



Select Committee Inquiry into Strengthening Multiculturalism Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

Questions on Notice – Public Hearing on 29 June 2017

1. In our news and lifestyle programs, we do have a very culturally diverse mix as well. I can take on notice to try and get you exact proportions if that would assist.

Ms O'Neil: It is difficult for us to comment on what other broadcasters are doing. Certainly, at SBS we are always very conscious of our onscreen diversity and of ensuring that there is a mix of backgrounds represented. For example, we have three major dramas this year. One is *Family Law*, which features a principally Asian background cast. We also have *Sunshine*, which I mentioned, which focuses on the South Sudanese community in Melbourne. The third one, which may not air this year but is in production, is called *Safe Harbour*, which is being filmed in Queensland. That features a number of Iraqi cast members. In our news and lifestyle programs, we do have a very culturally diverse mix as well. I can take on notice to try and get you exact proportions if that would assist.

SBS also provides diversity in other genres, including lifestyle and other types of factual programming. A good example is SBS's *The Chef's Line*, which premiered in 2017 and offers cultural exploration and discovery through food. The program's hosts and participants and the cuisines presented reflect Australia's cultural diversity. Many of SBS's popular food presenters also reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, including Luke Nguyen, Adam Liaw, Shane Delia, and Peter Kuravita. Our news and current affairs division, including NITV, employ people from a range of cultural backgrounds, both in front of and behind the camera.

As Australia's multilingual and multicultural broadcaster SBS has a very diverse workforce – this is reflected in statistics such as that, in 2015–16, 42% of SBS staff spoke a language other than English, nearly half (48%) were born overseas, and 4% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

SBS also takes steps to support diversity behind the camera. Launched in November 2016, the SBS Diversity Talent Escalator is a national initiative focused on increasing representation of Australia's diverse communities within the production sectors. Partnering with seven of Australia's screen agencies, the scheme aims to address the current lack of career development opportunities for emerging screen practitioners and freelancers from different backgrounds, providing clear pathways for progression at all levels.



2. Performance figures for *The Family Law*

Series 1 of *The Family Law* reached almost two million people through broadcast, and almost half a million through On Demand. Series 2, which is only part way through the season, has already (as at 13 July 2017) reached almost a million people through broadcast and over 100,000 on On Demand.