

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 58

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Page 41, 27/5/2015

Topic: Eurovision

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: I know that you are making the point that you hold the view that the broadcasting fee is confidential. I note that I think it was the BBC in their questions on notice to the similar house committee that does oversight did provide and has provided in previous years what those fees were. I would ask if you would take on notice reviewing how and why they made that decision when reviewing your decision not to disclose that fee?

Mr Ebeid: All I can tell you is I do not know what their contractual arrangements are, but we obviously enter into an agreement, and that agreement is bound by confidential clauses just like every other contract.

Senator DASTYARI: Now is not the time or place; this is a whole separate debate. But I ask you to take that on notice. I note public interest immunity, which is effectively what you are claiming, and confidentiality agreements and contracts, does not apply because of parliamentary privilege. I am asking you to take that on notice and review that in light of—

Mr Ebeid: I am happy with that, absolutely.

Answer:

Following further consideration, including that the BBC may have in the past disclosed during UK question time the fee it has paid to broadcast Eurovision, SBS continues to consider that this information is commercially sensitive and maintains the view that this fee should not be disclosed, as it not only breaches our contracts but would put SBS at a competitive disadvantage.