

Report No:	RFN12-02-01
File No:	C797
Date:	28.02.12
Information Only – no decision required	

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Communications Subcommittee
Meeting Date: 28 February 2012
Subject: Communication Advisor's Report
Report Author: Chris Choat – Communications Advisor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January, while traditionally a slower month for external communication as Council's staff get back into the swing of the New Year, was preceded by the December rain event with its initial response phase turning to recovery at the turn of the year.

The amalgamation proposal has provided interest in the Council as has the need to provide information within the guidelines determined by the Local Government Act.

January/February has been a very busy period regarding the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022, preparing the material required for the public consultation phase.

The Council had stands at the last two A&P shows for the season, Golden Bay and Murchison. The Council's presence was deemed valuable by those attending.

Three Newslines have been published over the last eight weeks and one Mudcakes & Roses.

Media activity was dominated in the month of January and February by the recovery effort following the December rain event, amalgamation and the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive Officer. The monitoring shows that the Council's media presence is very marginally negative due predominantly to the stance taken by some media regarding the amalgamation debate.

Overall communications billing is tracking down as Council continues to manage its communications budget.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report be received.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Communications Subcommittee receives the Communications Advisor's Report RFN12-02-01.

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1. COMMENTARY

January, while traditionally a slower month for external communication as Council's staff get back into the swing of the New Year, was preceded by the December rain event with its initial response phase turning to recovery at the turn of the year.

January 2012 was no different, however the amalgamation proposal, coupled with the cleanup efforts following the flood event of December 2011 and the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 document preparation added a different dimension to Council's communications.

It has been a very busy period regarding the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022. Dry Crust has been working closely with the Strategic Development Team to produce the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 and the Summary document (due for distribution on the 2 March 2012). These two documents will be supported by advertising, public meetings and media activity.

The Council had stands at the last two A&P shows for the season, Golden Bay and Murchison. The presence at each show was deemed valuable by the attending Councillors, the Mayor and the public. The measurable value of A&P shows is difficult to determine but the Council's support for, and presence at, these rural shows is often commented on by those attending. The shows do provide an opportunity for attendees to make contact with the Council either for information or for specific needs regarding living or doing business in the District.

Three Newslines have been published over the last eight weeks and one Mudcakes & Roses. The Communications team is working closely with Dry Crust to provide an efficient means of communicating with the residents of Tasman taking into account expectations, technology and the ongoing need to deliver the appropriate cost/benefit balance. This has led to the development of a new approach to Newline whereby the fortnightly publication condenses to eight pages and has an enhanced online presence. The prototype will be tested to ensure the shortened version and its relationship to the Council's internet presence does not handicap residents' access to information. Paramount to the development is the need to ensure the new format continues to deliver for the Newline audience and the Council.

Overall communications is tracking down as the Council continues to identify ways of managing its communications budget efficiently.

Savings are being achieved by exploring new ways of working with channels and suppliers and realigning existing communications formats whilst maintaining the quality of Council's communications. This work will continue.

Business units within the Council continue to develop their interactions with residents around projects. Earlier contact, fuller information and greater opportunities to participate in the decision-making process are certainly paying dividends.

2. PRODUCTION

January (February work billed 28 February 2012)

The following work was produced during January and early February:

- Friends of the Labyrinth - New promotional material
- A & P Shows (Richmond, Motueka, Golden Bay, Murchison) 2011/2012
- Hummin' Marketing and Distribution 2011/2012
- Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 - Design Concepts and production
- Mudcakes & Roses February 2012 #70
- Hydrology map - flood rainfall
- Native Restoration Manual
- Get Moving Website
- Feature Writing January 2012
- Newline 27 January 2012 Issue #267
- Print Advertising January 2012
- Radio Advertising January 2012
- Jam Online - January 2012
- Temporary Health Warning Sign
- Updates January 2012
- Tasman Youth Council Recruitment Poster
- 2012 Sundial Square Summer Sound Poster
- Enviroschools Sign
- Update Native Habitats Tasman Brochure and Letter

3. PUBLICATIONS

January 2012

Newline - The Mag
One issue published and distributed

Mudcakes & Roses:
One issue published and distributed

February 2012:

Newsline - The Mag
Two issues published and distributed

4. MEDIA ACTIVITY

Media activity was dominated in the month of January and February by the recovery effort following the December rain event, amalgamation and the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive Officer

Media releases sent out during January 2012 were:

- Tourism Rate to be Spread Across the District
- Cable Bay and Wainui Roads Open But Patience Required
- Major Milestone for Tasman's Great Taste Cycle Trail
- New Tasman District Council Chief Executive officer Announced
- Latest Civil Defence Information
- Severe Weather Warning

Media releases sent out during February 2012 (to 21 February) were:

- The Road to Totaranui Will Re-open This Year
- Funding Round for Community Arts Activities Open

The amalgamation debate is polarising opinion – and that is being reflected in the amount, and sentiment of, media coverage being received. This is to be expected. Council, through its own channels (Newsline, website, internal comms and Fresh FM) has the ability to continue to have a presence to enable residents to make an informed decision and to encourage voter turnout in April. The quality and balance of much of the news media's reporting of the amalgamation debate has been influenced by the stance taken by the print and radio providers within the region. This is not expected to change throughout the process.

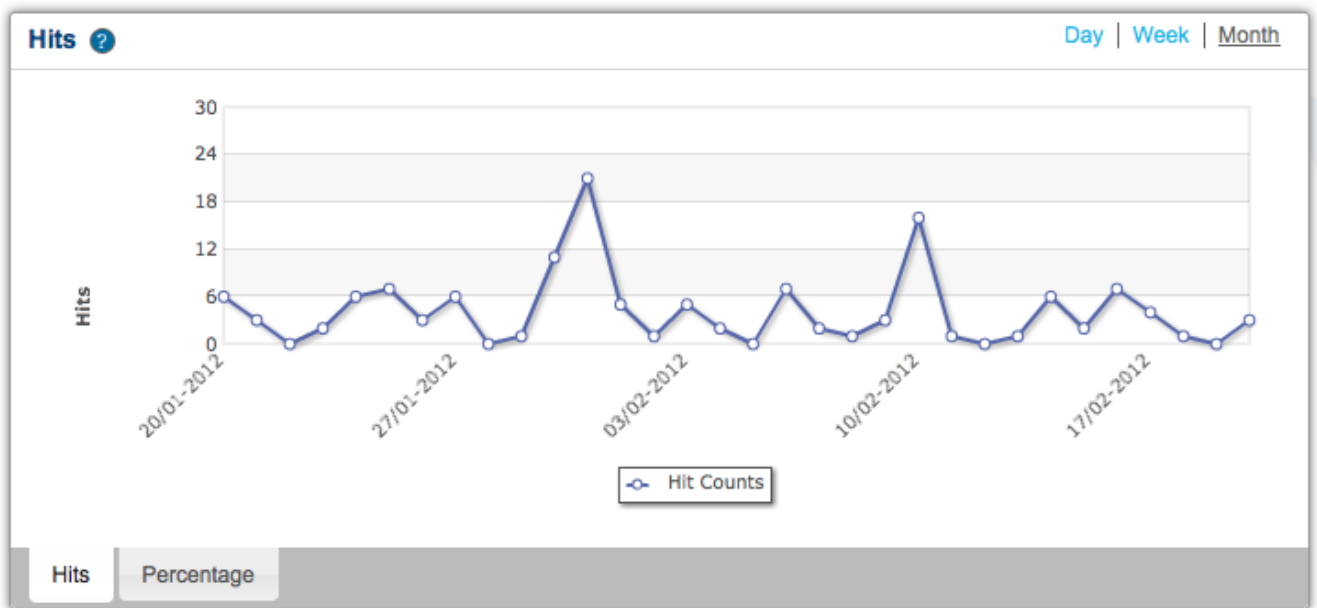
The flood event in December, though very well managed by Council and with a number of high profile 'wins', was always going to register as a 'negative' in media terms purely because it was an event that was undesirable and affected residents adversely. This has impacted on the overall sentiment score.

Council communications activities over the next two months will include providing residents across the District with facts and information on the amalgamation proposal to enable them to make an informed and educated choice. The legislative environment surrounding the amalgamation debate means that the major focus of any media presence will be to encourage as many residents as possible to vote.

