

INTERIM REPORT

Media coverage of House proceedings

Including the Chamber, Main Committee and committees

House of Representatives
Procedure Committee

© Commonwealth of Australia 2004

ISBN 0 642 78476 0



Contents

Foreword	vii
Membership of the Committee	ix
Terms of reference.....	xi
List of recommendations	xiii
1 An overview of media coverage	1
Background to the inquiry.....	1
Responsibility for media guidelines	2
The role of the Speaker	2
Origin of the guidelines.....	3
Implementing the guidelines	3
Role of the Procedure Committee.....	4
Evidence to the inquiry	5
The media and Parliament – an overview.....	5
Expanding coverage.....	5
Competing values in media coverage of proceedings	7
Television versus still photography	7
Radio broadcasting and rebroadcasting.....	8
The Parliament and the media	8
Attitudes to media coverage	9
Wider aspects of enhancing public knowledge of proceedings.....	10
2 History of current arrangements for media coverage.....	11
Source of information	11

Television and the chamber	11
Television coverage – a short history	12
Liberalising of guidelines for television broadcasters.....	13
Still photography in the chamber	13
How the current arrangements work	15
Television coverage.....	15
Radio broadcasts.....	18
Still photography.....	18
3 Looking to the future.....	21
Still photography.....	21
Technology and still photography guidelines	21
Extended access for still photographers.....	22
Television coverage.....	23
Providing more choice.....	23
Access to more camera feeds.....	23
Access to specially filmed excerpts – “iso feeds”	24
Allowing television bureaus to take their own camera footage.....	25
Other matters.....	26
Accessing documents.....	26
Obtaining special permission for access outside the guidelines	26
Access to Main Committee proceedings	26
Access to parliamentary committee proceedings	27
Television coverage.....	27
Still photography access to committee hearings.....	28
Conclusion	28

Appendix A

FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHY IN PARLIAMENT HOUSE	29
--	-----------

Appendix B

SUBMISSIONS 1 – 5.....	41
Mr Ian Harris, Clerk, House of Representatives.....	42
Angelos Frangopoulos, Managing Editor, Australian News Channel Pty Ltd	46
Paul Bongiorno, Vice President, Press Gallery	54
Mr Ian Harris, Clerk, House of Representatives (second submission).....	55
Neil Pickering, Director, Department of Parliamentary Services:	58

Appendix C

TRANSCRIPT OF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION; 15 JUNE 2004.....	63
--	-----------



Foreword

The committee decided to inquire into enhancing public knowledge of parliamentary proceedings following debate in the House about the role of the media. The committee has had an interest in promoting access to information about proceedings since it commenced its inquiry into community involvement in the procedures and practices of the House in 1998. This report continues this work.

This interim report focusses on media access and media coverage of events which is one aspect of the wider reference.

Margaret May MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Mrs M A May MP

Deputy Chair Hon L R S Price MP

Members Hon B K Bishop MP
Mr M J Ferguson AM MP
Mr B W Haase MP
Mr P E King MP
Ms M Vamvakinou MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Judy Middlebrook

Research Officer Peter Fowler

Administrative Officer Penelope Branson

House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6277 4685

Email: Procedure.Committee.Reps@aph.gov.au

URL: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/proc/



Terms of reference

General terms of reference

To inquire into and report on the practices and procedures of the House generally with a view to making recommendations for their improvement or change and for the development of new procedures

Inquiry terms of reference

To inquire into and report on all aspects of media coverage of the House (including proceedings in the House, Main Committee and committees of the House)

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the resolutions of 16 October 1991 and 1 May 1996 be replaced by an updated resolution which reflects current arrangements. In particular, the resolution should acknowledge the fact that the Speaker acts on behalf of the House in administering and implementing the guidelines relating to television broadcasting.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Speaker amend the guidelines for still photography in the chamber as follows: delete the words “and motor driven cameras” from still photography guideline (j) and delete the whole of guideline (l).

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Speaker revise guideline (c) of the rules for still photography in the chamber to extend automatic permission to discussions of Matters of Public Importance, divisions and adjournment debates for a trial period of three months.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the Speaker write to the television bureaus represented in the press gallery to offer them the use of isolated feeds produced by Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) Broadcasting staff on request. The Speaker might consider that any additional resources required to provide this footage should be paid for by the bureau making the request.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends that the DPS install inbuilt cameras in House of Representatives committee rooms to allow additional

television coverage of committee proceedings. Given cost constraints, it may be practical to stagger the installation of such cameras.