

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia



DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTS
PARL. NO. 11262
DATE PRESENTED
29 JUN 1975
<i>Mary E.</i>

**RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING OF
PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS**

The Joint Committee on
the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

May 1995

Australian Government Publishing Service
Canberra

CONTENTS

	Page
Membership of Committee	vi
Terms of Reference	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Recommendations	xi
 Chapter	
 1 Background to the Inquiry	
Broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings	1
Conduct of the Inquiry	2
 2 <i>The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946</i> and the Role of the Joint Committee	
Background	4
Legislation of Regulation?	5
Amendments to the Act	6
Extent of Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings ...	6
The ABC as Broadcaster	7
Television Coverage under the Act	7
Parliamentary Privilege	9
Technical Amendments to the Act	10
The Role of the Joint Committee	11
A New Act	13
 3 Radio Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings	
Historical background	14
Developments in ABC coverage	14
Establishment of the PBN and its development ...	15
Other Radio Coverage	15
The Production and Distribution of the Signal ...	16
Future of Radio Broadcasting	16
Future of the PBN	17

Coverage of the PBN	20
General Principles and Standing Determinations	21
Allocation of broadcasts	21
Coverage of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives	23
Other Radio Broadcasting	23
Technological Developments in Radio Broadcasting	25
Radio Coverage of Parliamentary Committees	26

4. Television Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings

History	28
Production and Distribution of the Television Signal	29
Extent of Television Coverage	30
Coverage on Free-to-air Networks	30
Commercial Networks	30
National Networks	31
Community Broadcasters and the 6th High Power Channel	32
Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings on Subscription Television	35
Overseas Parliaments	35
Potential Coverage of the Australian Parliament ...	36
Short Term Options	38
Longer Term Options	39
Packaged Materials	40

Appendices

1 List of submissions	41
2 List of persons or organisations giving evidence at public hearings	42
3 Conditions for granting access to proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives for the purpose of recording and broadcasting excerpts	45

4 General Principles relating to the radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings	47
5 Standing determinations relating to the radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings	49
6 Proposals for the re-allocation of broadcast Hours between the Houses	51

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Hon S P Martin, MP
Vice Chairman: Senator the Hon M E Beahan

Senators: Senator J Coates
Senator S C Knowles

Members: Mr M J Evans, MP
Mr E H Cameron, MP
Mr N J Hicks, MP
Mr P J Knott, MP
Hon L R S Price, MP

Secretary: Mr D R Elder
Inquiry Officer: Mr R L Morris

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To inquire and report on the arrangements which may apply in respect of the televising and radio broadcasting of the proceedings of the Houses of Parliament and their committees, including a review of the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* (the Act), with particular reference to:

- (a) the general principles upon which radio broadcast, delayed broadcast and rebroadcast of proceedings of both Houses and their committees occur and conditions for broadcasting of audio-only excerpts of proceedings;
- (b) in relation to the television signal of proceedings:
 - (i) the feasibility of encompassing within the Act arrangements applying to the televising of proceedings of each House and its committees, and joint committees;
 - (ii) the formulation of general principles upon which the televising of proceedings of both Houses and their committees occurs, the allocation arrangements between the Houses and conditions for usage of videotape excerpts of proceedings; and
 - (iii) review of arrangements for making available to bodies external to Parliament House, Canberra, the signal of proceedings distributed by means of the house monitoring service; and
- (c) the establishment of a permanent, Australia-wide parliamentary broadcast network under parliamentary control.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Australian Broadcasting Authority
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
DPRS	Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff
FACTS	Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations
FARB	Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters
PBN	Parliamentary Broadcasting Network
PNN	Parliamentary and News Network
PRN	Public Radio Network
SAVO	Sound and Vision Office
SCTCI	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport, Communications and Infrastructure
Technical Definitions:	
Broadcasting Service	A service that delivers television or radio programs to persons having equipment appropriate for receiving that service, whether the delivery uses the radio frequency spectrum, cable, optical fibre or any other means or a combination of means. ¹
Cable	A point to multi-point distribution system which utilises various forms of cable to carry multimedia services to consumers connected to the cable network
DBS	Direct Broadcast by Satellite - signal is delivered directly to reception equipment in private households. This equipment may include a receiving dish, a converter and a decoder. ²

1 *Broadcasting Services Act 1992.*

2 SCTCI Report, 1992, p. 32.

Digital Compression	Digital compression technology for television involves the use of high speed computers to process a signal. The amount of information to be transmitted is reduced which in turn reduces the channel capacity required for transmission and has the potential to permit an 80-90 per cent increase in the number of services within the present television bands. ³
High power service	A transmitter designed to cover a large geographical area (eg. a city or 50-60 kilometres) through utilising a high power transmitter with strategically placed translators. ⁴
Low power service	A transmitter designed to cover a limited area of approximately 6-10 kilometres depending on the power of the transmitter. ⁵
MDS	Multi-point distribution - a radio frequency system which operates using microwave frequencies. It is a point to multi-point delivery system which involves the line of sight transmission of signals to households. ⁶
Open Narrowcasting	A broadcasting service (a) whose reception is limited: (i) by being targeted at special interest groups; or (ii) by being intended only for limited locations, for example, arenas or business premises; or (iii) by being provided for a limited period or to cover a special event; or (iv) because they provide programs of limited appeal; or (v) for some other reason; and (b) that comply with any determinations or clarifications under section 19 (of the <i>Broadcasting Services Act 1992</i>) in relation to open narrowcasting services. ⁷
Pay-TV	Pay-TV services are television services for which the viewer will need to pay a subscription fee, either on a regular basis, or for particular programs (known as Pay-per-view). Pay-TV is forbidden to show advertisements or sponsorship announcements before 1 July 1997.

3 *Ibid.*, pps. 34-5.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

7 *Broadcasting Services Act 1992.*

Privilege

A statement is said to be privileged if the person making it is protected from legal action.

Absolute privilege exists where no legal action may lie for a statement even, for example, if made with malice. Protection is not limited to action for defamation but also extends to criminal matters.

Qualified privilege is where a person is not liable to an action for defamation if certain conditions are fulfilled, for example, if a statement is not made with malicious intention⁸.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 2 *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 and the Role of the Joint Committee.*

The Committee recommends that:

- 1 *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 be amended to bring the proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives and of parliamentary committees within the Act to allow the Joint Committee to make recommendations or determinations as to how these activities are to be broadcast (Para 2.15).*

- 2 *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 be amended to cover the radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings generally (Para 2.27).*

- 3 *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 be amended to provide absolute privilege only to compulsory radio broadcasts of proceedings which are required by the Act (Para 2.35).*

- 4 *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 be amended to make it consistent with other related legislation and to accommodate current management and operation of transmission facilities for compulsory radio broadcasts (Para 2.38).*

- 5 *The functions of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings continue to be specified under the Act and that these functions include:*
 - . *advising the Parliament on the arrangements for radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings;*

 - . *specifically in relation to the compulsory radio broadcasts, advising the Houses on the general principles and standing determinations which should apply to these broadcasts;*

 - . *the regular review every five years of the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings; and*

8 A. R. Browning (Ed), *House of Representatives Practice*, 2nd Ed., 1989, p 688.

advising the Houses on the application of new broadcasting technologies to the public dissemination of parliamentary proceedings (Para 2.48).

- 6 A new act covering the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings be drafted and introduced into the Parliament. The new Act should implement the recommendations the Committee has made in this chapter (Para 2.50).

Chapter 3 Radio Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings

The Committee recommends that:

- 7 The PBN continue to be used by the ABC, both for parliamentary broadcasts and for the ABC's news channel (Para 3.29).
- 8 The ABC supplement its compulsory parliamentary broadcasts on the PNN with coverage of other parliamentary material (Para 3.29).
- 9 Other producers of radio programming be encouraged to develop informational programs based on the work of the Parliament (Para 3.29).
- 10 Access to the compulsory radio broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings be made available progressively to all Australians (Para 3.33).
- 11 The general principles covering the compulsory radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings be amended to provide for a greater coverage of the House of Representatives (Para 3.44).
- 12 If the Act is amended to include coverage of proceedings of the Main Committee on the PBN, the general principles be altered to provide for rebroadcasts of the Main Committee on the PBN. Para 3.46).
- 13 The Sound and Vision Office investigate the options for providing, in a cost effective way, the SAVO feed to broadcasters, including the not-for-profit broadcasters who are located outside Parliament House. SAVO should report its findings to the Committee (Para 3.53).
- 14 Funding be provided to enable the production of a range of parliamentary related radio programs, including programs for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, to supplement the current continuous live coverage of parliamentary proceedings (Para 3.59).

- 15 The ABC investigate providing coverage of parliamentary committees as part of its programming on the PNN (Para 3.70).

Chapter 4 Television Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings

The Committee recommends that:

- 16 The signal of parliamentary proceedings continue to be made available on the current basis to the television networks located in Parliament House with the Boards of the ABC and SBS addressing the issue of greater coverage of parliamentary proceedings on their networks in the context of their charter obligations (Para 4.27).
- 17 SAVO's investigation of options for the provision of the SAVO audio feed to not-for-profit radio broadcasters include investigation of the provision of the audio-visual feed to not-for-profit television broadcasters (Para 4.38).
- 18 The Parliament (through the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings) monitor developments in the Pay-TV industry with a view to obtaining access to channel capacity at the earliest opportunity to enable the provision of a parliamentary television service (Para 4.61).
- 19 Funds be made available through the parliamentary budget for the development of packages of parliamentary proceedings for broadcast by interested media groups, provided such packages are of an informational or educational nature within the guidelines (Para 4.63).

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY

Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

1.1 Australia was one of the pioneers of radio coverage of parliamentary proceedings with the introduction of coverage of proceedings of the House of Representatives commencing on 10 July 1946. Radio broadcasting takes place under the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*.

1.2 In the immediate post-war environment the Australian media scene was relatively stable. The print media was largely under the control of family dynasties producing both morning and afternoon newspapers. Electronic media was limited to commercial radio and the ABC through its national network and shortwave stations. Parliamentary coverage on the electronic media was limited to compulsory radio coverage on the ABC and many Australians followed the parliamentary process in the daily press.

1.3 The advent of television in the mid-1950s had little impact on parliamentary coverage of proceedings. However, as the Australian television industry matured its impact on coverage of significant national and international events grew to a level where the Australian community began to look for information about the Parliament on television. Television had developed extensive news and current affairs programming which increasingly sought parliamentary material. In 1974 the Parliament amended the Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act to permit the first televising of its proceedings with coverage of joint sittings of the Senate and the House of Representatives. For the next 16 years, compulsory radio coverage continued and from 1985 permission was given for the radio broadcasting of excerpts in news and current affairs programs. Only minimal television coverage of proceedings was permitted.

1.4 The stability of the electronic media of earlier years disappeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s with 'every commercial television channel, virtually every radio station, and a significant number of metropolitan newspapers changing owners - or in some cases closing down'.¹ New regulatory rules on broadcasters, deregulation of the financial market and technological change all had their impact on this process. The change has seen the growth of a complementary public broadcasting infrastructure which operates under the umbrella of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. In addition to these changes, the introduction of subscription television has seen a move to create a new range of media services. A new group of entrepreneurs has entered the industry working alongside the

¹ S Cunningham & G Turner Ed., *The media in Australia - Industries, Texts, Audiences*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, Aust., 1993, p3.

traditional media and opening new opportunities for the transmission of information to the Australian community.

1.5 Televised coverage of parliamentary proceedings has reflected these external influences with developments increasing in pace. The first serious consideration of the more extensive use of television resulted from the move to the new Parliament House. It was at this time that the Sound and Vision Office (SAVO) was set up to produce radio and television signals of parliamentary proceedings. Significant capital and recurrent resources have been invested in the production of broadcast quality radio and television signals of parliamentary proceedings. However, to date that signal is not reaching a wide audience.

1.6 During 1990 and 1991 both the Senate and the House of Representatives resolved to allow live television coverage of proceedings together with the use of excerpts for news and current affairs purposes. These resolutions led to live television coverage of Question Time on ABC TV and extensive use of televised excerpts for news and current affairs programming on both commercial and national broadcasting networks.

1.7 Other issues also have relevance to parliamentary coverage in the mid to late 1990s. A recent survey which explored the level of understanding of the Australian community in relation to Australia's system of government suggested that:

our system of government relies for its efficiency and legitimacy on an informed citizenry ... (and that there was) .. widespread ignorance and misconception about the structure and functions of the Australian system of government, about its origins, and about the ways it can serve the needs of citizens.²

The report suggested that 'the presentation of televised parliamentary broadcasting could also be improved'.³ A key reason for extending the electronic coverage of parliamentary proceedings is the assistance it can provide in educating and informing the Australian community about current political issues and the part played by Members and Senators on the federal parliamentary scene. It is against this background that the current inquiry has been instigated with a view to exploring ways of improving the extent of coverage of parliamentary proceedings on both radio and television.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.8 The inquiry was advertised in national newspapers on 4 December 1993. The Committee invited submissions from radio and television networks, parliamentary departments and other interested parties. A list of submissions received is shown in Appendix 1.

² Civics Expert Group, *Whereas the people ... (Summary)*, AGPS, 1994, p. 5.

³ Civics Expert Group, *Whereas the people ... Report of the Civics Expert Group*, AGPS, 1994, p. 97.

1.9 Five public hearings were conducted by the Committee at which a range of organisations were invited to give oral evidence. A list of persons or organisations giving evidence is provided at Appendix 2.

1.10 The Committee issued an Interim Report which was tabled on 12 May 1994. This document reported on a specific reference from both Houses on certain of the general principles and standing determinations which cover radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. It also made recommendations concerning the ABC's proposal for the use of the down time on the Parliamentary Broadcasting Network to commence a 24 hour news and current affairs broadcasting service.

1.11 On 2 November 1994 the Committee released an Options Paper entitled 'A Way to Go - Options Paper on Directions for the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings'. This paper was circulated to all Members, persons who had made submissions to the inquiry and a number of other organisations with specific interests in subscription television and comments were invited. A number of responses were received and these have been considered in preparing this report.

The report is structured as follows:

- o *The Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* and the role of the Joint Committee (Chapter 2);
- o Radio Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings (Chapter 3); and
- o Television Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER 2

THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS BROADCASTING ACT 1946 AND THE ROLE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Background

- 2.1 The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* (the Act) came into being in an era when radio was the sole electronic medium for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings. The Act was designed to ensure that the Australian community had access to live radio coverage of the proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives. To ensure such coverage, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (then Commission) (ABC) was required to broadcast parliamentary proceedings through one of its national metropolitan networks and to remote areas through a shortwave transmitter.
- 2.2 In addition to these statutory requirements for radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings, the Act laid down the powers and responsibilities of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings. The Committee was to report to each House on the general principles concerning the broadcasting of the proceedings of each House. The Committee was empowered to make standing determinations pursuant to these general principles, including determining the allocation of broadcasts between the Houses.
- 2.3 The essential features of the Act in relation to parliamentary radio coverage remain in place today. The ABC is still required to provide coverage. However, transmission is no longer carried on one of the main ABC networks. Since 1988 the signal has been carried on the Parliamentary Broadcasting Network (PBN). The PBN is discussed in more depth in Chapter 3. The compulsory broadcasts and rebroadcasts are subject to the same immunities and privileges which apply to parliamentary debates.
- 2.4 Amendments were made to the Act in 1974 to provide for the television coverage of joint sittings. Regulation of the television coverage of proceedings of the individual Houses has been undertaken through resolutions of each House.
- 2.5 In submissions to the inquiry, views expressed on the Act ranged from advocating its repeal and its replacement by non-statutory methods for the regulation of broadcasting, to suggestions for amendments to the Act to reflect changes in the current technical and operational environment for parliamentary broadcasting. These suggested amendments ranged from relatively minor terminological changes to more substantial changes to the coverage of the Act and the role of the Committee.

Legislation or Regulation?

- 2.6 The initial question the Committee had to address was whether there was a continuing need for the Act. The original intent of the Act was as a mechanism to provide live radio coverage of proceedings to a significant section of the Australian public. The Committee considered whether there was a need for legislation to ensure radio coverage, or whether radio broadcasts could be covered through resolutions of each House. If there were no legislation in place, each House would be required to regulate (by means of resolution) the radio coverage of parliamentary proceedings.
- 2.7 The Department of the Senate argued in its submission that there were compelling reasons not to have an Act regulating broadcasting coverage of proceedings. The Department suggested that, apart from requiring a broadcaster to rebroadcast proceedings and applying parliamentary privilege to the compulsory broadcasts, none of the other provisions of the Act required a statutory basis. The Department also argued that legislation tended to be more inflexible than resolutions of the Houses and that it was a vehicle for 'imposing undesirable restrictive uniformity on the Houses.'¹
- 2.8 However, as the Clerk of the Senate noted, a practical problem would arise if the Act were repealed:
- if you repealed the Act tomorrow, the ABC would stop broadcasting, and you would not have the continuous radio broadcasting that you have now.²
- 2.9 The fundamental issue in assessing the need for the Act is the nature of the coverage required by the Parliament. As the Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff (DPRS) stated, 'a complete and uninterrupted service on the Parliament's own terms cannot ... be obtained without legislative requirement on a broadcaster'.³ Other individuals and organisations presenting evidence on this issue favoured retention of the Act.
- 2.10 The Committee considers that the current compulsory radio coverage may be endangered if the Act were to be repealed. The radio coverage is valued by listeners and the Committee would not wish to see its future threatened. Continued coverage is best assured by the Act and the Committee favours its retention. In addition, the Committee sees the Act being extended to cover broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings more generally.

¹ Evidence, p. 834.
² Evidence, p. 88.
³ Evidence, p. 225.

Amendments to the Act

2.11 Having determined that the Act should remain to ensure the continued radio coverage of parliamentary proceedings, the Committee considered a range of areas where the Act could be changed. In considering areas of possible amendment, the Committee had regard to the major features of the Act which focus on the proceedings of the Chambers, the designation of a specific broadcaster to provide coverage and the emphasis on radio broadcasting. A number of less significant possible amendments also were considered.

2.12 The Committee considered both the changing nature of the parliamentary process and the technological changes associated with broadcasting coverage. Unlike in the 1940s, the Parliament now has its own facility in the Sound and Vision Office (SAVO) which provides the basic feed for both radio and television coverage to broadcasting network bureaux housed in Parliament House. The operations of the Parliament also have changed with a second chamber in the House of Representatives, new sitting patterns, revised standing orders and an increasing role for parliamentary committees not foreseen when the Act was drafted and which impact on broadcast coverage requirements.

Extent of Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings

2.13 In light of the establishment of a Main Committee of the House of Representatives and the increasing role of parliamentary committees, consideration was given to the limitations on coverage provided for under the Act. Radio coverage of proceedings under the Act involves the broadcast of proceedings of the Senate, the House of Representatives, or joint sittings⁴. Television coverage is limited to joint sittings. The issue of amendment of the Act to cover televising more generally is discussed later in this chapter.

2.14 The Committee considers it is important that there should be the capacity for coverage on the PBN of other significant elements of the parliamentary process such as the Main Committee of the House of Representatives and parliamentary committees. This could be achieved through broadening the definition of 'proceedings' which are covered under the Act to include proceedings of the Main Committee and parliamentary committees. This would require either amendment to the clauses in the Act defining which proceedings are covered or the insertion of a definition of 'proceedings' which would encompass proceedings in a wider sense. Such a change would allow the Joint Committee the opportunity to recommend changes to the general principles and standing determinations to include coverage of the Main Committee and/or parliamentary committees.

2.15 The Committee recommends that:

- 1 **The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* be amended to bring the proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives and of parliamentary committees within the Act to allow the Joint Committee to make recommendations or determinations as to how these activities are to be broadcast.**

The ABC as Broadcaster

2.16 Currently the Act specifies the ABC as the broadcaster which is required to undertake the radio coverage of parliamentary proceedings. However, the specified broadcaster would no longer need to be the ABC as, with the establishment of a dedicated Network (the PBN) to cover parliamentary proceedings, the ABC's main networks are not required to cover Parliament.

2.17 The Department of the House of Representatives raised a question about the ABC's continuing capacity to cover parliamentary proceedings noting that:

In future the ABC, for funding or other reasons (such as the commercialisation or privatisation of the organisation), may find it increasingly burdensome to cover the Parliament.⁵

2.18 Public Radio News (PRN), an organisation representing community radio broadcasters, recommended that the Committee consider releasing the ABC from the requirement to broadcast parliamentary proceedings. It suggested that the funding provided to the ABC for the purpose of compulsory parliamentary radio broadcasting together with use of the PBN could be offered to other broadcasters. If this were done PRN stated that, not only would there be no loss of live parliamentary radio broadcasts, but also there could be an enhancement of the coverage provided to the general community during the time which the PBN network is not required for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings. PRN raised the issue of programming provided by the ABC and was critical of the level of use either of rebroadcast material or material being broadcast on other ABC networks for metropolitan audiences.

2.19 This issue, connected to the future use of the PBN for which there were a number of competing proposals, is discussed in the next chapter.

Television Coverage under the Act

2.20 The Act has a specific role in radio coverage requiring the ABC to provide continuous coverage of proceedings on a designated network. It also creates

⁴ *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946, s4 (1).*

⁵ *Evidence, p. 878.*

the regulatory framework to ensure that this coverage meets the requirements of the Parliament.

2.21 Television coverage has evolved in quite a different manner. While the Act was amended in 1974 to allow for the coverage of joint sittings, each House has resolved to put in place its own set of guidelines to regulate television coverage of its proceedings. There are some differences between the Houses in the content of these guidelines but televising arrangements have operated successfully.

2.22 The compelling of a broadcaster under the Act to provide continuous, or extended, television coverage of proceedings (in a way similar to the radio coverage) could not be supported. Such a coverage would have an unacceptable impact on the programming of any of the free-to-air networks and other avenues are not yet available to enable such coverage. However, the question as to whether the Act should provide generally for the televising of parliamentary proceedings brought forward a number of points of view.

2.23 DPRS considered that the Act should be amended to permit formally the general televising of proceedings. It considered the details of coverage should be a matter for the Joint Committee or for the respective Chambers. However, DPRS stated that the guidelines for television coverage should be consolidated and made consistent.⁶

2.24 The Department of the House of Representatives proposed the incorporation of televising into the Act, with the responsibility for the conditions for televising remaining with the individual Houses. The Department considered the Committee could have the responsibility for advising the Parliament on the arrangements for television coverage as they relate to the Parliament as a whole.⁷

2.25 In contrast the Department of the Senate believed that the televising arrangements and guidelines which have been developed since the inception of televising of both Houses should remain under the control of each House by means of resolutions.

2.26 The Committee considers that the Act should be amended to authorise broadcasting generally of radio and television coverage of parliamentary proceedings. Such a change will reflect the increased importance of television coverage of proceedings. The specific provisions for the compulsory radio broadcasts should remain. The Act also should specify the role of the Joint Committee in relation to the radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings generally. This role is discussed later in this chapter.

⁶ Evidence, p. 8137.

⁷ Evidence, p. 8201.

2.27 The Committee recommends that:

- 2 The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* be amended to cover the radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings generally.

Parliamentary Privilege

2.28 In relation to privilege attaching to broadcasting under the Act, the Act states:

No action or proceedings, civil or criminal, shall lie against any person for broadcasting or re-broadcasting any portion of proceedings of either House of the Parliament or of a joint sitting.⁸

2.29 The ABC indicated that there were instances where it would liked to have provided additional live radio coverage. However, if it did so, the ABC suggested that the question of extending 'absolute privilege' to cover these proceedings would need examination.

2.30 The Department of the Senate argued that it was not necessary to give the ABC's unedited broadcast absolute privilege, because the risk of a successful action against an unedited broadcast was virtually non-existent. In addition, the Department considered there was no reason to give these broadcasts greater protection than other media reports of proceedings.⁹

2.31 The Clerk of the House of Representatives stated that absolute privilege should only apply to those broadcasters who were required to provide coverage and that qualified privilege applied in respect of all other users of parliamentary proceedings.¹⁰ The Clerk considered the Act should continue to provide absolute privilege to the compulsory broadcasts.

