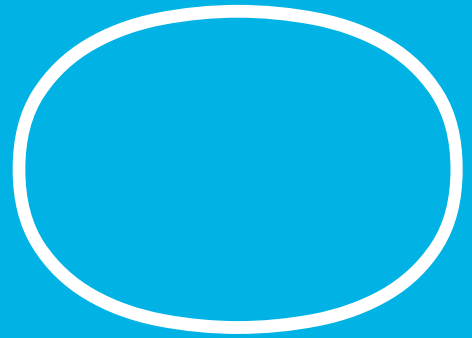


SBS CODES OF PRACTICE



SBS CHARTER

The SBS Charter is contained in section 6 of the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991.

1. The principal function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio, television and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society.
2. SBS, in performing its principal function, must:
 - a. contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - b. increase awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of Australian society; and
 - c. promote understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people; and
 - d. contribute to the retention and continuing development of language and other cultural skills; and
 - e. as far as practicable, inform, educate and entertain Australians in their preferred languages; and
 - f. make use of Australia's diverse creative resources; and
 - g. to the extent to which the function relates to radio and television services – contribute to the overall diversity of Australian television and radio services, particularly taking into account the contribution of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the community broadcasting sector; and
 - h. to the extent to which the function relates to radio and television services – contribute to extending the range of Australian television and radio services, and reflect the changing nature of Australian society, by presenting many points of view and using innovative forms of expression.

FOREWORD

Under the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991, the principal function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio, television and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, reflecting the diversity of our nation.

Across all of its channels and platforms, SBS's purpose is to inspire all Australians to explore, appreciate and celebrate our diverse world, and by doing so contribute to a cohesive society.

The SBS Codes of Practice outline the principles and policies followed by SBS in fulfilling its Charter. They set the benchmark for SBS programming and detail SBS's obligations regarding matters such as television program classification, advertising and sponsorship, community information, political broadcasts, and complaints handling.

SBS has a responsibility to ensure its policies keep pace with Australia's converging media landscape and to maintain the highest standards of broadcasting excellence, integrity and editorial independence across all platforms. As such, the SBS Codes of Practice have been developed over time to respond to shifts in audience needs and demands, and community standards, and to better meet changes in the media sector.

The Codes have also been modified to reflect developments within SBS, including the incorporation of National Indigenous Television (NITV) and its transmission through the SBS suite of free-to-air television channels, the expansion of SBS Radio, and the growth of SBS Online and Emerging Platforms including SBS ON DEMAND and our digital offering.

With the principles and policies set out in the SBS Codes of Practice and against the backdrop of a nation which continues to grow in cultural complexity and diversity, SBS will continue to deliver on its role and responsibilities with content that is relevant to all Australians.



Joseph Skrzynski AO
CHAIRMAN



Michael Ebeid
MANAGING DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

SBS is an independent national broadcaster operating under its own Act of Parliament, the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 (SBS Act). The SBS Act guarantees SBS's editorial independence. Under the SBS Act, SBS has sole responsibility for determining its content.

The SBS Codes of Practice set out the principles and policies SBS uses to guide its content. The Codes embrace the principal Charter function of SBS: "... to provide multilingual and multicultural radio, television and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society".

SBS has a unique and distinctive purpose to inspire all Australians to understand and appreciate the diversity of its communities and of the First Australians, and in doing so, contribute to an inclusive and cohesive society. It plays a role in contributing to the overall evolution of Australia as a diverse nation.

SBS Television, Radio, and Online and Emerging Platforms have different priorities and play complementary roles in pursuing SBS's objectives. Nevertheless, the principles and policies of SBS content are the same for Television, Radio and Online and Emerging Platforms.

Unless stated otherwise, these Codes apply to programs or program-related material produced, commissioned, acquired or otherwise obtained by SBS for broadcast on SBS's television and radio services, and SBS content published on SBS's digital platforms.

SBS Television

SBS Television exposes audiences to a wide range of cultures, languages and perspectives. By reflecting Australia's multicultural society SBS promotes cross-cultural awareness and participation in public life.

Most SBS Television programs are broadcast in English, as Australia's common language, or in a language other than English with English subtitles (in most cases). The ability to deliver content in this way means SBS has the widest possible reach across Australia. In broadcasting programs from non-English speaking countries, SBS Television provides a medium where people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can watch programming in their preferred language.

SBS ONE delivers a unique range of commissioned and acquired shows across news, current affairs, documentaries and entertainment. SBS ONE pushes the boundaries of Australian television to provoke debate, as well as surprising and delighting its audiences.

SBS 2 is the home of emerging culture for the 'thinking' twenty or thirty something Australian audience. It challenges the status quo of content across television and online; has a responsive relationship with its audience; and combines a unique Australian perspective with the best of cult shows from around the world.

SBS Radio

SBS Radio is a trusted source of Australian news and information in-language, broadcasting language programs on analog and digital radio and digital television. SBS Radio is the most linguistically diverse radio network in the world.

SBS Radio assists communities to participate as fully as possible in Australian society by providing Australian news and information in-language. Where possible, it also supports the maintenance and development of their cultural identities and provides cross-cultural links. While exploring issues relevant to all Australians, SBS Radio fulfils different roles, including information provider, news source, entertainer, educator, cultural vehicle, commentator and a medium for diverse community voices.

SBS Online and Emerging Platforms

SBS Online and Emerging Platforms provides multi-platform and multimedia content on SBS's digital platforms, including the SBS website www.sbs.com.au, and SBS ON DEMAND with the aim of adding depth and context to SBS Television and SBS Radio programming.

SBS Online and Emerging Platforms creates original online exclusive content and content in new formats, including interactive content, and takes SBS programming into new environments.

National Indigenous Television (NITV)

NITV is Australia's national free-to-air Indigenous television channel which brings content produced predominantly by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to all Australians.

1 GENERAL PROGRAMMING AND CONTENT

1.1 Introduction

SBS is committed to preserving the trust and confidence of its audience, who rely on SBS's editorial independence and integrity.

