

For immediate release

5 March 2014

RESPONSE TO LABOUR DOCUMENT LEAK

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting supports the idea of a levy on telcos as a viable way to fund public service media in NZ, as levies already do in Europe. The way we see it, telcos charge customers quite a lot for access to internet and online content. Yet the people who make the content receive none of that direct payment. It's unfair that while telcos do very nicely, the content creators such as news organisations like Fairfax, struggle to develop a viable business model. Paywalls are rare and even more rarely successful. A levy could be a great way to close the loop and solve several problems at once.

A levy like that suggested would cost very little to consumers and less to the telcos themselves as outlined by Dr Peter Thompson. It would also cost the government nothing, so therefore public service media need no longer be a drain on taxpayers and no longer a political football. A levy could fund many types of content and not just 'worthy' items like current affairs and news. Blogs, music and as-yet-unknown ideas dreamed up by young NZers. We would see a levy funding an online version of NZ on Air - NZ On-Line keeping NZ values, accents and cultures on line along with the millions of international webpages that already surround us.

We think a levy on telcos to fund content is a good idea that's time has come. We also note the comments of Vodafone Chief Executive Russell Stanners saying 'Labour should go the whole hog and nationalise everything' as a rather extreme reaction to what is a pretty rational idea.

FYI - The CBB is a charitable trust established by people from Save TVNZ 7 and Save RNZ. We aim to be a grassroots membership organisation and are soon to launch publicly.

For more info please call me on 021 666297

Many thanks

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For more comment or clarification please contact 021 666297 or email betterbroadcasting@gmail.com