

STAFF REPORT

TO: Communications Subcommittee
FROM: Communications Adviser
DATE: 16 November 2010
REFERENCE: C797
SUBJECT: Media Monitoring Report September & October 2010
– RFN10-11-11

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
Nelson Marlborough Farming
Nelson Weekly* (a new publication – monitoring info is not included for September)

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.

Google Alerts is also subscribed to 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 x 2 = 20 cm (approx size)
20 x \$4.15 (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 GB Weekly has a different way of charging for ads, but we calculate based on an average column cm rate of \$2.37 (the same rate as for The Motueka-Golden Bay News)

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2010

Story Tone

Tasman District Council featured in 145 stories in monitored publications during September. This was up against the August total of 114, and was largely as a result of Local Body election coverage.

27 stories were evaluated as negative (August 18)
88 stories were evaluated as neutral (August 54)
30 stories were evaluated as positive (August 30)

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

Publications

The number of stories each publication ran that mentioned Council during September 2010 were as follows. Augusts' figures are shown in brackets alongside.

GB Weekly - 12 (August 4)
Live Nelson – 2 (August 2)
Motueka-Golden Bay News – 12 (August 10)
Nelson Mail – 70 (August 57)
Nelson Marlborough Farming – 1 (August 0)
Nelson Weekly (unknown) (0)
The Guardian – 8 (August 11)
The Leader (Nelson) – 1 (August 1)
The Leader Richmond/Waimea – 18 (August 9)
Waimea Weekly – 19 (August 8)

This is unsurprising as The Nelson Mail is a daily, whereas all of the other publications are weekly or fortnightly. There were significantly more stories about Council published in the GB Weekly, The Leader Richmond, Waimea Weekly compared to the previous month and this was largely as a result of election coverage.

Publication & Tone

Of the 27 stories evaluated as negative, the vast majority (19) ran in The Nelson Mail and many of these were letters to the editor. The Motueka-Golden Bay News ran three negative stories (Elections, Joe Bell and Roads), the Waimea Weekly ran one (Hope Domain), The Guardian ran two (letters to the editor) and the GB Weekly ran one (letter to editor). There were a higher number of negative stories in the community papers than for the previous month.

Of the 30 stories evaluated as positive, these were spread quite evenly across each of the publications with the exception of the GB Weekly.

The only publication that ran more negative than positive stories about Council was once again The Nelson Mail. This is consistent with previous months.

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 September, there were 13 front page stories about Council.

- 7 - Nelson Mail (elections (2), quake (2), boil water warning, iwi settlements, Kina reserve)
- 2 – The Guardian (amalgamation, home insulation scheme)
- 1 – GB Weekly (Pakawau Beach Park development)
- 1 – Leader Richmond (Hope Domain)
- 1 – Waimea Weekly (Hope Domain)

Of these, the majority were positive or neutral. The one exception was the Waimea Weekly story on Hope Domain with the headline 'Lowering Lodge Roof Another Stupid Idea'. This was in contrast to The Leader Richmond's more balanced approach to the same story - 'Lodge consultation to start'.

Topics & Tone

The topics that generated the most positive coverage for Council can be broadly summarised as: awards and events including the Environment Awards, Ecofest, Waimea Inlet accord, Tasman Karaoke Superstar, Big Beach Clean Up, citizenship ceremonies, Age to Be expo and ASB Aquatic Centre Wave Rave. Two other topics generating positive press were Earthquake assistance and Richmond Library.

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

Value

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

Negative: \$4,776.58

Positive: \$6,830.69

Overall total (value of positive coverage less negative coverage):
+ \$2,054.11

This was down on the previous month's overall total of \$4,778.00.

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR OCTOBER 2010

Story Tone

Tasman District Council featured in 92 stories in monitored publications during October. This was down on the September total of 145, however this may be due to The Guardian stories not yet being counted.

16 stories were evaluated as negative (Sept 27)

47 stories were evaluated as neutral (Sept 88)

29 stories were evaluated as positive (Sept 30)

The number of negative and neutral stories was down on the previous month.

Publications

The number of stories each publication ran that mentioned Council during October 2010 were as follows. September's figures are shown in brackets alongside.

GB Weekly - 15 (Sept 12)

Live Nelson – 1 (Sept 2)

Motueka-Golden Bay News – 10 (Sept 12)

Nelson Mail – 51 (Sept 70)

Nelson Marlborough Farming – 0 (Sept 1)

Nelson Weekly – 0 (unknown)

The Guardian - unknown (Sept 8)

The Leader (Nelson) - 0 (Sept 1)

The Leader Richmond/Waimea - 7 (Sept 18)

Waimea Weekly – 8 (Sept 19)

This is unsurprising as The Nelson Mail is a daily, whereas all of the other publications are weekly or fortnightly.

Publication & Tone

Of the 16 stories evaluated as negative, the vast majority ran in The Nelson Mail and many of the negative stories in all publications were letters to the editor. Topics

included insurance on council buildings, amalgamation 'propaganda', the Mapua seawall, community board targeted rates, roading upgrade, pokies and motocross noise.

There were significantly fewer negative stories than for the previous month.

Of the 30 stories evaluated as positive, these were quite evenly split between the different publications. Many of the positive stories related to profiles of new and returning councillors following the elections, other positives included the Positive Ageing expo, Richmond library, the Ruby Bay Bypass opening, mural on bus shelter and the grant for the Lee Dam.

The Nelson Mail ran the same amount of positive as negative stories this month. (Normally negatives outweigh the positives).

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 October there were 11 front page stories about Council.

- 8 - Nelson Mail (dirty tactics mar campaign, new mayor, Motueka bypass, cowards smash candidates windows, grant to fast track Lee Valley dam design, old meets new as bypass opens, rallying stand against city's street violence, record deluge)
- 1 - GB Weekly (inclusion and agreement bode well for port, resource consent next step for integrated health centre)
- 1 - Waimea Weekly (Dam project wins \$1m)

All of these were positive or neutral.

Topics & Tone

The stories that caused the majority of negative press for Council during October 2010 were Takaka water scheme work during summer, letter from candidates who did not get elected, community board targeted rates, 'propaganda' allegations around amalgamation newsletter, motocross noise, seawall in Mapua, Daryl the boatie being moved on.

The topics that generated the most positive coverage for Council can be broadly summarised as: profiles of new councillors and mayor, dam project winning funding, Port Tarakohe, bypass opening, redesigned Richmond library winning an award, new learn to swim pool, events such as go by bike day, Positive Ageing expo.

Value

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

Negative: \$3,038

Positive: \$8,122

Overall total (value of positive coverage less negative coverage):

+ \$5,084

This was up on the previous month's overall total of \$2,054 and is likely to increase further once missing articles are factored in.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Communications Subcommittee receive the Media Monitoring Report for September and October 2010 RFN10-11-11.

Chris Choat
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