



Media statement

7 October 2011

Breach of rules for filming of Parliament

Following a breach of the House's rules for the filming of the proceedings of the House, the Speaker of the House of Representatives has suspended the privileges of the *New Zealand Herald's* membership of the Parliamentary Press Gallery from Monday 10 October to the dissolution of Parliament on 20 October 2011.

The Parliamentary Press Gallery's own rules recognise that its members must not infringe any of the House's Standing Orders. On Wednesday 5 October the *New Zealand Herald* published an article including a picture of a protestor who attempted to leap from the gallery into the Chamber during the general debate. The Standing Orders expressly prohibit the filming of interruptions of the House's business from the gallery.

The Speaker regards the breach seriously and says "it gave him no option but to take action to make it very clear that such incidents are not to be filmed under any circumstances". "The breach was considered and deliberate" he said.

The purpose of the rule, which is common to many parliaments, is to discourage such protest actions. "The New Zealand Parliament is a very open one and it is important to our system of parliamentary democracy that it remain so. Actions such as the *New Zealand Herald's* publication put at risk that openness. Most other parliaments have had to erect glass barriers in their galleries for this very reason." "We have not" the Speaker said "and I want it to remain that way".

The *New Zealand Herald* was not prevented from reporting the incident, nor is it in any way prevented from reporting during the period of the suspension. The suspension relates to the privileges members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery have of free access to the parliamentary precincts and the Press Gallery. The Speaker said

“there is no intention to prevent the *New Zealand Herald* from using its facilities in its offices at Parliament, provided access to them is properly facilitated”.

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