

**REPORT BY
THE MALAY PROGRAMMES ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
2010/2012**

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(I) INTRODUCTION

1 The Malay Programmes Advisory Committee (MPAC) was set up in August 1995 to evaluate the content and quality of Malay TV and radio programmes and their impact on the Malay community in Singapore, and to make recommendations for their improvement.

2 The current Committee was appointed by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) for a two-year term with effect from 1 August 2010. There are 15 members in the Committee which is chaired by Dr Maliki Osman, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Development. (Please refer to [Annex A](#) for the list of MPAC members)

The Committee's Work

3 During the current term, the Committee held a total of seven meetings and two dialogue sessions. The MPAC met with MediaCorp TV Suria, StarHub Cable Vision (SCV) as well as MediaCorp Radio's Warna and Ria, who updated MPAC on their programming plans. The Committee in turn gave views and suggestions on how TV and radio programming can be improved. It also held two separate dialogue sessions with Berita Harian forum contributors and production houses on the standard and quality of Malay programmes on TV.

4 In carrying out its work, the MPAC was guided by its terms of reference:

- Provided advice and feedback on the range and quality of broadcast programmes on Suria, Sensasi, Warna and Ria as well as made recommendations for their improvement;
- Provided advice and feedback on the broadcasters' compliance with guidelines on programmes and advertisements;
- Provided advice to the Media Development Authority (MDA) on the validity of public complaints on programming; and
- Reviewed and provided inputs on the MDA's review of guidelines for TV and radio content.

5 In formulating its recommendations on programmes and advertisements, the Committee sought to be mindful of issues that were deemed sensitive and of concern to the Malay community. The MPAC was also consulted for its views on the harmonisation of broadcast's ratings with that of films, and the introduction of the new PG13 rating on TV.

6 This report is a compilation of members' observations on programming during the Committee's term from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2012. It also contains recommendations on how the quality and range of programmes on local Malay TV channels and radio stations could be further improved. MediaCorp's response is appended at [Annex B](#).

(II) SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS & OBSERVATIONS

7 The following are the key observations and recommendations made by the MPAC:

(a) More success stories in dramas

Broadcasters could look into producing dramas based on the success stories of the Malay community to show the community's resilience and how they overcome the challenges faced. MPAC encouraged broadcasters to highlight more positive aspects of the community within dramas to show that the community has progressed, rather than focusing on the negative aspects. The committee also felt that more indepth research on various subject matter relevant to the particular drama, is needed for local dramas to ride on the potential value of drama as an educational tool for the community.

(b) Current Affairs and Info-Educational programmes;

MPAC was concerned that current affairs programmes like "Detik" and "Bicara" are scheduled at a late timeslot of 10.30pm on weeknights making them less accessible to the general audience. While the committee noted that the late timeslot would better cater to the PMEBS, MPAC is concerned that important issues featured in these programmes would not be conveyed to the community at large. Suria can consider scheduling the repeat telecast of current affairs programmes at an earlier timeslot on the weekends so that the programme can reach a wider audience.

(c) Maintaining the standards of Malay language

MPAC expressed its concern with the trend of using English words in Malay programme titles, as well as borrowing English words to coin new Malay words. While the aim is to make titles and phrases hip and trendy, doing so can lead to the loss of the original Malay words.

(III) MPAC'S EXPECTATIONS OF MALAY BROADCAST PROGRAMMES

(a) Dramas

8 MPAC acknowledged that Suria's efforts to incorporate public service messages into drama and variety programmes which have the potential to receive higher viewership. To add more value to Suria's drama offerings, Suria could explore producing dramas based on real life success stories from the Malay community to show its resilience and how these individuals overcome challenges they face. For example, there could be stories on how those from humble backgrounds overcame the odds to emerge as top students or went on to have successful careers. The broadcaster is also encouraged to highlight more positive aspects of the community in dramas to show how the community has progressed rather than the social problems the community is facing.

9 MPAC also asked that the broadcaster consider showcasing lesser known professions and educational paths that students need to take to pursue these careers, and in turn inspire the Malay community to aim for them. This can be done in dramas as well as in info-educational programmes. To enhance quality and ride on the value of drama as an educational tool for the community, MPAC felt that more indepth research is needed for the various subject matter presented in each drama. For example, in a drama portraying a chef as a professional, research on various aspects of food and nutrition, including issues of food safety and security, is needed and can be woven into the script to provide depth and realism to the content of the drama.

