

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) is working to create a more sustainable region via a programme of initiatives. A key initiative is a campaign called *Be the Difference*. This is a social marketing initiative seeking residents of the Greater Wellington region to sign up to more environmentally sustainable behaviours. *Be the Difference* was launched in early 2004.

Wellington residents who join the *Be the Difference* programme receive information packs (at least three times a year) with information, tips and advice about how they can live more sustainably.

TNS was commissioned to undertake qualitative (six focus groups with members throughout the region) and quantitative research (an online and telephone survey) with *Be the Difference* members to obtain an in-depth understanding of member perceptions and experiences of the programme, and to assess the extent to which the campaign and communication materials meet the needs of *Be the Difference* members. The research also explores and measures the extent to which there has been change in environmental attitudes and behaviours of members (with a particular focus on behaviours) as a result of the programme.

Fieldwork was undertaken in August and September 2005.

Report Structure

The report is in three parts:

- Part One:* Executive Summary – an overview of the key findings from the quantitative and qualitative research
- Part Two:* Findings of the quantitative research (telephone and online)
- Part Three:* Findings of the qualitative research (six focus groups with members throughout the region).

The key findings of the research (qualitative and quantitative) are summarised in this section – the Executive Summary.

Key Findings – Short Term Outcomes

This section reviews how successful the programme has been in the short term in achieving the outcomes of influencing behaviours, increasing understanding and influencing perceptions.

Actions and Behaviour

One of the primary objectives of the programme is to influence member's behaviour, and to encourage actions that will lead to a more sustainable region.

- The quantitative research indicates that two in five members (40%) have made changes to their everyday behaviour as a result of *Be the Difference*. Similar proportions (37%) indicate the programme has had a medium to high impact on their actions and behaviour towards the environment.

The qualitative research indicates that early impacts of the programme on learning and behaviour relating to specific environmental actions include:

- *Recycling* – receiving information from *Be the Difference* was a trigger for reminding people about the value of recycling, and in some cases prompted renewed effort.
- *Storm water drains* – some members are more careful about what they put down the drain now that they understand that material that goes into storm water reaches the sea without being filtered. Specifically, some members report hesitation in washing their car in the street (some use the car wash instead), and picking up material to prevent it entering the storm water (e.g. dog litter).
- *Conserving water in the garden* – for example watering the garden less often and re-using grey water where practicable.
- *Considering use of disposable items* – a few members reflected on their use of disposable items as a result of the information they received (e.g. plastic cups and cutlery, and in one case disposable nappies).

Learning and understanding

Overall, the research indicates that *Be the Difference* has had a great impact on members' *learning and understanding* than it has on *behaviour* at this stage. Specifically:

- *Be the Difference* has had a positive impact on members' environmental awareness and understanding. Almost two thirds of members (65%) agree that the programme has made them more aware of how their actions have an impact on the environment.

- In addition, a significant proportion (82%) agree they have learned something new from the programme. The qualitative research indicates new learning includes:
 - Think about what you put down the drain – storm water drains go straight to the sea.
 - Car washes are better for the environment than washing the car on the street.
 - Gardeners may not need to water as often as they think.
 - Air pollution from home fires – think about alternatives for home heating – and that air pollution is a problem for Wellington city (challenging the myth that Wellington’s wind effectively takes care of localised air pollution).

As well as providing new knowledge, the programme has had the effect of reinforcing existing knowledge about environmental issues.

- While a high proportion of members say that the *Be the Difference* programme has provided them with some information they already knew (71%) – the information was seen as a good reminder. Key messages reinforced by the programme relate to recycling, conserving water in the garden and air pollution from cars.

Member Perceptions and Experiences of *Be the Difference*

- Eighty six percent of members consider the programme has met their expectations. Two fifths (42%) consider it has met their expectations to a ‘great extent’ or a ‘very great extent’, and a similar proportion (44%) considers *Be the Difference* has met expectations to a ‘moderate extent’.
- The qualitative research found *Be the Difference* is perceived by some members as a primarily educational/awareness programme, with members in a passive role of receiving information and ideas from Greater Wellington. Others cast themselves in a slightly more active role, seeing the programme as a regional council initiative to encourage them to take small steps to care for the environment.
- The qualitative research also indicates that many members consider the programme to have a low public profile. As such, the programme appears to have no identity as a collective movement. This issue was not specifically tested by the quantitative research, but we know from the 2005 Communications Survey that 14 percent of the public have heard of *Be the Difference*.
- Focus group participants were concerned that there is a risk that *Be the Difference* will be dismissed by some participants as “PR” – Greater Wellington *appearing* to be doing something – rather than actually doing anything much. This risk arises from the perception among some participants that the programme is ‘all talk and no action’. Such participants are looking for evidence of action, and initiatives that they may participate in. They are also looking for feedback on the progress of the programme to date and its intended outcomes.

