



FlyLocal.NZ

Regional airport funding campaign

PROJECT

2017

NZ

CASE STUDY

PROJECT: FlyLocal NZ

DATE: April-September 2017

LOCATION: Wellington, New Zealand

CLIENT: New Zealand Airports Association

TYPE: Public affairs, stakeholder management

CHANNELS: Government, digital, social media

PROJECT LEAD: Justin Wastnage

KEY SERVICES USED

Global Match - international benchmarking

Influencer Matrix - politician targeting analysis

Custom audience - social media targeting

Options weighting - policy strategy planning

Issue infographic - visual policy representation

Takeout creator - accessible position paper

Campaign traffic - dedicated policy website



CLIENT SUMMARY

New Zealand Airports Association (NZ Airports) is the peak body in New Zealand representing the country's passenger airports. It is a not-for-profit organisation whose members operate 31 airports that span the country and enable the essential air transport links

between each region of New Zealand and between New Zealand and the world. The association has a small team based in the capital, Wellington, and needed specialist help to make the case for a change to regional airport funding inequity.

PROBLEM SUMMARY

The majority of regional airports in New Zealand are either wholly council-owned or joint ventures between councils and the Crown. No subsidy exists at a national level to protect regional air routes, which is unusual in developed countries, where essential air services provisions usually exist at national or subnational level.

Instead, the cost of expensive infrastructure upgrades is borne by small councils, who effectively underwrite essential routes to their regions, typically to support thin routes in off-peak periods. In the lead up to the New Zealand election of 2017, NZ Airports needed to mount a campaign to get key lawmakers to introduce funding for regional airports. The association also needed to get the public onside for its message.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

While the issue of inequitable airport funding had long been identified by NZ Airports as a priority, there was not consensus over how to achieve an outcome. The first work Message Shapers undertook was to work with key members and stakeholders to understand the impact of various scenarios in a facilitated session using its own **Options weighting** methodology.

A twin approach was agreed of using detailed policy research to influence public servants and a social media campaign aimed at potential voters or sympathisers of the minority party New Zealand First.

The most significant piece of research was the international benchmarking using the **Global Match**

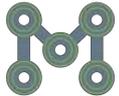
framework that showed New Zealand to be the only OECD country without a regional air subsidy.

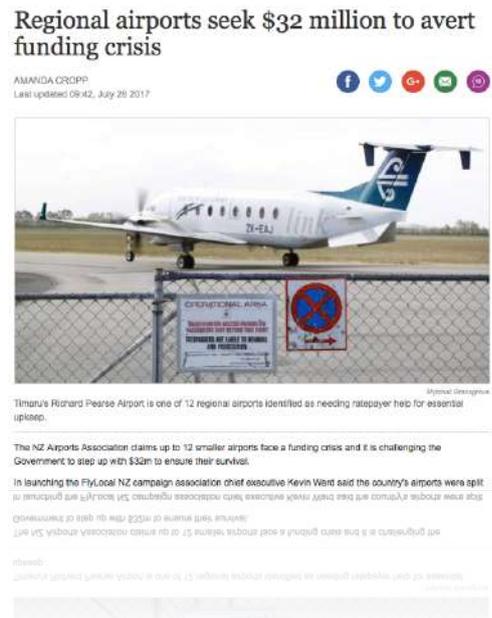
Message Shapers' digital capability was deployed to create a dedicated **Campaign traffic** website, flylocal.nz, which included a direct mail-your-candidate electorate-specific email generator.

The targeted social media campaign used a variety of Message Shapers' in-house **infographic, explainer video** and policy graphic capabilities as part of the **Custom audience** social media targeted campaign. We defined 12 regional electorates and used profiling to find marginal voters.

KEY DELIVERY STEPS

The multidisciplinary approach to policy research and communications was developed using a series of Message Shapers proprietary methodologies.

