LGPro VICTORIA
Public Relations Network

BENCHMARKING SURVEY #2
March 2011

Newsletters, Distribution and Advertising

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RESPONSES			
	Survey (35)		Victoria (79)
Melbourne	13	37%	22%
Interface	5	14%	16%
Regional City	8	23%	15%
Regional Shire	9	26%	47%
Melbourne	**18**	**51%**	**38%**
Regional	**17**	**49%**	**62%**

Melbourne Councils are over represented.
Regional cities made a good showing vs survey 1.

NEWSLETTER Basics					
BASICS	Produce n'letter?		Size		
	Yes	No	Broad sheet	A4 or Mag.	Other
Melbourne	13	1	2	9	0
Interface	4	0	1	3	0
Regional City	7	1	2	4	3*
Regional Shire	8	2	2	5	1*
Melbourne	**17**	**1**	**3**	**12**	**0**
Regional	**15**	**3**	**4**	**9**	**4**

NEWSLETTER Responsibilities				
STAFFING	Responsibility for newsletter and media			
	Same person		Different people	
Melbourne	3	19%	5	42%
Interface	1	6%	4	33%
Regional City	5	31%	2	17%
Regional Shire	7	44%	1	8%
Melbourne	**4**	**25%**	**9**	**75%**
Regional	**12**	**75%**	**3**	**25%**

Prevalence of newsletters

The majority of councils produce a newsletter in some form and frequency.

Size

The A4/Magazine format wins hands down, whether metro or regional.

* Respondents who entered "Other" for size did not describe their newsletter.

Newsletter responsibility vs media

Metro councils appear to have the luxury of splitting responsibility for newsletters and media at the individual staffer level.

The difference is quite stark comparing metro with regional, reflecting the size of their respective communications departments.

The trend toward single-person responsibility is consistent the further from Melbourne you go.

NEWSLETTER Qualities						
QUALITIES	Colour	B&W	Gloss	Matte	Bound	Crushed
Melbourne	9	0	2	9	9	1
Interface	4	0	2	2	3	1
Regional City	7	0	1	5	3	2
Regional Shire	6	0	3	3	1	5
Melbourne	**13**	**0**	**4**	**11**	**12**	**2**
Regional	**13**	**0**	**4**	**8**	**4**	**7**

NEWSLETTER Messaging					
MESSAGES & ALTERNATIVE FORMATS	Message from [*]		Media [#]		
	Mayor	CEO	Web view	Emailed	Audio version
Melbourne	9	1	2	4	4
Interface	3	0	0	0	2
Regional City	4	1	2	1	0
Regional Shire	4	0	0	1	1
Melbourne	**12**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**6**
Regional	**8**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**
% of respondents	60%	6%			

Qualities

All newsletters are in colour, and matte is preferred over gloss by a big margin.

They are more likely to be bound/stapled and flat by metro councils, unbound and crush folded by shires.

Messages from high

If there is a message from on high, it is usually from the Mayor.

[*] There were two instances of both Mayoral and CEO messages appearing in the newsletter (1 metro + 1 regional city).

Newsletter formats

One respondent noted large print versions.

[#] There seems remarkably little attention paid to making the newsletter available in alternative (searchable) formats.

NEWSLETTER Financials

FINANCIALS	Cost per resident		Total newsletter cost		Page averages[*]	
	Average	Range	Ave. annual n'letter cost	Range	Ave. pages per edition	Cost per page annualised
Melbourne	18c	8c-31c	$190K	$52K-$320K	17	$12,340
Interface	23c	12c-40c	$167K	$55K-$360K	28	$6,358
Regional City	15c	8c-27c	$77K	$12K-$175K	27	$4,271
Regional Shire	37c	12c-83c	$34K	$8K-$70K	18	$2,881
Melbourne	**21c**		$173,308			$9,600
Regional	**26c**		$55,530			$3,500

NEWSLETTER Measurement and Monitoring

MONITORING	Distribution		Newsletter	
	Effectiveness measured	Targets in contracts	Satisfaction surveyed	Benchmarked vs other media
Melbourne	6	2	10	4
Interface	2	1	5	1
Regional City	2	1	3	1
Regional Shire	1	0	3	2
Melbourne	**8**	**3**	**15**	**5**
Regional	**3**	**1**	**6**	**3**

Number of pages

All options from 4 to 24 pages came up for both broadsheets and magazine formats.

Newsletter financial averages

[*]Broadsheets calculated as A4 equivalent pages.

Clearly, metro councils are spending more on their newsletters than regional councils, though the cost per resident shows just how expensive it is for shires.

Monitoring distribution – There seems potential for monitoring distribution better, with only a third of respondents making an effort to do so. Then again, many more councils are relatively satisfied with current arrangements than not.

Monitoring newsletters - Perhaps thanks to annual community satisfaction surveys, at least 2/3 of councils assess the suitability of their newsletters, but there seems little formal benchmarking against other forms of community communication.

NEWSLETTER Distribution								
DISTRIBUTION	**Method**			**Satisfaction**				
	Distribn. company	Australia Post	Combination	Get extra value	Sufficient	Just needs tweeking	Needs impv'mnt	Despair
Melbourne	5	4	1	1	3	2	3	1
Interface	2	4	1	0	0	5	0	0
Regional City	3	5	2	1	4	2	1	0
Regional Shire	1	6	0	0	3	2	2	0
Melbourne	7	8	2	1	3	7	3	1
Regional	4	11	2	1	7	4	3	0
				Good to okay	**80%**		Not ok	**20%**

Respondent Comments about Distribution

- We hate this and need to go Australia Post. We will also look at online and MX style stands in shopping centres and libraries.

