

Evaluation - Community Engagement for the
Community Strategic Plan 2011-2021
On exhibition from 27 September to 8 November 2010

Compiled by the Communications and Marketing Unit

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Executive Summary

Tweed Shire Council undertook an extensive six-week community engagement campaign for the Draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021, from 27 September to 8 November 2010.

This campaign used community leaders from various sectors of the community to inspire and encourage input from all sections of the community, focusing on a 'My Vision, Your Vision ... Shaping Our Vision' slogan encouraging everyone to have their say.

It was guided by an Engaging The Community strategy (see Attachment A in the appendix). It sought to get Council out into the community, to actively seek public input to the Tweed Community Strategic Plan. The budget for the campaign was \$30,000.

Aim

To maximise community input to the Tweed Community Strategic Plan, by encouraging input from all individuals and organisations in all sectors of the community.

To co-ordinate community input which represented the views of the whole Tweed Community and could be effectively presented for easy and effective interpretation.

Measures such as an independently facilitated website, television advertising and the community information sessions were intended to inform and involve sectors of the community that can be difficult to reach, while the online forums, phone submission service and survey provided easy options for the community to provide input.

The dedicated website, www.ourtweedvision.com.au, was a central point for the engagement process, featuring all relevant information about the Strategic Plan, as well as an online survey and forums.

More than 1290 people visited the website, downloading the documents and supporting videos, and leaving a total of 248 comments on the online forums. Website visitors could also provide input through an online survey, on which 166 surveys were completed.

The site proved to be an effective hub for the campaign, providing a centralised point to make information readily available to the public and attracting a high level of community input. The website achieved an extremely high public response compared to similar campaigns by other NSW councils.

The site was promoted using a television advertising campaign, widespread print advertising, including Council's own newspaper the Tweed Link, and a series of community information sessions.

Early in the engagement period, Council and representatives of the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government held two community roundtables for 34 invited representatives of the Tweed's residents and progress associations, business chambers and environmental groups. They were an effective way to launch the engagement process, by getting community leaders involved and encouraging the organisations to disseminate the information to their members. Community delegates participated in lively and productive discussion and called for similar roundtables to be held on an annual or biannual basis.

The roundtables were followed by seven community information sessions at shopping centres, markets and town halls in centres throughout the Tweed. Senior council staff and elected councillors conducted the information sessions, for several hours in each location, enabling members of the public to visit the information stalls when it suited them. Around

340 people visited the sessions, with many positive comments about Council's efforts to get out into the community.

Council staff also visited five Tweed high schools and two skate parks to inform young residents about the Strategic Plan and encourage youth input. Nearly 100 student leaders and other interested students attended the school forums and were generally very enthusiastic about the opportunity to participate, prompting a number of them to complete the printed survey.

Council enlisted an independent research company to conduct a phone survey which provided an unbiased and statistically representative snapshot of the opinions of the broader Tweed community. Its method of randomly selecting 300 residents provides a sample of opinion which reflected the views of the wide Tweed community, which an accuracy rate of better than six per cent. It was therefore a comparatively low-cost method to identify resident views which Council could be confident reflected the views of the broader community.

Safe and peaceful surrounding and protecting the Tweed natural attributes and biodiversity emerged as priorities among the residents surveyed.

The online survey and a printed version of the survey – distributed at the information sessions and completed by 74 people – ensured this method of input was not restricted to the 300 people targeted by the random phone survey.

An independent provider was enlisted to offer a 1300 phone submission service throughout the engagement period. It was designed to provide a particularly easy method of input, by recording audio messages of up to 30 seconds. However, only 15 people used the service during the six-week period.

Council also maximised its use of traditional methods of communications, including a special eight-page special edition of the Tweed Link and regular Community Strategic Plan articles in the newsletter throughout the six-week engagement period.

