

# Who's paying for the network?



Ossie Huata

One of the mysteries of the Maori Radio network is the funding. Radio New Zealand has indicated that the capital costs of setting up the network will be \$2½ million in the first couple of years.

And it has talked of budgeting \$10 million for the operating costs over the first five year period.

But no one seems at all clear where that \$10 million will be coming from.

Some of it will be from Radio NZ's licence fees and advertising revenue.

But RNZ is counting, apparently, on other sources too — like Maori incorporations and Maori Affairs.

Bev Wakem sounded out the board of Maori Affairs before the hui and got a mixed reception there. Of the board members, Bert Mackie, was particularly unimpressed with the network proposal which he called "a sop to Maoridom."

But, at the hui, the Minister of Maori Affairs, Koro Wetere, announced his support for the Maori Radio Board — and said his department would come through with some "seeding" funding.

Despite the BCNZ explanations, it's hard to understand why Maori Affairs, Maori incorporations or any outside organisation should have to pitch in.

Everyone, finally, seems to acknowledge that Maori radio has been woefully neglected by Radio New Zealand and deserves immediate attention.

Maori broadcasting is an obligation

which the BCNZ has largely ignored.

Now it's time to deliver.

Sure, it will be expensive. But then Radio New Zealand has been saving millions for years by not spending what it should have on Maori radio.

It owes heaps.

And you don't have to look far to see that it spends heaps when it has a mind to.

In answer to questions from Whata Winiata, Hugh Rennie said the yearly capital costs of the YA network were half a million dollars. And the YC network cost nearly a million. Then, on top of that were the programming costs — \$11 million for the YAs and \$3 million for the YCs.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra costs \$5 million a year.

Whata Winiata argued that if Maori money was to be used it shouldn't go to setting up the network of stations in Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Wellington and Christchurch.

Rather, it should be used to extend the system by helping groups to establish regional and tribal stations like those that had operated on short-term warrants in Otaki and Wellington.

Hugh Rennie said the BCNZ policy was for community stations to pay their way — and it would be the same for any Maori community stations.

He said the 34 RNZ stations all worked on the basis that they could lose money for a month, or even for two consecutive months. But they would go off the air if the losses carried on for a third month.

"We'll show the same patience to Maori community stations . . . the rough patches of life will be the same for the Maori as for everybody else.

Sounds fair enough. Equal treatment all around. What could be fairer?

The trouble is that equal treatment is fair treatment only when you're all starting from the same mark.

Maori community stations will have enormous handicaps to overcome thanks partly to RNZ's past neglect of Maori recruiting and to the significant part it has played in developing a generation of listeners who can't understand Maori.

There is a formula for justice: "You treat equals equally. And unequals unequally."

## Maori Licensed Interpreters Exams

(a) Written — Papers I & II March 19, 1987  
Papers III & IV March 20, 1987

(b) Oral — April 17, 1987

Venues — The written and oral exams will be conducted in a centre close to the candidate's place of residence.

Applications — Close on January 15, 1987.

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