

# Mayoral Forum's Communications Strategy

2020–2022



# Communications Strategy 2020-22

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## Canterbury Mayoral Forum Communications Strategy

Prepared by	<b>Regional Forums Secretariat</b>	31 October 2020
Reviewed by	<b>Canterbury Chief Executives Forum</b>	2 November 2020
Approved by	<b>Canterbury Mayoral Forum</b>	27 November 2020

## Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>2.0</b>	Made final following Mayoral Forum approval	Rosa Wakefield, Secretariat	10 Dec 2020

# Introduction

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The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is mandated by the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement<sup>1</sup> and is the primary mechanism for communication, co-ordination and collaboration between councils in New Zealand's largest region. The members of the Mayoral Forum are the mayors of the 10 territorial authorities in Canterbury from Kaikōura to Waitaki, and the chair of the regional council (Environment Canterbury).

The Mayoral Forum provides a mechanism for local authorities in Canterbury to:

- stand together and speak with 'one-strong voice' for Canterbury and its communities
- identify and prioritise issues of mutual concern and foster co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration to address them
- advance regional economic and social development through leadership, facilitation and advocacy
- work together, and with central government and other key sector leaders in Canterbury, to meet the needs and expectations of our communities at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum launched its Plan for Canterbury 2020-2022 on 4 September 2020. The *Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2020-2022* broadens the scope of the Forum's leadership from economic development to sustainable regional development across all four aspects of wellbeing (environmental, economic, social and cultural).

Our vision for Canterbury is **sustainable development with shared prosperity, resilient communities and proud identity.**

The Forum focuses on a small number of priorities it can impact through leadership, enabling partnerships and advocacy. The forum has identified five priorities for this local government term:

- **Sustainable environmental management** of our habitats (land, air, water and ecosystems), focusing on land use and freshwater management.
- **Shared economic prosperity** – through sustainable, value-added primary production, high-value manufacturing, high-value tourism and growing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, investment and new businesses.
- **Better freight transport options** – mode shift to optimise movement of long-distance freight by rail and coastal shipping to improve road safety, decrease carbon emissions and reduce wear and tear on the region's roads.
- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation** – reducing our carbon footprint, building community resilience and making our infrastructure as strong as it can be.
- **Three Waters services** – securing safe drinking-water supplies, and ensuring that infrastructure, institutional arrangements and regulation enable the sustainable management of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater in Canterbury.

*The Forum meets quarterly and is supported by the Chief Executives, Policy, Corporate and Operations Forums and other working groups. The Regional Forum's Secretariat is hosted by Environment Canterbury.*

*The Forum has no budget and achieves its objectives primarily by facilitating collaboration between councils, and by advocacy to central government. From time to time the Forum has applied for project funding from central government, including a multi-year grant of \$1.45m for its Food, Fibre and Innovation Programme contracted to ChristchurchNZ and the University of Canterbury.*

*For further information, please contact Maree McNeilly, Mayoral Forum Secretariat, 027 381 8924.*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://canterburymayors.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/CMF-triennial-agreement-2020\\_signed.pdf](https://canterburymayors.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/CMF-triennial-agreement-2020_signed.pdf)

## Purpose

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The purpose of this communications strategy is to clearly articulate when and how the Canterbury Mayoral Forum will promote its leadership, facilitation and advocacy for Canterbury. We want to raise interest and awareness of the Mayoral Forum and its activity. This may take the form of both proactive and reactive communications. The strategy is focused on the actions in the *Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2020-2022*, however also responds to other matters of importance and interest to the Canterbury region.

This communications strategy shows how effective communications can:

- help us to achieve our overall Forum objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- demonstrate success of our work
- ensure people understand what we do
- change behaviour and perceptions where necessary
- gain support for our desired outcomes.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is committed to standing together for Canterbury and speaking with one voice to secure the best possible outcomes for our region and its communities. The Forum accepts, however, that its members and their councils will not be of a single mind on every issue. Communications from the Mayoral Forum would require agreement from **majority** of members before release. If there is not collective agreement on an issue then communications would likely be handled by individual Mayors, not under the auspices of the Mayoral Forum. The Chairs of the Mayoral and Chief Executives Forums would make final decisions.

## Communications Objectives

To promote the work of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum with central government Ministers, Members of Parliament, central government staff, local government councillors and staff, ratepayers, members of the public.

To raise awareness of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum with central government Ministers, Members of Parliament, central government staff, local government councillors and staff, ratepayers, members of the public.

