

**Senate Standing Committee on the
Environment, Communications and the Arts**
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Question: 135

Topic: Annual Report

Senator Birmingham asked:

If the SBS annual report has not yet been tabled, when will it be tabled and was any consideration given to having the annual report ready in advance of Supplementary Estimates as a courtesy?

Answer:

The SBS Annual Report has been tabled in Parliament and has also been placed on the SBS website www.sbs.com.au .

The Annual Report was tabled in accordance with the timeframes and guidelines required by the Australian Government.

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Question: 136

Topic: Staff recruitment
Senator Birmingham asked:

How many permanent staff recruited since the budget estimates?
What level are these staff?

Answer:

Fifteen permanent staff have been recruited since 26 May 2008. They are employed on the following levels:

SBS2: 1
SBS3: 4
SBS4: 2
SBS5: 2
SBS6: 3
SBS7: 3

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Question: 137

Topic: Staff recruitment

Senator Birmingham asked:

How many temporary positions exist or have been created since budget estimates?

Answer:

Fifty temporary positions have been created or existed since 26 May 2008.

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Question: 138

Topic: Staff recruitment

Senator Birmingham asked:

Since budget estimates, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

Since 26 May 2008, fifteen staff have been employed on contract, with an average length of employment period of 2.28 years.

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Question: 139

Topic: Efficiency dividend

Senator Birmingham asked:

Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?

If so, where and at what level?

Answer:

SBS is not subject to the efficiency dividend and has not had its budget cut.

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Question: 140

Topic: Razor Gang

Senator Birmingham asked:

What discussions has the SBS had with the Razor Gang Mk II?

Has the Razor Gang indicated any cuts/savings to be made by the SBS?

Answer:

SBS has had no discussions with the Razor Gang and there have been no indications regarding cuts or savings.

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Question: 141

Topic: Special accounts

Senator Birmingham asked:

What special accounts does the SBS currently hold? How much is in these accounts?

Does the SBS use the interest from these funds to fund ongoing operations?

Has the Razor Gang Mark II given any indication about the future of these special accounts?

Answer:

SBS holds no special accounts.

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Question: 142

Topic: Expenditure

Senator Birmingham asked:

How many programs were underspent in 07/08 financial year?

What requests have been made to roll-over underspends to 2008/09?

Were these requests successful?

Answer:

No programs were underspent in the 2007/08 financial year.

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Question: 143

Topic: Media monitoring

Senator Birmingham asked:

How much has been spent on media monitoring to date this year?

Answer:

SBS has a media monitoring contract with Media Monitors. SBS spends on average \$11,500 per month on media monitoring.

Additionally, SBS spent \$10,000 in 2007/08 on ethnic press monitoring. This amount is expected to increase to \$16,000 in total for 2008/09 due to the introduction of an e-mail alert service.

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Question: 144

Topic: Media monitoring

Senator Birmingham asked:

What communications programs has the SBS undertaken, or are planning to undertake?

For each program, what is the total spend?

Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.

Answer:

SBS does not conduct specific public communications programs as an organisation; however, SBS periodically conducts community consultations about issues which affect the broadcaster.

In 2008 SBS released its Plans for the Future document which outlines a vision for SBS and its services up to 2013, the proposed digital switchover date.

A series of community consultations to discuss SBS's plans have been held or are planned across Australia in 2008.

Specific costs for the consultations on the Plans for the Future are listed below. These include catering and room hire costs.

24/7/08 – Sydney - \$444.00
6/8/08 – Brisbane - \$1,456.06
20/8/08 – Melbourne - \$391.00
29/10/08 – Perth - \$286.00
30/10/08 – Adelaide - \$690.00

Consultations are also planned for Darwin, Hobart and Canberra over the coming months.

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Question: 145

Topic: FOI

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the SBS received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?

How many FOI requests has the SBS received?

How many have been granted or denied?

How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests?

Answer:

SBS relies on guidelines issued by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Since 26 May 2008 SBS has not received any FOI applications.

Two applications received in April were determined in June. One application was refused; the other lapsed when the processing fee was not paid.

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Question: 146

Topic: Reviews

Senator Birmingham asked:

How many Reviews are currently being undertaken in the SBS?

When will each of these reviews be concluded?

Which Reviews have been completed since Budget Estimates?

When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?

Answer:

On 16 October 2008 the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy announced a review into the role of public broadcasting in Australia.

