

CHiLD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP



AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC MEDIA BILL

SUBMISSION: SEPTEMBER 2022

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) is an independent charity working to eliminate child poverty in New Zealand through research, education and advocacy. CPAG believes that New Zealand's high level of child poverty is not the result of economic necessity but is due to policy neglect and a flawed ideological emphasis on economic incentives. Through research, CPAG highlights the position of tens of thousands of New Zealand children, and promotes public policies that address the underlying causes of the poverty they live in. CPAG recognises the foundational significance of te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa and works to realise its true intent.

Correspondence to:

Dana Wensley, PhD

Child Poverty Action Group

Email: research@cpag.org.nz

1. INTRODUCTION

The media plays an important role in creating and enforcing public awareness and perceptions of children and poverty in New Zealand / Aotearoa. Media gives voice to persons with lived experience of poverty, and the complex relationship between the media and poverty provides a rich body of academic analysis (see for example Susan Borden, *The Routledge Companion to Media and Poverty: 2021*). What follows is a submission focused on the rights of the child through the lens of poverty and socio-economic variance. It is important that children's voices are heard, both as content creators and consumers of media. We have read the submission of the New Zealand Children's Screen Trust and support their recommendations calling for a stronger focus in the proposed Bill on children's rights, and the provision on the Board of a children's expert.

2. CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A child impact assessment should be added to the Bill.

We note that the Aotearoa New Zealand Public Media Bill (the Bill) provides limited specific objectives in relation to children and young people. Pursuant to section 2 there are objectives to:

- (g) support children's and young people's—
 - (i) emotional, physical, and mental well-being:
 - (ii) creativity, learning, and development:
 - (iii) social participation and sense of belonging:
- (h) ensure that content and services are available and accessible to—
 - (i) all regions and communities; and
 - (ii) New Zealanders of all ages, genders, abilities, and ethnicities:

Section 12 sets out the functions of the Bill which include:

- (h) reflects the needs and experiences of New Zealanders—
 - (i) of all ages, genders, abilities, and ethnicities; and
 - (ii) from all regions and communities:

To give effect to these objectives and functions, the Bill should provide additional focus to how these mechanisms of support will be demonstrated, and what cultural, age and stage, socioeconomic, and regional barriers will be taken into account in the provision of services to children and youth. To reflect the experiences of all ages, more insight needs to be gained from children and engagement with children undertaken from a range of ages, regions, ethnicity, and social and cultural backgrounds and genders. This is necessary to give effect to the government's obligations to engage with children and youth under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention).


We note that the New Zealand government does have a Child Impact Assessment Tool ¹ that aims to assist government in assessing whether a policy of new legislation will improve the wellbeing of children and young people. We can find no analysis in this Bill of any impact assessment. Child impact assessment is part of the government's obligations as signatories to the Convention, and aims to ensure that the best interests of the child are incorporated into legislation and policy as a primary concern (Article 3).

It is also expected under the Convention that the views of children and young persons are respected and given weight in any decisions by government. We understand that there has been limited consultation with rangatahi in the charter engagement, but no wider consultation with children or youth. The three core groups engaged with were:

- media ecosystem stakeholders - including current public media, private media, community media, industry bodies, advertisers, content producers
- Māori media and Māori representative entities
- key audiences for a new public entity, including those who are currently under-served or under-engaged.

Children would fit into the category of 'key audiences for the new public entity who are currently underserved'. Data set out in section three of this report clearly shows the lack of programming for children, particularly pre-school age and older children, who are more likely to turn to radio and television (as opposed to social media, streaming, or internet) for entertainment and content.

It is important to note that youth should also be viewed as both content providers and consumers. Youth and multicultural youth organisations have been involved in generating content for Community Access Radio² and this operates as a successful learning pathway, a means of cultural expression, and a means to connect with others who live in isolated rural communities. Rural populations experience high rates of social isolation, and poor access to cell phone and internet connectivity. Radio and television remains an important link for them, and their voices need to be supported and engaged with so they can be reflected in the media. High levels of poverty exist in rural communities and the voices of these children are often not heard. It is important these voices are included in the feedback and consultation around the media merger. Due consideration should be given to how these groups can be engaged with, and the need for the merger to strengthen and support their media involvement at a regional and local level. See Figure 1 below for an example of the youth-run Community Access Radio shows in Nelson and Tasman which has a significant rural population. This shows this age bracket as both content creators and as consumers.




Radio Club

🎧 Children and Youth 🗣️ English

Collingwood Area School Students (with support from other Golden Bay Schools) host Radio club, with school news, information and music.

[📍 Episodes and More](#)




TBH

🎧 Children and Youth 🗣️ English

Fun, Games, Facts, Music and more with Gemma and Amos.

[📍 Episodes and More](#)




That's MYNT

🎨 Arts and Culture 🌐 Various

A Programme by and about Multi-Cultural Youth Nelson Tasman.

[📍 Episodes and More](#)




The Dinner Club

🎧 Children and Youth 🗣️ English

Emily, Millie and Alex, Students from Nelson College for Girls host The Dinner Club. Music chat and fun!

[📍 Episodes and More](#)



The Jam Takaka

🎧 Children and Youth 🗣️ English

Good music and information about youth-oriented events and opportunities in The Tasman District.

Figure 1 Fresh FM website

3. CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY: OVERVIEW

Children living in poverty and low-income environments access and experience media in different ways to their wider cohort. This is further discussed in section 4 below. This section provides an overview of poverty in New Zealand to form a basis for the discussion that follows.

One in ten children (11%) in New Zealand live in material hardship. However there are significant discrepancies in the rates of poverty for different groups. Māori and Pasifika children suffer much higher rates (23-28%) compared with that for European or Asian children/ethnicities (6-10%).³ Around one in five Māori children (20.2% of 298,000 or 60,300 children) live in material hardship. Around one in four Pasifika children (24% of 141,500 children or 34,000) live in material hardship.

Figure 1 below sets out additional data from the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Annual Report for year ending 30 June 2021, which shows data on the trends for years 2019/2020, and 2021/2022.

There also significantly higher rates of poverty for children with a disability or those who are cared for by a family member who has a disability. According to the Child Poverty Monitor, “disabled children, and children living in a household with at least one disabled person, were left behind in the progress toward the child poverty reduction targets.”⁴

For disabled children, the material hardship rate is one in five (20.5% of 126,800 children). For severe material hardship it is 10.3% compared, with non-disabled children (at 4.2%). Children in households with a disabled member have four times the rate of severe material hardship compared to children in a non-disabled household (10.3% and 2.5% respectively).

