

Uncorrected Hansard transcript

2018/19 Annual Review of Radio New Zealand Limited

Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee

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Members

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Tamati Coffey (Deputy Chair)
Dan Bidois
Hon Ruth Dyson
Andrew Falloon
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Witnesses

Radio New Zealand Limited

Dr Jim Mather, Board Chair
Paul Thompson, Chief Executive
Alan Withrington, Head of Business Transformation

[FTR start time:13:00:52]

Young Welcome everybody. Welcome Dr Mather, Mr Thompson, Mr Withrington. Great to have you here. We do have 30 minutes with you. Welcome to media and officials, etc. Can we just ask the camera people, if you don't mind, just refrain from filming anything on desks of members—that's just standard procedure, thanks very much. Look, thank you so much for being here. We'd like to give you about five to seven minutes for some introductory comments, and then we'll come to our questions. So handing over to you now. Thank you.

Mather Tēnā tātou katoa. E te rangatira, ngā mihi nui ki a koe, otirā koutou katoa. Tino harikoa mātou katoa ki te haere mai ki konei i tēnei wā ki te whakamārama i te whakaaro o te poari o Irirangi Aotearoa. Tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

[Greetings to all of us. Esteemed leader, many thanks to you, indeed to all of you. We are very happy to come here at this time to clarify the thoughts of the board of Radio New Zealand. Greetings to you, and to all of us.]

In my opening statement, I would like to firstly note that the 2018/2019 year has been another outstanding year for RNZ, the nation's most trusted

media organisation. However, I would also like to address some important issues that have been highly topical over the last week. The board, management, and staff of RNZ are committed to our charter. Our charter is broad and requires, amongst other things, that we stimulate, support, and reflect a wide range of music, including New Zealand composition and performance, and also provide programmes which balance special interests with those of wide appeal, recognising the interests of all age groups.

Recognising that we were not comprehensively fulfilling the requirements of our charter, the RNZ board directed management to identify options to strengthen our relevance to all New Zealanders, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic standing, or age. We take very seriously the responsibility associated with being Te Reo Irirangi o Aotearoa, Radio New Zealand—the public media organisation for all New Zealanders. We as a board could quite simply have sailed along comfortably over the tenure of our three-year terms and accepted the status quo, or, as we have done, chosen to make some unpopular but, ultimately, appropriate decisions about the future of RNZ.

In terms of responding to some key questions raised about RNZ Concert and to provide appropriate context to the select committee hearing, I wish to provide the following background information.

One, did RNZ explore the option of securing a third FM network for our planned service for young New Zealanders? Yes we did. Ministry of Culture and Heritage were approached in mid-2019 to see if an FM network could be made available for broadening our services. We discussed the option of the availability of 102 FM network, and the advice was that it would be incredibly difficult for RNZ to get access to them, and also to the required funding. The 102 FM network has been set aside for youth radio for more than 20 years and no Government, until now, has shown an appetite to take it off the shelf and allow us to provide that public service to New Zealand.

Two, did RNZ follow an appropriate process in keeping the Minister adequately informed of our new service for young New Zealanders? Absolutely. The Minister was briefed on our new strategy and a potential impact upon RNZ Concert in August 2019, October 2019, and, most recently, on January 29th of this year.

Three, did RNZ ignore the request of the Minister at the meeting on January 29th? We definitely did not ignore the request. We believe that the Minister had agreed to RNZ not delaying our internal staff consultation on potential changes to RNZ Concert whilst MCH explored the option of reviewing the FM frequency previously reserved for youth music. There was clearly a misunderstanding, as the Minister thought that our consultation process would be halted whilst MCH looked into the FM frequency availability as they were tasked to do at that meeting. There is absolutely no logical reason why RNZ would purposely ignore such a request from the Minister, aside from the fact that there was a significant misunderstanding.

Four, is the RNZ service for young New Zealanders simply another youth music station? Absolutely not. Our vision remains to create a multimedia

platform for young New Zealanders which will include music produced by local artists, as well as live performances. The level of locally produced music will be unrivalled in the history of our nation: commissioned programming content for young people that will explore topics relevant to them, such as civic, financial, lifestyle, and, most importantly, wellbeing issues; access to complementary RNZ services focused on younger audiences, such as podcasts; trusted news made for and made by younger audiences; and also providing a range of new employment opportunities.