What is in scope?	What is out of scope?
Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury	local TA issues
Canterbury Regional Economic Development Strategy 2017-2019	
Canterbury-wide issues	

## Authority to act

Communications may be initiated by any member of the Mayoral or Chief Executives Forum. The Secretariat will generally prepare communications, with appropriate input from Forum members,

council communication teams and with engagement of all members on the draft. Final decisions will rest with the Chairs of the Mayoral and Chief Executives Forums.

## Themes behind all communications

- Pride of place: it's all about our connection with Canterbury
- Collective responsibility: we are all in this together
- Action: is being taken and it is making a difference

## Canterbury Mayoral Forum audiences

- Ministers
- Members of Parliament
- Canterbury local authority councillors and staff
- Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnanga
- central government officials
- ratepayers / the public
- tertiary institutions, research institutions
- district health boards
- industry and representative groups
- non-government and community groups.

If we are successful with our communications, our audiences will know who we are, feel well informed and know and understand our position.

## Structure of Communications

Audience	who we want to engage with / hear from
Tone	how we want to come across
Language / content	what we want to say based on the level of information already received, relationship with us, and action required
Channel	how we will reach them

## Channels of communications

Our primary channel: [www.canterburymayors.org.nz](http://www.canterburymayors.org.nz) is the portal to Canterbury Mayoral Forum information, resources and news. Most communications will lead here.

Secondary channels include direct communication to Ministers, peers, stakeholders; direct engagement e.g. reports, addressed mail, meetings; use of advocates/influencers.

Media

## Communication principles

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum's communication will:

- be delivered in a way that is caring, confident and straight talking

- be timely and appropriate to the audience
- be evidence-based and driven by data/measurement of progress
- use channels that reach the intended audience(s) in their place and that represent good value for money
- use creative ways to engage with our audience
- be cognisant of risk to our reputation, but not at the cost of transparency
- be open and invite contribution
- start from a place of mutual respect, open to views of others
- tell the Canterbury story, the here and now situation and what is being done about it.

## **Media principles**

- proactively brief on issues we are aware of
- use in-person media briefings for more complex or higher profile issues
- act to form relationships with media outlets
- provide advice to those responding to media
- correct factually incorrect information reported in the media.

We do not control media channels so we will never use media advisories as a sole communications channel – we will always use our own channels first.

## **What / When we will communicate**

- New study or report e.g. Climate Change Risk Screening interim reports
- Announcement e.g. Mayoral Forum launches its Plan for Canterbury
- Event / Anniversary
- Response to news story
- Response to central government announcements e.g. Three Waters reform

## **Communications Approach**

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The following is an overview of the communication tactics for the major stakeholder groups

### **Media Communications**

#### **Approach**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will comment on those matters that promote the work of the Mayoral Forum and raise awareness of the Mayoral Forum.

#### **Media Protocols**

All key communications to be agreed by majority of members of the Mayoral Forum.

Key communications will be signed off by the Chair, Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

The Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum will front all media communications, in the first instance.

Following an agreed release, all members of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum can speak to Mayoral Forum matters to their local channels e.g. local radio, newspapers, Facebook and so on.

## **Communications Plans**

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For specific or complex projects (such as the Essential Freshwater and Three Waters reform programmes), a communications plan will be prepared to ensure activities are coordinated, effective and consistent with the Forum's communications strategy.

Communications plans will articulate the following:

- rationale and purpose of the plan: background on the issue, and why a plan is needed
- identification of who the spokesperson will be on the matter in question – if it is not the Chair Mayoral Forum
- objectives and measures of success: what the plan seeks to achieve, and how this will be measured
- strategic approach to be followed: how the plan will be implemented, and the objectives met
- key messages: the main points arising from the communications activities
- identification of key stakeholders and audience: clarify the stakeholders involved or interested in the subject of the activities, and the audience(s)
- action plan: the tactics and activities to be implemented, their timing, and clarification of responsibilities to achieve them
- risks and issues, and planned mitigations: what may occur as a result of the release, or other factors that may affect the communications activities' effectiveness, and the actions that can be taken to reduce or remove these impacts.
- clarification of approval and sign-off process: clear identification of who needs to be involved in reviewing and approving communications before they are released or distributed (for example, the convenor of the Climate Change Working Group would be included in reviewing or approving communications activities in the plan relating to climate change matters).

## **Measurement**

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A series of robust and meaningful key performance indicators (KPI) need to be developed to measure the success of communications

Quantitative measures could include:

- website hits/profiles
- feedback from key stakeholders/audiences
- correspondence/enquiries received
- media interest/coverage.