

# Podcast 79 – Multicultural Broadcasting – Australia's SBS

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

***Podcast Number 79 – Multicultural Broadcasting – Australia's SBS***

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast79.mp3>

Hi,

In a previous podcast (see [Podcast 60 – Multicultural Australia](#)), I talked about the multicultural nature of Australian society. Our government and our politicians, from both major political parties, recognize the value of migration for Australia. Over the period since the Second World War, migration has helped Australia to grow economically, to improve our living standards and to become culturally diverse. Today, we are proud of our multicultural society and I think that it's a wonderful thing which makes Australia a richer and more interesting place to live. To support our multicultural population, we even have our own Special Broadcasting Service (SBS for short) which aims to provide television, radio and online programs delivered in languages other than English. Indeed, there are around 3 million Australians who don't speak English as their first language in their everyday lives. SBS is there to make sure those people can still participate fully in Australian society and share their lives with other Australians. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about our SBS.



The logo of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

It was in 1975 that our national health system called Medicare was started (see [Podcast 13 – Health Care in Australia](#)). Back then, our government realized that there were many Australians who did not speak English every day. The problem was – how could they help these people to learn about the Medicare program? The government decided to try an experiment in multicultural broadcasting. They set up two special radio stations in Sydney and Melbourne which broadcast in languages other than English. They turned out to be a great success and it was decided that it would be expanded. The government passed a law to establish the Special Broadcasting Service. And so multicultural broadcasting was born in Australia.

Since then, SBS has grown and become part of Australia's multicultural character.

Today, SBS employs around 800 people. It provides multicultural and multi-lingual programs for radio, television and online. There are television programs in 60 languages, radio programs in 74 languages and online there are 50 languages. Wow, what an incredible resource for those

Australians not born here and for whom English is not their mother tongue. It means they can hear about what is happening in Australia and around the world and take an active part in the Australian community. Importantly, it means that, for Australians in general, the best ideas, the best art and the best entertainment from a range of non-English speaking cultures can be made available to all Australians. That's a good thing for everyone. In fact, SBS broadcasts in more languages than any other broadcaster in the world. Another first for Australia.



The Melbourne headquarters of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

SBS Television channels include SBS One, SBS Two, a National Indigenous TV channel focused on aboriginal Australians, a World Movies Channel, a food channel and an On Demand channel. Around half of the programs are broadcast in a language other than English. Many of these have English subtitles done by SBS staff, so that people like me can still enjoy these programs. In fact, I find some of the best movies

are in a foreign language. I especially like French and German films because I think they often present characters and events in a different way to English and American films. Films from Scandinavia are also very creative. Without SBS, I would never get to see these films. News from 26 countries is also shown each week. Because I am learning German, I like to watch the German news. There are no subtitles on the news so I really have to concentrate. That helps me a lot with my German listening skills. There are also documentaries, drama, comedy, entertainment and cartoons. The choice is huge.

SBS Radio is also a great source of excellent programs. Many of these programs are also available for downloading as a podcast, just like Slow English. I like to download the German radio programs to my smartphone as podcasts. That way I can listen to them at any time. I like to listen when I am going for my morning walk. SBS has also written a smartphone app so I can easily listen to SBS radio and podcasts when I am out and about. SBS Radio has programs covering news, sports, talkback, documentaries and of course lots of music. For example, there is even a dedicated PopAsia station. There is also lots of information for new migrants regarding settlement in Australia, jobs and government services such as health and education.

It's amazing to see which languages are covered on SBS. The list is very, very long. There are languages there which I have never even heard of. It shows you how diverse our community is, but it also shows you what an incredibly useful resource SBS has become for Australians. If you go to their website, you can search their program schedule by selecting the language of your choice. Each day, for example, SBS has around 3 hours of programming in German, around 1.5 hours in Portuguese, around 4 to 5 hours in Mandarin, just to mention only 3 languages from the 74 available.

SBS is also a strong sports broadcaster. Since their early days they have been broadcasting soccer in Australia, both the

Australian league and soccer from Europe. Since 1990, SBS has been FIFA's official World Cup broadcaster in Australia. Australians are all watching SBS when the world cup soccer is on. Cycling is another sport where SBS has always been strong, including being the official broadcaster for the Tour de France for 22 years. I know people who stay up all hours of the night in July watching the Tour on SBS.

The SBS website at [www.sbs.com.au](http://www.sbs.com.au) is an excellent source of information about all SBS programs. In researching for this podcast, I must admit I have discovered a lot of programs which I am now going to watch. I am glad I chose this topic for a podcast.

SBS is owned by the government, just like the ABC, although it is a little different in that it receives only about 80% of its funding from the government. The rest of its funding comes from advertising. Still, the quality of the programs is so high, that I don't mind also watching some advertising. I hope the SBS will be around for a long time to come.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at [rob@slowenglish.info](mailto:rob@slowenglish.info). I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

**Podcast 79 Quiz - Did you**

# understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

## Vocabulary

aboriginal = the first Australians

active = when you do lots of things, when you are busy

advertising = messages which tell you something is very good so that you will buy it

broadcasting = when radio and television stations make and send out programs for people

character = how something looks and feels

characters = the people in a film or book

concentrate = to think very hard about something

culturally diverse = when there are many different cultures

decided = when something is chosen

dedicated = about only one thing

delivered = sent out

diverse = when there are many types

downloading = to take a copy of something from the internet

economically = to do with money and the economy

entertainment = shows or programs which you like to watch because enjoy them

expanded = made larger

foreign = from another land

funding = money

incredible = almost hard to believe

indigenous = aboriginal, about the first Australians

languages other than English = not English

living standards = how well people live, if they have a good life

mention = when you talk about something

migration = when someone goes to another country to live and does not return.

mother tongue = the language you learnt to speak as a baby

multicultural = many cultures, such as the Turkish or Chinese culture

multi-lingual = many languages

nature = how something looks, sounds or feels

official = when the people in control give you permission to do something

On Demand = something you receive at the time you ask for it.  
Not according to a schedule

out and about = to be out of the house, going on an outing

participate = to do something with other people

period = a length of time

politicians = people who are elected by the people to make decisions in the government

quality = how good something is

radio stations = a group of people who make radio programs and send them to their listeners

resource = something which is useful

schedule = a plan according to time

selecting = choosing

settlement = when people go to live in a new place and stay there

society = describes all the people in a country and how they live

subtitles = when the meaning is written in another language across the bottom of the screen