



THE MARKET

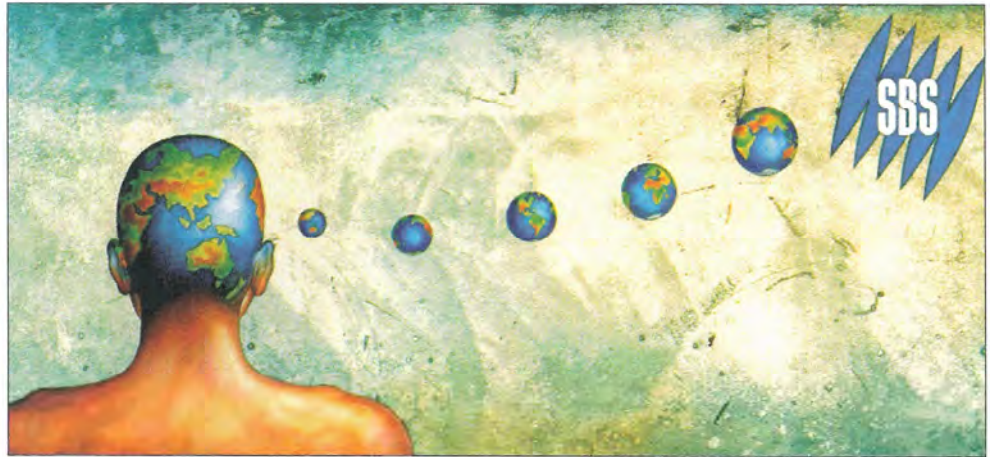
What are we watching for dinner tonight, Mum? Just forty years on from its first tentative forays, television is so much an integral part of our everyday lives that those early, flickering black and white images really do belong to another age.

But amazingly, we really have seen nothing yet. Digital broadcasting will soon deliver a choice of programs and information that just a few years ago was inconceivable and with it, an array of equally significant questions.

What do we want Australia's version of this global broadcasting cornucopia to be? Should we rely on market forces to deliver us a homogenised, international version of the promised digital utopia, or should we ensure the preservation of some uniquely national and quality elements in our menu of program choice? If so, who will the providers of such material be?

Clearly, the answer is the public broadcasters, whose role is to satisfy the need for the type of services which the commercial marketplace doesn't provide . . . to act as a reliable voice of independence and editorial integrity.

Australia is fortunate in having two public



broadcasting organisations, the ABC and SBS. They have quite different roles which have been formulated, fine-tuned and endorsed by successive Australian governments from both political sides.

SBS was established to help people understand and cope with the complexities of modern, cosmopolitan Australia. Drawing on 600 international and local program sources, it reaches out to its audiences in 68 languages. It is unique in public broadcasting, there is nothing else in the world quite like it.

ACHIEVEMENTS

SBS has made a major contribution to harmony and social cohesion in Australia, the work of very Special Broadcasting Services indeed! Providing invaluable insights into the nation's cultural makeup and its place in the world, SBS helps those born here and new arrivals alike come to grips with diversity and live together in one of the world's most tolerant, cosmopolitan societies.

SBS Independent, SBS's independent Australian program production unit, has achieved an international reputation for excellence in award-winning film and documentary production which far exceeds its funding and resource allocation.

SBS also takes credit for helping establish Soccer in Australia. Its first class coverage of three World Cup tournaments, the annual FA Cup Final live from Wembley Stadium and numerous international and Australian games have succeeded in putting the game well and truly on our sporting map.

The sheer act of surviving and flourishing

through the very diverse political regimes of four successive governments must in itself rate as one of SBS's greatest achievements. Despite their differences, the Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke/Keating and Howard governments showed their accord in acknowledging SBS's invaluable contribution.

HISTORY

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow. For SBS, the 'acorn' was the Whitlam government's need to inform people from non-English speaking back-



grounds about the new national health care system. From 2EA Sydney and 3EA Melbourne, the two experimental stations set up in 1975, the service has grown into a national network which provides 650 hours of programming a week in Australia's capital cities and major regional centres, broadcasting in more languages than any other station in the world.

From its equally modest start, also in Sydney and Melbourne in 1980, SBS Television has burgeoned into a national network that is now watched by an average of 5.5 million viewers a week.

THE PRODUCT

The aim of commercial broadcasters is to generate profit. Under the Charter created by the Special Broadcasting Services Act in 1991, SBS's mission is worlds apart - its primary function being "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."

