

----- Original Message -----

From: <[SaveOurSBS@SaveOurSBS.org](mailto:SaveOurSBS@SaveOurSBS.org)>  
To: <[ConroyS@aph.gov.au](mailto:ConroyS@aph.gov.au)>  
Sent: Wednesday, August 22, 2007 9:52 PM  
Subject: SBS Policy [www.SaveOurSBS.org](http://www.SaveOurSBS.org)

Dear Stephen Conroy,

We seek information as to ALP policy regarding SBS.

In particular we would like to know what is the ALP policy regarding the interruptions to programs for advertisements on SBS-TV?

Although we are aware that you were quite vocal in your objection when SBS announced its intention in 2006 to interrupt programs for ads, we are not sure what the official ALP policy is? In the light of the forthcoming election RE funding for SBS and advertisements on SBS many people want to know what the various parties offer. For example, would the ALP consider amending section 45(2)(a) of the Special Broadcasting Service Act (1991) to either restrict advertisements on SBS-TV to between programs only (as used to be the practice) or even prohibit ads altogether on SBS? Is there a policy to "do nothing" to just keep the status-quo? Is there an implied policy to see the special broadcaster underfunded by government?

You may have heard of our group, Save Our SBS. If not it is worth browsing our web site at: [www.SaveOurSBS.org](http://www.SaveOurSBS.org) and in particular reading the recently created petition that is addressed and in time will be presented to: The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

We are seeking a comment from all political parties regarding their respective policies about SBS, as per the four points made in the petition at [www.SaveOurSBS.org](http://www.SaveOurSBS.org) (which you will need to read on-line at [www.SaveOurSBS.org](http://www.SaveOurSBS.org) in order to answer this email).

For this purpose we would appreciate you replying by email in answer to the above so that we may publish the ALP policy about SBS on the Save Our SBS web site [www.SaveOurSBS.org](http://www.SaveOurSBS.org) under the category "2007 Federal Election & Advertising On SBS-TV".

Save Our SBS is a not for profit community organisation. We are not aligned with any political party or group. We were formed as a direct result of SBS interrupting programs for advertisements and are very concerned about the direction that SBS is heading in, the commercialisation of SBS etc.

We look forward to your fast reply.

Regards,

Bill & Steve  
for Save Our SBS

(XXXXXXXXXX)

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----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Conroy, Stephen \(Senator\)](mailto:Senator.Conroy@aph.gov.au) <Senator.Conroy@aph.gov.au>

**To:** [SaveOurSBS@SaveOurSBS.org](mailto:SaveOurSBS@SaveOurSBS.org)

**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2007 3:02 PM

**Subject:** SBS issues

Dear Bill and Steve

Thank you for your email dated 22 August 2007 setting out your concerns about the future of the SBS.

Labor considers the SBS an icon of Australian broadcasting. By providing both multicultural and multilingual broadcasts that aim to educate and entertain Australians of all backgrounds, the SBS plays an important social and cultural role in Australia and one that Labor champions.

### **Funding of the SBS**

Labor recognises that greater Commonwealth funding would assist the SBS to produce and broadcast more programs and news and current affairs bulletins for Australian viewers.

At its National Conference in April 2007, Labor acknowledged the importance of the SBS and committed Labor to ensuring adequate funding and support for the SBS, to enable it to continue to provide Australians with high quality services, free from political and commercial interference.

### **Advertising at the SBS**

Labor has opposed and continues to oppose the decision by SBS to introduce advertising into its programming.

SBS maintains that they can put advertisements into their programs without there needing to be a change to legislation. Section 45 of *the SBS Act 1991* provides for advertising only during periods before programs commence, after programs end, or during natural program breaks. Accordingly, Labor is concerned that the SBS's action may place it in breach of the Act.

I pursued this matter with SBS at Senate Estimates in October 2006 (see: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S9768.pdf> ) and again at Senate Estimates in May 2007 (see: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S10314.pdf> ).

The introduction of in program advertising to the SBS in effect makes the SBS a *de facto* fourth free-to-air commercial television station and serves to erode the fundamental tenets of public broadcasting- that is, that it should be free from commercial and political influence.

Thank you for writing to me about these important issues.

Your sincerely,

Senator Stephen Conroy  
Deputy Opposition Leader in the Senate  
Shadow Minister for Communications and Information Technology

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