

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**  
**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**  
**Additional Budget Estimates Hearings February 2010**  
**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Special Broadcasting Service Corporation**

**Question No: 45**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: SBS Program – *China's Capitalist Revolution***

**Senator Brown asked:**

The 9.30 pm program *China's Capitalist Revolution*, Sunday, 7 February 2010

Who, in the UK, made this program, when and with what funding?

**Answer:**

*China's Capitalist Revolution* was produced by Brook Lapping in 2009 for the BBC, and co-funded by public service broadcasters SBS, France 2, SVT (Sweden), NRK (Norway), VPRO (The Netherlands), SRC/CBC (Canada), RTBF (Belgium), YLE (Finland), DRTV (Denmark) and the MEDIA Programme of the European Union.

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**Question No: 46**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Portfolio Staffing – SBS**

**Senator Fisher asked:**

- a) What is the total expenditure on staffing for the Department and for all portfolio agencies? What is the SES and non-SES breakdown?
- b) What are the current staffing levels for SES and non-SES officers? What is the breakdown by location?
- c) What have been the changes in average staffing levels since November 2007? Why have these changes occurred? What have been the Budgetary implications?
- d) In the case of reductions in staff numbers, how have these reductions been absorbed by the Department? What functions have been sacrificed and why?
- e) Has there been a target for staff reductions to achieve savings? What is that target and what strategy is being implemented to achieve this?
- f) Have any voluntary or involuntary redundancies been offered to staff? If so, how have staff been identified for such offers? Are there such plans for the future?

**Answer:**

- a) \$76.967m. As SBS employees are not employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* SBS does not classify staff as SES/non-SES. SBS 'senior executives' are persons engaged by SBS who are concerned in, or take part in, the management of SBS, other than as a director. In 2008/09 the breakdown for total expenditure on staffing was: Senior executives – \$1,709,814; other – \$75,257,186.
- b) SBS employees are not employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. Current staffing levels for senior executives (as set out in (a)) and other officers as at 28 February 2010: SBS senior executives – 7; other – 812. Breakdown by location: SBS senior executives: Sydney – 7; Other: Sydney – 674; Melbourne -127; Canberra – 10; Brisbane – 1.
- c) FTE equivalent at November 2007 – 767.96. FTE equivalent at February 2010 – 838.74. In-sourcing of SBS TV sales; engineering infrastructure support for digital transition; resources for preparation and delivery of content over additional platforms including online, and SBS's digital multichannel SBS TWO; resources for audience research and program campaigns. Increases have been met via efficiency gains and additional non-Government revenue. SBS is continually looking to achieve further efficiencies to fund new content, maintain its ageing infrastructure and participate in new technologies.
- d) Not applicable.

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- e) Under the SBS Corporate Plan, SBS aims to grow resources available for content and services by increasing efficiencies in all of SBS's activities, but there is no specified target for each division or the corporation as a whole relating to staff numbers.
- f) In 2008/09 there were five redundancies. The SBS Certified Agreement 2008 does not provide for voluntary redundancies. Under the Agreement, SBS may determine that an employee is redundant where: a) their skills or talents are no longer relevant to program requirements; or (b) they are no longer required for the efficient and economical operation of SBS; or (c) their services cannot be used effectively because of technological change or other changes in work practices; or (d) their function is transferred to another location and they are not willing to relocate.

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**Question No: 47**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Portfolio Staffing - SBS**

**Senator Barnett asked:**

- a) How many permanent staff recruited since the supplementary budget estimates?
- b) What level are these staff?
- c) How many temporary positions exist or have been created since budget estimates?
- d) Since supplementary budget estimates, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

**Answer:**

- a) Seven.
- b) SBS Band 1 – two; SBS Band 3 –five.
- c) 16.
- d) Nine; 1.5 years.

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**Question No: 48**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Portfolio Staffing (efficiency dividend/budget cuts) – SBS**

**Senator Barnett asked:**

- a) Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?
- b) If so, where and at what level?
- c) Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details ie. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
- d) What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

**Answer:**

- a) SBS is not subject to the efficiency dividend and has not had its budget cut.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) Not applicable.
- d) SBS endeavours to offer a number of cadetship positions which are contingent on available resources and are reviewed annually. In January 2010 the SBS News and Current Affairs journalism cadetship program was reduced from four to two positions due to the effect of the global financial crisis on SBS resources. For several years one cadetship has been offered to an Indigenous journalist. This position was retained as one of the two available for 2010. From January 2011 it is planned to revert to the previous four cadetships, subject to available resources.