Communications Action Plan

2024 - 2028

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Carpentaria Shire Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the Gkuthaarn, Kukatj and Kurtijar peoples as the traditional owners of the lands and waters that form the Region. Council pays its respect to elders' past, present and emerging and welcomes the ongoing role that indigenous people play within the Carpentaria community.

Contents

Introduction

This Communication Action Plan details how Carpentaria Shire will deliver on its commitment to maintain open, honest, and transparent communication with stakeholders and be accountable to the community.

This action plan outlines the tools and tactics used to deliver timely, consistent, and accurate information and engage with stakeholders to inform decisions and community outcomes.

It is a working document and should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure objectives are being met.

The Communications Strategy intends to guide this Communication Action Plan.

Communication Goal

The overall communication goal is to:

- Increase community awareness, understanding and support for Council's activities by communicating in an open, honest and transparent nature
- Effectively engage with all stakeholders when considering major initiatives and decisions to achieve positive outcomes
- Continue to build relationships with all stakeholders to enhance Council's image and reputation.

Communication Objectives

The key objectives as identified in the corporate communications strategy are as follows:

Objective 1: To improve Council's media reputation and image by responding to 90% of media interviews, enquiries, and requests over a 12-month period.

Objective 2: To increase awareness of Council's decisions, milestones, and events, using print, electronic and social media, to reach 85% of the community over a 12-month period.

Objective 3: To provide information to the community about Council news, tenders, decisions, and milestones by producing a monthly newsletter.

Objective 4: To create openness and transparency within the community about Council decisions by engaging with stakeholders on 95% of key infrastructure projects and development initiatives over a 12-month period.

Objective 5: To build on the existing relationships between council and the community by ensuring Council attendance at 95% of major community meetings and events.

Objective 6: To boost Council's image outside of the Carpentaria Region by promoting current achievements at marketing events held by professional organisations and governing bodies (e.g., Gulf Savannah Development) at least twice a year.

Objective 7: To enhance Council's reputation as a strong communicating body by providing communication and media training and support to the Mayor, Councillors, and relevant staff at least once during the term of Council.

Target Audiences

The following target audiences are identified in the communications strategy:

Primary Audiences	Secondary Audiences
Residents and ratepayers	Other government authorities (local, state, and federal)
Key government departments and agencies	Queensland Tourism and Regional Tourism bodies (inc. Tourism Tropical North Queensland {TTNQ} and Outback Queensland Tourism Association {OQTA})
Council staff and their families	Local and state media
Visitors to the Carpentaria Region	
State and Federal Government Members of Parliament	
Community groups and progress associations	
Local business, developers, and investors	
Professional associations and peak bodies (e.g. Gulf Savannah Development)	
Interest groups (cycling groups, conservation groups)	
Council-controlled entities	

Challenges and opportunities

The following challenges and opportunities have been identified.

Challenge/Issue	Response /Opportunity
Loss of media image and reputation in the broader community due to absence in local media	Implement communication plan to release media statements for all major decisions, outcomes, initiatives, and project milestones. Commit to all media interviews and regular radio segments. Media training for elected representatives.
Negative or limited media attention during crisis or major incidents due to loss of media relationships	Re-establish media network contacts. Use of key messages in all media materials.
Potential for the community to be 'saturated' with information due to high volume of public notices	Ensure coordination of public notices across each department of council. Utilise social media and radio to supplement notices for key announcements.
Limited promotion of council achievements on social media	Promote all good news stories and achievements including photos on Facebook, and potentially Twitter page. Consistent and regular website updates.
Negative community feedback or concerns during infrastructure works impacting on residents and businesses	Targeted community engagement prior to and during all major construction works. Timely and accurate provision of information about works, timing, and contact details.
Lack of community support or engagement in council initiatives or funding opportunities	Targeted communication when feedback is required to minimise the effort required by the audience (e.g., drop-box for forms/surveys at select locations). Cross-coordination with other government agencies and authorities.

