

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Delivered by email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

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Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a supplementary submission on the National Cultural Policy–*Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place (Revive)*. This submission builds on our [March 2023 submission](#)¹ to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications and highlights additional points for consideration.

The vital role of public broadcasting

SBS welcomes *Revive's* recognition of national broadcasters as vital components of Australia's cultural infrastructure. The year 2025 marks SBS's 50th anniversary. For 50 years SBS has delivered trusted media to inform, educate, and entertain all citizens – and ultimately build a sense of belonging – as the demographics and experiences of Australians have changed and broadened. For many Australians, SBS has also played a crucial role in providing access to essential information in their first language – including during significant national moments – as well as facilitating social, economic, and civic participation. Looking to the next 50 years, the role of public service media in providing a diversity of stories remains essential, as is the need for sustained investment in public broadcasting for SBS to deliver on its statutory Charter obligations to reflect Australia's multicultural society.

In today's environment, with increasing risk of misinformation and challenges to social cohesion, SBS's role in sharing and celebrating diverse Australian stories has become more vital than ever. SBS is among Australia's most trusted news sources, and delivers distinctive services in more than 60 languages, enabling the 5.6 million Australians who speak a language other than English at home to participate in Australian cultural life.² SBS provides screen content that amplifies underrepresented stories from every corner of the country, across a range of genres. SBS is also home to NITV, Australia's leading platform for First Nations storytelling and news, connecting audiences including Australia's newest arrivals with the cultures, stories, and perspectives of First Nations peoples.

In December 2024, the Australian Government announced the expansion of SBS to Western Sydney and funding for SBS to develop a business case to establish a standalone Production Hub and Talent Incubator in the region.³ Expanding SBS to Western Sydney with a new production facility will boost cultural infrastructure in one of Australia's most diverse and fast-growing regions, improve community

¹ Special Broadcasting Service, March 2023, *Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications National Cultural Policy*, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/NationalCultural47/Submissions

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 20 September 2022, *2021 Census highlights increasing cultural diversity*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-highlights-increasing-cultural-diversity>

³ Commonwealth of Australia, Treasury, *Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2024-24*, <https://archive.budget.gov.au/2024-25/myefo/download/myefo2024-25.pdf>

Special Broadcasting Service

Locked Bag 028, Crows Nest NSW 1585 Australia
14 Herbert Street, Artarmon NSW 2064 Australia sbs.com.au
Tel: +61 2 9430 2828

ABN: 91 314 398 574



access and participation with one of the world's most diverse media organisations, forge new community partnerships, and further support jobs, talent, and skills development pathways, including for multicultural, multilingual, and First Nations youth. The facility will also generate benefits for audiences across the entire country through increased SBS programming including news and current affairs, First Nations stories, multilingual audio services, and screen content.

Supporting a sustainable news industry

SBS's trusted, impartial, and accurate news services play crucial roles – helping to reflect multicultural society, shape national identity, support democracy, foster social inclusion, and enable social, economic, and civic participation among Australia's multilingual communities. Strong policy and regulatory frameworks are needed to sustain the availability of public interest journalism in today's media ecosystem, where the fragmentation of audiences to third-party platforms and away from traditional media platforms challenges news production, and global digital platforms play gatekeeper roles between news providers and Australian audiences.

SBS has called for urgent action to address the power imbalance between digital platforms and news providers, which currently results in the use of public interest news and other content on some digital platforms without fair remuneration.⁴ Issues with the operation of the News Media Bargaining Code, and delays in bringing forward the News Bargaining Incentive, mean the intended benefits of this scheme have not been realised. Meta has publicly announced it will not renew commercial deals with news media companies, and Google has reportedly withdrawn from deals with dozens of Australian news outlets.⁵ The proposed new digital competition regime, which is being progressed by Treasury, should also be prioritised to address the anti-competitive behaviours of dominant digital platforms which have widespread impacts across industries. Issues of particular concern to SBS include self-preferencing behaviours, opaque ad-tech supply chains, and technology providers imposing unilateral and unfair terms and conditions in contracts.

