



Appendix B

SUBMISSIONS 1 – 5

Submission 1:

Ian Harris, Clerk of the House of Representatives

Media coverage of the House

Media access issues

In recent years the House has taken steps to increase the access of media representatives to its proceedings. Conditions and guidelines have been developed to cover the following matters:

- filming for private purposes
- filming intended for broadcast or publication
- filming of parliamentary proceedings
- still photography in the chambers during proceedings.

Attachment A is a document containing the relevant guidelines. In each case the guidelines have been issued by the Speaker, or by the Speaker and the President where the matter concerns both Houses. The terms of the House's 1991 and 1996 resolutions concerning the televising of proceedings and the principles concerning radio broadcasting are set out towards the end of the standing orders booklet.

The objective of the conditions/guidelines in each case is assumed to be to strike a reasonable balance between the goal of facilitating access to proceedings, on the one hand, and, on the other, the House's (or the House and the Senate's) interest in ensuring that access is not misused.

In these matters responsibilities are set out quite clearly:

- in relation to filming, whether for private purposes or publication, the Presiding Officers are responsible;
- in relation to the DPRS camera operators (who provide the feed for networks), the directions of the relevant Presiding Officer must be obeyed;
- in relation to still photography in the House the Speaker is responsible.

A variation exists in relation to the use of the television feed. The Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings is established under the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*. Its primary role is to regulate the radio broadcast and re-broadcast of proceedings. In addition, however, under the resolution of 16 October 1991 which authorised the live television broadcast and re-broadcast of proceedings, the House members of

the joint committee are able to consider breaches of the guidelines and any penalties that would apply.

Another objective in the Parliament's approach to media access may be to achieve a reasonable balance between the various media (electronic and print) so that they can cover proceedings on a relatively equal basis.

Some publicity has been given recently to the issue of access by still photographers. The guidelines on this matter in respect of the House are at Appendix 3 of Attachment A. It is notable that these guidelines include detailed penalty provisions – this may reflect a desire to give the Speaker a helpful and reasonably precise framework within which to consider problems in the area, rather than leave the Speaker with greater discretion, and responsibility, to determine any penalty. I understand that while many parliaments (and probably virtually all comparable parliaments) permit televising of their proceedings, many (including the UK House of Commons and the Canadian House of Commons) do not permit still photography. I also understand that the House's rules in this matter are more liberal than those applying in the Senate.

In fact, still photographers in the House enjoy access not only greater than that applying in the Senate; they also enjoy greater access than the television broadcasters quoted by the hard-copy media in their attempt to gain direct access. The original request came from the print media who indicated that they were compelled to take their photographs from the video feed. They were admitted on the grounds of equality. There have been marked instances where they have abused the privilege.

I opposed the widening of the guidelines in 1996 to enable photographs to be taken of Members who did not have the call of the Chair. There was some justification in the then Speaker's belief that the photographers would only be capturing what a visitor to the galleries could see. However, I thought then, and I continue to think today, that a visitor to the gallery does not have the ability to “freeze frame” a situation, and reproduce it possibly totally out of context. Over the years since the relaxing of the guidelines, I have seen many instances where a sub-editor has placed an interpretation on a photograph that is not borne out by the events as I observed them unfolding. The photograph has been used to actually make the news rather than report it.

This also happens with demonstrations in the public gallery. There was one occasion when a group of indigenous protestors entered the public gallery, made a protest, and despite warnings to the contrary, were photographed and published. The protestors on that occasion told the Serjeant, who requested them not to carry out the action that they were reported in the media as proposing to do, that they had told the press of their intentions, and they felt that they would lose face if they did not do so. The press photographers at the

time indicated that they realised that they were jeopardising their access rights if they did pass on the photographs, but they believed that they were placing their jobs in jeopardy if they did not do so. In this situation, I believe that the press had crossed the line, and were creating the news rather than reporting it.

I firmly believe that protestors should not be facilitated to reach a wider audience by using the Chamber as a forum. There is no doubt that there would be a copy-cat effect. I do not think that the fact that it might have happened to be sufficient cause for permitting the photographic and televised coverage of a disturbance of this kind. There have been instances where a man has committed suicide with a revolver on television, and the fact that it happened was not sufficient cause for it to be delivered into Australian lounge rooms.

