



Review of the Television New Zealand Charter

Report of the Commerce Committee

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Review of the Television New Zealand Charter

Recommendation

The Commerce Committee recommends to the House that it note that the committee has completed its review of the Television New Zealand charter and supports the performance measures that Television New Zealand intends to implement in 2008. The majority of us also support the revised wording of the charter.

Introduction

In December 2007 we received a letter from the Minister of Broadcasting inviting us to review the Television New Zealand (TVNZ) Charter. Under the Television New Zealand Act 2003, the charter must be reviewed by the House of Representatives at five-yearly intervals.

Background to the review

The Television New Zealand Act requires that TVNZ give effect to the charter in carrying out its functions. The charter is a declaration of the fundamental principles that guide all of TVNZ's activities, and it emphasises TVNZ's public broadcasting responsibilities. Under the current charter TVNZ aims to deliver more locally made programmes than it has previously.

TVNZ had the charter re-drafted by a management team, and in July 2007 the draft was made available to the public on TVNZ's website. After a nationwide advertising campaign TVNZ received 286 submissions on the draft from individuals and organisations.

A working party of representatives from TVNZ and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage analysed the public feedback, and revised the draft charter to reflect public concerns and to improve its clarity. An amended draft charter was approved by TVNZ's board and forwarded to the Minister of Broadcasting. A copy of this draft charter was provided to us by the Minister and is appended to this report as Appendix B.

The revised charter sets out seven broad purposes for the programmes TVNZ provides:

- to maintain an informed society
- to reflect the broad range of cultures and interests in New Zealand
- to reflect Māori interests
- to serve the interests and needs of the diverse audiences within New Zealand
- to meet high standards of quality and editorial integrity
- to display creative risk-taking and experimentation
- to support the creative talents of New Zealanders.

Committee consideration

We called for submissions on the revised charter, and received five. Most of them expressed general satisfaction with the revised charter; and several raised the issue that TVNZ did not have a way to measure its performance against the charter's objectives.

We also wish to see performance measures established. We subsequently heard that TVNZ had developed a new charter performance measurement framework, which was included in the 2008/09 Statement of Intent. TVNZ will measure its performance against the charter for the first time in 2008/09, and the results will be set out in its annual report. An excerpt from the framework, showing one of seven themes, is appended as Appendix C.

The new performance measurement framework provides for the measurement of results by examining the reach, output, quality, and impact of programming. Reach measures the usage of TVNZ content by the public, output the number of hours of content delivered, and quality and impact the commercial and public value respectively of TVNZ programmes. After a year, TVNZ plans to assess the performance measurement framework. Two of the four measures have been reported against the framework and this information is included in the six-month interim report for 2007/08, to establish data for measurement in later years.

We look forward to reviewing the performance measurement framework.

Minority view of Gordon Copeland

The Independent member expressed his disappointment at the omission from the redrafted charter of any reference to religion.

In his view, religious beliefs and the different values and world view that flow from them is one of the central dramas of our time. In today's pluralistic New Zealand society, failure to understand these differences can give rise to unnecessary tensions and misunderstandings, which could be avoided through education and the cultivation of mutual respect. TVNZ can and should have a role to play in that.

Nor is religion to be confused with culture. Practising Christians or Muslims, for example, can come from widely divergent cultural backgrounds but still adhere to a common faith and world view.

In his view the word "religion" should replace the word "regions" in paragraph 2(d) in the revised charter.

Appendix A

Committee procedure

The committee called for public submissions on the inquiry, with a closing date of 25 March 2008. The committee received five submissions from organisations and individuals and heard two of the submissions orally. The committee met between 20 March and 15 May 2008 to consider the inquiry.

Committee members

Gerry Brownlee (Chairperson)
Gordon Copeland (Deputy Chairperson)
Dave Hereora
Hon Darren Hughes (until 2 April 2008)
Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban
Hon Mita Ririnui (from 2 April 2008)
Simon Power
Hon Paul Swain
Lindsay Tisch
Dr Richard Worth

Appendix B

Revised redrafted charter

As a public broadcaster TVNZ will play a leading role in New Zealand television, especially in respect of the principles laid out in its Charter. The Charter shall apply to all of TVNZ's operations that contribute to making its content available to New Zealanders. In fulfilling the Charter TVNZ will make this content available through free to air broadcasting and other media technologies.

