# External Communications

# Strategy 2018 - 2020

COFFS HARBOUR
CITY COUNCIL

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# 1.    Introduction

Like other local government authorities around Australia, Coffs Harbour City Council faces the challenges of meeting the increasing expectations of its various audiences within a finite budget and in a sometimes-volatile political environment.

At the same time, rapidly evolving technology has transformed the way councils communicate and engage with their communities. These changes bring both opportunities and risks, as new and cost-effective tools allow instant and interactive communication involving levels deep within Council's organisation structure.

This Communication Strategy provides a framework to guide all external communication from Council. It links closely with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Framework; as external communication largely makes up the "Inform" level of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Community Engagement Spectrum.

It is also aligned with Council's internal communication strategy (under development), as staff and elected members play a significant role in external communication – both as an audience and a group of potential reputation ambassadors.

Most importantly, this strategy links to the messages enshrined in the MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan (CSP), and Council's responding Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

# 2.    Aim of this Strategy

The over-arching aim of this strategy is to ensure Council messages are communicated effectively, proactively and consistently. More specifically, it will ensure Council's communications:

- Promote a positive image of Council
- Contain key communication messages linked closely to the CSP and Delivery Program
- Are delivered through the most effective channels
- Reflect quality and consistency in branding and presentation

To achieve this aim, the strategy presents five Strategic Objectives. Each is linked to a set of actions. These actions are further developed in the accompanying Next Steps table.

**Strategic Objective 1 - Reputation and trust**
The community has confidence in Council's decisions and actions, and trusts the messages it delivers.

**Strategic Objective 2 - Clarity and consistency**

The community understands what Council does and doesn't do and appreciates the breadth of Council services.

**Strategic Objective 3 - Effective tools**

The community can easily access Council information and regards it as a source of truth.

**Strategic Objective 4 - Connection**

The community feels connected to Council and is confident community feedback plays a big part in Council decision-making.

**Strategic Objective 5 - Staff involvement**

Council staff are empowered to be the organisation's reputation ambassadors.

# 3. Our Communication Principles

These principles – linked directly to Council's stated Values – underpin all Council external communication.

**We take an organisation-wide commitment and approach to communication.** (Values: collaboration and empowerment). Excellent communication is a foundation of the way we do business, not an afterthought. This ensures communication resources are decisively, proactively and efficiently allocated.

**Our communication focuses first on the needs of our audience.** Information is presented with clarity, empathy and in plain language. Communication is inclusive of people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. (Value: customer-centric)

**Our communication is proactive.** We focus on communicating the right message to the right audience at the right time. If issues arise, we respond appropriately to complainants, always balancing the resources required to service these complaints with the needs of the broader community.

**We use consistent messaging and branding that tells our story.** It's easy to recognise a Coffs Harbour City Council project or activity.

**We communicate with transparency.** (Value: accountability). We explain the "why" of decisions. We take ownership of our decisions and stand by them.

**We focus first on digital communication using cost-effective tools,** but ensure the communication channel is always appropriate to the audience. (Value: innovation).

## 4. Background

While Council is currently undertaking many communication activities in different parts of the organisation, a more co-ordinated, strategic focus will integrate these activities and strengthen Council's overall identity.

Many communication initiatives are beginning to bear fruit; for example, Council's online newsroom is an effective way of establishing Council as a "source of truth" for community information. Council has a growing social media presence and is located in a media-rich area, with a relatively large number of traditional media outlets creating opportunities to report on Council stories.

Council's Have Your Say portal is proving an effective community engagement platform and, while in its infancy, work in the community engagement space will grow.

Desktop and in-person research carried out on Council's current external communication activities reveals areas where improvements can be made. These include:

- A lack of timeliness for information about specific projects being passed on to the communication team, and subsequently to the community
- A perceived reluctance about commenting or releasing information on high- stakes or controversial issues
- Use of bureaucratic language when communicating about Council operations
- A lack of consideration for accessibility of communication for people with a disability and people who speak languages other than English
- No clear suite of communication tools for staff across the organisation to access
- A perception that Council's communication is largely reactive instead of proactive and deliberate
- Relatively limited communication resources and staff working in silos across the organisation
- A large number of sub-brands without strong links to the Council brand

These perceived shortcomings also present opportunities as part of implementing this strategy, including:

- Developing ways to build communication early into project plans
- Implementing methods to identify ongoing key issues and communicating proactively about them
- Moving towards more consistency in Council's language and branding without losing the identity of core business units; and
- Identifying ways to better use all communication resources across the organisation

Failing to implement these improvements means Council may miss opportunities to build relationships and communicate effectively about the many projects and services it delivers.

