



MP for Dunedin South

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications
and Digital Media

Associate Minister for ACC

Minister for Government Digital Services

Associate Minister of State Services (Open Government)

28 FEB 2018

Ms Miriam Dean QC CNZM
Chair
NZ On Air
PO Box 9744
WELLINGTON

Dear Ms Dean

LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS: 2018/19

This letter sets out my expectations for the Broadcasting Commission (NZ On Air) in 2018/19. This Government firmly believes that a strong and informed democracy demands independent, original and free local media content that is universally available, which is essential to ensuring all New Zealanders are engaged, heard, and see themselves represented.

Policy context

We believe that modern public digital media services that inform, entertain, and uplift are vital to delivering on the Government's values of cultural diversity, artistic expression, and independence of thought and ideas. I expect that NZ On Air will play a vital role in supporting people to tell New Zealand stories that reflect and reinforce our unique culture.

As recently announced, I have established an Advisory Group to investigate options to establish a Public Media Funding Commission (PMFC) to advise on the state of the media and the resourcing needs of public media agencies. This Group will be charged with providing advice to Government on the allocation of any additional Crown funding that will be sought for public broadcasting in Budget 2018 as well as the role and functions of a potential PMFC and its institutional form.

Preparation of business case for new funding

To assist the Government with its planning for funding for public media as part of the 2018 Budget, I expect NZ On Air to be working on a business case for additional Crown funding with relevant stakeholders, and to engage constructively with the Ministerial Advisory Group on an ongoing basis. I expect your business case to be rigorous and of high quality. It should be ready to be shared with the Ministerial Advisory Group as soon as possible. The Advisory Group will advise you by when the business case is required.

I appreciate that this timing is tight, but necessary if the Ministerial Advisory Group is to provide high quality advice on the optimal allocation of additional Crown funding for 2018/19.

Strategic direction

As foreshadowed in the Labour Party Broadcasting Manifesto, I wish to signal a review of NZ On Air's functions. The scope and timing for such a review is yet to be determined, but you can expect this to become clearer over the coming 12 months.

I appreciate that the issues touched on above are likely to add some uncertainty to your operating environment. I would like to make it clear that I do not expect NZ On Air to pause in its important work while policy is developed around the PMFC and the review of NZ On Air functions.

As you are aware, the government is currently actively considering funding arrangements and policy direction for public media. Consistent with that policy, is a commitment to separating and clarifying funding and accountability lines for Radio New Zealand. In support of that objective, I would appreciate it if you would remove any requirement you may have for "New Zealand On Air" branding messages from RNZ broadcast, web presence and promotional materials.

Following on from the Government's response to the Government Administration Committee inquiry into captioning in New Zealand, I would like you to work with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage on options for increasing captioning levels in publicly funded content.

Performance and capability

I expect that the Board will continue to diligently oversee the performance of the entity. I would suggest that activities that support innovation, that address New Zealand's cultural capital, and that seek to deliver content that serves all New Zealanders, are likely to be enduring conversations between us over the coming years.

I have three specific areas of focus for NZ On Air, these are:

- maintaining robust investment frameworks;
- maintaining and growing organisational capability;
- best practice governance at the Board level.

Together these will continue the delivery of NZ On Air's mission and will ensure that the organisation is well prepared to contribute to the review of functions outlined above.

Given the significant impact of the new expectations and priorities outlined above, I expect the Board to update NZ On Air's current 2017-2021 Statement of Intent by 30 June 2018. For the avoidance of doubt, I would like to see a draft of NZ On Air's new SOI by 1 May 2018, to align with the due date for NZ On Air's draft 2018/19 SPE.

I look forward to working with the NZ On Air Board over the coming year, and receiving a written response to this letter by 30 March 2018.

Yours sincerely



Hon Clare Curran

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media

cc Jane Wrightson, Chief Executive