SBS has the right to determine what is broadcast and published on SBS services.

The Managing Director is the Editor-in-Chief who has final editorial control and responsibility.

Code 1 applies to programs and program-related material produced, commissioned, acquired or otherwise obtained by SBS for broadcast on SBS's television and radio services and SBS content published on SBS's digital platforms.

An important consideration in the application of the Codes of Practice is context. What is unacceptable in one context may be appropriate and acceptable in another.

In particular, these Codes do not prevent the presentation of genuinely held opinion or material that is factual or presented in the context of a humorous, satirical, artistic or dramatic work.

Satire is a long-established mode of expression and has a proper place on SBS. SBS may broadcast or publish content that adopts a humorous or satirical approach.

SBS broadcasts and publishes innovative and, at times, challenging material. SBS's content can be controversial and provocative and may sometimes be distasteful or offensive to some. Not all viewpoints presented will be shared by all audience members.

1.2 Diversity of views and perspectives

SBS is for all Australians. Accordingly, SBS is committed to broadcasting and publishing content that reflects a diversity of experiences, lifestyles, beliefs, cultures and languages within Australia.

SBS will seek to represent a range of perspectives which are of interest to the public, subject to supply and quality of material.

Some subject matter broadcast by SBS may be considered controversial. Section 70A of the SBS Act states: "... SBS may determine to what extent and in what manner political matter or controversial matter will be broadcast by the SBS".

SBS may broadcast or publish other content, such as documentaries, blogs or opinion pieces, which are

presented from particular points of view or explore a specific aspect of an issue. Such content is not required to present every viewpoint or all available material relating to a particular issue or allocate equal time to different viewpoints.

SBS's standards for the presentation of news and current affairs are set out in Codes 2 and 3.

1.3 Prejudice, racism and discrimination

SBS seeks to counter attitudes of prejudice against any person or group on the basis of their race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, gender identity, religion, disability, mental illness, or marital, parental or occupational status.

While remaining consistent with its mandate to portray diversity, SBS will avoid content which clearly condones, tolerates, or encourages discrimination on these grounds, taking into account the context in which the material is presented and the impression created by the schedule over time.

SBS views intolerance of difference, and racism in particular, as a serious impediment to achieving an equitable and harmonious society. SBS promotes the benefits of Australian multiculturalism as the most effective way to counter racism and promote social cohesion and harmony.

To this end, SBS seeks to provide content which tells the stories of contemporary multicultural Australia and Indigenous Australians, helps audiences understand the diverse cultures that constitute the Australian community, and contributes to a sense of belonging and national identity.

SBS understands that different cultural groups have different perceptions and values. SBS may broadcast or publish content which directly challenges accepted cultural views.

1.3.1 Indigenous Australians

'Indigenous Australians' refers to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. SBS recognises the social, cultural and spiritual integrity of Indigenous societies and acknowledges the diversity across and within these societies. SBS aims to promote and facilitate among all Australians an understanding of Indigenous cultures, values and aspirations, and supports the goals of reconciliation.

SBS aims, over time, to provide content which caters for the diverse and changing needs of all Indigenous

Australians and deals with contemporary issues of importance to Indigenous Australians.

SBS strives for maximum involvement of Indigenous Australians in all aspects of the production of such content.

In its Indigenous content, SBS will endeavour to ensure that proper regard is paid to the sensitivities, cultural traditions and languages of Indigenous Australians. SBS recognises the need of Indigenous communities to maintain their cultures, languages and traditions, and will seek to provide content to that end.

SBS will be sensitive to the many cultural issues that surround media presentation of Indigenous issues.

It is critical that the cultural practices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia are observed in any content produced, broadcast or published. The bereavement practices of Indigenous Australians are region specific. It is the responsibility of program makers, news editors and producers to verify and observe local practices when making content that depicts or represents recently deceased Indigenous Australians or reporting on recently deceased Indigenous Australians. Where appropriate, images, footage or sound recordings of deceased Indigenous Australians will be preceded by a warning.

Program makers, content producers and journalists will refer to the SBS publication *The Greater Perspective* which contains the 'Protocol and Guidelines for the Production of Film and Television on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities'. The *Greater Perspective* sets out six principles which program makers, content producers and journalists should refer to when making or producing content relating to Indigenous Australians. These principles refer to the need for program makers and producers to:

- be aware of and challenge their own prejudices, stereotyped beliefs and perceptions about Indigenous Australians;
- be aware that an Indigenous view of Indigenous issues may differ from a non-Indigenous view;
- consult with Indigenous Australians in the making of content about Indigenous Australians, particularly with those who are the subject(s) of the content;
- conduct dealings with Indigenous Australians openly and honestly which includes informing

Indigenous people involved of the consequences of any proposed agreements and of their right to seek independent legal advice;

- respect the lands and cultural property of Indigenous Australians, as well as the subject(s) of content; and
- be sensitive to the cultures of Indigenous Australians and undertake consultation and negotiation with the people concerned prior to and during the making of content.

1.4 Language and diversity

1.4.1 General

SBS's Charter responsibilities include contributing to the retention and continuing development of language and other cultural skills and providing content in people's preferred languages. As far as practicable, SBS aims to reflect Australia's linguistic diversity in its content, while at the same time remaining consistent with its other Charter responsibilities.

Accordingly, SBS embraces its role as an established medium through which Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities retain and develop their languages. SBS seeks to provide content in which people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can hear their preferred language.

SBS recognises English as the common language of Australia and therefore as a major vehicle through which SBS can promote cross-cultural awareness.

1.4.2 Allocation of airtime for community languages – SBS Radio

SBS Radio is a multilingual and multicultural broadcaster with a direct role in serving Australia's diverse language communities. In recognition of this role, the allocation of airtime to particular languages on SBS Radio is based on factors such as the size of the community speaking a particular language and other criteria which are reviewed from time to time. Programming changes can be made at the discretion of SBS and based on operational needs.