Continuing to communicate in an uncoordinated way will have an ongoing impact on Council's reputation and contribute to poor staff morale and lack of community buy-in on key Council decisions.

## 4.1    Council's communication resources

Effective communication requires buy-in from all stakeholders. All Council staff, Councillors, project and work teams are responsible for the organisation's reputation. Everything Council does, says and delivers impacts public perception of the organisation. All areas of Council must commit to this strategy.

Council has a two-person Communications team and a number of communications/ marketing professionals in other departments and business units. Other personnel with a key stake in communication include community engagement specialists, IT, HR and Customer Service.

Regardless of where they sit in the organisation structure, it is critical that all professional communication/marketing staff take a collaborative and coordinated approach to delivering this strategy, led by a Leadership team committed to delivering the strategy's objectives.

## 5.    Our Audiences

While "the community" is Council's key audience group, it has many dimensions and these must be taken into account when planning and delivering communication.

There is no "one size fits all" approach.

The Coffs Harbour Local Government Area will experience significant population growth over the next two decades, particularly in the 65+ age group. This has implications for Council's messaging and the way it delivers its communication. However, that is not to suggest that an ageing population is a disconnected one, with internet connections from dwellings only slightly lower than the state and national average (2016 Census).

As well as age, other factors that segment the broader community into more defined audiences include general interests, socio-economic groups, disability, ethnicity and languages spoken, education and many others.

Council also communicates with many other key audiences, including:

**Non-residential ratepayers** – they may have a particular interest in decisions affecting the value of their property.

**Business owners/operators** – likely to be keenly interested in economic development, business growth opportunities.

**Visitors** – strongly attracted to the many attributes of the LGA.

**Staff** – most also live in the LGA.

**Future staff** – opportunities to promote Council as an employer of choice, and the lifestyle attributes of the Coffs Coast.

**Government agencies/MPs** – important stakeholders in Council decision-making and service provision.

**Suppliers** – interested in any information that might impact their business with Council or offer new opportunities.

Council's Community Strategic Planning process and its customer surveys provide valuable insights into the issues, projects and messages that matter most to Council's audiences. These include:

- Having a strong sense of community belonging and wellbeing
- Promoting community prosperity through job creation, innovation and vibrant events
- Living in a beautiful area, where development is undertaken responsibly and the environment is protected
- Having a well-managed Council that bases decisions on community input
- Keeping updated on environmental and coastal management initiatives
- Receiving information about infrastructure delivery including roads, toilets, footpaths/ cycleways, street cleaning etc.
- Knowing about community facilities including parks, reserves and playgrounds
- Ongoing information about water, waste and sewerage

Council's communication and engagement activities will be most effective if targeted to reflect the identified priorities of the community and other audiences and sub-sets. Even if some issues are not strictly Council's responsibility, Council has an important role in keeping its audiences informed about high-priority issues, and engaging people in debate and decision-making.

# 6. Key organisational messages

Because Council operates across such diverse service areas and communicates in many different ways, it's vital that over-arching consistent messages are used regardless of the channel or the subject matter. Key strategic messages provide a framework for the language used when conveying any Council information.

It's important to stress that not every message will be used in every form of communication, and messages won't necessarily be used verbatim. They provide a guide for anyone communicating about Coffs Harbour City Council, to ensure what they are seeking to convey aligns with the essence of one, some or all of these messages.

It must also be noted that many communication activities are targeted at specific audiences and require additional key messages relevant to that context. While each piece of communication should reflect Council's position as a whole, there must also be flexibility so that specific, targeted messages are conveyed.

Council's key organisational messages (under the themes of Connected, Sustainable and Thriving) reflect the priorities identified in the following documents:

- Key themes from the Community Strategic Plan
- Key actions set out in the Delivery Plan
- Areas identified as a priority from Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Council's Vision statement

## Connected

➢ **Our core intent:** The wellbeing of our community is at the heart of everything we do.
➢ **Responsive leadership:** We listen and make transparent, responsible decisions in the best interest of the whole community.
➢ **Delivering the CSP:** We recognise and support community priorities identified through our Community Strategic Plan.

