



**PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT ON AUDIO/VISUAL
BROADCASTING
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Presented by

**Mr Bob Bloffwitch, MLA,
Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly**

16 November 1999

SUMMARY

It is recommended that -

1. a live feed of all proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be made available to radio, television and print media outlets;
2. the existing guidelines for production and use of the broadcast quality live feed remain;
3. broadcasts of the Legislative Assembly Legislation Committees' proceedings be restricted to the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system. No other Select or Standing Committees' proceedings be broadcast on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system until facilities become available;
4. live proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be broadcast via the Internet as soon as funding is available and that additional funding for the Parliament be provided for this project;
5. the Parliament's Internet Site contain copyright and disclaimer statements in regards to material published on the Site;
6. the Legislative Assembly endorses the provision of excerpts of proceedings to community television subject to the Presiding Officers being satisfied that the cost is reasonable and that funding is available;
7. as soon as funding is available captioning be provided for all proceedings distributed on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system and the Internet but not on live feed provided to media outlets;
8. as soon as funding is available an annunciator channel be established on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system with monitors strategically located throughout Parliament House and its annexes;
9. access to the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system be provided to all members and appropriate staff and that a live feed be provided to enable the Department of Premier and Cabinet to reticulate the proceedings to ministerial, departmental, electorate and Opposition offices;
10. liaison between the Presiding Officers continue, to ensure a high degree of uniformity between the Houses on the rules for televising;
11. the Parliament -
 - (a) be provided with sufficient funds to allow the project to proceed to tender; and
 - (b) implement aspects of the project that can be implemented immediately with little or no cost.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following are members of the Procedure and Privileges Committee -

The Speaker, Hon. George J. Strickland, MLA (Chairman)
The Deputy Speaker, Mr Bob C. Bloffwitch, MLA
Mr Rob F. Johnson, MLA
Mr John C. Kobelke, MLA
Mr Eric S. Ripper, MLA

COMMITTEE STAFF

Mr Peter J. McHugh (Clerk to the Committee)
Mr Doug Carpenter
Mr John D. Mandy

REFERRAL TO THE PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

On Wednesday, 15 September 1999 the Legislative Assembly agreed to the following motion moved by Mr E.S. Ripper and amended by the Leader of the House, the Hon. C.J. Barnett -

That this House requests the Procedure and Privileges Committee to present to the Legislative Assembly a report on access by television and radio stations to video and audio coverage of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and necessary guidelines for such access.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TELEVISIONING SYSTEM

The Parliament of Western Australia's Televising System came to fruition as a result of the previous outdated and unserviceable audio system requiring urgent replacement. Following several reports and reviews between 1992 and mid-1995, a decision was made to implement a televising system with a completion date of the Parliament's Opening Day on 26 February 1996.

The new televising system operated from startup with only a few initial difficulties which involved the new operators getting used to the televising system, the proceedings of each House and operating the system in accordance with the guidelines as determined by the Presiding Officers.

Coverage is now good, given the financial constraints within which the system operates.

EXTENSION OF LIVE COVERAGE OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Following the establishment of the Parliament's televising system in 1996 there has been significant experience to review where live footage of both Houses' Question Time, Opening Day proceedings, the budget speech and other significant events have been released to radio and television media outlets.

2. An expansion of the availability of live feed to include all proceedings ('gavel to gavel') will not create additional difficulties for either the Legislative Assembly or its members. Comments by various members during the debate on the motion to refer the matter to the Procedure and Privileges Committee were noted and the Committee notes that members will need to be aware that cameras may be aimed in their direction at any time of the day if they are next to, in front of, or behind a member who is speaking in the House. There has been no abuse by the media of television footage provided since 1996 and it is unlikely there will be misuse of footage only because of a decision to release all of the Legislative Assembly's proceedings to media outlets.

Recommendation No. 1

That a live feed of all proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be made available to radio, television and print media outlets.

GUIDELINES FOR BROADCASTING OF PROCEEDINGS

3. The Committee has taken into consideration comments made by various members during the debate on the motion which referred this matter to the Committee. While the Committee has noted suggestions by various members that wide angle and roving shots of the Chamber should be permitted, the Committee is of the opinion that the existing guidelines prevent temptation by users of footage to breach the guidelines because the footage is effectively edited prior to its release. This may partly explain why, to date, there have been no breaches of the guidelines. Footage currently produced under the guidelines also allows viewers to easily follow the debate. This has been further enhanced by minor changes to the guidelines which now allow the inclusion of limited interjections from the lead opposite spokesperson. Accordingly the Committee recommends no changes should be made to the existing guidelines (see Appendix "A" for guidelines).

Recommendation No. 2.

That the existing guidelines for production and use of the broadcast quality live feed remain.

BROADCAST OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEES' PROCEEDINGS

4. Given the limitation of existing televising facilities, the Committee recognises the impracticality of broadcasting the proceedings of Legislative Assembly Legislation Committees and recommends that restricted televising of Legislation Committees' proceedings on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system be provided which would be beneficial to members by allowing them to follow from their offices the activities of Legislation Committees.