Of course, it would be open for a media outlet to retain a sketch artist, drawing from memory, and there could be no objection to this. My experience has been that Members of the House remain to be very suspicious of the presence of cameras or sketch artists in the gallery.

I understand that this week Foxtel is scheduled to launch a Sky News Active service and that this will include coverage of the Houses, and some committee proceedings.

Committee proceedings have become a very important feature of the work of the House, and provision has also been made to facilitate and regularise access by the electronic media to such proceedings. Conditions were set by the House in a resolution of 16 October 1991 . Important features of the conditions are that it is always a matter for the particular committee whether to allow filming, that only public hearings may be filmed, that fairness and accuracy and general overall balance must be observed, that excerpts must be placed in context and that excerpts may not be used for political party advertising etc or for satire or ridicule.

Dissemination of information by the House

Another side of this subject is the issue of dissemination of objective and impartial information about the Parliament, a matter on which the Procedure Committee has commented at least twice already. A short paper outlining initiatives the Department has taken in recent years to disseminate information about, and engender interest in, the work of the House and its committees is at Attachment B. It outlines the role of the professional media adviser engaged by the department, our special publications, especially *About the House* , the seminar program, the changing approach to advertising, the introduction of the House News website and the university lecture program. The Department also supports the Parliamentary Education Office, providing half of the administrative funding for the office and helping with advice and input into its activities.

Promoting the Work of the House of Representatives

The media has reported on the proceedings of the Australian Parliament from the commencement of the Federal Parliament in 1901. The nature and content of that reporting has varied significantly over the course of the past century. Today's coverage tends increasingly to be image rather than text based, to involve brief snapshots rather than detailed presentation of facts and analysis, and to be focused on the day to day political contest rather than the issues or the parliament as an institution. It is probably fair to say that many view the media's reporting as reflecting negatively on the Parliament as an institution.

In the report: *It's your House: community involvement in the procedures and practices of the House of Representatives and its committees* (November 1999), the Procedure Committee made a number of recommendations aimed at improving public participation in the work of the House and its committees. The Committee aimed to ensure that the Australian public was well informed about the work of the House and its committees and was given the opportunity to engage fully with the Parliament. An important aspect was in encouraging media coverage of committees.

In response to the report the department has sought to work in partnership with the Speaker and members of the House to more effectively market the work of the House and its committees to the media and the community. In 1998, the Department of the House of Representatives established a small office, Liaison and Projects, to develop an overall marketing and communication strategy for the House and its committees. The success of the department's work has been recognised by the Australian Institute of Marketing – the department won public sector marketing awards in 2000 and in 2001.

Some of the strategies adopted by the department to promote the work of the House are set out in the following paragraphs.

Media Adviser

The department employed a media adviser to improve links between the media and parliamentary committees. The media adviser works with committees and their staff to support committees in their media and communications activities. As a result of the work of the media adviser, the department now has in place a framework for dealing with the media that is resulting in increased and more accurate media coverage of committee work. The framework includes:

* The guidelines included as Attachment A of this submission were those reproduced at Appendix A (pp. 35–45).

- Regular provision of information across all stages of committee inquiries, framed in a news style that is familiar to and easily picked up by journalists
- A reliable and single point of contact through which media queries and requests can be coordinated; and
- Quick and widespread dissemination of information. As one example, there are now hundreds of media organisations linked to a regular email alert service on the work of committees.

Feedback from members of the parliamentary press gallery and from metropolitan and regional media outlets indicates that this coordinated approach is valued by the media and gives committees the best possible opportunity to attract coverage for their work.

Publications for the community

The department publishes a magazine, *About the House*, to inform the public about the House and its committees. The magazine, which to date has had 20 editions, gives people news and feature stories about legislation before parliament, committee investigations and issues members are raising in the House.

Produced five times a year, the magazine has struck a positive chord within the community because, as one reader recently said, it gives people access to information that is not otherwise available to the public. We estimate that readership is above 50,000. Importantly, it continues to grow.

In a recent survey of the magazine's readership, well over 90 per cent of readers rated the magazine as excellent or good in its range of topics, content, readability, layout and design.

Recently, articles that have appeared in the magazine have been picked up by sections of the media and either been reproduced in the media or featured as discussion topics for talkback radio.

