

# THE AEU GUIDE TO LOBBYING

## the do's and don'ts of successful lobbying

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### CONTENTS

Why lobby? .....	Page 2
Parliamentary Structures and Processes Explained.....	Page 2
Planning Your Lobbying Exercise .....	Page 3
The Meeting .....	Page 4



# WHY LOBBY?

## **Why a lobbyists' kit?**

- Lobbying is a crucial element in the political process
- If you are going to lobby, you need to maximise your effectiveness
- Lobbying can form part of a broader political campaign
- A concerted lobbying campaign can be a means of involving members in your Union's activities

## **Lobbying in the policy-making process**

- Policy is driven in large part by pressures arising from organised groups in the community
- Lobbying provides a channel through which two-way communications can take place between policy-makers and interest groups
- There are various points in the political process where lobbying can be effective – to get an issue on the political agenda or to intervene at some stage in the legislative process
- But remember – at the end of day, the issue for elected policy-makers is votes. How will taking up the issue you raise affect voters' intentions?

# PARLIAMENTARY STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES EXPLAINED

- The Senate and House of Representatives have different roles and the members of each House have different interests and priorities. MPs (in the Lower House) have clear interest in their own electorates while Senators tend towards broader policy concerns.
- Senate Committees are pivotal to policy-making and legislation, and Senate Estimate Committees provide invaluable opportunities to seek information about the workings of government. Members of these Committees are often good lobbying targets
- The process by which legislation goes through the Parliament is complex. An understanding of the steps in the legislative process can improve lobbyists' effectiveness. (See Section 3 of the Kit for detail).
- Tactics such as parliamentary questions can bring crucial information to light; and speeches made in Parliament can get an issue – and facts – into the public arena.
- Parliamentary privilege has both a positive and negative side. It can allow allegations to be made and information to be brought out without risk of reprisal, but it also places obligations on all those involved in parliamentary processes, including those appearing before parliamentary committees and inquiries.

# PLANNING YOUR LOBBYING EXERCISE

## **Lobbying campaigns**

- Lobbying can be one-off and carried out discreetly
- Large, concerted, well-publicised lobbying campaigns, though, can be very effective
- These need to be well-organised and coordinated, with training and briefing for those taking part and high-quality handouts prepared

## **Who to lobby**

- Choosing the right target for your lobbying is important
- Is your issue a State issue, or a Federal Government responsibility?
- At certain times, your target should be Ministers and Shadow Ministers, while at others you should go to backbenchers, local members and key party opinion leaders
- The policy advisers of Members and Senate can be useful people to know and to lobby
- Sometimes it is appropriate to lobby bureaucrats – especially when dealing with the technical or other detail of policy and legislation

## **Timing your lobbying**

- Your own campaign's imperatives will influence you when you lobby
- But you also need to take account of the Parliamentary timetable and politicians' commitments
- Try to avoid the last three months of the year
- Remember the parliamentary summer and winter recesses
- Get hold of a parliamentary sitting schedule and plan your lobbying accordingly

## **Preparation for your meeting**

- Do your homework on the politician and his/her electorate
- Research the policy history of the relevant party or parties on your issue
- Prepare briefing material with care – be succinct, and avoid a 'shopping list' approach
- Set out clearly what you are asking the politician to do



# THE MEETING

## Contacting the politician(s)

- Start the process with a formal letter stating the issue concisely
- Follow up with a phone call
- If you are refused, know when to give up
- Confirm the meeting in writing, including name of those who will be attending from your organisation

## Your team

- Usually, it is best not to lobby alone – two or three is good
- Be disciplined: have a leader
- Do not include in your team people who cannot observe discipline
- Dress neatly and appropriately

## The meeting itself

- Do not overstay your welcome – keep the meeting as brief as possible
- Be prepared for interruptions
- Do not argue
- Remember – be concise, and state clearly what you want the politician to do

## Confidentiality

- Be scrupulous in observing any undertakings you make to keep information or opinions confidential
- Parliamentary privilege applies to certain documents related to formal parliamentary processes and you will not be given access to these until they are formally released

## Follow up

- Follow up requests for further information from the politician and send (selected) material you think might be of interest. Do this promptly.
- Make sure that your organisation's and your own contact details are left with the politician
- Stay in touch, providing updates on your campaign and issues



THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING