

To whom it may concern

On behalf of the Nelson Weekly and Waimea Weekly 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 Australian media companies in this 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. In particular the severe watering down of local news vital to a healthy community
  - Digital news choices reduced to one source, ie currently Stuff and NZ Herald, only one will survive. Falling in line with the overseas ownership of the majority of commercial radio stations.
  - A monopolistic approach to advertising sales, with predatory pricing to the exclusion of Independent publishers across NZ. This is already occurring particularly in their existing weaker areas with discounts of over 80% being used to drive local owned media out.
  - Driving smaller independent publishers out of their respective areas and local community.
  - A reduction in the quality and quantity of Editorial scrutiny and content across the country. Working from a central point called a hub it will be that Auckland supplies news for Nelson. Again this is already occurring.
  - 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. Already Fairfax is currently laying off staff in waves but lots of small amounts keeping it under the radar.
- 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 overseas company would be seen as a great injustice to all New Zealanders.

Thank you

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