Digital and media literacy

As online consumption of news content increases, digital and media literacy is becoming more important. SBS is ideally placed to play a key role in equipping Australians, including children and young people, to become critical, responsive, and active citizens online, through the provision of trusted multilingual news services and SBS Learn digital learning resources for teachers and educators, such as the bold and innovative resources [Safe Home: Media reporting on family violence](#) and [Discover Australia's first fake news story](#).⁶

SBS is a member of the Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA), an association with the shared objective of advancing education relating to media literacy within Australia.⁷

⁴ Special Broadcasting Service, 28 February 2025, *SBS Submission to the Treasury – A New Digital Competition Regime Proposal Paper*, <https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/2025/04/08/treasurys-new-digital-competition-regime/>

⁵ See: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1 March 2024, *Meta won't renew commercial deals with Australian news media*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-03-01/meta-won-t-renew-deal-with-australian-news-media/103533874>; Australian Financial Review, 22 June 2025, *Google ditches million-dollar deals with publishers amid Labor inaction*, <https://www.afr.com/companies/media-and-marketing/google-ditches-million-dollar-deals-with-publishers-amid-labor-inaction-20250620-p5m94l>

⁶ SBS Learn, 23 September 2025, *Safe Home: Media reporting on family violence* <https://www.sbs.com.au/learn/resources/safe-home-media-reporting-on-family-violence/>; SBS Learn, 17 September 2024, *Discover Australia's First Fake News Story* <https://www.sbs.com.au/learn/resources/discover-australias-first-fake-news-story/>

⁷ Australian Media Literacy Alliance, <https://medialiteracy.org.au/>



Artificial intelligence

SBS welcomes the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to drive innovation and deliver improved community, consumer, and business outcomes. AI presents opportunities to enhance and expand SBS's service provision for all Australians, by supporting efficiency gains and re-investment in content, and by making services more accessible. SBS recognises that AI carries clear risks which must be carefully managed and has robust safeguards in place to guide SBS's use of AI, maintain audience trust, and mitigate risks. The SBS Code of Practice contains comprehensive editorial standards in relation to a range of matters including accuracy, fairness, balance, and classification of content. SBS has further established and published guiding principles on its approach to the responsible use of AI, addressing audience trust, content integrity, and editorial standards.⁸

SBS is concerned about the risk presented by the unauthorised exploitation of copyright material by AI developers to the sustainability of Australia's vital media, cultural, and creative sectors, which are already under pressure. *Revive* recognises that Australia's copyright laws incentivise the creation of new cultural material while also allowing reasonable and equitable use of copyright. AI systems are being trained on vast datasets of copyright content without permission, attribution, or compensation.⁹ This negatively impacts the future output of Australia's media, cultural, and creative sectors, diminishing returns from the use of work and in some cases, replacing the demand for human-made creations, while creators and rightsholders continue to bear the costs of creating original content.

In December 2023, the Australian Government established the Copyright and Artificial Intelligence Reference Group (CAIRG), of which SBS is a member, to better prepare for future copyright challenges emerging from AI. The Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence recognised the inadequacy of the current copyright regime in protecting copyright materials from AI exploitation in its Final Report in November 2024. SBS supports further work and consultation being undertaken on the CAIRG's recommendations, including further consultation with rightsholders and other affected stakeholders on solutions to the theft of work by multinational tech companies; that the Australian Government require the developers of AI products to be transparent about the use of copyrighted works and that use of such works is appropriately licensed and paid for; and that the Australian Government undertake consultation to consider an appropriate mechanism to ensure fair remuneration to creators for commercial AI-generated outputs based on copyrighted material used to train AI systems.¹⁰

Recently, the Productivity Commission has sought information around the implementation of a text and data mining (TDM) exception for AI in the Copyright Act. SBS is strongly opposed to a TDM exception. A TDM exception would cause significant harm to the future productivity of Australia's media, creative, and cultural sectors by removing incentive for AI companies to enter licensing deals for the use of copyrighted work – at a time where there is an evolving market for the licensing of this work.¹¹ The

⁸ Special Broadcasting Service, 19 June 2025, *SBS Guiding Principles for Use of Artificial Intelligence*, <https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/sbs-guiding-principles-for-use-of-ai/>

⁹ See for example: The Guardian, 20 June 2025, *BBC threatens legal action against AI startup over content scraping*, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2025/jun/20/bbc-threatens-legal-action-against-ai-startup-over-content-scraping>; Australian Financial Review, 6 August 2025, *AI firms crawling Nine Entertainment's news sites 10 times a second*, <https://www.afr.com/companies/media-and-marketing/ai-firms-crawling-nine-entertainment-s-news-sites-10-times-a-second-20250806-p5mkop>

