



28 May 2015

Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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CC: Save Our SBS Inc

Dear Committee Members

On behalf the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), I thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear at the Committee Hearing on the *Communications Legislation Amendment (SBS Advertising Flexibility and Other Measures) Bill 2015* (the Bill), on 18 May 2015, in Melbourne. We are pleased that FECCA representatives at the hearing—FECCA Senior Deputy Chairs, Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis and Ms Tina Karanastasis—were able to further clarify, and discuss with the Committee members, our submission made on 13 April 2015 and the addendum of 14 May 2015.

Further, the purpose of this letter is to provide our formal response to the evidence provided in the hearing by the representatives of Save Our SBS Inc, Mr Steve Aujard and Mr Quentin Dempster, and containing allegations against FECCA.

We believe our written submission and evidence in the hearing provide sufficient clarification of FECCA's position on the measures proposed by the Bill. However, in view of the comments by Save Our SBS Inc, we reiterate that FECCA is an independent, impartial and non-political organisation that works to ensure that the views, needs and aspirations of our constituency are reflected in the national policy. The erroneous allegation made by Save Our SBS Inc of a conflict of interest relies on a figure of \$51,000 reported inaccurately as the financial representation of the relationship between FECCA and SBS. We fail to understand how this figure was identified, and reiterate that the assumption of an existing conflict of interest is both unfounded and unsubstantiated.

As discussed in the hearing, FECCA has had a close association with SBS for many years, considering the important services that SBS provides to Australia's multicultural communities. Our representations on any aspect of these services—either to SBS, the government, or the community—bear no relation to the value that we place on our engagement with SBS as an important stakeholder. FECCA does not have any ongoing collaboration with SBS. *Ad hoc* sponsorship arrangements may be made in the context of

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FECCA's biannual national conferences, which are open to sponsorship by any parties, subject to approval by conference committee, and any such partnerships are disclosed in conference materials. Potential in-kind contribution from SBS, as the media partner and one of numerous sponsors, for the upcoming 2015 FECCA Conference is yet to be finalised and, despite its prospective significance for the conference outcomes, has and will not have any impact on FECCA's policy positions.

FECCA's usual practice was followed in the development and preparation of the submission on the Bill. Our representations are based on our analysis of the available documentation and research, and on our positions coordinated, through the FECCA Chair, with the FECCA Executive, which comprises representation of all State and Territory membership of the organisation.

In conclusion, we reiterate the importance to having adequate safeguards in place to ensure that the integrity of the SBS Charter is maintained. In this regard, we emphasise the key role of the SBS Board in ensuring that the independence of SBS as a public broadcaster is safeguarded at all times, and the significance of advice provided by the SBS Community Advisory Committee.

Yours sincerely

Joseph A. Caputo OAM JP

FECCA Chair