



Special Broadcasting Service Locked Bag 028, Crows Nest, NSW 1585 Australia
14 Herbert Street, Artarmon NSW 2064
T: (+61) 2 9430 2828 F: (+61) 2 9430 3700 W: sbs.com.au

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Manager
Legislation Section
Digital Switchover Policy and Regulation Branch
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

Email: dst@dbcde.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Legislative framework for implementing a digital television switchover timetable

SBS thanks the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Digital Switchover Taskforce's Discussion Paper 'Legislative framework for implementing a digital television switchover timetable'.

The Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS) is established under the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* with a Charter to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society. SBS broadcasts both analogue and digital television services nationally, two radio services to state and territory capital cities and some regional centres and provides online services at www.sbs.com.au. The signal for SBS's digital television services currently reaches 96.4 per cent of the population, while the reach of SBS's analogue television services is 96.9 per cent.

SBS's digital services currently consist of simulcasts of its main (analog) channel broadcast in Standard Definition and High Definition formats, the digital only 'World News Channel' (SD), an SD channel for sporting highlights and other digital events, and two SBS Radio services (broadcast on digital television).

SBS comments on the following matters referred to in the Discussion Paper.

Amending the current legislative framework

SBS supports the general approach outlined in the Discussion Paper for a firm digital television switchover timetable supported by a flexible and practical approach involving a staggered region-by-region switchover.

Shortening the duration of the simulcast period

Where it is appropriate to do so, SBS supports the Government's proposal to amend the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* to enable the simulcast period for particular licence areas to be shortened.

Using geographical areas other than licence areas

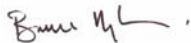
As a national broadcaster SBS provides broadcasting services to all Australia and its broadcasts are not restricted by licence areas. SBS therefore has no objection to the proposal to amend the *Broadcasting Services Act* to enable simulcast periods to be based on areas different to existing licence areas.

Choice of mechanism for setting a digital switchover timetable

SBS considers that the Minister should have the power to determine, and vary, a digital switchover timetable, following consultation with the Australian Communications and Media Authority as referred to in the Discussion Paper. The power should be made specific to Schedule 4 of the *Broadcasting Services Act*.

Please contact Sam Maresh, Manager Government Relations (02 9430 3825; sam.maresh@sbs.com.au) if you require any further information in relation to the matters raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely



Bruce Meagher
Director, Strategy and Communications