Service	Description	Timing	Outcome
 Global match <small>INTERNATIONAL POLICY COMPARISON</small>	Global match Desk based research into regional air route protection schemes in place in developed countries comparable to NZ	April 2017	The key fact used to deliver the campaign to policymakers was the discovery that New Zealand was alone in the OECD in offering no financial support for regional aviation
 Option weighting <small>HOW TO PICK YOUR AIRPORT CAREER STRATEGY</small>	Option weighting Our unique methodology created an index of how well various policies scenarios would perform against NZ Airports' priorities.	May 2017	A facilitated ideation session in Auckland brought together the key affected airports in New Zealand to agree on a joint approach to tackling the issue funding.
 Takeout creation <small>POLICY COMPARISON THAT LEAVES NO STONE UNTURNED</small>	Takeout creator We produced a condensed version of the technical issues around airport infrastructure funding with recommendations	May 2017	<i>Linking the Long White Cloud</i> was distributed to all NZ Airports members and political decision makers including the transport minister at a key parliament event.
 Issue infographic <small>HOW TO MAKE YOUR POLICY PAPER EASIER TO READ</small>	Issue infographic Message Shapers simplified the policy paper into a four-page infographic, using graphical elements to represent facts.	May 2017	The infographic was sent to mayors, airport managers and other influencers as part of the association's stakeholder management exercise.
 Influencer matrix <small>HOW TO PICK YOUR POLICY ENGAGEMENT PLAN</small>	Influencer matrix Message Shapers applied a unique methodology to plot the 20 key influencers in government and opposition on the issue	June 2017	Using a weighted index of politician and government officials, we were able to distill campaign attention to key government, opposition and minority party figures.
 Campaign traffic <small>POLICY MESSAGE THAT REACHES YOUR TARGET</small>	Campaign traffic Message Shapers created a dedicated campaign website flylocal.nz with information and direct candidate email function	July 2017	The website received over 4,000 visitors in the first month, mainly from New Zealanders in key marginal electorates in the provinces. Website was referenced in local media.
 Custom audience <small>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY TARGETING</small>	Custom audience Our targeted social media advertising penetrated 12 marginal electorates in regional New Zealand	August 2017	The NZ Airports Facebook page had a page reach of almost 40,000 throughout the campaign, with 740 post engagements and over 1000 link clicks to the campaign website



CAMPAIGN PROFILE

The campaign received national press coverage, as well as significant traffic on the association's Facebook page.

Some 34,000 adults saw the adverts, or 5% of the population of the marginal electorates targeted.

DEFINING MOMENT

The association's Twitter feed was established prior to the campaign. From zero followers, a series of attention-grabbing animated graphics caught the attention of politicians on the campaign trail. The re-tweeting of one of the campaign graphics by Jacinda Ardern put the message in front of an estimated 430,000 New Zealanders.



OUTCOME

The campaign received the public support from the minority party New Zealand First, as well as conditional support from New Zealand Labour. New Zealand First incorporated the campaign aims wholly into its transport policy. Following the election in September 2017, Labour formed a coalition

government with NZ First with the support of the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. During the coalition talks, the need to invest infrastructure in the regions was agreed, which led to a NZ\$1bn infrastructure fund. Further discussions around the campaign's aims are expected in 2018.

ABOUT MESSAGE SHAPERS

Message Shapers is a boutique public affairs agency based in Sydney. Message Shapers creates public policy positions for some of the largest industry associations, corporations and government agencies in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Message Shapers provides a range of policy services from research and policy visualisation through to policy audits and stakeholder matrices. Message Shapers' digital capabilities include social media targeted campaigns and policy visualisation for instant messaging.

Message Shapers was founded by Justin Wastnage, who brings 20 years of tourism, aviation and travel policy expertise to the consultancy.



OUR SERVICES

More details: messageshapers.com.au/our-products/

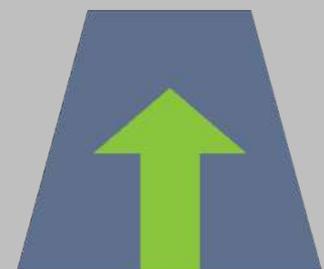


The Advocacy audit

Message Shapers' flagship service is the Advocacy audit, which has been created as a toolkit that analyses the longterm effectiveness and sustainability of not-for profit organisations.

The audit groups our four most popular products into one bundle.

- 1 **Resilience index** - mapping the reputation, revenue and relevance of your organisation against 10 competitors
- 2 **Influencer matrix** - plot your issue's key politicians, policymakers and influencers
- 3 **Issue roadmap** - an exploration of your current and future policy asks and which ones to junk
- 4 **Option weighting** - A review of the attractiveness of various policy paths weighted against ease of implementation



Advocacy audit
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLICY ASKS