- Members observe that major behavioural changes, such as installing double glazing or solar heating or taking the bus instead of the car on a regular basis, require financial incentives. This study found a loss of faith in local councils (Wellington City Council and Masterton District Council) in relation to environmental management, care and protection. Members would like to see Greater Wellington taking the lead, and pushing local councils on issues such as access to recycling, rural rubbish collection and disposal, cycle lanes, and adequacy of public transport services.
- Focus group participants who expected more participation in the programme were concerned that the communications represent one-way traffic from the council to members, with no provision for members to have input or provide feedback on the programme.

Members Perceptions of Greater Wellington

- Overall, the *Be the Difference* is regarded as a positive step in the right direction, and participants are pleased to see *someone* taking the lead in raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour. Where members do make the connection between *Be the Difference* and Greater Wellington, there is great kudos for the regional council.
- *Be the Difference* members are significantly more likely (than Wellington region residents generally) to have an overall favourable impression of Greater Wellington, and to consider that Greater Wellington is performing its role in the community well. For example, almost three quarters (72%) of members have a favourable image of Greater Wellington, compared to 55 percent of Wellington residents generally.
- Greater Wellington is a trusted and credible body to run *Be the Difference*, and participants are generally very positive about the fact that Greater Wellington has taken a leadership role when it comes to caring for the environment. However, they perceive that *Be the Difference*, as it has run to date, is "*just the start*".
- There is strong support for the programme to continue. Eighty five percent of members consider that Greater Wellington should continue the programme.

Key Findings – Member Response to Programme Outputs

This section reviews member response to the key programme outputs. That is, how successful the programme's tools have been. For example, whether members read and recall the communications, and the frequency of the communications.

Frequency of Communications

- The quantitative research tested the issue of frequency of communications with members. When told that *Be the Difference* material is sent out every three to four months, a high proportion of members (81%) consider this frequency to be 'about right'.
- The qualitative research found that there was mixed awareness of the frequency of communications. Some members have find delivery of programme material sporadic and erratic, rather than regular and predictable. Some are not always clear that the material they receive from *Be the Difference* is in fact part of the programme, confusing it with other communications from the city and regional councils.

Level of Information

Response to the level of information in *Be the Difference* communications is mixed among members.

- More informed members of the focus groups feel that the communications are "*pitched too low*" for the intended audience – people with a self-declared interest in caring for the environment – and as such, are too simplistic.
- Conversely, the quantitative research indicates a high proportion (84%) of members consider the level of information is 'about right'. About one in ten members would like more detailed information (9%).
- In addition, the quantitative research indicates eight out of ten (82%) members have learnt something new from the programme.

Substance of Communications

Member response to the substance of the communications is also mixed.

- The communications, while attractively packaged, are lacking substance for some members. The qualitative research found that there is some concern that the material is "*PR*" – Greater Wellington wanting to look like they are doing something about the environment, rather than really acting. Such participants are looking for evidence of action, and initiatives they may participate in. They are also looking for feedback on the progress of the programme to date and its intended outcomes.

- The quantitative research indicates a high proportion of members (70%) have received the type of information they expected to receive.
- Overall, members find the information they receive useful (81%). In particular, information relating to 'pest plants and planting natives' (80%)¹, 'being careful what you put down the drains' (77%) and 'rubbish and recycling' (73%). In addition:
 - 47% of members say the programme has had a medium to high impact on their awareness and understanding of environmental issues.
 - 65% of members consider the programme has made them more aware of how their actions have an impact on the environment.
 - 71% agree that *Be the Difference* has provided some information they already know, but that this information was a good reminder.

Style and Content of Communications

- Nine out of ten members find the communications easy to understand (89%), informative (88%). A high proportion of members also find the material useful (81%) and visually attractive (81%).
- Some members of the focus groups expressed concerns about the content and style of the communications. Key concerns include:
 - the material is not distinctively *Be the Difference* and perceived to look much like other promotional "*junk mail*" received through the post
 - the material appears inappropriately glossy and uses too much paper and plastic for a campaign with an environmental focus.
- Members commented that if *Be the Difference* material is inadvertently seen as unsolicited junk mail, it is less likely to be read. Where *Be the Difference* branding is identified clearly, members are more likely to read and retain the information, and less likely to have "*forgotten*" they joined the programme.