It is our intent to provide an opportunity for young New Zealanders to build a community designed by them, produced for them, presented by them, and, in doing so, creating a lifelong connection with RNZ. It will also have significant elements of Māori, Pasifika, and Asian audience elements that will reflect New Zealand in 2020 and beyond. The board and management of RNZ is committed to fulfilling our charter obligations and significantly increasing our relevance to more New Zealanders, particularly a younger generation of New Zealanders.

In concluding my opening statement, it is great news that RNZ and the Government are united on the new strategy and this opens the opportunity to launch our new service for young New Zealanders whilst continuing to enhance the services we provide in terms of the RNZ Concert family. Thank you.

- Young All right. Thank you very much for your opening remarks and for clarifying some of those issues.
- Lee Thank you very much for coming today. I can imagine that the nerves are up, as well, considering the fact that there are so many media cameras here as well. The elephant in the room is actually quite clear. I mean, a lot of people are concerned about Concert FM. I just want to actually check a couple of facts before I go into the questions. You actually said that MCH was approached in mid-2019 regarding your desire to start a youth FM programme, is that correct? And you've approached them about it for a new frequency?
- Mather That is correct, and our chief executive was at the forefront of those discussions. If you want more information I can ask him to comment.
- Thompson We briefed the ministry on our plans, last year, because we realised it was significant what we were proposing. And, obviously, one option was the 102s, which have languished on the shelf for decades, as we're aware. And the advice was that it would be very difficult to be able to gain access both to those frequencies and to the funding required to support it. And, therefore, we went on and developed our proposal as it was presented last week.
- Lee How clearly did you put that request for a new frequency to MCH?
- Thompson It wasn't a formal request in terms of a document; it was a discussion and advice, but, you know, the conclusion—
- Lee Sorry, advice? Did you request for a frequency or not?

- Thompson We explained our strategy and looked at a range of options, but we were clearly given the steer that it was going to be unlikely to be achieved.
- Lee So are you now saying that you hadn't actually requested for a frequency?
- Thompson What I am saying is exactly what I've said. We talked with them, briefed them, this option around the 102—which, obviously, was exciting—was mentioned and we discussed it, but the indications were that it would be very difficult to access them. And, therefore, we went on with our plan.
- Lee Right. From the statement made by the chairman, I was under the impression that you had specifically requested for a frequency and MCH actually turned you down.
- Thompson No. It's exactly as the chairman outlined.
- Lee So you've actually requested it. So yesterday, MCH appeared before select committee and they had actually said that there was no specific request for a youth radio frequency. Are they lying?
- Thompson No. No, I think this is in the context of having a discussion, and we had the feedback we got and we made our decision to proceed on a path which we saw as more productive.
- Lee Would you suggest that was another misunderstanding, then?
- Thompson No. No, I don't think it was another misunderstanding.
- Lee OK. Going back to the "misunderstanding" comment, what was misunderstood?
- Mather What was misunderstood—and I should also preface my response by saying I [*Inaudible 13:10:57*] in attendance at the meeting but I had phoned into the meeting. The other attendees from RNZ were our chief executive, Paul Thompson, and a board governor Peter Parussini. Now, the misunderstanding arose from the aforementioned governor, Peter Parussini, asking the Minister whether we were required to halt our consultation and not proceed with our planned moves with the new strategy. The belief on the part of that particular governor of RNZ was that the Minister had affirmed that it was acceptable to proceed.
- Lee So going back to Concert FM, what was the rationale behind the decision to replace Concert FM with youth FM and moving Concert FM to AM, and removing the staff, commentators, presenters—what was the rationale? Did you not think it was important enough?
- Thompson We think it is important, but we have a limited range of resources which we need to deploy in the best possible way, and we think it's vital, as the chairman outlined in his opening statements, that RNZ actually starts to connect with younger audiences, because whilst we have big and growing audiences, they do tend to be older people. So we looked at our strategy and we think that younger New Zealanders deserve a public broadcasting service as well, and our approach was to make quite a hard decision around where our resources were best prioritised. So that led to the decision to change Concert and move it from FM and move resources to create our

new brand, and to prioritise FM for that brand. These are always difficult decisions, and, you know, we can sit there and not take difficult decisions as an organisation, but we actually think we have an obligation to fulfil our charter. So that's why we made that difficult call.

The positive thing that's developed is that the Government now has provided us with the option for being able to do both, and that was always going to be our preference. It is an exciting opportunity for us to be able to create the kind of service for New Zealanders that the chairman's outlined today, and that's badly needed, and also continue to re-energise RNZ Concert, and I think we've all seen over the past week the enormous community support for that. So we are pleased with the outcome.

