



9 April 2008

Ms Lucinda Osmond
Research Director
Select Committee on the Broadcast of Parliament
Parliament of Queensland

Assessment of Queensland Parliament Broadcasting Facilities

Dear Lucinda,

- 1 Following my visit to the Queensland Parliament on 1 April 2008 and the subsequent committee hearing on 2 April 2008 I have written a report as requested regarding your broadcasting facilities. Please find it attached.
- 2 If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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7 These issues include the inability to place a camera "to line" without first saving the shot. The appropriate camera must be selected by the operator, then the operator must identify the member with the call, select the correct shot from the shot list, then focus and frame as required and then save the shot prior to going "on air". In some cases it may be too late to put this finalised shot into the broadcast.

8 Another area for concern is the inability to frame the "on air" camera smoothly. This could cause the media some issues as smooth panning and tilting are basic requirements for a broadcast.

9 The Camera Control Unit (CCU) currently in use does cause some concern as well. The system is fully automated and in an environment where lighting conditions can be fully controlled this system would work reasonably well. However, in the Legislative Assembly chamber there are exterior windows which let in different light levels according to changing weather patterns and the sun angles at different times of the year. As a consequence, the automatic CCU's will always expose for the brightest part of the picture, and if this is a window then a Member's face will be underexposed and subsequently not suitable for broadcasting.

10 It was noted that the recording of the proceedings of the Queensland Parliament are now being recorded onto long play DVD, this is not considered to be of Broadcast quality and as such consideration should be given to upgrading this system to capture all material produced in broadcast quality

11 At the Broadcast of Parliament Select Committee hearing I attended on 2 April 2008, it was stated that an issue existed with the current angles of the cameras within the Chamber - specifically that they were placed too high in the walls. The re-positioning of the cameras lower in the walls would improve the camera angles, but in doing so, may introduce a further problem where people walking past the cameras will block the "on air" shot. Therefore these two issues should be considered when making a decision regarding the height of the cameras in the walls.

Suggestions for alterations to current Standing Orders

12 A relaxation of the current guidelines for camera operators should be considered. In particular:

(a) Standing Order No. 2 - "*Cameras should never focus on a member who does not have the call or who is not participating in the debate*"; and

(b) Standing Order No. 5 - "*Reaction shots of a member are not permitted*".

13 A consequence of these changes would provide the media - and ultimately the viewing public - with a more comprehensive overview of the participants in the debate and ultimately the workings of their State Parliament.

14 Suggested wording for camera operators guidelines could read:

- (a) "Reaction shots of members are permitted when that member has sought information from a member who has the call"; and
- (b) "Reaction shots of members are permitted when the member is referred to in debate."

15 Overall I am of the view that the 9 cameras currently in the Legislative Assembly Chamber of the Queensland Parliament are more than enough to provide viewers - through both the media and the internet - with a very high quality broadcast production.

16 The fact that the Queensland Parliament is now providing live coverage of the sittings of the Legislative Assembly to internet viewers should be highly commended as this is delivering un-edited and non editorialised coverage to both the Queensland public and viewers from around the world.

Recommendations

17 It is recommended that the committee consider the following actions to improve the technical standards of the Parliamentary coverage. The actions are listed in order of priority:

- (a) Introduce a separate vision switcher into the broadcast system. This would alleviate the problem of the robotic camera software requiring a shot to be saved prior to that shot being put "on air";
- (b) Improve the robotic software responsiveness. This would enable the camera operators to re-frame the camera while it is "on air" and subsequently improve the production values of the broadcast by providing smooth pans and tilts. This would have a beneficial flow-on effect both for the media and internet viewers.
- (c) Investigate a manual CCU system. This will provide more professional exposure and colour balances of the cameras used in the broadcast.
- (d) Improve the speed of saving shots. This will enable the camera operator to concentrate on the production of the broadcast instead of waiting for the robotic software to save a shot.
- (e) Introduce a broadcast quality archiving system. At this point in time, it may seem to have a lower priority compared to improving the quality of the actual broadcast, but the historical significance of the material produced cannot be denied. Archiving broadcast quality material will ensure future viewers are able to view the deliberations of the Queensland Parliament at the highest possible quality.

Suggestions for alterations to current Standing Orders

18 A consideration to amend the Standing Orders with regard to the broadcast of parliamentary proceedings would also provide a more

comprehensive coverage for the media and the general public. Some suggested wording for the new guidelines could include

- (a) "Reaction shots of members are permitted when that member has sought information from a member who has the call"; and
- (b) "Reaction shots of members are permitted when the member is referred to in debate."

19 In conclusion, I would like to thank the Queensland Parliament for inviting me to participate in this inquiry and I hope that this report may prove helpful in their deliberations.

