

Communication Strategy

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1.0 BACKGROUND

The Issue of Illegal Dumping:

Like most local authorities, Palmerston North has a problem with illegal (fly) dumping. Illegal dumping is a national and global issue. Recently a spike in incidents was highlighted by neighbouring local authorities Rangitikei and Manawatu district Councils on Stuff, (see article [here](#)). In Palmerston North the phenomenon has been gradually increasing over many years, since the move to user pays and privatisation of waste disposal.

What is it?

- Up to 10 incidents a week where trailer loads of large items (furniture, white ware, bedding, household rubbish, tyres etc) are illegally dumped in out of the way (or out of sight) locations such as roadsides, parks and reserves, roadside drains and beside streams and rivers
- Un-reusable/unsaleable items dumped outside charity shops, charity clothing bins, recycling drop off points – usually on a weekend when no one around – can be anything from couches and mattresses to bags of household rubbish
- Bags of household rubbish stuffed into (Council owned) Street and Park litter bins
- Garden waste (eg lawn clippings) dumped on council owned land, next to water ways
- Whole streets littered with large unwanted items at the end of the university year.

Why is it a problem?

- Unhappy residents, ratepayers and business owners – in particular charity shop leaders and volunteers forced to clean up and pay to dispose of rubbish at transfer stations
- Polluted waterways
- Ratepayer complaints about untidy areas of the city
- PNCC (ultimately ratepayers) incurring increased costs as a result of measures being taken to address illegal dumping including:
 - Increasing the frequency of street and park bin collection
 - Collection of large items illegally dumped in out of the way areas
 - Subsidising charity shops to dispose of waste at transfer stations

What is the right waste disposal behaviour?

PNCC has adopted a policy to divert 75% of the city's waste to beneficial use – ie it wants ratepayers and residents to think about how they can reuse, recycle and repurpose items rather than just throwing them in 'out in the rubbish'. The days of taking the easy option and simply dumping all your rubbish at a dump or transfer station are well and truly over. There is only one transfer station in Palmerston North city operated by Enviro Waste and it's widely regarded as expensive to use.

However, there are numerous rubbish and recycling options for residents, including:

- Weekly Kerbside rubbish bag collection for the cost of the council bag (c.\$2.50)
- Alternate weekly collection of either a council-owned large kerbside recycling wheelie bin (paper, cardboard, cans, tin and clear plastics) or small plastic crate (glass)
- Ferguson St recycling centre (recycling and e-waste)
- Awapuni resource recovery park (recycling and greenwaste)

The waste management (rubbish and recycling) team has also developed some excellent communication tools and resources to assist residents to work out where different household waste items can go, including:

- Rubbish and recycling day finder tool (<http://www.pncc.govt.nz/services/onlineservices/rubbish-and-recycling-days/>) and
- Searchable A-Z of items for recycling or disposal – due to be live on PNCC website by July 1st

2.0 OBJECTIVES

PNCC has requested a Communication plan that fulfills three objectives:

- Highlight the extent of illegal dumping and its impact on the community
- Profile the right behaviours
- Publicise options for the community to assist Council to address the issue.

3.0 AUDIENCES – who are we speaking to?

1. Residents who dump large waste items in out of the way places and charity shops

It's generally believed these people are more likely to be lower socio economic.

Charity shop owners tell us that in some high rental areas, clusters of flats have periodic incidents of illegal dumping. The tenants appear to be lazy – letting rubbish pile up until they are forced to deal with it. Or they just think if they dump it on the street someone will be forced to pick it up. They can't be bothered or it's simply too hard for them to organise and dispose of their waste in the right way.

These dumpings are usually happening overnight indicating the culprits know that what they are doing is wrong/illegal. They have cars and they know and understand the secluded areas of the city environs - some may be boy racers/bogans.

These people are likely to be hard to influence but could respond to peer pressure and the threat of prosecution fines.

2. Residents who dump household waste in council bins

As above this is also more prevalent in the lower socio economic areas of the city.

In some cases where people are dumping household rubbish in the city bins they will feel quite justified doing this – their attitude will be “at least I'm putting my rubbish in a bin - it's better than leaving it on the street.”

Cost is the major reason that these people are not buying council rubbish bags. These are sold for \$2.50/bag and available at most supermarkets, dairies and petrol stations. (gladbag equivalents are \$0.50). These residents either do not understand (care) that the \$2.50 covers the cost of the collection and disposal.

The fact that these people do try to dispose of their rubbish indicates they could be influenced by a campaign to do the right thing and follow PNCC's waste disposal guidelines.

3. Residents who are doing the right thing – but could do better

90% of Palmerston North residents are doing the right thing – reusing, recycling and paying to dispose of their waste legally.

