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	Secretary:		

14 August 2008

Mr John Carter The Secretary Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600

jscfadt@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Carter

Australia's Relationship with ASEAN

SBS welcomes the opportunity to provide a public submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of ASEAN.

This submission is limited to SBS's role in improving cultural links between Australia and the countries of ASEAN and does not seek to comment in detail on the other aspects of the inquiry's terms of reference. References to cultural links between Australia and the countries of ASEAN have been interpreted to encompass links that promote improved cultural understanding of ASEAN in Australia, and Australian identities and values within ASEAN countries.

This submission comprises:

- (i) background information on the role of SBS as a national public broadcaster;
- (ii) future opportunities to align SBS services to foster greater cultural links and understanding of ASEAN countries; and
- (iii) suggested recommendations.

Also enclosed as an attachment to this submission is a copy of SBS's Plans for the Future which outlines our vision to use digital and online technology to broaden the range of programs and content and improve the service we provide to all Australians.

Our story: When we began in 1975, there were only a harvful of languages broadcast on Australian media. Now there are more than 66 languages broadcast by SBS, which makes on the world's most imulticultural broadcaster.

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Should the Committee require any further information please contact Mr Bruce Meagher, Director, Strategy and Communications, on 02 9430 3812.

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Yours sincerely Shaun Brown **Managing Director**

cc. The Hon Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs



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Shaun Brown Managing Director

cc. The Hon Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with ASEAN

Introduction

For more than 30 years SBS has been providing Australian audiences with a unique mix of multilingual and multicultural programs. No other broadcaster tells such diverse stories about Australian society or enables audiences to engage with the world as directly and creatively as SBS.

SBS has broad support within the Australian community and is recognised internationally as the world's most culturally and linguistically diverse public broadcaster. SBS tells truly unique Australian stories and provides the best of news and current affairs from around the world. Only SBS allows all Australians to access the world's best international programs through its renowned subtitling services and supports social inclusion and community understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Background

SBS was established as corporation operating as an independent statutory authority under the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* (SBS Act). As an independent national broadcasting service, the SBS Act provides for a Board of Directors to decide the objectives, strategies and policies of SBS.

SBS has offices and radio and television studios in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a news bureau in Canberra. SBS currently employees more than 840 people, of whom almost 50 per cent were born overseas with more than 25 per cent speaking a language other than English.

SBS is a hybrid-funded public broadcaster, financed mostly by Federal Government funding through triennial funding arrangements. Under the SBS Act, SBS is permitted to broadcast advertising and sponsorship announcements (subject to certain limitations). The SBS Act also provides for SBS to carry on, within or outside Australia, any business or other activity incidental to the fulfilment of the Charter. Other sources of revenue include sales of SBS produced or licensed programs, sales of program-related and logo-licencsed merchandise and revenue from SBS Language Services (translation and subtiling).

In 2006/07, SBS received a total of \$177.5 million in Federal Government funding which was supplemented by \$50.5 million in revenue from commercial activity. The vast majority of SBS revenue is allocated to fixed costs such as employee and transmission expenses.

SBS Charter

The SBS Charter, provided in the SBS Act, sets out the principal function of SBS and a number of duties it has to fulfil in performing its principal function. The Charter states:

- (1) The principal function of SBS 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.
- (2) SBS, in performing its principal function, must:
 - (a) contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - (b) increase awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of Australian society; and
 - (c) promote understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people; and



- (d) contribute to the retention and continuing development of language and other cultural skills; and
- (e) as far as practicable, inform, educate and entertain Australians in their preferred languages; and
- (f) make use of Australia's diverse creative resources; and
- (g) contribute to the overall diversity of Australian television and radio services, particularly taking into account the contribution of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the community broadcasting sector; and
- (h) contribute to extending the range of Australian television and radio services, and reflect the changing nature of Australian society, by presenting many points of view and using innovative forms of expression.

SBS Services

SBS provides television, radio and online services.

