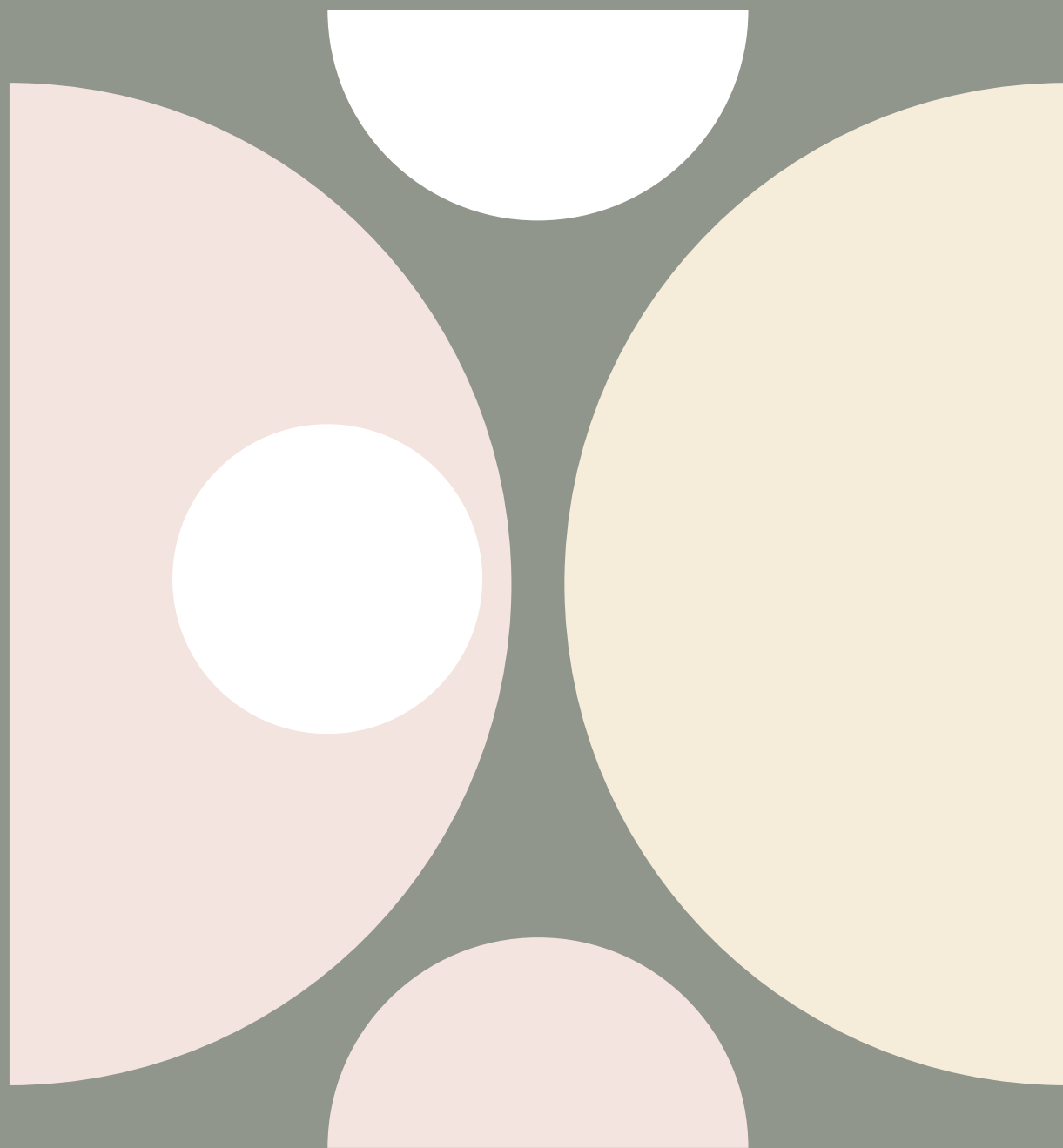


Doing The Right Thing

2023 Sustainability Report



WRIGHT
COMMUNICATIONS

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OUR 10 BIGGEST SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS

1

Mental Health Day

67

Professional Development
Training Hours

18

Volunteer Community
Gardening Hours

47

WFH Fridays

-2%

CO2 Emissions Reduction
(Scope 1-3)

\$100K

Pro Bono Hours

1

Kantar Corporate Reputation
Index Launch Event

7

Attendance at Sustainable
Business Council Member Events

6

Speeches on
Sustainability Topics

-11%

Gender Pay Gap for
Communications
Consultants

THE WRIGHT WAY

Welcome to our sixth sustainability report, a reflection of how we as a small but powerful team of communications experts have truly walked the sustainability talk while helping companies across New Zealand to “do the right thing” and pursue purpose beyond profit.



There is enormous value in taking time to pause, reflect, talk to our stakeholders and openly tell our story to ensure we are making progress in all the ways that truly matter.

In 2023, our resilience was tested once again. Severe weather events struck in January and February. Our office remained unscathed, but one team member's home suffered flooding. Others assisted family members in recovery efforts. For a week we were wielding water blasters on muddy driveways as much as pens on client copy. Our expertise in communications proved crucial as several clients grappled with property damage, necessitating swift communication with stakeholders.

A cost-of-living crisis, and the discretionary nature of PR spending became apparent with the departure of long-term client NZ Kiwifruit Growers, as they grappled with the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle. This natural disaster exacerbated existing issues related to weather, fruit quality, and severe labour shortages in key regions.

Pleasingly, corporate efforts to contend with global warming intensified and expanded to encompass adaptation and emissions reduction efforts. We participated in the annual Climate

Change and Business Conference as guests of our largest client, Toyota New Zealand, a highlight of the calendar year.

As a team we continued to put our people first with flexible working and a Mental Health Day. We embraced our rhythm of working together in the office Monday to Thursday and remotely on Fridays.

At a time of soaring rates of mental ill health, we are proud to have instilled a greater work/life balance, ensuring our team can be happier and more resilient. Flexible working provisions are crucial to attracting and retaining top talent.

A new partnership with AUT saw the establishment of our internship programme, Agency Ready, aimed at attracting Māori, Pasifika and Asian PR students, providing real-world PR agency experience and a head start in their communications careers.

We enjoyed great wins throughout the year with many new clients seeking our specialist, sustainability strategic planning, story-telling and reporting skills. Winning these competitive, morale-boosting pitches provides truly satisfying mahi for our growing team, enabling our junior staff, especially, to learn and develop at pace.

For the first time we were tasked with producing a Modern Slavery Report for a major corporate. We also pitched and won the right to manage a materiality assessment for a large co-operative.

