



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Speaker's Rooms
Hobart*

19 October 2018

Mr Paul Murphy
Chief Executive
Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance
PO Box 723

Dear Mr Murphy,

Thank you for your letter of 18 October last regarding media guidelines that apply in the House of Assembly of Tasmania.


First, may I say that I fully support the vital role of the media you have properly described: to scrutinise and report on the powerful in order to maintain a healthy functioning democracy and to report news stories in the public interest. I note your concerns about the guidelines, however, I assure you, that the document that was distributed this week contains nothing 'new', it is simply the first time the rules, protocols and directives that have been in place for decades have been consolidated into one document. It was thought that such a consolidation would actually be a helpful reference to assist journalists, particularly those new to Parliament House and was certainly not intended to be a prescriptive assault on journalists going about their work. The guidelines do not prevent journalists from undertaking their important role within Parliament House, the media will continue to have the same access they have always had and as stated, the areas in which the media are permitted to film and take photographs remain the same. The long standing protocols and rules in place are there to ensure a balance between reporting of Parliamentary proceedings and ensuring Members of Parliament and other building occupants are provided with a level of privacy which, should be expected in any workplace, and that Members are not obstructed in going about their duties whilst in Parliament House. You will find that the guidelines are quite consistent with those applying in other Australian jurisdictions.

The House of Assembly is absolutely committed to its proceedings being open and transparent which is reflected by the investment in live streaming of the proceedings each day through the Parliament's website, of public Parliamentary Committee meetings and the publication of the verbatim record of the House in *Hansard*.

The publication of these guidelines clearly came as a surprise to many journalists and members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery to whom it was distributed and despite, as I said above, there being 'nothing new' in them, I think the reaction quite clearly shows first, that there is little knowledge of the existing long-standing protocols and second, that the time has come for a review. To that end I

will be holding a round table discussion with senior journalists in Tasmania on Thursday, 30 November 2018 with a view to finding the right balance to ensure the above can be achieved while taking into consideration the evolving nature of journalism and concerns raised by local journalists.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Hickey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hon. Sue Hickey MP
Speaker