



PACIFIC SERVICE

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE & TRADE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

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Television New Zealand Pacific Service

1. Executive Summary

- (i) TVNZ has long experience of television in the Pacific and this close relationship with broadcasters continues mainly through TVNZ's management of the Pacific Service.
- (ii) The Pacific Service distributes *One News* and other selected programmes for a minimum of 11 hours each week to broadcasters in the Pacific. TVNZ is paid, via the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, \$607,000 per annum to provide the service. It is cost neutral to the company.
- (iii) 14 broadcasters throughout the region carry it live or re-broadcast the programmes distributed on the service.
- (iv) TVNZ believes the present service contributes significantly to Pacific communities' knowledge about, and their attitudes toward, New Zealand. In particular, news and current affairs programmes demonstrate to audiences the benefits of a democratic society at work.
- (v) Programmes provided by the Pacific Service are popular with Pacific audiences because of strong familial and numerous other associations with New Zealand.
- (vi) Other countries and NGO's have a growing presence on TV screens throughout the region, often associated with their aid programmes, religious views and political alliances. An expansion of the Pacific Service would build on its popularity, becoming a stronger alternative to these international broadcasters.
- (vii) TVNZ believes a phased expansion of the Pacific Service over, say, a three year period is a feasible option. TVNZ believes such expansion is a simple and cost effective way for New Zealand to increase its presence, every day, throughout the Pacific with outcomes entirely consistent with Government goals and in the national interest.

2. Brief History

New Zealand pioneered television in the Pacific in 1988 by helping to establish the first transmissions by the Niue Broadcasting Service. This proved something of a "shop window" for other Island territories and, in rapid succession TVNZ provided start-up, technical, staff training and programme assistance to the Cook Islands (1989), Nauru (1991), Fiji (1991) and Samoa (1991).

TVNZ, at its own expense, also provided these broadcasters (and later Tonga and American Samoa) with a nightly satellite transmission of *Network News*. This continued until early 2005 when the satellite being used for these transmissions was lost. This event, plus the higher costs of the only alternative satellite, focussed TVNZ on its overall expenditure on transmissions to the Pacific.

3. The Present Pacific Service

In 2005 it was agreed that the service would continue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade funding daily news transmissions (seven hours each week) and a selection of other appropriate programmes (four hours each week).

TVNZ established the Pacific Television Service and has managed it since September 2005 under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. TVNZ is paid \$607,000 (GST exclusive) per annum to deliver the service.

Under the current agreement a minimum of 11 hours of programmes each week must be distributed. The daily hours have increased recently because of favourable foreign exchange rates as most services are purchased in U.S. dollars. For the year ended June 2008, 632 hours were sent. All programmes are in English and nearly all are produced in New Zealand.

The number of broadcasters receiving programmes has gradually increased to 14, (Appendix A) all of whom have facilities to downlink programmes distributed from the Television Centre in Auckland via Intelsat's IS2 satellite. Its footprint is Appendix B.

Participants either re-broadcast programmes in real time or replay them to suit time zones/local schedules. There is no charge for the service but broadcasters sign an agreement committing to operating and technical matters and the re-use of the content.

Without this service Pacific broadcasters could not afford to enter into a commercial, or even cost recovery, arrangement to meet their need for New Zealand content.

TVNZ has made special arrangements for the rights and licences necessary to provide the programmes on the service so that participants can re-broadcast without having to deal with complex and very time-consuming negotiations over international contract rights and copyright issues.

There is regular contact by phone, email and newsletter with the Pacific broadcasters so TVNZ can track usage and viewer responses. Technical advice is regularly provided, including help with local operational problems not associated with the provision of the service. Urgent case-by-case support has been budgeted to assist broadcasters when they are unable to quickly recover from natural events such as storm damage.