10 With regard to "Anak Metropolitan 3", MPAC noted that there have been mixed public reactions to it, based on the discussions in the press. MPAC is of the view that dramas which explore social issues should be supported with solutions such as showing the relevant helplines available. While it is good for dramas to portray the plight of the disadvantaged, MPAC felt that the coping mechanisms for the lower income group are not highlighted sufficiently in social dramas, such as how they work towards getting out of their hardship and their determination to excel in their areas of strength. Such social dramas should be sufficiently engaging such that they will be a tool for discussion at various formal and informal settings.

11 On Radio, MPAC also expressed concern that the storylines and characterisation in Warna's dramas are not reflective and relevant to the current society. It was observed that the themes of the drama usually revolve around domestic conflicts between families of different social backgrounds. As radio dramas can serve as an effective means to educate the community, the MPAC recommended that Warna review the scripting of its dramas with more indepth research so that these can be a vehicle to convey useful messages to its listeners.

(b) Current Affairs and Info-Educational Programmes

12 MPAC was concerned that current affairs programmes like "Detik" and "Bicara" are scheduled at a late timeslot of 10.30pm on weeknights making them less accessible to the general audience, albeit the late timeslot would better cater to the PMEBS. While the

Committee applauded Suria's strategy in engaging and conveying messages to the general audience by weaving them into dramas and varieties, not all important issues and facts can be incorporated and hence Suria should not rule out its current affairs programmes as a means to keep the community at large updated on issues. While episodes of "Detik" are repeated on weekends, these are still scheduled at a late timeslot. To enable the programme to reach a wider audience, the Committee recommended that Suria consider scheduling the repeat telecast of current affairs programmes at an earlier timeslot on the weekends instead.

13 Tapping on the success of scriptwriting competitions for dramas "Projek Cerpen" which was organised by Suria, MPAC suggested that Suria include scriptwriting for documentaries or info-educational programmes. Doing so would invite participants to submit scripts for programmes in these genres, allowing participants to write on issues that matter the most to them and in turn, allow viewers to see these issues from fresh perspectives of writers from varying age groups. In addition, competition could help identify and develop new talent for documentary scriptwriting.

14 MPAC would also like to see a greater variety of styles in the production of documentaries, info-educational and current affairs programmes aired on Suria. This could be done by expanding the portfolio of local production houses to include programmes in these genres. The Committee recognises that there are experienced current affairs producers and journalists who are now working in local production houses. As such, they would have the expertise and experience to produce programmes in these genres. MPAC encouraged Suria to consider outsourcing some current affairs programmes which are not time sensitive to independent production houses.

15 For Radio, the Committee also hoped to listen to more informative programme segments and suggested that Warna and/or Ria introduce regular interstitials conveying valuable messages/information on dealing with social issues such as housing, education, finance and job hunting.

(c) Children's Programmes

16 The Committee commended Warna for its children's programme "Telatah Si Comel" where children are invited to call in and interact with the DJs on-air. MPAC suggested that Warna consider inviting children who are involved in performing arts, sports etc. to share their experiences on air as doing so would allow other children listening in to hear new perspectives.

(d) Variety Programmes

17 In its last report, MPAC had made the observation that Suria lacked programmes for its older viewers. In this regard, introducing "Anugerah V" to provide an opportunity for those aged 35 years and above to showcase their talents on Suria was seen to be a commendable effort.

(e) Language

18 The proper use of the Malay language continues to be the MPAC's concern for both Radio and TV. MPAC observed the increasing trend of including English terms in Suria's local programme titles. These are programmes such as "Nenek Queen Control", "K-Nite" and "Bandstand Elektra", and slangs such as "gerek" in its programmes. While MPAC recognised that "gerek" is a slang commonly used by the community to describe how exciting a situation is, there is still a need to be mindful of the use of colloquial terms on the broadcast platform, as frequently featuring them could send the signal that their usage in formal settings is acceptable as it is endorsed by mainstream media. On a separate note, MPAC praised Suria for the use of "peribahasa" (or idioms) in titles of drama series such as "Embun Di Tengah Hari" as doing so would indirectly teach viewers about Malay idioms/similes.

