

CHAPTER 3

NATION BUILDING THROUGH STRONG LOCAL MEDIA

MDA supports the development of compelling Singapore content on our FTA platforms through Public Service Broadcast (PSB) programmes. The aim is to foster a more connected society through quality, engaging and informative public service content.

PSB programmes have entertained, informed and engaged local audiences with a wide range of shows over the years. These include current affairs programmes, documentaries, sports, dramas, children's and arts programmes.

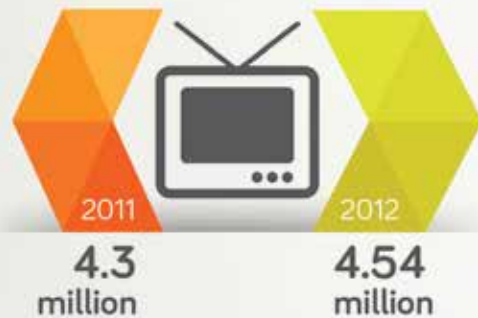
In the year of review, MDA's PSB funding support to MediaCorp and independent production companies have resulted in the provision of about 200 programmes, which totalled over 2,000 hours of original local PSB content in four languages across Singapore's seven FTA-TV channels. More viewers are also tuning in to these PSB programmes. In 2012, PSB programmes on FTA-TV attracted 4.54 million viewers, five per cent more than the previous year¹. In line with the trend of rising online media consumption, more web-exclusive and "Catch-Up" PSB programmes were also made available online on MediaCorp's XinMSN website, which have attracted some 10 million views in total².



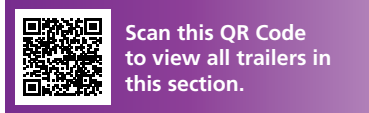
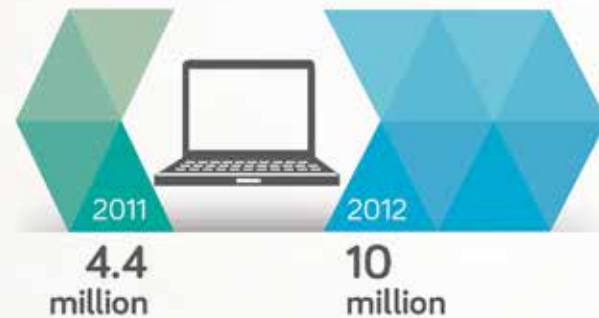
DIVERSITY OF PSB PROGRAMMES



PSB VIEWERSHIP ON FREE-TO-AIR TV HOLDING STEAD



PSB PROGRAMMES CONNECTING WITH ONLINE VIEWERS



Some examples of popular PSB programmes produced by MediaCorp include *Code of Law*, a drama series on Channel 5 about policemen and lawyers cracking crimes and *Don't Stop Believin'*, a drama series on Channel 8 about a passionate teacher in an underperforming school. Both drama series attracted 1.04 million and 2.33 million viewers, respectively.



Some PSB programmes produced by MediaCorp.

Apart from Channel 5 and Channel 8, PSB programmes on Suria, Vasantham and okto have generally fared well too. An example is Suria's *Masih Ada Embun Di Tengah Hari* (*Dewdrops Sr 2*). The drama, which focused on issues affecting middle and upper-class Malay society, drew 352,000 viewers. In addition, Vasantham's *Anjathey* (*Don't Fear*), an inspirational series showcasing youths who succeeded in various fields and *Bugsville*, a children's programme on okto attracted 139,900 and 54,300 viewers respectively.

Apart from PSB programmes produced by MediaCorp, PSB programmes created by independent production companies have also won viewers' hearts. Some notable titles include Channel U's programmes such as *Show Hand* by Wawa Pictures and *Find Me A Singaporean 3* by Threesixzero, as well as *Return to a Sexy Island*, on Channel NewsAsia produced by The Moving Visuals Co.



Apart from Mediacorp, MDA also supports independent production companies to produce quality PSB programmes.

To glean a deeper understanding of viewers' responses to PSB programmes, MDA conducts an annual PSB public satisfaction survey, which measures public satisfaction levels with attributes such as programme quality, engagement and informative value, and public service value. In 2012, 71 per cent of respondents indicated that their satisfaction level with PSB was high, up from 60 per cent in 2011.

Responding to recommendations by the PSB Review Panel

While PSB programmes have generally performed well in terms of viewership and public satisfaction, a rapidly changing environment means that more and more needs to be done to extend the reach and deepen the impact of PSB programmes. In 2010, an eight-member PSB Review Panel was set up to review improvements to the delivery of PSB programmes and recommend ways to maximise its reach and impact in Singapore. The Panel submitted its recommendations to the Ministry of Communications and Information (then Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts) in March 2012.



PSB Contestable Funds Scheme was introduced to invite more eligible local broadcasters to commission original PSB content.

