

# Political Lobbying Project: Wider Regulatory Issues Hui

Summary of Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice facilitated engagement hui with Māori and Iwi on issues with political lobbying

21 September 2023

## Agenda

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1. Wā tīmatanga
2. Karakia
3. Mihimihi and Waiata
4. Whakawhanaungatanga (see attendee list annex 1)
5. Kōrero – Māori perspectives on political lobbying
6. Wā whakamutunga
7. Karakia

## Introduction: Why we held this hui

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8. In April 2023, the Prime Minister announced several steps to introduce greater transparency around lobbying at Parliament. He commissioned the Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) to undertake a review of the different policy options for regulating lobbying activities.
9. This hui was held online on 21 September 2023 with Māori representatives of organisations identified in **Appendix 1**. The aim of the hui was to:
  - 9.1. Share information about initial scoping work done by the Ministry.
  - 9.2. Discuss issues related to political lobbying in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly those that are important for Māori, in order to inform the way forward for the work.
10. The Ministry outlined its approach to its work in a [presentation](#). It noted that a key focus is transparency, with summaries of all meetings, including this hui posted online.

11. The Ministry noted that discussions had also been held in August and September 2023 with other groups who have an interest in this work, including academics, interest groups (including those interested in transparency and integrity), industry and professional associations, government relations consultants and companies. Some issues relevant to Māori had been raised at those meetings and the Ministry shared a summary of these points (see **Appendix 2** for the list of points).

### **Kōrero: Feedback on the introduction and presentation given by the Ministry**

#### *Attendees' initial responses to the Ministry's presentation*

12. The presentation given by the Ministry did not resonate with the attendees. They said they struggled to stay engaged during the presentation and commented that it lacked a cultural narrative further reducing their ability to remain connected.
13. A pātai was asked about the slide in the presentation that summarised points made in the other meetings that were relevant to Māori (see **Appendix 2** for the list of points). Attendees wanted to know who made the points at the other meetings. The Ministry said these points were made by people who were either Māori or wanted to make sure that Māori issues were properly recognised in the work.

#### *Attendees' views on the process that needs to be followed for the work going forward*

14. The kōrero yielded valuable suggestions on how to engage Māori going forward, such as:
  - 14.1. More effort is needed to engage with Māori in this work and that it is important to engage with Te Arawhiti and other Ministry colleagues to ensure that Māori voices are properly included.
  - 14.2. Attendees asked if any rangatahi had attended the other hui that had been held as they make up 20% of the Māori population and should have a voice. The Ministry said that it had not yet held hui with rangatahi in the initial scoping work and agreed that this would be an important group to engage.
  - 14.3. One attendee pointed out that consideration would need to be given to engaging with wider groups including post settlement governance entities (PSGEs), hapū trusts and wider whānau. "I'm concerned some of our rūnanga are not on this call."

#### *Timeframes for the mahi*

15. In response to a pātai about the timeframes for the work, the Ministry noted the Prime Minister had said that a review of the policy options for regulating lobbying activities would be a longer-term piece of work, while the development of a voluntary code of conduct would have a shorter timeframe. Attendees expressed concern that the timeframes for the regulatory work may be too long and that "low-hanging fruit" should be fast-tracked. They added that there should be urgency in supporting the needs of Māori and other New Zealanders.

## **Kōrero: The issues associated with political lobbying for Māori**

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16. The group discussed issues for Māori associated with political lobbying in response to the following two key questions posed by the Ministry:

16.1. What does political lobbying mean to you?

16.2. What are the issues that need to be addressed for Māori?

17. Conversation traversed a number of different ideas and examples. These are summarised in thematic form in the two sections below.

### **What does political lobbying mean to you?**

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18. The Ministry asked the group what political lobbying means to them. Attendees spoke of the influence that te ao Māori has on their understanding of the term. Points made were:

18.1. Lobbying is a consequence of a democratic system where elected people are entrusted to make decisions, and lobbying is a process to influence decision makers on policies that impact the community.

18.2. The importance of integrating te ao Māori into the definition of lobbying.

18.3. There is a difference in the Pākehā interpretation and te ao Māori understanding of lobbying. Lobbying stems from the English political system and is not a familiar concept for all attendees.

18.4. The need to change the industry from “people who walk in one world – not our world – to people who walk in both worlds.”

19. Attendees also spoke about their experience of influencing decision makers. One person spoke about advocating for protection of their lake. Another spoke about how Māori are some of the best lobbyists that New Zealand has and how they have worked to address impacts of colonialism. “Looking back, the majority of the things that we have had to advocate for are the undoing of things that the Crown has done to Māori.”