Key Messages

Key messages are umbrella statements used in all communications about Council business, initiatives, and decisions. Key messages should be used to form the basis of media releases and interviews, public notices, website information, stakeholder meetings and community engagement activities.

Three key messages should be used in each activity and supported by facts, figures, examples, policies and explanations.

Some key messages and supporting statements are listed below, listed by category. This is not an exhaustive list and should be reviewed and updated as required. Key messages should also be distributed to staff to ensure accurate and consistent messaging across the organisation.

Events and Grants

- Carpentaria Shire is proud to provide/assist with social events and attractions to benefit our community and our visitors.
  - A free (insert event name) event will be held at the (insert venue) on (insert date).
  - The event is being held in conjunction with/to support (insert name/organisation).
  - For more information please contact (insert name) on 4745 2200.
- Carpentaria Shire recognises that supporting the community through financial and in-kind assistance is important.
  - We provide a wide range of support including small monetary donations, and hire fee waiver through our Community Donations and Support Program.
  - Applications for funding grants to (insert initiative) are always open to all residents or members of the community, subject to application conditions.
  - Residents are encouraged to apply for a grant by (insert website/contact number).
  - For more information, please contact the Community Services team on 4745 2200.

Flooding

- The safety of all road users, both locals and visitors, is paramount.
  - The following roads are currently closed due to flooding and inundation (list roads)
  - Up to date information on road conditions and closures can be found on our website www.carpentaria.qld.gov.au, Council's Disaster Dashboard, on the RACQ website or the Main Roads hotline 13 19 40.
- We understand these roads are our communities' lifeline and are working with emergency services (and state government) to restore access.
  - We have flood cameras operating at several major creek and river crossings to give us real-time updates of flood levels.
  - Our crews are working hard to get roads up to condition and reopen them for all traffic.
  - Speed restrictions and traffic management are currently in place for the safety of the travelling public.
- Roads that have been flooded must be carefully managed.
  - To do this, road closures/load restrictions/traffic management are currently in place to protect the road asset and balance access for communities and industries.
  - We ask all drivers to be patient, drive to conditions and be aware of your surroundings.
- Remember, if it's flooded, forget it.

Growth and development

- The future growth and development of Carpentaria Shire is important to us.
  - We are working with (insert organisation name (GSD, Tourism Qld etc) on a proposal to (insert initiative name).
  - Council has met with state/federal government representatives in Brisbane/Canberra to lobby for funding to help secure a (insert project/initiative name).
  - We have applied for funding to upgrade/install (insert project name).
  - If successful, work will commence on the project in (insert date).

Infrastructure - Roads, Water, Parks

- Carpentaria Shire is committed to improving our infrastructure services to meet the needs of the community.
  - We will be undertaking (maintenance/rehabilitation etc) works on the (insert name) at (insert location) from (insert date) until (insert end date).
  - Work will be conducted between the hours of 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.
  - We appreciate your patience and cooperation while we deliver this important work.
- Water conservation is important to ensure we can continue supplying residents and businesses and keep our towns looking good.
  - Carpentaria Shire is on Level (insert level) Water Restrictions as of (insert date, month, year).
  - These restrictions are in place due to the lack of rainfall last wet season and increase in visitor numbers during the dry months.
  - For detail on the watering times visit our website or view our public notices on the community noticeboards.
- Carpentaria Shire is working with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to upgrade the (insert road name) at (insert location).
  - Works commenced (insert date) and will be completed by (insert end date), weather permitting.
  - These works are funded by the (insert funding program name).
  - Further information can be found on Council's or Main Roads' website.

Major incidents and legal issues

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors is our number one priority.
  - We are deeply saddened by the events of today's incident. Our thoughts are with the family/families at this time.
  - We take this matter seriously and are working with (insert name of contractor) to investigate the incident.
  - We are working with (insert company name/ Workplace Health and Safety) to assist with investigations into the incident.
  - We are keeping our workforce informed of the situation and offering assistance to any employees affected by these events.
  - Any improvements identified because of these investigations will be implemented to minimise risks to employees and the community.