The review will canvass the key issues facing the public broadcasters over the next decade.

SBS welcomes the public review and will be making a detailed submission to the Government.

Submissions into the review of public broadcasting are due to Government by 12 December 2008.

Further questions regarding the review and the Government's response should be directed to the Minister.

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Question: 147

Topic: Programming

Senator Birmingham asked:

What proportion of airtime on SBS TV is dedicated to foreign language (non-English language) programming?

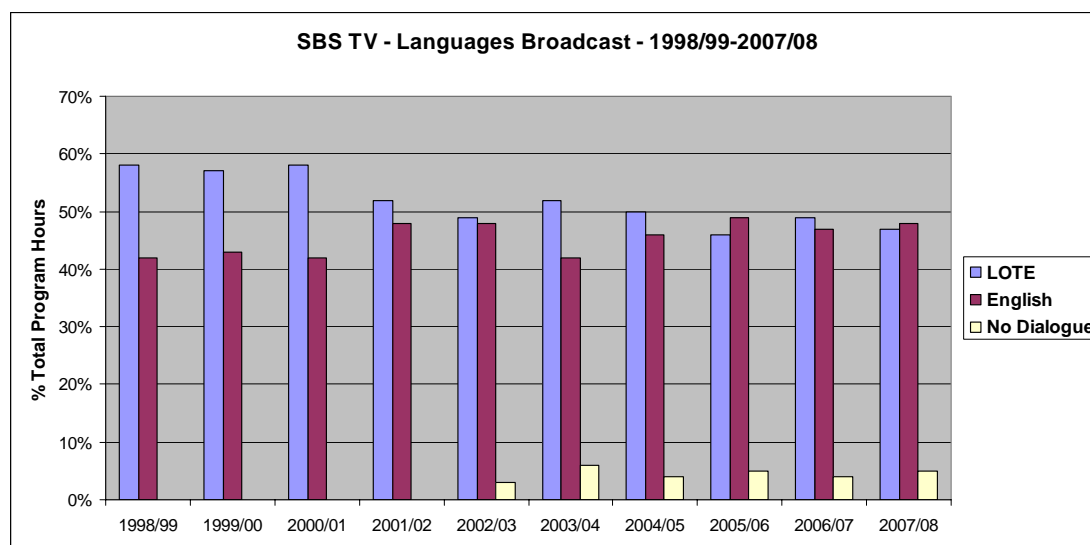
How has this changed over the last ten years?

Answer:

In accordance with the SBS Codes of Practice & Editorial Guidelines (updated 2006), SBS seeks in its yearly television schedule to achieve a balance between television programs in English and programs in languages other than English.

The balance between English and non-English language programming fluctuates from year to year but has remained relatively stable in recent years at 50:50.

The graph below demonstrates the balance between English, non-English language and non-dialogue programming in the past decade:



As the graph shows, prior to 2002/03 SBS did not track the amount of content broadcast without dialogue. This is now recorded separately.

The 2007-08 SBS Annual Report also provides information on English and non-English broadcast hours.

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Question: 148

Topic: Programming

Senator Birmingham asked:

What proportion of airtime on SBS TV is dedicated to programs in each of the following segments: news/current affairs, sport, comedy, documentaries, movies, drama and other?

Answer:

This information is available in the 2007-08 SBS Annual Report.

The table below gives a breakdown of SBS program hours by genre.

Genre	Local				Imported				Total	% Total
	First Run	Repeat	Total	% Local	First Run	Repeat	Total	% Imported		
Animation	0	2	2	0.1%	2	18	20	0.4%	22	0.3%
Arts	1	12	13	0.8%	46	42	88	1.7%	101	1.5%
Comedy	3	3	6	0.4%	22	33	55	1.1%	61	0.9%
Current Affairs	78	151	229	13.4%	0	0	0	0.0%	229	3.3%
Documentary	84	279	363	21.3%	429	377	806	15.7%	1169	17.1%
Drama	19	13	32	1.9%	118	168	286	5.6%	318	4.6%
Educational	16	5	21	1.2%	0	0	0	0.0%	21	0.3%
Entertainment Series	51	60	111	6.5%	0	0	0	0.0%	111	1.6%
Features	5	8	13	0.8%	350	493	843	16.4%	856	12.5%
News	433	0	433	25.4%	247	7	247	48.2%	2910	42.5%
Performance / Variety	3	0	3	0.2%	24	14	38	0.7%	41	0.6%
Short Films / Fillers	10	39	49	2.9%	39	12	51	1.0%	100	1.5%
Sport	152	10	162	9.5%	458	12	470	9.2%	632	9.2%
Other*	271	0	271	15.9%	0	0	0	0.0%	271	4.0%
TOTAL	1126	582	1708	100%	3964	1169	5133	100%	6842	100%

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Question: 149

Topic: Programming

Senator Birmingham asked:

How has the English language/non-English language component in each of these programming segments varied over the last ten years?