1.4.3 English and non-English language and cultural content – SBS Television

SBS Television is a multicultural broadcaster serving all Australians. To reach across Australian society, SBS provides:

- English language programming which is readily accessible to the general population;

- English-subtitled non-English language programming which may serve the needs of particular communities and is accessible to a wider audience; and
- non-English language programming which directly serves the needs of particular communities and may be of some interest to other audiences.

SBS seeks in its yearly television schedule to achieve a balance between television programs in English and programs in languages other than English, across the SBS network.

SBS aims, as far as possible and over time, to provide programs on SBS Television across languages spoken in the community and to present programming from a wide variety of cultural perspectives. Program selection will take into account variations in the availability and quality of programming from different television industries around the world, as well as the need to meet the range of SBS's programming objectives.

1.4.4 Subtitling and re-narration – SBS Television

The main way SBS Television makes non-English language programming accessible to a wider Australian audience is through English subtitles. SBS uses dubbing for re-narrations in documentaries. SBS also subtitles some English programs into community languages.

SBS seeks to reflect faithfully the cultural ambience and linguistic integrity of imported programs. SBS believes the interests of viewers are best served by subtitles which carry the impact of the original language. The nature of subtitling and differences between languages means that it is not always possible nor desirable to make literal translations. Where literal translations would distort the register and intent of a speech more appropriate and accurate English expressions are used.

1.5 Self-identification when referring to groups and individuals

SBS encourages different groups and individuals to express their cultural identity. Accordingly, SBS does not impose labels on cultural groups, but will use a group's self-identification, if it is freely chosen. SBS is not subject to the desires of any one group as to how any other group is to be identified.

While SBS accepts self-identification of cultural groups, this policy has no implications other than recognition of group identity within the Australian community. It should not be interpreted as recognition of any historical or political claims or conferring official authority on activities counter to the policies or practices of other governments. SBS recognises the nationality of people in accordance with their country of current citizenship.

In the production of content, SBS will take into account context and avoid the unjustified use of derogatory terms used by one cultural, national or religious group to describe another.

1.6 Religions

SBS broadcasts and publishes content in accordance with the principle that Australia is a secular democracy. SBS recognises the importance of religion for the many communities that make up Australian society and the potential for content dealing with religion to cause cross-cultural tensions. In broadcasting and publishing content about religion, SBS will not support any particular religion over any other, nor intentionally provide a medium for one religion to denigrate another.

1.7 Suicide

Suicide is a legitimate subject for content but one that should be portrayed with a high degree of sensitivity. Care should be taken to avoid describing or showing methods of suicide in great detail.

Program makers should be alert to the dangers of making such behaviour attractive to the vulnerable. Where methods are described, program makers should have regard to context and editorial requirements.

1.8 Interviews, talkback and audience responses

SBS will not transmit the words of an identifiable person unless:

- that person has been informed in advance that the words may be transmitted;
- in the case of words which have been recorded without the knowledge of the person, the person has subsequently, but prior to the transmission, indicated consent to the transmission of the words;
- the manner of the recording has made it manifestly clear that the material may be broadcast or published.

Despite everything else in Code 1.8, SBS may in some circumstances decide that it is permissible to broadcast or publish a recording made without a person's knowledge that it is intended for broadcast or publication, and without their subsequent consent. For example, SBS may determine that the broadcast is in the public interest, or the person may have been recorded incidentally in a public place.

1.9 Privacy

The rights of individuals to privacy should be respected in all SBS content, but these rights are balanced against SBS's obligations to report on matters of public interest.

In order to provide information to the public which relates to a person's performance of public duties or about other matters of public interest, intrusions upon privacy may, in some circumstances, be justified.

SBS may presume that if material is recorded in public, communication of this material will not intrude on a person's privacy.

Complaints under Code 1.9 may only be made by or on behalf of the person who considers their privacy was intruded upon.

2 NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

2.1 Introduction

Code 2 applies to SBS content produced by the News and Current Affairs Division of SBS, or produced by SBS Radio for inclusion in the news and current affairs segments in SBS Radio's programs.

News satire, blogs and opinion pieces are covered by Code 1.

Non-SBS produced news and current affairs content is dealt with in Code 3.

SBS believes in the right of the audience to make up its own mind after an objective presentation of the issues.

2.2 Accuracy, impartiality and balance

SBS is committed to achieving the highest standard of news and current affairs presentation. To this end, reasonable effort must be made to ensure that the factual content of news and current affairs programs is accurate, having regard to the circumstances, and facts known, at the time of preparing and broadcasting or publishing the content.

SBS will take reasonable steps to ensure timely correction of significant errors of fact.

The requirement for accuracy does not mean that an exhaustive coverage of all factual material relating to matters broadcast or published must be presented.

While the emphasis in news is the reporting of factual information, news content, as well as current affairs content, may include comment and analysis.

Reasonable effort should be made to ensure news and current affairs content is balanced and impartial, having regard to the circumstances at the time of reporting and broadcasting or publishing, the nature and immediacy of the material being reported, and public interest considerations.

The commitment to balance and impartiality requires SBS to present – over time and across the schedule of content broadcast or published on the relevant service (Television, Radio or Online and Emerging Platforms) – a wide range of significant views, not misrepresenting them or unduly favouring one over another.

It does not require SBS to present all viewpoints on an issue or to allocate equal time to different points of view. Neither does it preclude a critical examination of controversial issues or the expression of critical and provocative points of view.

The decision as to whether it is appropriate for a range of views or particular views to be included within a single program or story is a matter for editorial discretion.

In relation to news content, for major issues that are matters of controversy, balance should be provided over the period in which the controversy is active. Balance will be provided through the presentation, as far as possible, of principal relevant viewpoints.

SBS has a policy of self-identification (see Code 1.5) and does not arbitrate on the validity of territorial claims. SBS journalists should identify themselves and SBS before proceeding with an interview for broadcast or publication.

2.3 Violence and distressing events in news and current affairs

The decision to broadcast or publish violent images or sounds is based on their newsworthiness, together with proper regard for the reasonable susceptibilities of audiences to the detail of what is broadcast or published. SBS will not sensationalise violent events, or present them for their own sake. Where appropriate, news segments will be preceded by a warning indicating that some viewers or listeners may find the material distressing.