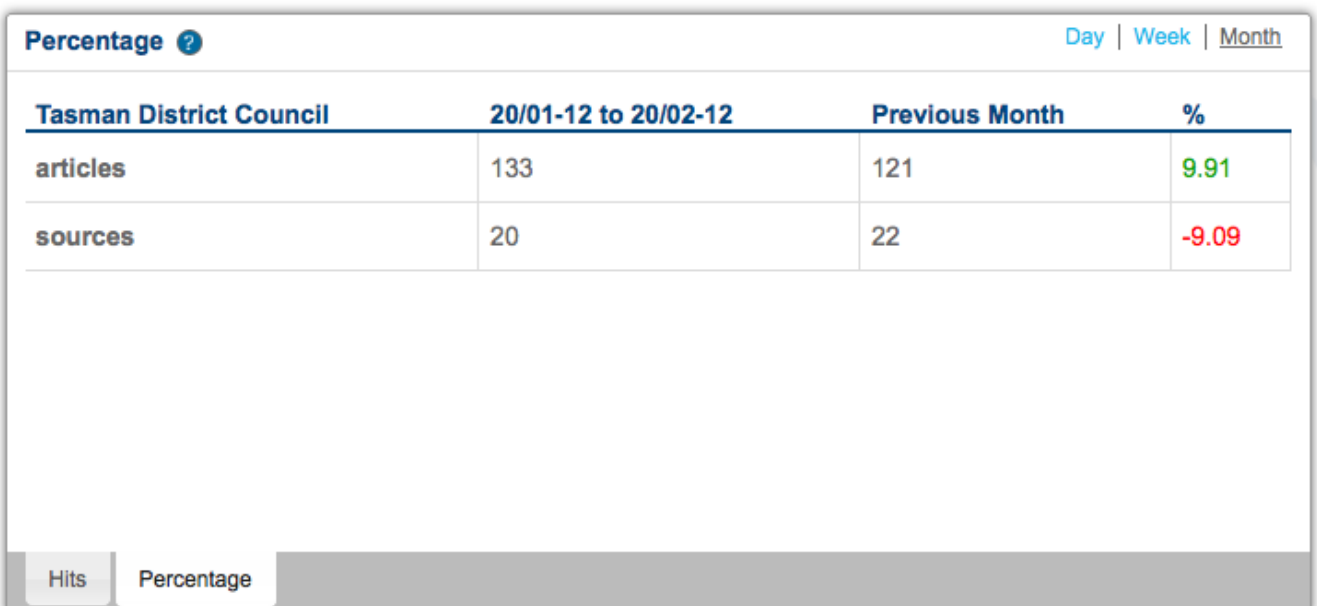
The Draft Long Term Plan Summary document will be released on 2 March 2012 to all households across the District. It will attract increased media attention on Tasman District Council, the decision making process and the decisions themselves.

5. MEDIA MONITORING

Council's media monitoring service is provided by Meltwater.