¹ It is important to note that the 'pest plant and planting natives' campaign went to members two weeks prior to fieldwork.

What do Members do with the Material they Receive?

- The quantitative research indicates that:
 - Over a third of members (37%) keep the material for reference
 - Almost all members (99%) read the material they receive to some degree. A high proportion (70%) 'have a good look through it'. Just under a quarter (23%) 'read or browse through some of it'
 - Over one in ten (13%) discuss the material they receive with family and friends, or give the material to another person. The qualitative research indicates that where information is discussed with wider family or friends, such discussion tends to be low key or incidental.
- The qualitative research found that members do not generally retain the communication materials for longer than a couple of days. Once members read the information, the material is recycled or discarded, with the exception of:
 - The tap hanger has been retained "*in the kitchen drawer*" in one or two cases for future reference
 - The large poster has been retained as a resource in one or two cases for members' children to use, at home or in their classroom.
- Members are open to receiving material they can retain to act as triggers for environmentally considerate behaviour, for example, fridge magnets.

Recall of *Be the Difference* Communications

- The qualitative research found overall mixed recall of the communications' themes to date. Focus group participants recalled some or all of the following general themes:
 - Water conservation and the need to think about water use around the home and garden.
 - The contribution of traffic emissions and domestic fires to air pollution.
 - The desirability of recycling.
 - Storm water drains and the need to take care with what is put down them.
 - Wind power (due to the high profile of this issue in Wellington at the time of the research, a number of participants believed that *Be the Difference* had sent out material specifically on this subject, confusing it with material they had received from sources other than the programme).
- Typically there was stronger message recall among 'greener' members of the programme, that is, those doing more with the environment in mind.

- A few images dominated spontaneous recall of the campaign material. In particular, the arresting images of the fish with the funnel in its mouth (*storm water drains*) and the shot of a smoggy suburb.
- There was strong spontaneous recall of the pest plants communication in the quantitative research (42% unprompted, 87% prompted), but this difference is likely to have come about due to the timing of the quantitative fieldwork (this was the most recently delivered campaign to members).
- Prompted recall of other campaigns was as follows: 'being careful what you put down the drains' (55%), 'water conservation in the garden' (44%), and 'rubbish and recycling' (52%). Almost one in ten members spontaneously mentioned the public transport vouchers (9%).

Why did people join *Be the Difference*?

- Key motivations for joining *Be the Difference* include:
 - The desire for greater awareness of environmental issues and greater understanding of the implications of their own behaviour, and for examples of things they could be doing in their day to day lives to make a difference to the environment.
 - To show support for Greater Wellington in taking this positive step and setting an example for the public to follow (many members are pleased that Greater Wellington has taken the lead in encouraging environmental awareness and behaviour).
 - To obtain information about what is being done for the environment in the Wellington region, and specifically what Greater Wellington itself is doing with regard to the environment.
 - A desire to do something for their own immediate environment, and to be part of a movement that will have a direct impact on them. A number of Wellington residents expressed a strong sense of pride in Wellington city, and a desire to protect it for their own enjoyment as well as that of future generations.
- Specific triggers to members signing up to the programme include:
 - The original sign up form sent out to households.
 - The hybrid car prize draw (this appears to have particular appeal to men).
 - Online sign up prompted by an email from a friend who was a member.

Member Profile

- There are now approximately 12,300 household members of *Be the Difference*. The membership continues to represent the full range of attitudes and commitment towards the environment.
- Around one-quarter of current members (27%) are committed to their current substantially environmental lifestyle (i.e. '**dark greens**' or '**greens**'). This compares to 12 percent of Wellington residents (2003) and 35 percent of *Be the Difference* members in the 2004 benchmark.
- '**Slipping greens**' are again underrepresented compared to Wellington residents generally (13% and 23%, respectively), but similar to the proportion observed in the *Be the Difference* member benchmark survey (9%). This group is uncommitted to their current, total environmentally considerate lifestyle (lifestyle type 1 – a substantially environmentally considerate lifestyle), but could 'slip' towards a less environmental lifestyle.
- Similar to findings from the Wellington resident and *Be the Difference* member benchmark surveys, around one third of current members (35%) live a more pragmatic environmental lifestyle. However, they are open to moving towards a more substantially environmentally considerate lifestyle.
- Fourteen percent of current *Be the Difference* members are classified as '**easy greens**' – no change from 14 percent also observed in both the Wellington resident and *Be the Difference* member benchmark surveys. This segment is content with a lifestyle that considers the environment, only when reasonable or practical to do so.
- A similar proportion (11%) of current members were classified as '**brown**' (likely to switch to a lifestyle unconcerned about the environment, or already committed to their current lifestyle that does not consider the environment in anything they do). *Be the Difference* members are significantly less likely to be 'brown' compared to Wellington residents more generally (16%).

