

# Case Study: Western Sydney Asbestos Answers Facebook campaign

## COUNCIL NAME

Western Sydney  
Regional Organisation  
of Councils (WSROC)

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.asbestosanswers.com.au/](http://www.asbestosanswers.com.au/)

## SIZE

5856 square  
kilometres

## POPULATION

1.7 Million

## Overview

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) undertook a social media awareness campaign targeting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The purpose was to ensure asbestos safety messaging reached groups who had not previously been engaged by English-centric campaigns using Facebook's demographic targeting tools to promote multi-lingual videos and fact sheets developed by WSROC member, Holroyd City Council. The Asbestos Awareness posts reached 14,736 residents and resulted in 8,361 video views in the week the campaign was live.

## Background

Western Sydney is one of Australia's most multicultural regions. Around 40% of residents were born overseas, and over 130 different languages are spoken. Asbestos awareness and safe disposal has been a key concern for western Sydney councils and their communities. A previous project resulted in over 95 tonnes of asbestos being safely removed from households.

Community consultation previously conducted by Holroyd City Council had identified that some residents, particularly CALD, had very low or no awareness of asbestos and its dangers. A separate survey conducted by WSROC prior to the Facebook campaign found that around 40 per cent of western Sydney residents were unsure what to do with asbestos. Incorrect disposal of asbestos, including illegal dumping, poses a health risk to council staff and the community, and requires significant council funding to clean up.

WSROC's work to improve awareness, safe disposal and reduce illegal dumping of asbestos has included a household disposal scheme and general awareness campaigns. During 2015 Asbestos Awareness Month, WSROC chose to focus on the region's significant CALD communities with the following objectives:

1. Raise awareness about the dangers of asbestos, and correct disposal in the community, particularly culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups.
2. Increase visitors to Holroyd's Asbestos Answers videos and website.

## Implementation

WSROC used Facebook's demographic and geographic targeting tools to promote Holroyd's multi-lingual videos and factsheets to the entire western Sydney region. The material was promoted to speakers of Arabic, Hindi, Tamil, Farsi and Mandarin (in addition to English), living in the western Sydney region, with an interest in DIY, renovation and real estate - this group is most at risk of coming into contact with asbestos. The campaign ran during Asbestos Awareness Week, November 2015, however the momentum continued beyond this time.

more likely to access information through mobile devices and social media and this was supported by this project where non-English videos were almost exclusively accessed through a mobile device, compared to 25% of English-speaking audience using desktops.

Holroyd City Council was the primary partner and developer of the content. The campaign was funded under the WSROC-managed Western Sydney Regional Waste Strategy, thanks to the NSW EPA's Waste Less Recycle More program. The budget allocated (\$500) was divided between the six videos appropriate to the target population size. For example, the English, Hindi and Mandarin language groups were much larger than Tamil or Farsi, for this reason more funding was allocated to these groups. Additional funding (\$300) was required for introductory post translations through a translation service.

## Outcomes

During the week it was live, the campaign reached 14,736 residents and resulted in 8,361 video views of 10 seconds or more.

Language	Post reach	Video views	Shares	Likes	% of total audience
English	6,337	2,642	2	3	0.6%
Hindi	2,641	1,590	3	8	61%
Arabic	2,174	1,175	13	16	44.4%
Mandarin	1,857	1,221	2	9	25.4%
Tamil	885	938	18	13	93.8%
Farsi	842	795	1	22	84.2%

The Tamil video received more views than the original post, indicating that this video was shared and/or watched multiple times. The high level of interest in the translated videos not only met the project objectives, but confirmed that the information contained within the videos was of interest to CALD communities, either because the information was novel or surprising, or because previous campaigns had not adequately reached CALD communities. The quality of comments and questions received and the number of shares with others confirmed a high level of engagement from the audience.

The success of this project may lead the way for future CALD engagement campaigns. WSROC is currently undertaking in-depth research to better inform how councils can engage with diverse communities, particularly using modern technology and engagement methods.

## Key Learnings

This campaign was WSROC's first attempt at engaging with CALD communities through translated social media campaigns, its success confirming an effective and cost-effective way of reaching diverse groups. New migrants are receptive to safety messaging from councils, particularly when it is presented in an easy-to-understand format.

The significantly higher levels of engagement from CALD communities indicates that this method may be more effective as CALD groups are not targeted by as many other messages on a day to day basis.

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WSROC is currently commissioning research into how councils can better engage with CALD communities, and there may be opportunities to run similar campaigns more frequently, or for longer periods. WSROC is also investigating the possibility of replicating the exercise on a larger scale by involving the ten member councils' social media reach to broaden the audience and message exposure during asbestos awareness month.

Following the success of its asbestos campaign, WSROC ran a similar campaign to promote the benefits of composting. The composting videos were received with similar enthusiasm, confirming the ability of this project to be transferred to other council services, for example, how to book a council clean-up, how to lodge a DA, or how to register a pet.

Given the level of interest in the videos, it would be necessary to have a native language speaker on call to help answer questions and comments in a timely manner for future campaigns. Using a traditional translation service means the turnaround can be slower than the community might expect on social media.

Once the results of this report are complete, WSROC will look at potential future projects which could be run in partnership with its member councils.

## Contact

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**This project was the 2016 winner of the Asbestos Management Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards**