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Sent: Friday, 1 July 2016 11:21 a.m.
To: Registrar
Subject: Submissions against the merger of Fairfax and NZME

To who it may concern

On behalf of the Ruapehu Bulletin, I register this submission against Wilson and Horton Ltd (trading as NZME) and Fairfax NZ Ltd who are seeking authorisation to merge their media operations in New Zealand.

A merger between the two largest media companies in the country is not in the best interests of the existing media industry and residents of this country.

If this merger is approved it will open up the possibility for:

- A monopolistic news service, covering radio and print.
- Digital news choices reduced to one source, ie currently Stuff and NZ Herald, only one will survive.
- A monopolistic approach to advertising sales, with predatory pricing to the exclusion of Independent publishers across NZ.

We have already seen this with Fairfax having taken over our neighbouring competitors at Taihape and Taumarunui – advertisers are sold multiple paper deals, shutting out independent publications. A merger between the two companies can only make this worse.

- Driving smaller independent publishers out of their respective areas and local community.

We have already seen this – the Taihape and Taumarunui papers used to be locally-owned. Now, as Fairfax papers, they are identical in content past the first few pages, reducing their local news to a bare minimum. A merger with NZME would extend this reduction in service to other areas such as Whanganui.

- A reduction in the quality and quantity of Editorial scrutiny and content across the country.
- The reduction in employment opportunities in all publishing categories, and the resulting drop in training through the established and approved ITO's, i.e. a dumbing down of the industry .
- The 'Fourth Estate' was acknowledged as the eyes and ears of the residents of this country, to put the control in the hands of one company would be seen as a great injustice to all New Zealanders.

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