Be the Difference Members Compared to Wellington Residents

- While the *Be the Difference* membership represents the full range of attitudes and commitment towards the environment, some differences are evident among members when compared to residents of the Wellington region generally.
- *Be the Difference* members are significantly more likely to feel concerned about the environmental sustainability of the greater Wellington region (82% compared with 54% of residents). Specifically, members are more likely to be concerned about a number of specific environmental issues in the region (e.g. household waste, impact of weeds, pollution from motor vehicles).
- *Be the Difference* members are also significantly more likely than Wellington residents more generally to: consider that they could be doing more now to make a positive difference to the environment (83% compared to 78% of residents).

- *Be the Difference* members are significantly more likely to be involved in a range of environmental activities than Wellington residents more generally. For example, contributed money to an environmental cause or organisation (57% members, 33% residents) or taken part in a one off organised environmental action such as a beach clean up (32% members, 23% residents).
- Specifically, *Be the Difference* members are significantly more likely to undertake some environmental actions than residents more generally. For example, recycle bottles, cans, paper or plastic instead of throwing away (94% members, 84% residents), consider what you put down the drain (87% members, 78% residents), composting food or garden waste (62% members, 56% residents).

Member Suggestions for Moving Forward with *Be the Difference*

- Members made a range of suggestions for moving forward with the *Be the Difference* programme. Key suggestions include:
 - Meaningful incentives to change 'hard-to-change' behaviour – including systems support (e.g. car pool lanes, cheaper park and ride options, rewards for low waste producing households).
 - Working to reduce barriers to desired behaviours² (e.g. reminders of what can and cannot be recycled (e.g. fridge magnets), rural recycling stations or drop off stations, green waste bins for homes).
 - Target businesses with incentives (e.g. workplace recycling, incentives for businesses to provide staff with free public transport rather than cars/car parks in salary packages).
 - Promote eco-friendly businesses to members.
 - Provide ways to make a difference in public spaces (e.g. organise communal activities such as tree planting, a beach/ stream tidy up).
 - Email communications to members (instead of glossy communications material).
 - Information and fact sheets, available via the website, and website links to other sources of information.
 - Continue to raise the profile of *Be the Difference* – as a means of drawing public attention to the programme and encouraging wider participation. Profile raising methods should ideally fit with the nature of the programme reinforcing sustainability messages.

² Many of these suggestions relate to rubbish and recycling.

Conclusions

Be the Difference – the Social Marketing Context

Social marketing has been defined as “...*the application of the marketing concept, commercial marketing techniques, and other social change techniques to achieve individual behaviour changes and societal structural changes...*”³.

Be the Difference is a social marketing programme with the goal of encouraging residents of the greater Wellington region to consider and undertake more environmentally sustainable behaviours. In the assessment of any social marketing programme, it is important to acknowledge that achieving behavioural change is a long term process.

It is widely accepted that individuals move through stages as they progress towards – or digress from – adopting or altering a behaviour pattern. One such model⁴, suggests these stages are: *precontemplation* (no intention to change behavior), *contemplation* (considering behavior change in next 6 months), *preparation* (intermittently attempts behavior), *action* (enacts the new behavior regularly, but for less than 6 months), and *maintenance* (has enacted the behavior regularly for more than 6 months).

An understanding of the audience along the behaviour change continuum can inform the development of social marketing programmes and campaigns, and help to assess programme effect. Attitudes and behaviour need to be assessed at each stage of the process in order to understand changes or outcomes at higher levels

Be the Difference

Be the Difference was launched in early 2004. While 18 months is an early stage for assessment of any social marketing campaign with regard to long term behavioural change, it is timely to explore and assess member experiences of the programme, to examine the membership profile, and to obtain an indication of the difference the programme has made for individuals.

