

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 71

Program No. SBS

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Savings from cost sharing arrangement with ABC

Senator Birmingham asked:

Please detail savings made by the SBS through its cost sharing arrangement with ABC announced in the 2009-10 budget, but listed 'not for publication'.

1. Have savings been made through this arrangement?
2. In what areas?
3. Have savings been returned to the government or reduced SBS's budget appropriation?
4. Are any further savings expected?

Answer:

1. Anticipated savings generated by such an arrangement have been included in the forward estimates from 2011-12 onwards.
2. The savings relate to digital transmission services.
3. SBS's budget appropriation has been reduced from 2011-12.
4. Continued savings are expected to be realised upon the renegotiation of existing contracts.

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Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paul McGeough's trip to Iraq

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Did SBS co-sponsor Paul McGeough's trip to Iraq in October 2010?
2. How much did SBS contribute to this exercise?
3. Please provide a breakdown of costs paid by SBS.
4. Was security for Mr McGeough one of those costs?
5. If so, how much was budgeted for security costs?
6. How much was spent on security costs?
7. Were any security services paid for but not utilised by Mr McGeough?

Answer:

1. - 7.

In October 2010, SBS and Fairfax Media collaborated on the production of a special report for *Dateline* called 'Power struggle'. The report was presented by Paul McGeough, and filmed and field-produced by SBS cameraman Ryan Sheridan.

SBS and Fairfax agreed that, on the same assignment, Paul McGeough would be permitted to produce a print version of the story for publication in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. SBS's contribution to the story was \$6,990. This included security costs which were in line with standard expenditure for operations in conflict areas.