

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 306

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Boards (for Departments or Agencies with boards)

Senator Ludwig asked:

Since 7 September 2013;

1. how often has each board met, break down by board name;
2. what travel expenses are provided;
3. what is the average attendance at board meetings;
4. how does the board deal with conflict of interest;
5. what conflicts of interest have been registered;
6. what remuneration is provided to board members;
7. how does the board dismiss board members who do not meet attendance standards?
8. Have any requests been made to ministers to dismiss board members since 7 September 2013?
9. Please list board members who have attended less than 51% of meetings
10. What have catering costs been for the board meetings held this year; is alcohol served?

Answer:

1. The SBS Board met twice between 7 September 2013 and 31 January 2014.
2. Travel expenses are provided as per the *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2013/16 – Official Travel by Office Holders*.
3. 96%.
4. The provisions in the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* apply – see section 27F-27L. SBS's corporate standards in relation to conflict of interest are set out in the SBS Code of Conduct (s.2.4) and the SBS Accounting Manual (s.25). Board members are required to declare any conflict of interest or any potential conflict of interest.
5. Nil.
6. Remuneration is provided as per the *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2013/03 – Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-Time Public Office*.
7. The *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* (s.27) sets out the terms for removal of Board members:
S.27 Removal of non-executive Directors from office
 - (1) The Governor-General may remove a non-executive Director from office for misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity.
 - (2) If:
 - (a) the Chairperson, or a non⁸ executive Director acting as Chairperson, is absent, except with the leave of the Minister or the Board, from 3 consecutive meetings of the Board; or
 - (b) a non⁸ executive Director (other than the Chairperson or a Director acting as Chairperson) is absent, except with the leave of the Chairperson, from 3 consecutive meetings of the Board; or

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

(c) a non^s executive Director:

(i) becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounds with his or her creditors or makes an assignment of his or her remuneration for their benefit; or

(ii) fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with section 27F or 27J of the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997;

the Governor^s General may remove the non^s executive Director concerned from office.

(3) If:

(a) the Minister is of the opinion that the performance of the Board or the SBS has been unsatisfactory for a significant period of time; and

(b) the Minister proposes that the appointment of all non^s executive Directors, or specified non^s executive Directors, be terminated; the Governor^s General must terminate the appointment of all non^s executive Directors or the specified non^s executive Directors, as the case may be.

(4) If:

(a) the Minister is of the opinion that the performance of a particular non^s executive Director has been unsatisfactory for a significant period of time; and

(b) the Minister proposes that the appointment of the non^s executive Director be terminated;

the Governor^s General must terminate the appointment of the non^s executive Director.

8. No.

9. Not applicable.

10. Catering costs for Board meetings held since 7 September 2013: \$1,792.75. No alcohol is served.