Michael Ferguson
Assistant Director
Broadcasting Content
Department of Parliamentary Services



ATTACHMENT A

Parliament of Australia Department of Parliamentary Services Content Management Branch Broadcasting Content Section

Overview of Broadcasting Content Operations

Broadcasting of the Parliament

- 1 The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), Content Management Branch, Broadcasting Content section provides live televised coverage of:-
 - (a) the Senate;
 - (b) the House of Representatives;
 - (c) the Main Committee of the House of Representatives; and
 - (d) selected Parliamentary Committee hearings held in Parliament House.
- 2 The section also provides audio-only coverage for:
 - (a) selected Parliamentary Committee hearings held in Parliament House; and
 - (b) selected Parliamentary Committee hearings held interstate.
- 3 All sittings of the Parliament and its committees are recorded for Hansard transcription purposes.
- 4 The live television and radio proceedings of the Parliament are available on the in-house House Monitoring Service (HMS), the internet via webcasting and sent directly to the media bureaux in Parliament House.
- 5 Broadcasting Content provides a range of in-house television, radio and multimedia services to Senators, Members, other occupants of Parliament House as well as external clients.
- 6 All recordings of public proceedings are available free of charge, however fees may apply for tape and digital media stock, or in instances where extensive dubbing is required. Some cost recovery charges may apply for external clients.

Broadcasting Content services

- 7 Broadcasting Content provides a range of services including:
 - (a) Television and radio production services, such as video editing and studio recordings;

- (b) Televising of parliamentary events on HMS;
- (c) Webcasting of parliamentary proceedings on the internet;
- (d) Audio visual services for parliamentary events held by a Senator or Member;
- (e) Televising of press conferences held by Senators, Members or committees on HMS;
- (f) Video and tele-conferencing support for parliamentary purposes in-house and in the Broadcasting studios; and
- (g) Dubbing of parliamentary material.

House Monitoring Service (HMS)

8 The House Monitoring Service (HMS) is an internal fibre optic network which distributes television and radio signal throughout Parliament House. DPS is not a broadcaster for the purposes of the *Television Broadcasting Services (Digital Conversion) Act 1998*, but nevertheless DPS tries to comply with the spirit of that legislation by providing widescreen digital content to the HMS and to the media bureaux.

9 Each suite in Parliament House is equipped to receive TV and radio broadcasts via the HMS which includes 64 television channels and 36 radio frequencies.

10 A number of different services are available on specific HMS channels. They include allocated channels for:

- (a) Live coverage of parliamentary proceedings in widescreen format;
- (b) Live coverage of parliamentary proceedings included in an "Events In Progress" format;
- (c) Press conferences;
- (d) Special events;
- (e) Replays of parliamentary proceedings;
- (f) Government and Opposition whips Chamber monitoring;
- (g) The re-broadcast of free-to-air television networks and subscription services such as CNN, BBC World, Sky News Australia, Sky News ACTIVE, CNBC Australia, Bloomberg and Fox Sports; and
- (h) The re-broadcast of free-to-air radio stations such as PNN, ABC 2CN, Radio Australia, JJJ FM, 2RN, ABC FM, 2CA, 2CC, FM 104.7, ABC South Eastern Regional Network, SBS Radio, FM 106.3, 1RPH.

11 The Senate, the House of Representatives and the Main Committee of the House of Representatives all have their own respective HMS channels for television and radio programming. Committees and special events also have

allocated channels. The current HMS guide has been included at the end of this document to show the structure of the TV channels and radio frequencies.

12 The Presiding Officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives are the approving authorities for any changes to HMS policy and television/radio services.

Webcast

13 Since 1999 the proceedings of the Parliament have been webcast live on the internet. The vision signals produced by DPS Broadcasting Content are automatically encoded and available as high and low resolution video streams, and audio-only streams. DPS Broadcasting Content's current production scheduling system provides for the latest information to be updated and published as the online "program of events". The webcast of proceedings is available at www.aph.gov.au/live .

Archives – recording and storage

14 All televised proceedings of the Parliament are currently recorded onto Betacam SX digital tape and approximately two years of proceedings are held on-site. The hours of broadcast material produced depends on parliamentary sittings and committee hearings, but on average 2,500 hours per year are produced. Tapes to be archived are currently sent off-site to a purpose built, environmentally controlled facility where approximately 50,000 hours of proceedings are currently held.

15 Recently the National Archive deemed the recordings of the Parliament to be of national significance. Consequently measures must be taken to conserve all the footage produced since 1988 when Parliament was first televised.

16 The department currently has an archiving project in process where all existing recorded vision will be digitised, and hence all future recordings as well.

Legislation and guidelines governing the broadcast of Parliamentary proceedings

17 The copyright of the Parliamentary broadcast belongs to the Commonwealth of Australia.

18 Television broadcasts that are continuous, complete and in an unaltered state are protected by Parliamentary privilege.