## Sustainable

➢ **Effective infrastructure:** We plan for and provide the infrastructure our community uses every day – from roads, water and waste to footpaths, cycleways, parks and cultural services.
➢ **Environment:** We understand Coffs' environment is precious – we make careful, responsible decisions that safeguard our region's natural assets.
➢ **Growth and development:** We recognise the importance of our role in managing development, and make decisions that are environmentally, socially and economically responsible.

## Thriving

➢ **Coffs prosperity:** We champion business, innovation and technology to create jobs and grow our local economy.
➢ **A place for community:** We share the community's love for Coffs and are creating beautiful, liveable spaces across our region.
➢ **Excellence:** We show our commitment to excellence every day in the vast range of services and projects we deliver.
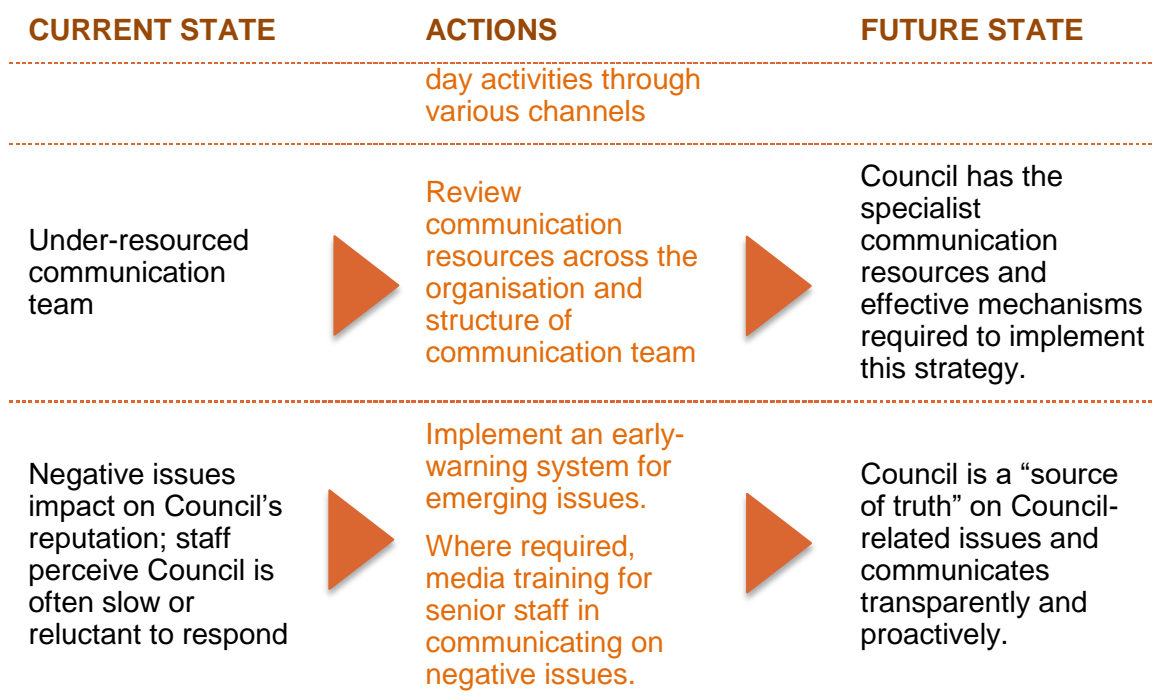
# 7. Strategic Objectives

**Strategic Objective 1 - Reputation and trust**

The community has confidence in Council's decisions and actions, and trusts the messages it delivers.

**Our approach**

- Council seeks out opportunities to communicate the many services, events and initiatives we provide, to raise awareness and build relationships with all our audiences.
- Proactive and timely communication about Council decisions – linked to the Council meeting cycle.
- Deliberate and sustained communication about ongoing Council operations– linked to the Delivery Program
- We communicate proactively about small, medium and large projects – linked to the Delivery Program and CSP.
- We report regularly and transparently on Council's performance, regardless of whether we perceive it to be a positive message.

