

Report No:	RFN11-06-01
File No:	C797
Date:	
<i>Information Only – no decision required</i>	

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Communications Subcommittee
Meeting Date: 7 June 2011
Subject: Communications Adviser's Report RFN11-06-01
Report Author: Chris Choat

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reporting to the Subcommittee highlighting the communications activity for the months of March and April.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Subcommittee receives the Communications Adviser's report RFN11-06-01.

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Report Author: Chris Choat
Communications Adviser

1. Communications Report April/May 2011

The last two months have been solid 'business as usual' in terms of Council's communications, as well as some standalone projects that have been well received by the public/media.

The Draft Annual Plan Summary – a 20 page Newsline format document was produced to support the Draft Annual Plan public consultation process and distributed to every household in the District. The second Motueka Flood Control Newsletter was produced and delivered to all affected households in the area and the Native Habitats Tasman newsletter was produced and distributed to all interested parties.

Positive media coverage of Council activity outweighed negative for both March and April, which is becoming a trend. The trend can easily be affected by a high profile single-issue, but overall this trend shows an improvement in relations with the local news media over the past 12 months.

2. Publications

2.1 Newsline - The Mag

Two issues of Newsline were produced in March 2011 and two in April 2011. All were 12 pages. A 'special edition' 20 page Newsline was produced on the 18 March 2011 to communicate the Draft Annual Plan Summary.

A feature trialed since the start of the 2011 year has been the inclusion of a 'Community Conversations' section. The section was initiated following feedback from the Newsline survey distributed last year where a significant number of responses identified the need for more 'local stories' with specific mention of the Community Boards and Associations. Despite visiting the majority of associations in the District earlier in the year there has not been a rapid uptake of the opportunity. The Community Boards have not missed the opportunity, however, with regular updates from both community boards filling the space allocated for a wider use.

The Subcommittee has signalled its intention to explore the opportunity the Community Conversation space presents and the success or otherwise of the initiative. This can be a matter for discussion at the meeting.

Discussions have been had around the quality of the first draft of Newline and how this can be improved to better represent the final print version. The main issue being faced is ensuring that Council staff with information relevant to the Newline audience are identified in time for it to be included in the draft story list communication (sent out on Friday nights to all relevant individuals). From this list the editors have the ability to finalise the copy and image needs before 4.00 pm the following Monday.

It is believed that the process behind Newline is sustainable but emphasis needs to be put on the requirement to identify information relevant to residents and to have it prepared and signed off prior to the copy deadline. To assist in this process all staff at Council have been provided with a publication schedule highlighting copy deadlines and cover dates for all of Council's publications.

Agreement on the draft story list is also important to ensure the efficiency of the process. Any issues with the draft story list should be raised prior to 4.00 pm on the Monday following the lists distribution

All individuals' assistance in this process is very much appreciated and will help Dry Crust to produce a draft version of Newline that enables the Communications Subcommittee and managers to make informed decisions regarding the final versions style, balance and content.

We are always working on ways to ensure that the Newline process is followed more closely by all those who are involved in providing content and it is hoped that this work will help to alleviate the issues raised by the Communications Subcommittee recently around the Newline first proof.

2.2 Mudcakes and Roses

The latest edition was published in April 2011 and the publication remains very well received amongst 50+ age residents and those who provide services for them.

The changes that were highlighted in the February/March 2011 report have helped to increase awareness that Mudcakes & Roses is a Tasman District Council publication and we have received no negative feedback to this change.

2.3 Boredom Busters

The latest edition of Boredom Busters was distributed at the end of last term (start of the Easter holidays). So far the colouring competition has received over 620 entries – one of the highest response rates ever.

If interest from advertisers is any indication of the publications relevance/quality then it's fair to conclude that Boredom Busters is in a good place. Advertising revenue has almost doubled in the last 12 months and in the current issue we have sponsored competitions from Summit (word search), Cawthron (science week), Village Cycles (colouring competition), State Cinemas (movie reviews) and Mondo (win a family holiday to the Gold Coast).

Also new to Boredom Busters is the Ecobuzz page where we utilise some of the information found in Ecobuzz and bring it direct to the Boredom Busters audience. This also adds some value to the Ecobuzz brand.

3. Media

Media releases sent out during March/April 2011 were:

March 2011

Top of the South Maps Nationally Recognised
Upgrade Started for Richmond Resource Recovery Centre
Tsunami Effects Measured in Tasman Bay
Tasman's Draft Annual Plan Adopted for Consultation
Council Assistance for Safe Management of Old Sheep Dips
Water Restrictions Lifted
Earthquake Affected Asked to Register with Red Cross
More Support for Visiting Cantabarians

April 2011

Motueka West and Central Draft Plan Change Released
Stopping Distance Demonstrations Aim to Slow Traffic
Cycle Trails Trust Logo Competition
Tasman Freedom Camping Bylaw Progresses
Free Internet to Remain in Tasman Libraries
Tasman Discusses Performing Arts Centre and Conference Centre
Tasman District Council Reviews Heritage Trust Request
Share Your Views at Annual Plan Meetings Next Week

