

Broadcasting and Media Policy

Vision

We envision an Aotearoa New Zealand in which:

- A strong, diverse and independent media contributes to the maintenance of effective democracy, and to our social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being.
- We enjoy 100% accessible broadcasting and participation in a diverse range of media, and we actively support public broadcasting and community based media initiatives.
- We recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and the special place of Māori broadcasting.
- The right to broadcast or publish is balanced with expectations to act responsibly.

Key Principles

1. The Green Party will work to honour Te Tiriti obligations in broadcasting especially in terms of Te Reo Māori, Māori Television and iwi radio.
2. Citizens need timely and accurate information about their rights and responsibilities, knowledge of our political institutions, and an appreciation of each others' needs, interests and aspirations. This information must be universally and freely available through broadcast and digital media.
3. The media should inform, educate and entertain in a manner that supports citizens to participate effectively in democracy.
4. People of all abilities should be able to easily access media content over a variety of platforms.
5. A vigorous, independent and diverse media is the cornerstone of a free society: the media are none of these things if they are predominantly controlled by the

state, or owned and controlled by international media conglomerates, or dominated by local commercial monopolies.

6. The media wield significant social, cultural and economic power, which must be used responsibly. An independent media should be responsibly self-regulating, although self-regulation does not imply an absence of regulation; it must rest on the foundation of a strong regulatory framework that reinforces responsible self-management.
7. There is no place for gratuitous violence on free-to-air television.
8. Non-violent resolution of political and social conflict is based on knowledge, acceptance and understanding of diverse communities, and of their needs, interests and aspirations.

Specific Policy Points

1. The Right to Broadcast

At present the right to broadcast in Aotearoa New Zealand is allocated to the highest bidder. There are few restrictions on foreign ownership, or on the number of radio and television channels, newspapers, magazines and other media that any one company can control. There are also no public service or other obligations attached to the right to hold a broadcasting license, unlike in many other countries.

The role of the Commerce Commission in broadcasting is limited; it is unable to investigate or regulate the negative effects of political, social and/or cultural influence of media organisations.

Policy Positions

- 1.1 Create the organisational structure necessary to establish, monitor and enforce rules relating to any obligations attached to the right to broadcast and stream content online, such as minimum local content quotas, spectrum pricing, access rules, and common standards for broadcast platforms, as well as issues relating to digital convergence, cross-media and multi-media ownership.
- 1.2 Review the mechanisms for allocating radio and television frequencies to Māori, public and community broadcasters.
- 1.3 Ensure that Māori rights and interests in broadcasting are guaranteed under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

2. Supporting quality programming: Television New Zealand, Radio New Zealand, and Digital Media Commons

The Green Party envisions a quality public service broadcasting and digital media commons that nurture and promote our own talent and creativity as a nation, reflecting the unique cultural environment of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Policy Positions

- 2.1 Protect the political independence of Radio New Zealand, Television New Zealand and the Māori Television Service and iwi radio, and ensure they remain securely in public ownership.
- 2.2 Establish a Digital Media Commons, that in partnership with public television, public radio, community broadcasters, and website media providers delivers access to quality public-interest content, information, and publicly funded resources (such as the Public Archives, museums and libraries).
- 2.3 Examine the options available to improve the quality of public service broadcasting. This may include working with Television New Zealand to investigate the best ways of providing a commercial free public broadcasting service.
- 2.4 Enact strategies to ensure the production of quality music, films and programmes for broadcasting and streaming by Aotearoa New Zealand artists, producers, and directors.
- 2.5 Review the Government's approach to incentivising film production in New Zealand to ensure that local artists and locally written and produced smaller budget films are not disadvantaged.
- 2.6 Ensure that independent and dependent media contractors (including contractors in the film industry) have access to a dispute resolution process, the ability to bargain collectively, and legislation for minimum pay and conditions.
- 2.7 Establish a separate funding stream that aims to increase Aotearoa New Zealand-made documentary, children's and drama programmes. This will help provide a platform for Aotearoa New Zealand broadcasters, writers, producers and directors to have work commissioned for broadcast and digital distribution.
- 2.8 Investigate introducing minimum Aotearoa New Zealand content quotas for public broadcasters, including incentives for commercial broadcasters to provide higher levels of local content.