5. The Committee does not recommend the broadcasting of Standing and Select Committees' proceedings except on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system as it becomes available, although, Standing and Select Committees may, by resolution, admit television and radio media to cover their proceedings. The rules applying to usage of the Parliament's televising system footage also applies to footage filmed by media organisations.

Recommendation No. 3.

That broadcasts of Legislative Assembly Legislation Committees' proceedings be restricted to the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system. No other Select or Standing Committees' proceedings be broadcast on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system until facilities become available.

BROADCAST OF LIVE PROCEEDINGS ON THE INTERNET

6. During October 1998, some Legislative Assembly members had an opportunity to observe a trial broadcast of Legislative Assembly proceedings on the Internet. While the result was encouraging, the cost of implementing this project was considered to be too high. Alternatives are now available and the potential cost has fallen in recent times. The Committee is further encouraged by the successful June 1999 launch of the House of Commons live broadcast of its proceedings on the Internet. The Committee encourages members to view the House of Commons' proceedings on the Internet at www.tvontheweb.com/channels/parliament/index.html

7. The Committee agrees that broadcasting of the Legislative Assembly's proceedings on the Internet should be a priority as it will allow constituents anywhere in Western Australia, who have access to the Internet, to follow the proceedings of Parliament. Users of the live proceedings site should have the option of either audio and visual or audio only which allows the user to listen to

the proceedings while undertaking other tasks. Accordingly the Committee recommends that additional funding be provided to the Parliament for the establishment of this service.

Recommendation No. 4.

That live proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be broadcast via the Internet as soon as funding is available and that additional funding for the Parliament be provided for this project.

INTERNET SITE COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER STATEMENTS

8. The Committee sought from the Crown Solicitor's Office advice re suitable copyright and disclaimer statements. They have advised that similar statements, with minor modification, to those currently on the Internet Site for Hansard would be suitable for use in relation to instantaneous broadcasting of Parliamentary proceedings on the Internet. The statements could be as follows -

“ COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Western Australian Parliament materials, including internet pages, documents and on-line graphics, audio and video are protected by copyright law. Copyright of the Western Australian Parliament materials reside with the Parliament of Western Australia. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any commercial purposes whatsoever without prior written permission of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia.

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Recommendation No. 5.

That the Parliament’s Internet Site contain copyright and disclaimer statements in regards to material published on the Site.

PROVISION OF EXCERPTS OF PROCEEDINGS TO COMMUNITY TELEVISION

9. A proposal has been received by the Presiding Officers for broadcast on community television of half hour excerpts of proceedings. That seems to lend itself to the provision of Question Time even though that is not representative of the bulk of the Assembly’s work. While the Committee believes it is desirable to have the Legislative Assembly’s proceedings broadcast on community television, the initial cost was excessive. Excerpts will need to be ‘packaged’ with lead in and conclusion titling and some costs will be incurred for that process. The Presiding Officers should continue negotiations and if there is a significant reduction in cost, excerpts of proceedings should be broadcast on community television.

Recommendation No. 6.

That the Legislative Assembly endorses the provision of excerpts of proceedings to community television, subject to the Presiding Officers being satisfied that the cost is reasonable and that funding is available.

CAPTIONING OF PROCEEDINGS

10. A proposal to implement a captioning system on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system has already been investigated but not yet funded. Captioning will be beneficial in keeping members, Ministers, staff and visitors fully informed of the proceedings before each House, including the speech time remaining for the member who has the call. Information provided through a captioning system will assist users of the proposed live broadcast of proceedings on the Internet. The broadcasting media will continue to receive the edited output from the Parliament's televising system, without the captioning, allowing them to caption as they wish.

Recommendation No. 7.

That as soon as funding is available captioning be provided for all proceedings distributed on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system and the Internet but not on live feed provided to media outlets;

ANNUNCIATOR CHANNEL

11. An annunciator channel on the Parliament's closed circuit televising system should be established to allow members and staff to easily access information about the daily program for each House, Committees' activities and meetings and other general information. Information could be accessed by members either on their own computers or TV monitors in their Parliament House offices or a combination of both. This channel should run on the system of monitors placed in public areas for the general public and the system should be extended to cover the main public areas of the parliamentary buildings.

12. Part of the information for the annunciator channel could be generated by the proposed captioning system.

Recommendation No. 8.

That as soon as funding is available an annunciator channel be established on the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system with monitors strategically located throughout Parliament House and its annexes.

ACCESS TO BROADCASTS WITHIN PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT

13. If maximum benefit is to be obtained from the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system, all members' offices in Parliament House and appropriate parliamentary staff should have access. This could be achieved by either expanding reticulation of the existing televising system within Parliament House and its annexes or through the use of a media software package on members' and staff computers or a combination of both. The Committee agrees that whatever method is selected, it should be relatively simple and easy to use by both members and staff.

