



5 November 2015

Senator Linda Reynolds CSC
Chair of the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator *Linda,*

Following the Estimates hearings of the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee on 20 October 2015 I am writing to you as the Chair of the Committee to clarify some issues around the questioning of the role of SBS in relation to deradicalisation.

All the Australian media have an important role to play in deradicalisation and countering extremism, particularly SBS as we are a public broadcaster and a multicultural broadcaster. SBS has a proud history of producing content to support social cohesion. Strong social cohesion is good for Australia in many ways, but importantly it is a valuable protection against radicalisation. As I indicated to the Committee, SBS takes our role in building social cohesion very seriously and that is why I wish to clarify some of the discussion which occurred at the hearing.

SBS regularly engages with ministers, members of parliament, government agencies and departments about possible programs and areas where we can do more to connect with audiences including with regard to countering violent extremism. As a public broadcaster we are consistently looking at opportunities where our television, radio and on-line platforms can provide content to engage with various communities.

In my time as the CEO I have engaged with both the previous government and the current government seeking opportunities for SBS to assist these objectives and government communication in different languages across all our platforms.

My comments to the Committee could leave the impression that we have put formal funding proposals to the previous and current governments to undertake targeted deradicalisation measures and that these proposals have been rejected. Whilst we have had, and are currently having, discussions on possible opportunities for SBS to do more to support social cohesion as a way to counter radicalisation, it is incorrect to state that we have made formal submissions for funding which have been rejected. SBS has engaged with various ministers and the previous Prime Minister providing them with a range of suggestions on a greater role that SBS can play in this area.

As I stated in my evidence we have started a process of engaging with various ministers and departments on what role SBS can play in this area and what government programs may provide a funding source. SBS will continue to look at new areas where we can provide additional language services to provide resources and information to specific communities to promote social cohesion.

I will provide a subsequent response to the Committee on the points which I took on notice during the hearing.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Ebeid
CEO & Managing Director