For the year ended June 2021, the annual household disposable income for disabled people was \$42,239 which is lower than the average household equivalised disposable income for non-disabled people of \$51,683.⁵ However, the costs associated with disability are high. builds of state housing are aimed to be assessable.

While we acknowledge the progress made towards lifting some children out of poverty, we remain concerned with the lack of progress for Māori, Pasifika, and disabled children.⁶ Progress against the baseline measures since 2017/2018 is shown below.

Progress since the baseline year (2017/18) on primary measures in the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018.

Measures	Rate (%)				Change in rate
	Year ended June 2018	Year ended June 2019	Year ended June 2020	Year ended June 2021	Year ended June 2018–2021
Before-housing-cost primary measure (moving line)	16.5 (183,400 children)	13.5 (153,200 children)	13.2 (151,200 children)	13.6 (156,700 children)	-2.9 (-26,700)
After-housing-cost primary measure (fixed line)	22.8 (253,800 children)	18.3 (207,700 children)	17.8 (203,300 children)	16.3 (187,300 children)	-6.5 (-66,500)
Material hardship primary measure	13.3 (147,600 children)	13.2 (149,400 children)	11.5 (131,700 children)	11.0 (125,700 children)	-2.3 (-21,900)

Figure 2 Source Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Annual Report for Year Ending 30 June 2021 (April 2022) p 30

Poverty is also seen in rural and isolated populations as the below graph demonstrates:

Severe material hardship

Year ended June 2021

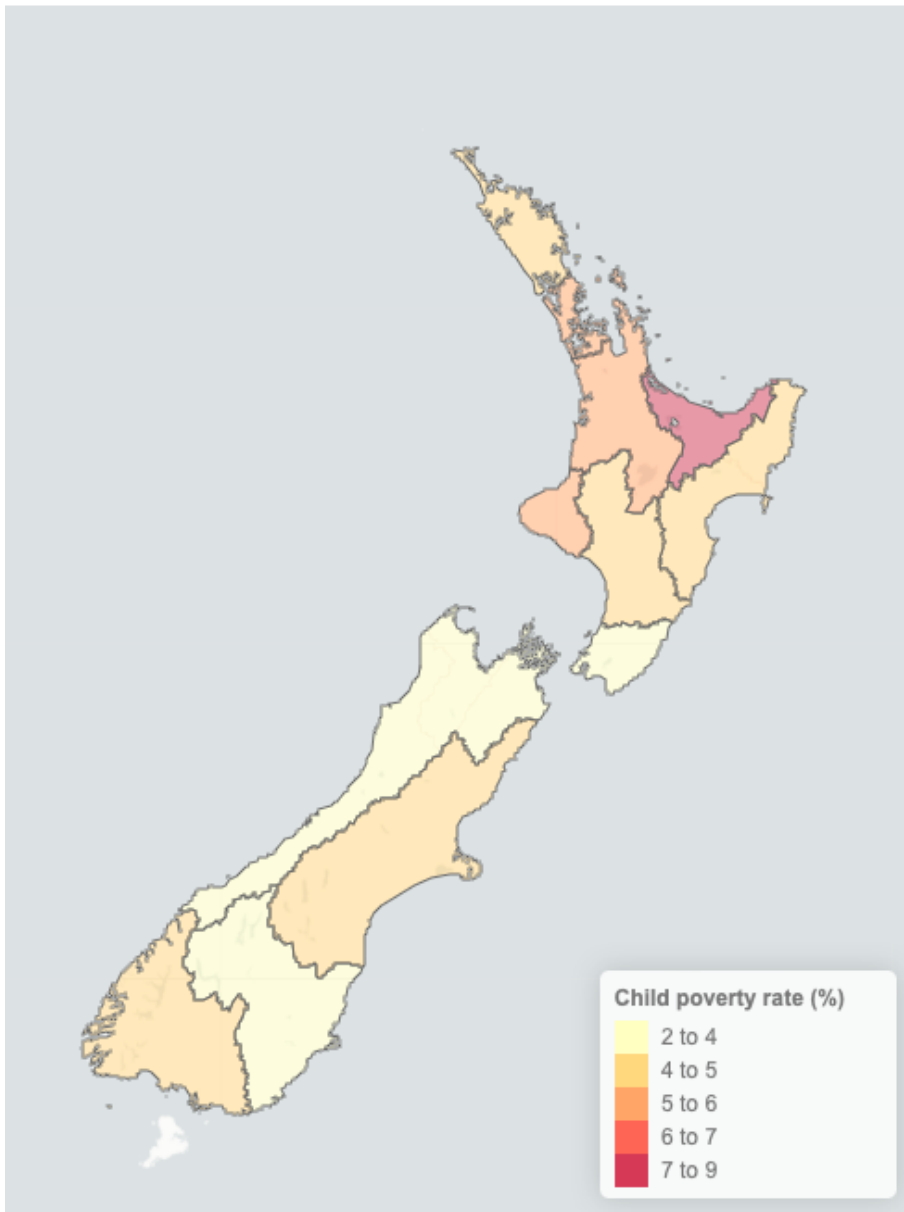


Figure 3 Severe material hardship stats per region, Stats NZ

The needs of children in poverty need to be taken into account in the Bill.

4. CHILD-CENTRIC MEDIA ANALYSIS: DATA SUMMARY COLMAR BRUNTON POLL

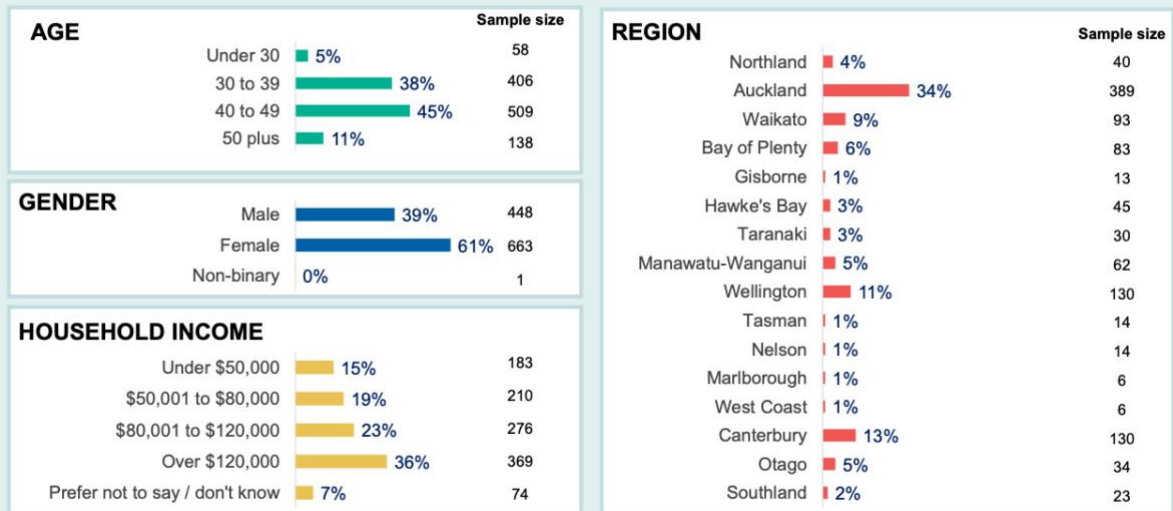
Children need to be provided with programming that is safe, and appropriate for their age and stage. Specific channels dedicated to pre-school age (and then age brackets rising to 18 years) should be considered the gold standard. While New Zealand is a small country, and making content and service provision in small subsets is financially challenging, in order to give effect to the Convention articles it is crucial that children are provided with content that meets their developmental needs and does not expose them to disturbing images or content.

For pre-school age, statistics suggest that the Bill should strengthen the aspects of the merger that relate to childrens' content and that awareness needs be built into the Bill of the discrepancies in the manner in which children of different ages and stages, and socioeconomic groups access media. Satisfaction rates for pre-schoolers in current media offerings is low, and this is a crucial age for them to be exposed to positive, strong, local influences to encourage language growth and development of key concepts and cultural awareness.

Below we provide a summary of data from the Children's Media Use survey undertaken by Colmar Brunton⁷ commissioned by the Broadcasting Standards Authority March 2020. It is useful to show a snapshot of media use and children and youth, the changing face of media and content delivery, and trends across ages and socioeconomic / ethnic groups in terms of access.

While the Colmar Brunton survey provides data is useful to shed light on media usage, it has its limitations in terms of reach into remote, rural areas of New Zealand and is dominated by respondents who earn in the higher wage brackets with 59% earning over \$80,000 (of which 36% earned over \$120,000).

Sample profile – parents and caregivers



NOTE: % represents the weighted proportion (nationally representative of the Census). n is unweighted sample size
 Source: S5Q2. Are you? | S5Q1. In which of these age groups do you belong? | S6. Which of the categories best describes the gross combined income of you and your partner, if you have one, before tax? | COLMAR BRUNTON 2020 133
 S6b. In which one of the following regions do you live?

Figure 4 Source: Colmar Brunton Survey 'Children's Media Use' June 2020

Given the discrepancies shown in the level of media viewing for lower socio-economic groups, more research and attention needs to be given to the importance of Television media as an entertainment and education value for children whose parents are in low-income brackets. Media for this group is a key learning and language opportunity that cannot be measured in terms of economic return or entertainment value. Priority should be given to childrens' programming for pre-school age and pre-teens to encourage local programmes that reflect them and the world they live in.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Television is still widely available in homes across New Zealand, with smartphone and computer (or laptop) coming a close second and third.

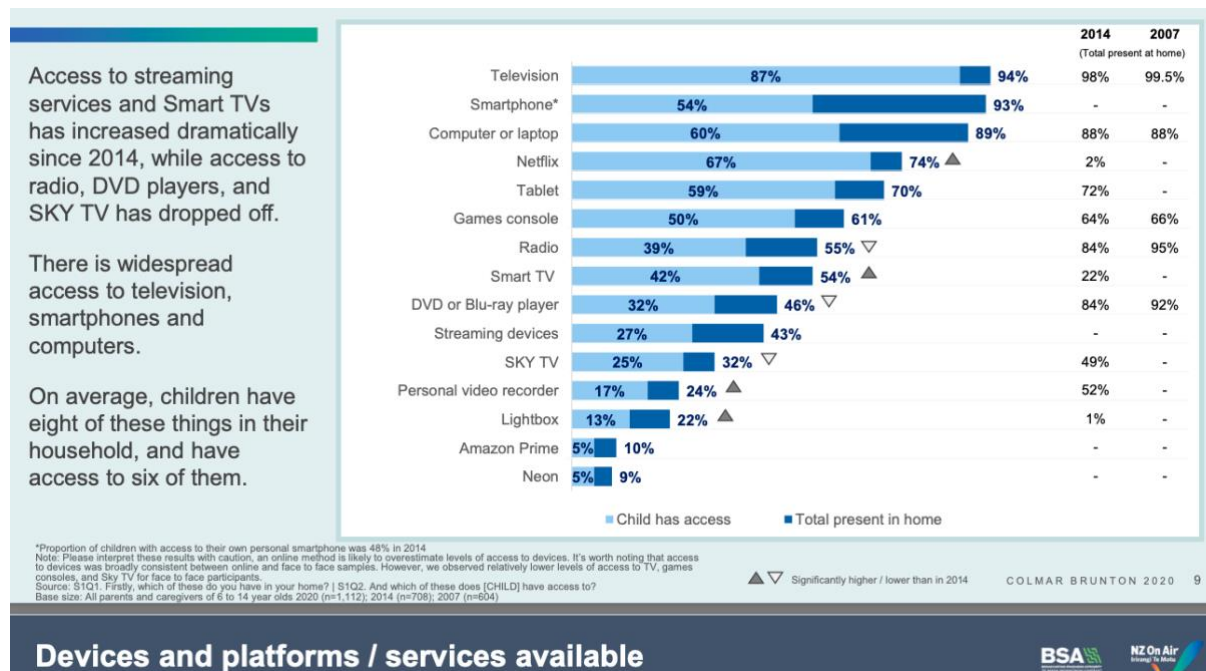


Figure 5 Source Colmar Brunton (June 2020)

If we break that data down by socioeconomic group we see discrepancies begin to emerge, with those from lower socioeconomic groups having less access to computers or streaming services.

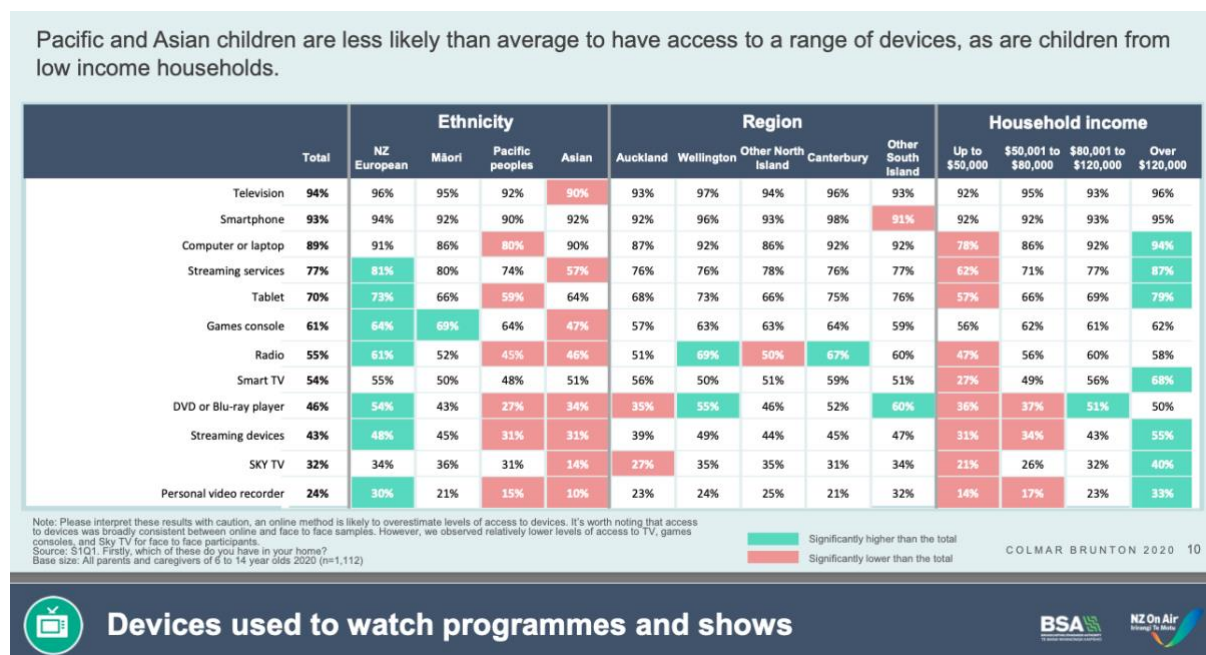


Figure 6 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Children spend on average most of their time with media content watching television and shows or the internet.

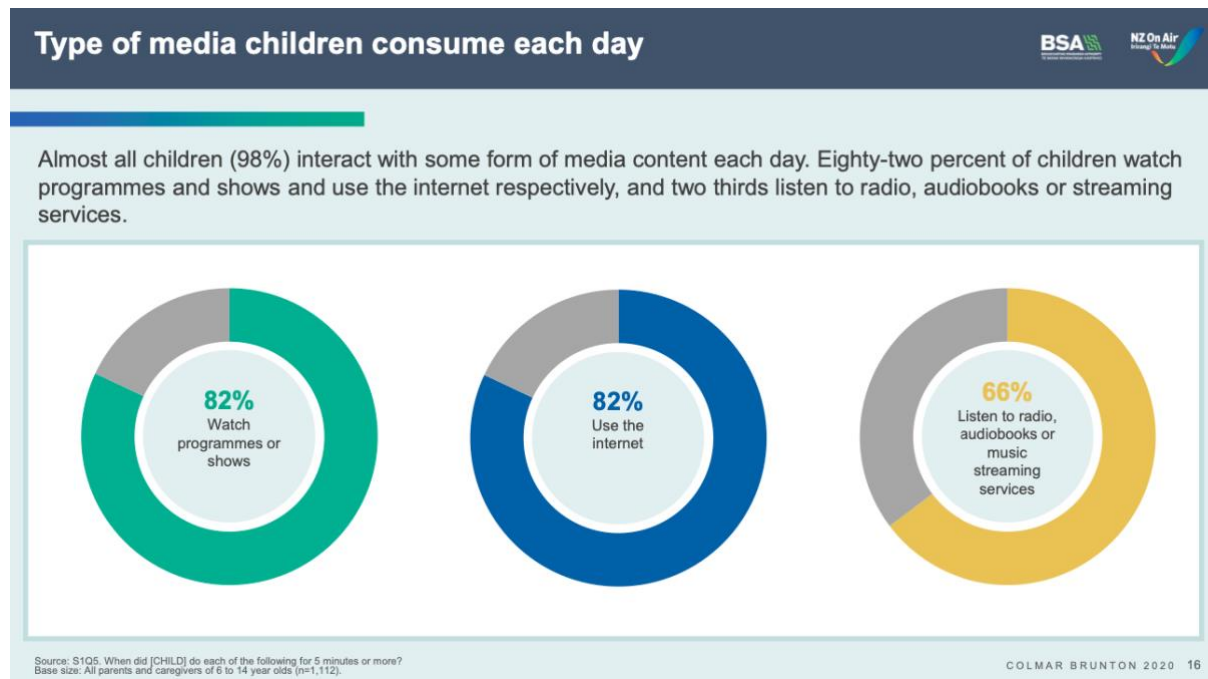
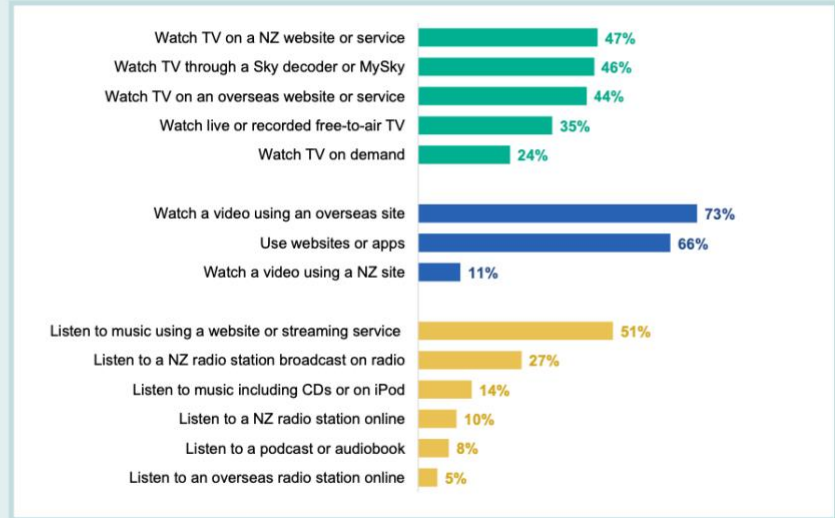


Figure 7 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Overseas content is consumed in high numbers, suggesting either New Zealand children are not being given the quality of content that is suitable for their needs, or that New Zealand children prefer to view overseas material for other reasons. Without knowing more about the reasons for this discrepancy we cannot draw conclusions from the preference for overseas content.

Type of media children consume each day

When we break these broad categories down, we see the most popular activities are watching videos online and using websites and apps.