Given that the timing and content of newsflashes are unpredictable, care should be exercised in the selection of sounds and images, and consideration given to the likely composition of the audience.

News updates and news promotions which portray elements of violence should generally not be scheduled during content directed at young children.

SBS avoids sensationalised and exaggerated treatment of news events. In covering murders, traumas, accidents, funerals, suicides and disasters, SBS expects its program makers to exercise great sensitivity, particularly when approaching, interviewing and portraying people who are distressed.

3 NON-SBS NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

SBS broadcasts and publishes substantially unedited news and current affairs content from other countries and from news agencies which provide automated newsfeeds.

In selecting such programming, SBS endeavours to ensure a level of quality which is appropriate to the SBS schedule.

SBS will identify the source of this material so that audiences can exercise their own judgement about how issues and information are presented.

3.1 WorldWatch

SBS's WorldWatch service broadcasts and publishes news and current affairs programs from overseas sources.

WorldWatch is provided to cater for the individual language and cultural needs of Australia's diverse multicultural communities. It provides a unique and regular news service from the home territories of many of Australia's citizens and visitors in their own language. It also offers all Australians a perspective on world news events. Much of the material is in a language other than English and is not subtitled.

WorldWatch programs are drawn from a variety of overseas sources – government, public and commercial – and are often produced and interpreted from particular editorial perspectives.

A decision on whether to introduce a new program to WorldWatch is based not only on the size of the language community within Australia but also on a careful assessment of all available programming sources in that language to determine which, if any, is best suited to serving communities' particular needs as determined in consultation with the community concerned.

4 TELEVISION CLASSIFICATION

4.1 Introduction

SBS applies the classifications below to all programs and program promotions broadcast on SBS Television, with the exception of news and current affairs, sport programs and general information.

The SBS system of television program classification is adapted from the 'Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games' made under the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995.

The guiding principle in the application of the following classifications is context. What is inappropriate and unacceptable in one context may be appropriate and acceptable in another. Factors to be taken into account include: the artistic or educational merit of the production, the purpose of a sequence, the tone, the camera work, the intensity and relevance of the material, the treatment, and the intended audience.

SBS believes that the integrity of programs is best retained if programs are broadcast unaltered.

However, SBS will schedule programs or, if necessary, modify them in accordance with the SBS classification categories (see 4.6) to ensure that they are suitable for broadcast, or for broadcast at particular times.

SBS's classification system gives special attention to culture, levels of violence, sex and nudity, and use of language.

4.2 Culture

SBS's role as a multilingual and multicultural broadcaster requires SBS to reflect a diversity of cultures including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

SBS classifies programs based on SBS's knowledge of the cultural context of each program. SBS will interpret the relevant classification elements so as not to impede the presentation of relevant cultural information to audiences or limit its ability to reflect diverse cultural values.

4.3 Violence

SBS acknowledges that violence is part of everyday life which must be dealt with responsibly. SBS recognises that for some people, particularly children, the portrayal of physical and psychological violence has a unique potential to distress and disturb. Accordingly, it is SBS policy not to present violence gratuitously.

In assessing program content involving violence, consideration is given to numerous factors including:

- context;
- degree of explicitness;
- propensity to alarm, distress or shock;
- significance in relation to the message; and
- social importance.

SBS believes that violence should not be presented in such a manner as to glamorise it or make it attractive. It is important when violence is portrayed that, as a rule, its serious consequences are not glossed over.

Where violence is presented, SBS will, where appropriate, broadcast an advance warning to viewers. (Code 2.3 deals with violence in news and current affairs.)

The presentation of violence in drama requires careful consideration. SBS rejects the use of violence as an easy substitute for other dramatic values. However, violence has always been a powerful ingredient in the dramatic tradition and SBS accepts that there are occasions when authors and directors use violence to make a substantial point about society and human relationships.

4.4 Sex and nudity

In assessing program content involving sex and nudity, consideration is given to a number of factors including:

- judgement of a program's bona fides;
- the responsibility with which visuals and subject matter are treated, particularly the treatment of non-consensual sexual activities and any sexual activity involving children or minors;
- the degree of explicitness of visuals; and
- the impact which visuals have in the context of a program as a whole.

4.5 Language and terminology

SBS programming includes variations of language and terminology used by different groups and communities. Expressions used by one group may be distasteful to another. Accordingly, SBS will take into account use of language when classifying programs and deciding the kinds of warnings provided to viewers.

SBS believes that audiences should receive programs unaltered. Therefore, strong language will only be removed from original programs if SBS believes it is inappropriate to the classification.

4.6 Classification categories

SBS will broadcast programs with the following classifications:

- General (G)
- Parental Guidance (PG)
- Mature (M)
- MA15+ – Mature Audience

G – General

(G programs may be shown at any time)

G programs, which include programs designed for pre-school and school-age children, are suitable for children to watch on their own. Some G programs may be more appropriate for older children.

The G classification does not necessarily indicate that the program is one that children will enjoy. Some G programs contain themes or storylines that are not of interest to children.

Whether or not the program is intended for children, the treatment of themes and other classifiable elements will be careful and discreet.

Themes: The treatment of themes should be discreet, justified by context, and very mild in impact. The presentation of dangerous, imitable behaviour is not permitted except in those circumstances where it is justified by context. Any depiction of such behaviour must not encourage dangerous imitation.

Violence: Violence may be very discreetly implied, but should:

- have a light tone, or
- have a very low sense of threat or menace, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Sex: Sexual activity should:

- only be suggested in very discreet visual or verbal references, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Artistic or cultural depictions of nudity in a sexual context may be permitted if the treatment is discreet, justified by context, and very mild in impact.

Language: Coarse language should:

- be very mild and infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Drug use: The depiction of the use of legal drugs should be handled with care. Illegal drug use should be implied only very discreetly, and be justified by context.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context should:

- be infrequent, and
- not be detailed, and
- not be gratuitous.

