



Guide to lobbying

July 2010

Think  before you vote

This guideline has been produced on how to identify (and thereby avoid) some of the pitfalls which prevent effective lobbying. Unless specifically identified, this lobbying guide is aimed at governments (Federal, State and Local) though it can be easily applied to other organisations and groups.

What is lobbying and who can do it?

Lobbying is the art of successfully advocating change to policy by providing compelling and supporting information or argument. Lobbying will generally present an alternative point of view. Lobbying can be carried out by individuals acting alone or on behalf of organisations.

Your issue

To lobby effectively, you must become very knowledgeable about all aspects of the issue and collect information such as:

- Is it caused by lack of funding or policy – or both? Check out existing policies/ programs/funding. These may not be easy to find but are often available on the Departmental websites, particularly at Commonwealth level. You need to be able to say what is wrong and what needs to be changed.
- How many people does this issue affect?
- Are others working on this issue?
- Who are the decision-makers; organisations, trade unions, political party, community groups, local government, state government or federal government
- Who would be opposed to change? You should recognise that your views are not necessarily welcome, and that there will be opposition. Proposals are often challenging decisions already made and existing policies. These may serve the interests of other groups who will oppose changes. The person being lobbied may be looking for ways of undermining or ignoring what you are saying. They may decide that they do not want to cause a fuss or tread on the toes of some other interest group with more power.
- What arguments can be presented why change should be made? Try to find solutions for the problems you raise. If nothing else, you then make them think it through by having to answer your proposals in detail and argue against your suggestions.
- What facts can be collected to support a change?

The Campaign Plan

The project guidelines of “**who**”, “**what**”, “**when**”, “**where**” and “**how**” are useful tools in preparing a campaign.

Who to lobby – identify all key stakeholders, including those who may be opposed to change. Information must be prepared to counter arguments against changes. Networks matter! People who have influence because of their status and/or power can use this to promote their issues.

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What to lobby about – you need to be really clear about what you want and information must be prepared to capture different aspects of the issue. It can be a human rights issue AS WELL AS poor public policy or a funding issue. These different aspects may be given a different weight in the arguments, but one or all will find favour with different people.

When to lobby – can start a campaign at any time, but effort can be optimised by recognising the decision-making processes. In all organisations, including government, budget setting is done at a particular time of year. Requests for funding should be done within the formal processes. Lobbying for policy change however can commence with specific opportunities, such as; Advisory Councils and Committees, Parliamentary Committees, Public Inquiries, Interdepartmental Task Forces, political party policy-making, Caucus and Party-Room decisions Accords and Compacts. Of course, lobbying at election time can be particularly effective!!

Where to campaign – there are many different arenas in this technological age. To increase political pressure and a desire for change however, needs public approval and this generally means the attention of the media or to put the issue out into the public arena.

How to campaign – Tools. These are many and varied:

- Letters and submissions
- Personal letters or form letters
- Petitions to parliament or to local government
- Leaflets
- Telephone campaigns
- Public meetings
- Meeting candidates or politicians or key stakeholders
- Street theatre
- Rallies and marches
- Letters to the editor
- Talkback radio
- Articles in journals, newspapers
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Email newsletter

Gaining support – remember that having a just cause will not necessarily mean that you will be successful and that you should consider having your campaign endorsed by other groups, such as trade unions or community groups. Very strong community support will give your campaign more power.

Contact the [WEL office](#) if you would like more information on the policy-making processes of government.