Source: S1Q5. When did [CHILD] do each of the following for 5 minutes or more? Base size: All parents and caregivers of 6 to 14 year olds (n=1,112). Excludes don't know responses.

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Figure 8 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Those in low income bracket have a higher rate of watching TV on Demand.

Age is the biggest differentiator when it comes to the content children consume. Older children are more likely to use online platforms and apps which often require the user to find content themselves.

	Total	Age			Gender		Ethnicity				Household income			
		6 to 8 years	9 to 11 years	12 to 14 years	Male	Female	NZ European	Māori	Pacific peoples	Asian	Up to \$50,000	\$50,001 to \$80,000	\$80,001 to \$120,000	Over \$120,000
Watch TV on a NZ website or service	47%	49%	45%	48%	44%	51%	47%	49%	49%	41%	40%	51%	44%	52%
Watch TV through SKY decoder or MySky	46%	44%	47%	48%	45%	48%	46%	52%	45%	36%	47%	46%	48%	45%
Watch TV on an overseas website or service	44%	46%	40%	48%	43%	47%	41%	49%	47%	46%	42%	46%	42%	48%
Watch live or recorded free-to-air TV	35%	33%	36%	35%	34%	35%	34%	31%	31%	35%	41%	32%	39%	32%
Watch TV on demand	24%	23%	22%	27%	24%	24%	21%	28%	30%	24%	32%	23%	24%	22%
Watch a video online using an overseas site	73%	61%	72%	86%	73%	72%	71%	78%	74%	77%	77%	69%	77%	72%
Use websites or apps	66%	45%	69%	87%	65%	67%	66%	68%	72%	60%	66%	68%	70%	65%
Watch a video online using a NZ site	11%	8%	9%	16%	12%	9%	9%	10%	14%	14%	13%	10%	12%	11%
Listen to music on a website or streaming service	51%	41%	46%	69%	49%	54%	48%	61%	58%	57%	49%	51%	56%	50%
Listen to a NZ radio station broadcast on radio	27%	26%	29%	26%	26%	28%	29%	29%	21%	23%	27%	22%	31%	28%
Listen to music on CDs or iPod	14%	14%	11%	18%	14%	14%	11%	15%	13%	18%	21%	14%	14%	12%
Listen to a NZ radio station online	10%	11%	10%	11%	11%	10%	9%	9%	15%	10%	7%	12%	14%	10%
Listen to a podcast or audiobook	8%	9%	6%	8%	9%	7%	6%	7%	10%	12%	8%	8%	10%	7%
Listen to an overseas radio station online	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	4%	3%	4%	11%	8%	5%	8%	8%	2%

Source: S1Q5. When did [CHILD] do each of the following for 5 minutes or more? Base size: All parents and caregivers of 6 to 14 year olds (n=1,112). Excludes don't know responses.

Significantly higher than the total
Significantly lower than the total

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Figure 9 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Children spend over an hour a day watching TV on a New Zealand website or service.

How long children spend on different activities

Of all the activities we asked about, children spend the most time watching videos online on overseas platforms.

The least amount of time is spent listening to New Zealand radio online, and watching video content on local websites.



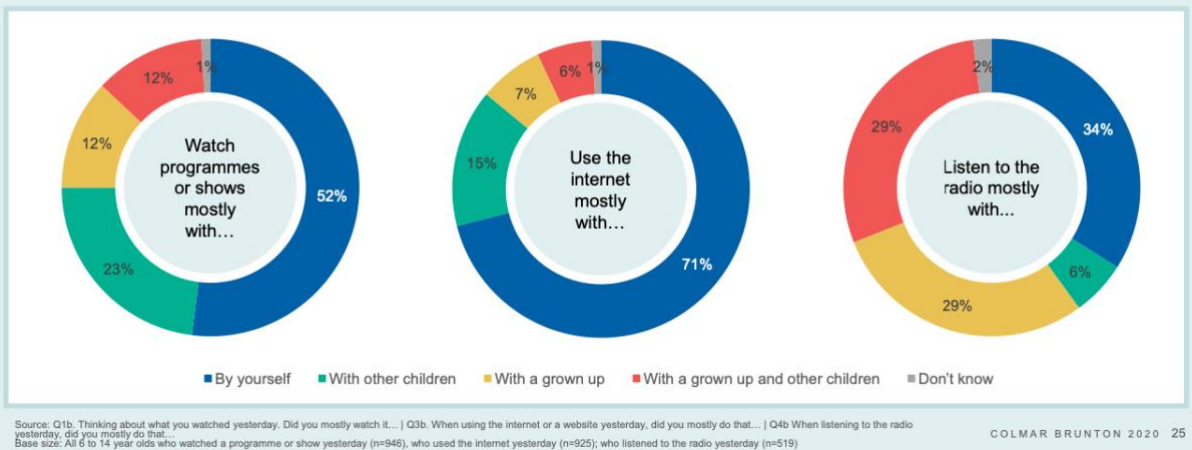
Source: S1Q7. Still thinking about yesterday, how long did [CHILD] spend on each of these activities in total? Base size: All parents and caregivers of 6 to 14 year olds who did each activity yesterday (n=58 to n=789).

COLMAR BRUNTON 2020 22

Figure 10 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Lack of supervision is a key concern in relation to childrens' viewing habits. Over half the children surveyed watched TV shows on their own, with no parental guidance or other children. For internet use this figure increased dramatically to 71%.

Watching programmes and shows and using the internet are largely solo activities. In contrast, children most often listen to the radio with a grown up present, suggesting much of children's radio exposure is second hand and they are not actively seeking out this type of content on their own.



Source: Q1b. Thinking about what you watched yesterday, did you mostly watch it... | Q3b. When using the internet or a website yesterday, did you mostly do that... | Q4b. When listening to the radio yesterday, did you mostly do that... Base size: All 6 to 14 year olds who watched a programme or show yesterday (n=946), who used the internet yesterday (n=925), who listened to the radio yesterday (n=519)

COLMAR BRUNTON 2020 25

Figure 11 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

43% of children aged 6-8 years were watching TV on their own, and 58% watching internet on their own, which shows the importance of safe and trusted spaces for children.

