

14 April 2014

CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF TO REVITALISE NZ'S PUBLIC BROADCASTING

A new organisation launching today, aims to tap into the support thousands of Kiwis have shown for public broadcasting and media, to help rejuvenate the floundering sector.

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting is a non-profit charitable trust formed by organisers of Save Radio NZ and Save TVNZ 7. Both campaigns uncovered a huge groundswell of public opinion in favour of public service broadcasting, says CBB chief executive, Myles Thomas.

“Public service media – that is, radio, television and online media that’s for the audience and not just advertisers – is something New Zealanders value highly. Look at how popular Radio NZ is, with the highest audience share in NZ radio and with 86% of all Kiwis agreeing it is important (see notes).”

The Coalition for Better Broadcasting aims to be an active, vocal and long-term champion of public service broadcasting and media in New Zealand. We will represent the most important and most neglected stakeholder in NZ media – the audience.

The new organisation will contact the thousands of supporters of Save TVNZ 7 and Save Radio NZ to invite them to become members.

The first target for the CBB is Radio NZ's funding freeze.

Since 2008 Radio NZ's funding has been frozen despite an independent KPMG report the previous year recommending an increase in funding of \$6.7m. Myles Thomas says “Apparently our national radio broadcaster has survived by selling land, grand pianos and other non-essentials but now they've run out of stuff to sell.”

The funding freeze has effectively cut RNZ's budget, which is staggeringly low by international standards (please contact for more info) but despite the freeze Radio NZ has suffered in silence and carried on.

“The government has misread public opinion on this one. Radio NZ is hugely important to Kiwis from all walks of life, all over the country – rural, urban, men, women and right across the political spectrum.

“The Coalition for Better Broadcasting is calling on the government to take the opportunity at the next budget to ‘defrost’ Radio NZ funding back to pre-freeze

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levels. Accounting for inflation and the KPMG recommendations would cost a relatively minor \$10.2m annually.

“That’s a small price to pay for improvements that will be appreciated by hundreds of thousands of Kiwis. As the global economy recovers and NZ business/consumer confidence returns there is simply no reason to freeze Radio NZ funding.”

For more information including details of the *CBB Ten-Point-Plan* go to www.betterbroadcasting.co.nz or call Myles Thomas on 021 666297

Notes:

- Save RNZ has over 30,000 Facebook ‘likes’
- Save TVNZ 7 received over 36,000 petition signatures
- 86% think it is important for New Zealand to have a public service radio broadcaster and 4% disagree (source RNZ/Colmar Brunton)
- RNZ National is the most listened to station in NZ with 10.3% audience share (source RNZ/Nielsen)