TVNZ's *One News* is the daily backbone of the service, with other programmes distributed because of their special interest to Pacific viewers. Other regularly distributed titles include:

<i>Close Up</i>	Monday - Friday
<i>Tagata Pasifika</i>	Fridays
<i>IAM TV</i>	Saturdays
<i>Taste NZ</i>	Thursdays
<i>Country Calendar</i>	Saturdays
<i>Mucking In</i>	Sundays

Other specials include:

<i>Polyfest</i>	Annual series of 5 episodes
<i>Dancing With the Stars</i>	Final
<i>Stars in the Eyes</i>	Final
Rugby 7s	
Rugby League	
Netball	
Commonwealth Games	
Olympics Games	

As a public broadcaster with 20 years' experience in the Pacific, TVNZ understands the ethos and the operational limitations of its Pacific partners. This understanding comes from TVNZ's assistance with founding and fostering many Pacific broadcasters, the training of their staff and the supply of programmes.

At the centre of the relationship with Pacific broadcasters has always been their recognition that TVNZ's editorial independence is protected by statute. This respect and understanding was further enhanced recently with the addition in TVNZ's redrafted Charter of a clause stating that the broadcaster must reflect New Zealand to the Pacific. This was a sentiment Pacific broadcasters themselves petitioned to be included.

While the service does not have the financial resource to research viewer habits or preferences, and there are no rating systems in the Islands, anecdotal evidence suggests the broadcasts are very popular. This is because:

- Almost without exception, the programmes are re-broadcast by local partners;
- In Rarotonga *One Network News* is the only programme in which local advertisers will buy commercial time – it's the most-watched programme in the broadcaster's entire schedule;
- *One Network News* is the second most popular of all programmes on Samoa's SBC, after their own daily local news;
- In Niue, the timing of a recent memorial service was rearranged to avoid clashing with Pacific Service broadcasts; and
- Broadcasters, seeking continuity of this popular programming stream for their viewers, requested the transmission be included in TVNZ's recently redrafted Charter.

4. New Zealand – Pacific Relationships through TV

TVNZ believes that the Pacific Service supports a number of themes central to New Zealand-Pacific relationships. These include:

- Advancing New Zealand's relationships with Pacific governments and peoples;
- Creating links with the peoples of the Pacific;
- Refining the level and nature of New Zealand's engagement in the Pacific; and
- Promoting New Zealand as a good neighbour and friend in the shared region.

These themes are, TVNZ suggests, indirectly developed each day through the programmes it broadcasts to the Pacific. The Government also has more specific goals and TVNZ believes these are supported in the same way via*:

- Knowledge of stability and security of various States and the overall region;
- Familiarity with shared concerns in natural resources and the environment, including climate change;
- Realising trading opportunities, and enjoying the advantages of trade agreements;
- Information about immigration and arrangements for seasonal workers; and
- Comprehending the challenges of globalisation.

TVNZ does not suggest that the service should or even could produce specific content linked directly to these wider themes. But a well-programmed service should generate a cumulative viewer connection with and between them.

5. Competition in the Pacific

Other television organisations have had a long-standing presence in the Pacific, with their programmes shown - sometimes exclusively and continuously - on local stations.

Under these “exclusivity” arrangements, some international broadcasters have, with the direct or indirect support of their own governments, supplied the broadcasters with free equipment on the condition that their broadcasts continue on terms they dictate. Many national interests are represented by broadcasters - both public service and private commercial entities - in the Pacific, often linked with or as part of much wider aid programmes.

The result is that programmes from that country are re-broadcast around the clock in several island territories. Other nations also have a 24 x 7 presence in the region via their satellite broadcasts. These broadcasters are listed on Appendix C.

In addition to broadcasters representing national interests, either directly or by way of subsidy or aid packages, American religious organisations beam their talk, music and Christian lifestyle programmes to the Pacific. One Pacific station recently changed its name to “Elijah” to clearly signal its Christian-ethic and thus acquire rights to access American programming at no cost.

