Making Canva ads that print well on newsprint

A quick guide for Pōhutukawa Coast Times advertisers.

Newsprint is softer and more absorbent than glossy paper, and some Canva settings can reduce the print quality of your ad. A few simple steps in Canva will make sure your ad looks as sharp as possible in print.

1. Set up your design

- **Use the exact ad size we give you.** Create a custom-size design in millimetres, matching your booked ad size (if in doubt, check with advertising@pctimes.co.nz).
- **Keep a safe margin.** Keep text, logos and contact details at least 3mm in from the edges.
- **Add a border if your ad has a white background,** so it stands out from the editorial around it.

2. Text

- **Black text should always be pure black: RGB 0, 0, 0 (hex #000000).** Don't use dark grey or "near black", as it can print fuzzy or patchy.
- **Keep text at least 7pt.** Anything smaller can blur or fill in on newsprint.
- **Avoid very thin or delicate fonts,** especially at small sizes.
- **Be careful with white text on dark or coloured backgrounds.** Keep it large and bold.
- **Avoid small coloured text.** Small text prints best in black.

3. Colour and images

- **Expect colours to print darker and less vivid** than on your screen. Avoid very dark backgrounds with dark text or images on top.
- **Avoid very pale tints.** Light pastel colours and tints under about 10% may disappear on newsprint.
- **Brighten your photos.** Images print darker on newsprint, so lift the brightness slightly in Canva's photo editor.
- **Use good-quality images.** Low-resolution photos or images copied from websites can look blurry or pixelated in print.
- **Make QR codes at least 2cm square,** in black on a white background.

4. Download from Canva

Click **Share** → **Download**, then choose:

- **File type:** PDF
- **Preset:** Print
- **Colour profile:** CMYK (best for professional printing), if you have Canva Pro

Under **Advanced Settings**, make sure the following are all turned **off**.

- Crop marks and bleed
- Flatten PDF
- Include notes
- Match reading order to layers

5. Check your PDF before you send it

Open your PDF in Adobe Acrobat (or the free Acrobat Reader) and go to **File** → **Properties** → **Fonts**.

- **If you see a list of fonts,** your text has been saved as live text, and your ad will probably print well.
- **If the list is empty,** your text may have been turned into an image. Check that Flatten PDF was switched off and download it again.

Zoom in to check that text and logos look crisp, and proofread phone numbers, addresses, dates and prices one last time.