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### **Redundancies at Radio NZ**

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting is deeply concerned about potential redundancies at Radio NZ as reported in the DomPost and Herald today.

“It’s great that Radio NZ is branching out into online services but that shouldn’t come at the expense of existing radio or news services.” says Myles Thomas of the CBB. “It shows that Radio NZ is under-resourced as a result of the government funding freeze imposed since 2008.”

In 2007 an independent KPMG report said Radio NZ was already under-resourced and recommended funding increases of \$6m plus. Instead the government has effectively cut funding by 9% as inflation continues to rise.

Radio NZ has managed the freeze by selling assets, grand pianos and land around its transmission site, but recently CEO Paul Thompson admitted to the parliamentary commerce select committee this - “to answer the question, how much longer can we cut the cloth? Not much longer.”

“To continue Paul Thompson’s analogy, Radio NZ may soon look decidedly undressed!”

“We note that rumours of job cuts surfaced last week and were denied by Radio NZ’s Board, yet now they’re admitting it. This indicates a Board trying very hard to conceal the detrimental effects of the funding freeze. But clearly the reality is that the freeze is starting to bite and will inevitably begin to undermine the quality of our only public service broadcaster.

“Rumours are of 12 to 15 redundancies. That out of a newsroom of less than 100 staff would be significant.

“New Zealand legislation has strict rules about political interference in Radio NZ’s editorial decision-making. But funding allocation is one way governments can weaken or strengthen state media organisations. This government has placed impossibly tough funding restrictions on RNZ and TVNZ since it came to power in 2008. It is therefore no surprise that TVNZ moved away from current affairs and into entertainment, eg Seven Sharp, no local 20/20 items, shortened Sunday. So far RNZ has resisted significant on-air changes but that seems to be about to change.”

Ends

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