

Regions losing their funding

Taxpayer funds are like a silk purse: valuable and to be treated with care. Many of us willingly pay taxes, knowing

they support hospitals, schools, police, the justice system and other institutions we rely on. Our patience is sorely tested when the Government does not spend our investment wisely. The current Government is showing insufficient regard for the silk purse of taxpayer funds. It often appears they are turning our silk purse into a sow's ear.

A few examples. Dunedin's Territorial Army Band will be cut in June: Anzac Day at Queen's Gardens won't be quite the same in future. Funding for the Pipes and Drums of the 4th Otago Southland Battalion will stop, and Defence Force bands through the regions are to be cut.

Getting rid of seven local bands will save a fraction of 1 per cent in a cuts programme aimed at saving \$400 million a year. Instead of funding seven excellent volunteer reserve groups, millions will be spent maintaining three professional bands based in the "main centres".

This Dunedin cut is part of a growing theme of regional cuts. While Wellington jobs are protected, morale amongst volunteers plummets without meaningful savings. This cut is one part of a protracted and shambolic restructuring of defence.

Other shambolic restructures and Government bumbles hog the media limelight. More than \$9m of taxpayer money has been spent on "change consultants" asked to cut \$25m from MFAT's budget. The Nick Smith/Judith Collins saga continues to unravel. Not to mention the Chinese firm Huawei's involvement in Broadband.

They were specifically excluded from Australia's Broadband rollout due to security concerns. Why has New Zealand not taken those concerns equally seriously?

Even the Government's economic management is being called into question.

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