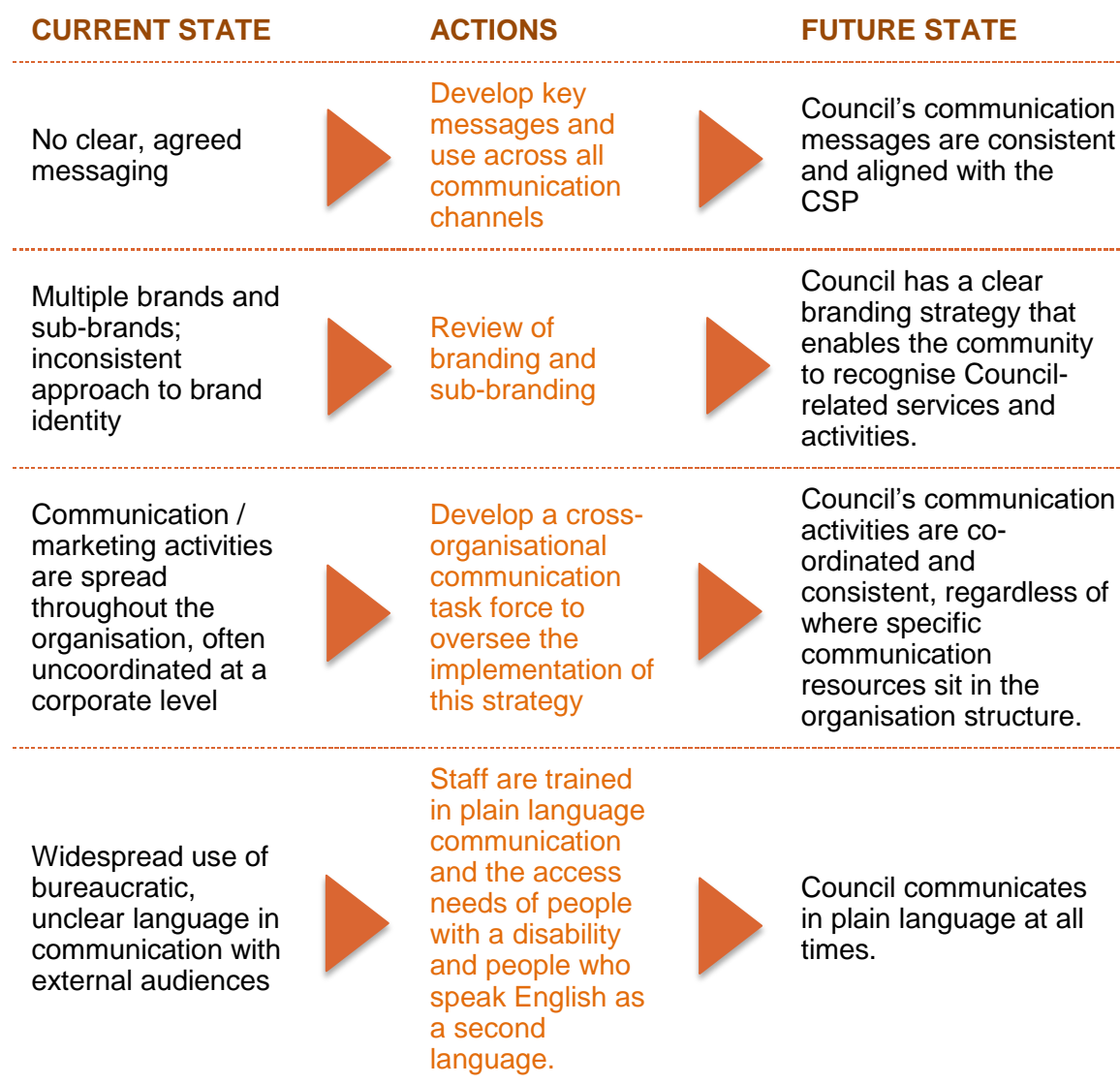| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| Staff perceive Council has a poor reputation in the community | Implement the communication strategy and measure community and staff perceptions. | Evidence shows that Council has a positive reputation in the community. |
| Communication is largely reactive | Council commits to and implements an organisation-wide approach of proactive communication | Communication is deliberate, proactive and sustained, reacting to and addressing issues where required. |
| Staff perceive the community has limited knowledge of Council services | Build proactive communication activities into all key programs and services | Demonstrated increase in community awareness of Council services. |
| Information from project teams doesn't meet the pace of communication | New project templates and processes to ensure information quickly gets to communications team | Effective communication is built in to each project plan. |
| Communication about day-to-day activities takes a back seat to project communication | Develop organisation-wide content calendar to ensure regular drip-feeding of information on day-to- | Audiences are aware of breadth and value of Council services. |

