



SBS Managing Director Michael Ebeid
2016 SBS Parliamentary Showcase
Tuesday 23 February 2016

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Introduction

Good evening everybody and thank you for coming.

Can I also acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

Thank you, Minister, for those words of support for SBS.

This is the first time we've hosted a Parliamentary showcase in over three years. But we're here, because it's important that we ensure you, our Parliamentary supporters, know where SBS is headed, and how we are delivering on our Charter.

Forty years ago the Parliament saw it as a valuable investment to set up a *special* broadcasting service, dedicated to servicing the needs of multicultural Australia; to help new migrants participate in Australian life, and to help all cultures understand each other better. Australia is envied internationally for that foresight, because, SBS is a great Australian success story.

Today, if we ask ourselves: Is it more or less important for Australia to maintain investment in a broadcaster with a specific purpose to tell the stories of multicultural Australia?

When you consider our increasing cultural complexity and the challenges that Australia faces in navigating social cohesion at home and as part of a global community, the role of SBS is more important and more relevant today than at any point in our history. And it's fantastic that we also have more audiences engaging with us than ever before.

Our television audiences are up 11 per cent and we are using digital technology to reach multicultural communities, with more multilingual programs and services than ever across all platforms, television, radio, online and via our digital services.

We've listened to what our audiences want, which is to get their favourite programs in their own time, and on their own devices. That's why we've invested in SBS On Demand, where audiences can get over 4,500 hours of programs, including over 600 movies, of which 90 per cent are in language and subtitled. With 15 million video views per month, we know audiences are engaging with and loving that multicultural content. SBS is able to offer so much more today in a digital world than we ever could with just one channel, when SBS Television was first established.

News and Current Affairs

In 2016, SBS will continue to deliver world news and current affairs with a unique multicultural focus across our flagship programs: *SBS World News*, *Dateline*, *The Feed*, and *Insight* – which explores a

range of topics relevant to Australians, with a studio audience more diverse than you'd see anywhere else, which ensures we present a broader range of views in the debates.

Australians are increasingly focused on the big global challenges because they are more relevant to us domestically – terrorism, refugees, the Chinese economy and the environment, to name a few.

In the latest Essential poll for 'Trust in Media' – SBS TV News and Current Affairs was rated the second most trusted news source, with 63 per cent of Australians considering it a trusted news source, compared to commercial media at 48 per cent. Audiences trust SBS, and they come to us for that point of difference, with in-depth balanced news, and stories that explore diversity.

National Indigenous Television (NITV)

Let me now turn to National Indigenous Television.

In 2016, NITV will continue to deliver compelling documentaries, live sport, diverse entertainment, and children's content for all Australians.

NITV news and current affairs remains a core part of the schedule, with a more comprehensive offering, delivering distinctive content to audiences across platforms.

NITV provides a unique First Nations voice, challenges perceptions, celebrates achievements and facilitates national debate about important Indigenous affairs.

SBS Radio

SBS Radio has of course been at the heart of the organisation since the beginning. It's how we've forged our unique connections with Australia's multicultural communities.

Every week, across 74 language programs we are talking with people in their language about Australian news and information, so they can understand and participate in Australian life. That is exactly the role the Parliament envisaged when it established SBS and it's the role we are so proud to play today.

We have evolved our services and there's been a substantial increase in online and mobile traffic to our language program websites. We are also connecting with second and third generation migrants who are using those platforms.

Arabic24

I am pleased to announce tonight a new initiative.

On 7 March we will launch SBS Arabic24, a 24/7 Arabic digital radio channel and online destination. It's a 12 month trial and our hope is that it becomes a permanent offering.

SBS Arabic24 will deliver impartial news, information and analysis to Arabic-speaking Australians and will be a forum for vibrant debate and exchange of opinion. It will have global stories and perspectives, with local conversations.

We have secured great BBC Arabic content to complement our local radio programming. This is about helping Australian audiences get an in-depth understanding of how the UK and other Arabic communities around the world are dealing with similar issues to us in Australia. We look forward to launching SBS Arabic24 next month.

SBS Documentary

Finally, I'd like to talk briefly about our documentaries. SBS documentaries tell the important stories about multicultural Australia that other networks frankly shy away from.

We are continually looking for new ways for our documentaries to:

- Inspire change;
- Help all Australians understand other cultures; and to
- Explore fascinating elements of cultural diversity.

Conclusion

SBS appreciates the current tough fiscal environment. That's why we are getting on with the job, continuing to ensure we deliver great value for money for the Australian taxpayer, by being as effective and lean as we can be, whilst delivering powerful programs and important services for Australian audiences. We operate on less than 20 per cent of the average budget of the other broadcasters.

SBS has removed tens of millions of dollars out of the back-office over the last five years and implemented several joint initiatives with the ABC which are saving the Australian taxpayer hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition we generate almost 30 per cent of our budget from our own commercial activities, despite the current flat advertising market.

In 2016, our sole focus is on providing unique services to multicultural Australia at a time when inspiring a greater understanding of the value of multiculturalism is vital for all Australians.

SBS will:

- Inspire the big conversations about what it means to be Australian today;
- Showcase the benefits of diversity;
- Help new migrants to understand Australian values of acceptance/ diversity/ and equality; and
- Tell those special and distinctive stories.

All of this is how we will continue to deliver on our Charter and contribute to social cohesion.

Thank you all for coming this evening, and for your ongoing support of SBS.

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