Lee That's a very positive spin on it. Were you surprised by the tens of thousands of people who were irate at RNZ for their decision?

Thompson No.

Lee You weren't? So does that mean that you—there were some suggestions that perhaps you actually planned this action so that the Government will give you a frequency, and your reaction was that you weren't that clever.

Thompson No, and, look, the outcome is positive and probably the most significant opportunity that's happened in public broadcasting in years, and it certainly was not a manipulated situation where we tried to engineer that. It's turned out well, though, which is good.

Lee Considering your choice to integrate The Wireless, which was actually a platform for the youth audiences, why do you think actually having a youth channel on RNZ is going to actually succeed when you've decided that Wireless wasn't actually going as well?

Thompson The Wireless was online only, and it was focused mainly on written content and multimedia, and it didn't have a broadcast option. It was also funded internally from our very scant resources. It had about four or five staff and, in the end—with its own independent website, and meanwhile the rnz.co.nz website was booming. As an organisation, we just couldn't maintain the infrastructure or the teams across two websites, so we brought The Wireless and the team into our main website, and that work is all still there in our In Depth section. What we're proposing now is a much more comprehensive service, and it will succeed in part because while it will be fully multimedia, focusing very much on being staffed by young people who represent all of New Zealand, focusing on New Zealand music and content, it will have both a broadcast and a multimedia aspect, and that's where we'll get the audience engagement.

Lee Did you not just contradict yourself?

Young OK, so Deborah Russell, then we can come back to questions.

Russell I've got a few questions; they're all related. I just want to ask you, first of all, what market testing you did around that proposal to develop a youth station.

Thompson What do you mean by market testing?

- Russell How did you understand that you needed to develop, you know—how did you gauge the size of the audience, gauge the size of the potential youth audience, look at how youth were served elsewhere? So actual rigorous market testing.
- Thompson Two key bits there. One is we looked closely at the GfK radio survey numbers, which showed the engagement of people under 30 with radio, and we assessed whether there was an opportunity there within those numbers. What that shows is that 75 percent of young people still listen to the radio. The time spent listening is dropping and the engagement is dropping, but young people still use the radio.
- The second thing we looked at was diving in-depth into the audience needs of those young people, so a significant piece of research done by Colmar Brunton—the most significant single piece of research RNZ has ever done. What that identified was a group of people who RNZ and public broadcasting doesn't connect with at all at the moment, and we think that that's a gap that we can't just let remain unfilled. But it also showed an opportunity and an appetite among those folk for something which was commercial-free, was attached to the RNZ brand, provided trusted information, and would deliver a higher quality and quantity of coverage of New Zealand music. The new brand, the new service, will play an unprecedented amount of New Zealand songs and artists, which is really positive.
- Russell OK. Thank you. So you did that market research. Did I hear you say this correctly—I might have misheard it—you said, I think, “Audiences for Concert FM tend to be old people.”?
- Thompson No. I said RNZ's audiences across the board tend to be older—right across RNZ. We've got very strong audiences, but they are 50-plus. That's a good thing, and we don't think that that's something which is not important and is something that we don't value, but if you look at our obligation to be a public broadcaster for all the community, at what point do we start to look to provide the unique thing that we do to younger age groups? Bigger public broadcasters that are very much like RNZ and operate under a similar charter in similar countries have that range of services, and we had a choice of either accepting that it was all too hard and not doing anything, or actually trying to take some steps to make sure that we were connecting with those people. We felt an obligation to do that.
- Russell But what about an obligation for the audience that is served nowhere else in terms of classical, jazz—sort of what people sometimes nastily refer to as “high culture” but is actually an important part of music as well, including New Zealand composers and New Zealand performers like, you know, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra?
- Thompson Yes, and look, we were always going to continue to record and broadcast performances by New Zealand orchestras, so that was not in doubt—that was part of the plan—and we were still going to have an RNZ Concert service that would be readily available on multiple platforms. But it is a trade-off. We have to make difficult decisions with our limited resources,