2.32 The Department of Communications and the Arts suggested that the Act should be amended to correct an anomaly which appeared to extend absolute privilege to all radio broadcasts of Parliament, irrespective of whether such material forms part of a compulsory broadcast or some other form of coverage (such as excerpts in a news bulletin). The Department recommended that absolute privilege should be provided only in respect of mandatory radio broadcasts of the Parliament and that all other radio and television coverage should be accorded qualified privilege under sub-section 5.10 of the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987*.

⁸ *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*, Section 15.

⁹ Evidence, p. 834.

¹⁰ Evidence, p. 98.

2.33 In November 1991 amendments to the Act to extend the absolute privilege accorded to radio broadcasts of Parliament to television were proposed as part of the Transport and Communications Legislation Amendment Bill 1991. These amendments were rejected by the Senate which considered that the qualified privilege afforded by the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987* may be more appropriate. The Senate took into account the fact that television broadcasts of the Parliament, unlike those of radio, are not mandatory.

2.34 The Committee considers there is still a need for the Act to provide absolute privilege to compulsory radio broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings. The question of whether absolute privilege should be given to any other electronic coverage of parliamentary proceedings will be considered by the Committee in the context of particular proposals for extended parliamentary coverage of Parliament in the future, for example in relation to a Pay-TV proposal along the lines of the C-Span network in the United States. At this stage, other reports will attract qualified privilege as afforded by the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987*. In accord with this approach, the Committee considers the Act should be amended to clarify that absolute privilege applies only to the compulsory radio broadcasts.

2.35 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 3 **The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* be amended to provide absolute privilege only to compulsory radio broadcasts of proceedings which are required by the Act.**

Technical Amendments to the Act

2.36 The Committee considers a number of detailed amendments to the Act are necessary to ensure the Act is consistent with other relevant legislation and more fully reflects the changed broadcasting environment of the mid 1990s.

2.37 The reference to the *Broadcasting and Television Act 1946-73* should be deleted and replaced by reference to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* or other related legislation. The Act should also recognise the use of the Parliamentary Broadcasting Network (PBN) instead of the existing section citing the broadcasting medium 'as a medium wave national broadcasting station in the capital city in each State and in the city of Newcastle and such other national broadcasting stations (including shortwave national broadcasting stations) as are prescribed'.¹¹

11 *Parliamentary Proceedings Act 1946, s4. (a) & (b).*

2.38 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 4 **The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* be amended to make it consistent with other related legislation and to accommodate current management and operation of transmission facilities for compulsory radio broadcasts.**

The Role of the Joint Committee

2.39 The compulsory radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings is controlled by the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings. The Committee reports to each House on the general principles covering these broadcasts. It also determines, in accordance with the general principles, the days and periods on which each House will be broadcast and the conditions for rebroadcast of any portions of the proceedings of either House.

2.40 The Committee has performed a valuable role for the Parliament in examining and advising on the arrangements for the compulsory radio broadcasts. Its membership reflects the balance between the number of parliamentarians in the two Houses. A significant advantage of the Committee has been that, by bringing together both Houses in the consideration of compulsory radio broadcasts, co-operation and commonality has been able to be achieved in those arrangements.

2.41 The Committee has also performed an important role in setting the conditions which apply to non-compulsory radio broadcasts. Excerpting rules covering the use of the audio signal of parliamentary proceedings have worked successfully since their inception in 1986. They were amended in June 1994 to allow coverage of the newly created Main Committee of the House of Representatives. A copy of the conditions is at Appendix 3.

2.42 Currently the Committee does not have a regulatory role under the Act in relation to the televising of parliamentary proceedings except for joint sittings. Each House has undertaken responsibility for the televising of its proceedings with the development of rules covering camera operators, access to proceedings by broadcasters and others, and guidelines covering the televising of committees.

2.43 Without exception people and organisations making submissions to the inquiry saw an ongoing role for the Joint Committee in relation to the compulsory radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The degree to which the committee should be involved in the regulation of television coverage was an area of differing opinion.

2.44 On the one hand, the Department of the Senate and the ABC submitted that the duties of the committee should be limited to its current role in relation to the compulsory radio broadcasting with the individual Houses authorising televised coverage by resolutions.

2.45 DPRS believed it was essential to retain the Committee. However, it felt that the Committee's responsibilities should be reviewed in the context of this inquiry. The Department recommended that the Committee should have a role in monitoring developments in the television industry including ongoing review of the options available to the Parliament for the extension of coverage on both free-to-air and pay television.¹²

2.46 The Department of the House of Representatives recommended the retention of the Joint Committee with consideration being given to extending its role in televising to arrangements as they relate to the Parliament as a whole. It suggested this in the context of the introduction of pay television and a rapidly changing technological environment which may offer new options for televised coverage. The Department also recommended an additional role in providing a mechanism for the regular review of the arrangements for broadcasting every five years. This review process would allow the Committee to advise the Houses more effectively through longer term planning in parliamentary broadcasting.

2.47 The Committee considers it has played a valuable role in relation to radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings and should continue in this role. A recommendation has been made earlier in this chapter for the Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act to be amended to cover the radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings generally. In light of this extension, the Committee considers its role should be expanded to cover televising arrangements. The Committee's role should be extended to include reporting to the Houses on arrangements for televising of parliamentary proceedings. In addition, the Committee should be required to review the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings on a regular basis (every five years) and report to the Parliament.

2.48 **The Committee recommends that:**

5 **The functions of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings continue to be specified under the Act and that these functions include:**

- advising the Parliament on the arrangements for radio and television broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings;
- specifically in relation to the compulsory radio broadcasts, advising the Houses on the general principles and standing determinations which should apply to these broadcasts;
- the regular review every five years of the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings; and

· advising the Houses on the application of new broadcasting technologies to the public dissemination of parliamentary proceedings.

A New Act

2.49 In this chapter the Committee has recommended a number of significant amendments to the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*. Some of these amendments are only of a technical nature. However, some of the amendments, such as those to provide coverage of televising arrangements and to expand the role of the Committee, are substantial. The Committee considers that the changes as a whole are of such significance as to warrant the enactment of new legislation to cover the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

2.50 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 6 **A new act covering the arrangements for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings be drafted and introduced into the Parliament. The new Act should implement the recommendations the Committee has made in this chapter.**

12 Evidence, p. 8228.

CHAPTER 3 RADIO COVERAGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Historical Background

3.1 The Australian Parliament was first broadcast on radio from the House of Representatives on 10 July 1946. It was the second national Parliament of the Commonwealth (after New Zealand) to introduce radio broadcasting of its proceedings. The broadcast took place under the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*.

3.2 The Act required the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to broadcast the proceedings of the Senate or the House of Representatives or of joint sittings. Broadcasts were specified as being from a medium wave national station in each State capital and Newcastle and from other national broadcast stations as prescribed. A medium wave station in Canberra and a short wave station were also prescribed by regulation in 1953.

3.3 Parliamentary broadcasting was to be controlled by the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings which was appointed pursuant to the Act at the commencement of each Parliament. The Committee was required to report to each House on the general principles to cover radio broadcasts (a copy of the general principles revised as a result of the Committee's Interim Report of May 1994 is at Appendix 4). It also determined, in accordance with the general principles, the days and periods on which each House would be broadcast (a copy of the standing determinations revised as a result of the Committee's Interim Report of May 1994 is at Appendix 5). The Committee also was required to determine the conditions for rebroadcast of any portions of the proceedings of either House.

Developments in ABC coverage

3.4 For many years, the ABC broadcast parliamentary proceedings from its metropolitan radio stations in each of the prescribed centres. During the 1980s pressure began to build within the ABC to free up programming options on its metropolitan network where the coverage of parliamentary proceedings clashed with the ABC's other programming priorities. The ABC sought to overcome this problem in 1988 by moving coverage of Parliament from its metropolitan network to its Radio National network. However, this created new clashes with programming on that network. The ABC brought significant pressure to bear to have the broadcast of parliamentary proceedings removed from its main networks.

Establishment of the PBN and its development

3.5 In August 1988, under the National Metropolitan Radio Plan (NMRP), the Government announced the establishment of a dedicated AM broadcasting network for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings (the PBN). The network provided transmitters in all State capitals and in Canberra and Newcastle. In most cases transmission facilities were provided on ABC standby transmitters which had limited transmission power and old technology.

3.6 The National Transmission Agency has begun a program, which should be completed in 1995, to upgrade these transmission facilities. This upgrade will mean that the transmitters will be able to be used 24 hours a day widening the programming options available on the network. However, the upgrade will not increase significantly the current listening reach of the network which is estimated to cover between 66% to 75% of the Australian population¹. The Government has indicated that any plans to extend the network will have to await the completion by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), in 1997, of its current planning process.

3.7 In February 1994 the Committee heard evidence from the ABC in relation to a proposal it had developed to use the time during which the PBN network is not required for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings to introduce a 24 hours news service. The Committee reported in May 1994 that it did not oppose the proposal. The ABC's request to use the time during which PBN is not required for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings was approved by the Minister for Communications and the Arts. The new service, known as the Parliamentary and News Network (PNN), commenced in August 1994.

3.8 This brief history of the compulsory radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings indicates the developments which have occurred in the facilities available for the broadcasts. It also shows, as the Department of the House of Representatives noted, the long and generally satisfactory relationship between the Parliament and the ABC, although the enthusiasm of the ABC for covering Parliament has waxed and waned.²

Other Radio Coverage

3.9 In addition to obligatory ABC radio broadcasts which take place under the Act, other radio broadcasts of proceedings are permitted. In 1984 a recommendation was made by the Joint Committee to authorise the use of 'a sound record of the proceedings in subsequent news, current affairs and documentary

1 In its promotional material for the 24 Hour News and Parliamentary Service the ABC quotes a figure of 66% coverage. A representative from the National Transmission Agency in evidence made an estimate of 75% coverage.
2 Evidence, pps. 374-75.

programs by all Australian radio stations'.³ In May 1985 the Committee recommended this arrangement be for a trial period during the 1985 Budget sittings. This recommendation was agreed to by both Houses. The Committee determined the conditions which would govern access to proceedings during the trial period. The trial proved successful and access to proceedings for the purpose of broadcasting excerpts was agreed to on a permanent basis.

3.10 On 2 June 1986 a set of conditions for granting access to proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives for the purpose of recording and broadcasting excerpts was adopted. The conditions were modified recently by the Committee to include coverage of the proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives. This revision was adopted on 7 June 1994. A copy of the current conditions is at Appendix 3.

The Production and Distribution of the Signal

3.11. The Sound and Vision Office of the Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff is responsible for the production of radio coverage of parliamentary proceedings and provision of a clean feed to news bureaux including the ABC. This provides the raw material for all radio broadcasting and rebroadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. In relation to the obligatory radio broadcasts, the ABC provides the circuits to carry programs from Parliament House to the ABC Ultimo Centre from where it is transmitted by satellite to national transmission facilities. The National Transmission Agency is responsible to the Minister for Communications and the Arts for the planning, provision, management and maintenance of national broadcasting facilities, including the PBN network.⁴

Future of Radio Broadcasting

3.12 With the increasing dominance of television as a source of information and entertainment it could be argued that the radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings could be eliminated in favour of a concentration on television coverage. However, the evidence put to the Committee indicated that few would agree. The Committee considered the future of radio broadcasting in the context of giving as many Australians as possible easy access to proceedings of the two chambers. Such access, through continuous live coverage of proceedings, is unlikely to be provided on other forms of electronic media in the short term, even with the advent of pay television. As the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Reporting Staff noted:

I cannot see why in a country such as Australia, notwithstanding the advent of satellite television, we should not have both television and

³ JCBPP Report, Inquiry into Televising and Radio Broadcasting of both Houses of Parliament and their Committees, June 1986, Parliamentary Paper No. 125/1986, pps. 33-34.

⁴ Evidence, p. S166.

radio available. A lot of people will not have access to television during the day. Radio is a very suited medium, in some respects, to parliamentary proceedings. It also allows people who for whatever reason – be they driving or working – (want) to be able to listen [to Parliament] without having their attention totally absorbed by watching the screen.⁵

Future of the PBN

3.13 With the upgrade to the transmission facilities of the PBN, the use of the time during which the PBN network is not required for the coverage of Parliament has been recognised as a valuable resource. The Committee has received a number of proposals for the use of the network, including during periods when it is not required for parliamentary broadcasts.

