

CONFIDENTIAL

## Media Strategy

For decision:  For noting:

### Te tūtohunga / Recommendation

That the Auckland Transport Board (board) approve the Media Strategy.

### Te whakarāpopototanga matua / Executive summary

1. Media coverage plays a key role in the public's perception of transport in Auckland and its challenges, Auckland Transport (AT) and its activities (i.e. our social license). This updated Media Strategy (last reviewed in 2020) is a key component to support the communication of and conversation around the developing transport strategy for Auckland, its challenges and the travel behaviour change that will be needed to achieve Auckland's transport objectives, and a key tool to support the necessary development of an improving social license for AT.
2. The global and local media landscape is constantly changing - a 24-hour news cycle, online news and social media have produced a challenging environment, compounded by fewer journalists and pressured newsrooms that are expected to cover complex topics. This updated Media Strategy addresses how to meet some of these challenges and seek improved media impact for transport in Auckland.

### Ngā tuhinga ō mua / Previous deliberations

3. There have been no previous deliberations on this updated Media Strategy.

### Te horopaki me te tīaroaro rautaki / Context and strategic alignment

4. The Media Strategy is aligned to AT's objectives included in the Statement of Intent and translated through the internal Enterprise Business Plan including our focus areas of Safety and Wellbeing, Whirinaki (trust and confidence) and Climate Change and Sustainability, the Communications and Engagement Strategy and the Social Media Strategy that is currently under review.
5. The Media Strategy is a critical component in developing the Auckland transport conversation, progressing the conversation towards a strategic level with a single transport strategy narrative, and developing AT's social license for delivery. It's development was informed by research commissioned from Isentia (AT's independent media monitoring company), internal audit of media management and the Whirinaki Blueprint, with peer review by Porter Novelli Communications, the Auckland Council (AC) media team and director Dr Jim Mather.

CONFIDENTIAL

## Ngā matapakinga me ngā tātaritanga / Discussion and analysis

6. Research supporting the Whirinaki Blueprint shows that news media has the second highest impact on people's view of AT, topped only by personal experience. Research commissioned by AT looking at media coverage about transport across New Zealand shows that the conversation has little maturity and coverage tends to focus on individual projects rather than the broader issues (refer to Attachment 2).
7. We need to move towards the strategic level conversation around a single transport strategy and narrative and a connected multi-modal network - developments over a number of years and towards long-term strategic goals, such as the long-term investment in public transport. This will assist public to piece together a comprehensive picture of transport, its challenges, considerations and key issues. This is particularly important when we consider key individual strategies or components of the single transport strategy and multi-modal network.
8. Another key finding is that only a few journalists have a deep knowledge of transport. Journalists are also time poor and coverage is often driven by popularity, whereas transport is a complex issue with many agencies involved.
9. AT has a very high profile. In the six months between November 2020 and April 2021 Auckland was discussed in 31% of all coverage across the country, equal to all the other big regions combined. The challenge is in shaping a broader narrative. We have seen from our work around road safety for example that it is possible, with our partners, to lead a conversation and start to elevate the coverage away from single, point-in-time projects to more in-depth coverage that looks at wider issues. The new regional Hub structure in the communications team lends itself to building relationships with local journalists
10. There is an opportunity to build the broader narrative around existing and emerging whole of region challenges including moving towards a more liveable, sustainable and productive region enabled by transport and through transport reform, which is limited in existing reporting.
11. There are opportunities to engage and work with more journalists, for example business journalists and transport sector journalists.
12. The objectives of the strategy are to:
  - a. Elevate the strategic media conversation to being about transport for Auckland, how transport contributes and shapes the liveability and wellbeing, sustainability and productivity of Auckland. A more analytic and nuanced media conversation will help Aucklanders understand the trade-offs needed in developing a transport network that is fit for the region's future.
  - b. Increase the number of informed journalists covering transport. The turnover of journalists is high and newsrooms are pressured.
  - c. Seek editorial quality over quantity by targeting our stories and using sponsored content where appropriate.
  - d. Capitalise on the community and wider city and regional benefits of our projects, services and interventions. This can be achieved by making the most of our Hub communications model and putting community and wider benefits as the headlines.
13. The success of the strategy will be evaluated in several ways – a more balanced profile across the top 10 media outlets, a greater range of journalists covering transport stories (in monthly reports) and a repeat of the Isentia research to see how the dial has shifted.

CONFIDENTIAL

## Ngā tūraru matua / Key risks and mitigations

14. There are numerous reputational risks for AT that the Media Strategy will seek to improve upon, including, but not limited to, understanding of transport objectives, AT's role, misinformation about interventions and a strategic conversation on transport.

## Ngā ritenga-ā-pūtea me ngā rauemi / Financial and resource impacts

15. This strategy will be delivered by the AT media team along with the Head of Strategic Communications with support from the local Hub teams. Resource planning for the team along with other support teams will need to be reviewed.

## Ngā whaiwhakaaro ō te taiao me te panonitanga o te āhuarangi / Environment and climate change considerations

16. The key issue with regards to climate and environmental issues is the role of media in helping explain AT's vision and role in providing a transport network that supports reducing emissions and is fit for the future, including how individual strategies and plans support this.

## Ngā whakaaweawe me ngā whakaaro / Impacts and perspectives

### Mana whenua

17. As part of our plan to extend the number of news outlets covering AT stories we work with Māori news outlets.

### Ngā mema pōti / Elected members

18. There has been no engagement with elected members.

### Ngā rōpū kei raro i te Kaunihera / Council Controlled Organisations

19. The communications network across the council whanau is strong. We regularly meet and share intelligence about media and opportunities. We also collaborate on projects such as the city centre project being led by Eke Panuku. The communications teams at AC and CCOs were invited to peer review the strategy and it has been shared amongst the group. AT is now supporting AC to develop their media strategy.

CONFIDENTIAL

## Ngā kiritaki / Customers

20. The Media Strategy is a deliverable from the Whirinaki Blueprint and has been informed by that research.

## Ngā whaiwhakaaro haumarū me ngā whaiwhakaaro hauora / Health, safety and wellbeing considerations

21. The Media Strategy along with a review of the Social Media Strategy will support the wellbeing improvement of our staff that is often negatively impacted through public engagement and social media coverage of AT initiatives. Our approach will include a media spokesperson plan and a rolling programme of media training, support to staff who engage with the media and decision making on who should engage.

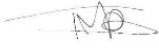

## Ā muri ake nei / Next steps

22. Implement the Media Strategy, deliver the spokesperson plan and media policy and update the Social Media Strategy.

## Ngā whakapiringa / Attachments

Attachment number	Description
1	Media Strategy
2	Isentia Benchmark report
3	Media Outlook Audience Data

## Te pou whenua tuhinga / Document ownership

Submitted by	Teresa Burnett <b>Head of Strategic Communications</b>	
Recommended by	Scott Campbell <b>EGM Stakeholder, Communities &amp; Communication</b>	
Approved for submission	Mark Lambert <b>Interim Chief Executive</b>	