In addition to the many sustainability reports we produced for corporates, we have provided full-service communications support to a wide range of organisations, from New Zealand SMEs to multinationals, local government bodies and charitable organisations.

“We enjoyed some great wins throughout the year with many new clients seeking out our specialist, sustainability strategic planning, story-telling and reporting skills.”

Unwaveringly committed to our niche in sustainability communications, we remain an organisation which lives and breathes its core values - Genuine Connections, Delivering Exciting Work, Having Each Other’s Back and Doing the Right Thing.

These values guide our behaviour and thinking and have opened the door for a diverse range of work.

Part of our credo is to give back – purpose beyond profit. The team has provided a lot of pro bono and after-hours support for clients like Presbyterian Support Northern and Surf Life Saving Northern Region.

On a personal level, as a business owner, I am hugely grateful to have retained some of New Zealand’s leading communicators and welcomed new talent. We have the ideally supportive and steadfast team for the ever-evolving issues our clients wish us to address.



NIKKI WRIGHT

MANAGING DIRECTOR



Nikki Wright, Managing Director, Wright Communications Pictured at the Climate Change Business Conference in September 2023



ABOUT WRIGHT COMMUNICATIONS

Since its inception in 2006, Wright Communications has partnered with leaders in sustainability and helped them craft their story. These are the kind of stories that matter to us.

In 2023 we have worked alongside owners of famous global and local brands as they took their sustainability strategies and initiatives deeper and deeper into their business operations, production and supply chains.

When a company such as Toyota acquires a rental car company so it can fulfil its mobility ambitions to increase car sharing opportunities and Unilever introduces a four-day working week, you have evidence that the corporate world is accelerating its attempt to reduce its environmental footprint or address societal needs.

Many of our clients are taking the lead on climate

action and social impact. During 2023 we worked with Toyota, Unilever, ChargeNet, Concrete NZ, DLA Piper, and Toitū – to name a few – to tell their positive stories of sustainable action.

We also dedicate our time, effort and public relations and strategic communications expertise to support the not-for-profit sector.

In the past year we're proud to have provided our storytelling skills to causes that we care about, and to have served the community with heavily discounted professional fees for those working on campaigns that strengthen the fabric

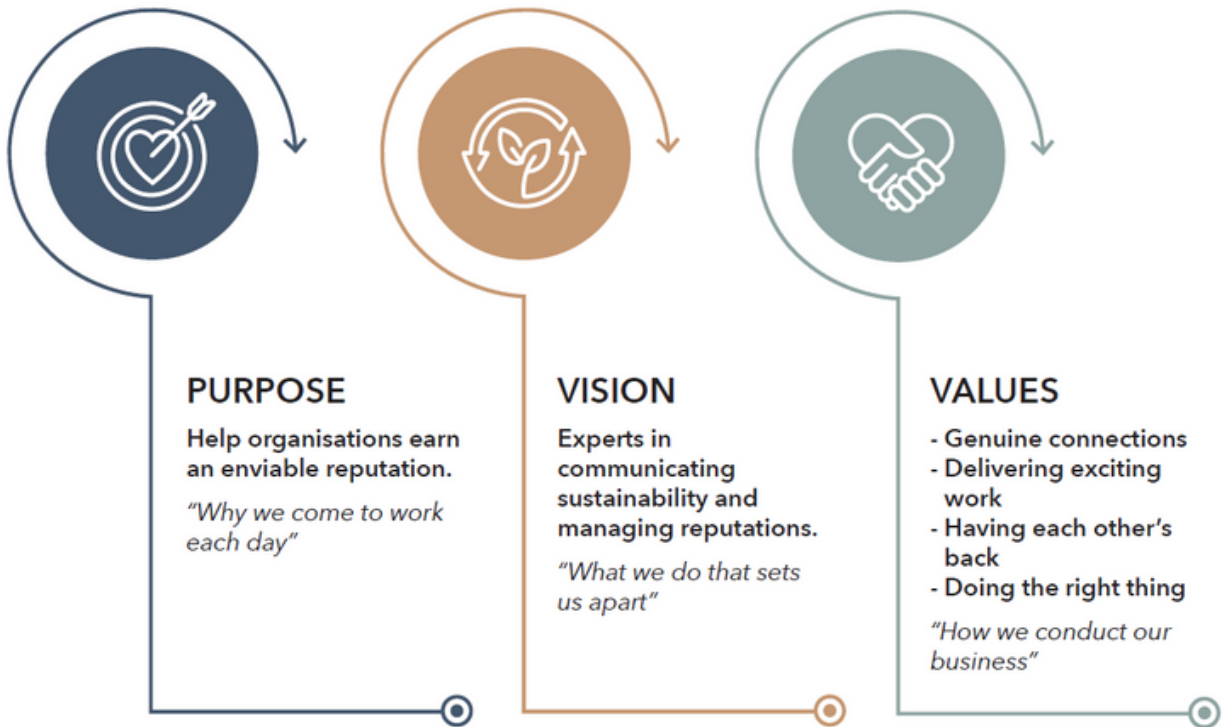
of our society, and those committed to reversing the decline of our natural capital.

At Wright Communications we provide strategic PR services at reduced rates for registered not-for-profits with the Charities Commission. In 2023, we were privileged to provide strategic communications management to the following charities for the betterment of New Zealand:



This year the consultancy has contributed \$100,000 to charitable storytelling for the above organisations.

THE WRIGHT WAY



IN-DEMAND SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES

Increasingly organisations are being required to report on a wide range of sustainability issues – from impact on climate change and energy use to gender pay gaps and human slavery in their supply chain. At the same time, the number of possible frameworks or standards to use for sustainability reports is proliferating.



A SELECTION OF SOME OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RISK REPORTING THE TEAM AT WRIGHT COMMUNICATIONS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS YEAR

Supporting Climate Reporting Entities (CREs) with penning Climate Statements

We have had an increasing number of clients request support with the preparation of their Climate Statements.

Around 200 entities in New Zealand are required to prepare and lodge climate statements. These Climate Reporting Entities (CREs) include registered banks, credit unions, and building societies with total assets of more than \$1 billion, managers of registered investment schemes with greater than \$1 billion in total assets under management, licensed insurers with greater than \$1 billion in total assets or annual gross premium income greater than \$250 million, and large (\$60 million) listed issuers of quoted equity securities or quoted debt securities.

These disclosures will enable investors to receive the information they need to understand the impact of climate change on the future performance of their investment.

Climate statements follow the reporting standards that have been set by the External Reporting Board.

We have seen with our clients that it also protects and improves their reputation by building trust through transparency. Several of our clients are now reporting against the Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standards and we have been honoured to hold the pen for them.