PG – Parental Guidance

(Parental guidance recommended for people under 15 years)

PG programs may be shown at any time.

PG programs may contain adult themes and concepts which, when viewed by those under 15 years, may require the guidance of an adult.

The PG classification signals to parents that material in this category contains depictions or references which could be confusing or upsetting to children without adult guidance. Material classified PG will not be harmful or disturbing to children.

Parents may choose to monitor the material for their children. Some may choose to watch the material with their children. Others might find it sufficient to be accessible during or after the viewing to discuss the content.

Themes: The treatment of themes should be discreet and mild in impact. More disturbing themes are not generally dealt with at PG level. Supernatural or mild horror themes may be included.

Violence: Violence may be discreetly implied or stylised and should also:

- be mild in impact, and
- not be shown in detail.

Sex: Sexual activity and nudity in a sexual context may be suggested, but should:

- be discreet, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Verbal references to sexual activity should be discreet.

Language: Coarse language should be mild and infrequent.

Drug use: Discreet verbal references and mild, incidental visuals of drug use may be included, but these should not promote or encourage drug use.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context should not be detailed or gratuitous.

M – Mature

(Not recommended for people under 15 years)

M programs may be shown between:

- noon and 3.00pm on weekdays that are school days; and
- 8.30pm and 5.00am on any day of the week.

The M category is not recommended for people under 15 years.

Programs classified M contain material that is considered to be potentially harmful or disturbing to those under 15 years. Depictions and references to classifiable elements may contain detail.

While most themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in the M category – the less explicit or less intense material will be included in the M classification and the more explicit or more intense material, especially violent material, will be included in the MA15+ classification.

Themes: Most themes can be dealt with, but the treatment should be discreet and the impact should not be strong.

Violence: Generally, depictions of violence should:

- not contain a lot of detail, and
- not be prolonged.

In realistic treatments, depictions of violence that contain detail should:

- be infrequent, and
- not have a strong impact, and
- not be gratuitous.

In stylised treatments, depictions of violence may contain more detail and be more frequent if this does not increase the impact.

Verbal and visual references to sexual violence may only be included if they are:

- discreet and infrequent, and
- strongly justified by the narrative or documentary context.

Sex: Sexual activity may be discreetly implied.

Nudity in a sexual context should not contain a lot of detail, or be prolonged.

Verbal references to sexual activity may be more detailed than depictions if this does not increase the impact.

Language: Coarse language may be used.

Generally, coarse language that is stronger, detailed or very aggressive should:

- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Drug use: Drug use may be discreetly shown.

Drug use should not be promoted or encouraged.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context may be shown but depictions that contain any detail should not be gratuitous.

MA15+ – Mature Audience

(Not suitable for people under 15 years)

MA15+ programs may be shown between 8.30pm and 5.00am on any day of the week.

MA15+ programs, because of the matter they contain or because of the way it is treated, are not suitable for people aged under 15 years.

Material classified MA15+ deals with issues or contains depictions which require a more mature perspective. This is because the impact of individual elements or a combination of elements is considered likely to be harmful or disturbing to viewers under 15 years of age. While most themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in the MA15+ category – the more explicit or more intense material, especially violent material, will be included in the MA15+ classification and the less explicit or less intense material will be included in the M classification.

Themes: The treatment of themes with a high degree of intensity should not be gratuitous.

Violence: Generally, depictions of violence should not have a high impact.

In realistic treatments, detailed depictions of violence with a strong impact should:

- be infrequent, and
- not be prolonged, and
- not be gratuitous.

Depictions of violence in stylised treatments may be more detailed and more frequent if this does not increase the impact.

Depictions of sexual violence are permitted only if they are not frequent, prolonged, gratuitous or exploitative.

Sex: Sexual activity may be implied.

Depictions of nudity in a sexual context which contain detail should not be exploitative. Verbal references may be more detailed than depictions, if this does not increase the impact.

Language: Coarse language may be used.

Coarse language that is very strong, aggressive or detailed should not be gratuitous.

Drug use: Drug use may be shown, but should not be promoted or encouraged. More detailed depictions should not have a high degree of impact.

Nudity: Nudity should be justified by context.

4.7 Classification symbols

The classification symbol of the PG, M or MA15+ program being shown will be displayed at the start of the program.

4.8 Consumer advice

Audio and visual advice on the principal reasons for an M and MA15+ classification will be given before the program.

SBS may provide other appropriate consumer advice at the start of a program. In particular, SBS will provide appropriate consumer advice at the start of a PG classified program where SBS considers that the program contains material of a strength or intensity which SBS reasonably believes parents or guardians of young children may not expect.

4.9 Program promotions

Program promotions will not exceed the classification of surrounding or adjacent programming matter.

Where content is unclassified, program promotions will be scheduled with regard to the time zone.

4.10 Time zones

The time zones indicated for each classification are guides to the most likely placement of programs within that classification. The recommended placements are not hard and fast rules and there will be occasions when programs or segments of programs will appear in other time zones.

For example, an arts program or segment of an arts program classified M may appear during a weekend daytime schedule.

SBS should have sound reasons for any departure from the time zone for a program classification.

Programs that deal in a responsible manner with serious moral, social or cultural issues may appear outside their normal classification time zone provided a clear indication of the nature and content of the program, in the form of consumer advice for example, is given at the start of the program.

Due to local scheduling arrangements, some programs will be broadcast in some locations outside their classification time zone.

Some individuals and groups choose to access programming directly from a satellite signal outside of the area for which the signal is intended. In these cases, SBS cannot guarantee that people will receive SBS programs in their local areas at the times for which the programs are classified and scheduled.

When SBS is retransmitted via subscription services or other operators, the times during which SBS programs are made available on those services may be outside the control of SBS. In these circumstances, time zone restrictions in relation to different categories of programs may be determined by the retransmission service in accordance with its relevant regulatory requirements.

5 ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP

Code 5 applies to advertising and sponsorship announcements broadcast on SBS Television and SBS Radio.