- The printing company uses a walking distributor to drop in all household letterboxes. About 500 copies also come to the council offices and are dispersed around the office, customer service, community centres, our sports centre, other council sites, and then a mailing list of people outside [*regional city*] is used to post copies

- Mailed out with rates notices

- DL brochure Aust Post from Forms Express collation.

- We use the Australia Post UDS and we also mail out about 10,000 copies to our non resident ratepayers.

- The companies here lack resources to get the job done.

- Australia Post has caused a lot of despair but has improved recently

- Mixed...never totally reliable method.

- We are currently reviewing the walkers and making sure they are delivering their copies to the areas they are supposed to. We are also investigating putting copies in doctors surgeries and motels, at present we only keep them in council venues such as community centre and Visitor Information Centre.

- Because we send to our non-resident ratepayers there is a 'double up' eg one copy goes to their holiday house and another gets mailed to them which is definitely not ideal. We've been unable to find a solution for this as we don't know who rents out their property and which properties are empty. As we have such a large number (10,000) of holiday home owners we think it is important that they get the newsletter. We also find the unaddressed delivery system difficult and often find that the numbers vary quite dramatically between editions.

- Not really ever sure if the delivery is undertaken to all residents as Australia Post don't do any service checks

- Few gaps in distribution - in that mail comes into our Shire from another regional centre. We get around this by sending to specific post offices some bulk quantities which they put into boxes or on counters.

SECTOR CONNECTOR.

NEWSPAPER COLUMN Basics								
BASICS	**Publish a newspaper column?**		**Frequency**			**Size**		
	Yes	No	Weekly	Fort nightly	Monthly or less freq.	Full pg or more	Half page	Less than ½ page
Melbourne	8	1	5	1	3	3	1	0
Interface	2	3	1	1	0	1	0	0
Regional City	5	2	3	2	0	3	1	1
Regional Shire	8	2	5	0	3	4	2	2
Melbourne	**10**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**0**
Regional	**13**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**3**	**7**	**3**	**3**

ADVERTISING Control						
QUALITY CONTROL	**To what degree is the communications department in control of paid advertising carried out by the organisation?**					
	In control	**Generally** in control	**Process entrenched** across org.	Dept. is **under resourced**	**Lack of standards** in the org.	Dept. tends to be **bypassed**
Melbourne	5	5	0	2	0	0
Interface	1	3	2	1	0	0
Regional City	4	1	0	0	0	1
Regional Shire	2	5	1	0	1	0
Melbourne	**6**	**8**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**0**
Regional	**6**	**6**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**
% of responses	Good to okay		**85%**	Not good or okay		**15%**

Newspaper columns

Full page 'columns' is the most popular size, especially in regional areas.

Only 5 respondents (14%) present the newspaper column as a message from the Mayor or CEO, as opposed to presenting as general news or a mixture.

Advertising control

Overall, respondents seem happy with their lot regarding control over corporate advertising.

PAID ADVERTSING CHANNELS Print								
NEWSPAPERS	**Local newspaper**				**Metropolitan newspaper**			
	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never
Melbourne	9	1	0	0	2	0	4	2
Interface	4	0	1	0	2	0	2	1
Regional City	7	0	0	0	2	1	3	1
Regional Shire	8	1	0	1	2	4	1	1
Melbourne	13	1	1	0	4	0	6	3
Regional	15	1	0	1	4	5	4	2

PAID ADVERTSING CHANNELS Radio								
RADIO	**Local radio**				**Metropolitan radio**			
	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never
Melbourne	1	1	2	3	1	0	3	3
Interface	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Regional City	2	4	1	0	0	0	2	4
Regional Shire	2	1	4	1	1	0	1	4
Melbourne	1	1	2	6	1	0	3	6
Regional	4	5	5	1	1	0	3	8

Print

No surprise that the majority of councils advertise frequently in the local newspaper.

Almost all councils advertise in metro press at some stage.

Radio

Radio does not seem to be on councils' collective radar.

NB: Unfortunately, information is not available about the purpose when councils do advertise on radio. Perhaps for a later survey.

PAID ADVERTSING CHANNELS Television

TELEVISION	Local TV				Metropolitan TV			
	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never
Melbourne	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
Interface	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Regional City	1	4	0	2	0	0	4	3
Regional Shire	0	1	2	4	0	0	4	4
Melbourne	**0**	**0**	**0**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**8**
Regional	**1**	**5**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**8**	**7**

PAID ADVERTSING CHANNELS Niche

NICHE PUBLICATIONS	Niche print publications				Niche web publications			
	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never	Weekly to monthly	At least every quarter	Less than quarterly	Never
Melbourne	1	2	5	1	0	0	3	2
Interface	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1
Regional City	0	3	3	1	0	0	4	2
Regional Shire	0	2	4	1	0	0	3	4
Melbourne	**1**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**3**
Regional	**0**	**5**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**7**	**6**

Television

Television rates zero among metro councils.

Local and metro TV is used by regional councils though. That is understandable for local TV, but half of regional respondents do use metro TV now and again.

NB: Unfortunately, information is not available about the purpose when councils do advertise on TV.

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS REGARDING PAID ADVERTISING

• There is no single paper that covers the entire *area*.

• Metro media ads are for Public Notices on a weekly basis and are the responsibility of the Media and Communications Team.

• As a regional city-based Council we have a high concentration of localised media outlets and are able to utilise them for saturation when and if necessary.

• Local newsletters - currently as needed, about to start monthly columns similar to local paper in five local newsletters (A4).

• The only ads we do are our weekly advertisement, statutory ads and employment

• Most external advertising relates to employment opportunities.