Modern Slavery Reports

This year we penned our first ever Modern Slavery Report for a large gentailer. It was a fascinating project and one that suited our report writing expertise. We anticipate more companies will get in front of pending legislation and produce Modern Slavery Reports in 2024.

Impact Reporting

Increasingly we are getting requests from NGOs that want to transition their traditional Annual Reports into Impact Reports that tell more of a story about their purpose and outcomes achieved for society.

We have really enjoyed supporting two of our NGO clients with impactful reporting that seeks to retain and strengthen their fundraising strategies.

Steady demand for Materiality Assessments and Sustainability Reporting

Over the last decade, a range of insightful reports have been produced for retailers, manufacturers, primary producers, energy companies and technology businesses. Our expertise has expanded from the GRI Standards to the Integrated Reporting framework and Sustainable Development Goals and we often use a combination depending on the client's strategic approach to annual reporting.

Over the last 12 months our corporate team has produced a range of materiality assessments and

sustainability reports for corporates in the energy, automotive, retail, and professional services sector.

Whether an organisation is just starting out or strengthening its focus on sustainability, we're committed to supporting our clients at every step of the journey.

Cyber reputation management expertise

As a result of the surge in cyber-attacks over the past year, our expertise in strategic communications has made us a sought-after resource by insurers and lawyers. We are now leading the charge in planning and thwarting future attacks for major corporations. Given that insurance policies often encompass reputation management in the event of cyber-attacks, seeking expert advice is a logical step. Additionally, we have actively assisted numerous large corporations in conducting cyber-attack rehearsals and developing crisis communications plans based on realistic scenarios.



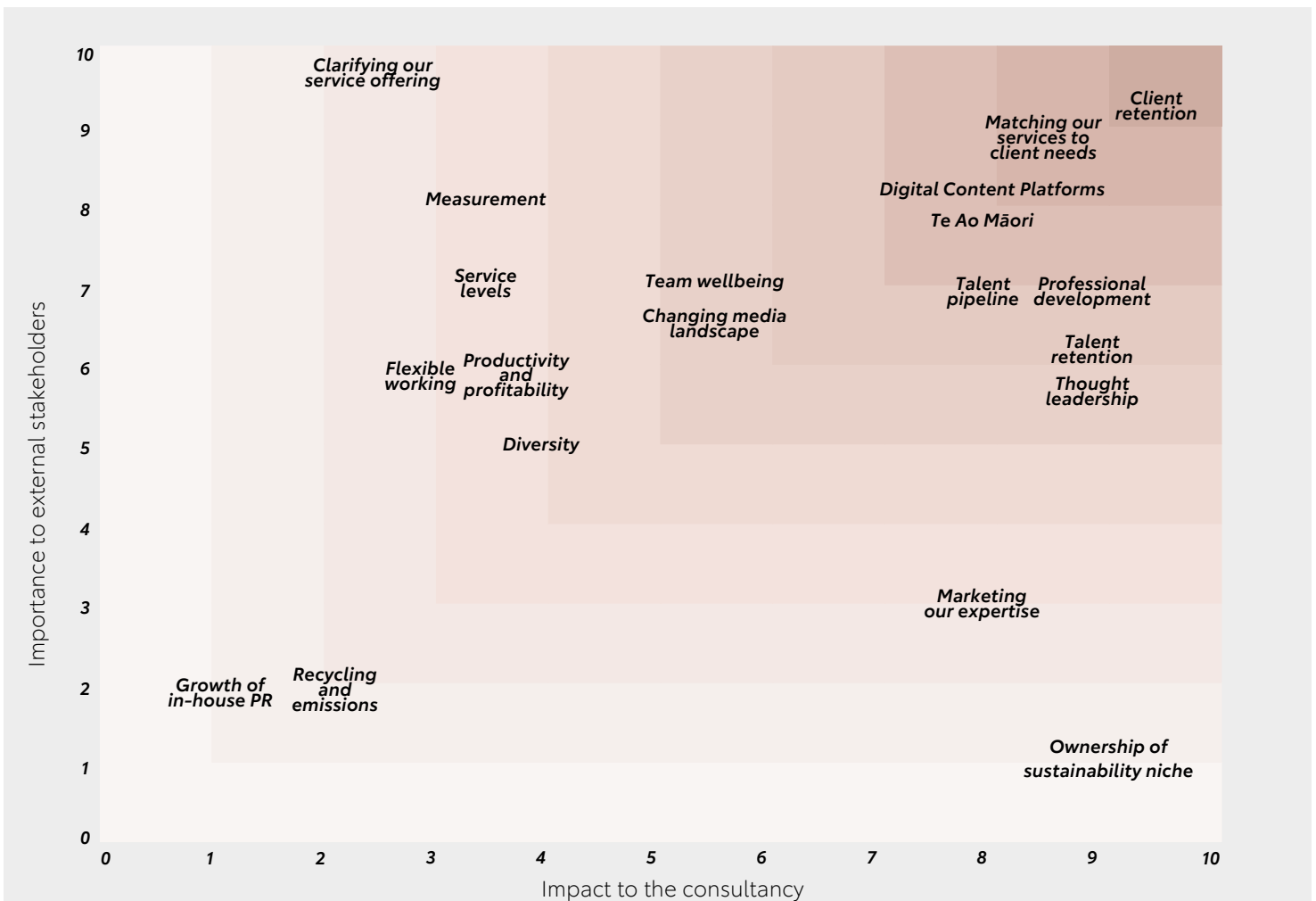
WHAT MATTERS MOST

We conduct a bi-annual materiality assessment with our internal and external stakeholders to identify the material topics that impact our business and our working lives.

We also discuss the impact we, as a team, have on the environment and the community. The subsequent list of material topics was used to guide the content of this Sustainability Report. We have chosen to structure this Report on the top 10 material topics.

Our top 10 material topics are:

1. Client retention
2. Matching our services to client needs
3. Digital content platforms
4. Te Ao Māori
5. Talent pipeline
6. Professional development
7. Talent retention
8. Thought leadership
9. Changing media landscape
10. Team wellbeing



ALIGNING WITH UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Wright Communications has moved beyond merely mapping to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. We focus on meaningfully relating these goals to our business strategy in order to build our organisation’s sustainability culture.

We’ve taken our values and material topics and committed to some tangible, real-life targets that relate to the SDGs. These are reflected in the following diagram, and throughout this report as targets that are related to each of our topics.