The department has also established a weekly column on the work of the Parliament and its committees in the *Campus Review* newspaper which reaches around 86 000 people, most of them educators in the tertiary sector. It also produces a monthly column on the work of committees for the Canberra Business Council's e-newsletter, *Business Link*.

Advertising

The department has focused on achieving more effective and cost-effective advertising of committee inquiries over a number of years, through re-design and simplification of advertisements and greater use of combined advertising and other cost-effective avenues for publicising inquiries. The combined advertising involves the placement of a fortnightly advertisement on the work of committees in *The Australian* newspaper. Committees can contribute to

each advertisement, so they no longer need to place more expensive individual advertisements in newspapers. Committees also take advantage of alternative publicity avenues – such as the About the House magazine, the House News website, media liaison and direct mailing. This results in cost savings while achieving the desired outcome of informing the public about the work of committees, more effectively.

House News website

As part of the House of Representatives website, the department has established a House News page that provides consolidated and easy to access information on happenings in the House, particularly in relation to committees. The news page provides a quick entry point for people seeking the latest news about committees and proceedings in the chamber.

Seminars

For a number of years now, the department has conducted a public seminar program on a cost recovery basis. It presents a number of types of seminars, including a general overview of the House and detailed explanations of the legislative, committee and budget processes of the House and the Parliament. Members of the House participate in the committee seminar, and provide a Member's perspective on the work of committees. The majority of participants are public servants from Australian Government agencies. Seminars are mainly held in Canberra, but seminars have also been held in State capitals, including Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart.

Feedback from participants on these seminars is very positive, with more than 95 per cent of evaluations expressing satisfaction with the seminar attended.

University Lecture Program

The department has sought to broaden links between the House and tertiary institutions and has established a university lecture program whereby members of the House and senior parliamentary officials visit universities free of charge to provide lectures on the realities of working in today's House of Representatives. The program was trialled with a few universities and proved such a success that it has now been extended to tertiary institutions throughout Australia. A small and manageable number of universities is visited annually.

Lessons Learnt

There are a number of lessons that can be learnt from our experience in this area. Chief among these is that there is a high level of interest in the work of the Parliament among the public, as evidenced by the large number of requests for the About the House magazine, the growing number of people who are joining the email alert service, the increase in registrations for

seminars and the growing list of universities participating in the lecture program. What the public appreciates is that they are receiving information about the Parliament and its work in a way that is not regarded as politically biased and is not devoted simply to the political contest within the parliament.

This may be a message for the media too. While there will always be a place for the media to cover the day to day political battles within parliament, they should not just act as 'theatre' critics. The substance of parliament's work and the institution of parliament should not fall victim to the desire to portray the parliament as an arena of political combat.

Another lesson learnt is that it is worth the risk of being innovative in the way parliament communicates with the community. There is always a danger that people will look on efforts to increase the profile of parliament in a cynical way. But our experience shows that improved communication between the parliament and the public can be seen as a breath of fresh air by those seeking genuine discourse about the issues that matter.

A final lesson is that an effective marketing strategy requires a collaborative effort between the members of the House and departmental officials. The House and its committees need to be promoted in a consistent way by all participants.

Submission 2:

Angelos Frangopoulos, Managing Editor, Australian News Channel Pty Ltd



Submission by

Australian News Channel Pty Ltd

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Procedure

Media Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings

June 2004

Background:

Australian News Channel Pty Ltd operates Sky News Australia, the nation's only locally produced 24 hour news channel.

ANC is a joint venture company of Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd, Seven Network Australia and British Sky Broadcasting.

Sky News Australia began services on February 19th 1996, initially on the Foxtel and Optus Cable television networks.

Since that first broadcast, Sky News has grown to become a key part of the Australian media landscape.

Sky News is the number one news channel in Australia and has attracted a greater share of viewing than all the 24-hour news international channels combined.

Sky News is one of the biggest producers of Australian news programming, creating 118 hours a week of television.

Sky News Australia features news on the hour, every hour and headlines every fifteen minutes, changing the way Australians get their television news.

Apart from the flagship news on the hour service, Sky News also produces 14 half hour programs per week, including, Willesee Across Australia, Australian Agenda, Viewpoint, In the First Person and Health News Australia.