14. Financial arrangements for reticulating captioned live feed of proceedings to ministerial, departmental, electorate and the Opposition offices will be met by the Premier and Cabinet Department.

Recommendation No. 9.

That access to the Parliament's internal closed circuit televising system be provided to all members and appropriate staff and that a live feed be provided to enable the Department of Premier and Cabinet to reticulate the proceedings to ministerial, departmental, electorate and Opposition offices.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

15. The Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council have continued to co-operate on the establishment and operation of the Parliament's televising system. In particular, the Presiding Officers and the Management Executive Committee have adopted a uniform approach to the rules which apply to televising and it is desirable that uniformity continue. This Committee agreed that the Speaker discuss the issues in this report with the President prior to the report being finalised in order to ensure that uniformity continue as far as possible.

Recommendation No. 10.

That liaison between the Presiding Officers continue, to ensure a high degree of uniformity between the Houses on the rules for televising.

PROJECT COSTS

16. The estimated cost of implementing the recommendations for the Legislative Assembly in this report are as follows -

Item	\$
• Live feed of all parliamentary proceedings with tapes retained for 4 weeks and limited editing of special events (per annum)	10 000
• Live proceedings via a link from the Parliament's Internet Site	20 000
• Internet Provider setup costs	10 000
• Provision of excerpts of proceedings to community television (per annum)	23 000
• Captioning system (including inflationary factor for years 98/99 & 99/2000)	60 000
• Annunciator system/data channel (including inflationary factor for years 98/99 and 99/2000)	<u>33 000</u>
Subtotal	156 000
• 10% contingency for minor variations and movements in currency exchange rates	<u>15 600</u>
Total	<u><u>\$171 600</u></u>

17. The cost of broadcasting for both Houses of Parliament would be less than double because some facilities would be shared.

18. The Committee supports the provision of funding so that the project can go to tender. In the meantime, those aspects of this report which can be implemented with little or no cost, including full availability to the media of the Legislative Assembly proceedings in the Chamber, should be implemented immediately.

Recommendation No. 11.

That the Parliament -

- (1) be provided with sufficient funds to allow the project to proceed to tender;
and
- (2) implement aspects of the project that can be implemented immediately with little or no cost.

APPENDIX A

TELEVISIONING GUIDELINES

These guidelines were adopted in 1996 by both Presiding Officers after discussion with the Presiding Officers' Televising Advisory Committee. The guidelines were then tabled in each House by the respective Presiding Officer.

GUIDELINES FOR CAMERA OPERATORS

1. As a general principle cameras should focus on the Member with the call. Shots should be no closer than 'head and shoulders'.
2. Fine tuning or variations to depths of field at the discretion of the operator is acceptable.
3. Wide-angle shots of the Chamber may be used during Divisions and Question Time. Sparing use of the wide-angle shot may be used at other times.
4. Reaction shots of a Member are not permitted.
5. In the event of unparliamentary behaviour or a disturbance on the floor of the House, the camera is to focus on the Chair or a slightly wider angle shot of the Chamber which incorporates the Chair and the Clerks at the Table but which does not show the incident.
6. No close-up shots of Members' papers shall be permitted.
7. Instructions from the Speaker in relation to the operation of the sound and vision equipment in the Legislative Assembly shall be observed.

CONDITIONS FOR BROADCASTERS

Conditions

Access to the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly for the broadcast of proceedings is subject to an undertaking to comply with a number of conditions. Non-compliance with the conditions may incur penalties for stations including withdrawal of access for such time as is appropriate. If it appears that the conditions may have been breached, that matter will be considered by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The conditions are:

1. Source of Recording

Broadcast and rebroadcast may occur and recordings may be made only from the official composite vision and sound program provided by the Parliamentary Televising Unit.

2. Fair and Accurate Reporting

Program material shall be used only for the purposes of fair and accurate reports of proceedings, and shall not be used for:

- (i) political party advertising or election campaigns;
- (ii) satire, ridicule or denigration;
- (iii) commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising.

3. Balanced Reporting

Reports of proceedings shall be such as to provide a balanced presentation of differing views.

4. Withdrawn Remarks

Remarks which are subsequently withdrawn may be rebroadcast only if the withdrawal is also rebroadcast.

5. Sale of Program Material

No program material may be sold to any person or organisation without the written permission of the Speaker.

6. Speaker's's Instructions

The instructions of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, in respect of broadcasting, shall be observed.

**GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS TO VIDEO RECORDINGS OF
PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM MATERIAL**

Video recordings of program material may be made available on a cost recovery basis to any person on request to the Parliamentary Televising Unit, subject to the following conditions.

Program material is to be used only for the purposes of:

- (a) providing fair and accurate reports of Legislative Assembly proceedings; or
- (b) providing information about the proceedings and operation of the Legislative Assembly,

and shall not be used for:

- (c) political party advertising or election campaigns;
- (d) satire, ridicule or denigration;
- (e) commercial advertising.”.