



RNZ chief executive Paul Thompson outlines his vision for the organisation



The industry panel at Jeanz, from left, Tony Wall, Tim Murphy, Kirsty Johnston and Aimie Cronin



The Jeanz conference delegates.

Industry voices heard at Jeanz conference

RNZ is well on the way to doubling its audience and balancing its books, says RNZ chief executive Paul Thompson.

These were among the messages in Paul's keynote address at this year's Jeanz conference, hosted by Wintec's journalism school in Hamilton on June 29-30.

RNZ's audience was 500,000 a few years ago, but has now grown to 800,000.

"Our target is 1.2 million by 2022," Paul said.

The audience growth has been achieved by such innovations as RNZ's partnerships with other news organisations – including Stuff – and its multimedia programmes, like Checkpoint.

The government has a more receptive attitude towards improving RNZ's funding and this, plus revenue from various co-ventures, has seen the organisation's deficit almost gone, Paul said.

He also outlined other plans for the state broadcaster.

More RNZ staff would be based around the country.

The recent major earthquakes in Wellington made RNZ realise its operations were too centralised, Paul said.

“We were lucky, in that the earthquakes were near enough that we could easily report on them but far enough away that our building on The Terrace was not affected.”

RNZ may not be so lucky next time, so Paul intends to eventually have half the staff based outside RNZ’s headquarters in the capital.

RNZ has a major Maori strategy, which will be “woven into the fabric of RNZ”, Paul said.

Te reo is achieving a higher status at RNZ, including Maori language sign-offs on news reports. RNZ is also working more closely with Maori media organisations.

On the new-technology front, RNZ is trialling software that will allow listeners to quickly give oral feedback on events in the news, with the comments automatically transcribed into text for RNZ’s use.

“Machines transcribe at 95 per cent accuracy, people at about 90 per cent,” Paul said.

Other industry people also spoke at the conference, including a panel comprising NZME investigative reporter Kirsty Johnston, Fairfax investigative reporter Tony Wall and newsroom.co.nz co-editor Tim Murphy. The panel was chaired by freelance journalist and Wintec editor-in-residence Aimie Cronin.

The panel’s wide-ranging discussion included debates around the lack of ethnic diversity in the industry’s workforce, pay rates, new technology and the status of that old chestnut, shorthand - Kirsty still uses hers, Tony never learnt it!

Jeanz members and others presented numerous papers at the two-day conference, including on the New Zealand journalist workforce in an international context, Pasifika media, and teaching millennials social media skills for journalism.

Many of the presenters’ Power-point slides can be viewed under Research papers on the JEANZ website.

New faces at AUT



AUT’s new head of journalism,
Louise Matthews.



AUT’s new head of the School of Communication Studies,
Professor Berrin Yanikkaya

The new head of journalism at AUT is Louise Matthews.

Louise studied at AUT and later lectured in multimedia journalism at the university. She was most recently the programme leader for the MA in Multimedia Journalism at Bournemouth University.

She has worked as a journalist in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, including at Television New Zealand, *The New Zealand Herald* and the *Daily Mirror*.

She will start at AUT in August.

AUT's new head of the School of Communication Studies is Professor Berrin Yanikkaya, currently professor in communication science at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey.

The acting dean of the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies, Pro Vice-Chancellor Philip Sallis, said Professor Yanikkaya was chosen from a field of well-qualified and able applicants.

"Berrin stood out among the candidates for her energy of purpose, clarity of vision for the school and obvious grasp of the issues and challenges it faces."

Professor Yanikkaya will begin her role in July.

Professor David Robie speaking at the World Press Freedom Day conference, alongside an effigy of a blindfolded and gagged journalist. Photo: Alliance of Independent Journalists.



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David Robie plays key role at global press freedom event

Pacific Media Centre director Professor David Robie was a keynote speaker at a dissident seminar on Media Freedom in West Papua, held as part of the largest media freedom conference ever.

The four-day UNESCO World Press Freedom Day event was held in Jakarta in May, attracting 1500 delegates.

But the conference's UNESCO and Indonesian Press Council hosts were accused of trying to gag discussion on media freedom in Indonesia's troubled provinces of Papua and West Papua.

Hence the dissident seminar, which was “packed” with delegates, David said.

Despite the controversy, David greatly enjoyed his time at the conference.

“It was an awesome experience – quite simply the best conference I have ever been to.

“The hospitality from the hosts was superb. This developing nation – the country with the world’s largest Muslim population – with a thing to prove about media freedom, meant they pulled out all stops to make this a memorable occasion.”

World Press Freedom Day is marked annually on May 3.