

STAFF REPORT

TO: Communications Subcommittee
FROM: Communications Adviser
DATE: 23 September 2010
REFERENCE: C797
SUBJECT: Media Monitoring Report August 2010 - RFN10-09-20

PURPOSE

To inform the Communications Subcommittee of the media coverage of the Council.

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR AUGUST 2010*

Story Tone

Tasman District Council featured in 102 stories in monitored publications during August. This was slightly down on the July total of 144 stores.

18 stories were evaluated as negative (July 20)
54 stories were evaluated as neutral (July 41)
30 stories were evaluated as positive (July 53)

The number of positive stories was down on the previous month.

Publications

The number of stories each publication ran that mentioned Council during August 2010 were as follows: (July's 2010 figures are shown in brackets alongside.)

GB Weekly - 4* (unknown)
Live Nelson – 2 (6)
Motueka Golden Bay News – 10 (20)
The Nelson Mail – 57 (47)
The Guardian – 11 (6)
The Leader (Nelson) – 1 (2)
The Leader RMD/Waimea – 9 (20)
Waimea Weekly – 8 (7)

**This August 2010 media evaluation does not include all the stories that ran in the GB Weekly during August as we are still waiting on two back issues.*

This is unsurprising as The Nelson Mail is a daily, whereas all of the other publications are weekly or fortnightly. Fewer stories about Council ran in the Motueka/Golden Bay News during August compared to the previous month.

Of the 18 stories evaluated as negative, the vast majority (15) ran in The Nelson Mail. The Guardian, the GB Weekly and the Waimea Weekly each ran one negative story. This was very similar to July.

Of the 30 stories evaluated as positive, one ran in the GB Weekly, two ran in Live Nelson, seven in the Motueka/Golden Bay News, eight in The Nelson Mail, four in The Leader Richmond/Waimea, two in the Waimea Weekly.

The only publication that ran more negative than positive stories about Council was The Nelson Mail (15 negative compared to eight positive). A lot of the neutral coverage in all publications related to local body elections.

Front Page Stories

Front page stories often have more impact as they are often larger and more widely read. During August, there were six front page stories for Council:

- 1 - GB Weekly (local food challenge – related to Ecofest)
- 2 – The Nelson Mail (amalgamation petition and funding for cycleway)
- 1 – The Guardian (students help build footbridge)
- 1 – The Leader RMD (Ecofest funky fashion)
- 1 – Waimea Weekly (powerlines going underground)

Of these, all were positive or neutral. Council received only an incidental mention in The Guardian and Waimea Weekly stories.

Topics & Tone

The stories that caused the majority of negative press for Council during August 2010 were Hope Domain Lodge, in-action from the Council following an out of control party in Richmond, and Kina Reserve plans. Other issues included water rates, rate increases, Joe Bell resignation, preserving heritage and Council spending/transparency. Much of the criticism was contained in letters to the editor, with some of these written by those standing in local body elections.

The topics that generated the most positive coverage for Council can be broadly summarised as: Outstanding Community Service Awards, Citizenship Ceremony, Big Beach Clean Up, Ecofest, The Cycle Trail, free child restraint checks, Top Team, and the Rural Wear & Tear Show at the Nelson A&P Show.

A lot of the neutral coverage, particularly in The Nelson Mail, related to local body elections.

It should be noted that council often misses out on being included in positive news stories relating to things such as libraries, recreation centre facilities, the ASB Aquatic Centre and events which it sponsors.

Value

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

Negative	- \$2,849
Positive	- \$7,627

Overall total (value of positive coverage less negative coverage): + \$4,778

This was down on the previous month's overall total of \$13,550.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Communications Subcommittee receive the Media Monitoring Report August 2010 RFN10-09-20.

Chris Choat
Communications Advisor

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 & Richmond/Waimea)
- The Guardian
- The Waimea Weekly
- GB 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.' (However this service was started part-way through the month, so the figures are not accurate as a monthly total).

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. We do not allocate costs 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.

We only began subscribing to Google Alerts part way through the month, so these figures will not be accurate as monthly total.