| CURRENT STATE | | ACTIONS | | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | day activities through various channels | | |
| Under-resourced communication team | ▶ | Review communication resources across the organisation and structure of communication team | ▶ | Council has the specialist communication resources and effective mechanisms required to implement this strategy. |
| Negative issues impact on Council's reputation; staff perceive Council is often slow or reluctant to respond | ▶ | Implement an early-warning system for emerging issues.<br><br>Where required, media training for senior staff in communicating on negative issues. | ▶ | Council is a "source of truth" on Council-related issues and communicates transparently and proactively. |

**Strategic Objective 2 - Clarity and consistency**

The community understands what Council does and doesn't do and appreciates the breadth of Council services.

**Our approach**

- We clearly convey Council's vision for Coffs and how that links to the CSP.
- The community is clear on what we do and what we don't do.
- The community understands our information because the messages are clear, the language is plain and the methods used are inclusive and relevant to the audiences.
- We recognise communication about specific projects and activities often needs to be tailored to particular audiences. Our approach is flexible enough to ensure we effectively reach the right people, while enhancing Council's identity.

| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| No clear, agreed messaging | Develop key messages and use across all communication channels | Council's communication messages are consistent and aligned with the CSP |
| Multiple brands and sub-brands; inconsistent approach to brand identity | Review of branding and sub-branding | Council has a clear branding strategy that enables the community to recognise Council-related services and activities. |
| Communication / marketing activities are spread throughout the organisation, often uncoordinated at a corporate level | Develop a cross-organisational communication task force to oversee the implementation of this strategy | Council's communication activities are co-ordinated and consistent, regardless of where specific communication resources sit in the organisation structure. |
| Widespread use of bureaucratic, unclear language in communication with external audiences | Staff are trained in plain language communication and the access needs of people with a disability and people who speak English as a second language. | Council communicates in plain language at all times. |

**Strategic Objective 3 - Effective tools**

The community can easily access Council information and regards it as a source of truth.

**Our approach**

- We communicate through appropriate channels that meet the needs of the community.
- We audit and review our channels to make sure we're focusing on the ones that are most effective.
- Our website is up to date and a source of truth for our community.
- Our social media content is engaging, effective, sustained and consistent.
- We use traditional media effectively to communicate key messages and address negative issues.
- We expand our use of cost-effective tools like video to communicate our messages.
- While focusing on the digital space, we offer a range of publications in various formats to reach our different audiences.
- We build accessibility into our communications.
- Staff are trained and confident to access interpreters for people who cannot speak English.

| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| Large number of communication channels and platforms with little consistency | Conduct an audit of all communication channels | Council has the appropriate number and breadth of communication channels to effectively reach its audiences. |
| More than 50 social media accounts in various states of use/effectiveness | Review all social media accounts as part of the communication audit | Council uses social media effectively |
| Website pages not consistently up to date | Review the website and processes for updating its content as part of the communication audit | Council's website and associated online newsroom are regarded as the source of truth on Council projects, activities and issues. |
| Well established traditional media relationships but could capitalise more on proactive stories | Implement changes to project plan templates and content calendar to ensure communication team receives updated information | Council's media coverage largely results from proactive stories rather than responding to negative issues. |

| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| Not capitalising on growing opportunities to use video | Communication task force investigates and implements additional uses for video as a core part of effective communication | Video is a primary tool for communicating about Council decisions, projects, events and activities. |
| Wide range of newsletters and publications without clear links between them or to Council | Review all publications and online newsletters as part of the communication audit | Council delivers an appropriate number, range and style of publications to effectively communicate with its audiences. |
| Eservice platforms developed inconsistently | Review the branding of eservice platforms as part of the branding review | Council's eservice platforms reflect its agreed branding strategy. |

**Strategic Objective 4 – Connection**

The community feels connected to Council and is confident community feedback plays a big part in Council decision-making.

**Our approach**

- Communication activities align with community engagement activities/outcomes
- Communication is targeted based on available audience data/stakeholder analysis
- More proactive communication translates into fewer customer complaints/more positive outcomes.