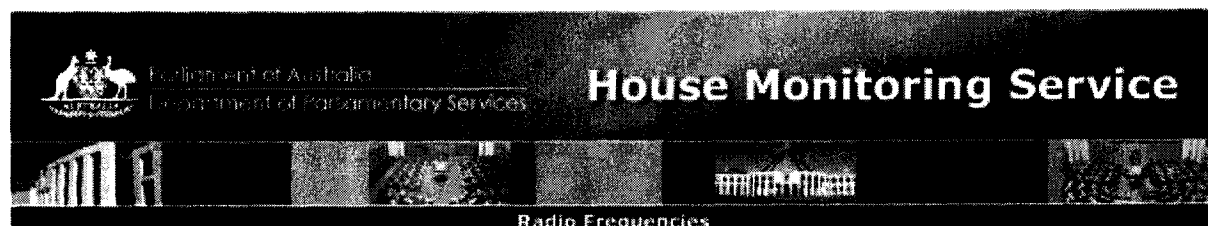
19 The broadcast and re-broadcast of Parliamentary material (in full or excerpt) are subject to certain conditions:-


- (a) the material may not be used for political party advertising or election campaigning;
- (b) the material may not be used for satire or ridicule; and
- (c) the material may not be used for commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising.

20 The following documentation refers to guidelines and determinations for re-broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings:-

- (a) Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946;
- (b) Joint Standing Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings;
- (c) House of Representative practice, fifth edition;
- (d) Australian Senate Practice, eleventh edition;
- (e) HOR Standing Committee on Procedure;
- (f) Media coverage of House proceedings: Including the Chamber, Main Committee and committees (Final Report);
- (g) Parliamentary Paper No. 259/2005; Presented 10 October 2005; and
- (h) Senate Standing Committee on Procedure.

HMS Channel guide




 Commonwealth of Australia
 Department of Parliamentary Services

House Monitoring Service

Radio Frequencies

85.3MHz	Senate Committee room 152	95.0MHz	HoR Committee room 1R1	100.7MHz	ABC Metropolitan (2CN)
85.7MHz	Senate Committee room 153	95.3MHz	HoR Committee room 1R2	101.1MHz	Radio Australia
85.1MHz	Senate Committee room 154	96.7MHz	HoR Committee room 1R3	101.6MHz	111 FM
85.9MHz	Senate Committee room 155	97.1MHz	HoR Committee room 1R4	101.9MHz	ABC Radio National (2RN)
86.9MHz	Senate Committee room 156	97.5MHz	HoR Committee room 1R5	102.3MHz	ABC FM
88.3MHz	Senate Committee room 2S1	97.9MHz	HoR Committee room 1R6	103.5MHz	2CA
88.7MHz	Senate Committee room 2S2	98.3MHz	HoR Committee room 2R1	104.3MHz	2OC
89.1MHz	Senate Committee room 2S3	98.7MHz	HoR Committee room 2R2	104.7MHz	FM 104.7
89.7MHz	Main Committee room 1R0	99.1MHz	HoR Committee room 2R3	105.1MHz	ABC South Eastern Regional Network
93.5MHz	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	99.5MHz	Library Media review (radio)	105.5MHz	SBS Radio
94.3MHz	SENATE	99.9MHz	Special Events (HMS 15)	106.3MHz	FM 106.3
95.1MHz	Special Events (HMS 15)	100.3MHz	PHN (ABC Newsradio)	106.7MHz	15PH

Television Channels

1	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	23	HoR Whips Monitoring	45	ABC TV Canberra
2	SENATE	24	HoR Whips Monitoring	46	SBS TV
3	EIP--House of Representatives	25	HoR Whips Monitoring	47	SBS World News
4	EIP--Senate	26	HoR Whips Monitoring	48	PRIME TV
5	HoR Main Committee	27	SENATE Whips Monitoring	49	WIN TV
6	EIP--HoR Main Committee	28	SENATE Whips Monitoring	50	S C TEN
7	HoR & HoR Main Committee (Split Screen)	29	SENATE Whips Monitoring	51	Sky Parliament
8	Committee Room Bookings	30	SENATE Whips Monitoring	52	Fox Weather Channel
9	Committee Coverage	31	SENATE Whips Monitoring	53	CNN International
10	Committee Coverage	32	SENATE Whips Monitoring	54	BBC World
11	Committee Coverage	33	SENATE Whips Monitoring	55	SKY News
12	Committee Coverage	34	SENATE Whips Monitoring	56	CNBC Australia
13	Committee Coverage	35	HoR Main Committee Whips Monitoring	57	Bloomberg
14	Committee Coverage	36	HoR Main Committee Whips Monitoring	58	FOX Sport 1
15	Special Events (95.1MHz)	37	HoR Main Committee Whips Monitoring	59	FOX Sport 2
16	Special Events (99.9MHz)	38	HoR Main Committee Whips Monitoring	60	FOX Sport 3
17	Special Events Replays	39	Library Replays	61	FOX News
18	Online Channel Guide	40	Library Replays	62	Al Jazeera
19	HoR Whips Monitoring	41	Ad Hoc Services	63	Widescreen HoR
20	HoR Whips Monitoring	42	Weather Camera	64	Widescreen Senate
21	HoR Whips Monitoring	43	ABC TV 2		
22	HoR Whips Monitoring	44	ABC Sydney Tv News		

House Monitoring Service | For enquiries phone Ext. 2020

**This guide is an internal document provided to Parliament House occupants.*