The start of the television advertising – a two week campaign on the NBN and Prime networks – and the release of the special Tweed Link issue coincided with substantial rises in the number of visits to the website. Smaller increases also occurred with the publication of advertisements in five of the shire's newspapers.

Engagement methods

- Bang The Table website – including online forums
- Community service – online and printed versions
- Random phone survey
- Community roundtables
- Community information sessions
- Addresses to business chambers
- Phone submission service
- Audio recording of draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan
- Vodcasts
- Tweed Link – special issue and regular articles
- Print advertising
 - * Tweed Daily
 - * Tweed Sun
 - * Tweed Echo
 - * Murwillumbah Weekly
 - * Tweed Weekly
 - * Koori Mail

- Customer Service Centre displays
- Library displays
- Direct mail to non-resident ratepayers
- Direct mail to organisations in Community Directory
 - * Government agencies
 - * Community organisations
 - * Schools and other education and training institutions
 - * Business and industry groups
- High school visits
- Skate park visits
- Facebook advertisement
- Community notice boards - posters

Participant numbers at a glance

Website www.ourweedvision.com.au

- Number of visits to website home page: 1634
- Number of unique visitors: 1291
- Number of visits to website forums page: 1151
- Number of unique visitors: 690
- Number of comments on online forums
 - * Civic leadership 53
 - * Supporting Community Life 68
 - * Strengthening the Economy 50
 - * Caring for the Environment 77
 - Total 248
- Number of people who completed the online survey: 166

Community roundtables

- 30 September – Murwillumbah Civic and Cultural Centre 25
- 30 September – Tweed Heads Civic and Cultural Centre 9

Public information sessions

- 6 October: Uki hall 40
- 9 October: Kingscliff Markets 40
- 16 October: Tweed City Shopping Centre 30
- 17 October: Pottsville Markets 70
- 18 October: Sunnyside Shopping Centre – Murwillumbah 100
- 23 October: Centro Tweed Shopping Centre 50
- 25 October: Chillingham hall 7

Note: Attendance numbers at information sessions are estimates because not all visitors completed the attendance register.

High school visits

• 25 October: Murwillumbah High School	14
• 26 October: Tweed River High School	32
• 26 October: Wollumbin High School	7
• 27 October: Banora Point High School	23
• 28 October: Kingscliff High School	20

Skate park visits (community conversations)

• 3 November: Tweed Heads South skate park	16
• 3 November: Cabarita skate park	35

Total number of people who completed the survey: 240

Number of submissions to 1300 phone service: 15

Number of people surveyed in random phone survey: 300

** See attachments in appendix for further detail about participant and submission numbers.

Engagement Method: Bang the Table Online Forum

Summary of activities

An online engagement consultancy firm, Bang The Table, was hired by Council to create a website specifically for community engagement for the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan.

The website – www.ourtweedvision.com.au – was open to the public for the entire consultation period, from 27 September to 8 November 2010. It was a hub for the engagement process, with all of the key information relevant to the Community Strategic Plan and the methods of engagement.

Visitors to the site could access online copies of the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan and all supporting documents, as well as an audio version of the Strategic Plan.

Regular news items on the website and videos featuring community leaders and members of the general public kept the community up to date with the progress of the engagement process.

Site visitors would provide input through the website by two methods:

- An online survey (see below)
- Four online forums; one for each of the themes outlined in the draft Strategic Plan
 - * Civic Leadership
 - * Supporting Community Life
 - * Strengthening the Economy
 - * Caring for the Environment

It was the first time Council has used online forums for public consultations and was heavily promoted during the engagement period.

The forums and overall website were jointly administered and maintained by Bang The Table staff and Council's acting Community Engagement Officer.

Council staff provided the vast majority of the site's content, including news items, videos, photographs, audio recordings and all documents. They also monitored all forum submissions and provided forum responses when required.

Bang The Table staff moderated the forum - deleting a couple of submissions which violated forum conditions, assisted with website design and coordinated supporting surveys which identified the age demographics of site visitors and their perception on the relative importance of the four themes.

