

Dear Senate Committee

I wish to object strongly to this Bill, which seeks to increase the number of minutes of advertising on SBS, per hour in prime time.

I write as a film producer who has delivered films and programs for broadcasting on SBS, and as an avid SBS viewer.

I speak as part of the active constituency of viewers who seek out SBS, as the 'home' of stories, news, documentaries and films not available on other channels - in particular a well-balanced, broad perspective on the world, which is precious and open.

SBS' role as a broadcaster of quality TV is unsurpassed; it exists in a rare 'semi-commercial' state, in which a precarious balance exists between the needs of the broadcaster to fund programming, and the needs of the audience to watch programs in as uninterrupted state as possible. [Historically, as we know, SBS originally did not have any advertising at all; then, there was the period of ad breaks around programming. The erosion into the 'program' part of the hour has already now happened twice.]

SBS has its own obligations under its Charter, and one of the specific obligations is not to generate **unnatural breaks** within programming. The more minutes within programs that are dedicated to ad breaks - and 'product placement within programs' - the less likely SBS will ever be to fulfil its Charter obligations. Additionally, advertisers will be prioritised over editorial and viewers, in the rush for income.

All this amounts to a creeping commercialisation of the channel, tantamount to a betrayal of the cultural pact between SBS and its constituency.

To see SBS eventually broadcasting 14 minutes per hour of disruptive commercial breaks (i.e. ads plus promos) is totally unacceptable. It's starting to look a lot like any commercial channel!

I urge the government not to pass this Bill. If anything, a reversal of the trend towards increasing commercialism on SBS is called for, to protect an invaluable national resource.

best regards

Bridget Ikin