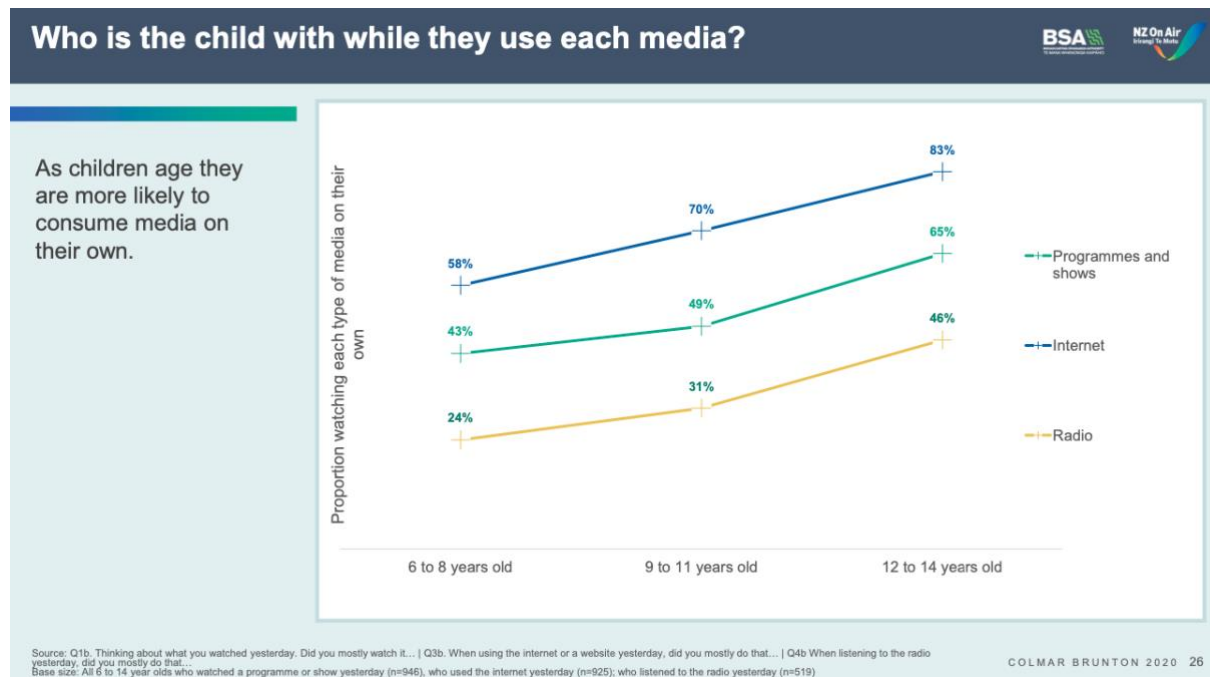


Figure 12 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Income plays a role in media use for children. This suggests that further analysis need be undertaken into the effects on children on the public media merger, and its establishment.

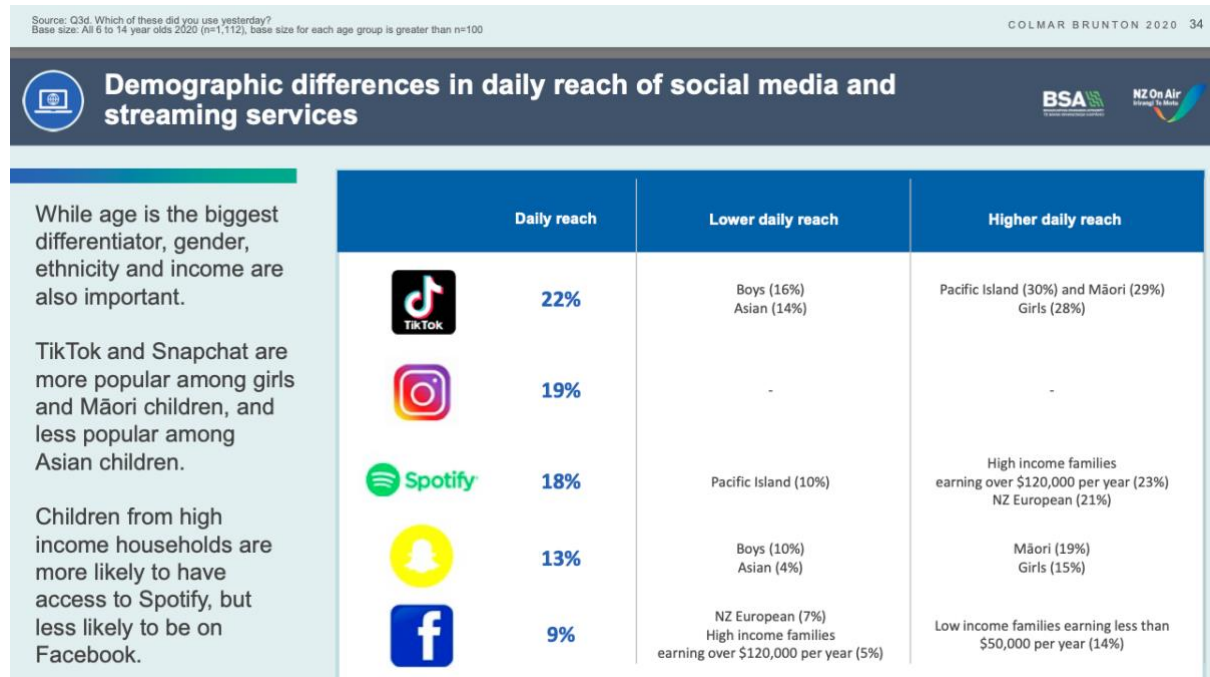


Figure 13 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

For pre-schoolers, overseas shows such as Peppa Pig and Paw Patrol are most preferred, and no favourite New Zealand TV show was indicated in the survey. This suggests a failure in the provision of a sufficient number of shows which are discoverable and engage young children at the appropriate stage age/stage of development and capture their imagination.