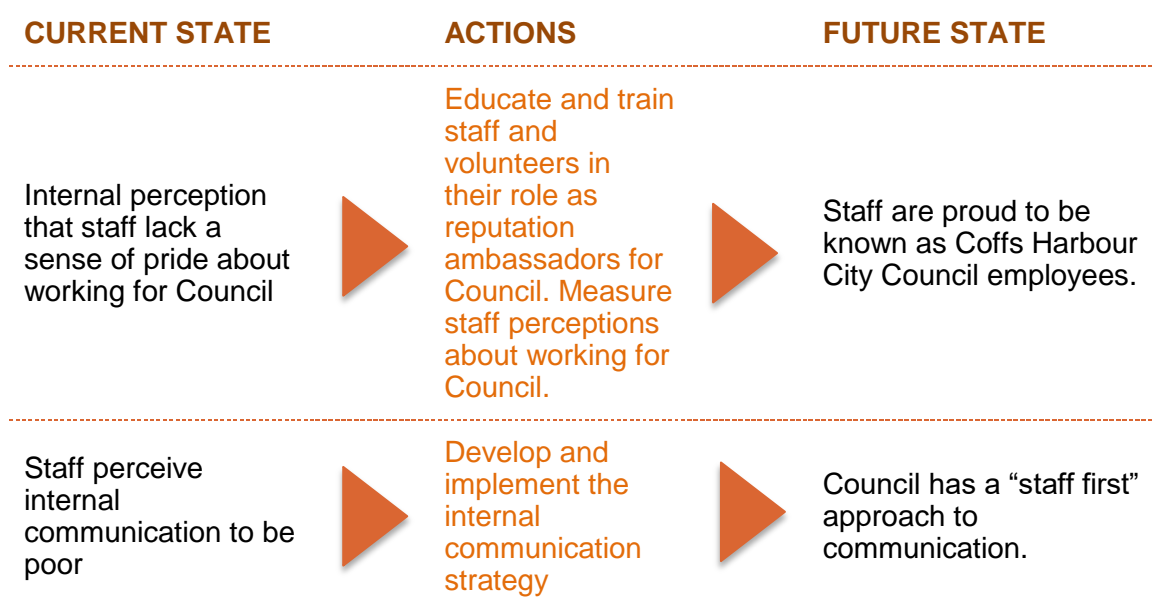| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| No close link between Council's communication and community engagement functions | Community engagement professionals are a key part of the communication task force | Communication and community engagement activities interrelate seamlessly, regardless of where personnel sit in the organisation chart. |
| Communication messages are not linked closely to CSP and customer survey outcomes | Develop key messages that link directly to CSP and sentiments expressed in customer surveys | Council's communication messages are meaningful to the community and demonstrate that Council is listening and responding. |
| Council does not regularly "close the loop" in reporting the outcome of community engagement on decision-making | Ensure that "reporting back" is part of all community engagement activities | The community understands how comments/input have contributed to Council's decision-making. |

**Strategic Objective 5 – Staff and volunteer involvement**

Council staff and volunteers are empowered to be the organisation's reputation ambassadors.

**Our approach**

- As part of the development of an internal communication strategy, we take a "staff first" approach to external communication – conveying information to our workforce first, then to the broader community.
- Councillors, staff and volunteers are fully aware of Council's key messages and understand their role as reputation ambassadors for Council and the Coffs Harbour region.
- Appropriate training and information resources are provided to Council workers.

| CURRENT STATE | ACTIONS | FUTURE STATE |
|---|---|---|
| Internal perception that staff lack a sense of pride about working for Council | Educate and train staff and volunteers in their role as reputation ambassadors for Council. Measure staff perceptions about working for Council. | Staff are proud to be known as Coffs Harbour City Council employees. |
| Staff perceive internal communication to be poor | Develop and implement the internal communication strategy | Council has a "staff first" approach to communication. |

# 8. Evaluation

This strategy is reviewed annually and renewed every two years.

It is recommended that outcomes linked to the strategy are built into the performance reviews of the Communication team and other staff as appropriate, as well as future iterations of the Delivery Program.

