

From: "Hudson, Phillip"

Date: Wed, 28 Nov 2012 16:50:54 +1100

Subject: Important - New media rules for Parliament House

Dear Gallery Colleagues,

The Speaker Anna Burke and President of the Senate John Hogg have today released new media rules for Parliament House. This is the result of a review that has taken more than a year. The Press Gallery committee was involved in various meetings and discussions. The rules will apply from February 5 next year. The Gallery committee is not happy with every change (and I will discuss some details below) but has had significant input and is pleased with many of the final decisions.

An important change is that the rules will also apply to MPs and their staff, as Anna Burke said in Parliament today.

The new rules are attached, including colour maps showing where we can film and take photos without permission, with permission and not at all. Please read.

The biggest issue of disagreement is a new clause saying that vox pops with members of the general public in the precinct are banned. We strongly disagree. The Presiding Offices said there were complaints from members of the public and a strong feeling from MPs to impose this ban. We consider it to be a ridiculous curb on democracy at the Parliament. We believe we should be allowed to approach members of the public and politely ask for an interview and if they say no we move on – the same rules that apply in any public place. We are hopeful this issue can be re-visited.

The existing rules on interviewing people in private areas of the building without permission, such as Aussies, is unchanged.

Another specific new rule is that photographs cannot be digitally manipulated.

The number of photographers allowed in the House of Reps chamber has been increased from 5 to 20, but there are still limits in each Gallery and permission is still required as is current practice. The number in the Senate remains at 5. Only accredited photographers may take photos. Using phones and devices is banned. We can still take photos of any MP in the Reps chamber at any time. The Senate rule remains the Senator with the call.

Our request to have TV cameras in the chambers has not been accepted but we continue to push for a trial. We are also confident we will get a locked head-on feed of dispatch box. The new rules say it is available 'on request' but some digital changes being made will hopefully soon make it automatic. Stay tuned.

I urge you to have a good look at the maps and section 4 of the report that discusses the areas and conditions of filming and photography. This covers courtyards, the Blue room, Mural Hall, committee rooms, chambers etc. There are some slight changes to existing rules and if you have any questions

please come to me.

Filming is allowed outside the Ministerial, Reps and Senate doors and we can film people, even if they don't want to be filmed. But we can't force them to have doorstops and shouldn't stick cameras in their faces. The Presiding Officers also want to make sure no one is followed into the entry and security areas.

The rules set out the dress code in the chambers. It says a tie should be worn in the Reps, but this will not be required and will be changed.

A new section of the rules deals with penalties for breaches. There are no new penalties. The Presiding Officers have always had the powers to impose the penalties that are listed – and more. But they are spelled out in more detail than previously. Please note the Presiding Officers can suspend the pass of any individual or the Press Gallery licence holder (ie your organisation). There will be a right to appeal.

Please let me know if there are any concerns or thoughts you have on the new rules. Anna Burke and John Hogg have said they are prepared to consider any further changes to these rules.

Phillip Hudson
Press Gallery President