Answer:

SBS does not compile information on this basis.

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Question: 150

Topic: Programming

Senator Birmingham asked:

What proportion of current English language programming would SBS consider is related to indigenous cultural issues?

Answer:

Under the SBS Charter, SBS's principal function is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society. In performing this function, SBS must contribute to meeting the communication needs of Australia's multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

SBS Television broadcast a total of 82 ½ hours of programs with Indigenous Australian content in 2007/08.

This included 32 hours of first release programming such as *Living Black* (current affairs), *The Circuit* (drama), *The Deadlys* (arts), *A Bit of Black Business* (a series of interstitials), *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Cathy Freeman episode) and *My Brother Vinnie* (documentary).

In September-October 2008 SBS also broadcast the landmark seven-part documentary series *First Australians*, the first television series to chronicle the history of Aboriginal Australia since 1788.

SBS Radio produces and broadcasts the Aboriginal Program.

Three one-hour programs are broadcast each week in Sydney, Canberra, Wollongong and Melbourne and two one-hour programs are broadcast each week on SBS's National Radio Network.

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Question: 151

Topic: Radio

Senator Birmingham asked:

Of which language programs has spot monitoring for radio content taken place this year?

Answer:

The list of language programmes monitored in 2008 is below.

Month	Programme
January	German
February	Hindi
March	African
April	World View
May	Greek
June	Italian
July	Burmese
August	Dari
September	Czech
October	Turkish
November	Swedish

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Question: 152

Topic: Radio

Senator Birmingham asked:

What, if any, breaches of editorial standards or other guidelines were identified?

Answer:

There were no breaches of the SBS Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines identified.

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Question: 153

Topic: Radio

Senator Birmingham asked:

What spot monitoring is planned or forecast over the rest of the financial year?

Answer:

The list of language programmes scheduled to be monitored during the rest of 2008/09 is listed below.

Month	Programme
November	Swedish
December	Slovak
January 2009	Spanish
February 2009	Tongan
March 2009	Dutch
April 2009	Punjabi
May 2009	Filipino
June 2009	Portuguese

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Question: 154

Topic: Community announcements

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Please provide details of what free to air time on both TV and radio that SBS dedicates to “community” announcements including, if possible, the frequency and nature of such announcements.

Answer:

The broadcast of Community Service Announcements (CSA) is guided by the SBS Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines.

SBS allocates a limited amount of free airtime on the Television and Radio schedules to community and charitable organisations for the broadcast of community information.

SBS will broadcast announcements and material on the basis that the public interest is being served. In the selection and placement of this material, SBS will take into account its role as a multicultural broadcaster, in particular its Charter duty to contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia’s multicultural society, including ethnic and Indigenous communities. For more information on the criteria for broadcasting CSA’s please consult the SBS Codes of Practice.

The amount of CSA’s broadcast varies each week.

SBS Television will generally air 4-6 chosen organisations or causes each week, and attempt to broadcast at least 25 spots for each organisation or cause.

SBS Radio content is broadcast in-language, with some air-time devoted to community announcements. There is no formal tracking of the number of CSA’s on SBS Radio at the present time.

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Question: 155

Topic: Radio

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

What component of the SBS budget is currently allocated to radio programs?

Answer:

This information is available in the 2008/09 SBS Portfolio Budget Statements.

In an integrated broadcasting organisation such as SBS, it is difficult to separate and allocate the resources and costs of the organisation, specifically against program activity in the three main content streams of television, radio and online. Some costs and resources are shared by different parts of the organisation.

SBS estimates that in 2008/09, the direct cost of providing radio services will be \$28.7 million.

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Question: 156

Topic: Radio

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In relation to SBS Radio, please provide a weekly schedule of programs, including details of the nature of the programs for each of those time slots.