Outcome

A total of 1291 people visited the site during the six-week engagement period, for a total of 1634.

They submitted a total of 248 messages on the forums and 166 completed the online survey.

Website statistics:

- Number of visits to website home page: 1634
- Number of unique visitors: 1291
- Number of visits to website forums page: 1151
- Number of unique visitors: 690
- Number of comments on online forums
 - * Civic leadership 53
 - * Supporting Community Life 68
 - * Strengthening the Economy 50
 - * Caring for the Environment 77
 - Total 248
- Number of people who completed the online survey: 166

Forum comments

Civic Leaders

Respondents indicated Council needed to show its willingness to listen and response to community demands, demonstrating its commitment to transparency and a commitment to sustainability in its decision making.

Supporting Community Life

Improved urban design, a restored train service and a desire for safer community were raised by a number of participants in the Supporting Community Life forum.

Strengthening the Economy

The protection of agricultural land was the most prominent theme in the Strengthening The Economy forum.

Caring for the environment

Measures to protect the Tweed's biodiversity, controls to achieve sustainable development and protecting waterways and foreshores emerged as key issues in this forum.

See attached Bang The Table report (Attachment C in appendix) for further detail.

A print-up of all the comments is also attached.

Cost

\$7000

Evaluation of Communication Method

The website and online forums were an effective way to inform the community about the Tweed Community Strategic Plan and enable them to provide input.

While the number of visitors to the site represented just 1.3% of the Tweed's estimated population and non-resident ratepayers, it was a good response for a high-level strategic document which is difficult to capture the community's attention.

The comment numbers compared extremely favourably to similar online forums for other government organisations.

Of the other forum projects viewed on the Bang The Table site, only a Lake Macquarie council forum for a waste strategy attracted more comments, with a total of 349.

While a strategic plan forum for Waverley Council attracted a total of 154 comments, the strategic plan forums for Gosford, Wollondilly and Kiama council received between 24 and 10 comments.

This compared to 248 on www.ourtweedvision.com.au, which included a number of conversations which evolved between participants on the forum. During the engagement period, the forums were promoted as a method which enabled public input to evolve by encouraging community conversation about issues.

This helped appease critics who called for public meetings as part of the engagement process. The forums were promoted as a six-week, 24/7 public meeting which enabled the whole Tweed community to participate whenever and wherever suited them. The website was particularly valuable for this reason.

The forum was also promoted as a key measure to enhance transparency in the engagement process. It allows all visitors to the site to read every comment and compared that input to the final document.

A number of participants in the forum and visitors to the community information sessions called for the forums to become ongoing features in future community engagement by Council.

Engagement Method: Community Survey

Summary of activities

Council conducted a community survey through three methods:

- A random phone survey (see below)
- An online survey on the www.ourtweedvision.com.au (Bang The Table) website
- Printed copies available at the information sessions.

The online survey was conducted through the Survey Monkey program. It was implemented by Council's Information Technology department and linked to the Bang The Table website.

Internet Protocol (IP) address recognition was used to ensure only one survey could be completed from each computer, to prevent respondents from submitting numerous survey and 'stacking' the result.

500 copies of the printed version were distributed at each of the information sessions; the community roundtables, community information sessions, school visits, skate visits and meetings with organisations such as business chambers, youth organisations and indigenous groups.

Copies were individually numbered to prevent respondents from photocopying them and submitting numerous copies to skew the result.

To make it easier for people to submit completed surveys, the printed copies could be delivered to Council's civic and cultural centres in Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, dropped into the libraries at Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Kingscliff or delivered to the Pottsville Beach Community Neighbourhood Centre.

The online and printed surveys were promoted as a method which only took a few minutes for people to provide input to the Community Strategic Plan.

Outcome

A total of 166 survey forms were completed on the Bang The Table site.

Council also received a total of 74 completed copies of the printed survey.

See attached report (Attachment E in appendix) for further detail about survey results for both the online and printed versions.

