

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 80

Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Page 40, 18/10/2016

Topic: Review process of the language broadcasted on SBS Radio

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: But you have initiated a review process of the languages that you currently—

Mr Ebeid: What we do every four or five years with the Census data is we initiate a review to have a look at the demographics of Australia, what new language groups are growing and what new migrant groups need our services, so we do review our languages that we broadcast every four or five years. We have a public consultation process that we are about to undertake and then we will look at the criteria that would constitute what languages we keep, what languages we change and what languages we might increase or decrease.

Senator DASTYARI: Is that consultation process written anywhere? Is there a document somewhere that you can take on notice where you give us what the consultation process is? If there is not a process yet if you can take on notice what the previous process was because I assume a future process would be—

Mr Ebeid: I can do two things. One is to give you the consultation process that we undertook in 2012. We will soon, before Christmas, be going out to the public with our new consultation process for the next 12 months and I am very happy to share that with you in the coming month or two.

Answer:

Radio Services Review process 2012-13

- In February 2012 the SBS Board endorsed: draft language selection criteria to determine the languages that SBS would produce content for as part of the review; and the Board endorsed the community consultation process.
- The public consultation was held from 2 to 30 April 2012 using an online submission process. SBS received almost 1,200 responses to the public consultation. The proposed selection criteria were:

*Large Languages Criteria: population greater than 20,000**

High Needs Languages Criteria:

- *Threshold requirement - population must be greater than 1,000**
- *English language proficiency (weight = 40 per cent)*
- *Recentness of arrival (weight = 30 per cent)*
- *Household resources and unemployment (weight = 20 per cent)*

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- Ageing (weight = 10 per cent)

* Population size based on 2020 SBS projections.

- After consideration of all feedback, the final selection criteria were announced in June 2012. The final selection criteria were:

*Large Languages Criteria**: population of approximately 20,000 or greater

*High Needs Languages Criteria**:

- Threshold requirement – population must be greater than 1,000
- English language proficiency (weight = 40 per cent)
- Recentness of arrival (weight = 30 per cent)
- Ageing (weight = 15 per cent)
- Household resources and unemployment (weight = 15 per cent)

SBS may also include a sizeable ethnic community if its needs are significant but not adequately captured in the Large Language or High Needs Selection Criteria.

Factors which SBS may take into account include:

- *Discrimination/Vilification: where a group is subject to frequent discrimination or vilification in Australia based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin*
- *Immediate need: a significant increase in the population of a language group through Australia's Humanitarian Program*

**SBS will use ABS 2011 Census data for language spoken in Australia*

- The final language selection criteria included the use of 2011 Census data. The relevant Census data was released by the ABS from June 2012 through to October 2012.
- The new (current) SBS Radio Schedule was launched on 29 April 2013.

Radio Services Review process 2016-17

- In August 2016 the SBS Board endorsed a review of SBS Radio services and the intended timeline. SBS will conduct the review in a similar process to the 2012-13 review.
- Public consultation on the draft criteria will be held from 14 November to 11 December 2016, using an online submission process.
- The criteria are due to be finalised in March 2017.
- The new schedule is due to be finalised and launched before the end of 2017.