- Our employees are our priority, and we are taking this matter seriously.
  - We are working closely with our legal representatives and/or authorities to resolve the situation.
  - We are taking steps to manage this situation (list steps being taken to address matter as legally allowed).
- An investigation into today's tragic crash at (insert road name) is being undertaken by police.
  - Council will work with police in investigating the crash. Police will determine if any external factors attributed.
  - If any road factors are identified in these investigations, we will act to address them.

Rates

- Carpentaria Shire has posted rate notices and residents will receive them soon.
  - We recognise some ratepayers may experience financial difficulties in meeting their commitments on time, so we are offering payment assistance.
  - Payments can be made on-line or via the Normanton Shire Office or Karumba Service Centre, or by contacting our rates office on 4745 2200.

Tourism/visitors

- Visitors are part of our lifeblood in the Gulf.
  - We ask that all visitors help keep our region beautiful by respecting the environment, our heritage buildings, and our attractions.
  - Visitors are reminded to dispose of rubbish thoughtfully.
  - Our rest areas are there for everyone to use so help us to keep them clean and tidy.
  - The only authorised points to obtain potable water from are the RV Dump Points at the following locations (insert locations).
  - Information about our attractions can be found on Council's website or at one of our Visitor Information Centres.
- The roads, environment and culture can be new experiences for visitors to our region.

Information about travel precautions, driving in the outback and weather conditions is available on our website and our Visitor Information Centres.

Actions – Tools and Timing

Communication Tool	Audience	Objective	Timing	Responsibility	Budget
Produce and distribute monthly newsletter! (350-450 copies)	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, and visitors to the shire	Objective 3	Monthly	Executive Officer - Governance, Projects, and Communications (GPC)	Approx. $2,000 per print (12 per year)
Media statement – operational /	Secondary audiences – media, government authorities and agencies and reps Primary audiences – residents, businesses, tourists	Objective 1 Objective 2	As required at the commencement, at major milestones and completion of all projects and major works	GPC	Nil
Media statement – policy/budgetary	Secondary audiences– media, government authorities and agencies and reps Primary audiences – residents, businesses, tourists	Objective 1 Objective 2	To announce policy/legislation or key organisational changes Budget announcements or decisions on major funding/grants or awards	GPC	Nil
Media interviews	Secondary audiences – media, government authorities and agencies and reps Primary audiences – residents, businesses, tourists	Objective 1	As required	Elected representative (Mayor) GPC	Nil

Website updates	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, tourists Secondary audiences – media, other govt. agencies and professional organisations	Objective 2 Objective 4	Monthly and as required	GPC Relevant Department	Nil
Social media updates	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, tourists Secondary audiences – media, other govt. agencies and professional organisations	Objective 2	Regularly as required – in conjunction with public notices, media statements and letterbox drops	Relevant Department	Nil
Public notices	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, and visitors	Objective 2 Objective 4	Regularly as required to inform residents about all council news, decisions, and information	Relevant Department	In-house printing costs
Public notice boards (Electronic Message Board - Karumba)	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, and visitors	Objective 2	As required	Relevant Department	Nil
Letterbox drop	Primary audiences - residents, businesses	Objective 2 Objective 4	As required - as part of project communications or targeted consultation To inform residents of major decisions and announcements	GPC	Approx. $500-$600
Display and marketing material at various external events	Secondary audiences – other govt. Agencies and professional bodies	Objective 6	As required when events are held	GPC Comm. Dev. Team	In-house printing costs plus production of display materials

