



The Honourable Sue Hickey MP
Speaker of the House of Assembly
Parliament House
Hobart Tasmania 7000
By email: sue.hickey@parliament.tas.gov.au

18 October 2018

Dear Madam Speaker,

I write to express the great concern of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the professional association for Australia's journalists, over the new guidelines for journalists working at Tasmania's Parliament issued by you.

The guidelines represent an outrageous assault on press freedom, undermine the role of the media in carrying out legitimate scrutiny of the work of the state's elected representatives, and hinder the dissemination of news and information to the people of Tasmania.

The rules effectively ban journalists from working in many areas of the Parliament, impede the work of journalists as they seek to carry out their duties and responsibilities, prohibit media filming and photography by stifling and/or censoring what can be photographed and when, impose barriers to curtail MPs and the media from interacting and exchanging information, and prevent the media from reporting on the activities and behaviour of the elected politicians in the People's House.

The role of the media is to scrutinise and report on the powerful. It is a role that is vital to maintaining a healthy functioning democracy by ensuring the media is able to report legitimate news stories in the public interest. These new rules represent the most egregious attack on the work of a parliamentary press gallery in this country and are not worthy of an Australian parliament.

I urge you to immediately rescind these new rules and restore the ability of journalists to do their vital work of informing Tasmanian communities about what their Parliamentarians are doing in their name.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Murphy
Chief Executive