

## **Submission to the Draft Digital Strategy**

**by One Double Five Whare Roopu Community House,**

**155 Kamo Road Whangarei 09 437 0185**

**Carol Peters, Coordinator 021 557 498**

**carolp@ihug.co.nz**

We wish to encourage the review of broadcasting policies of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Economic Development, especially as it relates to community radio and television broadcasting. Current policy between these two agencies both endorses and at the same time discourages community involvement and local content. We are concerned that these disparities will also adversely influence community access in the switch to digital and in emergence of online streaming broadcast.

One Double Five Whare Roopu Community House is a not for profit community group that offers tea and a listening ear which fosters local community economic and social development. From this base we have been instrumental in the development of a free Cyber Whare and Cyber Whare network, a community owned health centre, emergency housing, a community law office, a youth directed school, adult courses, whanau support, a community film unit. We have been involved in the design and development of a community owned, not for profit, regional television station venture over the past three years which will go to air in July. Our submission grows from this basis.

Current policy of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage encourages the production of local content and local broadcasting that involves local people. However, community owned, not for profit television and radio broadcasters are charged prices by Kordia (Ministry of Economic Development) that greatly challenge their ability to operate in as sustainable community owned entities.

For example, the Ministry of Culture financially supports a regional television station, such as the one we are part of developing in Whangarei, by granting amounts around \$60,000 per annum. At the same time, Kordia requires \$80,000 to transmit from local mountains. Kordia notes that this is a discounted rate for a community owned broadcaster. Nevertheless, this means, in effect, that the government (who controls both Ministry of Culture and Kordia) gives little or no support to community involvement in broadcasting in this example.

We realise that at this time allocations are being made of digital spectrum and are concerned that limitations may be applied to community owned not for profit broadcasters. We note that Kordia has signed a joint venture with Northpower for the management of a fibre optic loop throughout northland and also in Whangarei. We are concerned that Kordia ownership or involvement of this will mean that there will be high costs to using this for community groups who wish to broadcast or produce digital content.

We wish to recommend that

- a) The disparity between the aims of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Economic Development in relation to community television and radio be resolved in such a way as to allow the growth of local community owned broadcasting.
- b) Sufficient digital spectrum is set aside for a robust and growing community and not for profit involvement in broadcasting.
- c) Fibre owned or joint owned or joint managed in Northland by Kordia be made available and rates that recognise the limitations of their finance for local community owned not for profit organizations who wish to stream broadcast through the internet.