- Develop a staff policy that includes flexible working, diversity and inclusion. **Completed**
- Establish flexible working behaviour – WFH Fridays embedded. **Completed.**
- Develop a monthly programme of volunteering and social outings to enhance the mental wellbeing of our team. **Established new community partnership and regular team social occasions.**



- Develop career pathway plans collaboratively for all consultants. **Completed for all consultants that celebrated the anniversary of their employment with Wright Communications during the year.**
- Participate in PRINZ’s professional development programme. **Ongoing.**



- Address the gender imbalance through mentoring of AUT third year PR students to balance representation of males and females, encouraging younger males into the profession. **Annually.**



- Become the go-to PR agency for sustainability storytelling and reporting. **Ongoing.**



- Address the ethnic imbalance through partnering with PRINZ on their Diversity and Inclusion workstream to balance representation of ethnic minorities in the PR profession in New Zealand. **Launched our Agency Ready internship in partnership with AUT. Currently paying the Living Wage to our Māori intern.**



- Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy. **Completed.**

CLIENT SERVICES

Client Retention

Client retention is one of the stand-out achievements of the firm and an ongoing challenge. We pride ourselves on understanding client needs, the value we add, and the deep relationships of mutual trust and respect that have been created.

Our clients have been incredibly loyal to us and they enjoy their depth of connection with their account directors at Wright. We choose to largely operate a retainer model – alongside undertaking key projects – meaning we can afford to be proactive. While we operate a sliding scale of charge-out rates for most clients and services, we offer pro bono services for charities and a flat rate of \$150/hour for all public-sector and non-profit organisations.

Wright Communications increased its client portfolio to 21 monthly retainer clients this year adding Oji Fibre Solutions, Ethical Power, DLA Piper, The Ākina Foundation, and Z Energy to its roster.

Nine of our valued retainer clients have stayed with the consultancy for five years or more, including:

✓ Toyota	15 years
✓ Lexus	15 years
✓ Wainhouse Distribution	15 years
✓ Kantar	12 years
✓ Presbyterian Support Northern	10 years
✓ Surf Life Saving Northern Region	8 years
✓ Forsyth Barr	6 years
✓ National Road Carriers	5 years
✓ Delta Insurance	5 years



We're incredibly proud of our 15-year PR relationship with Toyota New Zealand and relish our status of trusted advisor to CEO Neeraj Lala



The Corporate Reputation Index is an annual study using the globally validated RepZ framework for measuring reputation, created in collaboration with our valued client, Kantar.



For eight years we've helped spread beach safety and drowning prevention messages in the media on behalf of Surf Lifesaving Northern Region.

Matching our services to client needs

To some, sustainability is about reducing waste, energy consumption and emissions. For many of our clients, however, sustainability affects the very core of the way they do business.

Not only is there increasing interest from customers, investors and regulators in how companies handle Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, over the past three years there has also been growing legislative pressure.

The Zero Carbon Act means many of our clients face increased challenges in how they play their part to help meet the 2050 zero emissions target that will come from domestic change alone.

New strategy and legislation is also under development to set New Zealand's direction towards a low-waste economy. This will include setting targets to reduce waste and make better use of resources.

For Wright Communications, the evolving sustainability landscape means we are adjusting our offering to ensure we constantly remain up to date in ways we can support our clients.

This year, we assisted our clients to communicate a broad range of sustainability initiatives.

While we still use tried and tested channels - such as supporting our clients with interviews on TVNZ's Breakfast show or Mike Hosking's top-rated radio show - we are also boosting our digital offering.

Our social media expert can guide our clients to use the most appropriate outlet, whether that's using influencers, or focusing on their own content via the likes of TikTok, Facebook or Instagram.

We have worked hard to ensure that the expertise available to our clients reflects both changing external expectations and changing channel audiences.



SUSTAINABILITY ADVOCACY / HANDPRINT

This page is dedicated to standout work of the agency in the sustainability space.

We have an incredible handprint (beyond our carbon footprint), the sustainable impact we have through our clients. There is a lot of value we provide as a service provider in the climate action space.

We also support Sustainable Business Council on occasion with our expertise, pen blogs, and host online workshops.

HAMILTON-BASED SAVEBOARD WINS TWO INTERNATIONAL RECYCLING AWARDS IN NOVEMBER

TOITŪ ENVIROCARE TO TRANSITION AWAY FROM NEW ZEALAND CARBON CREDITS TO ALIGN WITH GLOBAL STANDARDS

Neeraj Lala: Toyota NZ warns Government's electric dreams are not realistic

My Net Worth: Laura Scampion, managing partner at DLA Piper



CHARGENET ANNOUNCES PLANS TO BUILD 10-POINT CHARGING HUB IN TAURIKO

ETHICAL POWER NZ FORMS ALLIANCE WITH NEW ENERGY

The B Corp boom: sustainability and success

Business Hub: Toyota NZ CEO Neeraj Lala on EVs, the ute cultural war and Govt timelines



HYBRID HILUX CONFIRMED FOR NEW ZEALAND EARLY 2024

NZ Concrete Industry Launches 2050 Roadmap to Net Zero Carbon



NORTHLAND WOMAN SAVING THE PLANET ONE OAT MILK AT A TIME



THRIVING PEOPLE

Talent Pipeline

We are creating a positive social impact by increasing the wellbeing of our people at work. We have also launched an internship for under-represented groups, instilling valuable skills for a future career in PR and communications, building human capital and establishing a long-term, more representative talent pipeline for our industry.

While we have been careful to foster an excellent reputation within the industry as a great place to work, this alone is not enough to ensure a talent pipeline.

Wright Communications has kept an eye on the horizon, with a strategy that considers evolving needs of clients over the coming one to five years.

We have mapped the kind of talent we will need to respond to our client needs, and aligned our work culture to ensure we are attractive to those prospects.

We have created a supportive team culture for our seniors that values teamwork and a varied and inspiring client roster.

Our current juniors have let us know they value mentoring and opportunities to grow professionally, so we ensure our workplace is able to support them.

While our team is diverse across age, experience, gender and orientation, we recognise that our changing workforce has resulted in a deficit of ethnic diversity this year. We look forward to balancing our team makeup as vacancies allow.



Loren Cunningham joined the team as an Account Manager



Brie Urlich completed her Agency Ready Certification



Yara Domachi came onboard as our new intern

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

There is limited representation of ethnic and minority groups within New Zealand's communications industry. To be truly reflective of society we need to attract and retain a more diverse range of practitioners at all levels of our profession.

A Commercial Communications Council (CCC) diversity and inclusiveness survey showed that 87% of the industry is led by European/Pakeha.

While the figures tell a dire story, the Public Relations industry is in a privileged position to advocate for equality. Besides a responsibility, this is also where we thrive and deliver for our clients every day.

From a diversity perspective, this means we need to:

- Triple the number of Māori practitioners
- Quadruple the number of Pasifika practitioners
- Double the number of Asian practitioners
- Increase the number of men, particularly in the lower age range
- Ensure gender pay equity at all levels.

