

Statement from Phillip Coorey, political editor of the AFR:

Clearly we would all prefer if no such demands were placed on drops but that's the prerogative of the dropper. At the end of the day, we're not forced to write it so it is about, first, choosing to inform the reader and, second, getting around that restriction in the most effective and balanced way so as to write the most informative story possible, even anticipating what the reaction will be.

The no third party comment edict means the reporter cannot solicit reaction from the opposition, stakeholders etc until the embargo lifts, which is usually 10.30pm, meaning that reaction flows in pretty quickly after that point. In the interim, that's why it's important to contextualise as much as you can.

"Drops", be they speeches, policy announcements, reports from regulators or whatever, are a small but regular feature of covering politics.

As a reporter, the only question is will reporting the drop be of net benefit to the readers and often that answer is yes because the counterfactual would be to not inform them. And given the speed of the modern news cycle, the responses come pretty quickly.

Nor should reporting drops be a case of simple regurgitation. One should use one's institutional knowledge to contextualise the information, such as why is the announcement being made, what is the political imperative or pressure behind it, does it represent a backflip on a previous position etc.