1. An Informed Society

To provide impartial and comprehensive New Zealand and international programmes that are essential to having an informed and educated society, TVNZ will:

- (a) Provide a range of programmes across all genres;
- (b) Strive for the highest standards of programming quality and editorial integrity;
- (c) Provide independent, comprehensive, impartial and in-depth news and current affairs;
- (d) Promote democratic participation by examining the activities of public and private institutions;
- (e) Provide programmes of an educational nature which support and encourages learning; and
- (f) Provide programmes that extend the range of ideas and experiences available to New Zealanders

2. National Identity and Citizenship

To provide entertaining, educational and informative programmes that reflects the diverse range of cultures and interests that contribute to an understanding of who we are as New Zealanders, TVNZ will:

- (a) Provide shared experiences that contribute to a sense of citizenship and national identity;
- (b) Provide programmes that contribute towards intellectual, scientific, cultural, sporting and spiritual development;
- (c) Enhance citizens' opportunities to participate in public life by featuring programmes that provide a forum for critical and many-sided debate;
- (d) Provide programmes about the diverse cultures, history, heritage and natural environment of New Zealand, and its regions;
- (e) Provide programmes that cater for minority interests;

- (f) Provide programmes intended for general audiences that address minority interests; and
- (g) Strive to enable New Zealanders of all abilities to engage with the fullest range of programmes.

3. Maori

To provide entertaining, educational and informative programmes that reflect Maori interests, including language, history, culture and contemporary issues, and to convey these interests to a wider New Zealand audience, TVNZ will:

- (a) Provide programmes by, for and about Maori, involving significant Maori participation and perspectives; and
- (b) Provide programmes intended for general audiences that promote Maori language and culture.

4. Diversity

To provide entertaining, educational and informative New Zealand and international programmes that serve the interests and needs of different audiences, cultures, beliefs, abilities, lifestyles, age groups and regions, and particularly those not provided for in a purely commercial broadcasting environment, TVNZ will:

- (a) Provide programmes across all genres;
- (b) Provide programmes catering for interests not normally provided for by other national television broadcasters;
- (c) Balance the programme needs of general and smaller audiences;
- (d) Provide programmes that promote understanding of New Zealand's diversity of cultures and regions;
- (e) Feature New Zealand films, drama, comedy and documentaries;
- (f) Provide programmes that educate, inform, entertain and involve children and young people;
- (g) Provide programmes that support and encourage awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development;
- (h) Provide programmes that support, encourage and feature the sciences;
- (i) Provide programmes that support, encourage and feature the arts;
- (j) Provide programmes that reflect the role of sport and recreation in New Zealand;
- (k) Provide programmes that support awareness of business, commercial and financial matters.

TVNZ will:

- (a) Set the highest standards of programme quality, editorial independence and integrity;
- (b) Comply with the Free-To-Air Code of Broadcasting Practice, which includes standards on violence and good taste and decency; and
- (c) Comply with the codes relating to the level and nature of advertising, particularly that to which children are exposed.

6. Innovation

To promote innovation in form and content TVNZ will provide programmes that display creative risk-taking and experimentation.

7. New Zealand Talent

TVNZ will support and promote the talents and creative resources of New Zealanders, including the independent television and film industries.

8. Presenting New Zealand Overseas

TVNZ will reflect New Zealand to the Pacific region and to New Zealanders overseas.

Appendix C

Excerpt from TVNZ charter performance measures framework

Theme	Objective	Charter sub sections included	TVNZ's 5 year strategic plan – the strategic priorities below will advance the Charter objectives and outcomes.	Measures
An Informed Society	To provide impartial and comprehensive information and national and international programming that is essential to having an informed and educated society	(a) i, (a)ii (b)i, (b)ii, (b)xiv	<i>Valued As Their Public Broadcaster By All New Zealanders:</i> Achieve FTA leadership in all local content genres; Deliver the programmes and content that New Zealanders want and expect. <i>The Content Leader:</i> Reach the maximum target audience(s) on viable platforms.	Reach: Reach of identified national and international programmes across all TVNZ services for “programming of an educational nature that support learning and the personal development of New Zealanders” - Reach measures are: Cumulative audience (5+) across identified series/programmes Number of people downloading the identified programmes from TVNZ ondemand/Podcasting over a fiscal year Unique visitors to tvnz.co.nz for content supporting the identified programmes over a fiscal year Number of identified programmes within the yearly Top Programmes list across 5+ and 18-39 Output: Number of hours and hours of captioning of identified national and international programmes across all TVNZ services for “programming of an educational nature that support learning and the personal development of New Zealanders”

Appendix D

Evidence

Written submissions were received from:

- Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
- Human Rights Commission
- P. M. Coates and W. N. Sheat
- Parish Council of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church
- Peter A. Thompson

Correspondence

Email from Peter Parussini, Head of Corporate Affairs at TVNZ, referring to examples of Charter documents from other public broadcasters, dated 10 April 2008.

Email from Peter Parussini, Head of Corporate Affairs at TVNZ, attaching section from the Statement of Intent discussing the new performance measurement framework, dated 10 April 2008.

Source documents

Television New Zealand Limited, <http://tvnz.co.nz>, last accessed 9 May 2008.

Television New Zealand Limited, *Statement of Intent for three years ending 30 June 2010*.

Television New Zealand Limited, *TVNZ Interim Report FY 2008*.