As this is one of the biggest – if not the biggest issue the industry faces, Wright Communications wants to be part of the solution.

We understand PRINZ is using its latest member survey to capture the most up to date information on the demography of its membership base.

Included in this will be specific questions around diversity in the PR workplace, a strategic pillar of the Board's plan for the coming years.

Once the results are in, PRINZ will be in a more educated position to continue engagement with agencies such as Wright Communications. We are looking forward to partnering with our industry association in advancing a Diversity and Inclusion workstream to drive positive change for our industry.



Diversity of Consultants

Ethnicity/ Nationality	
NZ European/ Pakeha	10
Pasifika	1
Māori	1

Age	
20-29	5
30-39	1
40-49	2
50-59	1
60-69	2
70-79	1

Gender	No. of Consultants
Female	5 (56%)
Male	4 (44%)
Female (senior associates)	2
Female (office manager)	1
Female (finance contractor)	1
Female (intern)	1
Total Full-time Employees	11

Management Positions	
Female	1 (50%)
Male	1 (50%)
Number of Managers	2

Gender Pay Gap

We have used Statistics New Zealand’s and Global Women’s measurement guides to work out our gender pay gap using hourly rates and median pay per their recommendations.

In 2023, Wright Communications’ gender pay gap – the gap between men’s and women’s median hourly pay – was 22%. The national average is 10%, although the average for professional services is 14%. There is no available research into how we compare relative to other PR agencies but anecdotally we know we have better gender diversity than many. Whilst we have pay equity for roles, we have no men in administration or internships and therefore, despite having women in well paid senior consulting roles they are over-represented at the lowest pay rates in our organisation.

If we remove these administration roles from our workings, there is in fact a -11% gender pay gap.

EQUAL PAY

means that men and women performing the same role receive the same pay

Equal pay for equal work has been a legal requirement in New Zealand since 1972

THE GENDER PAY GAP

indicates the difference in average earnings between men and women

Why are women underrepresented in the top paying roles and sectors?

- We raise boys and girls differently
- We split caring and unpaid work unequally
- We have inherited systems, values and biases that tend to favour men

New Zealand's gender pay gap is 9.2% (October 2018)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Our people are the lifeblood of the business, and their personal and professional satisfaction is just as important as that of our clients.

All consultants at Wright Communications are given paid memberships to the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ) to provide free access to the Continuing Professional Development programme.

The PRINZ Code of Ethics is prominently displayed for internal and external awareness. This is a critical document for our consultancy as it underpins our role as professional advisors.

During the course of the year, team members participate in a range of webinars and online events to increase their competency against the industry's body of knowledge. Additionally, several of our senior practitioners host online learning sessions for other industry participants or contribute to webinar panels and mentoring.

All employees have comprehensive Job Descriptions developed in line with the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) professional framework, and at their annual performance review a career pathway is discussed to enable advancement at Wright. Any identified skills gaps will be plugged with training on the job or via an external provider.



Internal Knowledge Sharing Sessions

Once a month we get together for a lunch and learn session with our colleagues. It's an opportunity for team members to either share something interesting they've been working on if they think it could benefit the skill development of others, or they can present an interesting PR trend.

FEBRUARY

Participated in a presentation by Nikki Wright on **greenwashing**

MARCH

Participated in a session run by Richard Gordon on **ChatGPT and discussion** about ethics of using the app

APRIL

Update on social media platforms **TikTok and Threads** by Harry Willis

MAY

Participated in a session presented by Matt Martel, **Business Desk** on their use of **ChatGPT for market updates**

MAY

Participated in a session on **modern slavery reporting** presented by Richard Gordon

JUNE

Participated in a session on the **Emissions Trading Scheme** given by Catherine Bright from the Ministry for the Environment

JULY

no session

AUGUST

Unconscious bias training webinar - from New Zealand Law Society

SEPTEMBER

Recap of the **Climate Change and Business Conference** by Nikki Wright

OCTOBER

Byron Terris of IronDuke presented a **post-election analysis**

NOVEMBER

Richard Gordon briefed us on **Climate Statement Reporting** and recent client examples

TALENT RETENTION

Retaining key staff provides continuity of service to our valued clients and a stable working environment.

Unlike agencies with high numbers of junior staff and frequent turnover, ours is an experienced, dedicated group.

Today, our core consulting team numbers 10 highly talented people with two support workers in office management and finance.

In 2023, our consultant retention rate was 90%. We farewelled an intermediate level consultant to the sunny shores of the Gold Coast and attracted an even more experienced consultant to service these valued client accounts.

The consultancy comprises eight women and four men. Average age is 42, with good gender diversity at the senior consulting level including a female leader at the helm.

We're egalitarian and do not operate a typical hierarchy. Our consultants are "senior doers" and regularly collaborate on creative ideas and problem-solving with their peers and clients.

We strive to create an environment that stimulates staff and reflects their values through flexible hours and work location.

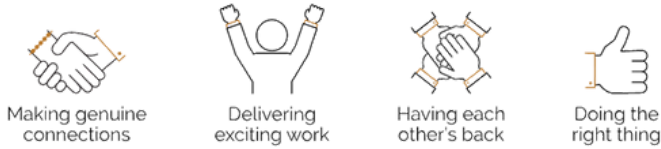
Our people are recognised for their work, both professionally and personally, through our peer-nominated Reward & Recognition programme which sees one lucky team member receive a \$200 voucher each month.

On Mondays we discuss priorities for the week ahead at a team WIP (the business buys everyone a coffee or similar in keep cups).

At Thursday's "Diamond and Coal" debriefing sessions, positive client feedback is taken out of our "Jar of Awesome" and read aloud by Nicki. The feedback is then posted on our "Wall of WOW" for all team members to see.



Performance-based remuneration is reviewed annually with client satisfaction and staff feedback considered. We pay our interns and office cleaners the official Living Wage.



We are pleased to stay connected to many of our alumni, some of whom have contributed testimonials of their time working at Wright Communications.



“I absolutely loved working with some of New Zealand's top brands and impactful non-profits throughout my time at Wright. Wright Communications' commitment to sustainability and incredible company culture is what really drew me in. Aligning my personal values with my place of work was a definite highlight, as well as the outstanding team that became friends, as well as colleagues”

Alumnae: Juliette Desborough-Mitcalfe
Marketing & Communications Contractor, Gold Coast, Australia

TEAM WELLBEING

In a business where time is money, our challenge is to maximise productivity while minimising stress and supporting our people to thrive.