A spreadsheet with all the written answers to Question 6 is also attached (Attachment F in appendix).

Evaluation of Communication Method

The survey was a low-cost method which provided a quick and easy option for input. It could be completed in only a few minutes and therefore encouraged input from people who were unlikely to take the time to write a submission.

It provided visitors to the information session with an easy way to provide immediate input while they were at the stall and motivated. It was also a particularly effective method for young people, with some of the visited high schools completing the survey as part of a school activity.

The survey provided valuable quantifiable results, numerically outlining the respondents' priorities when presented with many of the key issues.

The only expense was the cost of printing. Distribution was through the existing information sessions and online version did not have any cost other than Council labour.

The online and printed surveys complemented a random phone survey which generally used the same questions. Two of the questions in the online and printed versions had to be altered slightly because of the different format.

While the random phone survey was valuable in providing results which are statistically representative of the entire shire, the online and printed versions were valuable in allowing everyone in the community to participate – not just the 300 people randomly contacted for the phone survey.

The printed survey was also a valuable inclusion in information packs provided to many community leaders.

Engagement Method: Random Phone Survey

Summary of activities

Independent consultants Woolcott Research was hired to conduct a random phone survey from 25-31 October.

Council worked with Woolcott staff to devise a series of questions which identified:

- Community members current opinions about priorities raised during the Tweed Futures consultation in 2004
- How successful Council has been in addressing those issues
- How Council resources should be allocated to address current priorities.

A total of 300 people were surveyed over a one-week period, with age-group and gender quotas to ensure the demographics of participants accurately represented the demographics of the wider community. This helped ensure the survey results were statistically representative of the broader Tweed community.

Outcome

300 Tweed residents were surveyed and a summary of the results was provided by Woolcott Research (see Attachment A in appendix)

Council received three complaints from people contacted during the survey and Council contacted Woolcotts to address these complaints.

Cost

\$7500

Evaluation of Communication Method

The random phone survey provided numerical results which were quantifiable and easily interpreted. It provided firm figures which are less open to subjective interpretation.

The phone survey provided a cost and time-effective method of gaining a snapshot of the views of the broader Tweed community. The random nature of the survey and the size of the sample (300 residents) ensured the views expressed by the participants were statistically representative of the entire community.

Engagement Method: Community Roundtables

Summary of activities

Council conducted two Community Roundtables on 30 September for representatives of the shire's residents and progress associations, business chambers and environmental groups.

An afternoon forum was held at the Murwillumbah Civic and Cultural Centre and was followed by an evening session at the Tweed Heads Civic and Cultural Centre. The two locations and the combination of day and evening forums was designed to enable as many representatives as possible.

Council hired representatives from the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government, Graham Sansom and Melissa Gibbs, to facilitate the forums. Their involvement utilised their skills as meeting convenors, while emphasising the importance of the Community Strategic Plan. Participants would hear from authorities who could add weight to what Council was trying to achieve.

The meetings outlined the processes and objectives of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, while encouraging input from the participants. Each of represented organisations was given three minutes to outline their priorities for the shire, in addition to discussions at the end of each forum.

Outcome

The Murwillumbah forum was attended by 25 community representatives, while nine attended the Tweed Heads session.

Delegates were very positive about the roundtables and called for similar forums annually or biannually.

See Attachment F in appendix for a summary of delegate comments at the community roundtables.

Evaluation of Communication Method

The roundtables were planned as an effective way to launch the engagement process, by getting community leaders involved and encouraging the organisations to disseminate the information to their members.

Both forums featured lively and constructive interaction by participants, aided by skilful facilitation by Mr Sansom and the attendance of senior Council staff and elected councillors.

Independent facilitation and Mr Sansom's previous roles in Tweed Shire were valuable in encouraging participation by the delegates.