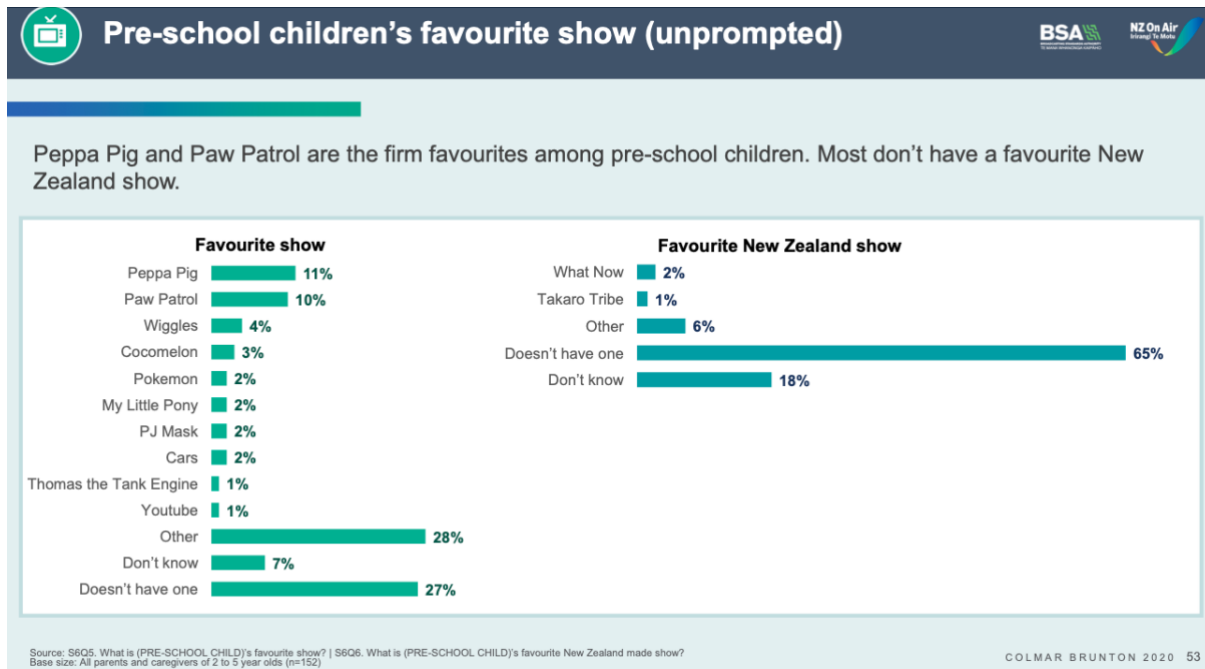


Figure 14 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020



Figure 15 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

While there is an awareness of local content on HEIHEI, it is not strongly supported by parents and caregivers as a great place to find local content. 47% of Children ages 6-8 either 'love' or 'like' the local content on HEIHEI, suggesting that it was successful with a targeted, narrow age band.

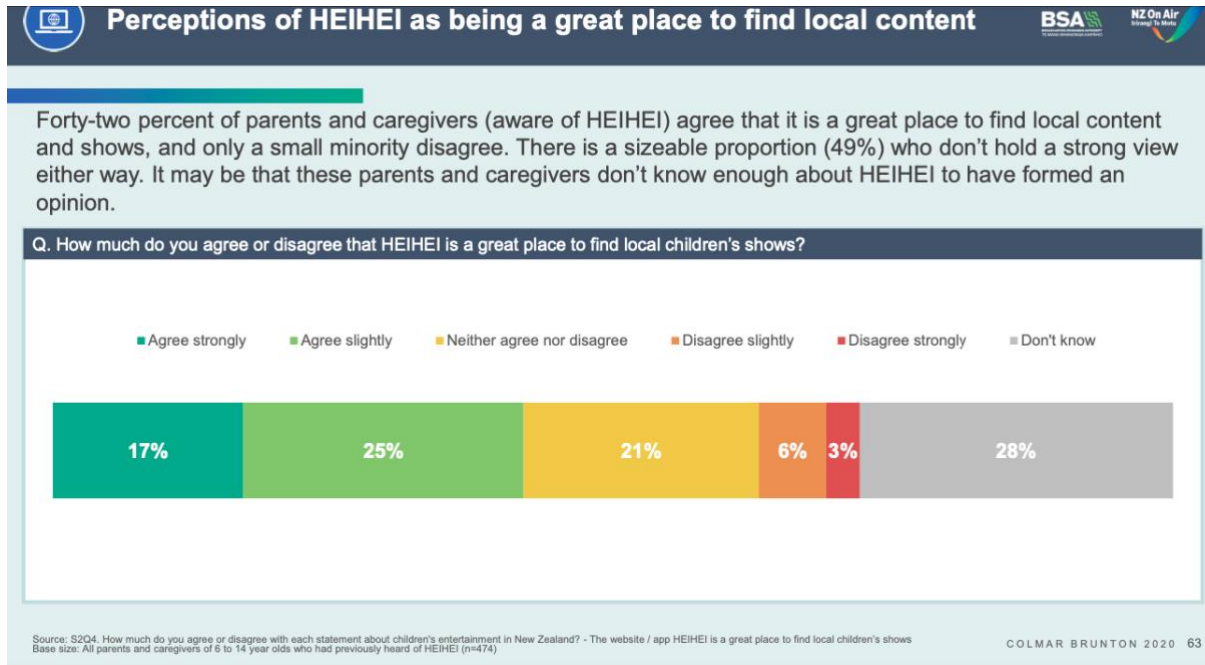


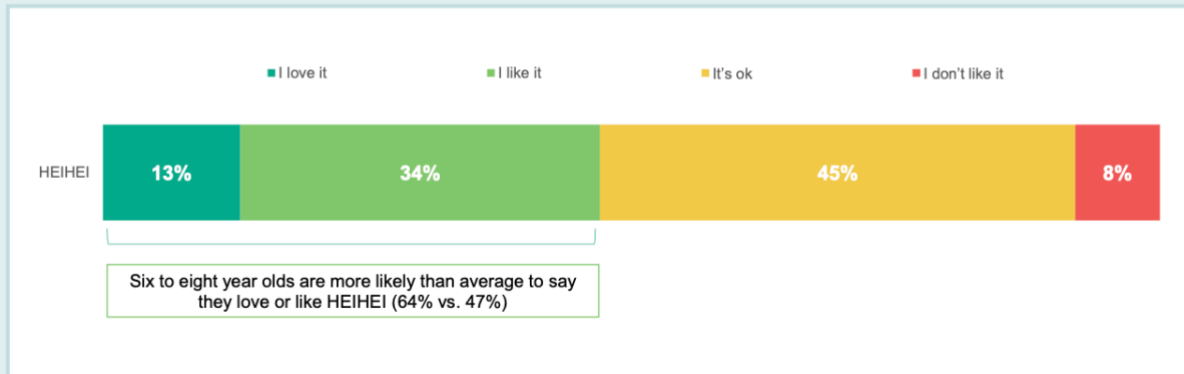
Figure 16 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020



Enjoyment of HEIHEI



Nearly half of those tamariki who have used HEIHEI enjoy it, with 13% saying they love it. However, this does leave 53% who aren't particularly enthusiastic about the platform. Younger children tend to like HEIHEI more than older children.