Sky News is now available in more than 1.8 million homes across Australia on the Foxtel analogue and digital platforms, Optus, Austar, Transact and Neighbourhood Cable subscription television networks and across New Zealand on the Sky Television satellite and Telstra clear cable networks.

The ABC also screens Sky News programs in the Asia Pacific region.

ANC also operates Sky News Australia – New Zealand and produces the daily Prime News First At Five Thirty for the open television broadcaster, Prime Television New Zealand.

Sky News also features an Online service www.skynews.com.au and a 3G telephony service, currently available on Hutchison's 3 network.

Every week across Australia and New Zealand, more than 2 million people access news services from Australian News Channel Pty Ltd

In March 2004, Sky News launched Sky News Active giving viewers access to news on demand 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Sky News Active is available on Foxtel Digital. It is due to be launched later this year to regional, rural and remote areas on the new Austar Digital platform.

Sky News Active offers 8 channels of video content and 5 menus of text ranging from news headlines to business and finance plus sport, weather and showbiz.



Sky News Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings since 1996

Sky News Australia has been committed to the coverage of National Affairs since its inception.

Federal Politics has become the cornerstone of the channel's news coverage.
Main Points:

1. HOR Question time has been covered live for every sitting since 1996.
2. Live coverage of the Senate during major events.
3. Official openings and all formal ceremonial events have been shown live on Sky News.
4. Full live coverage of Elections and Federal Budgets.
5. More than 250 news conferences have been shown live.
6. More than 400 live interviews with political leaders.
7. Dedicated bureau in Canberra since 2000.
8. Average of 6 live reports every day from Federal Parliament.
9. Live coverage of major committees.
10. Sky News aired the HOR produced series "House for the Nation" in late 2003 and early 2004.
11. Sky News coverage of Parliamentary proceedings and news coverage are available to Australian schools via Foxtel Education and Austar for Schools industry initiatives.
12. Sky News offers schools online support via dedicated website:
www.skynews.com.au/education

Sky News launches dedicated Parliamentary Channel.

On the 24th of March 2004, the Prime Minister officially launched Sky News Active and a revolutionary addition to Australian television – the Sky News Parliamentary Channel.

The Sky News Parliamentary Channel is produced by Australian News Channel Pty Ltd at no cost to the Parliament.

Sky News Parliamentary Channel is available to all FOXTEL Digital Subscribers as part of their basic package.

It is due to be launched later this year to Regional, Rural and Remote Australia on the new Austar Digital platform.

Sky News Parliamentary Channel is a local development of the American C-SPAN and British Parliament service.

Since March, Sky News has shown live coverage of the HOR, Senate and its committees.

On Budget night, Sky News Active, in addition to the Parliamentary Channel, aired a total of 4 channels dedicated to the Budget.

Sky News Active has also featured live coverage of the Senate Estimates Committees.

When Australians go to the polls, Sky News will also offer a 24/7 Election Channel which will operate from the day the election date is announced.

Sky News has full editorial control of what feeds from Parliament it chooses to take. In any given day for example, the Parliamentary Channel may switch to any one of the proceedings underway in the Parliament.

The Sky News Parliamentary Channel utilises the television feeds supplied to media organisations by the Broadcasting section of the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Australian News Channel is grateful for the assistance of this department in the successful launch and operation of this service.

Improving Access to Parliamentary Proceedings

Press Gallery Facilities:

As a relatively new player in the media, Sky News is severely handicapped by the grandfathering of office space in the Press Gallery.

Sky News provides all its political coverage and dedicated Parliamentary Channel from two very small suites. The space is smaller than the space given to other media organisations for storage.

We are physically restricted from expanding our staff and coverage of National Affairs.

This is an impediment to all new players wanting to enter Federal Political reporting.

It is this company's view that the Parliament should address this issue and that the amount of space provided by the Commonwealth be apportioned on a more equitable basis.

This is an issue that is growing as new digital technologies such as Sky News Active change the shape of media reporting and thus how Australians are informed of Parliamentary services.

Access of Television Crews:

Sky News believes the widening of the Filming and Photography guidelines in 1996 has been to the advantage of the Print media and the detriment of Television.

The guidelines provided to DPRS are restrictive and do not allow a full open coverage of Federal Parliament, and in particular major events.

