

**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: 64**

**Program No. Special Broadcasting Service**

**Hansard Ref: Page 51, 27/5/2015**

**Topic: Hybrid Broadcaster**

**Senator Ruston, Anne asked:**

**CHAIR:** So, who proposed the change of SBS to a hybrid broadcaster?

**Mr Ebeid:** We might have to take that one on notice.

**CHAIR:** I would be interested to know if it was a Liberal or Labor government.

**Mr Ebeid:** Who was in government in 1991? I am not sure.

**CHAIR:** I think I am reasonably certain I know the answer to that.

**Mr Ebeid:** We will test everyone's political history here.

**Senator Fifield:** 1991 was that transition time.

**CHAIR:** At that time, to the best of your recollection, because I understand that probably nobody was there at the time, was there ever any acknowledgement about the distinctive character of the programs of SBS that would give you distinctive appeal to particular advertisers in terms of your niche market?

**Answer:**

SBS became a hybrid broadcaster in 1991. The changes to the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* were proposed by the then Managing Director of SBS, Brian Johns. SBS understands that at the time, the specific motivation for the change to the hybrid model was that the ability to raise additional revenue through advertising. This was considered to be a positive move for the organisation, particularly with regard to sponsorship which could pay for coverage/the rights to events such as the FIFA World Cup.

*The SBS Story* by Ien Anf, Gay Hawkins and Lamia Dabboussy provides further historical context to advertising on SBS, pages 249-253.