
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

General Principles and Standing Determinations

Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

May 2013
Canberra

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Membership of the Committee

Chair	Ms Anna Burke MP Speaker of the House of Representatives	
Vice Chair	Senator the Hon John Hogg President of the Senate	
Members	Mr Mark Coulton MP Mr Chris Hayes MP The Hon John Murphy MP Mr Wyatt Roy MP Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP	Senator Stephen Parry Senator the Hon Lin Thorp
Secretary	James Catchpole (from 2 October 2012) Siwan Davies (until 2 October 2012)	
Inquiry Secretary	Sonia Palmieri (until 17 December 2012)	

Terms of reference

Section 5 *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*:

- (1) At the commencement of the first session of every Parliament, a Joint Committee of nine members of the Parliament, to be called the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, shall be appointed according to the practice of the Parliament with reference to the appointment of members to serve on Joint Select Committees of both Houses of the Parliament.
- (2) One of the members of the Committee shall be the President of the Senate, one member shall be the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and, of the other seven members of the Committee, two shall be members of, and appointed by, the Senate and five shall be members of, and appointed by, the House of Representatives.

Sections 12(1) & 12(2) *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*:

- (1) The Committee shall consider and specify in a report presented to each House of the Parliament, the general principles upon which there should be determined the days upon which, and the periods during which, the proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall be broadcast.
- (2) The Committee shall, in accordance with general principles specified by the Committee and adopted by each House of the Parliament, determine the days upon which, and the periods during which, the proceedings of either House of the Parliament shall be broadcast.

General Principles and Standing Determinations

Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946

- 1.1 Section 12(1) of the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* (the Act) requires the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings (the Committee) to consider and specify in a report presented to each House of the Parliament, the general principles upon which there should be determined the days upon which, and the periods during which, the proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives should be broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
- 1.2 Section 12(2) of the Act requires that the Committee shall, in accordance with general principles specified by the Committee and adopted by each House of the Parliament, determine the days upon which, and the periods during which, the proceedings of either House of the Parliament shall be broadcast. The schedule of broadcasting is referred to as the Standing Determinations.

General Principles

- 1.3 On 19 March 2013 the Committee adopted the following general principles determining the days upon which, and the periods during which, the

proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives should be broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation:

Allocation of the broadcast between the Senate and the House of Representatives

- The proceedings of Parliament shall be broadcast live whenever a House is sitting;
- The allocation of broadcasts between the Senate and the House of Representatives will be in accordance with the standing determinations made by the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings. It is anticipated that over time, the coverage of each House will be approximately equal.

Rebroadcast of questions and answers

- At the conclusion of the live broadcast of either House, questions without notice and answers thereto from the House not allocated the broadcast shall be rebroadcast.

Unusual or exceptional circumstances

- Nothing in these general principles shall prevent the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings from departing from the principles in unusual or exceptional circumstances.

Standing Determinations

- 1.4 On 19 March 2013 the Committee resolved that, contingent on adoption by each House of the General Principles specified by the Committee, the following standing determinations be the standing determinations of the Committee, pursuant to section 12(2) of the Act:

Allocation of broadcasts

1. The allocation of broadcasts between the Senate and the House of Representatives shall be as follows:

	Sitting weeks commencing on a Monday	Sitting weeks commencing on a Tuesday
Monday	House of Representatives	[No sitting]
Tuesday	Senate	House of Representatives
Wednesday	Senate	Senate
Thursday	House of Representatives	Senate

Friday	House of Representatives	House of Representatives
Saturday	Senate	House of Representatives
Sunday	House of Representatives	Senate

Transfer of broadcast from one House to the other

2. When both Houses are meeting on the same day and the House whose proceedings are being broadcast adjourns for the day or suspends its proceedings for an extended period, the broadcast shall be transferred to the other House at the earliest opportunity.
3. When both Houses are meeting on the same day and the House not allocated the broadcast meets earlier than the other House, the broadcast shall commence at the start of the proceedings of the House meeting earliest. This broadcast shall continue until the House allocated the broadcast meets, when the broadcast shall be transferred. Annex 1 provides examples.
4. If there are significant issues under debate in the House not allocated the broadcast, a decision to transfer the broadcast may be made by:
 - I. the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings or its subcommittee; or
 - II. the Presiding Officers, on advice from the Secretary to the Joint Committee, following consultation with the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Usher of the Black Rod and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The decision:
 - a. must take into account the importance of, and public interest in, the impending debate, and
 - b. may initially be given orally, but must be reported to the Joint Committee in writing.

Rebroadcast of Governor-General's speech

5. On the first sitting day of each session of the Parliament, the speech of the Governor-General shall be rebroadcast at the earliest convenient time available on the Parliamentary Broadcast Network.

Announcements from control booths

6. The following general principles apply to announcements made from the control booths:
 - I. announcements may include a description of procedure, and business before the allocated House or

- of business before the other House or of procedures and/or business before joint committees or committees of either House;
- II. general information may be provided about the context of debates or particular proceedings as long as political views or forecasts are not included;
 - III. the announcement of each Senator or Member receiving the call may include the following particulars:
 - a. name;
 - b. parliamentary office or portfolio;
 - c. political party;
 - d. electorate or state;
 - IV. names of members intending to speak may be announced; and
 - V. information approved by the Secretary to the Joint Committee, including pre-recorded parliamentary educational material and references to school groups currently visiting the chamber, may be used during procedural processes, such as divisions, that take place during a broadcast.
7. Details of coverage of broadcasts are to be reported by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to the Joint Committee at the end of each three month period.

Annex 1: Examples of broadcast transfers

Example 1: Budget Reply in the Senate

The Leader of the Opposition's Budget Reply speech is usually given on the Thursday following the introduction of the Appropriations Bills in the House of Representatives. The speech is broadcast in accordance with the usual allocation of the broadcast in the House of Representatives on Thursdays. The House traditionally adjourns at the conclusion this speech, at 8.00pm.

The Senate continues to sit to allow debate on the Budget.

Broadcast transfer required: The broadcast should be transferred from the House to the Senate at the adjournment of the House (i.e. 8.00pm) until the adjournment of the Senate.

Example 2: Early commencement of sittings of the House of Representatives

The House of Representatives has resolved to vary its hours for a Tuesday sitting and will now meet at 9.00am rather than 2.00pm.

The Senate, the house allocated the broadcast on Tuesdays, meets at 12.30pm.

Broadcast transfer required: The House should be broadcast from 9.00am until 12.30pm; the broadcast should then transferred to the Senate until its adjournment.

Re-broadcast of Parliamentary Proceedings

Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946

- 2.1 Section 14(1) of the Act states that the Committee shall have power to determine the conditions in accordance with which a re-broadcast may be made of any portion of the proceedings of either House of the Parliament or of a joint sitting.
- 2.2 Section 14(2) of the Act states that no re-broadcast shall be made of any portion of the proceedings of either House of the Parliament or of a joint sitting otherwise than in accordance with the conditions so determined.

Re-broadcast of parliamentary proceedings

- 2.3 On 19 March 2013 the Committee resolved:

That, pursuant to section 14 of the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*, the conditions relating to the re-broadcast of any portion of the proceedings of either House of Parliament or of a joint sitting shall be those resolved by the respective House in relation to the broadcast of proceedings.

Anna Burke MP

Chair