3.14 In setting out its proposal to the Committee for a 24 hour news and parliamentary service, the ABC stated that it would:

provide Australia's most comprehensive and informed international and Australian news radio in conjunction with coverage of proceedings from the Federal Parliament.⁶

The ABC believed that the new programming would have a positive impact on the PBN by improving audience awareness of the network and its place on the radio dial. As noted earlier, in April 1994 the ABC, with the concurrence of the Committee and the approval of the Minister of Communications and the Arts, commenced its service (the PNN) on the PBN.

3.15 Two other proposals were received by the Committee to use the PBN, not only to provide uninterrupted coverage of parliamentary proceedings, but also to offer coverage of other parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities on the network.

3.16 The Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff proposed that SAVO take over the control of the PBN and assume responsibility for the radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The Department proposed that a minimum level of coverage should include; complete chamber coverage, weekly packages of chamber highlights, weekly packages of committee highlights, live broadcasts of selected committee hearings (especially the Main Committee of the House of Representatives and Senate committees considering legislation) and educational and other programs using parliamentary material.⁷

3.17 The Department suggested that if it were given responsibility for radio coverage on the PBN, arrangements for the transmission would be organised in a

⁵ Evidence, p. 107.

⁶ Introductory Paper, 24 Hour News and Parliamentary Service, ABC 1994.

⁷ Evidence, p. S146.

similar way to that adopted by the ABC. The Department's assumption of responsibility for the PBN would be introduced in three stages.

3.18 Phase one would take between six to twelve months to implement and would see the setting up of technical and administrative arrangements for the ongoing management of the network while providing continuous coverage of proceedings of the two Houses along the lines currently provided.

3.19 Phase two would see the expansion of coverage of proceedings on sitting days from 9:00 am to the adjournment of the House allocated the broadcast. Coverage, other than the live broadcast of the Chambers, would include committee highlights, interviews and a parliamentary round-up. This phase would take between twelve to eighteen months to implement.

3.20 The final phase would extend the coverage of parliamentary material to non-sitting weeks. Additional coverage would include live coverage of committee hearings, packages of legislation including debates, committee compilations and packages of other issues of parliamentary interest both local and international.

3.21 While recognising that the DPRS proposal would provide a greatly expanded coverage of parliamentary proceedings, the Committee cannot support its adoption for a number of reasons.

3.22 To establish phase one would cost in the vicinity of \$400,000. However, this would provide only a level of coverage of parliamentary proceedings that currently is provided by the ABC at no cost to the Parliament. The implementation of phase one would only be sensible if it were intended to move on to the later phases which enhanced the coverage of proceedings.

3.23 However, phases two and three would involve additional expenditure for staff and capital equipment to extend production and increase on-air time. While this would enhance significantly the coverage of parliamentary proceedings, there may be other more cost effective ways of increasing coverage, such as negotiating with the ABC for additional programming material on the PBN and having packages of material prepared for broadcast on the PBN and other radio networks.

3.24 The Committee is also concerned that a number of costs may have been omitted from the DPRS proposal. These costs include advertising the network and its program timetable to members of the community who may wish to listen to proceedings (and other programming). Unlike the ABC, which has an extensive network of publications, commercial outlets and other networks on which it can advertise the PNN, DPRS would need to devote additional resources to this function. The use of the existing ABC infrastructure for advertising and promoting the network is potentially a more cost effective option. However, it is not clear how effective the ABC's promotion of the PNN has been since its inception.

3.25 Finally, both the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate expressed concern about the Parliament becoming a

broadcaster. They see such a venture as being costly and involving the Parliament in an area in which it has no existing expertise. At this time the Committee agrees. However, this matter should be reassessed as part of the ongoing review of the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

3.26 A second proposal for control of the PBN came from Public Radio News (PRN) which proposed that, subject to being granted the same level of funding as the ABC receives for providing parliamentary coverage, the PRN 'would be keen to run a service'.⁸ In addition to the live broadcasts of the chambers, PRN proposed to offer a range of programs not offered by the ABC on its PNN. PRN was critical of the ABC's coverage on the PNN suggesting that the ABC extensively used rebroadcasts of material and concurrent broadcast of material being broadcast on its other metropolitan networks. PRN suggested that its control of the PBN would lead to an enhanced coverage of parliamentary proceedings and increased audience reach. PRN would make more extensive use of parliamentary material in the period when the PBN network is not required for live coverage of parliamentary proceedings on the PBN. It would take advantage of its existing links with the community radio network which has access to an estimated audience of 2.5 million people. The audience includes people from non-English speaking backgrounds and those living in regional areas outside the transmission range of the PBN.⁹

3.27 The Committee is attracted by the more extensive coverage of parliamentary proceedings which would be offered by PRN and the opportunity to extend the audience reach for proceedings. However, the proposal would require significant governmental funding support. In addition, the ABC has only recently commenced the PNN and this service should be assessed over a longer period before alternatives are considered. While the PRN proposal for the control of the PBN is not supported, PRN's proposals for the development of new program packages presenting aspects of parliamentary proceedings are seen as positive and should be explored further. Funding for the development of packaged material covering parliamentary proceedings is raised later in this report.

3.28 The ABC's current PNN format provides a basic coverage of parliamentary proceedings. However, the programming issues raised by DPRS and PRN have considerable merit. The Committee believes that the ABC should be encouraged to extend its parliamentary coverage beyond the compulsory broadcasts to provide coverage of parliamentary committees, packages of debates on legislation, committee compilations and packages of other parliamentary material both local and international. Broadcasts could include packages of material from State and Territory Parliaments. This would give the network a greater parliamentary flavour and provide the Australian public with a rounder picture of the operations of the Parliament and the roles of its parliamentarians. Recommendations are made later in this chapter for funding to be provided for the development of packages of parliamentary material for airing on the PNN and other radio networks.

8 Evidence, p. S190.

9 Evidence, p. S111.

3.29 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 7 **The PBN continue to be used by the ABC, both for parliamentary broadcasts and for the ABC's news channel.**
- 8 **The ABC supplement its compulsory parliamentary broadcasts on the PNN with coverage of other parliamentary material.**
- 9 **Other producers of radio programming be encouraged to develop informational programs based on the work of the Parliament.**

Coverage of the PBN

3.30 The extension of transmission coverage of the PBN is an issue which, to a large extent, depends on the Australian Broadcasting Authority's review of the broadcasting spectrum due in 1996. This will provide the Minister for Communications and the Arts with advice on the relative demand for individual services and for access to the available spectrum. In addition, part of the agreement between the Minister and the ABC was the assurance that it would not seek extension of coverage of the PBN prior to the ABA review.

3.31 It is unlikely, in the short term, that additional funds would be available for the extension of the terrestrial network to cover centres like Darwin or some of the other major regional centres. The Committee must therefore look to improve coverage of proceedings on the existing network and other radio broadcasting options indicated later in this chapter.

3.32 In the longer term, the Committee strongly supports the extension of the network so that all Australians have access to parliamentary proceedings on radio. In its 1986 report, the Committee expressed a view that the proceedings should be available to all Australians.¹⁰ The Committee restates that view, while recognising that its realisation is subject to technological developments and the review processes of the ABA.

3.33 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 10 **Access to the compulsory radio broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings be made available progressively to all Australians.**

¹⁰ Parliamentary Paper No. 125/1986, p. 29.

General Principles and Standing Determinations

3.34 In its Interim Report tabled in May 1994, the Committee reviewed the general principles and standing determinations relating to the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The proposed general principles were adopted by both Houses on 10 October 1994. Copies are attached at Appendices 4 and 5. As the Committee noted in that report, the new general principles

retain the core of the approach which has characterised radio broadcasting of Parliament since its inception in 1946. However, they bring the general principles and standing determinations into the 1990s and have them reflect current technical, procedural and community realities.¹¹

3.35 The Committee indicated that it would assess the operation of the new arrangements and report as necessary in its final report. The allocation of the radio broadcasts between the two Houses was the main issue to arise from the revised general principles which required further examination as part of this report.

Allocation of Broadcasts

3.36 One of the changes made as a result of the interim report was to alter the general principle relating to the allocation of broadcasts so that coverage of each House would be approximately equal rather than having greater time devoted to the House of Representatives than to the Senate. The change was made because the allocation of broadcasts between the two Houses in recent years, with the introduction of an eight day sitting fortnight, had led to a roughly equal coverage of both the Houses. The Committee considered the general principles should reflect actual coverage.

3.37 The revised standing determinations reflected this change with the House of Representatives receiving coverage on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday while the Senate was to be allocated the broadcast on the other days of the week.

3.38 The Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure (SCP) wrote to the Committee requesting that it reconsider the issue of broadcasting allocation between the Houses in its final report. The Procedure Committee suggested that the share of total broadcasting hours per fortnight of the House of Representatives had fallen from a ratio of 64% in 1951 to 49% in 1983 under the revised general principles and standing determinations.

3.39 The Procedure Committee suggested the relevant general principle should revert to its original wording reflecting greater coverage of the House of Representatives. It suggested that the allocation change with Tuesday being a House

¹¹ Interim Report, *Inquiry into the Radio and Television Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings*, May 1994, p. 13.

of Representatives broadcast day and Friday being a Senate day. This proposal is outlined at Appendix 6. Based on current sitting days and times this would mean that the House of Representatives' share of total broadcast hours in a sitting fortnight would increase to 66%. As Fridays are rarely sitting days (in the last two years the Senate has sat once on a Friday) such a change would mean that the Senate normally would be covered only on Wednesday.

3.40 The Committee considered other options which would increase coverage of the House of Representatives. (The effect of these on broadcast coverage are outlined at Appendix 6.) One option considered was a change in the allocation so that, of the eight sitting days in a fortnight, five would be allocated to the House of Representatives and three to the Senate. Assuming the Tuesday of the second week was to be the extra House of Representatives broadcast day, this would increase coverage of the House of Representatives to 57% of total broadcast hours.

3.41 Another option considered was the allocation of an additional half day each week for the coverage of the proceedings of the House of Representatives. The allocation of the Wednesday sitting day could be split between the Senate and the House of Representatives with the Senate being broadcast between 9:30 am and 3:00 pm and the House of Representatives being broadcast between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm. This would allow the coverage of Question Time from both Chambers and would increase the broadcast coverage of the House of Representatives to 63%. While the Committee acknowledges that there will be some minor technical difficulties in switching quickly between the Houses which may create some lack of continuity for listeners, it does not see this as a significant problem.

3.42 Bearing in mind that there are twice as many Members of the House of Representatives as there are Senators, the Committee considers that there should be greater broadcast coverage of the House of Representatives. The Committee believes the most effective way of giving greater coverage to the House of Representatives would be by allowing the transfer of the broadcast from the Senate to the House of Representatives at 3.00pm on Wednesdays. The implementation of this proposal would increase coverage of the House of Representatives while preserving coverage of Senate Question Time on two days.

3.43 To accommodate this change the general principles would require amendment to reflect a greater coverage of the House of Representatives. The standing determinations also would require amendment to provide for the transfer of the broadcast from the Senate to the House of Representatives on Wednesdays at 3:00 pm. Once the Houses make the appropriate change to the general principles, the Committee will alter its standing determinations accordingly.

3.44 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 11 **The general principles covering the compulsory radio broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings be amended to provide for a greater coverage of the House of Representatives.**

Coverage of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives

3.45 In the last chapter the Committee recommended that the Act be amended such that the proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives be included in 'proceedings' that are covered by the Act. If such an amendment were agreed, the Committee would need to change to the general principles to provide for the broadcasting or rebroadcasting of proceedings of the Main Committee. Rebroadcast of the Main Committee would provide the opportunity to obtain additional coverage an important feature of the House of Representatives proceedings.

3.46 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 12 **If the Act is amended to include coverage of proceedings of the Main Committee on the PBN, the general principles be altered to provide for rebroadcasts of the Main Committee on the PBN.**

Other Radio Broadcasting

3.47 In addition to the live continuous coverage of parliamentary proceedings provided on the PBN, much use is made by public and commercial broadcasters of excerpted materials which are rebroadcast in a variety of news and current affairs programs. The terms of reference for this inquiry required the Committee to review the excerpting conditions which are applied to radio coverage and make recommendations relating to them.

