

Hon Parekura Horomia

26/07/2007

Minister welcomes Māori Television's second channel

Māori Affairs Minister Parekura Horomia is welcoming the launch of Māori Television's second channel, which will ensure a continuing Māori language presence in the digital environment and facilitate more prime time programming in te reo.

The announcement was made today by Māori Television chief executive Jim Mather and representatives of the two stakeholders in Māori Television; Mr Horomia, on behalf of the Crown, and Tu Williams, the chairman of the Māori broadcasting electoral college Te Pūtahi Paoho.

The new channel is scheduled to be launched next year and will screen 100 per cent te reo programmes over three hours each night between 7.30 and 10.30pm – prime time viewing hours. It will transmit via the Freeview platform and also be free of advertising.

Mr Horomia said the second channel would enable Māori Television to enhance the services it delivers to fluent Māori speakers and learners of te reo, without compromising its statutory requirements to promote te reo and tikanga Māori in both English and Māori languages to a broad audience.

“There will be no decrease in the amount of Māori language programming on the first channel – in fact over time the creation of programmes for the second channel is expected to increase the Māori language content on the first channel.”

The second channel is a key component of Māori Television's digital strategy, and will ensure a continuing Māori language presence in the digital environment.

“This is particularly important as digital technologies are likely to result in more new channels in New Zealand and, without a dedicated Māori digital television service, there is the potential for a diminished presence of Māori language and culture in the lives of all New Zealanders,” Mr Horomia said.

The 2006 Health of the Māori Language Survey (the Survey) showed that 71% of Māori surveyed watch Māori language programmes on mainstream television, which shows that there is a need to ensure that Māori language programmes feature in the digital environment.

In addition the survey revealed a rapidly growing appetite among Māori adults for Māori language programmes on television.

“A second channel dedicated to the Māori language during prime time will support the goals of the Māori Language Strategy to increase both language skills and the use of the Māori language in the home.”

The Labour-led government increased Māori Television funding by \$23.1 million over four years in Budget 2007. The money was to support Māori Television's plan to move to digital television, to establish infrastructure for it and to add new programming content including on the existing, Mr Horomia said.

“Maori Television has already demonstrated its commitment to public service broadcasting by

giving New Zealand viewers new insights into, and knowledge of, Māori communities, people and events and therefore our national identity.

“It is also becoming an increasingly important language development tool and I have no doubt the extra te reo programming produced as a result of the second channel will continue to enhance both its significance and its reputation.”

.....