

Government Response to the
Broadcast of Parliament Select Committee

Report No. 1, May 2008


Inquiry into the Queensland Parliament Video Broadcast System

LAI UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE

No.: 5208TH015

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MP: Hon A Bligh

Clerk's Signature: 

The Select Committee's Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The select committee finds that the Queensland Parliament broadcast system is comprised of nine high-definition cameras, with two feeds being provided to the television media for their use. The select committee finds that the number of the cameras and feeds being supplied to the television media is equal to, if not superior to, broadcast systems operating in other Australian jurisdictions. However, it also sees merit in providing to the media, if possible, isolated feeds from each individual camera.

The select committee recommends that investigation occur into supplying to the television media isolated feeds from each individual camera.

Response: The Government supports an open Parliament and supports, over time, enhancements to the Parliament's Video Broadcast System, as the Budget priorities of the Parliament allow.

Recommendation 2

The select committee finds that the Guidelines for Camera Operators used by the camera operators of the Queensland Parliament broadcasting system does not allow sufficient reaction shots of members to be taken for the television media's reporting purposes.

The select committee recommends that the Guidelines for Camera Operators be amended to include:

Reaction shots of members are permitted:

- (a) when the member has sought information which is being supplied by a member having the call; or*
- (b) when the member is referred to in debate.*

Panning shots are permitted for the purpose of showing members listening to debate.

Response: The Government supports an open Parliament and supports, over time, enhancements to the Parliament's Video Broadcast System, as the Budget priorities of the Parliament allow

Recommendation 3

The select committee finds that the picture quality of the broadcast system is sufficient for the television media's reporting purposes. However, enhancements to the broadcast system are required to ensure sufficient camera control, camera coverage and lighting.

The select committee recommends that the broadcast system be enhanced as follows:

- 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 to air.*
- Improve the robotic software responsiveness, possibly through the introduction of a joystick operation. 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.

- *Implement a manual camera control system. This will provide more professional lighting exposure and colour balances of the cameras used in the broadcast.*
- *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.*
- *Investigate lowering the position of the cameras to assess whether the repositioning of cameras will improve the angles of the shots taken.*
- *Employ a director/producer. This person will assist the camera operators to line up and take appropriate shots in a timely manner.*

Response: The Government supports an open Parliament and supports, over time, enhancements to the Parliament's Video Broadcast System, as the Budget priorities of the Parliament allow.

Recommendation 4

The select committee finds that following implementation of recommendation 2 and recommendation 3, in accordance with term of reference (b), the quality of material produced by the Queensland Parliament's broadcast system will be sufficient for the television media's reporting purposes.

Response: The Government notes this recommendation and will review the issue at such time that all recommendations in 1,2 and 3 have been implemented and an assessment of the quality of broadcast material can be made. This assessment will involve consultation with relevant media organisations.

Recommendation 5

The select committee finds that under section 1 of the guidelines applying to media camera operators in the Legislative Assembly chamber, cameras should only begin to film when the Speaker enters the chamber and takes the chair.

The select committee recommends that the Media Guidelines be amended to state that the television media camera operators set up their cameras for filming before the first ringing of the bells at 9.23 am each sitting day. Television media camera operators should then be required to leave the chamber and be permitted to return to the chamber to commence filming when the Speaker enters the chamber and proceedings begin.

Response: The Government supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

The select committee finds that it is in the interests of both the party making a complaint of a breach of the Media Guidelines and the party who is alleged to have committed the breach that a formal complaint-handling process is established that resolves complaints fairly and expeditiously.

The select committee recommends that the formal complaint-handling process proposed by the Speaker in the revised draft Conditions for Media Access to the Parliamentary Precinct dated February 2008 be established as soon as possible.

Response: The Government supports this recommendation and notes that these guidelines are proposed to be inserted into Standing Orders and therefore refers finalisation of these proposed Guidelines to the Standing Orders Committee. Further, the Government will refer to the Standing Orders Committee, the question of appropriate adjudication/enforcement of these Guidelines including the role of the Members Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Recommendation 7

The select committee finds that under Australian copyright law, television media who use their own cameras to capture the vision of the proceedings of parliament own the copyright to the vision. Therefore, vision captured by the media cameras which is in breach of the Media Guidelines can be rebroadcast without recourse by the Parliament.

The select committee recommends that the Media Guidelines be amended to establish that, as a condition of entry of the television media cameras into the chamber, copyright of any vision of the proceedings of parliament captured by the television media is assigned to the parliament. A copy of all such vision is to be lodged with the Speaker's Office at the end of each sitting day.

Response: The Government supports enforceable guidelines, will seek legal advice and will also consult the Standing Orders Committee and relevant media organisations to determine appropriate measures.

Recommendation 8

The select committee finds that guidelines by which the television media are permitted to film the proceedings of the parliament deserve express recognition in the Standing Orders of Parliament.

The select committee recommends that the guidelines by which the television media are permitted to film the proceedings of the parliament be incorporated into the Standing Orders by schedule.

Response: The Government supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 9

The select committee finds breaches of the guidelines by the media when filming the proceedings of parliament to be a serious matter which should be reflected in the penalties that are instituted.

The select committee recommends that the penalties section in the Media Guidelines be amended to apply to each of the media 'pool' cameras on the floor of the chamber, not to individual media outlets, with the penalties for breaches being:

- First breach – access to the chamber by all media cameras be withdrawn for one sitting day;*
- Second breach – access to the chamber by all media cameras be withdrawn for three sitting days;*
- Breaches thereafter – such other penalty as decided by the Speaker.*

Access to the parliamentary broadcast is to be retained by all television media outlets.

Response: The Government supports this recommendation, but refers to the response to recommendation 6.

Recommendation 10

The select committee finds that timely access to an audiovisual news report of the proceedings of parliament by all Queenslanders, including those living in regional areas, is integral to participative democracy in Queensland.

The select committee recommends that investigations commence into:

- (a) developing a system capable of providing archived broadcast material on demand;*
- (b) establishing a direct and live feed of the parliament's broadcast to regional media;*
and
- (c) providing secure downloadable recordings of the proceedings of parliament to regional media outlets on a same-day basis.*

Response: The Government supports this recommendation.