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10 February 2006

The Rt Hon Steve Maharey
Minister of Broadcasting
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

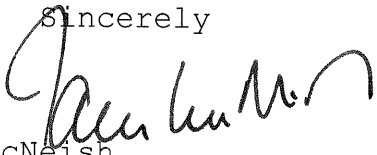
Dear Minister


We enclose an Open Letter about our public television.
You will see that our concern is shared by other New
Zealanders.

We are releasing the letter to the press with an embargo,
as shown. We hope you will have a chance to study the letter
before then.

We look forward to your response.

With best wishes. Sincerely


James McNeish


Ian Johnstone


Les Holborow

(Founder group/instigators of the Charter
adopted by Parliament for Radio New
Zealand in 1995)

noon on Tuesday

embargoed: not for publication before 14 February

AN OPEN LETTER

To the Minister of Broadcasting, the Rt Hon Steve Maharey

Wellington, 10 February 2006

Dear Minister

We write to you about New Zealand public television - or, rather, the absence of television which serves the public.

There is a growing perception in New Zealand that because public television is used to make money for the government through excessive advertising, New Zealand viewers get the worst deal of any in the western world.

The problem is not the Charter, which was designed to lift standards. It is not the Board, nor the Chair, nor the CEO - the problem is TVNZ's status.

The problem dates from 1989, when TVNZ - now a crown-owned company - was converted from a public corporation to a State Owned Enterprise. Since then New Zealanders have seen far fewer local programmes of worth and been made to watch more commercials than viewers in any other Commonwealth or West European country.

We seek a radical change.

We believe that everyone who expects public television to make a better contribution to our national life (remember Close to Home? McPhail & Gadsby? Gallery? and scores of other New Zealand programmes) will join us in urging that you reinstate a public television system comparable with those which are still the pride of citizens in Australia, Britain and Canada.

Governments and advertisers have hi-jacked and abused our public television for far too long. We hope that you will have the determination to return it to serving its real owners, the people of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

NEIL ASHCROFT
GEORGE BARTON, QC
MARGARET CLARK
IAN CROSS
ROGER EVISON
MAURICE GEE
SIR MICHAEL HARDIE BOYS
SIR EDMUND HILLARY
MICHAEL HOUSTOUN
SUE KEDGLEY, MP
MARGARET MAHY
JAMES McNEISH
MERWYN NORRISH
JO RANDERSON
DAME CATHERINE TIZARD
SIR OWEN WOODHOUSE

AILSA BARTON
PAUL CALLAGHAN
CHRISTINE COLE-CATLEY
DAME PAT EVISON
SIR MICHAEL FOWLER
SIR DOUGLAS GRAHAM
BOB HARVEY
LES HOLBOROW
IAN JOHNSTONE
DAME FIONA KIDMAN
DAME MALVINA MAJOR
FRANCOISE NORRISH
VINCENT O'SULLIVAN
JEFF TALLON
CARDINAL TOM WILLIAMS

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