

**Public hearing: Sydney 13 October 2006****SBS and ethnic media to discuss electoral participation of migrants**

Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee will hold a roundtable discussion with representatives of the ethnic media, including SBS, at its public hearing in Sydney on Friday (13 October).

SBS submitted that its Charter requires it to "provide multilingual and multicultural services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society. As part of the work of fulfilling this Charter, SBS seeks to find ways of engaging diverse audiences with Australian cultural democracy by improving access to relevant, independent information in many languages across various platforms" (p. 1, Submission 69).

Committee Chairman Peter Lindsay (Herbert, Qld) said, "we need to find out how migrant citizens are participating in Australia's democratic process. Where do they find out about political debates in Australia and how do they engage in these? What role do ethnic media play in shaping migrants' opinions and encouraging participation?"

The Committee will also continue to hear from individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of civics and electoral education. Mr Don Perna, a teacher at St Joseph's Catholic High School, has established The Parliamentary Club, an educational project to enhance the teaching of civics and citizenship across the student population. The Parliamentary Club would like to replicate its successful program across the State and the rest of the country.

Mr Lindsay said, "the Committee is keen to examine the effect of the introduction of the Club on students' participation in broader electoral processes".

The inquiry by a Joint Committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate has received over 100 submissions from a broad range of individuals and organisations.

Public hearing in Committee Room 814/815, NSW Parliament, Macquarie Street

- 9:00am Parliament of NSW (Sub 16)
- 9:45am Australian Centre for Educational Studies, Macquarie University (Sub 19)
- 10:30am **Roundtable discussion with ethnic media representatives**
- 11:45am Ms Amber Sierek (Sub 97)
- 12:15pm The Parliamentary Club

For media comment: Please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Peter Lindsay MP on (02) 6277 4964 (Canberra) or (07) 4725 2066 (Townsville), or by mobile on 0419 656 234.

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4453, by mobile on 0411 440 490, email jscem@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/>