SBS Television

SBS Television – on its main channel and its digital World News Channel – broadcasts a unique mix of Australian and international programming, from hundreds of national and international sources, which SBS either produces, acquires or commissions including news, current affairs, documentaries, sport, dramas, comedies and entertainment.

In 2007/08, the balance of English and non-English language programming on the SBS main channel was equal. For the same period on the World News Channel, 98 per cent of the total hours of programming was in a language other than English.

SBS Radio

SBS Radio is the world's most linguistically diverse network. It broadcasts programs in 68 languages. Each language program presents listeners with a wide range of content covering local, national and international news and current affairs, sport, interviews, features, talkback, community information and music. SBS Radio also produces Alchemy, providing coverage of youth affairs and music relevant especially to multicultural youth, and World View, its English language multicultural affairs program.

SBS Radio broadcasts two services in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and Wollongong, and a national service to other major centres around Australia including Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin and Perth.

SBS Online

SBS Online extends and enhances SBS Television and Radio programming and creates and commissions innovative content and interactivity that is exclusive to SBS Online. The SBS Radio website has audio streaming of SBS Radio's language programs as well as podcasting services and archived news and other reports.

Programming

Programs hours currently transmitted which provides services in ASEAN languages include:



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Total ASEAN Language Hours - SBS Television 2007/08					
Language	SBS TV & WorldWatch	World News Channel	News Service ¹		
Cantonese	117	208	Hong Kong News (TVB Hong Kong)		
Filipino/Tagalog	106	390	Bandila (ABS-CBN Manila)		
Indonesian	114	468	Dunia Dalam Berita (TVRI Jakarta)		
Khmer			_		
Lao		autore .	_		
Malay					
Mandarin	183	498	Chinese News (CCTV Beijing)		
Spanish	374	650	•Telediaro (RTVE Madrid) (Spain) •Esta Semana (TVN Santiago) (Chile)		
Tamil		-			
Thai	16				
Vietnamese	2	_	-		

In-language services broadcast on the WorldWatch schedule and on the World News Channel.

ASEAN Language Hours / Week - SBS Radio					
Language	Sydney / Canberra / Wollongong	Melbourne	National		
Cantonese	9	9	5		
Filipino	6	6	4		
Indonesian	3	3	2		
Khmer	4	4	1		
Lao	2	2	1		
Malay	1	1	1		
Mandarin	7	7	3		
Spanish	10	10	4		
Tamil	- 1	1	1		
Thai	2	2	1		
Vietnamese	14	14	7		

Audience

Each week more than 8 million Australians watch SBS Television. This includes 53 per cent of people born overseas in a non-English speaking country are who reached by SBS Television in an average week. In 2006/07 an average of half a million people visited SBS Online each month, with a record 1.04 million unique browsers recorded during the FIFA World Cup. In addition, SBS Radio which broadcasts in more than 68 different languages provides a bridge to link the 3.1 million Australians who speak a language other than English to the wider Australian community.

SBS is uniquely placed as a national broadcaster to communicate with a range of local ethnic communities that originate from ASEAN countries. SBS Radio for example, provides regular in-language services targeted to a range of ethnic communities. As the table below indicates, audience reach for in-language radio services varies according to the demands of individual communities and their access to alternative in-language media and broadcasting services.



Six Billion Stories and counting ...

Radio Weekly Reach and SBS Weekly Reach Top Six Language Groups Sydney & Melbourne					
	% of speakers who listen to in-language radio in a week	% of radio listeners reached by SBS in a week			
Arabic	48%	38%			
Cantonese	21%	43%			
Greek	39%	41%			
Italian	43%	30%			
Mandarin	17%	41%			
Vietnamese	54%	98%			

Source: Cultural Partners/Newspoll In-Language Media Research July 2007

Note: These estimates are based on research undertaken with the top 6 language groups in Australia. Telephone interviews were conducted in-language with communities in Sydney & Melbourne. At the last census, these language groups accounted for 50% of the population speaking a language other than English in the home. About 74% of speakers of the top 6

Future Opportunities

Later this year SBS's Triennial Funding Submission 2009 – 2011 will be considered by the Federal Government. In advance of preparing its formal Triennial Funding Submission to Government, SBS has begun consulting multicultural communities across Australia about *SBS's Plans for the Future* (see attachment). Several proposals contained in *SBS's Plans for the Future* provide new opportunities to improving cultural links and foster greater understanding between Australia and the ASEAN countries.

