



SBS submission to the Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific August 2018

Key Points

- In a world where audience choice continues to expand, the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (**SBS**) continues to make a vital difference to the Australian cultural and media landscape.
- Through content across all our platforms, SBS inspires a richer, more holistic understanding of our world and presents surprising perspectives in entertaining and innovative ways.
- Unlike the ABC, SBS is not required by its Charter to provide services internationally, including to the Asia Pacific.
- As such, SBS services are not, and have not been, available on shortwave terrestrial broadcast technology in the region. Rather, SBS's focus is on providing services to the community in Australia, in line with its Charter obligations.
- Of SBS's 68 language radio programs, 31 are in languages from across the Asia Pacific region. In addition to these, SBS offers two music channels with content from the region.
- SBS Radio communicates a diversity of views and perspectives to audiences in a range of languages and in line with SBS Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines. The primary focus of these programs is information and news about Australia.
- In addition, SBS provides international news coverage through the lens of the community living here in Australia, a perspective which migrants are unable to experience through programs sourced from their homeland.

Introduction

SBS appreciates the opportunity to submit to the Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific (the **Review**).

As Australia's multilingual and multicultural public broadcaster, SBS is needed now more than ever to build understanding and cohesion in our society.

In a world where audience choice continues to expand, SBS continues to make a vital difference to the Australian cultural and media landscape. The network's unique position allows it to develop and present compelling, distinctive and thought-provoking content that no other Australian media organisation provides.

A quarter of Australians were born overseas, almost half have at least one parent born overseas, and 21% per cent (4.87 million people) speak a language other than English at home, according to the 2016 Australian Census.

Some of SBS's content is targeted to the needs of particular groups or communities, whether by language or subject matter. Other content is of broader appeal, helping to promote SBS's stories of our multicultural society to as many Australians as possible.

SBS is the world's most linguistically diverse broadcaster reaching almost 100 per cent of the population in Australia through its six free-to-air TV channels (SBS, SBS HD, SBS VICELAND, SBS VICELAND HD, Food Network and National Indigenous Television (**NITV**)) and seven radio stations (SBS Radio 1, 2, 3, SBS Arabic24, SBS PopDesi, SBS Chill and SBS PopAsia). Engagement is being significantly extended through SBS's digital services, including SBS On Demand and portals which make online audio programming and information available in nearly 70 languages other than English.

Through content across all our platforms, SBS inspires a richer, more holistic understanding of our world and presents surprising perspectives in entertaining and innovative ways.

Coverage of and access to SBS media services in the Asia Pacific

Unlike the ABC, SBS is not required by its Charter to provide services internationally, including to the Asia Pacific. As such SBS services are not, and have not been, available on shortwave technology in the region.

However, SBS's digital services, including social media, provide an opportunity for all audiences to engage with SBS services, programs and discussions on contemporary issues. For example, each SBS Radio program page (language and music) has a dedicated SBS in language website, as well as social media profiles across most popular platforms, including Facebook, WeChat, and Twitter. These services provide a rich source of balanced and high quality news and information about Australia available in a range of languages.

For the Asia-Pacific region, these services may be beneficial to those considering migration to Australia, for those who have family here, or for those who may be visiting. In particular, the [settlement guides](#) (published in 35 languages including 24 languages

from the Asia-Pacific region) provide valuable insight and critical information about life in Australia for new migrants.

SBS Radio services relating to the Asia Pacific

Of SBS's 68 language radio programs, 31 are in languages from across the Asia Pacific region. A full list of these services is in **Appendix A**. In addition to these, SBS offers the following music channels:

- SBS PopAsia is a 24 hours per day, seven days a week music channel broadcasting pop music from Korea, Japan, China and across Asia.
- SBS PopDesi showcases hits 24 hours a day, seven days a week from Bollywood and Bhangra (India).

Value of SBS Radio services

A recent GfK Radio Insights study¹ found that radio is the most trusted media in Australia and is seen as the most credible source of news.

As a public broadcaster, SBS is committed to being balanced and impartial. Each of the language programs produced by SBS is subject to rigorous Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines. In this role, SBS also has a responsibility to apprise all Australians about the community in which they live. SBS Radio communicates a diversity of views and perspectives to Australian audiences. While migrants to Australia now have access to homeland news and information via satellite television and the internet, SBS Radio plays a fundamental role in providing Australian news and information, celebrating audiences' cultures, and giving migrants a voice within the Australian community—all in the migrant's first language. This enables and promotes participation in Australian society.

In addition, SBS provides international news coverage through the lens of the community living here in Australia, a perspective which migrants are unable to experience through their homeland sources. SBS broadcasters can access the stories of people 'on the ground' no matter where a story breaks in the world—and bring those stories to Australia, where we can also translate them into English to share with all Australians.

The content featured on SBS Radio's programs is national, and broadcasters are encouraged to broadly represent communities across the country. Language programs that are broadcast everyday have correspondents in most states, as well as internationally, who provide international, regional and state-based reports. The content for these programs is locally produced and presented, and programs contain majority Australian-focused content.

¹ Survey carried out in May 2017, results released in July 2017. "42% of respondents surveyed considered radio trustworthy, with a wide gap to TV (24%), online (18%) and newspapers/magazines (15%). <http://www.gfk.com/en-au/insights/press-release/radio-most-trusted-media-survey-shows/>.



In addition to the many language programs offered across the schedule of our main radio channels, in March 2016, SBS launched SBS Arabic24 for Australia's Arabic-speaking community—a 24/7 multiplatform service on mobile, online and digital radio. SBS Arabic24 offers Arabic-speaking Australians a balanced and impartial destination focusing on life in Australia and a touchpoint to the rest of the Arabic-speaking world. The service's Australian-produced content is complemented by a selection of the best programming from SBS partner BBC Arabic, broadcast live from the BBC's Dubai news centre.

Conclusion

SBS provides significant national broadcasting services, which are a valuable service to the Australian community. Their extension of these programs internationally would provide a supplementary service to international communities, individuals, and those looking to migrate to Australia.

SBS would be open to the concept of providing additional services outside Australia, however this would require a consequential uplift in funding and potential updates to the Charter of both SBS and the ABC.

Appendix A – SBS Radio programs in languages from the Asia Pacific

1. Bangla
2. Gujarati
3. Hindi
4. Malayalam
5. Nepali
6. Pashto
7. Punjabi
8. Sinhalese
9. Tamil
10. Telugu
11. Urdu
12. Indonesian
13. Japanese
14. Samoan
15. Cantonese
16. Filipino
17. Korean
18. Mandarin
19. Vietnamese
20. Amharic
21. Burmese
22. Hakha Chin
23. Hmong
24. Karen
25. Khmer
26. Kirundi
27. Lao
28. Mongolian
29. Rohingya
30. Thai
31. Tibetan