# 9. References

- MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan
- Adopted Delivery Program 2017-2021
- Adopted Operational Plan 2017-2018
- Adopted Community Engagement Policy
- Draft Community Engagement Framework
- 2016 Census Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Community Engagement Spectrum - www.iap2.org.au
- Coffs Harbour City Council Customer Service Strategy 2016-2018 and Customer Service Charter

## 10. Next steps table

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Review communication resources across Council and structure of corporate communication team | Council has a small corporate communication team relative to other councils, with other communication resources located across the organisation. A review will establish whether the current structure/resource level is best serving Council and the community. | Conduct review of communication function including benchmarking with other councils | Executive Leadership Team | From January 2019 | $5,000 (Potential travel costs related to onsite visits) | 1. Reputation & trust |
| 2. | Establish and enable an organisation-wide communication task force | To ensure consistency of messaging and approach, it's important that Council's available communication and marketing resources work together towards the shared objectives of this strategy. | Establish a task force comprising staff with a communication/marketing focus across Council, plus community engagement and customer service. This group will be the driving force behind implementation of the strategy at an operational level. | Group Leadership Team | January / February 2019 | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust 2. Clarity & consistency |

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Conduct an audit of all Council communication channels | To effectively deliver this strategy, Council needs a clear picture of its current channels, what's working well and what is old/duplicated/ineffective- and which tools will best meet its communication needs into the future. | Review communication channels - including newsletters, publications, websites and social media and benchmark against other councils. Establish a clear menu of channels (understanding some will be at corporate level while others will be function-specific) and identify channels to be further developed into the future. | Group Leader Customer Services/Task force | From February 2019 | $5,000 (Communication consultant to review audit findings and assist with actions) | 3. Effective tools |
| 4. | Introduce compulsory communication plan templates for all Council projects and events. | Council is missing opportunities to tell the community about the many projects and events it's delivering. | Completion of a simple plan enables information to flow quickly into communication channels including staff communication, social media, website, media releases, statutory advertising, Mayoral/GM news, newsletters, direct stakeholder communication. | Task force, supported by Group Leadership Team | February 2019 | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust 3. Effective tools |
| 5. | Establish an organisation-wide content calendar | Various parts of the organisation are communicating with external audiences in | Use a free tool e.g. Airtable or similar – all members of the task force (and others as required) contribute to | Task force, supported by Group Leadership Team | From February 2019 | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust 3. Effective tools |

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | isolation; Council is missing opportunities to communicate "wins" to a wider audience. | collection of content for use across communication tools | | | | |
| 6. | Proactive communication about Council decisions, linked to the meeting cycle | Ensure Council is "on the front foot" with announcements about key decisions. | Information on key decisions from Council meetings published within 24 hours on (at a minimum) Coffs Council News site and social media, and conveyed to staff (other tools may include media releases, Mayoral/GM columns, statutory ads) | Communication Team, assisted by relevant staff | Ongoing | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust |
| 7. | Deliberate communication about ongoing Council operations, linked to Delivery Program | Council is missing opportunities to remind the community of the value they receive through Council's day to day operations, and to communicate about Council's vast range of services (particularly those highlighted as priorities in the Delivery Program and Customer Satisfaction Surveys) | Through the content calendar, continually identify opportunities to convey messages about the breadth of Council services, using tools including social media, newsletters, website, Mayoral/GM columns – and future tools identified in the audit. | Task force, Communication Team | Ongoing | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust |

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | Early warning system for emerging issues | Council tends to react to negative issues rather than communicating proactively. | Council needs a specific mechanism for considering issues (particularly where stakeholders' needs are perceived to have not been met) assessing the likely impact on reputation and whether proactive communication is required. For example, this could be a standing item at leadership meetings (then conveyed to the communication team). | Task force, supported by Group Leadership Team | March 2019 | Nil | 1. Reputation & trust |
| 9. | Implement key messages | Consistently communicating agreed core messages would build Council's identity. | Build at least one of the agreed key messages into each communication activity. | Task force, supported by Leadership Teams | On adoption of this strategy, and ongoing | Nil | 2. Clarity & consistency<br>4. Connection |
| 10. | Review of brand and sub-brands – establish brand hierarchy, along with criteria and approval process for sub-brands | Council has a relatively large number of individual brands, rather than a strong corporate identity and a few well-chosen sub-brands. This is diluting Council's identify. | Compare Council's approach to branding with that of similar local government authorities. Establish a structure around Council's branding hierarchy and a way to determine which sub-brands should continue *(see notes in appendix).* | Task force, supported by Leadership Teams | May 2019 | $5,000 (Communication consultant to review structure) | 2. Clarity & consistency<br>3. Effective tools |