Source: Q10dv. How much do you like HEIHEI?
Base size: All 6 to 14 year olds who have used HEIHEI before (n=170)

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Figure 17 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

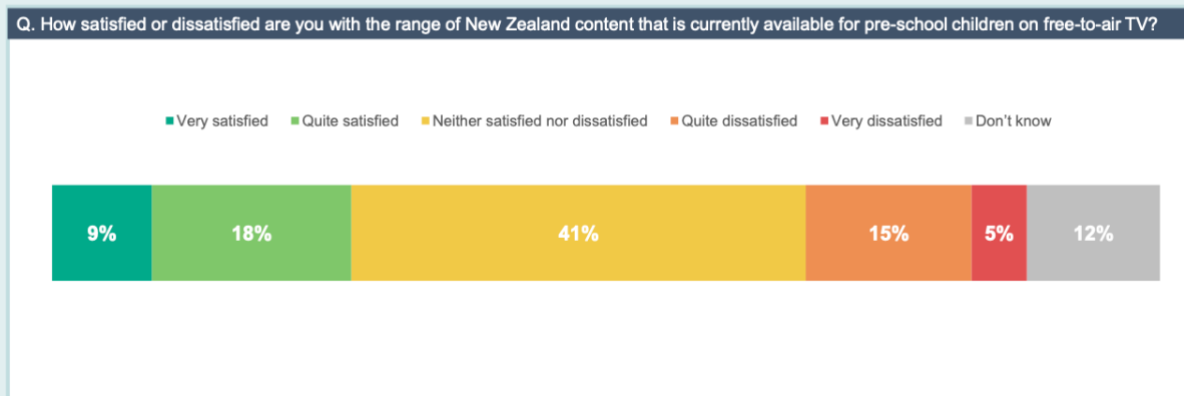
For pre-school age, statistics suggest that the Bill should strengthen the aspects of the merger that relate to childrens' content and that awareness needs be built into the Bill of the discrepancies in the manner in which children of different ages and stages, and socioeconomic groups access media. Satisfaction rates for pre-schoolers is low, and this is a crucial age for them to be exposed to positive, strong, local influences to encourage language growth and development of key concepts.



Satisfaction with the range of New Zealand-made content for pre-school children on free-to-air TV



Twenty-six percent of parents and caregivers are satisfied with the range of New Zealand content available for their pre-school children, however 20% disagree. The remaining 53% are on the fence.



Source: S6Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the range of New Zealand content that is currently available for pre-school children on free to air TV channels such as TVNZ 2, Three, or Prime?
Base size: All parents and caregivers of 2 to 5 year olds (n=152)

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Figure 18 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

Children need to be provided with programming that is safe, and appropriate for their age and stage. It is disturbing that 87% of children over the age of 10 years of age have been exposed to content that is upsetting. Building a strong, age appropriate public media programme offering across all ages and stages is a crucial commitment to children and must be provided for in the Bill.

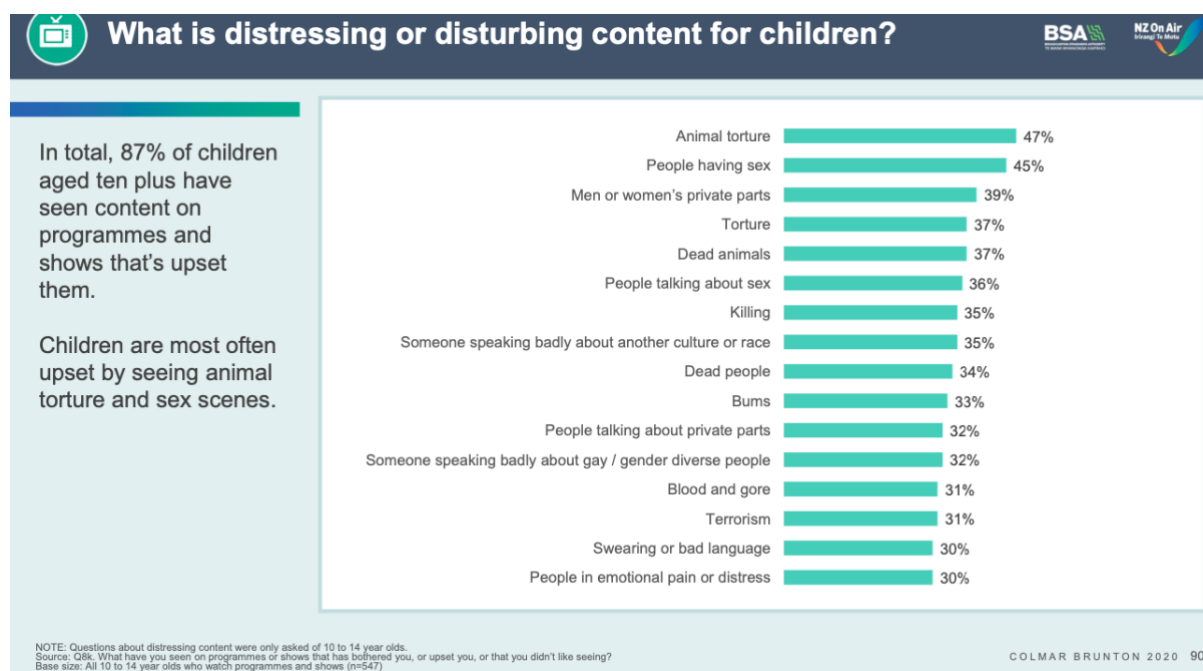


Figure 19 Source Colmar Brunton June 2020

CONCLUSION

We consider the merger needs to strengthen the Bill from a child's rights perspective: engage with children and youth, include a child impact assessment, and meet the needs of children in poverty.

We also support the recommendations contained in the submission from the NZ Children's Screen Trust.

¹ Child Impact Assessment Tool, <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/resources/child-impact-assessment.html>

² Community Access Radio, <https://www.nzonair.govt.nz/about/our-funding-strategy/community-access-radio/>

³ See Bryan Perry, 'Child Poverty in New Zealand: The demographics of child poverty, survey-based descriptions of life 'below the line' including the use of child-specific indicators, and international comparisons - with discussion of some of the challenges in measuring child poverty and interpreting child poverty statistics' (Ministry of Social Development, Wellington) June 2021, p 25

⁴ M Duncanson, H van Asten, et al, 'Child Poverty Monitor: Technical Report' 2021 (Commissioned Report for External Body) New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10523/12540>

⁵ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/household-income-and-housing-cost-statistics-year-ended-june-2021>

⁶ Child Poverty Action Group, 'Bold Policy Change Needed to Support Stagnant Child Poverty Rates' Feb 24, 2022 <https://www.cpag.org.nz/media-releases/bold-policy-changes-needed-urgently-to-shift-stagnant-child-poverty-rates>

⁷ Children's Media Use (June 2020), Colmar Brunton
https://d3r9t6niqlb7tz.cloudfront.net/media/documents/2020_Childrens_Media_Use_Research_Report.pdf