SBS may broadcast advertisements and sponsorship announcements that run in total for not more than five minutes in any hour of broadcasting.

Revenue from advertisements and sponsorship announcements assists in the funding of programming which fulfils SBS's Charter obligations.

All decisions regarding commercial revenue are subject to the overriding principle that the integrity of the SBS Charter and SBS's editorial independence are paramount. SBS reserves the exclusive right to determine what is broadcast on SBS services.

The SBS Board is required to develop guidelines on matters relating to advertising and sponsorship announcements and these are available on the [SBS website](#).

Advertisements and sponsorship announcements must be readily distinguishable from programming.

SBS has adopted the following definition of advertisement:

Matter, for which SBS receives consideration in cash or in kind, which draws the attention of the public, or a segment thereof, to a product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct in a manner calculated to promote or recommend, directly or indirectly, that product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct.

SBS has adopted the following definition of sponsorship announcement:

Matter, for which SBS receives consideration in cash or in kind, which advises audiences of a sponsorship relationship with SBS and actively promotes the product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct of the sponsor in a favourable way.

The following is not considered to be advertising or sponsorship matter for the purpose of calculating the five minute per hour limit:

- a station identification;
- promotions for SBS content (which may inform the audience of the identity of relevant sponsors);
- publicity for SBS products, services or activities for the broadcast of which SBS does not receive any consideration in cash or in kind;

- material overlaid on the test pattern, or similar non-programming material;
- community information (see Code 6); and
- material broadcast under SBS's free airtime provisions (see Code 7).

As an associate member of Free TV Australia, SBS takes account of the 'Classification and Placement of Commercials and Community Service Announcements' contained in Section 6 of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2010, where it relates to commercials.

6 COMMUNITY INFORMATION

6.1 Introduction

SBS allocates a limited amount of free airtime on its television and radio services for the broadcast of community information announcements and community promotional material, known as community service announcements (CSAs). SBS may also publish limited CSAs on its digital media services.

SBS broadcasts and publishes CSAs on the basis that the public interest is being served.

6.2 Selection and placement

SBS allocates free airtime for CSAs to Australian charities, community organisations and other relevant entities.

SBS will give priority to [SBS Foundation](#) partners in the allocation of free airtime under this Code (see the [SBS website](#) for information about the SBS Foundation).

SBS may broadcast or publish CSAs which are directed at SBS's diverse audiences and deal with services or forthcoming events of a social, cultural, welfare, educational or other beneficial nature within the community.

In the selection of CSAs, SBS will take into account:

- its role as a multicultural broadcaster, in particular its Charter duty to contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural and Indigenous communities;
- SBS's strategic objectives;
- the character and the aims and objectives of the entity, and alignment with the SBS Charter;
- the financial status of the entity;
- the subject matter of the CSA.

The following matter does not qualify as a CSA:

- Political matter including matter that promotes a political party or a candidate for political office, or matter that advocates for a change in the law. Free airtime may be allocated to political parties during elections and referendums under Code 7.
- Social, religious and any other matter that SBS considers to be controversial or potentially divisive to the community.
- Announcements that strongly promote a commercial entity, either directly or indirectly.

The placement of CSAs on SBS's services is subject to the availability of television and radio airtime or online space and will be determined at SBS's discretion.

CSAs will be broadcast or published on SBS's services as separate announcements in most cases. CSAs may also be broadcast or published as announcements within content as SBS considers appropriate.

Decisions regarding the selection and placement of CSAs are subject to the overriding principle that SBS's editorial independence and integrity are paramount.

SBS retains the right to edit any material provided.

Pre-recorded material provided to SBS for broadcast as a CSA must be of production quality acceptable to SBS.

In some cases production fees may need to be charged for CSAs.

6.3 SBS Radio

In order to meet the specific needs of SBS Radio's language communities, the following material may also be broadcast as CSAs on SBS Radio, as long as the material is broadcast only at the discretion of SBS Radio and SBS does not receive any consideration in cash or in kind for the airtime:

- In limited and special circumstances only, program segments or interviews to discuss work or services provided by entities on a commercial basis, provided a special need for the information has been identified within the language community.
- Campaigns by government departments and agencies which provide information about, and access to, government services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, particularly for new and emerging or high needs communities.

7 POLITICAL BROADCASTS AND ELECTION COVERAGE

Section 70A of the SBS Act allows SBS to determine to what extent and in what manner political matter or controversial matter will be broadcast by SBS.

7.1 Election and referendum coverage

SBS provides information about elections and referendums to Australia's diverse communities through:

- the allocation of free airtime to qualifying political parties during federal and state government elections, as community information (see Code 6);
- the allocation of free airtime to represent the Yes/No cases in referendums, as community information (see Code 6); and
- SBS news and current affairs coverage.

Further information on the allocation of free airtime is available on the [SBS website](#).

Free airtime allocated under Code 7 does not imply SBS support for the views contained in the material broadcast.

If political parties wish to be allocated any additional airtime they must purchase advertising on SBS's television, radio or online services.

8.1 About this Code

SBS recognises the special and unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's history, culture and society.

NITV is subject to the SBS Codes of Practice. NITV also adheres to the obligations set out by this NITV Code of Practice, which contains specific provisions in recognition of the unique nature of NITV and the cultural needs of its audience.

Note: Code 1.3.1 relates to Indigenous protocols and applies across all output.

8.2 Introduction

NITV is Australia's dedicated national Indigenous television service.

NITV supports the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The trust and respect of the Indigenous community is paramount.

NITV creates and delivers unique content reflecting the diverse voices and creative talent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NITV content aims to foster the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and to encourage awareness of Indigenous cultures and languages.

NITV broadcasts and publishes content that informs, educates and entertains audiences on the rich diversity of Australian and international Indigenous cultures and languages.

NITV delivers content in accordance with the following channel principles:

- NITV has a distinctive identity and is primarily produced by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; through this NITV becomes a channel for all Australians.
- In fulfilment of its responsibilities NITV protects the primacy of Indigenous voices and perspectives.