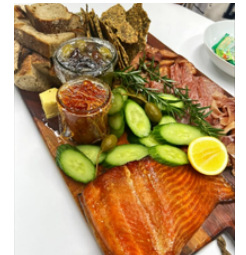
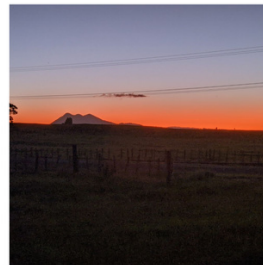
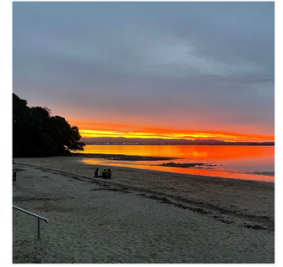
The wellbeing of our team is the number one priority for our founder and Managing Director Nikki Wright.

The day-to-day environment at Wright Communications stimulates our people and aligns with their personal values. The office is modern. There is a fresh-fruit delivery every Monday, we use eco-cleaning products, and we have a supply of meditation cushions for those who wish to take a mental health break.

The business' Flexible Working policy acknowledges and adapts to other demands on our team's time.

We rallied around supporting charities together, including a gardening volunteer day with Communities Feeding Communities, and using our PR skills for good deeds which definitely gave us all a morale boost.

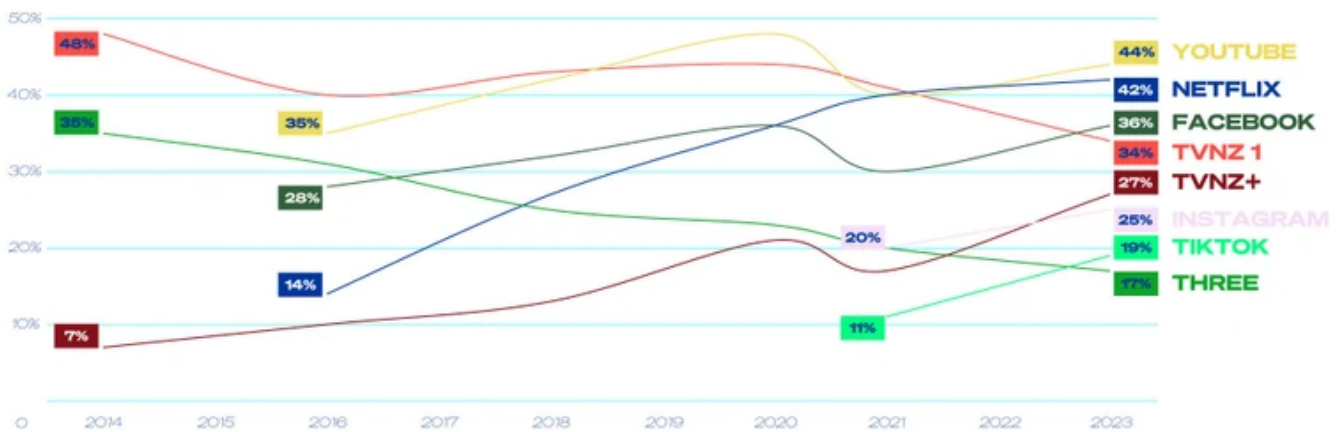
Twice a year we host a friends and whanau evening, giving the team an opportunity to gather with each others loved ones. We also held a Mental Health Day on 20 October – a paid day off – as a thank you from the company for the team's hard work during the year.



MEDIA LANDSCAPE

In the evolving landscape of news media trends, 2023 has witnessed significant shifts, reflecting the dynamic nature of information consumption. The acceleration of digital transformation has continued to redefine how audiences access and engage with news content. Streaming platforms and social media have become prominent conduits for news dissemination, influencing the editorial choices of traditional media outlets.

Most popular channels sites and stations



Source: The Spinoff

BusinessDesk has introduced New Zealand's inaugural artificial intelligence-powered market news feed. Utilising artificial intelligence technology, BusinessDesk is now able to swiftly release NZX news nearly instantaneously. The implementation of ChatGPT enables the generation of articles directly from company announcements as soon as they are made public, significantly reducing the time required to publish an article from half an hour to under a minute.

However, this era of rapid technological advancement and newsroom spending cuts

forcing a reliance on global newswires has also brought challenges, notably the proliferation of misinformation. An independent investigation is underway into how an RNZ digital journalist was able to insert Russian propaganda into stories about the war in Ukraine. RNZ has stood down the journalist.

The EU has issued a warning to Elon Musk, urging compliance with new laws on fake news and Russian propaganda. A report revealed that X (formerly Twitter) had the highest ratio of disinformation posts among major social media platforms. The analysis is part of the first report

detailing the extent of fake news on social media across the European Union. TikTok and LinkedIn removed millions of fake accounts, with Facebook ranking as the second worst offender under the Digital Services Act (DSA), effective since August. Despite signing up to the EU's code of practice, Twitter/X left it, making compliance with the DSA mandatory to avoid an EU ban. The 200-page report outlines efforts by platforms like Facebook, Google, TikTok, Microsoft, and Meta to combat Russian propaganda, hate speech, and disinformation.

Discerning credible sources amidst the digital noise has become a critical skill for news consumers. The intersection of technology and journalism ethics is a central theme, as media organisations grapple with maintaining trust and accountability in an era of instant information dissemination.

In summary, the news media landscape in 2023 is marked by the ascendance of digital platforms, the integration of artificial intelligence, and the ongoing battle against misinformation, collectively shaping the trajectory of journalism and influencing how society consumes and interprets news.

Recent developments have significantly influenced New Zealand's media landscape. The country's largest news publisher, Stuff, is undergoing a major transformation, dividing into three entities — Stuff Digital, Stuff Masthead Publishing, and Stuff Brand Connections. This restructuring is part of a broader initiative to realign editorial oversight, newsgathering, and commercial operations. A separate plan aims to significantly reduce print production staff and introduce advanced technology for paper production and online news management.

In April, Stuff introduced subscription-based

websites for prominent daily papers, The Press, Waikato Times and The Post a shift from nearly a quarter-century of providing most news online for free. Concurrently, the National Business Review (NBR) has ceased opinion columns, opting for more analysis to enhance newsroom capabilities.

Meanwhile, Newstalk ZB is expanding its digital presence through ZB Plus, a subscription service led by editor Philip Crump. This move aligns with NZME's digital subscription strategy, building on the success of NZ Herald Premium digital subscriptions, the acquisition of BusinessDesk, and the launch of Viva Premium. In July, NZME and Are Media teamed up to launch the paywalled Listener website on nzherald.co.nz.

