

PRESS RELEASE

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Coalition for Better Broadcasting alarmed by more job losses at RNZ

Yet again RNZ is announcing job losses and explaining them away as a reorganisation of jobs. But the underlying reason is that the government is chronically under-funding RNZ.

“The Government is slowly strangling RNZ, limiting its ability to provide core services - quality news, current affairs and entertainment for all New Zealanders.” says Coalition for Better Broadcasting director, Myles Thomas. “Previously it's been revealed that RNZ is seen by government MPs as an adversary which makes the lack of funding look more and more like political interference.”

“RNZ's expansion into digital and cross-platform broadcasting is necessary if it is to stay relevant to Kiwis. But NZ's national broadcaster shouldn't be expected to achieve this significant expansion on the same budget it's been working with since 2008.”

RNZ has repeatedly asked the government for increased funding, putting in strong pitches and submitting their first ever business plan before last year's budget. Each time RNZ were refused a funding increase by the Minister of Broadcasting, effectively refusing New Zealanders the right to adequate public radio.

The refusals have obviously taken a toll – last February RNZ announced they wouldn't be asking for increased funding in this year's budget with the Chairman, Richard Griffin admitting it was “pointless beating your head against a brick wall”.

“Clearly the RNZ Board realise what everyone in broadcasting and media knows - the government has no interest in RNZ or its listeners. Our government's decision to continue the RNZ funding freeze shows a particular disregard for the 87% of the population who believe it is important for New Zealand to have a public service radio broadcaster (Colmar Brunton survey for RNZ).

“RNZ’s funding increase is long overdue, to the point of desperation. Job cuts and reduction of services at our last public broadcaster will be disastrous for New Zealand. The cuts will have an impact on many New Zealanders at home, on the farm and in the workplace.”

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting calls on the Minister of Broadcasting, Amy Adams to reverse the dire situation at RNZ and increase funding in this year’s budget.

Background

In 2007, an independent KPMG report recommended RNZ funding increase by 18% (\$6m). But instead the incoming National government froze funding. With inflation the eight-year freeze equals a cut of 14%.

RNZ receives \$34m or \$7.19 per person while public radio networks in Australia, the UK and Ireland get at least twice that per person. These organisations provide a vast array of important radio and online services to their public.