- and that was a difficult call. But I will say that we know that most of RNZ Concert's audience also listens to us on RNZ National, so it's not that we weren't providing a service that those people enjoy, and RNZ Concert was going to continue, and we wanted to do this new thing. The good opportunity is now that we can do both.
- Russell Right. OK. So I want to go back to something that Melissa Lee was asking, because I don't think I got a clear answer to it. Did you explicitly ask for a frequency for the youth radio?
- Thompson What I did is I talked about—
- Russell I've heard that. I've asked a very direct question: did you explicitly ask for a frequency?
- Thompson No. But what I did was I—
- Russell OK. Thank you. That's what I needed to know. Now, do you stand by your publicly reported comments that it was a miscommunication and it should have been communicated better?
- Thompson I do.
- Russell So where was the miscommunication?
- Thompson I think when we were talking with the Minister and we were talking about starting the staff consultation, he was talking about the option of providing this additional support. It was misunderstood that our discussions would also include mention of Concert coming off FM. That was the miscommunication.
- Russell So who was responsible for that miscommunication?
- Thompson Well, I think we just have to say that we should have done a better job of communicating it, clearly.
- Russell Because our understanding is the Minister explicitly directed you to wait.
- Thompson Well, I think this was the confusion, that—
- Russell Who's confusion?
- Thompson The Minister absolutely understood that we were going to continue with the staff consultation, but where the glitch was was whether the Concert on FM part of it was in scope. That was the confusion.
- Russell By whom?
- Thompson I think by the Minister.
- Russell So you're saying the Minister was confused?
- Thompson Not confused, but we hadn't clearly communicated it.
- Russell Well, that's different from saying the Minister was confused. You're now saying you didn't communicate it properly.
- Thompson Whichever way it played out, I can't say. We thought we had done all of the briefings that we needed to do—

- Russell Right.
- Thompson —and there was confusion. It's a complex issue. This was quite a challenging project.
- Russell [*Inaudible 13.21.00*] that complex—right, thank you.
- Lee Supplementary on that issue. There is an OIA that I did actually request through MCH. There is specific comment about 102 FM, specifically reserved-for-use FM, and that is the frequency you're announcing that you tried to communicate that you required for the purposes of Radio New Zealand's youth programme—is that right? So you've actually requested that in the way that you did—not specifically, you're saying—to the Minister, saying, "We want to actually have a youth programme on RNZ, on FM." And you're saying, "Maybe we could have that 102 FM?"—suggested—but you didn't get it. I'm thinking that's what you're trying to say.
- Thompson I can only—all I can do is—
- Lee You made your request quite clear. You did try to say earlier—
- Thompson We discussed whether it was an option to access those frequencies and the feedback was that would be unlikely to be successful, given the cost and complexity of that. Therefore, we went back and developed our plan as it stood.
- Lee Considering the fact that you've actually made your plans very clear, and that you were actually hoping that the Minister would potentially give you a frequency perhaps, do you now feel that you're basically thrown under the bus after the Concert FM thing was actually blown up?
- Thompson No.
- Marcroft Oh, thank you. Tēnā koutou katoa. Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou. I'd just like to go back to what you talked about in terms of—you looked at the GfK audience rating surveys to attest the viability of going into the youth market, bearing in mind that currently the youth market is well served across New Zealand, and that the youth actually are curating their own playlists with Spotify and all those sorts of things. Did you go and ask youth in the age group that you want to target? Will they listen to this new radio station?
- Thompson The research we did was based on a representative sample of New Zealanders, reflecting the whole community—so, yes, we did.
- Marcroft What was that sample?
- Thompson I can't recall, but it was a representative sample that was robust for research purposes. We can get the information but I can't—however many you'd need to be able to capture all those demographics.
- Mather Perhaps if I can just add, in response to your question that the youth market is well served currently, it is our view that the youth market is not well served in the context of what we are proposing. We are not proposing another youth music channel with commercial and revenue models

supporting it; what we are talking about creating here is a multimedia platform that engages young New Zealanders and it provides them with a forum to listen to music, to produce music, to be part of a dedicated platform but also it's a creation of a community whereby young people, who have a service designed by other young people, presented by other young people, and developed by other young people, get access to things like video content that's associated with things of interest to them. We're going to engage specific young influencers to be part of the development of this new platform. So, I'd just like to clarify: this is not a music station for young New Zealanders; this is a completely different concept which incorporates the important element of music.

Marcroft So people have been quoting the UK model, or even in Australia the triple j model, which 20-odd years ago there was the market availability to tap into that. Setting that up now, do you feel that you—what percentage of the audience will you capture? I think only 40-odd percent of youth actually listen to the radio. What percentage of the market do you expect to capture?