Incidents such as those involving President Bush in the Chamber were of national interest and the Australian people were only able to access that event via the use of footage obtained by a foreign camera crew.

Parliamentary Education Office

Sky News believes that the launch of the Parliamentary Channel offers the Commonwealth a unique opportunity to “open up” the political process to more Australian schools.

We would welcome working closer with the Parliamentary Education Office, in particular with our own school based activities.

Coverage of Committees

Committees are an important part of the political process and a key feature of the Sky News Parliamentary Channel.

It is Sky News’ understanding that committees must decide whether to allow filming of committees as an “opt in”.

We would support an “opt out” provision, in that committees would automatically be able to be covered by DPRS cameras, unless they specifically requested otherwise on worthy grounds.

Angelos Frangopoulos
Managing Editor
Australian News Channel Pty Ltd

Submission 3:

Paul Bongiorno, Vice President, Press Gallery

"FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS THE SAFEGUARD OF OUR LIBERTY AND CANNOT BE DIMINISHED WITHOUT BEING LOST"

Thomas Jefferson.

TELEVISION

"...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)."

The House of Representatives should within the rules of decorum have no restrictions on television coverage of what happens within its confines while the parliament is in session.

Television news crews should be allowed to enter or exit the galleries at will.

Decorum means that television coverage of the debates should not be distracting or intrusive. This can be achieved by restricting crews to the galleries.

The rules covering what the Sound and Vision Office is permitted to send the TV bureaus should be broadened. Besides the current S AVO feed showing only the member with the call or the Speaker, bureaus should also be able to access other in-house camera angles. This is available to MPs and should be allowed to the accredited media.

Rules

This access should be allowed to all news crews with parliamentary press passes. Visiting crews would have to seek specific permission of the Speaker.

Submission 4:

Ian Harris, Clerk, House of Representatives (second submission)

21 June 2004

Mrs M May

Chair

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs May

I refer to the recent roundtable with representatives from the media as part of the Committee's inquiry into enhancing public knowledge of parliamentary proceedings. I have previously provided a submission to the inquiry addressing the terms of reference.

At the roundtable, Mr Grubel, AAP Bureau Chief and Press Gallery Secretary, referred to some difficulties experienced by AAP in getting access to tabled reports and other documents.

Ms Robyn McClelland, Clerk Assistant (Table) and Ms Joanne Towner, Director, Legislation and Records, met with Mr Grubel on Friday 18 June to discuss press access to documents. Attached for the Committee's information is a paper setting out the provision of documents to the press by the House of Representatives Table Office. Mr Grubel undertook to distribute copies of the document to members of the press gallery.

Yours sincerely

I C HARRIS

Clerk of the House

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TABLE OFFICE PROVISION OF DOCUMENTS TO THE PRESS

DOCUMENT TYPE	PROVISION?	COMMENT
Bills, EM, second reading speeches	Yes	As soon as presented. One or two copies only. Also available on http://www.aph.gov.au/bills/index.htm
Government documents (on day of tabling and during tabling sitting week) (ie documents available in press gallery)	No	PM&C arrange for delivery of stock to the press gallery (at the boxes) once tabled. Alternatively the Agency website.
Government documents (from previous sitting week and beyond) (ie documents that are no longer available in the press gallery)	Yes (<i>if we have stock</i>)	Historic documents are stored in Archive basement so there may be a delay in retrieving, depending on other requests. Note: if we don't have stock e.g. only a master copy – if it is a PP, these can be accessed through the Parliamentary Library. If it is not a PPS, and we need to photocopy, build in some time for this.
Parliamentary committee reports	Yes (<i>if we have stock</i>)	Available either through the Committee secretariat or the Table Office. Single copy only.

Delegation reports	Yes	
Deemed papers	Yes	
Miscellaneous papers tabled during QT, Adjournment debate etc	Yes	
Acts	Yes	For the printed copies of individual acts
Consolidations of Acts	No	We do not hold stock – available electronically (http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/quicksrch.htm)

House of Representatives Table Office, RG 89

June 2004

Submission 5:

Neil Pickering, Director, Department of Parliamentary Services:

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure

Enhancing public knowledge of parliamentary proceedings

The following services are provided by DPS to Members, Senators, the press gallery, parliamentary staff and the public. DPS could provide additional services but not within its current budget. Any new service would have to be costed and additional funds obtained.

