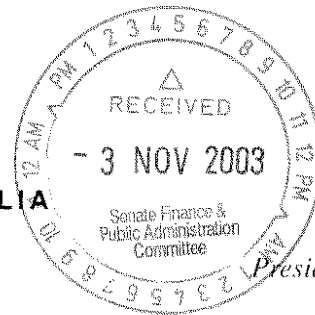




PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA



Speaker of the House of Representatives

President of the Senate

30 OCT 2003

Mr Malcolm Farr
President of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Farr

We ask you to bring to the attention of all members of the Parliament House Press Gallery our concern about the unauthorised filming, photography and television broadcasting in relation to the House of Representatives Chamber and the private areas of Parliament House, on 23 and 24 October 2003 during the visits of the Presidents of the USA and China.

At the outset, we acknowledge that foreign media, despite the Speaker's explicit directions to the contrary, were able to film and broadcast images from the Chamber on 23 October 2003. We are pursuing this separately and vigorously and will take appropriate action when inquiries are completed.

In respect of the Australian media, the joint meetings of the two Houses for the addresses by the Presidents were undoubtedly significant parliamentary events, and rightly merited greater media attention than usual for a parliamentary sitting. Nevertheless, we need to remind Press Gallery members that it is just as necessary to follow the usual guidelines and processes for these special events as it is at all other times.

The matters involving unauthorised filming, photography and television broadcasting by members of the Press Gallery include:

- photographs taken on 23 October
 - in the Chamber, of Senators Brown and Nettle interjecting, which have appeared on various days in every major newspaper since last Thursday;
 - in the galleries, of various persons, which have also appeared in newspapers since last Thursday;
- certain video film of events in the Chamber on 23 October, which has appeared on various days on every Australian television network since last Thursday;

- photographs taken on 24 October of Senators Brown and Nettle in the private areas of the building, which have appeared in newspapers since last Friday; and
- filming on 24 October of Senators Brown and Nettle in the private areas of the building, which has appeared on various days on television networks since last Friday.

We have viewed the photographs and film of these matters. They are clearly in breach of the filming, photography and television broadcasting guidelines for Parliament House.

We appreciate that members of the Press Gallery seek to secure the best images possible. However, we remind you one of the main principles of the filming, photography and televising guidelines for Parliament House is to ensure fair access to parliamentary proceedings for all media. It is a condition of Press Gallery members' access to Parliament House that they continue to abide by the guidelines.


While it may be argued that photographs breaching the guidelines were used as a counter to the availability of unauthorised video material, this is no defence to the breaches of the guidelines, either in the Chamber or in the private areas of the building. We have noted the attributions of photographers to the offending photographs in the newspapers, and we have received advice identifying by name and organisation the individuals involved in the unauthorised filming and photography in the private areas.

We are prepared to excuse the breaches of the guidelines by members of the Press Gallery as aberrant behaviour in what was an extraordinary week. However, we wish to remind members of the Press Gallery that the guidelines for filming, photography and televising have not changed and that the Press Gallery is expected to abide by them at all times.

We are pursuing separately the location of the unauthorised camera in the Chamber gallery on 23 October.

We know that most members of the Press Gallery are responsible and co-operative members of the Parliament House community. We look forward to a return to the good working relationship which we have come to expect.

Yours sincerely



NEIL ANDREW



PAUL CALVERT