3.48 Following a report of the Committee in 1985, both Houses resolved to permit, for a trial period, the broadcasting of sound excerpts of proceedings for use either on radio or with still frame or overlay material on television. The arrangements were given standing authority by both Houses in 1986. Broadcasting of excerpts takes place under conditions approved by the Committee. In 1994 a minor change was made to the conditions (see Attachment 3) to permit the coverage of proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives.

3.49 The only further change suggested is to have the proceedings of parliamentary committees covered by the excerpting conditions. This issue is discussed later in this chapter.

3.50 The coverage of parliamentary proceedings on radio channels other than the PBN has to some degree been limited because broadcasters not based in Parliament House have to pay for access to the House Monitoring System (HMS) audio signal while it is provided free of charge to the news bureaux housed in Parliament House. Several submissions strongly urged the Committee to extend free access to the HMS to not-for-profit broadcasters who are not based in Parliament House.

3.51 In its submission, Open Access Cable indicated that the National Community Media Centre (NCCMC) situated in Sydney and operated by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBA), distributed the Community Radio Satellite service (COMRADSAT) of four radio channels to 90 community radio stations around Australia. Other areas without satellite reception systems are serviced by an audio tape mail distribution system to local stations.¹² In addition, Open Access Cable was interested in having access to the audio-visual signal as it distributes material to community television channels and has an interest itself in television broadcasting. Public Radio News would interlink with this system by producing program packages which would be distributed on the network to a potential audience of 2.5 million in regional Australia.¹³ The key limitation at the moment is that Open Access does not have the resources to pay for the link between Parliament House and its centre in Sydney.

3.52 The Committee considers that there should be access (subject to cost limitations) to the SAVO feed for not-for-profit broadcasters like PRN and Open Access Cable. These organisations have the capacity and interest to provide production and broadcasting skills which could improve the presentation of parliamentary issues to the general public. The Committee considers that access for such organisations should be assessed.

3.53 The Committee recommends that:

- 13 The Sound and Vision Office investigate the options for providing, in a cost effective way, the SAVO feed to broadcasters, including the not-for-profit broadcasters who are located outside Parliament House. SAVO should report its findings to the Committee.

3.54 As noted earlier, the Committee strongly supports the extension of the coverage of parliamentary proceedings beyond the audience currently reached on the PBN.

3.55 To assist in achieving this, PRN proposed to provide programming for people from non-English speaking backgrounds which would extend their knowledge of the Westminster system. The Committee is aware of a recommendation made in the 1986 report, and which has not yet been acted on:

that steps be taken to assist in the production of programs summarising the proceedings of the Houses and their committees in various languages, and that assistance be given to ensure the widest possible circulation of these programs.¹⁴

¹² Evidence, p. S185.

¹³ Evidence, p. S111

¹⁴ Parliamentary Paper No. 125/1986, p. 38.

3.56 The proposal put forward by PRN would significantly meet the spirit of this recommendation in improving the type of parliamentary coverage available to listeners from non-English speaking backgrounds.

3.57 In addition to programming for non-English speaking listeners, the Committee would like to see the production of programming initiatives such as the compilation of coverage of legislation of particular interest, compilation of parliamentary committee hearings and other items of general interest. This would provide a more comprehensive radio coverage of parliamentary issues, giving listeners a broader appreciation of parliamentary activities.

3.58 The Committee acknowledges that development of this type of programming will incur ongoing production and distribution costs. Consideration should be given to the allocation of appropriate levels of funding to ensure that quality programming can be produced to provide such an extension of parliamentary coverage.

3.59 The Committee recommends that:

- 14 Funding be provided to enable the production of a range of parliamentary related radio programs, including programs for people from non-English speaking backgrounds, to supplement the current continuous live coverage of parliamentary proceedings.

Technological Developments in Radio Broadcasting

3.60 The provision of simultaneous radio transmission of both Houses has long been an aim of the Committee. The current PBN network, being a single channel AM network, cannot provide this. It is unlikely, even in the long term, that another AM network would be made available to the Parliament. One submission suggested that the signal could be broadcast on a stereo FM network with the Senate being broadcast on one channel and the House of Representatives being broadcast on the other. A representative of the Department of Communications and the Arts indicated that this was not feasible technically. Irrespective of the technical feasibility of such a proposal, it would be unlikely that an FM frequency could be obtained for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

3.61 With options on the PBN limited, the Committee must keep under review new and evolving technologies which may allow it to extend and improve coverage of parliamentary proceedings.

3.62 Digital audio broadcasting (DAB) is one of the new technologies which offers a robust signal with near CD quality sound which will no longer depend on adjusting aerials or moving receivers to improve sound quality. A DAB signal could

be received by a mobile receiver direct from a satellite.¹⁵ It is a system which would allow multi-channel capacity through a single transponder, an important consideration with limited transponder capacity. The problem associated with the introduction of DAB is that it requires a new type of radio receiver which is currently not on the Australian market and is only available in limited numbers on the European market. Its introduction would depend on production schedules, the setting up of the broadcasting infrastructure and a level of acceptance by the market.

3.63 In November 1994 the British Broadcasting Corporation issued a press release indicating that it is to launch a DAB service in September 1995 which, among other programming, will carry extended coverage of parliamentary proceedings. The new service will mean:

that listeners can have access to Parliament on an unprecedented scale, debates from the House of Commons in their entirety, key business from the Lords and coverage of Select Committee proceedings in far more detail than at present The BBC plans to start DAB transmissions in key population areas and hopes to reach 60% of the population within four years of launch.¹⁶

3.64 While such an option is unlikely to be available in Australia soon, the Committee will monitor the implementation of DAB in Australia and make assessments of possible application to the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

3.65 The application of an existing technology which offers possibilities for the future is 'twisted pair cable'. It would be possible to install a 'twisted-pair' telephone cable link to SAVO which could provide a point-to-point telecommunications link similar to the 008 "Freecall" or "0055" services which are now available. The technology is rapidly developing including providing multi-channel capacity. This could enable several channels to be available for coverage of the Chambers and parliamentary committees. Such a service may not be well suited to use for continuous broadcasting. DPRS submitted that it is technically capable of offering "Freecall" or "0055" services but warns that such a service could be extremely expensive. This service would require the preparation of precis of proceedings which would need continual updating and would require additional staffing resources in the Department.¹⁷

Radio Coverage of Parliamentary Committees

3.66 The Committee recognises that since the passing of the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* many changes have occurred in the work of Parliament and much more time is now spent in committee work. This extension of

15 Evidence, p. 76.

16 Evidence, p. S212.

17 Evidence, p. S231.

committee activities was not foreseen when radio broadcasting commenced and was therefore not provided for under the Act. In the previous chapter the Committee recommended the Act be amended to include parliamentary committee proceedings as 'proceedings' which could be broadcast under the Act. Such a change would permit the Committee to advise on general principles and standing determinations relating to the broadcast of parliamentary committees on the PBN.

3.67 There has been an interest shown by some committees in having their proceedings broadcast on the PBN. However, the coverage of committees raises a number of issues which would need to be addressed before broadcasting could commence. These issues include:

- . responsibility for the allocation of the broadcast between committee hearings being run concurrently;
- . the degree of restriction which may need to be imposed by committees to protect the interests of witnesses and their ability to freely present evidence;
- . the issue of 'absolute' or 'qualified' privilege in relation to the coverage of hearings;
- . the coverage of committees which are meeting outside Parliament House; and
- . the impact of coverage of committees outside normal sitting periods on the programming of the ABC's 24 hour news service.

3.68 If the Act were amended to include the coverage of parliamentary committees, the Committee will report to both Houses on the arrangements which would apply to coverage of committee proceedings on the PBN. In the interim, the Committee requests that the ABC investigate providing some coverage of parliamentary committees as part of its PNN programming. Coverage could involve 'packages' of committee material rather than continuous coverage of committee proceedings if this were more suited to PNN's programming requirements.

3.69 In addition to possible coverage of parliamentary committees on the PNN, the Committee will amend the conditions for the recording and broadcasting of excerpts specifically to include coverage of parliamentary committee proceedings. The Senate already has in place guidelines which cover the broadcasting of committees.

3.70 The Committee recommends that:

- 15 The ABC investigate providing coverage of parliamentary committees as part of its programming on the PNN.

CHAPTER 4

TELEVISION COVERAGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

History

4.1 Despite the power and pervasiveness of television as a medium of communication, the Parliament has been relatively slow in using it to inform the general community of its activities. Television footage of parliamentary proceedings has now become integral to the way television networks cover news and current affairs. It is the Committee's view that the extent and nature of coverage of proceedings on television could be improved.

4.2 The first televising of the Australian Parliament, other than of the opening of Parliament, occurred in 1974 with the televising of joint sittings of the Houses in accordance with the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*, which was amended to cover televising of joint sittings (section 4.2).

4.3 In 1986, the Committee recommended that the proceedings of both Houses should be available for televising. This recommendation was not acted upon immediately. While general televising of proceedings was not permitted, televising of major statements by the Prime Minister, of the Budget speech and of the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Budget were allowed.

4.4 The move to the new Parliament House in 1988 stimulated the consideration of the televising of Parliament. The new building was fully equipped with the technology necessary for the television coverage of proceedings.

4.5 The Senate was the first House to permit continuous televising of its proceedings. This commenced on 21 August 1990 for a trial period under guidelines for broadcasters approved in the Senate. On 18 October 1990 the Senate authorised permanently live televising of its proceedings and the rebroadcast of excerpts.

4.6 The House of Representatives approved televising of its proceedings on a trial basis from 12 February 1991. The trial period was reviewed by a Select Committee on Televising in 1991 which reported in August 1991 recommending that the House continue to permit live televising of proceedings and rebroadcast of excerpts. On 16 October 1991 the House resolved to authorise the live televising and rebroadcast of proceedings of the House and its committees on a permanent basis. Guidelines for operators of sound and vision equipment and conditions for broadcasters were also set in place by the House of Representatives.

4.7 This resolution also established the House Standing Committee on the Televising of the House of Representatives to monitor televising arrangements and

report to the House on any changes to the conditions for broadcasters. Among its responsibilities, the Committee determines whether there have been breaches to the televising conditions. The Senate does not have a similar body to oversee its televising arrangements.

4.8 A further review of televising of the House of Representatives was conducted by the House Standing Committee on the Televising of the House of Representatives. This review focussed on the conditions covering the televising arrangements on the House of Representatives. The Committee recommended a number of changes to the conditions for broadcasters, not all of which were accepted by the House.

Production and Distribution of the Television Signal

4.9 The television signal used by broadcasters is produced by SAVO and is transmitted at no charge to the television networks located in Parliament House. The television signal is produced under sets of guidelines for camera operators developed by each of the Houses.

4.10 The signal is also provided to all building occupants by means of the House Monitoring System.

4.11 In addition, access to the HMS is extended to government departments and industry bodies based in Canberra. The extension of the HMS was agreed to by the House of Representatives in late 1993 in the following terms:

The House authorises the extension of the provision of the House Monitoring Service television coverage of proceedings of the House and its committees to government departments and others, as may be determined by the Speaker, on such terms and conditions as stipulated by the Speaker.¹

The Senate also approved the extension of the HMS of its proceedings in similar terms.

4.12 Telecom, as the owner of the optic fibre network, carries the signal to subscribers, arranges for recovery of its own costs and markets the service to new subscribers. DPRS charges an annual fee of each subscriber to recover its costs for providing the service. DPRS has a subscription narrowcasting licence issued under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* to provide the service. Subscribers must agree to a memorandum of understanding prior to the service being provided. The MOU covers the conditions for providing the service.

¹ House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings No. 20, 28 September 1993, Page 284.

Extent of Television Coverage

4.13 While televising of proceedings of both Houses is permitted, actual coverage on television networks is very limited and tends to concentrate on material that is seen as newsworthy or sensational. The only regular live coverage of proceedings is the ABC's presentation of Question Time from the Senate. House of Representatives Question Time is rebroadcast by the ABC late at night on each sitting day. Special events, such as the Budget and the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Budget, usually are televised live on at least one of the networks. The ABC produces a weekly round-up of parliamentary activities, 'Order in the House', which is broadcast on Saturday nights. Other coverage of proceedings is limited to the use of excerpts in news and current affairs programs.