- Live television, audio and internet coverage of chambers, committees, parliamentary functions and events.
- Copies of any of this coverage can be provided on DVD, windows media format, VHS tape, various broadcast quality formats, CD or audio cassette. Still images can also be provided from the video coverage. The first copy of any parliamentary event is free for Members and Senators. A charge is levied for multiple copies of the same event to cover our operator's time and the cost of the recording media.
- Replays of material over the House Monitoring Service to Members and Senators and over tie lines to the media bureaux are free.
- A fully equipped television and radio studio is available to Members, Senators and parliamentary staff. Material recorded in the studio can be provided in a variety of formats for a variety of purposes including incorporation into presentation material.

Additional TV news cameras in the chamber

I do not think it necessary to have additional news cameras in the chamber. The chamber is already fitted out with eight built-in broadcast quality video cameras operated by DPS staff covering all angles of the floor.

There are certainly some disadvantages of having additional video cameras in the chamber including anticipated problems with egress from the public galleries, less than ideal camera angles of the Members from above and the major disadvantage of independent television crews not necessarily following the Parliamentary Camera Guidelines. DPS Broadcasting is wholly accountable to the Parliament, while it might be said that the media bureaux could be swayed by the need to maintain commercial TV ratings.

Camera angles

DPS cameras are located in recesses in the walls of the chamber and the camera operator is located in a DPS control room in the basement. This placement allows more relevant and complimentary 'front on' shots of Members while remaining unobtrusive to the proceedings in general. Video taken from the galleries would be looking down on Members and as such would appear quite different to the normal coverage. Additional news cameras should not be positioned anywhere in the house in a way that could interfere with the DPS coverage.

Camera guidelines

If the committee considers changing the parameters of the current camera guidelines, consideration should be given to such examples as the disruption caused during President Bush's address to the House and the incident when a member of the public jumped into the chamber.

It should be noted that the current guidelines for DPS camera operators do not specifically state what is allowed in the event of unparliamentary behaviour by a Member or Senator. However, the House of Representatives Practices manual is more specific and instructs the camera operator to focus on the chair.

Any changes to the camera guidelines should not require DPS camera operators to make judgments about what is likely to be newsworthy.

Additional camera angles other than the broadcast feed.

It is technically possible for DPS to record additional camera angles other than the program feed and distribute these to the media or a particular member with the agreement of the Speaker. This has been done in the past on several occasions for a variety of reasons. However, the priority of the camera operator in the control room is always the current proceedings and thus it is only possible to record additional material if time permits.

It may be possible to put in place a streamlined approval process for any additional material requests to ensure availability of operators and timeliness.

Television coverage of committee

There are five committee rooms in Parliament House equipped with broadcast quality cameras - 2R1, 2R3, 1R0 (the main committee room), 2S1 and 2S3. Outside of Senate Estimates committee hearings, the main committee room is rarely used for committee hearings.

Committees should consider using the main committee room or the Senate committee rooms to increase the number of televised committee hearings without incurring additional infrastructure costs.

Equipping additional committee rooms or televising away committee hearings would require substantial additional funding for DPS.

Increasing the distribution of DPS' television and radio coverage.

The number of distribution channels has increased over the last few years. Extensive coverage of the parliament is already distributed over the Internet (www.aph.gov.au), ABC Radio, Sky News Active - Parliament Channel, TransAct and Broadcast Australia. Sky News and ABC TV also cover Question Time. Major TV networks provide coverage of special events such as the budget speech and news worthy stories sourced from the Parliament.

What's possible with digital television?

SBS and ABC are allowed to multi-channel under digital TV legislation. For example SBS is providing two additional channels on their digital service, the World News Channel and SBS essential. ABC TV was providing the additional services of Fly and Kids TV until June 30, 2003. This could be an opportunity to encourage the ABC to dedicate more 'air time' to television coverage of the Parliament.

Digital TV legislation also allows the Parliament to be broadcast through data casting channels. Broadcast Australia is already doing this as part of their trial in Sydney, but this is an audio only service at this stage. The main reason the service does not include video is the expense of purchasing sufficient bandwidth to send the signals to Sydney.

I hope this information is useful to the committee.

Neil Pickering
Director Broadcasting
Department of Parliamentary Services