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Review communication training needs for staff across Council | Staff are a key resource for Council's communication. To communicate effectively, staff need access to the right information, and to be able to communicate in plain language. | Assess needs and budget requirements for plain language training for Council staff. Consider what can be done now to provide simple tools to help staff communicate plainly | Task force, supported by Group Leadership Team | May 2019 | Nil | 2. Clarity & consistency<br>5. Staff involvement |
| 12. | Review the website and processes for updating its content | The website is a key communication resource and Council is missing opportunities to ensure it is regarded as the "source of truth" on all Council matters. | Would form part of review of communications tools. Also, use the content calendar and task force discussions to source updated information for the website. Review how information is updated, and how the website can be better used as a truth source (e.g. linking from social media posts). | Task force | December 2018 and Ongoing | Nil | 3. Effective tools |
| 13. | Investigate use of video as a core part of effective communication | Video has emerged as a powerful local government communication tool, and Council is under-using this as an approach. | Would form part of review of communications tools. Some video may be able to be introduced in the interim. | Task force | March 2019 | Nil | 3. Effective tools |

| No. | What | Why? | Detail | Who's Responsible | When by | Required Funding (excl internal resources) | Link to Strategic Objectives |
|-----|------|------|--------|-------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 14. | Report back to community after each community engagement activity | Staff have a perception that Council is not effectively closing the loop after engagement activities. | Make reporting back a key element of community engagement activities – through tools such as social media, website, newsletters, media release, columns | Community engagement team, task force, communications team | Ongoing | Nil | 4. Connection |

# 11. Appendix - Council's Branding Hierarchy

In establishing clear messaging from Council as a whole organisation, I am not necessarily recommending that all entities of Council fall under one corporate brand for marketing/promotion purposes.

Local government is such a diverse tier that it is virtually impossible to effectively market all Council-funded services under one "vanilla" brand.

The problem arises, however, when too many of Council's services develop their own marketing approaches at the expense of a clear and unified Council identity.

A useful middle ground can be to establish a hierarchy of brands and sub-brands. Many other councils face similar issues and have approached it this way.

**Tier 1 – Council's corporate brand**

This is the identity of Coffs Harbour City Council, symbolised by the corporate logo. It is the "voice" of Council, where communication is initiated from both the elected and executive arm, and where communication and marketing takes place at a whole-of-organisation level for all services under the Delivery Program.

Each communication initiative still needs to be targeted at a specific audience and tailored accordingly; however, the over-arching flavour and messaging reflects Council's corporate identity.

**Tier 2 – Council entities whose core business is highly specialised and perceived by the community to be substantially different from Council's overall core services**

Brands in this tier can demonstrate their target market is a specifically defined sub-set within Council's broader audience. They also have significant commercial drivers to justify why they require their own branding identity.

Examples across local government include:

- Leisure centres operating commercially
- Golf courses operating commercially
- Commercial airports
- Significant cultural facilities e.g. performing arts centres, art galleries, museums
- Tourist parks

This is not a definitive list as each council's operations will be different.

Council should consider carefully the number of sub-brands it allows, and have an approval process for the creation of sub-brands based on strict criteria.

Sub-brands are also a service provided/funded by Council, and while they may be permitted to have their own logo and branding identity, there should also be a requirement for additional branding to reflect that the entity is part of Council. This could be as simple as requiring a statement such as: **A service of Coffs Harbour City** Council in a consistent location on all marketing collateral, Other councils have required a council logo in a consistent location on all sub-brand material.

**Tier 3 – Council services that may have specific messaging but are still part of Council's core services**

Examples may include:

- Animal impounding facilities
- Environment services/projects
- Libraries
- Infrastructure and works services

Tier 3 services require particular care in the development of their messaging, to make sure they are communicating clearly with the people who most need to hear that message e.g. pet owners, library users – while still communicating under the umbrella of Council's corporate brand.

Treating these services as separately branded entities risks diluting Council's overall identity, when in fact these are the organisation's core strengths in the services it delivers to the community every day.