Please see the accompanying media report for further information/analysis

Media Report

Background

Dry Crust Communications monitors local print media on behalf of Tasman District Council. The following media are monitored:

- Live Nelson
- The Nelson Mail
- The Leader (3 editions - Nelson, Motueka-Golden Bay News and Richmond/Waimea)
- The Guardian
- The Waimea Weekly
- Golden Bay Weekly
- Nelson Marlborough Farming
- Nelson Weekly

News stories and letters that feature the words 'Tasman District Council' or those that clearly relate to Tasman District Council events or projects are clipped, scanned and measured and evaluated as either positive, negative or neutral. A dollar value is assigned to the story based on its size.

Dry Crust Communications also subscribes to the Google Alerts service which provides a report on online activity for the words 'Tasman District Council.'

Evaluation of Costs

Each story that runs in the print media is allocated a cost based on what the article would cost to purchase if buying the equivalent in advertising space.

Advertising space is calculated as height (cm) x width (columns) x \$(rate). For example a story that was 10 cm high x 2 columns wide in The Nelson Mail would be calculated as:

$$10 \times 2 = 20 \text{ cm (approx size)}$$
$$20 \times \$4.15 \text{ (advertising rate)} = \$83.00$$

Notes

- 1 Costs are not allocated against stories that run in Live Nelson.
- 2 This is not a perfect measure. Advertising sizes are fixed and are based on column/centimetre widths. However, editorial stories can be almost any size and do not adhere to the column centimetre/widths, therefore the closest approximate measure of column/centimetre width has been used.
- 3 Costs are not allocated against online stories or activity.
- 4 Where stories are primarily about an unrelated topic and include only an incidental mention of Council, the size and value is calculated as zero so as not to skew the results.

- 5 The Golden Bay Weekly has a different way of charging for ads, but we calculate based on an average column/centimetre rate of \$2.37 (the same rate as for The Motueka Golden Bay News)

Summary Statistics for March 2011

Overall Summary – General Trends

This month, the number of stories featuring Council was down on previous months, as were the column/centimetres. This may be due to a number of factors, however previous hot topics such as Ligar Bay and Maitai Lodge received far less coverage this month, which may have been a contributing factor.

The number of front page stories remained steady, with one more than February (11). March saw only seven negative stories for the month – a significant drop from the 27 in February. This may be because there were fewer letters to the editor on topics such as Ligar Bay and Maitai Lodge. After February's very low number of stories in The Leader – Richmond/Waimea (1), March saw a marked increase in the number of stories (12).

Story Tone

Tasman District Council featured in 62 stories in monitored print publications during March. This was down significantly on February (92).

16 stories were evaluated as positive (Feb 24)

39 stories were evaluated as neutral (Feb 41)

7 stories were evaluated as negative (Feb 27)

Publications

The number of stories each publication ran that mentioned Council during March 2011 were as follows. February's figures are shown in brackets alongside.

Golden Bay Weekly - 4 (Feb 20)

Live Nelson – 0 (Feb 1)

Motueka Golden Bay News – 7 (Feb 5)

Nelson Mail – 28 (Feb 49)

NM Farming – 0 (Feb 0)

Nelson Weekly – 0 (Feb 1)

The Guardian – 3 (Feb 7)

The Leader (Nelson) - 1 (Feb 0)

The Leader Richmond/Waimea - 12 (Feb 1)

Waimea Weekly – 7 (Feb 9)

Publication & Tone

Of the seven stories evaluated as negative, six ran in the Nelson Mail and one in the Golden Bay Weekly.

Of the 16 stories evaluated as positive, two ran in the Golden Bay Weekly, three in Motueka Golden Bay News, four in the Nelson Mail, one in the Guardian, five in Leader – Richmond, and one in Waimea Weekly.

The Nelson Mail ran four positive stories this month, compared to six negative.

Front Page Stories

Front page stories often have more impact as they are often larger and more widely read. During March there were 12 front page stories, which was one higher than the 11 in February. Front page stories were:

- 3 – Golden Bay Weekly (Students continue work on fish passage; Library site submissions: clear themes; Ligar Bay bach decision still divides a community)
- 4 – Nelson Mail (Gears turn on progress of cycle trail; Port Nelson among areas most at risk of liquefaction; Well-respected principal rural fire officer killed in crash; Refugees set to have big impact on city)
- 1 – The Guardian (Draft Annual Plan ready for consultation)
- 1 – The Leader Nelson (The Leader's founders look back on 20 years)
- 1 – The Leader Richmond (The Leader's founders look back on 20 years)
- 2 – Waimea Weekly (High rates halt 'vibrant' CBD entrance; Council set to increase rates by 7%)

Topics & Tone

The main topic that caused negative press for Council during March 2011 was the Ligar Bay baches removal. Other topics included: Maitai Lodge; Tapawera Park; Tapu Bay erosion; Jakkett Island erosion court case and TDC being hard to contact.