4.14 In this inquiry the Committee has been concerned with ways to extend the coverage of parliamentary proceedings available to the Australian community on television. This would include additional live coverage of the proceedings of both Houses, coverage of the proceedings of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives and of parliamentary committees.

Coverage on Free-to-Air Networks

4.15 While Pay-TV has just commenced in Australia and will make inroads into television broadcasting over time, the free-to-air networks will be the major source of television programming for Australians in the short term. In the longer term, the free-to-air networks will continue to have a considerable role alongside Pay-TV. It is important then that coverage of parliamentary proceedings on the free-to-air networks be developed.

4.16 The existing free-to-air television broadcasters fall into three categories - the commercial broadcasters, the national broadcasters and the community broadcasters. As was noted in the previous section, coverage of parliamentary proceedings on the existing free-to-air networks has been relatively limited. The role these broadcasters might play in the future of the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings is outlined below.

Commercial Networks

4.17 In considering whether to use parliamentary material in their programming, the commercial networks have to consider issues such as ratings, continuity of programming, the style of presentation which is appropriate to this type of 'news' or information and attraction of advertising revenue. Commercial networks have provided only a limited live coverage of parliamentary proceedings. They do not provide any live coverage. The primary reasons for this limited coverage are the focus of the commercial networks on ratings and an awareness that parliamentary broadcasts would not rate strongly. There are additional difficulties

for commercial networks in televising parliamentary proceedings, as one representative of the networks noted:

...by and large, stations run regular formats day in, day out, week in, week out. Question time (or other semi-regular parliamentary activities) is not every day of the week and not every week of the year, so it poses (programming) problems of that order too.²

4.18 The commercial networks have no plans to commence live coverage of parliamentary proceedings or provide extended rebroadcasts. They considered that any extended coverage of proceedings was not their responsibility to provide but rather was that of the publicly funded national broadcasters.

4.19 However, the commercial broadcasters make extensive use of excerpts of proceedings for their news and current affairs programs and have indicated a strong desire to retain their ability to cover proceedings live. These networks wish to continue to have full access to parliamentary material. This view was summed up by a representative:

...whatever the Parliament may decide to do with its broadcast facilities, we hope the excellent service which we all use continues to be made available to a network such as ours without charge. The argument there is that as a genuine news organisation the network, through its news services, is reporting to the people of Australia the activities of the Parliament and, as such, the provision of pictures, for example, from the committees and from both Chambers is just helping us to do our jobs.³

4.20 The Committee agrees that the commercial networks should continue to have access to the HMS signal within Parliament House.

National Networks

4.21 The national broadcasters share with the commercial networks many of the programming problems in the coverage of parliamentary proceedings. However, they do not share the same focus on ratings as the primary determinant of programming.

4.22 The main coverage of parliamentary proceedings on ABC TV is the live telecast of Question Time each sitting day. Until early 1994, when the House of Representatives changed the commencement time of Question Time from 2.00pm to 3.00pm, the live telecast of Question Time by the ABC would alternate between the Houses. Following this change the ABC decided it would no longer cover Question Time live from the House of Representatives because of a clash with children's programming. Senate Question Time has continued to be televised live. Question

² Evidence p. 159.

³ Evidence p. 154.

Time from the House of Representatives is rebroadcast in the early hours of the morning following the sitting day. The ABC also provides live coverage of significant items of national interest including the Budget Speech and the Leader of the Opposition's response and openings of Parliament. Like the commercial networks, the ABC makes extensive use of excerpts for its news and current affairs programs. It also provides a regular weekly program during sitting periods entitled 'Order in the House', which provides edited highlights and commentary on the business of both Houses during the previous week.

4.23 During 1994 the ABC began transmissions to Asia on its Australia Television Service. This service currently rebroadcasts Senate Question Time through its transmitter in Darwin as well as broadcasting "Order in the House".

4.24 The ABC indicated it did not intend to provide greater television coverage of parliamentary proceedings on its free-to-air network than is currently provided.

4.25 SBS coverage of parliamentary proceedings is more limited. There is occasional live coverage of major events, such as the Budget, and the use of excerpts in news and current affairs programs. SBS considered broadcasting House of Representatives Question Time when the ABC discontinued its live coverage. This has not progressed further.

4.26 The national broadcasters are publicly funded, imposing on them a wider responsibility to provide news, information and educational broadcasting. Both national broadcasters have charters which refer to the requirement on them to inform and educate the Australian community. This should include an adequate and balanced coverage of parliamentary activities. The Committee considers the current coverage on the national networks does not meet their charter requirements. However, it is not considered appropriate to legislate for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings on the national networks. The issue of greater television coverage of parliamentary proceedings should be addressed by the Boards of both the ABC and SBS in the context of their charter obligations.

4.27 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 16 **The signal of parliamentary proceedings continue to be made available on the current basis to the television networks located in Parliament House with the Boards of the ABC and SBS addressing the issue of greater coverage of parliamentary proceedings on their networks in the context of their charter obligations.**

Community Broadcasters and the Sixth High Power Channel

4.28. A further possible avenue for the coverage of parliamentary proceedings on a free-to-air network is the use of the sixth high power channel. While the

permanent usage of the sixth high power channel will not be finalised until a review by the ABA is completed in 1997, a report in 1992 by the House Standing Committee on Transport, Communications and Infrastructure (SCTCI) examined competing uses of the channel including its use by community broadcasters, for educational television and for parliamentary broadcasting. The then Presiding Officers made a submission to the SCTCI expressing some caution about the use of the sixth high power channel for parliamentary broadcasts. While the SCTCI did not support the use of the network by community broadcasters, instead favouring the use of the channel for educational television. The SCTCI recognised that educational providers were not ready to use the channel at that stage. The SCTCI recommended the channel be made available immediately on a trial basis for community access television using low power transmitters with the longer term allocation of the network being determined later.

4.29 The Minister for Communications and the Arts, the Hon M Lee, MP, directed the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) to reserve the sixth channel as a high power television channel for the provision of national broadcasting services, or for community broadcasting services, and to give favourable consideration to making the channel available immediately for community and educational television on a continuing trial basis. The ABA has made the sixth channel available, until February 1996, on an area-by-area basis for open narrowcasting services for community and educational not-for-profit purposes. Services are operating in a number of centres.

4.30. Community broadcasters have expressed interest in providing coverage of parliamentary proceedings. One of these broadcasters, ACE Television based in Adelaide, indicated it would be interested in televising parliamentary proceedings and that:

it is lack of prime time access for these proceedings which actually prevents the majority of Australians from finding out what is going on. Other broadcasters have different imperatives and objectives in carrying out their enterprise, making a profit, and as such have to look to issues of the highest rating shows. What community broadcasting does is not so much look at a slice of time, it looks at who watches particular shows that they want to tune into.⁴

4.31 ACE Television suggested it should be given access to the feed or to video tapes of material for later transmission. Open Access Cable, another community broadcaster, proposed that the SAVO feed be provided to the National Community Media Centre in Sydney for distribution to community radio stations via the Community Radio Satellite service (COMRADSAT) and for delivery to community television services throughout Australia. Open Access indicated that the cost of the radio delivery system would be \$600 000 (of which \$430 000 is set up costs) and the additional cost to include satellite and cable television would be \$425,000 (with \$95 000 being set up costs).

4 Evidence p. 200.

4.32 There are a number of issues in relation to the television coverage of parliamentary proceedings by community broadcasters.

4.33 The interest of the community broadcasting network in extending the coverage of Parliament, and its committees, could provide a valuable experimental test for the wider coverage on free-to-air television. Cooperation with community broadcasters, who have been temporarily permitted to transmit on this channel, may provide the Parliament with a long term relationship for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

4.34 However, there needs to be consideration of the expense involved in providing the feed and the necessary funding to community broadcasters to provide such a service. In this regard, the Committee is aware of the concerns expressed by the SCTCI about the provision of a potentially open-ended taxpayer subsidy to community broadcasters to undertake broadcasts.

4.35 In addition, consideration needs to be given to the viability of the sixth high power channel in the longer term in view of the cost of providing transmission facilities, meeting transmission costs and recognising the development of alternative means of delivering broadcasting services (particularly Pay-TV). It is possible that the Parliament may wish to indicate its interest in using the sixth high power channel to obtain transmission time for parliamentary proceedings.

4.36 In light of these issues, the Committee cannot support the proposals of community broadcasters for the funding of a full-scale parliamentary service on the sixth channel. However, it is not unreasonable that community broadcasters should have access to the signal of parliamentary proceedings as long as this can be done within reasonable cost. In the previous chapter, the Committee recommended that an investigation be undertaken into the provision of the SAVO audio feed to not-for-profit broadcasters, such as Public Radio News. SAVO should also investigate the provision of audio-visual feed to not-for-profit television broadcasters.

4.37 Later in the chapter, the Committee also suggests the development of packages of parliamentary material for use on television. This material could be both developed and broadcast by community broadcasters.

4.38 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 17 **SAVO's investigation of options for the provision of the SAVO audio feed to not-for-profit radio broadcasters include investigation of the provision of the audio-visual feed to not-for-profit television broadcasters.**

Coverage of Parliamentary Proceedings on Subscription Television

4.39 Australia has just begun its journey into subscription television with the first permanent broadcasts by Galaxy on 26 January 1995. Pay-TV and the technologies and delivery systems it utilises, offer a new and exciting area for possible parliamentary broadcasting.

4.40 Coverage of parliamentary proceedings on cable television has been a feature in a number of other countries.

Overseas Parliaments

4.41 The Committee reviewed the broadcasting operations of several overseas parliaments which have complete televised coverage of proceedings on subscription television. Such coverage of the Canadian, United Kingdom and the United States legislatures has moved far ahead of that provided on free-to-air channels in Australia. This is largely because of the development in these countries of an extensive cable and satellite network infrastructure over the last twenty years.

4.42 C-Span provides such a service in the United States and is a private non-profit business which receives no funding from the government. In fact, the cable television industry invested some \$18 million to provide two 24-hour, seven day a week television channels in 1992. C-Span 1 and 2 provide comprehensive coverage of proceedings, committees and a variety of other politically-oriented programming including coverage of overseas legislatures.

4.43 In the United Kingdom a parliamentary cable television channel (the Parliamentary Channel), owned and funded by a group of United Kingdom cable operators runs a non-profit operation which receives no public money or sponsorship. This channel transmits the 'clean feed' of parliamentary proceedings and is on air whenever Parliament is in session. There is no commentary or editing of any kind apart from captions to indicate the speaker and his/her party representation. A detailed summary of the day's business is shown at the beginning of each transmission.

4.44 The Canadian coverage sees the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation taking the signal provided by the House of Commons and arranging its distribution via satellite to cable companies and individual satellite dish owners across the country. The cable companies in turn make the signal available to their subscribers as part of their basic cable service. The cable companies also decide whether to provide coverage live or on a delayed basis. Transmissions may be taken with audio in French, English or a combination of both.⁵

⁵ Linda Bailey, *A Report on the Televising of Parliamentary Proceedings*, Australian National Internship Program, 1994.

Potential Coverage of the Australian Parliament

4.45 The provision of wider coverage of proceedings on subscription television, or on the delivery systems for subscription television, like that offered by the C-Span network or the parliamentary channel in the United Kingdom, was seen by many who gave evidence as a logical development. However, in general this was seen as a longer term development which may be difficult to achieve in the short term. The Department of Communications and the Arts considered that subscription television services could be used to develop a parliamentary service like the C-SPAN network. However, it did not consider such a network would be implemented early in the introduction of Pay-TV.