Newstalk ZB is expanding its digital presence with the launch of ZB Plus, a subscription service led by high-profile editor Philip Crump. The move is part of NZME's digital subscription strategy, following the success of NZ Herald Premium digital subscriptions, the acquisition of BusinessDesk, and the launch of Viva Premium. ZB Plus aims to tap into Newstalk ZB's existing radio audience, attract new subscribers, and further diversify NZME's digital revenue streams.

Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill

The New Zealand Government is following a global trend by introducing legislation that requires tech giants like Google and Facebook to pay for news content displayed on their platforms. Inspired by similar measures in Australia and Canada, the legislation includes a provision targeting artificial intelligence companies that use news content for building databases. The move aims to address the dominance of internet platforms in the advertising market, which has led to a decline in

revenue for media companies struggling to monetise their content online. The Government's involvement stems from concerns about the financial strain on media companies, evidenced by falling newspaper revenue and industry struggles intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In June this year, the allocation of the Public Journalism Fund officially came to an end. The fund was announced by the Government in 2020 to support news media through the Covid-19 downturn for a limited period.

The Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill has been introduced as a "backstop" measure to compel platforms to pay for content, with the hope that resulting commercial deals could inject \$30 million to \$50 million into the local media market. The legislation represents a proactive step to rebalance the relationship between digital platforms and media companies, acknowledging the vital role of journalism in a democratic society.

Major New Zealand news publishers, including Stuff and NZME, have struck deals with Google over the use of their content but Meta (Facebook) is still reviewing their position and has actively removed the news link tag recently in the UK, France and Germany ahead of rules that would force it to pay for content.

There have been senior leadership shake-ups at just about every media business this year. TVNZ lost CEO Simon Power and gained a new-look board; several executive appointments have been announced at NZME, Stuff and Sky; and MediaWorks lost CEO Cam Wallace and several other senior leaders. Commercial media businesses are facing economic challenges and handling careful cost management plans, while rebuilding themselves around refreshed digital and audience strategies.

Seismic Leadership Changes Across All Media Partners

NZME.

Paul Hancox - Chief Commercial Office, moving to MediaWorks Christchurch

Stuff

Major Leadership changes with Sinead Boucher stepping into Executive Chair and Publisher of the company with Laura Maxwell appointed as CEO with three new MD positions - Nadia Tolich (Digital), Jo Norris (Masthead Publishing) and Matt Headland (Brand Connections)

tvnz

Simon Power CEO has resigned, with Brent McNulty (Head of Legal and Corporate Affairs) as interim CEO.

WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

Senior Director of Ad Sales Donna Gurney has stepped down, with James Hole stepping in as Acting, previously Revenue Director

sky

New appointment of Lauren Quaintance as Chief Media and Data Officer

ooh!

Ben Gibb, Head of Product and Revenue, moved to Head of Sales at Sky TV.

JCDecaux

NZ Country head Mike Watkins has stepped down with ANZ COO Andrew Heins (AU based) stepping in as interim Country Head of NZ.

mediaworks.

Wendy Palmer appointed the permanent CEO, following the departure of Cam Wallace.

Source: Spark Foundry

DIGITAL CONTENT PLATFORMS

The digital content/social media industry is always buzzing with changes, and 2023 had its fair share of updates and news. People of all ages, even boomers, are spending more time online. Here's a quick look at the major happenings, shifts between platforms, and how local content creators are making their mark.

TikTok's Phenomenal Rise

TikTok continued its meteoric rise in popularity this year, captivating 1.4 million diverse users across New Zealand who, on average, spend over an hour and a half on the app every day. The platform's algorithmic approach to delivering content bypasses the traditional social media format of "follow what you like" in favour of an endless feed of new, relevant content "For You". It's revolutionised the way consumers are digesting news and information with its creative and interactive nature, proving to be a powerful tool for content creators and brands alike.

Threads' Birth and Demise

Meta's new social media platform was launched with quite the bang this year, surpassing 30 million sign ups in less than 24 hours. Despite the initial enthusiasm, the Twitter-competitor failed to engage its userbase with any discernible or valuable features, and ultimately may be suffering from a case of irrelevancy. Threads' lifecycle reveals the competitive nature of the digital content space and the importance of sustained innovation for survival.

Twitter's Evolution to X

Twitter, the bullish, scrappy little sibling in the social world, underwent notable transformations this year. After Elon Musk purchased the company in October 2022 and laid off staff from its AI ethics, accessibility and curation teams,

Twitter adapted to position itself as a multifaceted hub for freedom of speech. After criticism for its lax approach to content moderation, users (and advertisers) departed in droves. Not even a rebrand to 'X' could shift the downward trend, and as journalists, influencers and brands disengage, the future for the platform looks dubious.

Instagram's Stability

Despite its hiccup with Threads, Meta retains popularity among users and content creators as Instagram and Facebook remain stable and influential platforms this year. However, the company continues with its copycat strategy of replicating popular features from its more innovative competitors and fails to provide any original features of its own.

The Role of Content Creators

Content creators continued to play a role in shaping the narrative of digital platforms in New Zealand. As the social media landscape continues to evolve, we're seeing creators who may have traditionally associated with static Instagram posts or highly curated feeds attempt to diversify, dipping their toes in the unpolished world of TikTok, to mixed results. As we don't see any platform ready to truly challenge TikTok's supremacy, in 2024 expect to see creators trying on new styles and jumping into new niches to see what 'sticks' in the algorithm. What we've noticed in 2023 is an increase in topics such as sustainability, DIY, mental health and budgeting hacks in response to uncertain economic times. Also expect a shift toward long-term partnerships as brands and creators seek out long form storytelling.

The key word is authenticity. When creators and brands team up effectively, they have the power to shape consumer trends and help brands communicate their message to specific audiences.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Te Ao Māori

At Wright Communications we are committed to improving our knowledge and practice of te reo, tikanga and Te Ao Māori. We know we have a long way to go, but it is already enriching our understanding and appreciation of the land and tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Training

We worked with Anita Gill of Te Puna Reo Māori to train our team in cultural competency with one hour monthly sessions. This included Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), te reo in the workplace and pronunciation.

Mihi pepeha

We have each written our own pepeha, which we have practised saying internally. We have occasionally used a condensed version to introduce ourselves at certain client meetings.

Thought Leadership

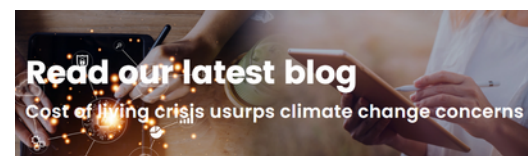
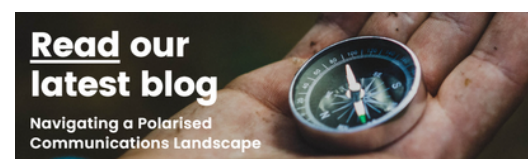
Each month we supply our clients with our latest thinking. Over the past 12 months, we have penned thought pieces on a range of topics from trends in PR and communications.