SBS's Plans for the Future

SBS's vision is to harness the potential of digital and online technology, broaden the range of programs and content and improve the service we provide to all Australians. A key element of this vision is to expand the range of services SBS currently provides and allow Australians to access international content with a particular emphasis on Asia-Pacific content which is currently underserved in the Australian media. Through the expansion of these targeted services, Australians will be encouraged to improve their awareness and connection with global cultures and issues whilst also developing a greater understanding of the ASEAN region.

Subject to a commitment by the Federal Government on funding, these plans will deliver the following expansion of services which will contribute to improvements in cultural links between Australia and the ASEAN countries:



F			
		↓	a new digital television channel – <i>SBS World</i> – predominantly in languages other than English with an Asia-Pacific emphasis and made accessible to all Australians through SBS's renowned subtitling service
TV .		✓ 1	subtitled children's programming benefiting communities and language learning
		~	English language tuition to support language learning and targeted at new migrants and emerging communities
	4. 	√ , 1	nine digital radio channels, including services for Chinese and East Asian languages, that will expand the limited services provided to ethnic
Radio			communities and allow changes to the program schedule to enable SBS to respond to changes in community demographics without the loss of existing services
Online		1	new online services including community language hubs that will allow different communities to access a broad range of new content and upload user generated content

While digital and online technology provides opportunities for SBS to considerably improve its services, the emerging digital media environment also presents significant challenges. The switch off of the analogue television signal in 2013 and the commencement of digital radio by commercial operators as early as 2009 will reshape the broadcasting and media environment in Australia.

In this new digital environment audiences will increasingly use different platforms such as the internet, cable TV or satellite services to access content. New media players will enter the market as barriers to entry fall and large commercial multinational producers who have previously relied on free-to-air broadcasters will access consumers directly through new platforms. As international experience has shown, there is no guarantee of good quality and reliable content in new digital environments.

Without new investment, SBS risks being stranded in this new digital environment, unable to offer the necessary range and quality of content, thus becoming an irrelevant and marginalised service.

SBS is also facing challenges from the changing demographics and needs of its diverse audience. As the latest census data illustrates, new immigrant communities from the Asia-Pacific and African regions are growing while traditional post-war European immigrant communities are ageing. There is increasing pressure on SBS to provide new services to growing communities while continuing the existing levels of service to established communities. Only through the expansion of digital services can SBS hope to reconcile these competing demands without affecting services to individual communities.

Conclusion

Any effort by Government to expand Australia's relationship with countries of ASEAN will be affected by the extent of the Australian public's understanding and acceptance of ASEAN cultures and Australia's role in the region.

In advancing the Australian public's engagement with the ASEAN region, the improvement of language skills and cultural competency across the Australian community should be considered by Government as an important priority. Similarly, consideration should also been given to utilising local ethnic communities with strong ties to the ASEAN countries as a strong base from which to expand and broaden the existing relationship between Australia and the ASEAN countries.



Six Billion Stories and counting ...

As the worlds most culturally and linguistically diverse public broadcaster, SBS provides the Australian Government with an additional avenue to deliver on both domestic and foreign policy objectives whilst remaining true to the guiding principals of the SBS Charter.

Recommendations

- That the committee notes the SBS is uniquely placed to assist Australian audiences develop language skills and cultural understanding of ASEAN countries.
- That the committee notes that *SBS's Plans for the Future* will help foster improved cultural links between Australia and ASEAN countries.



Six Billion Stories and counting ...



SBS's Plans for the Future

To ensure that Australia's cultural and creative identity is inclusive and shaped by all Australians, regardless of origin or language.

To enhance cultural understanding through content that all Australians can share in English and other languages.

To provide outstanding news coverage, credible information and opportunities for engagement in many languages to enable all Australians to participate in public life.



SBS's Plans for the Future

SBS wants to deliver more and better services to its audiences.

To continue to fulfil its Charter and to grow, SBS has an ambitious plan to harness the power of digital and online technology to deliver new programming that explores the true, multicultural Australia and allows us to engage with the world.

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New digital television, digital radio and broadband online services will allow us to better meet growing audience demands. These include: a more comprehensive representation of multicultural Australia; more international content; more time allocated for languages on radio; better services for new and emerging communities; more opportunities to contribute to debates; and better access to new and existing services regardless of geographic location.

With increased investment by the Government in the next federal budget, SBS plans to:

- Add at least 100 hours per year of original Australian multicultural programming on SBS television by 2012.
- Expand SBS's programming of the best of content from around the world in any language, by increasing the number of SBS digital television channels.
- Add nine new digital radio channels with distinctive, credible and culturally relevant Australian perspectives on local and international issues.
- Make all our content available streamed and on-demand via broadband connections.

These plans are outlined in greater detail on the following pages. We would like to hear your thoughts about our proposals. Any feedback you provide will be used to assess these proposals before our final submission to Government.

We also need your help. As the nation's cornerstone of Australia's cultural diversity and identity, SBS needs your voice to urge the Federal Government to properly fund SBS so it can continue to make an important civic, cultural and creative contribution to Australia.

The Government considers SBS's core funding every three years. Previous government funding submissions have not delivered real increases in core funding. Therefore, Budget 2009 will be critical for the future of SBS and its continuing role in protecting and promoting Australia's cultural and creative diversity. We face the risk of SBS's unique multicultural perspectives being marginalised or lost in the new digital environment:

- costs of acquiring and producing content are increasing;
- changes in technology and audience demands for a wider range of services, including online and on-demand, require investment in new modes of content delivery; and
- new communities, with pressing needs, are emerging, challenging SBS's ability to serve them without reducing programs for established communities.



SBS Television from 2009 onwards

SBS – An adequately resourced main SBS channel

More multicultural stories, more of the time

With a further 100 hours per year of original and distinctive Australian drama, documentary, comedy and entertainment SBS can better express the true, multicultural Australia.

This content will be commissioned from the Australian independent production sector and will build on the distinctive voice of SBS drama, developed in *Remote Area Nurse*, *EastWest101* and *The Circuit;* documentaries such as *Veiled Ambition*, and *My Brother Vinnie;* and programs like *Food Safari, Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Salam Café*.

• <u>Stories that connect you to the world</u> The best documentary, drama and entertainment programs from around the world.

SBS will select the best of the world's content and make it available to all Australians through SBS's award-winning subtitling service. Adding to our exciting offerings such as *Inspector Rex, Inspector Montalbano, The Eagle, Anatomy for Beginners, Iron Chef* and *City of Men.*

Stories that matter

Broadening our award winning and independent news and current affairs service.

Adding to the challenging, timely local and international issues covered by *World News Australia, Living Black, Dateline* and *Insight*, with greater opportunity for engagement online. Major international sporting and cultural events

Maintaining our strong tradition in supporting free to air and live broadcasting sporting events beloved of many Australians.

Continuing to feed fanatical sports enthusiasts appetite for live broadcasts and skilled commentary of *The World Game*, *The FIFA World Cup*, *The UEFA Champions League*, the *Olympics* and *Tour de France*.





SBS World - to launch in 2009

A new digital channel (replacing the existing World News Channel) selecting programs from around the world that no other channel will deliver.

Predominantly LOTE (subtitled)

SBS World will deliver more content in-language than ever before. Capitalising on the expertise of our subtitling unit, we can make it accessible to all Australians.

International content,

with an Asia-Pacific emphasis Exciting international content, including from our region, currently underserved in Australian media. Encouraging awareness and connection with global cultures and issues, for all Australians to develop a better understanding of the world and region we live in.

The best of international film

Fantastic free to air world movies programmed by theme, director or form and made accessible by SBS's award winning subtitling unit.

Children's programming

For the first time, SBS will provide children's programs in LOTE (subtitled) benefiting language communities and also supporting language learning.

Expansion of the WorldWatch service

In-language news services for more communities, running, in addition to an expanded current schedule, daily services in Hindi, Korean, Macedonian, Polish and Portuguese and others as they become available.

English language tuition to support language learning

Targeted programs to support essential skills for new migrants to Australia, including familiarisation with Australian institutions and resources to help emerging communities engage better with Australian public life.







SBS3 and SBS 4¹, to launch in 2013

M/ SBS

Deepening the range and variety of international, subtitled programming SBS offers, navigated by audiences by language, cultural form or genre. SBS will undertake consultation on and analysis of two options:

OPTION 1 – by genre

SBS 3 - Stories that go deeper

• Adding depth and context to significant stories International documentary strands, investigative reporting, international news and current affairs, live and long-running sporting events that better inform audiences and take them deeper into their interests than can be offered on the main channel.

SBS will provide international perspectives on significant issues, such as French documentaries about religion in schools, African current affairs programs about aid and development, Chineselanguage programming about climate change and behind the scenes on preparations for international sports events. SBS 3 will enable audiences to access different perspectives and in-depth coverage beyond the sound grab, in its original language, made accessible through subtitling.

SBS 4 - Unexpected stories

 <u>Stories you would not know to search for</u> Exciting forms and genres curated for you beyond the barriers of language or geography. In an era of on-demand and user-led services, SBS will have a role in seeking out the best local international stories that will surprise and enrich the media experiences of audiences via subtitled original content.

A range of international comedy, animation, short film, soap opera, quirky game and lifestyle shows, 'cult' and new international movies. On SBS 4, audiences will watch their favourite Latin American telenovellas, Japanese anime, emerging Australian animators and a range of new, rich and engaging content navigated through the electronic program guide. OPTION 2 – by language

SBS 3 – Asia focus

• <u>New and exciting stories from our region</u> A range of content from the rich continent of Asia, including film, documentary, entertainment, drama and comedy from our Asian neighbours allowing deeper exploration of Asia than can be catered to on the main channel.

A range of content from Indian film, to Japanese anime to Korean soap opera, as well as in-depth current affairs and documentary on issues relevant to our region - including climate change, human rights, international migration and global business - allowing in-depth coverage in its original language, made accessible to all Australians through subtitling.

SBS 4 - Europe focus

Stories from the new Europe

Programming that explores the diverse cultures of Europe, with a deeper view of the social, cultural and political issues facing this changing continent.

A range of European comedy, soap opera, 'cult' and new movies, current affairs and documentary exploring the varied cultural forms of the new European Union. On SBS 4, audiences will watch the best of Spanish film, French documentary, Russian comedy and food, travel, current affairs and arts programs that explore the diverse cultural forms and current issues of Europe.

In this option, SBS World would be adjusted to focus on regions outside Asia and Europe including, for example, the Middle East and Africa.

SBS Radio

<u>Two national analogue networks</u>

Languages reflecting Australia's multilingual and multicultural diversity as well as intercultural programming in English.

Professional, editorially independent local and international news and other programming from a range of unique perspectives with unique connections to Australia's diverse communities.

SBS Radio broadcasts high quality content not found on any other service including, for example, coverage of the Italian elections in which Italian-Australians elected their own representative; crucial settlement information in the Amharic program; detailed coverage of recent humanitarian crises in Burma; and national talkback drawing out a range of perspectives within the Arabic-speaking community.

Separate digital simulcasts of existing <u>networks</u>

Digital will give immediate access to all existing content to the main centres previously restricted to single network coverage: Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Timeshifting of services on digital

Timeshifting allows SBS to improve the previous limitations of the SBS schedule that had forced the sole broadcast of some language programs when audiences may have been working, at school or, in the case of some of the African languages, in bed. Better access for some will be as simple as a few more options for tuning in.

Nine new digital channels

Progressive introduction of new digital channels between 2009 and 2012 (see outline attached) including: Extending language services offered and allowing for greater depth of service for major language groups (for example Chinese or Indian languages).

Providing much needed services for new and emerging language groups (including Horn of Africa and other refugee groups).

Broadening high-quality, relevant and engaging programming for second and third generation Australians.

The Australian community is changing and SBS must respond. The next SBS Radio schedule review is due to start soon based on latest census figures. New and emerging groups demand new services, the price of which is that some languages (mainly European languages) will lose airtime. Digital radio, with adequate funding, solves this problem. It will allow us to cater for more communities and offer more, relevant services for all our audiences without forcing any group to lose out.







Draft Digital Radio Rollout Plan

2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011	2011/2012		2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	2014 / 2015
1. AM Analogue Simulcast	1. AM Analogue Simulcast	1. AM Analogue Simulcast		1. AM Analogue Simulcast	1. AM Analogue Simulcast	1. AM Analogue Simulcast
2. FM Analogue Simulcast	2. FM Analogue Simulcast	2. FM Analogue Simulcast		2. FM Analogue Simulcast	2. FM Analogue Simulcast	2. FM Analogue Simulcast
3. Analogue Timeshift FM x 4 hrs	3. Analogue Timeshift FM x 4 hrs	3. Analogue Timeshift FM x 4 hrs		3. English	3. English	3. English
4. Analogue Timeshift AM x 4hrs	4. Analogue Timeshift AM x 4hrs	4. Analogue Timeshift FM x 4 hrs	IIAL	4. Chinese (5 languages)	4. Chinese (5 languages)	4. Chinese (5 languages)
5. Alchemy Digital	5. Alchemy Digital	5. Alchemy Digital	TRIENNIAL	5. Alchemy Digital	5. Alchemy Digital	5. Alchemy Digital
6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)	6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)	6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)	Æ	6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)	6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)	6. Indian Subcontinent (8 languages)
7. East Asian (Mandarin,Cantonese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)	7. East Asian (Mandarin,Cantonese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)	7. East Asian (Mandarin,Cantonese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)		7. East Asian (Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)	7, East Asian (Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)	7. East Asian (Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean)
	8. English/European	8. European		8. European (German, Italian, Spanish, Greek, French)	8. European	8. European
antonio de la composición de la compos La composición de la c	9. Middle East/African	9. Middle East/African		9. Middle East/African	9. Middle East/African	9. Middle East/African

SBS Online

- All SBS TV and Radio content available free online.
- New and existing content made available to mobile devices.
- Original online material including user generated content.
- More opportunity for debate and engagement through political opinion (*Insight* online forums), humour (comment on *Salam Café*) or armchair sports commentary (on sites like The World Game).
- Online hubs for every one of the 70+ language communities catered for by SBS services.
 A 'public square' of content, discussion and news created in every language.

 Full use of the power of new broadband opportunities for content delivery.
 With additional support for online, SBS can ensure its exciting content is made available to Australian audiences when and where they want it.

SBS will be able to leverage its cultural connections, expertise and relationships with communities often 'left out' of national conversation to truly broaden Australian public debates online.



SBS - For all Australians

Improved transmission to all Australians

SBS seeks to ensure that all metropolitan and regional audiences have equity of access to high-quality transmission of improved SBS services.

This requires a better and more efficient use of valuable spectrum including additional bandwidth for SBS, which will enable us to offer four digital TV channels after 2012.

Universal services

SBS believes that all Australians, regardless of geography, age, cultural background or language skills should have access to high quality independent Australian media.

Culturally relevant, public interest media promote better democracy, social inclusion and a broader sense of Australia and its place in the world.