- 2.9 Develop strategies to support the production of Aotearoa New Zealand films and programmes by Aotearoa New Zealand producers, directors and writers, such as extending economic incentives currently offered only to large overseas film productions to locally produced, smaller budget films.

3. Funding, Subsidies and Incentives

The Green Party supports the continuation of New Zealand on Air funding for public good broadcasting. This system of providing direct support for local actors, writers and producers is an explicit subsidy that provides for the transparent and accountable expenditure of public funds.

Policy Positions

- 3.1 Ensure that current levels of funding for New Zealand on Air from consolidated revenue is maintained.
- 3.2 Provide ring-fenced revenue to ensure sustainable funding for public broadcasting and identify additional sources of revenue, such as frequency licensing, "leasehold" payment for the use of publicly-owned radio frequency spectrum, and a levy on commercial broadcasters and telecommunications companies.
- 3.3 Allow for New Zealand on Air to manipulate the broadcaster's contribution (equity) to a lower level in specific priority genres (like Children's) in order to directly influence genre/audience priority.
- 3.4 Implement new criteria for New Zealand On Air funding decisions, so that funding is available to support quality content for niche audiences who are underserved by commercial programming, rather than maximising audience size.
- 3.5 Support and fund public broadcasters to act as the designated Lifeline Utility broadcasters in the event of a Civil Defence emergency.

4. Support for Community Broadcasting and Media

The current legislative and funding framework does not sufficiently recognise the vital contribution that small independent radio and television services make to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. These services can provide a vibrant and lively contribution to the Aotearoa New Zealand media mix and are an essential means of information that supports local democracy.

Policy Positions

- 4.1 Ensure that the regulatory framework for broadcasting provides ongoing security over both broadcasting rights and funding, for community access broadcasters.
- 4.2 Ensure that community broadcasting is able to grow and develop in a manner that reflects ethnic and cultural diversity, changing interests, needs and aspirations.
- 4.3 Increase support for Pasifika media and services to the Pacific, such as Radio New Zealand International.
- 4.4 Investigate establishing a network of community media hubs who may share content and contribute to the Digital Media Commons.

5. Māori Public Broadcasting and Media

As the indigenous culture, Māori kaupapa, tikanga and te reo, have a special place in Aotearoa. In recognition of this and in accordance with Te Tiriti O Waitangi, it is important that Māori have a strong voice as media content producers and broadcasters. The Green Party is committed to supporting dedicated Māori media to play a major role in revitalising language and culture that is the birthright of every Māori and the heritage of every New Zealander.

Policy Positions

- 5.1 Secure long term funding and support for the Māori Television Service to be an independent, secure and successful Māori broadcaster.
- 5.2 Support iwi radio stations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to be independent, secure and successful Māori broadcasters.
- 5.3 Work with the Māori media industry to develop and enhance services as we move into the multi-media, multi-platform environment.
- 5.4 Ensure all New Zealanders have access to Māori language and culture in the media through support of small independent media content providers and broadcasters who may share content and contribute to the Digital Media Commons.
- 5.5 Investigate and review funding rates regularly to ensure Māori content producers can continue to provide varied genres of quality content.
- 5.6 Investigate ways to encourage all media in Aotearoa New Zealand to offer Te Reo Māori services and use correct pronunciation for Māori words and place names. This may include setting standards for Te Reo Māori proficiency requirements at state funded journalism courses.

6. Children's Television

Television, radio and web content has a major influence on children's lives, their values and their sense of identity. Children require access to information and education as well as entertainment, but entertainment and advertising currently dominates much of children's programming and online content.