4.46 There are a number of factors militating against the early introduction of a channel on subscription television to cover parliamentary proceedings:

- there remains a lack of clarity over many aspects of the service to be provided by Pay-TV, including the dominant mode of delivery and who will emerge as the major players;
- there has been a heavy investment in infrastructure and licences by Pay-TV operators. It will be some time before they are able to recoup their venture capital and begin making profits. Such a situation would militate against the creation of parliamentary specific channels as the demand for coverage of parliamentary proceedings may not be high. The possibility of Pay-TV operators funding a parliamentary channel could not be expected until Pay-TV becomes well established and profitable;
- there is likely to be a relatively limited audience reach for Pay-TV until the late 1990s; and
- to receive a parliamentary channel on subscription television, even if the channel were fully funded by the Pay-TV industry or the Parliament, one would need to be a subscriber. This may limit the capacity of a wide cross-section of the Australian community to receive televised coverage of proceedings.

4.47 Despite these constraints, subscription television is opening up a number of technologies and delivery mechanisms which provide possibilities worth exploring in the shorter and longer terms to enhance the television coverage of Parliament.

4.48 Satellite provides one delivery mechanism. The first of the Pay-TV licences were issued to services which will use the Optus satellite. The operators of

the three satellite licences (A, B and C) will provide 10 services.⁶

4.49 Compressed Digital Video (CDV), which will be introduced progressively over the next few years, will allow a significant (at this stage four to six-fold) increase in spectrum productivity from each satellite transponder, reducing operating costs for each channel for operators.⁷ The major limitation imposed on this technology at the moment is the regulation which prohibits access to foreign satellites. The Department of Communications and the Arts suggested that after 1997 there may be a capacity for up to 1,000 CDV channels in the region using a variety of satellites and that these channels may be attractive to open or subscription narrowcast services. To extend coverage of parliamentary proceedings utilising the opportunities offered by CDV cannot be envisaged until the technology is fully implemented. When this occurs the availability of transponder capacity for commercial and other users will be easier to assess in terms of cost and potential audience reach.

4.50 The recent sale of Multi-point Delivery Systems (MDS) licences to Pay-TV operators opens another avenue for the transmission of proceedings. This transmission system is relatively inexpensive and is being used in commercial systems overseas. But the method and cost of conveying a parliamentary broadcasting signal to the MDS transmitters would need to be considered. Also there is limited channel capacity in analogue MDS so questions about negotiation with licensees to provide channel space for a parliamentary channel arise. One future technology which would increase channel capacity is digital MDS, but digital MDS transmission has not yet been proved. A further consideration is that MDS requires an essentially clear line of sight transmission path. Obtaining adequate coverage may require an integrated approach involving both satellite and MDS systems. The Galaxy service which has commenced recently is using this mixture of delivery mechanisms.

4.51 A third technology is the use of a broadband cable network like that being laid currently by Telstra and as proposed by Optus. This system offers a simple point-to-multipoint architecture able to be connected to television receivers using a set-top box. The drawbacks of this system are its cost, which involves service providers paying a connection fee to the network and for the use of the network, as well as customer installation and usage fee. An additional drawback is the time needed for the cable network to reach a large proportion of the Australian population, especially those outside capital cities and major regional centres. In the longer term cable may have an advantage in the provision of Pay-TV because of its greater carrying capacity and better quality of transmission.

4.52 The final possibility is the use of telephone lines. Further refinements to Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) technology may make it possible to

⁶ The three licences were allocated as follows - Licence A to UCOM-Continental, Licence B to Australia-Lenfest and Licence C to a subsidiary of the ABC.

⁷ Briefing Paper, Delivery options for Sound and Vision Services from The Parliamentary Sound and Vision Office, Department of Communication and the Arts, August 1994.

deliver video signals through the existing telephone network. However, ADSL technology may not be fully developed until 1997.

Short Term Options

4.53 During the period in which the issues emerging from Pay-TV are being resolved and the future picture clarified, there are options which the Parliament can develop in the short term to exploit the opportunity offered by the emergence of Pay-TV and its associated technologies.

4.54 A number of companies which have expressed an interest in being part of the Pay-TV industry, including the Australian Information Media Pty Ltd, News Limited, Reuters and Prime Media Development, have raised the question of the provision of the SAVO signal. According to DPRS, these companies appeared at this early stage interested in transmitting considerably more coverage of Parliament than has traditionally been the case. On behalf of Parliaments DPRS has indicated its interest in providing input and assistance to any company or consortium wishing to utilise parliamentary material.⁸

4.55 Primary amongst these operators is Australian Information Media Pty Ltd, an ABC subsidiary which holds satellite licence C. It will provide a 24 hour news service on one of its channels. It indicated:

Clearly, in the provision of a news channel, one of the principal focuses of that channel will be the national parliament, and we are eager to ensure sympathetic and close cooperation with parliamentarians and the officers of the parliament in order to ensure that there is appropriate and substantial coverage of national political affairs in the channel, including transmission of such things as question time in both houses, committee hearings conducted by both chambers, and also key media conferences that are run by members of the government, the opposition and other interested parties.⁹

4.56 It is understood the initial coverage of parliamentary proceedings will be of Question Time and of parliamentary committees, and will provide approximately four hours of coverage each day. As the news channel will have accommodation in Parliament House, the provision of the feed will not be a difficulty.

4.57 In addition, the Parliament should work with the other Pay-TV consortia who may wish to use parliamentary material on their Pay-TV channels. This will involve discussion as to how access to the signal, or other services can be provided.

8 Evidence, p S232.

9 Evidence, p. 221.

Longer Terms Options

4.58 The Committee would wish to see a television channel devoted to coverage of parliamentary proceedings developed in Australia. This could take the form of a C-Span type operation or be more in the style of the parliamentary channel in the United Kingdom. The ABC considered that it may be ten to twenty years before a C-Span type network would be viable in Australia and that it would be very difficult to sell a parliamentary network commercially, or to cover the costs of producing programs on it. This would mean that a parliamentary channel would need to be supported either by public funding or by the Pay-TV consortia.

4.59 Open Access put a proposal to the Committee for a C-Span type operation. It stated that it could provide a 15 hour per day service with large segments of unedited parliamentary sessions. Costs would be kept low by using skilled volunteer support and a low resolution signal. Open Access estimated the cost of the service at \$1.58m.¹⁰ The Committee cannot support this proposal at this stage. It would prefer to see what alternative delivery mechanisms become available for the use of parliamentary broadcasting. However, it does indicate that a C-Span type of operation could be introduced much earlier than envisaged by the ABC.

4.60 The Committee will keep abreast of the implementation of the delivery systems for television services and the opportunities they may offer to obtain a network suitable for the delivery of parliamentary coverage. In general these developments seem to indicate that the availability of channels will not be a difficulty within a few years. In fact, there may be an excess of capacity. As a result, channels will not be as valuable and the likelihood of a channel or channels covering parliamentary proceedings increases significantly. It could be, that as the Pay-TV industry develops, the dominant players could provide (or be required to provide) one or more channels for parliamentary coverage. It would be for the Parliament to consider the nature of the coverage which could be provided on any channel which became available.

4.61 The Committee recommends that:

- 18 The Parliament (through the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings) monitor developments in the Pay-TV industry with a view to obtaining access to channel capacity at the earliest opportunity to enable the provision of a parliamentary television service.

10 Evidence, s. 189.

Packaged Material

4.62 One reason why there has not been greater coverage of parliamentary proceedings on television is the lack of generally available packages of material for broadcast. Unedited proceedings have not been of interest to television broadcasters generally, and would be most appropriate for a specialised television channel. However, packaged parliamentary material, including question time, censure and other debates of wide interest and parliamentary committee proceedings involving subjects of wider public interest may attract interest from the television media. Such packaged material could be broadcast by the free-to-air commercial or national networks, community broadcast channels or Pay-TV channels.

4.63 DPRS stated that it could produce packages of parliamentary proceedings.¹¹ While this was suggested in the context of providing material for a C-Span type channel, such packages may well have a wider interest. Community broadcasters expressed an interest in developing packages of parliamentary material. Other broadcasters may be interested in being involved in the preparation of packages. The Committee considers that funds should be made available for the development of packaged material.

4.64 **The Committee recommends that:**

- 19 Funds be made available through the parliamentary budget for the development of packages of parliamentary proceedings for broadcast by interested media groups, provided such packages are of an informational or educational nature within the guidelines.



STEPHEN MARTIN
Chairman

May 1995

¹¹ Evidence, p. 10.

APPENDIX ONE

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

No.	Name of person/organisation
1	Mr Bruce Alexander
2.	Mr Chris Borthwick
3	Mr A. C. M. Laing
4	Mr Peter Pini
5	Hon Peter Duncan MP
6	Mr Rod Atkinson MP
7	ACE Television
8	Senator Grant Chapman
9	Mr Brian Hard
10	The Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters Limited
11	Australian Broadcasting Corporation - Subscription Services
12	Department of the Senate
13	Australian Broadcasting Corporation - Office of the Managing Director
14	Open Access Cable Pty Ltd
15	Hon John Howard MP
16	Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff
17	Department of the House of Representatives
18	Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations
19	Mr Raymond Isaac
20	PRN Network Radio
21	Concerned Citizen's Association of Australia
22	Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff
23	Hon Michael Lee MP, Minister for Communications and the Arts and Minister for Tourism
7A	ACE Television
24.	Mr Martyn Evans, MP
7B	ACE TELEVISION
14A	OPEN ACCESS CABLE Pty Ltd
20A	PRN Network Radio Inc
21A	Community Party of Australia
17A	Department of the House of Representatives
19A	Mr Raymond Isaac
12A	Department of the Senate
25	National Transmission Authority
26	Mr Alexander Downer MP, Leader of the Opposition
27	The President, New South Wales Legislative Council
28	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Western Australia
3A	Mr A. C. M. Laing
22A	Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff

APPENDIX TWO

LIST OF PERSONS OR ORGANISATIONS GIVING EVIDENCE TO PUBLIC HEARINGS

Witness/organisation	Date of appearance
Australian Broadcasting Commission	
Mr David Hill Managing Director	28 February 1994
Mr Peter Loxton Director Radio	28 February 1994
Mr Anthony Green Project Officer	17 March 1994 16 June 1994
Mr Phillip Koch Manager, Australian Capital Territory	17 March 1994
Mr Christopher Anderson Managing Editor, ABC Radio	16 June 1994
Australian Information Media Pty Ltd	
Mr Kimberly Williams General Manager	6 February 1995
Mr Donald Lange News Planning Consultant	6 February 1995
Department of the Senate	
Mr Harry Evans Clerk	17 March 1994 15 June 1994
Mr Robert Alison Usher of the Black Rod	17 March 1994 15 June 1994

Department of the House of Representatives

Mr Lyn Barlin Clerk	17 March 1994 15 June 1994
Mr Ian Harris Deputy Clerk	17 March 1994 15 June 1994

Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff

Mr John Templeton Secretary	17 March 1994 15 June 1994
Mr Ian Sharp Manager, Sound and Vision Office	17 March 1994 15 June 1994

Department of Communication and the Arts

Mr John Neil Acting First Assistant Secretary	15 June 1994
Ms Susan Page Acting Assistant Secretary	15 June 1994

National Transmission Agency

Mr Gregory McAdoo Assistant General Manager	15 June 1994
--	--------------

Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters

Mr Tony Brannigan General Manager	16 June 1994
--------------------------------------	--------------

Network 10

Mr Paul Bongiorno Bureau Chief	16 June 1994
Mr Graham Cavanagh Director of News (Sydney)	16 June 1994

Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters

Mr Graeme Carroll
Manager 16 June 1994

Mr Anthony King
Chief Executive 16 June 1994

Public Radio News Inc

Ms Susan McCauley
Manager Training and Development 16 June 1994

Mr Tony Douglas
Business Development Manager 6 February 1995

ACE Television

Mr Nicholas Cockram
Secretary 16 June 1994

Open Access Cable Pty Ltd

Mr Jeffrey Cooke
Director 16 June 1994

Ms Wendy Spencer
Director 16 June 1994

Seven Network

Mr Dennis Grant
Bureau Chief 16 June 1994

National Nine Network

Mr Peter Harvey
News Director 16 June 1994

Mr Stephen Rice
Executive Producer 16 June 1994

APPENDIX THREE

**CONDITIONS FOR GRANTING ACCESS TO PROCEEDINGS OF
THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR
THE PURPOSE OF RECORDING AND BROADCASTING
EXCERPTS**

Adopted by the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of
Parliamentary Proceedings on 2 June 1986 and revised on 7 June 1994.