8.3 General programming

8.3.1 Diversity

NITV aims to reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to feature a range of views in its presentation of Indigenous perspectives.

This is subject to the supply and quality of programming, as well as the need to meet the range of NITV's channel principles and strategic objectives.

Not all viewpoints presented will be shared by all audience members.

8.3.2 Language

NITV aims to reflect the linguistic diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in its content subject to the supply and quality of programming.

In all its programming, including news and current affairs, NITV may speak directly to Indigenous audiences using vernacular Aboriginal English, Kriol and other Indigenous languages.

8.4 Indigenous protocols and culturally appropriate content

As Australia's dedicated national Indigenous television service, NITV places high importance on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols.

NITV respects Indigenous cultural beliefs, traditions, protocols and practices, and where possible will obtain the appropriate permissions.

NITV exercises editorial discretion when determining whether to broadcast or publish content that contains terminology that is likely to seriously offend Indigenous peoples. NITV will take into account the context and circumstances in which the content is to be broadcast or published.

8.4.1 Representation of deceased people

NITV respects and acknowledges the bereavement and mourning practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

NITV respects the protocols relating to the representation of deceased Indigenous people and is committed to providing appropriate warnings to Indigenous audiences where such protocols are in place.

However, NITV acknowledges that because of the diversity and complexity of Indigenous communities, it may not always be possible to comply with relevant protocols and practices and a deceased persons warning may not always be appropriate.

8.5 INACA: Indigenous News and Current Affairs

NITV presents news and current affairs from an Australian Indigenous perspective.

NITV is committed to maintaining journalistic values and adheres to Code 2 including accuracy, impartiality and balance.

News and current affairs is provided by, or on behalf of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and informs and educates the wider Australian community on Indigenous issues.

8.6 Non-NITV content

NITV may broadcast and publish news and current affairs content from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that is substantially unedited, in accordance with Code 3.

NITV may also broadcast and publish other content from Indigenous communities that is substantially unedited. This content is broadcast and published as a service to those communities as well as providing a cultural context for those communities. Much of the material is in different Indigenous languages and is not subtitled.

NITV aims to select content of a quality appropriate to the NITV schedule. NITV will identify the source of this material so that audiences can exercise their own judgement about how issues and information are presented.

8.7 Children and young people

NITV broadcasts and publishes content that is specifically designed for children and young people.

NITV broadcasts and publishes content that is designed to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

NITV content aims to foster the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and to encourage awareness of Indigenous cultures and languages.

NITV content designed for children and young people contributes to the rich story-telling tradition of Indigenous cultures in Australia and tells traditional stories of Indigenous spirituality and contemporary stories about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life.

Content directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people aims to inform, educate and entertain by reflecting the shared experiences of Indigenous children in Australia and around the world.

In providing content for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, NITV contributes to their understanding of Indigenous cultural practices. This content may contain serious themes relating to Indigenous cultural practices and spirituality.

Content for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people may include vernacular Aboriginal English, Kriol and other Indigenous languages.

NITV will take due care to protect the dignity and welfare of children and young people who are involved in making, participating in, or presenting content produced by NITV.

8.8 Classification

Code 4 applies to all programs and program promotions broadcast on NITV, with the exception of news and current affairs, sport programs and general information.

8.9 Advertising and sponsorship

NITV reserves the right to place restrictions on the selection and placement of advertisements on its services.

8.10 Community information

NITV may broadcast or publish at its discretion community information on the basis that the information is of interest to Indigenous communities.

In the selection and placement of this material, NITV takes into account its role as an Indigenous broadcaster and its duty to serve the information and communication needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

8.11 Complaints about NITV content

Complaints about NITV content are subject to Code 9. The NITV Channel Manager can also refer a complaint to the Complaints Committee for review (see Code 9.3.7).

The NITV Channel Manager sits on the Complaints Committee for complaints about NITV content.

9 COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT SBS CONTENT

9.1 Introduction

SBS values all audience feedback and comments about its content and services. Whether complimentary or critical, all comments are immediate sources of feedback and an important way for SBS to keep in touch with audience and community opinion.

9.2 Comments, feedback and general complaints

Comments, feedback and general complaints about SBS's content and services can be made by contacting SBS Audience Relations.

General complaints concern matters not covered by the SBS Codes of Practice (see 9.3).

Comments, feedback and general complaints received by SBS Audience Relations are responded to as appropriate.

SBS will not respond to comments, feedback or general complaints which are frivolous, vexatious, not made in good faith, offensive or abusive.

General complaints will be referred to the relevant content area to determine the appropriate action.

SBS is not required to investigate and respond to general complaints, but will make reasonable efforts to address the major concerns in general complaints received in writing.

SBS does not usually provide a written response to comments, feedback or general complaints made by telephone.

Information about comments, feedback and general complaints received by SBS Audience Relations is compiled into a summary report and brought to the attention of management and relevant staff.

SBS Audience Relations

Telephone:

Toll Free: 1800 500 727
Head Office: (02) 9430 2828 (Sydney)
TTY* Call the NRS on 1800 555 677
and ask for 1800 500 727

**For people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.*

Post: SBS Audience Relations
Locked Bag 028
Crows Nest NSW 1585

Email: comments@sbs.com.au

SBS Website: Some content sections of the SBS website allow for comments to be made on the website. Comments submitted in this manner are not covered by Code 9.

9.3 Code complaints

A complaint that alleges that SBS has breached these Codes of Practice will be investigated as a Code complaint.

Code complaints are managed by the Office of the SBS Ombudsman.

Office of the SBS Ombudsman

Post: SBS Ombudsman
Locked Bag 028
Crows Nest NSW 1585

Email: codecomplaints@sbs.com.au

Website: Complete the online code complaint form at:
www.sbs.com.au/codecomplaints

9.3.1 How to make a Code complaint

To make a Code complaint about SBS content, you need to write to the SBS Ombudsman with the following information:

- identify yourself – name and postal address, and email address if possible; and
- identify the content, where you viewed or heard it (television channel, radio channel, website address) and the date of broadcast or when accessed for online content; and
- explain what aspect of the content you are complaining about.