The Panel noted that though there is public affinity for PSB programmes, the media consumption habits of local audiences have changed as a result of digitisation. More media choices and increasing ease of access to global content have also led to audience fragmentation in Singapore. Taking these factors into consideration, the Panel recommended that the PSB framework be strengthened so that it will remain relevant and appealing to the public. The quality and accessibility of PSB content must also be continually enhanced to meet these challenges.

In July 2012, the Government announced its acceptance of the majority of the Panel's recommendations to enhance the quality and increase the reach of PSB programmes. A five-year budget of S\$630 million was allocated to enhance the quality of programmes on FTA-TV. PSB support was also extended to non-FTA local platforms, such as Internet TV and pay-TV, and to create sustained training plans for talent development.

MDA also introduced the PSB Contestable Funds Scheme, a revamp of the previous Public Service Content Scheme, to identify and invite more local broadcasters, including non-FTA broadcasters, to commission original PSB content. A revised PSB intellectual property (IP) ownership framework was also put in place to accord ownership to IP creators of original PSB content.

During the year in review, MDA introduced dedicated funding to develop concepts for five pilot-tested programmes, namely *Mata Mata*, *Estate*, *Di Luar Garisan (Out of Line)*, *Recruit Diaries* and *Twinadoes*. These programmes were first launched as pilot episodes on *TesTube*, a showcase of experimental programmes by MediaCorp. The pilots, which have since been developed into full-fledged PSB series, have begun screening on the FTA channels from May 2013.

In addition, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information, announced in Parliament on 8 March 2013 that the Government would invest another S\$182 million over the next four years to support more locally-produced documentaries such as *We Made the News* which chronicles the 50 years of news broadcasting in Singapore and *SG+*, a weekly programme that discusses social issues with analysis and discussions by an expert panel.

Free-to-air content on multiple platforms

In step with changing media consumption patterns, FTA content, including PSB programmes, has been made available on multiple platforms. Examples include *We Are Singaporeans*, a game show about anything and everything Singapore, which was complemented by a card game and an educational online game; and *First XI*, a sports reality programme which generated much online buzz with Facebook postings and on-air live tweets. *Campus Superstar 2013* was also the first PSB programme that was delivered across multiple platforms — online, radio, print and TV.



Campus Superstar 2013 was one of the first multi-platform PSB programmes.

With technology dramatically changing the way media is consumed, MediaCorp also enhanced its online presence with the launch of Toggle in February 2013. Toggle is an over-the-top service that offers entertainment, information and news to viewers on the Internet, as well as via mobile devices. While Toggle is largely a paid service, it also has a free component where viewers can watch FTA content including PSB programmes that MediaCorp has rights to, for free. Channel NewsAsia is streamed live, while PSB content from other FTA-TV channels are provided on demand. The service has been extended to overseas Singaporeans in the later half of 2013, so that they can keep in touch with the latest developments at home and continue to enjoy home grown content.

DIGITAL TV AND FREE-TO-AIR AND SUBSCRIPTION RADIO

Taking the next step towards the future of TV broadcasting, all seven FTA channels will go fully digital using the DVB-T2 broadcasting standard at the end of 2013.

Channel 5, Channel 8, Suria and Vasantham will be available in High-Definition (HD) as digital broadcasting commences. Channel U, okto and Channel NewsAsia will initially be available in Standard Definition (SD) before transiting to HD in 2016.



Benefits of digital TV include better quality pictures, superior sound and electronic programme guides.

To ensure a smooth switchover, there will be a simulcast period of at least two years, where both digital and analogue FTA-TV signals will be broadcast. This will ensure that all households have sufficient time to get ready to receive their FTA-TV signals digitally.

In preparation for the transition to digital TV, MDA and Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) worked together to finalise and publish the DVB-T2 receiver specifications. MDA also worked with manufacturers and suppliers to bring in DVB-T2 compatible equipment so that consumers can make the switch to digital TV early.



Consumer labels which will be affixed to DVB-T2 compatible television sets and set-top boxes available in retail outlets.

DVB-T2 compatible Integrated Digital TVs (IDTVs) are now available on the market, while DVB-T2 set-top boxes are expected to arrive later in the year.

To help consumers identify TVs and set-top boxes compatible with Singapore's digital TV system, MDA also introduced consumer labels which will be affixed to DVB-T2 compatible television sets and set-top boxes available in retail outlets.

Free-to-air and subscription radio

As of December 2012, there were four FTA radio broadcasters operating 19 FTA radio stations in Singapore. With the exception of the BBC World Service, all the stations are simulcast online. Based on the Nielsen Radio Diary (2012 Wave 2), the top three radio stations¹ were Y.E.S. 93.3FM, Love 97.2FM and Capital 95.8FM. A new radio station, Kiss 92, was launched by broadcaster SPH Unionworks on 18 September 2012.



The top three radio stations in Singapore, based on the Nielsen Radio Diary (2012 Wave 2).