19 For Radio, the Committee also highlighted the occasional instance of adding affixes to English words or borrowed English words. For example, during one of the music chart segments, a DJ used the term "mereleasekan". While there are Malay words coined from English words which are accepted by MABBIM (Majlis Bahasa Indonesia, Brunei dan Malaysia) dan DBP (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka) such as "mereliasasikan", MPAC is concerned that this practice could eventually lead to the loss of the original Malay words. The committee recommended that broadcasters use the Malay equivalents of the words when the latter is available. For example, "kenyataan" instead of "mereliasasikan" and "melancarkan" instead of "mereleasekan".

20 In supporting the use of Malay language, the Committee commended Warna's "Panggung Petang" where listeners are invited to call in and share their original limericks, as well as the educational segment where DJs introduce a Malay idiom and share its meaning.

(V) CONCLUSION

21 In conclusion, the Committee believes that local Malay broadcasters have a part to play in shaping and uplifting the Malay community while it offers programmes which are entertaining, educational and informational. Broadcasters should therefore continue to be in-tune with social issues by working closely with the relevant agencies or organisations to ensure that it is constantly aware of the sensitivities of the community.

22 The responses from the broadcaster to the Report can be found in Annex B.

[ANNEX A]

MPAC MEMBERS

Chairman:

Mohamad Maliki Osman

Senior Parliamentary Secretary
Ministry of National Development

Vice-Chairman:

Mr Ahmad Nizam Abbas (*member until 31 July 2011*)

Lawyer
Straits Law Practice Llc.

Members:

Mdm Siti Haslinda Putri Harun

Director
The Kids Dentist

Mr Abdul Hamid Abdullah

Auditor Director
Auditor-General's Office

Mdm Hanim Mohd Saleh

Correspondent and Head of Entertainment &
Lifestyle, Berita Harian/Berita Minggu/Sutra
Magazine
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Dr Suzaina Kadir

Assistant Professor
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Ms Fuziah Binte Muhamad Taha

Principal
Fuhua Primary School

Ms Atiqah Halim

Lecturer, NACLI

Mr M Ma'mun Bin H M F Suheimi

Retiree

Ms Mariah Bte Mohd Zainal Abideen

Freelance Speech and Drama Teacher

Mr Mohamed Faizal Ahmad

Chief Executive
A-Spire Learning Academy

Mr Muhammad Nazri Muhd

Group Managing Director (Asia-Pac)
Vector Scorecard (Asia-Pac) Pte Ltd

Ms Suriati Bte Abdullah

Managing Director & Principal Consultant
The SuChi Group
SuChi Success Initiatives Pte Ltd
SuChi Media Pte Ltd

Ms Zarina Yusof

Deputy Director
Youth Health Division
Health Promotion Board

Mr Muhammad Ikram Bin Mohd Ariff

Training Consultant

BROADCASTER'S RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

MediaCorp has responded to MPAC's feedback and recommendations in these areas:

I. More success stories in dramas

Television (Paragraph 10)

2 On MPAC's comments with regard to the provision of helplines within dramas which explore social issues, MediaCorp shared that it had in the past included helplines in dramas/other programmes that viewers can refer to such as the PPIS-Family Care Service hotline in "Kpak Bing Bing" Sr 1 and 2; The National Family Service Helpline and Ain Society Helpline in "Mentari" Sr 1 and 2. With regard to "Anak Metropolitan 3", MediaCorp clarified that their approach to providing information on the available avenues for help was slightly different. The drama instead included interviews with real-life past offenders/gang members who gave their take on the issue and what they thought could have been done in the various situations featured in the stories.

Radio (Paragraph 11)

3 MediaCorp had noted MPAC's concerns with the storylines and characterisation in Warna's dramas. The broadcaster shared that the producers of the drama have worked with the scriptwriters to give ideas on how to make the storylines more up to date. Social media elements have been incorporated to make dialogues more current. Younger scriptwriters were also considered but some did not have the skills and experience. In this regard, MediaCorp is currently looking into conducting scriptwriting for radio drama workshops with the Singapore Media Academy.

