligar Bay Confirmed

Please see the accompanying media report in Appendix 1 for further information and analysis following monitoring of media activity over the months of January and February 2011.

5 WEBSITE ACTIVITY

At the last Communications Subcommittee meeting the Subcommittee requested that staff report at each subsequent meeting on activity on the Council's website.

Appendix 2 outlines the website activity for January and February 2011.

6 RECOMMENDATION

That the Communications Subcommittee receives the Communications Report – January/February 2011 report number RFN11-03-01.

Chris Choat
Communications Adviser