The majority of phone calls to the PNCC 0800 number are about rubbish and recycling. These ratepayers want to proud of a clean and tidy city. They want to see action on illegal dumping because they take responsibility for their own mess and they believe others should too. They're the kind of people who volunteer for community service, who want to do the right thing.

This audience will respond to clear, regular and relevant communication about how to do the right thing with their waste.

Other audiences

- Stakeholders affected by illegal dumping (eg charity shops and other businesses)
- Council staff
- Councillors
- Ratepayers

4.0 MESSAGES

What they care about, what they'll respond to.	Residents who dump large waste items	Residents who dump household waste in council bins	Residents who are doing the right thing
If you dump waste illegally PNCC will catch you and prosecute you	✓		✓
We're proud to be from Palmy - it's a great city	✓	✓	✓
Doing the right thing with your waste makes you feel good		✓	✓
PNCC information about recycling is really easy to find and useful.		✓	✓

5.0 CHANNELS

What influences these people? What do they watch, read and listen to? How will we reach them?

	Facebook users	Radio listeners	Newspaper readers
Residents who dump large waste items	✓	✓	
Residents who dump household waste in council bins	✓	✓	✓
Residents who are doing the right thing	✓	✓	✓

6.0 RECOMMENDED MARKETING CAMPAIGN & COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The following campaign ideas are targeted at Audience 1 and 2 but will also be seen by Audience 3 and ultimately all PNCC ratepayers.

We are recommending a positive approach to illegal dumping that moves the conversation towards doing the right thing with your rubbish. Executed well, this campaign will make the whole city take notice, smile, talk about it and ultimately get in behind it.

Key elements:

1. An idea/tagline that appears wherever the campaign is run:

Let's put rubbish in its place

2. A central character for the campaign:

The Rubbish Guru – “I’ll show you where to stick it”

(creative example attached)

This character is a funny, likable, helpful guy that becomes part of the media advertising (think Ches and Dale). He resonates with Audience 1 and 2 because he’s a bit cheeky and irreverent.

3. Create a simple and easy to use web landing page pncc.govt.nz/rubbish that hosts the Rubbish Guru character and all the information that residents are looking for to quickly work out how to dispose of their waste. (eg Rubbish and recycling day finder tool and Searchable A-Z of items for recycling or disposal, map of recycling and waste disposal locations).
4. A series of simple 15 sec video clips posted on PNCC Facebook page (and used in a Facebook advertising campaign) that highlight illegal dumping in a humorous, unexpected way ending with the positive message:

Let's put rubbish in its place (*storyboard example attached*)

5. A 10-month Facebook advertising campaign that drives traffic to PNCC Facebook page and rubbish guru
6. Create Google advertisement campaigns connected to keywords associated with rubbish, recycling in the Palmerston North area.
7. Stickers on city bins in illegal dumping hotspots – to be identified by the PNCC team – and in frequently visited areas such as The Plaza. The message on these stickers:

“Please don't overfeed me”

8. 3 x 2-week bus shelter advertising campaign spread over 6 months
9. 6-month Radio advertising campaign – targeting Audience 1 and 2 on Edge/More (NZME) and Hauraki/ZM (NZME)
10. Media release stories at launch and periodically thereafter (also posted on Facebook and in PNCC newsletters) for example. These are targeting Audience 3 and other stakeholders – giving them a sense that PNCC is being proactive and doing something about illegal dumping but with a positive focus.
 - ‘Let's put rubbish in its place’ Campaign launch – we've developed great tools – now we're making it easier for people to do the right thing
 - tackle misperceptions around the cost of rubbish bags, visual diagram of what \$2.50 covers several things including collection and dumping. Idea could be: 'What's in a bag?' And we provide a breakdown of the 2.50 cost.
 - Statistics on % ages of waste going to recycling – positive changes are happening
 - City bin sticker launch - why we're doing it
 - End of student year story – PNCC working with students to ‘put rubbish in its place’

It is envisaged that this is an initial 8-10-month campaign. However, the key campaign elements such as the tagline and the central character allow it to have a life well beyond the initial launch period.

To really build awareness of the right behaviour and lock in long term attitude changes we recommend that PNCC considers this a long-term investment with an ongoing budget. One way to reduce cost could be to invite neighbouring local authorities (Manawatu and Rangitikei for example) to replicate the approach in their areas.

7.0 ACTIVITY REQUIRED

1. Agree on timing and scope of campaign with PNCC
2. Make recommendations and/or create strawman for PNCC rubbish guru landing page on website
3. Create Video content plan, filming and post production
4. Design bin stickers, billboards and bus shelter posters
5. Copy for 6 x radio advertisements
6. Create google adword campaign
7. Create 5 x Facebook advertising campaigns over 10 months
8. Generate 4 x media releases (bi-monthly)

8.0 BUDGET

The total estimated budget for this activity is \$37,780 + GST.