Public display at library	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, visitors, investors Secondary audiences – other govt. Agencies	Objective 2 Objective 4	As required – during community engagement for projects and initiatives	GPC Comm Dev. Team	Printing costs for display materials if cannot be produced in-house
Public Consultation sessions	Primary audiences – residents, businesses, visitors, investors Secondary audiences – other govt. Agencies	Objective 2 Objective 4	As required – during community engagement for projects/initiatives To discuss major decisions or issues	Elected representatives (Mayor and Councillors) CEO Relevant Director GPC Comm. Dev. Team	Nil if held at council-owned buildings
Website and hard copy survey and feedback form	All audiences	Objectives 2-6	Annually	GPC Relevant Department	In-house printing costs (up to $500)

Budget - All figures quoted are approximate at the time of publication and are subject to Council discretion and approval.

Evaluation

The purpose of evaluating this plan is to determine Council's success in meeting the objectives. An evaluation of Council's ability to meet the below objectives should be carried out at least annually. The entire action plan should also be reviewed and amended as part of continuous improvement and to deliver the requirements of the Communications Strategy.

Objective	Measurement	Timing
To improve Council's media reputation and image by responding to 90% of media interviews, enquiries, and requests over a 12-month period	- Qualitative data review including media scanning/monitoring of regional media.	Daily
	- The number of published media articles and interviews versus the number of enquiries received.	Annually
	- The level of positive versus negative media coverage received	Annually
	- The number of follow up media enquiries received in response to a statement or interview.	Annually
To increase awareness of Council's decisions, milestones, and events, using print, electronic and social media, to reach 85% of the community over a 12-month period.	- Number of print and electronic articles produced including media statements, public notices, web articles and social media and the distribution.	Annually
	- Number of webpage visits, social media likes, percentage increase in page followers/web visits.	Annually
	- Number of enquiries and complaints received about council decisions and events and the type of enquiry (positive vs. negative).	Annually
	- Survey to determine number of households informed about council decisions and events over a 12-month period, via the newsletter/rates notice/web poll/library.	Annually

	- Quantitative data captured through the community survey and ongoing monitoring of community views.	Ongoing
To provide information to the community about Council news, tenders, decisions, and milestones by producing a monthly newsletter.	- Number of newsletters produced in a 12-month period.	Annually
	- Circulation numbers and any increase/decrease in publication numbers.	Monthly/Annually
	- Number of website hits, page likes.	Annually
	- Qualitative data captured in response to the publications.	Monthly/annually
To create openness and transparency within the community about Council decisions by engaging with stakeholders on 95% of key infrastructure projects and development initiatives over a 12-month period.	- Number of engagement activities carried out per project, including formal meetings, informal discussions	Quarterly/annually
	- Type, number, and frequency of communication material produced per project. For example, media statement released to announce the start, milestones and completion of a major infrastructure project, public notices and stakeholder notifications produced, news articles produced for the newsletter, website, and social media updates.	Quarterly /annually
	- Number of enquiries and complaints received about a particular project and the timeliness and accuracy of responses.	Quarterly/annually
	- Number of media enquiries received about the project and the type of enquiry (positive vs. negative)	Quarterly/annually

(and/or at the end of each project) |

To build on the existing relationships between council and the community by ensuring Council attendance at 95% of major community meetings and events.	- Number of meetings and events attended by council	Monthly / Annually
	- Quantitative data captured through a community survey in the newsletter/website/email/library	Annually
	- Qualitative data captured through the community survey and ongoing monitoring of community views.	Ongoing
To boost Council's image outside of the Carpentaria Region by attending marketing events held by professional organisations (e.g., Gulf Savannah Development) at least twice a year.	- Number of meetings/conferences/events attended and the type of marketing collateral produced for the event, for example, visual display, newsletters and information sheets.	As they occur / Annually
	- Number of enquiries received from stakeholders outside of the region.	As they occur / Annually
To enhance Council's reputation as a strong communicating body by providing communication and media training and support to the Mayor, Councillors, and relevant staff at least once during the term of Council.	- Frequency of training and support provided to council staff	Annually
	- Quality of communication materials produced.	Ongoing