Thompson Seventy-five percent of under-30s listen to the radio at least weekly. We haven't designed this to get hundreds of thousands of listeners and create a massive brand. So we would be quite modest in our growth prospects, but you would think that we would get at least a cume of 100,000 to 200,000 within a couple of years with this service. But the point is, it's not just a radio station; it's going to be a service with that rich content available on every platform. So, yes, radio still has a future, but probably equally, if not more important, will be people accessing it on social platforms, online, on demand, through podcasts.

Marcroft Will there be a Māori voice on the youth channel?

Thompson Absolutely. We've been set four priorities by the Government under their public media policy: young New Zealanders, Pacific, Māori, and regional New Zealand. All those groups will be reflected in the strategy around the station.

Marcroft So will we hear more Māori on air?

Thompson Absolutely.

Young OK. We've got just a few more minutes. Thanks very much, Jenny. Dan Bidois has a supplementary, then Melissa's got a couple of questions, then we're coming across to Poto and to Tamati to finish off. Thank you.

Bidois Kia ora koutou katoa. Just a supplementary on the market analysis. Did you guys look at overseas countries where there's youth channels? If so, can you name where this has worked well, because I'm certainly curious as to—there's a whole different array of markets. Are other countries actually doing this and how are they successful?

Mather Before I pass it back to the chief executive, one of the requirements of the board was we wanted to have a very, very robust process around development of this strategy, given its importance to the fulfilment of our charter obligations. So I just want to emphasise that this process took us almost a year and we have actually very vigorously interrogated the rationale

behind the process—i.e., in October of last year, the RNZ board asked—directed, I should say—the management of RNZ to go back and come back with further information, just along the lines you’re talking about: “Explain to us how this has been developed in overseas jurisdictions.” So triple j in Australia, where they’re under ABC is the obvious example. BBC have a similar youth-oriented offering.

However, we did not just want to pick up one of those models, as has been referred to. They are approximately 20 years old. We wanted to provide something that is fit-for-purpose for young New Zealanders in 2020 and beyond. So that was a key requirement for the chief executive to come back to the board on. So in terms of looking at alternative international models, I’ll just let the chief executive explain further.

Thompson Look, young New Zealanders are very poorly served when it comes to public broadcasting. If you look at triple j or BBC Radio 1 in Britain, they are leading services that promote the local culture, the local voices, are staffed by local people. So that suggests there’s an opportunity. But New Zealand’s very different, and we’re not just seeing this as something which will be on the radio and that’s it. So we see it as multimedia and we think it needs to connect and be relevant to younger people with a range of content.

Lee So I’ve got a couple of questions. Going to question No. five on your annual review questions, you say you’ve participated in no working groups or reviews during the 2018-19 period. So does that actually mean that you’ve had nothing to do with the public media review under Michael Stiassny, which ran from February 2018 to June 2019 or the Māori media sector shift review which ran from October 2018 to May 2019?

Thompson We had no involvement in any working groups of that nature. We met with the Stiassny group, but it wasn’t a working session; it was just a chance for us to update them on our plans.

Lee So how do you actually react to the ministerial advisory group, who actually advised the Minister, that, potentially, Radio New Zealand, we should get rid of it; TVNZ, we should get rid of it, and actually combine it into a new public media outfit—

Thompson My view is that—

Lee —considering the fact that you haven’t actually taken part in the review?

Thompson Yeah, but subsequent to that, and since the start of the new financial year, we have been involved intensely, working with MCH and our colleagues from New Zealand on Air and TVNZ on the thinking behind this proposal.

My view on the proposal is that it has merit but it needs to be thoroughly tested with the business case process to see whether it will work. The other comment I’d make is that I don’t think we can just allow things to remain as they are across public media entities in New Zealand. The world is changing rapidly. Audiences are changing rapidly. There is enormous stress on every commercial media outlet, so we need to be open to doing things differently. And I’m encouraged that the Government is open to looking to invest in significant amounts of new funding into public media in New Zealand.