Be the Difference is seen as a positive step, creating kudos for Greater Wellington, and fitting well with its role. The programme has had a very positive impact on members' impressions of Greater Wellington – for having taken the lead on signalling a commitment to the environment.

Despite the early stage of programme implementation, there is evidence of the programme 'making a difference'. For example, the programme is reinforcing environmentally friendly behaviour, raising awareness and building understanding of environmental issues such as storm water and air pollution (prompting contemplation of alternative behaviour for some members) - “*I didn't know that*”, “*I didn't know why*”. The programme is also prompting minor behaviour changes where it is easy, by suggesting alternatives.

³ Donovan, R. and Henley, N. (2003) *Social Marketing Principles and Practice*, IP Communications, Melbourne.

⁴ Prochaska, J. O. et al (1988). Measuring processes of change: Applications to the cessation of smoking. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 56, 520-528.

Be the Difference communications provide some striking visual images. However, the qualitative study suggests that the material and much of the detail are not being retained by members. At this stage, communications are perceived to be too sporadic to build impetus. Partly as a result of the time lapse between mail outs (and instances where members are not receiving or noticing mail outs at all) there is no sense of growing momentum - the difference *Be the Difference* has made so far - and therefore little reinforcement for members' involvement.

Members have indicated a willingness for the programme to 'move to the next level' and have made a range of suggestions for improving implementation. For example, suggestions for improving delivery of the campaign material include materials that 'walk the talk' – more evidence of council action, that material is pitched at a more 'intermediate' than 'beginner' level and opportunities for member interaction.

Member suggestions for improvement of, and desire for involvement in, *Be the Difference* are an indication of the strong support that exists for the continuation of the programme.

Evaluation of Communication Strategy 2003-06

1. Purpose

To report the analysis of research into Be the Difference, as part of the ongoing evaluation of Greater Wellington's communication strategy.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Greater Wellington's communication strategy was adopted in June 2003 for the period 2003 – 2006. An evaluation process was initiated as part of this strategy to monitor the programme and provide data for an overall review near the end of the strategy's life. The evaluation included a special focus on the Be the Difference component of the strategy.

In September officers reported the qualitative component of the research. The attached report now includes the quantitative component of the research. It is intended to provide Councillors with a final evaluation of Be the Difference and the Communication Strategy in January 2006, in preparation for discussions as part of the development of the 2006 – 16 LTCCP.

4. Comment

The report includes information on the overall success of Be the Difference as well as detailed information on the effectiveness of specific communication tools. Some of the key findings on the overall outcomes are as follows:

- The quantitative research indicates that two in five members (40%) have made changes to their everyday behaviour as a result of Be the Difference. Similar proportions (37%) indicate the programme has had a medium to high impact on their actions and behaviour towards the environment.
- Be the Difference has had a positive impact on members' environmental awareness and understanding. Almost two thirds of members (65%) agree that the programme has made them more aware of how their actions have an impact on the environment.
- 82% of members agree they have learned something new from the programme. 71% say the programme has reinforced existing knowledge.
- Eighty six percent of members consider the programme has met their expectations.

The qualitative research identified risks to the programme if material were too glossy and too promotional. This research also identified that members believe the programme has a low public profile overall and that it would be preferable if it were more visible. Members were also keen to see evidence of Greater Wellington taking action on these issues itself, and to

know about the success of the campaign. Members also believed that action on issues that require substantial financial investment (e.g. installing double glazing) would require financial assistance.

Be the Difference members are significantly more likely than Wellington region residents generally to have an overall favourable impression of Greater Wellington, and to consider that Greater Wellington is performing its role in the community well. For example, almost three quarters (72%) of members have a favourable image of Greater Wellington, compared to 55 percent of Wellington residents generally.

Overall, Be the Difference is regarded as a positive step in the right direction, and participants are pleased to see *someone* taking the lead in raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour.

4.1 Next steps

In September officers provided Councillors with a preliminary evaluation of Be the Difference which did not include the results of the quantitative research. That evaluation will now be updated and provided to all Councillors in time to be considered as part of the review of Greater Wellington's communications strategy.

A paper (05.658) has been submitted to the Planning and Monitoring Subcommittee outlining the process and first steps for the development of this strategy.

5. Communication

No communication on this report is recommended.

6. Recommendations

That:

Councillors note the report and attachments.

Attachment 1: