

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: 66

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Page 55, 27/5/2015

Topic: Decision around running an ad during Mardi Gras

Senator Canavan, Matthew asked:

Senator CANAVAN: I just wanted to ask some questions about an ad that you decided not to run. An ad was booked with SBS I believe in February. It was an ad that was pro-traditional marriage that was booked to run during the Mardi Gras. I have here that the ad was confirmed by SBS on 17 February and then within a couple of weeks, the Friday before the Mardi Gras, an email was sent saying that SBS had decided not to run the ad. Can you walk me through how you came to that decision and, of course, I would like to know why as well? Firstly, how did you make that decision?

Mr Ebeid: That is a very good question. Ms Kellie runs the editorial committee that looks at all of this. She was in charge of that so it might be good for her to take us through that process so that you understand that we regularly look at ads on the network and decide what is appropriate for a program and what is not. That is certainly not a one-off, and I will let Ms Kellie give examples of why and how we do that.

Ms Kellie: The process is the same for all of our advertising. This is not a different process. What happens is advertisers come in and we book spots for them. We then review the ads in terms of their editorial suitability for the network and then make a decision to confirm their placement. That is what happened in this case. We booked the ads. As you know, under our codes and guidelines we reserve the right to decide which ads we show or do not show and often we are looking at where a particular ad might conflict with the surrounding editorial. There have been a number of occasions over the past few years where we have not taken ads, because of a conflict between the editorial, so Sportsbet advertising in a gambling program or alcohol ads in a—

Senator CANAVAN: When was the decision made to not—

Ms Kellie: Where was the decision made?

Senator CANAVAN: When?

Ms Kellie: After the booking. It was after the booking process and prior to the timing of the refusal—

Senator CANAVAN: Can you take that on notice?

Ms Kellie: —we reviewed the ad and had discussions.

Senator CANAVAN: Can you take on notice when the decision was made?

Ms Kellie: I can give you the exact dates, yes.

Answer:

The decision not to air the Australian Marriage Forum advertisement was made on 4 March 2015.