The stories generating positive coverage were: Citizenship ceremony, Freedom Camping; Tasman's Cycle Trail; Wastewater pipeline upgrade; Last Of The Summer Fare; Motueka Youth Council; Fun Family Bike Ride and Firefighting Water Pipes Being Installed.

Value

The approximate 'value' of the stories based on their size is:

Negative: \$2,191.16

Positive: \$3,274.77

**Overall total (value of positive coverage less negative coverage):
\$1,083.61**

Positive coverage again outweighed negative in March 2011, however, it was slightly lower than the amount in February (\$3,132.77).

Summary Statistics for April 2011

Overall Summary – General Trends

This month, the number of stories featuring Council was over double what it was in March, with the column centimetres also significantly higher. (However it should be noted that the number of stories for March was down quite a bit on the monthly average). Topics in April that garnered considerable media attention were: the Freedom Camping Bylaw, the Annual Plan, the meeting that Paul Wylie attended in Golden Bay.

The number of front page stories remained steady, with nine for the month. April saw 36 negative stories, a large proportion of which were letters to the editor relating to topics such as Port Taranaki, Paul Wylie's appearance in Golden Bay and opposition to the Freedom Camping Bylaw. April also saw a marked increase in the number of stories in the Nelson Mail, going from 28 in March to 52 in April.

Story Tone

Tasman District Council featured in 133 stories in monitored print publications during April. This number was up significantly on March (62).

28 stories were evaluated as positive (March 16)

69 stories were evaluated as neutral (March 39)

36 stories were evaluated as negative (March 7)

Publications

The number of stories each publication ran that mentioned Council during April 2011 were as follows. March's figures are shown in brackets alongside.

Golden Bay Weekly - 21 (March 4)

Live Nelson – 3 (March 0)

Motueka Golden Bay News – 15 (March 7)

Nelson Mail – 52 (March 28)

NM Farming – 3 (March 0)

Nelson Weekly – 0 (March 0)

The Guardian – 13 (March 3)

The Leader (Nelson) - 0 (March 1)

The Leader Richmond/Waimea - 12 (March 12)

Waimea Weekly – 9 (March 7)

Publication & Tone

Of the 36 stories evaluated as negative - 16 ran in the Golden Bay Weekly, 15 ran in the Nelson Mail, three in Motueka Golden Bay News and two in The Guardian .

Of the 28 stories evaluated as positive - 11 ran in the Nelson Mail, seven ran in Leader – Richmond, three ran in Live Nelson, three ran in Motueka Golden Bay News, three ran in The Guardian and one ran in Waimea Weekly.

The Nelson Mail ran 11 positive stories this month, compared to 15 negative.

Front Page Stories

Front page stories often have more impact as they are often larger and more widely read. During April there were nine front page stories, compared to 12 in March. Front page stories were:

- 2 – The Leader Richmond (Youngsters turn out for parades; Aussies join Anzac Day service)
- 2 – Waimea Weekly (Shooting and stabbing rocks two communities; Report confirms church lied)
- 2 – The Guardian (ANZAC's remembered in moving ceremonies; Students do the numbers on free library internet)
- 1 – Golden Bay Weekly (Tarakohe: Option to sell port mooted in media)
- 1 – Nelson Mail (US party to rival Nelson)
- 1 – Motueka Golden Bay News (The reason behind the poppies)

Topics & Tone

The main topic that caused negative press for Council during April 2011 was the Freedom Camping Bylaw (mostly in the form of letters to the editor). Other topics included: Paul Wylie's appearance at a Golden Bay meeting, Annual Plan (rates increase), Port Tarakohe and Ligar Bay baches.

The stories generating positive coverage were: ANZAC Day coverage, Citizenship ceremony, Cycle Trails logo competition, Ligar Bay baches, Council's stance on the Nelson City Council performing arts and conference centre and the Mapua Hall development.

Value

The approximate 'value' of the stories based on their size is:

Negative: \$2,860.79

Positive: \$6,384.74

**Overall total (value of positive coverage less negative coverage):
\$3,523.95**

Positive coverage again outweighed negative in April 2011. Although there were fewer positive stories than negative overall, the size of the positive stories outweighed the negative (many of which were letters to the editor).

4. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMING TWO MONTHS

There are a number of projects strategic, tactical and operational to be managed in the next two months.

Strategic

Community Engagement Strategy
Social Media Policy
Long Term Plan communications plan
Civil Defence Education
Cycle Trust Marketing Agreement

Tactical

Annual plan delivery
Amalgamation decision
Capital works – Motueka stormwater, Richmond Water treatment, Richmond Resource Recovery Centre
Building e-newsletter
Review of Community Conversations within Newsline
Takaka Wastewater Treatment Plant

Operational

Website maintenance and development including forms online, widening submission fields, real time reporting
Updating Civil Defence

5. RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

6. DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Communications Subcommittee receives the Communications Adviser's report RFN11-06-01