Engagement Method: Community Information Sessions

Summary of activities

Senior Council staff and elected councillors staged a series of seven Community Information Sessions, from 6 – 25 October, at shopping centres, community markets and halls in centres throughout the shire.

Each session ran for between four and 10 hours, allowing residents to visit when it suited them to ask questions about the Community Strategic Plan and talk to Council representatives about their priorities for the shire.

The session provided visitors with copies of the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan and accompanying documents, including printed copies of the survey.

Visitors were also shown how to access the www.ourtweedvision.com.au website and participate on the forums.

Pull-up banners promoting the Strategic Plan's theme and engagement program dates were created by Council's signs department to achieve an eye-catching display.

An information session at the Chillingham community markets was originally scheduled for 10 October. However, the markets were cancelled because of wet weather. There wasn't another Chillingham market during the engagement period, so the Chillingham session was rescheduled to 25 October at the village's hall.

Outcome

Public information session attendances

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • 6 October: Uki hall | 40 |
| • 9 October: Kingscliff Markets | 40 |
| • 16 October: Tweed City Shopping Centre | 30 |
| • 17 October: Pottsville Markets | 70 |
| • 18 October: Sunnyside Shopping Centre – Murwillumbah | 100 |
| • 23 October: Centro Tweed Shopping Centre | 50 |
| • 25 October: Chillingham hall | 7 |

Evaluation of Communication Method

The success of the Community Information Sessions varied widely, with the best responses at the markets (numbers at the Kingscliff markets were severely reduced by wet and windy conditions). It brought the campaign out into the public eye and visitors to the markets were more prepared to browse.

While the shopping centre sessions also took the campaign out into the public, shoppers were in more of a rush and were less inclined to stop at the stall. There was a good number of visitors at the 10-hour Sunnyside session. But the markets were most effective in terms of visitor numbers relative to the duration of each session.

Attendances at the Uki hall were positive, considering many visitors were passers-by who said they were unaware of the Community Strategic Plan and the information session. This was probably because the session was early in the engagement process. It suggested a more localised information campaign was needed in the area.

The Chillingham session in particular emphasised that community markets were a better option for the information sessions.

However, all seven sessions attracted positive community comments about Council's efforts to take the campaign out into the community and actively seek public input. In that sense, they were a success exercise in public relations.

Engagement Method: 1300 phone submission service

Summary of activities

Council engaged Lismore company Immediate Reception to facilitate a phone submission service. Participants could phone a 1300 number and, for the cost of a local call, provide a verbal submission of up to 30 seconds.

Respondents could use the phone service as often as they liked.

Council had previously used the service for its consultation for the Water Augmentation Strategy, with a favourable response.

Immediate Reception staff received the calls and provided fortnightly reports to council, with details of the participants and typed versions of the verbal submissions.

Outcome

A total of 15 people lodged a total 17 submissions.

Cost

\$645

Evaluation of Communication Method

Including the phone submission service in the engagement process further emphasised Council's efforts to encourage input from all members of the community.

However, it was ultimately underutilised, relative to its cost. Uptake of the service was probably reduced by the fact it ran parallel to the Bang The Table website. The type of person likely to use the phone service – because it is quick and easy – is also likely to utilise the website survey or forums. It would seem the website was largely viewed as the better option.

Engagement Method: Tweed Link

Summary of activities

Council produced a special eight-page, colour issue of its Tweed Link newsletter, dedicated to an outline of the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan and how the community could provide input.

A story about the Strategic Plan and the engagement process was featured in each subsequent issue of the Tweed Link during the consultation period.

Outcome

Copies of the special issue and each subsequent issue were delivered to 38,500 households in the shire. They were also posted to subscribers and included in information packs provided to community leaders.

Visitor numbers to the www.ourtweedvision.com.au website rose significantly - from about 40 to over 80 – when the Tweed Link special issue was delivered to residents.

Cost

\$6,000

Evaluation of Communication Method

Many visitors to the information sessions stated they read about the Community Strategic Plan in the Tweed Link.