Answer:

This information is available in the 2007/08 SBS Annual Report and is also listed below:

AM – Sydney 1107 – Canberra 1440 – Wollongong 1485 & 1035

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TIME
12am–6am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Nightwatch (1hr) O/night progs	O/night progs	12am–6am
6am	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	O/night progs	O/night progs	6am
7am	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	7am
8am	Serbian	Slovenian	Croatian	Croatian	Serbian	Croatian	Slovenian	8am
9am	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	9am
10am	Cantonese	Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin	Cantonese	10am
11am	Mandarin	French	Khmer	French	French	Khmer	Hebrew	11am
12pm	Aboriginal	Albanian	Aboriginal	Maori	Lao	Hungarian	Yiddish	12pm
1pm	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	1pm
2pm	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hebrew	Korean	Cantonese	Tongan	Cook Is. Maori	2pm
3pm	Croatian	Serbian	Yiddish	Serbian	Norwegian	Fijian	Korean	3pm
4pm	Tongan	Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian	Swedish	French	4pm
5pm	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	Danish	Kannada	5pm
6pm	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	6pm
7pm	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	7pm
8pm	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	8pm
9pm	Khmer	Croatian	Serbian	Khmer	Aboriginal	French	Samoan	9pm
10pm	Lao	Korean	Somali	Amharic	Korean	Malay	Macedonian	10pm
11pm–12am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	African	Alchemy	Alchemy	11pm

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FM – Sydney 99.7 – Canberra 105.5

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TIME
12am–6am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Alchemy (1hr) O/night progs	Alchemy	Alchemy	12am–6am
6am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	6am
7am	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	7am
8am	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	8am
9am	German	German	German	Czech	German	Nepalese	Hindi	9am
10am	Dutch	Filipino	Dutch	Filipino	Filipino	Dutch	Urdu	10am
11am	Russian	Russian	Filipino	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese	Tamil	11am
12pm	Maltese	Maltese	Hindi	Maltese	Armenian	Maltese	Sinhalese	12pm
1pm	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	1pm
2pm	Bosnian	Indonesian	Burmese	Gujarati	Indonesian	Persian-Farsi	Ukrainian	2pm
3pm	Hindi	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	3pm
4pm	Bangla	Ukrainian	Latvian	Ukrainian	Dari	Russian	Russian	4pm
5pm	Turkish	Lithuanian	Russian	Estonian	Maltese	Latvian	Finnish	5pm
6pm	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	6pm
7pm	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	7pm
8pm	Romanian	Armenian	Armenian	German	Assyrian	Thai	German	8pm
9pm	Filipino	Thai	Portuguese	Punjabi	Dutch	Filipino	Czech	9pm
10pm	Spanish	Japanese	Spanish	Indonesian	Spanish	Kurdish	Slovak	10pm
11pm–12am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	11pm

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Melbourne – AM 1224

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TIME
12am–6am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Nightwatch (1hr) O/night progs	O/night progs	12am–6am
6am	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	O/night progs	O/night progs	6am
7am	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	7am
8am	Serbian	Slovenian	Croatian	Croatian	Serbian	Croatian	Slovenian	8am
9am	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	9am
10am	Cantonese	Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin	Cantonese	10am
11am	Mandarin	French	Khmer	French	French	Khmer	Hebrew	11am
12pm	Aboriginal	Albanian	Aboriginal	Maori	Lao	Hungarian	Yiddish	12pm
1pm	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	1pm
2pm	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hebrew	Korean	Cantonese	Tongan	Cook Is. Maori	2pm
3pm	Croatian	Serbian	Yiddish	Serbian	Norwegian	Fijian	Korean	3pm
4pm	Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian	Swedish	French	4pm
5pm	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	Danish	Albanian	5pm
6pm	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	6pm
7pm	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	7pm
8pm	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	8pm
9pm	Khmer	Croatian	Serbian	Khmer	Aboriginal	French	Samoan	9pm
10pm	Lao	Polish	Somali	Amharic	Hungarian	Malay	Macedonian	10pm
11pm–12am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	African	Alchemy	Alchemy	11pm