II. Better Scheduling of Current Affairs and Info-Educational programmes

Television (Paragraphs 12, 13, 14)

4 In response to MPAC's recommendation to repeat the telecast of current affairs programmes like "Detik" and "Bicara" at an earlier timeslot on the weekends, MediaCorp shared that they are considering 4 to 6pm on Saturday/Sunday as a possible slot.

5 As for holding scriptwriting competitions for programmes in other genres, Suria will consider working with the Singapore Media Academy to develop the idea further.

6 On outsourcing Current Affairs programmes, Suria opined that such programmes should be best left to the in-house News & Current Affairs team to produce in order to ensure that content integrity is not compromised. Notwithstanding the above, MediaCorp added that it had outsourced Info-educational programmes closer to the Current Affairs genre such as "DNA" Sr 1 and 2, which had worked well for the channel in terms of ratings and public feedback.

Radio (Paragraph 15)

7 With regard to MPAC's request for more informative programme segments on Warna, MediaCorp highlighted that Warna has two dedicated Current Affairs segments on weekdays called "Segi Tiga" at 7am – 8am, and at 9pm – 10pm. It would as far as possible, try to weave in current affairs, social and info-educational information into its programmes. The segment "Tamu Warna Petang" on weekdays at 5pm invites experts to share information and respond to listener queries on finance, health, education, law and the Arts. MediaCorp shared that in June and July 2012, Warna had broadcast four Talkback Programmes called "Tanya AP Anda (Ask Your Mp)" with Parliamentary Office Holders. SPS Dr Maliki Osman, MOS Halimah Yacob, MOS Masagos Zulkifli and SPS Hawazi Daipi were the guest speakers covering current issues like active ageing, social issues, drug problems and education matters. It also added that Ria also has segments on "Paparazzi Pagi" (the morning show), "The O Show" (lunch belt) and "Inspirasi Go Glam" (the afternoon show) which highlight and discuss current and social issues with counsellors invited to give their views.

III. Children/Variety Programmes(Paragraphs 16, 17)

8 On MPAC's suggestion for Warna to invite children to share their experiences on air, Warna informed that the station had invited children from different schools for sharing sessions where they shared tips on topics such as preparing for exams, and excelling in sports, arts and crafts. During the Malay Language Month 2012, "Telatah Si Comel" conducted roadshows at the National Library, Library @ Esplanade and the Jurong Regional Library with presenters conducting on-site interactive story-telling sessions with children. On 8 September 2012, "Telatah Si Comel" carried out an onsite competition "1 minute of Fame" at the "WARNARIA Raya Carnival" sponsored by MCYS.

9 MediaCorp indicated that it was heartened by the Committee's commendation of Warna's programme "Telatah Si Comel" and Suria's initiative to introduce talent shows such as "Anugerah V" which its older viewers could participate in.

10 On the programmes for older viewers, Suria highlighted that it would always ensure there is something for every age group and that it has plans in the pipeline for programmes other than "Anugerah V".

IV. Maintaining the standards of Malay languageRadio (Paragraphs 19, 20)

11 On MPAC's concerns with proper use of the Malay language, WARNA assured MPAC that it would seek to ensure that the Malay Language standards are maintained. In promoting the use of good language, MediaCorp also shared that it had joint-productions on limericks with Radio Televisyen Brunei (RTB), and a special language programme called

“Pituah Sesepuh (Words of Wisdom)”. These were broadcast on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with scripts written by renowned linguist Dr. Hj Ariff Ahmad.

- 12 As for Ria, the station currently offers the following language programmes:
- a segment in “Paparazzi Pagi” sharing the meanings of rarely used Malay words;
 - a segment in “Skoolz” sharing proverbs and idioms;
 - “DJ Pelajar” – a platform for students to co-host a segment and converse in Malay.
 - ‘Pantun’ segment in Go Glam

V. Conclusion

13 MediaCorp is encouraged that the Committee has taken note of the range and quality of Malay programmes by Suria, Warna and Ria and efforts to improve offerings to viewers and listeners. The channel and radio stations would continue to invest in resources to produce innovative programmes and foster more collaboration to reach out to and engage their current and new audiences.