Despite an overwhelming presence of other interests in the Pacific, almost without exception broadcasters, officials and individuals say that for a variety of reasons they feel neighbourly allegiance first to New Zealand. They have affiliation through family, church, sport, alumni and visits and therefore welcome, or would like the opportunity to watch, New Zealand programmes on the Pacific Service.

* Ministerial Briefing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Official Website, 2007.

6. Enhancing New Zealand's Presence

TVNZ has suggested that New Zealand's presence in the Pacific can be maintained and enhanced by expanding the present successful service which, every day of the year, delivers the New Zealand way of life directly to the people of the region.

A detailed, costed, proposal for a phased expansion was lodged with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in October 2007. It has also found favour with the Minister.

The proposal has three elements:

- (i) **Immediate expansion** of the current service from 11 to 15 hours per week and later up to 20 hours each week plus complementary initiatives with costs estimated at \$320,000 per annum.
- (ii) **Create a Pacific Service Broadcasting Trust** from the 2008/09 financial year at an estimated cost of \$1 million expended over three years to assist broadcasters in the Pacific increase the numbers of viewers they can reach.
- (iii) **Develop a dedicated TVNZ Pacific Channel** from the 2009/10 financial year at an estimated cost of \$2.240 million per annum.

Details of each of these are:

- (i) **Immediate Expansion** proposal covers five activities:
 - **Increase service output** from 11 hours a week to 15 hours per week for, say, three months, and then to 20 hours per week for, say, six months. It's estimated this would cost an additional \$320,000 in the current financial year. This period would also be used to put in place other elements of the overall proposal.
 - Creation of a first-ever **Pacific Programme Exchange Scheme** to enable Pacific broadcasters to send pre-agreed programmes or recordings of major public events in the Pacific via courier to TVNZ in Auckland to re-distribute around the region. It's estimated this would cost an additional \$35,000 in its first year and provide between 10 and 15 hours of extra programming.
 - **Increase the number of participating broadcasters.** It's estimated Tuvalu Television needs \$65,000 in capital expenditure to access the current Pacific Service. Palau Television, Papua New Guinea's EM Television and new TV channel plus broadcasters in Noumea and Papeete could also be encouraged to join the service at a minimal cost to the New Zealand Government.
 - **Increasing the administrative portion of the expanded service.** When the service began in 2005 \$20,000 pa was set aside to recover a part salary and minor administration costs for TVNZ. It's estimated this would need to increase by an additional \$80,000 in the current financial year to enable this immediate expansion proposal.

- **Research**
 - a) Research is needed to better understand the programme needs and preferences of Pacific Island broadcasters and to resolve ownership, copyright and contractual matters of the content not already owned by TVNZ. This work will result in a licensing “tariff” appropriate to the combined Pacific territories, and would cost \$27,000.
 - b) A survey of technical reception and re-distribution equipment used by Pacific broadcasters is needed to identify capabilities and make recommendations for any additional/replacement equipment needed for down-linking and re-broadcasts within each island group.

The cost would be \$35,000, and provide the information needed to decide on the potential for a Pacific Broadcasting Trust (described below).

(ii) Pacific Service Broadcasting Trust

Non-existent or aging and outdated infrastructure is one of the major impediments to broadcasting in the Pacific. Improving this is the key to enhancing Pacific broadcasters’ ability to reach their audiences, particularly in outlying islands, but also the Pacific Service’s. The establishment of a trust to drive such improvements would make a significant difference to Pacific broadcasters. While the terms of reference of such a trust would need to be developed it could provide Pacific broadcasters with technical training and support, broadcasting advice and expertise, infrastructure funding and be the mechanism to evaluate and audit requests and expenditure.

Such a trust could be made up of representatives from TVNZ, MFAT and, perhaps, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat.

The first step in establishing such a trust would be a survey of the technical capabilities of Pacific broadcasters. It’s estimated this would be a one off cost of about \$35,000. It’s estimated that such a trust would need a one off capital fund of about \$1 million expended over 3 consecutive years.