Feedback during the engagement period indicated the Tweed Link was effective in informing residents about the plan and how they could make submissions.

Engagement Method: Television advertising

Summary of activities

For the first time, Council used an extensive television advertising campaign to promote the Community Strategic Plan.

The advertisements were run early in the engagement period – during second and third weeks – to create community awareness before most of the engagement methods were employed.

The commercial featured community leaders from various sectors of the Tweed community, encouraging viewers to visit the www.ourtweedvision.com.au website.

The commercial was initially produced by Council staff as a vodcast to feature on the Bang The Table website and in other Council promotions. However, it was decided to convert the vodcast into a television commercial, with assistance from production staff at NBN.

Outcome

Council ran a total of 128 30-second advertisements on the region's two television networks, Prime and NBN, spread between morning and evening peak viewing periods and off-peak periods.

Each network screened the advertisement 64 times.

The number of comments on the www.ourtweedvision.com.au website rose sharply – from less than 10 per day to over 40 per day – on the day the television commercials began screening.

Cost

\$3,800

Evaluation of Communication Method

The number of visitors and comments on the website and a sustained level of activity during the television advertising campaign suggested they were effective in raising community awareness.

Feedback at the information sessions indicated a reasonable number of visitors had been informed by the commercials.

Engagement Method: Media stories

Summary of activities

Council's Communications and Marketing Unit provided Tweed media with regular press releases and story suggestions throughout the engagement period.

On 16 September – the day before a Council meeting considered and adopted the draft Community Strategic Plan – Council staged a media briefing attended by the Mayor, General Manager and each of the directors. The shire's newspapers, television stations and radio stations were contacted and invited to attend the briefing, to ensure the media was properly informed about the Strategic Plan before it went to the council meeting.

Outcome

Two newspapers and NBN Television were represented at the media briefing. Stories from the briefing were featured in NBN and in four the shire's newspapers.

These four newspapers also ran articles and editorials throughout the engagement period, often on novel issues highlight by Communications and Marketing Unit staff.

Council also provided an article and photograph which appeared in the youth newspaper the Tweed Youth Times, produced by a committee of young people with assistance from St Joseph's Youth Service.

Engagement Method: School visits

Summary of activities

Council's acting Community Engagement Officer and its Youth Development Officer visited the shire's five high schools, to speak with Student Representative Council members and other interested students about the Community Strategic Plan.

Participants were provided with information packs, shown a PowerPoint presentation and introduced to the www.ourtweedvision website.

Outcome

High school visit participant numbers

- | | |
|--|----|
| • 25 October: Murwillumbah High School | 14 |
| • 26 October: Tweed River High School | 32 |
| • 26 October: Wollumbin High School | 7 |
| • 27 October: Banora Point High School | 23 |
| • 28 October: Kingscliff High School | 20 |

Some schools invited particular representatives of the SRC to attend, while others made it open to all their SRC members.

Some schools arranged for students to complete the printed surveys as a school exercise.

Evaluation of Communication Method

The high school visits were an effective method of encouraging youth input to the Community Strategic Plan and were generally worthwhile in showing Council was keen to hear from the shire's young residents.

It also a novel initiative which inspired an article in the Tweed Daily newspaper, providing further exposure to the overall engagement process.

Engagement Method: Community discussions – skate park visits

Summary of activities

Council's acting Community Engagement Officer and its Youth Development Officer visited two skate parks, in Tweed Heads South and Cabarita Beach, on 3 November to speak to young people.

The visits were timed to coincide with weekly barbecues staged by St Joseph's Youth Service and Pottsville's Beachside Church.

Outcome

A small crowd at the Tweed South skate park brought an early end to the St Joseph's Youth Service barbecue. However, Council staff spoke to 16 young people and parents.

They also spoke with 35 youth and Beachside Church representatives at the Cabarita Beach skate park.

Evaluation of Communication Method

The skate park visits were probably less successful than the school meetings in encouraging youth input to the Community Strategic Plan.