¹⁰ Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI), November 2024, *Final report*, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Adopting_Artificial_Intelligence_AI/AdoptingAI/Report

¹¹ See for example: Adnews, 20 August 2025, *Google's first Australian AI news content deal*, <https://www.adnews.com.au/news/google-s-first-australian-ai-news-content-deal>; The Guardian, 23 May 2024, *OpenAI and Wall Street Journal owners News Corp sign content deal*, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/may/22/openai-chatgpt-news-corp-deal>.



Australian Government should instead be taking steps to further incentivise fair licensing arrangements between AI companies and copyright holders, including through ruling out the introduction of a TDM exception, and exploring options to strengthen enforcement of copyright protections.

Unique considerations arise regarding AI and First Nations knowledges and cultural expression. Any use of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual property (ICIP) must be done respectfully and in accordance with best practice principles that uphold First Nations peoples' self-determination and ICIP rights. SBS is committed to respecting ICIP rights, grounded in the principle of free, prior, and informed consent, regarding the use and management of First Nations cultural intellectual property and cultural heritage.¹²

The unauthorised use of First Nations knowledges and cultural expressions by AI developers, without proper recognition of ICIP, poses significant risks to First Nations peoples, cultures, and communities. First Nations peoples' rights to the protection and development of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions are recognised in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.¹³

However, Australian law does not currently recognise ICIP rights or adequately protect ICIP, because much cultural heritage is not in material form. Rather, it is transferred through practice and cultural expression, communally owned, and is created, reproduced, and enshrined by customary laws, lore, and protocols. This means AI systems can scrape and exploit material containing ICIP without permission, attribution, remuneration, or respect for ICIP rights or cultural protocols. SBS welcomes *Revive's* identification of the need to develop stand-alone ICIP legislation through a First Nations-led process. SBS supports the consideration of both traditional harms, such as counterfeit art and merchandise, and emerging threats posed by AI to cultural integrity, in the design of legislation.

Radio prominence framework

In July 2024, Australia introduced laws establishing a prominence regime for local TV services on connected TV devices. The prominence framework will apply to devices manufactured and supplied on or after 10 January 2026. This framework is essential to ensure that Australian services delivering local and national news and distinctive Australian entertainment continue to be easy for Australian audiences to find on TVs, in a market where there is a risk of international TV services dominating home screens.

SBS supports the introduction of a prominence regime for local Australian audio services. As *Revive* recognises, it is essential that Australian stories are both seen and heard, particularly as global content and technology providers dominate content discovery. National broadcasters play a vital role in ensuring audiences can access distinctive Australian news and storytelling through audio services. Today, audio services are consumed across a range of devices, including smart speakers and in-car entertainment systems. There is a risk that Australian audio services become less available or easy to access across these types of systems, where a limited number of manufacturers play a gatekeeping role and service providers must compete with global service providers. A radio prominence framework would ensure that freely-available, local Australian audio services remain easy to access for audiences.

¹² Special Broadcasting Service, 1997, *The Greater Perspective*, https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/site_20_rand_1000072370_the_greater_perspective_sbs.pdf; Special Broadcasting Service, 2018, *The Greater Perspective Supplementary Guidelines*, https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/site_20_rand_1735771747_the_greater_perspective.pdf

¹³ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Article 31 https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf



Archives

SBS welcomes *Revive's* acknowledgement of the critical importance of preserving Australia's cultural memories through properly maintained digital archives, and the pivotal role of archives in supporting truth-telling for First Nations peoples and communities. SBS has been maintaining an archive of audio recordings, footage and image content documenting Australian life since the first radio broadcasts of 2EA and 3EA in June 1975, with particular focus on multicultural and multilingual Australians. Through NITV, which began in July 2007 and then launched as part of SBS in 2012, SBS holds extensive First Nations media archives, documenting First Nations peoples' lives and production histories. The preservation, storage, management and access to these ever-accumulating media materials, particularly First Nations materials, requires ongoing support.

SBS looks forward to the ongoing evolution of *Revive*. Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide a supplementary submission.

Yours sincerely,



Clare O'Neil
Director of Corporate Affairs