(iii) TVNZ Pacific Channel

With digitisation, and the addition of new channels, TVNZ has available in-house more factual, documentary and news and current affairs content than ever before.

It is recommended that some of this material form the backbone of a new TVNZ Pacific Channel, along with other programmes that are of interest to the region, such as sports and major events. For example, using some TVNZ 7 content as the backbone would be a cost effective approach as public money has already been spent on its creation.

It’s envisaged that TVNZ Pacific would provide 3 x 8 hour blocks of programmes per day, seven days a week. As is the case now with the Pacific Service, this channel would be sent via an encrypted satellite signal into the region for local broadcasters to transmit live or retransmit at a later time. It would not be a channel that viewers would be able to see directly as this would compete with local broadcasters.

The costs for this part would be:	
Satellite and Uplink	840,000
Programme Sourcing/Acquiring/Scheduling/Play-out	128,800
Programme Rights and Licences	816,000
Management/Administration	122,800
Project Manager	122,000
Technical Equipment	35,000
Preparation/Play out/ Editing/Equipment	186,500
Total	2,240,000

7. Summary

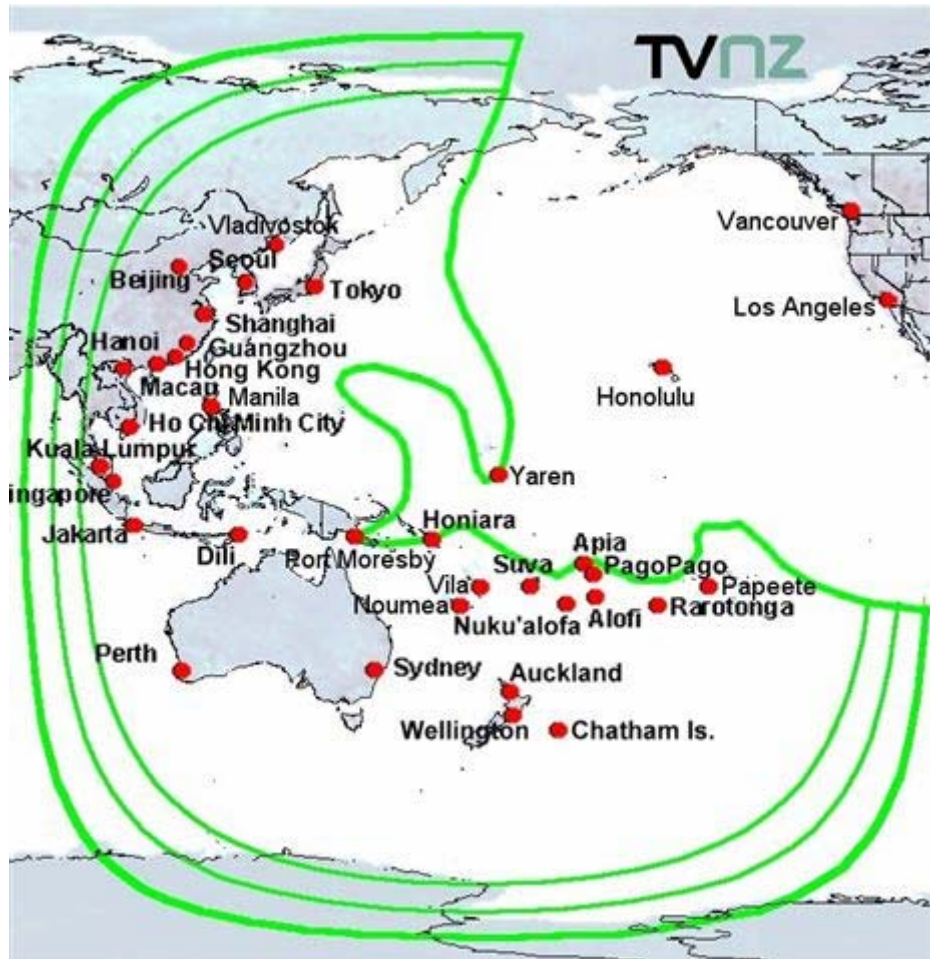
TVNZ believes that the medium of television has much to contribute to New Zealand's aspirations in the Pacific and the current Pacific Service is popular and is the country's voice in the region.