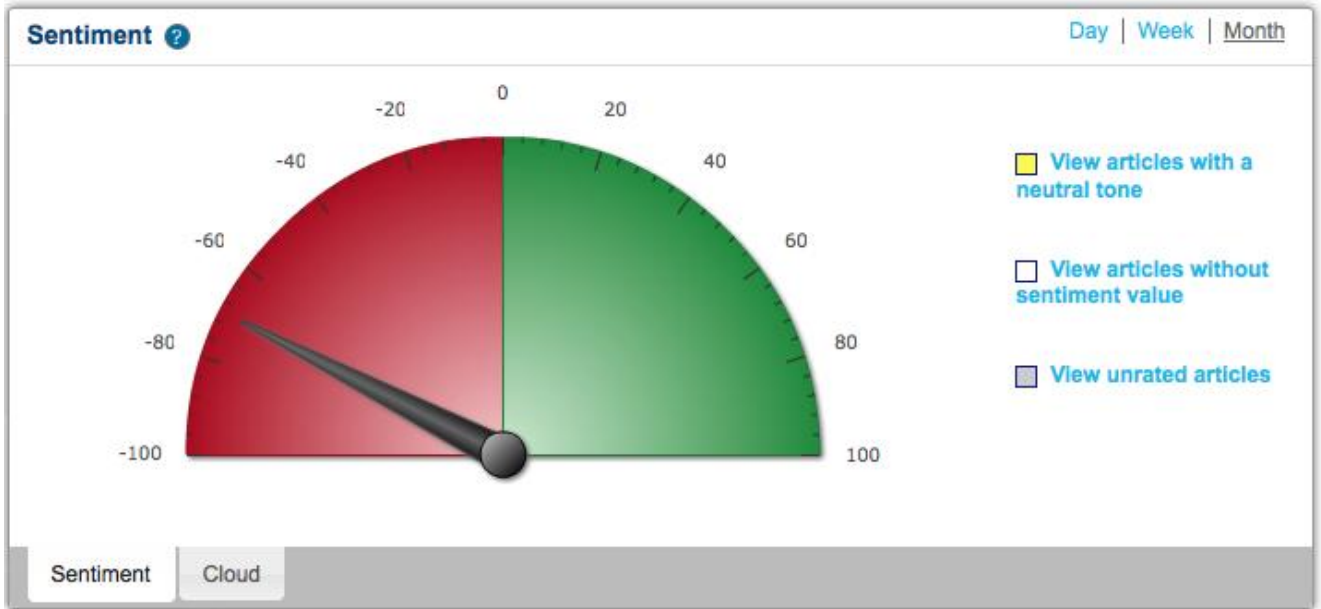


Over the last month the phrase 'Tasman District Council' has been mentioned 133 times, across 20 media outlets (previous month 122 mentions over 22 media outlets).

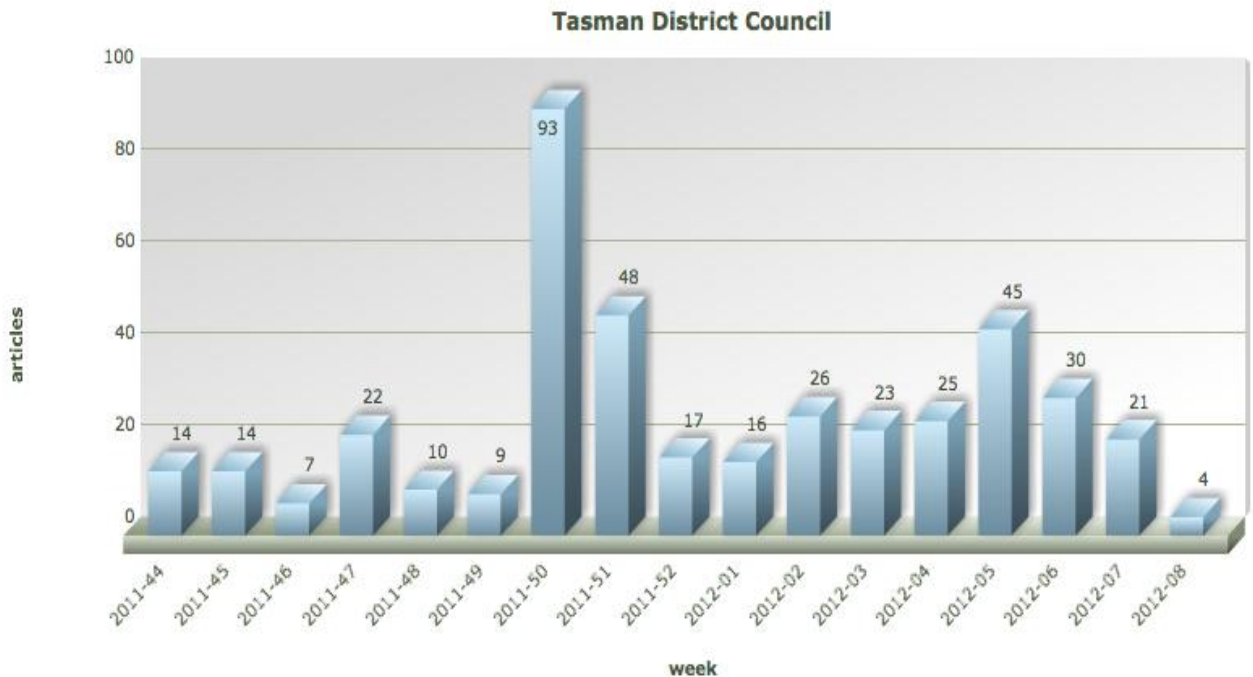


Tasman District Council	20/01-12 to 20/02-12	Previous Month	%
articles	133	121	9.91
sources	20	22	-9.09

Meltwater measured the 'sentiment' of those 133 mentions as being mostly negative (on average)



Below is a breakdown of the number of times the phrase 'Tasman District Council' has been mentioned in the media over the past three months. As you can see – there have been two 'spikes', the first following the flood event in December 2012 and the second following the Local Government Commission's amalgamation announcement. It is expected that there will be continued media interest in our region over the next 3-6 months as the amalgamation debate comes to a conclusion.



5. RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report be received.

6. DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Communications Subcommittee receives the Communications Advisor's Report RFN12-02-01.