

## **Speaker's response to certain recommendations of the report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure—*Media coverage of House proceedings***

### **Recommendation 2**

*The committee recommends that the Speaker amend the guidelines for still photography in the chamber as follows: modernise the language of the guidelines wherever necessary to accommodate the change from film to digital technology; and move the provisions of guideline (l) to the preamble.*

All media guidelines are monitored and amendments are made from time to time to ensure, among other things, that their intent is clear and the language is appropriate. The Speaker informs the President of the Press Gallery of any amendments after they are made. The last time amendments were made was in October 2005 and the changes at that time gave effect, in part, to the recommended changes.

### **Recommendation 3**

*The committee recommends that the Speaker revise guideline (c) of the rules for still photography in the chamber to extend automatic permission for still photographers to take photographs during ministerial statements, discussions of matters of public importance, divisions and adjournment debates for a trial period of 10 sitting weeks.*

The Speaker agrees to a trial period of a temporary guideline under which any photographer wishing to enter the galleries to take photographs during ministerial statements, discussions of matters of public importance, divisions and adjournment debates may do so, subject to the requirement that at these times s/he must advise the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office that s/he is going to enter the galleries. In all other circumstances, the guidelines will apply and requests will be considered on a case by case basis. The trial period will commence from the next week of sittings for ten sitting weeks.

### **Recommendation 4**

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

The recommendation for isolated feeds to be produced 'on request' is not agreed to.

The focus of the DPS broadcasting staff and the equipment they use is to produce the official broadcast of chamber proceedings, and anything else must remain subordinate to that function. Isolated feeds can be, and sometimes are, provided from the existing resources used to make the composite feed of the chamber. The current practice is that television bureaus can make a specific request for isolated feeds produced by DPS broadcasting staff. Typically, the timing of such requests has been that they are made immediately prior to commencement of the parliamentary agenda item to which they relate. A consequence of this timing is that the requests must be responded to with some urgency, and this currently occurs. Nevertheless, as they can only be facilitated by diverting resources which would otherwise be focussed on the feed for the official broadcast, such requests must always be dealt with as subordinate to the primary focus on the broadcast of the official feed. Isolated feeds will continue to be provided in response to requests, subject to the production of the official composite feed of the chamber.

#### **Recommendation 5**

*The committee recommends that the Press Gallery Committee consult with the Broadcasting Section of DPS in relation to improving the content of the existing feed for television excerpt purposes and to explore the possibility of additional feeds focusing on the speakers at the despatch boxes; and that the committee evaluate any such new arrangements after they have been in operation for six sitting weeks.*

DPS broadcasting staff routinely have discussions with the media about matters related to the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings and would welcome consultation with the Press Gallery Committee on its views about improving the content of the existing feed and possible additional feeds focusing on the despatch boxes. If proposals for changes are received, they and any trial of new arrangements will be considered in the context of the existing guidelines and resource allocation.

#### **Recommendation 6**

*The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services install inbuilt cameras in additional House of Representatives committee rooms to allow increased television coverage of committee proceedings.*

The Speaker supports the principle of increasing community access to parliamentary proceedings, including through encouraging television coverage of committee proceedings, and recognises that achieving greater television coverage of committee proceedings is not simply a function of installing cameras in additional committee rooms. The Speaker has asked the Department of the House of Representatives to examine the issue of achieving increased television coverage of committee proceedings, including through the possible installation of cameras in additional committee rooms.