If possible, identify the Code (or Codes) which you consider applies to the content.

Complaints received prior to the broadcast or publication of the content will not be treated as Code complaints.

9.3.2 Timing

Code complaints must be received by SBS within six weeks of the date of the television or radio broadcast,

or six weeks from the date the content was first made available on SBS's digital platforms.

9.3.3 Code complaints which will not be investigated

SBS will not investigate or respond to Code complaints from:

- persons not resident in Australia; or
- non-Australian entities;

unless the person or entity is identified in the content complained of.

SBS will suspend the investigation of any Code complaint which is or becomes the subject of legal proceedings. It is anticipated that, if possible depending on timing and other relevant circumstances, such investigations would be completed once the legal proceedings have been finalised.

SBS will not investigate:

- anonymous complaints;
- complaints that are frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith;
- complaints that are offensive or abusive.

9.3.4 Code complaints in languages other than English

SBS believes that people should be able to communicate with SBS in their preferred language. If SBS receives a Code complaint in a language other than English, SBS will generally have the complaint translated into English.

9.3.5 Confidentiality

SBS respects the confidentiality of Code complainants and will not disclose the identity of individual complainants unless:

- SBS is required by law to do so; or
- the complaint has been made public by the complainant; or
- the complaint is a matter of public record.

9.3.6 How SBS deals with Code complaints

The SBS Ombudsman reports directly to the Managing Director and is independent of all SBS Divisions. The SBS Ombudsman is responsible for undertaking a proper and fair investigation of Code complaints, determining whether the complaint

is upheld or not, replying to the complainant, and managing enquiries and issues about the complaints handling process.

Complaints received by the SBS Ombudsman will be assessed as either a Code complaint or a general complaint. Once a complaint has been assessed as a Code complaint, the SBS Ombudsman will send a written reply to the complainant by post or email:

- acknowledging receipt of the Code complaint;
- informing the complainant that the SBS Ombudsman will investigate the matter;
- providing an estimated timeframe for the complaint to be responded to; and
- advising the complainant of the circumstances in which SBS's response can be reviewed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

In some cases, all or part of a program broadcast or published in a language other than English may need to be translated. Where this is the case, SBS will advise the complainant of any expected delay. In such cases, SBS appreciates the cooperation of complainants in allowing a reasonable period for the complaint to be addressed.

9.3.7 Complaints Committee

The SBS Ombudsman or the relevant SBS Division can refer a Code complaint to SBS's Complaints Committee for further consideration. The Complaints Committee will then review the complaint and any recommendations of the SBS Ombudsman and make an independent determination on whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint.

The Complaints Committee is composed of the Managing Director (Chair), SBS Ombudsman, Director Television, Chief Digital Officer, Director Audio and Language Content, Director News and Current Affairs, and Director Corporate Affairs, Strategy and Communication. In the case of complaints about NITV, the Committee will include the NITV Channel Manager (or nominee).

If necessary, the Complaints Committee may invite a relevant expert to assist in the deliberation.

9.3.8 Replies to Code complaints

The SBS Ombudsman will endeavour to provide a written response to the complainant within 30 days of

receipt of the Code complaint, but in any event must do so within 60 days. The complainant will be advised:

- whether the Code complaint is upheld or not;
- the reasons for SBS's decision; and
- the right of the complainant to refer the matter to the ACMA if not satisfied with SBS's response.

In exceptional circumstances an extension to the 60 day deadline may be justified. Such an extension requires the approval of the Managing Director and the complainant must be informed of the revised timeline for finalising the complaint.

9.3.9 SBS's response to Code complaints that are upheld

If a Code complaint is upheld SBS, at its discretion, may take action including:

- acknowledging that a breach has occurred;
- apologising for the impact of the breach;
- placing a correction, retraction or apology on the SBS website;
- broadcasting or publishing the correct information; or
- broadcasting or publishing an apology.

9.3.10 What to do if you are dissatisfied with SBS's response

If you have made a Code complaint in relation to a television program or a radio program and:

- you have not received a response within 60 days after making it or, in exceptional circumstances, within the time period as advised to you; or
- you received a response within that period which you consider to be inadequate,

you may complain to the ACMA, under section 150 of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (BSA).

The ACMA can only investigate complaints about SBS's television and radio programs. Online content is not included within the jurisdiction of the ACMA for the purposes of section 150 of the BSA.

If the ACMA investigates a complaint and finds that it is justified, it may recommend SBS take action to comply with the relevant Code of Practice or other action relating to the complaint. If SBS does not take the action recommended by the ACMA within 30 days, the ACMA may give the Minister a written report on the matter which will be tabled in Parliament.

9.4 External review of complaints

Requests for an external review of complaints should be sent to:

Australian Communications and Media Authority

PO Box Q500

Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230

www.acma.gov.au

HOW TO CONTACT SBS

Information

Information about SBS is available on the SBS website at www.sbs.com.au, including program, schedule and corporate information. Information about SBS content is also available on social media platforms and electronic program guides.

If what you are looking for is not there, you can contact SBS Audience Relations.

Comments, feedback and general complaints

If you would like to comment about SBS programs or content you can contact SBS Audience Relations.

SBS records all comments and circulates them to management and relevant staff. You will generally not receive a written reply.

See Code 9.2 for more information about comments and general complaints.

How to contact SBS Audience Relations

Telephone:

Direct: Sydney (02) 9430 2828
Melbourne (03) 9949 2121
Toll Free: National 1800 500 727
TTY* Call the NRS on 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 500 727

* For people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.

Email: comments@sbs.com.au

Write to: SBS Audience Relations
Locked Bag 028
Crows Nest NSW 1585

If a program has its own website with a comments page, you can submit a comment to the program directly.

Code complaints

If you want to make a Code complaint about an SBS program or content which you believe breaches these Codes of Practice, you will need to follow the steps in Code 9.3.

The SBS Codes of Practice are published on the SBS website www.sbs.com.au