1. Excerpts may be taken from proceedings of each House or of the Main Committee of the House of Representatives (whether or not the proceedings are being continuously broadcast) commencing at the time fixed for the meeting of the House until the adjournment of that House until the next sitting.
2. Excerpts shall be recorded from the audio signal of proceedings transmitted by the House monitoring system throughout Parliament House, Canberra.
3. Excerpts are not to be used for the purposes of satire or ridicule.
4. Excerpts shall not be used for the purposes of political party advertising or in election campaigns.
5. Fairness and accuracy and a general overall balance should be observed.
- 5A. Excerpts of proceedings which are subsequently withdrawn shall be available for re-broadcast provided the withdrawal is also reported.
6. Excerpts must be placed in context. Commentators should identify Senators and Members at least by name.
7. Events in the Galleries are not part of the proceedings and excerpts in relation to such events, as far as is practicable, should not be used.
8. Qualified privilege only shall apply to broadcasters in the use of excerpts.
9. The instructions of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives or their delegated representatives on the use of recorded excerpts, shall be observed at all times.

10. Where the excerpts are used on commercial networks, the station should try to ensure that advertising before and after excerpts is of an appropriate nature.
11. Where the audio excerpts of proceedings are used on television, their use may be that of audio over still frames, or overlay material.
12. Access to proceedings for the purpose of recording excerpts shall be on the basis of undertaking to observe these guidelines.

APPENDIX FOUR

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RELATING TO THE RADIO BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

1. *Days upon which Proceedings shall be Broadcast and their allocation between the Senate and the House of Representatives.*

The proceedings of Parliament shall be broadcast on each day on which either House is sitting. While there will be a usual allocation of broadcasts between the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings or its Sub-Committee shall take into account the importance of the impending debate and the public interest attaching thereto in deciding on the allocation. It is anticipated that, over time, the coverage of each House will be approximately equal.

2. *Rebroadcast of Questions and Answers.*
 - (a) The following Parliamentary Proceedings shall be rebroadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation at the conclusion of the broadcast of live proceedings from either House unless otherwise ordered by the Committee

Senate proceedings - Questions without notice and answers thereto;

House of Representatives proceedings - Questions without notice and answers thereto;
 - (b) The rebroadcast shall be of the House that is not allocated the broadcast;
 - (c) When a member makes a personal explanation in rebuttal of misrepresentation contained in a question asked that day or an answer thereto, the question and answer shall, subject to the next succeeding sub-paragraph, be excluded from the re-broadcast; and
 - (d) The Presiding Officer may, in his or her discretion, refer any case to the Joint Committee for decision as to whether such a question and answer shall be excluded from the rebroadcast.

3. The general principles specified here and adopted by both Houses shall be observed generally by the Joint Committee in making determinations in accordance with the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*, but nothing in those general principles shall be taken to prevent the Joint Committee from departing from those general principles in order to meet any unusual or special circumstances.

APPENDIX FIVE

STANDING DETERMINATIONS RELATING TO THE RADIO BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Transfer of Broadcast from one House to another

1. When both Houses are meeting on the one day and the House whose proceedings are being broadcast adjourns for the day or suspends its proceedings for an extended period, the broadcast may be transferred to the other House at the earliest opportunity.
2. On any day when both Houses are meeting and on which the House to which the broadcast for the day has not been allocated meets prior to the allocated House, the proceedings of the House first mentioned shall be broadcast from the time of its meeting until the latest time for transfer of the broadcast to the allocated House for the commencement of its proceedings.

Allocation of Broadcasts

3. The allocation of broadcasts shall be as follows unless the Joint Committee or its Sub-Committee decides there are significant issues under debate in the House not allocated the broadcast that warrant the transfer of the broadcast:

Monday - House of Representatives
Tuesday - Senate
Wednesday - Senate
Thursday - House of Representatives
Friday - House of Representatives
Saturday - Senate
Sunday - House of Representatives

Rebroadcast of Questions and Answers

4. When points of order or other extraneous matter are eliminated from the rebroadcast of questions and answers, this should be indicated by an appropriate announcement.

Re-broadcast of Governor-General's Speech.

5. On the first sitting day of each session of the Parliament the Australian Broadcasting Corporation shall rebroadcast the Speech of the Governor-General 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:
- (a) Announcements can include a description of procedure, and business before the allocated House or of business before the other House:
 - (b) General information can be provided about the context of debates or particular proceedings as long as political views or forecasts are not included:
 - (c) The announcement of each Senator or Member receiving the Call includes the following particulars:
 - (i) Name
 - (ii) Parliamentary office or portfolio
 - (iii) Political party
 - (iv) Electorate or State.
 - (d) Names of members intending to speak may be announced.

Comment on the presence or absence of Senators and Members is not to be made except that announcers may refer during Divisions to the way in which specific Members vote. It is to be understood this reference may be made only in such cases as when a Member is voting away from his usual Party alignment or to show on which side an independent Member is voting.

APPENDIX SIX

PROPOSALS FOR RE-ALLOCATION OF BROADCAST HOURS BETWEEN THE HOUSES

BROADCAST HOURS FOR CURRENT ALLOCATION BETWEEN HOUSES

REPRESENTATIVES				1 Week	2 Week
MON	12:30 PM	8:00 PM	7:30	7:30	
TUES	12:30 PM	2:00 PM	1:30	1:30	
THURS	9:30 AM	6:00 PM	8:30	8:30	
				17:30	17:30
				35:00:00	
				% of sitting hours broadcast 51%	
				Share of total broadcast hours 49%	
SENATE					
TUES	2:00 PM	7:50 PM	5:50	5:50	
WED	9:30 AM	7:50 PM	10:20	10:20	
THUR	6:00 PM	7:50 PM	1:50	1:50	
				18:00	18:00
				36:00:00	
				% of sitting hours broadcast 56%	
				Share of total broadcast hours 51%	

Total broadcast time*	71:00:00
------------------------------	-----------------

* Not including rebroadcasts of Question Time

**BROADCAST HOURS FOR PROPOSED ALLOCATION
BETWEEN HOUSES**

**Proposal One: Additional Tuesday each week to the House of
Representatives**

REPRESENTATIVES		1 Week	2 Week	
MON	12:30 PM 8:00 PM	7:30	7:30	
TUES	12:30 PM 8:00 PM	7:30	7:30	
THURS	9:30 AM 6:00 PM	8:30	8:30	
		23:30	23:30	47:00:00
	% of sitting hours broadcast		69%	
	Share of total broadcast hours		66%	
SENATE		1 Week	2 Week	
WED	9:30 AM 7:50 PM	10:20	10:20	
THURS	6:00 PM 7:50 PM	1:50	1:50	
FRI				
		12:10	12:10	24:20:00
	% of sitting hours broadcast		38%	
	Share of total broadcast hours		34%	

Total broadcast time	71:20:00
-------------------------------------	-----------------

**BROADCAST HOURS FOR PROPOSED ALLOCATION
BETWEEN HOUSES**

**Proposal Two: Additional broadcast day each alternate Tuesday for the
House of Representatives**

REPRESENTATIVES		1 Week	2 Week	
MON	12:30 PM 8:00 PM	7:30	7:30	
TUES	12:30 PM 2:00 PM	1:30		
TUES	12:30 PM 8:00 PM		7:30	
THURS	9:30 AM 6:00 PM	8:30	8:30	
		17:30	23:30	41:00:00
	% of sitting hours broadcast		60%	
	Share of total broadcast hours		58%	
SENATE		1 Week	2 Week	
TUES	2:00 PM 7:50 PM	5:50		
WED	9:30 AM 7:50 PM	10:20	10:20	
THURS	6:00 PM 7:50 PM	1:50	1:50	
FRI				
		18:00	12:10	30:10:00
	% of sitting hours broadcast		47%	
	Share of total broadcast hours		42%	

Total broadcast time	71:10:00
-------------------------------------	-----------------

**BROADCAST HOURS FOR PROPOSED ALLOCATION
BETWEEN HOUSES**

**Proposal Three: Additional half day each week to the House of
Representatives**

REPRESENTATIVES		1 Week	2 Week	
MON	12:30 PM 8:00 PM	7:30	7:30	
TUES	12:30 PM 2:00 PM	1:30	1:30	
WED	3:00 PM 8:00 PM	5:00	5:00	
THURS	9:30 AM 6:00 PM	8:30	8:30	
		22:30	22:30	45:00:00
		% of sitting hours broadcast	66%	
		Share of total broadcast hours	63%	
SENATE		1 Week	2 Week	
TUES	2:00 PM 7:50 PM	5:50	5:50	
WED	9:30 AM 3:00 PM	5:30	5:30	
THURS	6:00 PM 7:50 PM	1:50	1:50	
		13:10	13:10	26:20:00
		% of sitting hours broadcast	41%	
		Share of total broadcast hours	37%	

Total broadcast time	71:20:00
-------------------------------------	-----------------

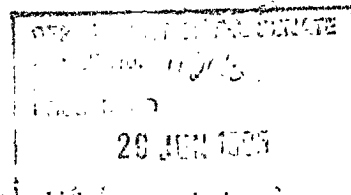
JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE
ON THE BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Members:

Mr Martin (Chairman)
Senator Beahan (The President)

Senator Coates
Senator Vanstone

Mr Bevis
Mr Cameron
Mr Hicks
Mr Knott
Mr Price



The committee is to inquire into and report on the arrangements which may apply in respect of the televising and radio broadcasting of the proceedings of the Houses of Parliament and their committees, including a review of the Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946 (the Act), with particular reference to:

- (a) the general principles upon which radio broadcast, delayed broadcast and rebroadcast of proceedings of both Houses and their committees occur and the conditions for broadcasting of audio-only excerpts of proceedings.
- (b) in relation to the television signal of proceedings:
 - (i) the feasibility of encompassing within the Act arrangements applying to the televising of proceedings of each House and its committees, and joint committees;
 - (ii) the formulation of general principles upon which televising of proceedings of both Houses and their committees occurs, the allocation arrangements between the Houses and conditions for usage of video-tape excerpts of proceedings; and
 - (iii) review the arrangements for making available to bodies external to Parliament House, Canberra, the signal of proceedings distributed by means of the House monitoring service; and
- (c) the establishment of a permanent, Australia-wide parliamentary broadcast network under parliamentary control.

Consulted Body	Witness	Authority or Designation	Pages
ACE Television Inc.	Cockram, Mr N	Secretary	211
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Anderson, Mr C.J Green, Mr A Hill, Mr D Koch, Mr P Loxton, Mr P.L.D	Managing Editor, Television and Information Services Project Officer Managing Director Manager for the ACT Director Radio	126 52/126 3 52 3
Australian Information Media Pty Ltd	Lange, Mr D.R Williams, Mr K.L	News Planning Consultant General Manager	220 220
Department of Communications and the Arts	McAduo, Mr G.N Neil, Mr J.B Page, Ms S.L	Assistant General Manager, National Transmission Agency First Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting Policy Division Acting Assistant Secretary, Public Broadcasting Policy Branch	66 66 66
Department of the House of Representatives	Barlin, Mr L Harris, Mr I.C	Clerk of the House of Representatives Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives	21,62, 96 21,62, 96
Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff	Sharp, Mr B Templeton, Mr J.	Manager, Sound and Vision Office Secretary	43,109 43,109
Department of the Senate	Alison, Mr R Evans, Mr H	Usher of the Black Rod Clerk of the Senate	34, 89 34, 89
Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations	Branigan, Mr T	General Manager	153
Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters Ltd	Bell, Mr A.E Carroll, Mr G King, Mr A.M	Director Manager, Public Affairs Chief Executive	185 185 185
National Nine Network	Harvey, Mr P Rice, Mr S.D	News Director (Canberra) Executive Producer, Sunday and Business Sunday	153 153
Open Access Cable Pty Ltd	Cook, Mr J.J Spencer, Ms W.J	Director Director	199 199
Public Radio News Inc	Douglas, Mr J.A McCauley, Ms S.	Business Development Manager Manager, Training and Development	232 170
Seven Network	Grant, Mr D.C	Bureau Chief, Press Gallery, Parl. House	153
Ten Network	Bongiorno, Mr P Cavanagh, Mr G.	Bureau Chief, Press Gallery, Parl. House Director of News (Sydney)	153 153