It is important that young New Zealanders can access a variety of quality television programmes that are made specifically for Aotearoa New Zealand children, reflecting our cultural diversity and values, and acknowledges the place of Māori as Tangata Whenua.

Policy Positions

- 6.1 Support the production of children's media content with a substantial increase in funding through New Zealand On Air for locally produced children's programming.
- 6.2 Require public broadcasters to take the lead in providing quality locally made free to air children's content, and investigate the introduction of a minimum number of hours of Aotearoa New Zealand made children's content.
- 6.3 Investigate removing commercial advertising from broadcasts aimed at pre-school and school age (5-16 year old) audiences. Work with community representatives, health professionals, broadcasters and producers to develop guidelines on what encompasses commercial advertising, and appropriate and inappropriate levels of product endorsement.
- 6.4 Investigate the development of a funding stream for broadcast and online content aimed at increasing the information and educational resources available to children.
- 6.5 Encourage media production that engages children in a more active way than passive entertainment programmes.

7. Responsible self-regulation

The Green Party supports responsible industry self-regulation as the most appropriate system for regulating media content. A free and independent media acts as a public watchdog against the misuse or abuse of social, economic and political power.

Policy Positions

- 7.1 Bring three existing media industry organisations - the Advertising Standards Authority, the Broadcasting Standards Authority and the Press

Council - into a common framework based on the principle of responsible self-regulation.

7.2 Create the organisational structure necessary to:

- a) Monitor the activities and decisions of media industry self-regulatory organisations, and regularly report to Parliament on the effectiveness of self-regulatory codes.
- b) Hear appeals against the decisions of industry self-regulatory organisations.
- c) Issue minimum codes or regulations in the event that self-regulation can be demonstrated to have failed.
- d) Ensure that appeal to industry self-regulatory bodies will be available to individuals, institutions and organisations (including public sector agencies and local authorities), but not to Members of Parliament, who enjoy the protection of parliamentary privilege as a safeguard against the misuse or abuse of media power.

8. Reducing Violence

There are currently excessive levels of gratuitous violence presented on television and in new media. There is particular concern about the effects of violence viewed by children and young people. While violence in society is a complex issue, the Green Party takes a precautionary approach, seeking to work with broadcasters, producers and regulators to reduce the frequency and graphic nature of depictions of violence.

Policy Positions

- 8.1 Ensure excessively violent programmes are not broadcast before 10 p.m.
- 8.2 Monitor and enforce the TV codes of broadcasting practice on the portrayal of violence, and investigate developing an equivalent code for online content.
- 8.3 Monitor the amount of violence on all television channels and online streaming platforms through annual surveys and report the findings to Parliament each year.
- 8.4 Update the recommendations of the Working Group on Television Violence in light of recent developments in broadcasting, online content and new media, including a review of the normally accepted viewing times for children to determine whether they need to be extended.
- 8.5 Require Television New Zealand, as a publicly funded channel, to take a lead in reducing the amount of violence on television by:
 - a) Developing guidelines on violence for producers and programmers.

- b) Committing itself to not screening or streaming programmes that contain gratuitous violence.
- c) Ensuring that ratings for each programme are well advertised and clearly communicated to parents.

9. Captioning

Broadcasting must be accessible to all. There are many communities within Aotearoa New Zealand who are unable to access broadcasting content in an accessible format. We need to significantly increase captioning levels for deaf consumers and those with hearing impairment, as well as audio description for those with vision impairments.

The Government needs to honour its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

Policy Positions

- 9.1 Enact legislation to require television (both broadcast and on-line) to provide media in an accessible format, including captioning, audio-description and New Zealand Sign Language content, and to set a target of 100% captioning for all free to air TV to be phased in over a reasonable timeframe.
- 9.2 Adopt a consistent evaluation process, including feedback from the disabled community, around captioning standards and quality of access.