Our Blog Headlines for 2023:

- PR trends for 2023
- Climate-related disclosure is a boon for greenwashing
- Chat GPT and implications for the PR industry
- The 2023 Kantar Better Futures Report
- TikTok's time is now
- The vital role of communications in cyber attacks
- Cracking the code: building a resilient corporate reputation
- Unravelling Threads
- Climate mitigation, adaptation and Te Ao Māori



Anita Gill of Te Puna Reo Māori leads us in a Te Ao Māori training session.



SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

Carbon Action

We reduced our footprint by 2% from our base[1]year total of 15.39 tCO₂e. We have radically reduced our direct emissions down to 3.8tCO₂e by choosing a carbon neutral electricity retailer and focusing on office waste reduction. Now we need to reduce our indirect emissions, such as business travel.



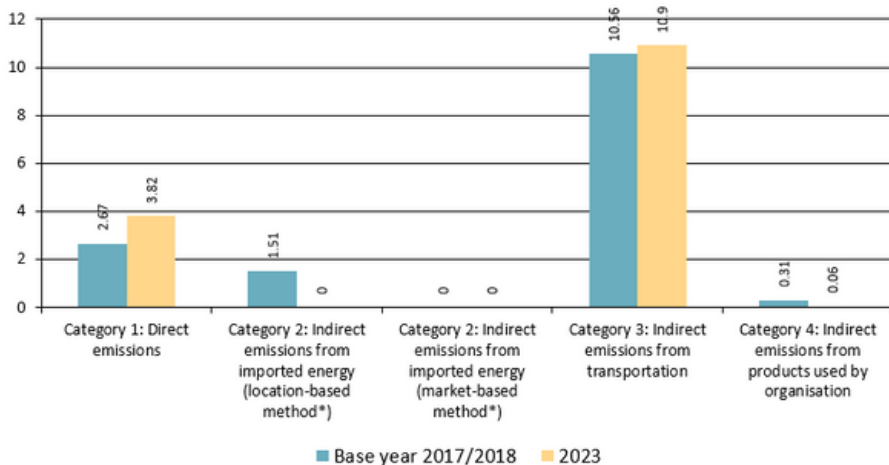
Emissions Reductions

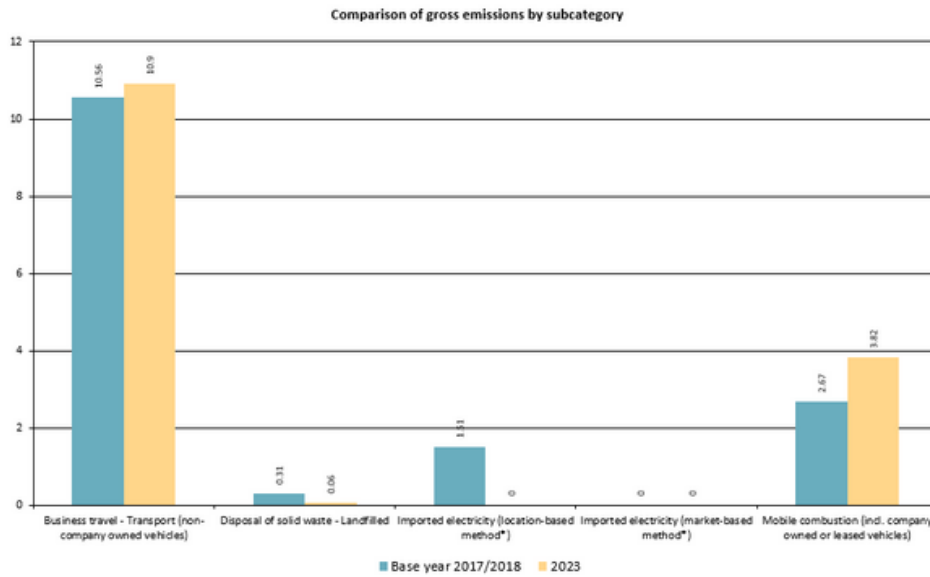
As a member of the Climate Leaders Coalition, Wright Communications is committed to setting a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target. Although our carbon footprint is teeny tiny we are committing to halving our emissions by 2025 (against baseline year) to stay within 1.5° of global warming.



Target name	Baseline period	Target date	Type of target (intensity or absolute)	Current performance (tCO ₂ e)	Current performance (%)	Comments
An absolute reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions (combined)	01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	31/03/2025	Absolute	3.8	11.00%	Emissions decrease against baseline
An absolute reduction in Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 Mandatory GHG emissions (combined)	01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	31/03/2025	Absolute	11	0.99%	Emissions increase against baseline
				14.8		

Comparison of gross emissions by category





How will we do this?

- Only fly when absolutely necessary.
- Make greater use of remote-meeting technologies and virtual collaboration tools e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Google Docs.
- Maintain vehicles for optimal fuel use; walk or use public transport if possible to attend client meetings.

We conducted a climate change risk assessment, divided into two key areas: adaptation and transition.

Adaptation:

- Risk Mitigation: We have identified potential risks related to extreme weather events and the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure. While we cannot control the latter, we acknowledge proactive measures taken by our service providers to enhance reliability. These include innovations like Starlink for robust internet connectivity, reinforcing our confidence in maintaining uninterrupted operations.
- Work Flexibility: We maintain a flexible working culture, allowing our team to work from home, mitigating potential disruptions arising from factors like flooding affecting commuting.

Transition:

- Cost Considerations: We recognise potential cost increases, such as rising insurance premiums and increased electricity expenses. However, we are prepared to adapt and ensure uninterrupted services to our clients.
- Sustainability Focus: Our primary focus is on providing strategic support to our clients in their sustainability efforts, helping them respond to the growing market demand for sustainable products and services.

Natural Capital Commitment

We are actively supporting organisations committed to reversing the decline in natural capital. For instance, we are proud to be working with Presbyterian Support Northern's 'Communities Feeding Communities' initiative, which promotes sustainable food production and consumption.

Additionally, many of our clients are engaged in various initiatives to protect and restore natural capital, such as reforestation projects, reducing waste and energy consumption, and promoting biodiversity in their operations.

B Corp Certification

Successfully completing B Corp certification is a major milestone for the agency. It underscores our commitment to meeting stringent standards in social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. This certification reflects our dedication to balancing profit with purpose, demonstrating our holistic approach to business that takes into account our impact on people and the planet.

Achieving B Corp certification is not just a recognition; it's a testament to our values-driven business practices and our contribution to building a more sustainable and socially responsible global business community.





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