But other well resourced nations and NGO's have an increasing presence in the region.

An expansion of the Pacific Service would be a simple and cost-effective (as it would extract greater value out of the public funding already spent on TVNZ 7) New Zealand foreign policy initiative in the region.

APPENDIX A

Footprint for Satellite IS2



APPENDIX B

Participating Broadcasters

Cook Islands:	Elijah Communications Limited/Pitt Group, Avarua, Rarotonga. Free-to-air, commercial. Mostly re-broadcast. Role of public broadcaster.
Cook Islands:	Mangaia Island TV. Government provided down-link local/community station.
Cook Islands:	Palmerston Island TV. Government provided down-link local/community station.
Samoa:	Samoa Broadcasting, Apia. Role of public broadcaster, free-to-air, commercial.
Samoa:	TV3Samoa, Apia. Privately owned free-to-air commercial station.
American Samoa:	PCSTV, Pago Pago. Privately owned free to air commercial/community broadcaster.
Tonga:	Tonga Broadcasting Commission, Nuku'alofa. State owned, public broadcaster, free-to-air commercial.
Tonga:	Tonfon, Nuku'alofa. Privately owned pay-tv.
Niue:	Broadcasting Corporation of Niue, Alofi. State owned public broadcaster, free-to-air.
Nauru	Nauru Television, Yaren. State owned public broadcaster, free-to-air.
Kiribati:	Television Kiribati Limited, Tarawa. State Owned (Telecom) free-to-air commercial.
Vanuatu:	VBTC, Port Vila. State-owned public broadcaster, free-to-air at present but will soon be pay-tv. Commercial.
Fiji	Mai TV, Suva. Privately owned commercial station.
Solomon Islands	My Telekom. Honiara. Public Broadcaster, free to air.

Participation likely from:

Tuvalu:	Tuvalu Television Limited, Funafuti. State Owned (Telecom) free-to-air.
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APPENDIX C

List of countries/organisations with a television presence in the Pacific

- **Australia.** Funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia Network* provides three different channels programmed from different satellites to align with Asian and Pacific time zones. They broadcast 24 hours x 7 days per week, and are retransmitted by some of the broadcasters who also show the New Zealand's Pacific Service. The budget for *Australia Network* is \$A20million a year.*
- **Fiji.** Fiji TV Limited, a combined free-to-air and pay TV operator (with a sister station in Papua New Guinea) owns Sky Pacific, a multi-channel, satellite subscription service available across much of the South Pacific. Fiji TV has acquired the rights for many popular programmes and major sports events, at the expense of other local free-to-air broadcasters who cannot afford to pay the escalating rights fees.
- **China.** China's support for broadcasting projects is usually aligned with other major aid activity, and includes the offer of 24 x 7 transmissions of the English and Chinese languages versions of state-owned China Central Television, together with the provision of transmission, etc, equipment at no cost, including a large consignment to Tonga in time to cover the coronation of His Majesty George V.
- **United Kingdom.** BBC World is virtually fully subsidised by the UK Government, and its 24 x7 service is available to all broadcasters, usually at no cost.
- **United States.** Some broadcasters downlink and re-broadcast CNN programmes for fixed parts of each day, paid for under US aid arrangements.
- **France** State-owned RFO, through its own global network of satellite coverage, rebroadcasts in New Caledonia and Tahiti. Other broadcasters within the footprint take the services ad hoc.

* Alexander Downer, news interview, 2006, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Official Website, Archive of News Releases