However, the skate park visits, particularly the Cabarita Beach meeting, were worthwhile in showing Council was keen to hear from the shire's young residents.

Engagement Method: Library and Customer Service Centre displays

Summary of activities

Community Strategic Plan displays – including all the documents, pull-up banners and large posters – were featured throughout the engagement period in Council's Civic and Cultural Centre foyers, as well as the Kingscliff, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah libraries.

Computers dedicated to the www.ourtweedvision.com.au website were provided in the civic centre foyers and computer access was also available at the libraries.

Outcome

Many printed copies of the draft Community Strategic Plan and accompanying documents were taken from the displays. However, very few people used the computers.

Evaluation of Communication Method

The displays were reasonably effective in disseminating copies of the documents.

While few people actually used the computers in the civic centres and libraries, making them available were a worthwhile exercise in public relations. When a number of people were critical of Council's emphasis on the www.ourtweedvision website, stating many people did not have access to the internet, Council staff could inform them about the library and civic centre displays.

Engagement Method: Audio recording of the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan

Summary of activities

Council engaged a volunteer for the Tweed branch of the Blind Citizens Association to record an audio version of the draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan.

Council had previously provided an audio version of its Community Engagement Strategy and received a favourable response.

Council produced CD copies of the Community Strategic Plan audio recording and made the recording available to download from the www.ourtweedvision website.

Outcome

CD copies of the Community Strategic Plan audio recording were distributed to 14 members of the Blind Citizens Association Tweed Branch.

The online version was divided into chapters, so each segment could be easily downloaded. The 11 chapters received a total of 109 'hits'.

Cost

\$100

Evaluation of Communication Method

The audio recording targeted a niche – but growing – audience. However, it was a relatively low-cost method to make the engagement process more inclusive and was a valuable public relations exercise.

It showed Council was actively seeking input from all members of the community.

It also a novel initiative which inspired an article in the Tweed Sun newspaper, providing further exposure to the overall engagement process.

Engagement Method: InsideOut staff newsletter

Summary of activities

Articles and columns about the Community Strategic Plan were featured in the August, September, October and November issues of the InsideOut newsletter.

Outcome

Printed copies of each issue were distributed to 400 Council outdoor staff.

Around 250 staff members also downloaded each issue – August (236), September (254), October (251) and November (258).

Engagement Method: Print media advertising

Summary of activities

Display advertisements were run in five of the Tweed Shire's newspapers between 17 September and 20 October:

- Tweed Daily
- Tweed Sun
- Tweed Echo
- Murwillumbah Weekly
- Tweed Weekly

A display ad was also run in the Koori Mail national newspaper in the first week of October, to target the shire's Aboriginal community.

Outcome

The appearance of each advertisement corresponded with some increase in visits to the www.ourweedvision.com.au, which was one of the input methods highlights in the ads.

Cost

\$2453.83

Evaluation of Communication Method

Each of the advertisements appeared to bring some increase in community awareness and involvement, judging by the number of visits to www.ourweedvision.com.au in the days following each ad.

It is difficult to assess exactly how influential the advertisements were in these rises, when there were other factors in play at the same time. For example, there was a substantial increase after the Tweed Daily advertisement appeared but this also coincided with the distribution of the special Tweed Link edition.

However, the paid advertisements created goodwill among the newspapers, which ran numerous articles, including several update briefs, on the Community Strategic Plan throughout the engagement period.

Engagement Method: Social media - Facebook

Summary of activities

Council ran an advertisement on the social media website Facebook for the final three weeks of the engagement period.

The advertisement randomly appeared on the site for Facebook users who had Tweed, Tweed Heads, Kingscliff, Gold Coast or Murwillumbah mentioned in their profile.

Users who clicked on the advertisement were automatically redirected to the www.ourweedvision.com.au website.

It was intended to run the Facebook advertisement throughout the engagement period. However, the advertisement did not become active when it was first booked.