Melbourne – FM 93.1

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TIME
12am–6am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Alchemy (1hr) O/night progs	Alchemy	Alchemy	12am–6am
6am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	6am
7am	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Maltese	7am
8am	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	8am
9am	German	German	German	German	German	German	Hindi	9am
10am	Dutch	Filipino	Dutch	Filipino	Filipino	Dutch	Urdu	10am
11am	Russian	Russian	Filipino	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese	Tamil	11am
12pm	Maltese	Maltese	Hindi	Punjabi	Armenian	Maltese	Sinhalese	12pm
1pm	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	1pm
2pm	Bosnian	Indonesian	Burmese	Romanian	Indonesian	Persian-Farsi	Ukrainian	2pm
3pm	Hindi	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	3pm
4pm	Bangla	Ukrainian	Latvian	Ukrainian	Dari	Russian	Russian	4pm
5pm	Turkish	Lithuanian	Russian	Estonian	Bulgarian	Latvian	Finnish	5pm
6pm	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	6pm
7pm	Maltese	Arabic	Maltese	Arabic	Maltese	Arabic	Arabic	7pm
8pm	Romanian	German	Armenian	German	Assyrian	Thai	German	8pm
9pm	Filipino	Thai	Portuguese	Punjabi	Dutch	Filipino	Czech	9pm
10pm	Spanish	Japanese	Spanish	Indonesian	Spanish	Kurdish	Slovak	10pm
11pm–12am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	11pm

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National Radio Network

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TIME
12am–6am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Alchemy (1hr) O/night progs	Nightwatch (1hr) Alchemy	Alchemy	
6am	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	O/night progs	O/night progs	6am
7am	Greek	Arabic	Greek	Greek	Greek	Arabic	Maltese	7am
8am	Italian	Italian	German	Croatian	Serbian	Italian	Italian	8am
9am	German	Slovenian	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	German	Vietnamese	Hindi	9am
10am	Cantonese	Filipino	Dutch	Filipino	Mandarin	Dutch	Urdu	10am
11am	Russian	French	Filipino	Portuguese	French	Portuguese	Hebrew	11am
12pm	Dutch	Maltese	Aboriginal	Punjabi	Armenian	Hungarian	Yiddish	12pm
1pm	Polish	Spanish	Polish	Spanish	Polish	Turkish	Polish	1pm
2pm	Hungarian	Indonesian	Burmese	Korean	Cantonese	Persian-Farsi	Tamil	2pm
3pm	Tongan	Lithuanian	Turkish	Estonian	Indonesian	Russian	Sinhalese	3pm
4pm	Macedonian	Ukrainian	Latvian	Macedonian	Dari	Swedish	French	4pm
5pm	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	Danish	Finnish	5pm
6pm	Lao	Greek	Italian	Italian	Italian	Greek	Greek	6pm
7pm	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Russian	Arabic	Vietnamese	Arabic	Vietnamese	7pm
8pm	Romanian	Cantonese	Mandarin	German	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	8pm
9pm	Filipino	Croatian	Serbian	Khmer	Aboriginal	Thai	Czech	9pm
10pm	Spanish	Japanese	Somali	Amharic	Spanish	Malay	Slovak	10pm
11pm–12am	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	African	Alchemy	Alchemy	11pm
12am	O/night progs	O/night progs	O/night progs	Alchemy	Nightwatch	O/night progs	O/night progs	12am

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Question: 157

Topic: Legal costs

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

What is the current budgeted amount for legal costs? Please provide details as to the basis and procedures undertaken in assessing the likely legal budget required.

Answer:

The total budget for salaries, administrative costs and external costs is more than \$1.1 million.

In assessing the legal budget requirements, SBS considers the volume and nature of legal issues likely to arise in the year to come, which is then costed and assessed through internal budget setting processes. The legal budget is then reviewed quarterly.

**Senate Standing Committee on the
Environment, Communications and the Arts**
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation
Supplementary Estimates Hearings October 2008

Question: 158

Topic: Legal costs

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

What contingent liabilities does the SBS have regarding legal matters?

Answer:

\$200,000.

**Senate Standing Committee on the
Environment, Communications and the Arts**
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio
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Question: 159

Topic: ABC merger

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

What work has been undertaken at the SBS, including by SBS management and the SBS Board, regarding any merger with the ABC. Please provide details of the same including the date when such work was first commenced and the anticipated savings that such a merger could achieve. Please provide a copy of any such work.

Answer:

SBS is not aware of any work or studies being undertaken regarding a merger with the ABC.