This is what sets SBS apart and is so truly reflected in the station's distinctive, unique approach. Program buying, commissioning, production, scheduling, presentation, every facet of SBS's activities is painstakingly monitored to maintain the highest standards of quality and innovation.

SBS Television strives to be different to the mainstream free to air networks; to complement rather than replicate them, with core programming based on News, Current Affairs, Sport, Documentaries and Movies. It celebrates diversity and contributes to cross-cultural understanding, airing over half its programs in languages other than English, mostly with English subtitles.

It breaks the mould on the meaning of international programming, providing programs that are truly international, not just from Australia, USA and Britain. Around two thirds of SBS programs come from over 600 international and local sources. It provides morning news services from 17 countries around the world, and thrives on audience feedback, receiving massive amounts of it (including as much love mail as the other kind!) daily. Feedback in languages other than English is welcomed and SBS responds in the same language. SBS Radio focuses on serving Australia's cultural communities, broadcasting in 68 languages on a



national multilingual radio network. It delivers local and international news and current affairs, community information, cultural events, music, sports and entertainment. It also provides advertisers and marketers with a one-stop multilingual/multicultural translation, production and consultancy service, staffed by university-tested language experts.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Reacting and adapting to its environment like the healthy organic body it is, SBS has recently introduced some extensive changes.

Audience research indicated a strong demand for a late prime time news service, so the mid-evening World News caters for the emerging trend to later working hours. SBS recruited the ABC newsreader Indira Naidoo and filled the market gap with Australian television's only quality free-to-air, mid evening news service. It has brought a whole new audience to SBS News. In a mid-year Newspan survey, 88% of respondents agreed that "SBS presents its news in a fair and balanced way" and 90% agreed that "SBS has better coverage of overseas news than the other TV stations".

SBS Sport, hosted by Les Murray, SBS's "Mr Soccer", Toyota World Sports has been extended to seven nights a week. To date, its highest-profile success is the 1998 World Cup coverage from France, a 33-day spectacular whose national viewership was 7.3 million, an amazing 28% increase on the previous World Cup. To the further delight of fans, SBS gained rights to the English Premier League, whose action-packed highlights are shown on Monday nights.

'Alchemy', SBS's new, alternative late-night program featuring music from around the world, has proved the station had its finger well and truly on the pulse. Reinforcing the point, America's top rating cable TV program

'South Park' (which rocketed to cult status, joining The Simpsons, Ren and Stimpy, Beavis and Butthead in animation comedy's Hall of Fame) quickly made its mark - delighting record numbers of children and teenagers and amazing many of their parents.

PROMOTION

SBS's corporate brand image campaign 'The world is an amazing place' has evolved with the network since its original conception in 1994. Unmistakably different from those of the other TV networks, SBS's distinctive on-air promotional look revolves around the intriguing and repeated use of the SBS corporate symbol (the 'surfboards' as they're affectionately known by SBS staffers). This simple, powerful device is continuously translated into clever new creative executions in all on-air station IDs as well as external publicity and advertising material.

Supporting these above-the-line activities are Aerial magazine, SBS's monthly subscription-based program TV and Radio guide, and the SBS website. Click on www.sbs.com.au and you'll find forthcoming SBS TV and Radio details along with a wealth of fascinating information and useful links to other sites.

BRAND VALUES

With its mission crystallised in the positioning statement "The world is an amazing place", SBS constantly endeavours to deliver a fresh perspective on the cultural diversity of Australia and the world, adopting a fearless and frequently controversial approach to reflecting a diversity of views and opinions.

Committed to broadcasting the very best of the world's TV and cinematography, SBS shows around 50% of its programs in languages other than English. Out of respect for the original languages in which they were created, these programs are not dubbed, but subtitled in the common language English.

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SBS

- The SBS corporate symbol design evolved from a working diagram of a segmented globe. Angled to 23.5 degrees, the tilt of the earth's axis, its colour is derived from the colour of the planet when viewed from outer space.
- SBS has the world's largest library of foreign films and an army of translators who spend countless hours subtitled them into English.
- The SBS Youth Orchestra, a world class ensemble of young, Australian musicians has received outstanding acclaim in its many national and international performances.
- SBS management conducts hundreds of consultations each year with ethnic community groups to assess their needs and opinions.