- Lee Could ask you so many more questions. One final question: in the 52nd Parliament—in my 12 years in Parliament, RNZ has actually performed really well during the annual reviews, but in the 52nd Parliament it's been quite controversial. Going back to a senior manager and former Minister relationship—we've actually had that issue here; we've dealt with it. You know, RNZ has actually come under a cloud of suspicion of mismanagement, whatever. What's happened in the last three years that actually has caused RNZ to lose the confidence of the public?
- Thompson I disagree. There'll always be challenging moments when you're trying to run an organisation in the public eye. There will always be challenging moments when you're trying to do things positively. I'm not responsible for conduct of former Ministers, which is one of the issues that you've raised. But, if you look at RNZ across the board, we've had a fantastic year.
- Our audience performance is higher than ever. We're now reaching 53 percent of New Zealanders a week. Five years ago, it wasn't a third of that. We do that across all our channels, and we've kept radio strong. We share content with over 40 media companies, including every one of them represented in this room today, and we're reaching their audiences as well. We've got more diverse content than we've ever had. Our gender pay gap has gone down from 6 percent to 0.5 percent in a year. We've launched the local democracy reporter service, in concert with the publishers. That's putting reporters into local newsrooms where there are news deserts developing.
- Young OK.
- Thompson I could go on.
- Young I know.
- Thompson We are doing really well.
- Young And I did give you more time, because I appreciate it was quite a difficult question, but we do have two final questions, and then we're going to finish off. Thank you.
- Williams Tēnā koutou. It's been a difficult few days, I guess. It's been a difficult few days for MPs as well, who have fielded questions from constituents about their beloved radio station. So I just wanted to share that with you.
- Dr Mather, you started with the comment: the nation's most trusted—
- Mather Media organisation.
- Williams —media organisation. And you've got that on your—
- Mather Yes. And it's supported by evidential research as well.
- Williams OK. So just given that trust is obviously an important aspect of your business—you're indicating that—how do you think the public trust and confidence has played out during this particular issue? How do you think the public see you now?

Mather I'll probably answer it by saying leadership is about making the right decisions not the popular decisions. It would have been very easy for us, going back to the previous question, to continue that, sail along, and not do anything of an audacious nature that was going to be transformative not just for this generation of listeners of RNZ but future generations as well. So I don't know if it's a trust issue; it probably would be a confidence issue in terms of our support for RNZ Concert.

But, to be quite frank—if I can share with you—the most interesting piece of feedback that I've received about RNZ Concert from the many hundreds if not thousands of correspondents that have contacted me in the last week is one Pākehā gentleman reframed the entire process and said he considered RNZ Concert to be a taonga tuku iho—a treasure that has been passed down from past generations. So as a Māori, that really resonated with me and gave me an insight into how connected some of our constituents are to Radio New Zealand Concert programme.

So we have got a much stronger understanding of the passion and belief in this part of our organisation, RNZ Concert. We respect all of the RNZ Concert whānau fraternity and that audience. And we will certainly ensure that we do everything we can to reassure them with confidence that we now have the opportunity to maintain this wonderful service.

Coffey Kia ora. Tēnā koutou. Just to finish off, I'm a big advocate of Radio New Zealand. I like the idea of your new youth focus. I look forward to hearing that roll out. But, just to finish off with, after the debacle that's gone on this week, what have you learnt, and what will you do differently going forward?

Thompson Good question. Probably—and, look, we haven't had time to debrief it. You'd understand we've been a bit busy dealing with it, but we will do it at some stage, probably around the clarity of those briefings and the need to actually go to great lengths to make sure there are no crossed wires. That's probably one thing.

Look, we expected the feedback to be intense, but it probably was more intense and from more quarters than we thought. And anything else that comes out of our debrief, I'll have to wait to see what that is. But those would be the two things top of mind for me.

Mather Probably, if I could just add to the chief executive's comments, just clarity of communication is probably the key message. We were so involved in this process as a board and as an executive team that everything that seemed, you know, abundantly, obviously clear to us would not be to a party that was being first introduced to it. So that's been a key learning—to actually step out and ensure that we've got an independent perspective and it's clear.

Like, one of the most frustrating things that we've heard over the last week is that New Zealand does not need another youth music station. We didn't clarify well enough exactly what we intended to do.

And, probably, if I could just take this opportunity, Mr Chairman, just to say that one question that hasn't been asked that's asked every year is just about our Māori representation on RNZ National, and I'm pleased that the

chief executive has made significant progress in that matter, and we hope to be able to make an associated announcement around that in the very near future, unless you want to talk about now.

Young Well, look, thank you very much. Thirty minutes wasn't long enough.

Mather Kia ora koutou. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou. Tenā rā koutou mō tenei—

Young Kia ora koutou. Thank you very much.

[FTR finish time: 13:07:53]

conclusion of evidence