Outcome

A total of 21 'clicks' were reported during the three-week period, redirecting users to www.ourweedvision.com.au. Most of these clicks occurred from November 1, when the advertisements began a countdown to the deadline for submissions.

Cost

\$16.99

Evaluation of Communication Method

While there were only 21 clicks on the Facebook advertisement, Council was only charged a small fee for each click and the amount of time required to create and maintain the advertisement was very minimal.

Given the small input required, it was still a worthwhile exercise which should become increasingly valuable as social media becomes even more prevalent and Council increases its social media presence.

Engagement Method: Direct mail to Non-Resident Ratepayers

Summary of activities

Letters from the Mayor, outlining the Tweed Community Strategic Plan and how people could provide input, were sent by direct mail to 7550 non-resident ratepayers.

The letters were accompanied by two supporting documents:

- Frequently asked questions
- How you can have your say

Outcome

Workloads preparing other methods for the Community Strategic Plan meant the letters were sent two weeks into the engagement period, with a month still remaining in the process.

Council received complaints from a couple of non-resident ratepayers who did not receive their letters for another week and requested an extension to the submission deadline. Some of these people shared a common postal address with a central contact, who might have taken a while to forward this correspondence.

Cost

\$9,415

Evaluation of Communication Method

The direct mail to non-resident ratepayers proved to be a relatively expensive step in the overall engagement process but was the only effectively method to reach the high number of Tweed property owners who live outside the shire. It was considered important to ensure these ratepayers were engaged in community discussion about the Community Strategic Plan. At least 12 people who lived outside the shire either lodged a written submission, visited www.ourtweedvision.com.au or used the phone submission service, so there was a modest level of participated by non-resident ratepayers.

The cost of the direct mail could have been reduced by not including the accompanying fact sheets, avoiding much of the printing costs. However, at the time they were deemed justified to generate interest among the recipients.

Engagement Method: Direct mail to Community Directory

Summary of activities

Letters from the Mayor, outlining the Tweed Community Strategic Plan and how people could provide input, were sent by direct mail to 647 organisation representatives listed in Council's community directory, including:

- Business and industry groups
- Youth organisations such as the PCYC
- Schools and other education and training institutions
- Church organisations
- Government agencies
- Sporting groups
- Ethnic groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups
- Disability support groups

The letters were accompanied by two supporting documents:

- Frequently asked questions
- How you can have your say

Outcome

Workloads preparing other methods for the Community Strategic Plan meant the letters were sent two weeks into the engagement period, with a month still remaining in the process.

Cost

\$355.85

Evaluation of Communication Method

Council received few submissions from the organisations which received these letters, although the recipients might have responded as individuals.

However, the letters to the community organisations were an important step to emphasise that Council is conscious of the opinions of the shire's community groups.

Engagement Method: Posters – Community notice boards

Summary of activities

100 A3 colour posters featuring Tweed community leaders were printed and laminated in-house. They were displayed at the Community Information Sessions, at shopping centres and community notice boards in towns throughout the shire, as well as the offices of several youth organisations.

Cost

\$100

Evaluation of Communication Method

The posters were a comparatively inexpensive way to keep the Strategic Plan and the website in the public eye, complementing other forms of promotion such as the television commercials which featured the same community leaders and slogan.

A high workload for the overall Community Strategic Plan campaign meant posters were delivered to towns throughout the engagement period, as other methods took Council staff to those areas. Ideally, it would have been preferable to have the posters on display in the days immediately before the engagement period began but the overall workload did not allow this.

Appendix

Attachment A: Draft Tweed Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021

Attachment B: Engaging The Community

Attachment C: Bang The Table report

Attachment D: Random Phone survey results

Attachment E: Survey Monkey survey results

Attachment F: Survey Monkey results – Question 6 answers

Attachment G: Phone submissions to Immediate Reception

Attachment H: Issues raised at community roundtables

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