

# Aotearoa Broadcasting Systems ploughs on

*DESPITE BCNZ pulling the financial rug from under their feet only a week before the third television channel warrant hearing, Aotearoa Broadcasting Systems fronted up with their supporters to the Broadcasting Tribunal.*

*From Toa Rangatira marae, Porirua, the Tribunal went to Waiwhetu in Lower Hutt. It was here that the tangata whenua told the Tribunal exactly what they thought of the current television programming.*

Chairperson for Nga Kaiwhakapumau i te Reo, Huirangi Waikerepuru told the Tribunal that they support ABS's application because it enables the maori language to reach every home in New Zealand.

"The loss of the language will be detrimental to the race relations in New Zealand," he said.

"The Tribunal must be supportive in keeping the maori language alive."

Chief Executive for ABS, Derek Fox said their case was a simple one. He said that the Maori people have been cheated of their rightful place on the air waves since television came to New Zealand.

"The legitimate claims of the Maori people have to be met before the licence is given to a private competitor.

"We are offering a bi-lingual and bi-cultural programme."

He said that the other contenders were providing "another pakeha service".

At a later cross examination, Fox had to curb his tongue against some of the leading questions the competitor's lawyers threw at him.

UTC counsel, John McRae wasn't sure whether ABS was applying for a news programme warrant or the third channel one. Fox adamantly replied that ABS

was going for the third channel one.

"None of the other contenders are filling the requirements of the Broadcasting Act 1976, the Waitangi Tribunal or the Treaty of Waitangi. If ABS doesn't get it, no one should."

Questions were raised about the staffing requirements ABS has to fill, market research, production expertise, where ABS' audience was going to come from and funding.

At this time, ABS had no comment to make about its financial situation.

But for most of his time on the stand, Fox had to explain to the competitor's counsels and the Tribunal ABS's programming proposals.

Fox maintained that there is potential for maori programming to a New Zealand audience.

He said the audience will grow because of the nationwide growth of Kohanga Reo and the awareness of Maori throughout the country as a whole.

Chairman of Nga Kaiwhakapumau, Huirangi Waikerepuru says the Minister and the government seem to be saying that the select committee is the only appropriate body to consider the jurisdiction of the Treaty of Waitangi, when in fact, for Maori people, the only body that has the mana and mandate to do this is the Waitangi Tribunal, as set up by a Labour government.

By the time this issue of TUTANGATA is out, the Language Bill select committee may be hearing submissions such as will be made by Nga Kaiwhakapumau. Any inclusions and strengthening of the Bill will then be scrutinised by the Members of Parliament in its second reading.

By then it is hoped that our parliamentarians will have the courage to do what previous administrations have consistently failed to do for over one hundred and forty years, that is acknowledge our nationhood was founded on two cultures agreeing to be equal partners.

This acknowledgement needs to be in legislation and enforceable for as the Waitangi Tribunal stated, "rights that cannot be enforced are illusory."

As the Waitangi Tribunal said, popular recognition will depend on "successful establishment of a supervisory body to foster the language and overcome difficulties that are bound to arise ... plus "an appeal to the strong New Zealand sense of fair play."