### **What are the issues that need to be addressed for Māori?**

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20. The Ministry asked if there were any issues for Māori or Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) that should be explored as part of the political lobbying work. The responses shared by attendees have been grouped below under three main principles that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) has suggested should guide countries’ policy work on political lobbying. These are fair access, transparency, and integrity.

## Fair access

### *The rights of Te Tiriti partners*

21. Attendees were clear that the rights of rūnanga to engage as a Te Tiriti partner must not be confused with lobbying. “They have that right and I [as a lobbyist who has whakapapa Māori] do not.”

### *Systematic imbalances for Māori*

22. Attendees said that if people say there are no issues with political lobbying it is “because they have been systemically favoured” and that Māori do not feel comfortable participating in the lobbying industry: “We sit in the rooms dominated by people who don’t look like me and don’t act like me.”
23. Attendees also discussed how important topics for Māori are often seized on and made into a political issue. For example, they talked about how the *He Puapua* report on how to achieve UNDRIP goals had been used by lobbyists with a wider agenda as a “political football”. “Political lobbying has not enhanced Māori at all. How do we get onto this waka?”

### *Breaking down barriers to access*

24. An attendee spoke of the reality that there are barriers and privileges to being able to be a lobbyist because of the access that people have to the system. Another shared a possible solution to this, describing mahi undertaken around the research project, *Ātea*, a place where people can listen and share perspectives in a digital format<sup>1</sup>. “This would assure people that a te ao Māori perspective is not being diluted through a singular conversation between a lobbyist and the decision maker they are meeting with.”

## Transparency

### *Openness is part of te ao Māori*

25. Attendees said that in a te ao Māori context, discussion is always transparent because it is shared with everyone. “We are open and transparent people and there are no hidden agendas. We want to be kanoahi ki te kanoahi, and to be up-front. One person said that statements are made on the marae ātea, and whakataukī are used to anchor the merit of what’s being said. “It is heard by everyone. I have never heard of a lobbyist in a marae as it is not how our culture operates.”

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<sup>1</sup> [Ātea - Digital Marae - HITLabNZ](#)

### *Indirect lobbying techniques*

26. One attendee expressed concern about a lobbying technique known as astro-turfing or “trojan-horsing” where entities are dishonest about who is behind media that aims to influence the general public. They shared an example of an article discussing a website that appeared to be targeted at Māori but was backed by a politically motivated organisation that was actually challenging rangatiratanga. They said that this behaviour was offensive and went against kaupapa Māori.

### **Integrity**

#### *Kawa and tikanga guide Māori ethics and processes*

27. Attendees spoke of the importance of kawa and tikanga, underpinned by whakapapa as “a wonderfully simple” framework that guides connections and processes, and that political lobbying ethics really need to be considered from this te ao Māori view. An attendee spoke of the different, positive approach they took to their lobbying mahi underpinned by Māori values. “Everything is led from my values. I see this as a duty, to serve the kaupapa. Lobbying is inherently good and I want this industry to be better in the future than when I entered it.” They explained what a positive approach to lobbying meant from a Māori perspective. “When doing things through kaupapa Māori values it’s about looking through the eyes of your own people and justifying what you’re doing for your people. If you cannot justify what you are doing, then you should not be doing it.”
28. Attendees wondered if the issue is not so much about how Māori fit into the lobbying system, but more how the system could better integrate with te ao Māori. “I’m absolutely sure you’ll find an elegant and robust solution to this [political lobbying] work by drawing on the learnings from te ao Māori.”

### **Next steps**

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The Ministry thanked attendees for sharing their views and noted that a summary of the notes from the hui would be circulated for review prior to publishing online.

## Appendix 1: Attendee list

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29. Attendees were invited from a list of 68 Māori organisations and rūnanga and those who had registered their interest in the project.

Lisa Sheppard	Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice
Elisha Connell	Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice
Nadja Colic	Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice
Anitaa Morris	Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice
Kim Harris	Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice
Holly Bennett	Awhi
Jesse Thompson	Awhi
Clayton Burney	Individual
Dan Tekanawa	Tuhono Trust
Brandi Stafford	Tuhono Trust
Selena Hunt	Muaūpoko Iwi Authority (Levin)
Piri te Tau	Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust

## Appendix 2

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Some issues relevant to Māori were raised during discussions Te Tāhū o te Ture Ministry of Justice held in August and September 2023 with other groups who have an interest in the political lobbying work. The slide below given in the presentation summarises these points.

# Wider discussion: Māori issues

### Key points made in other meetings on Māori issues

Political lobbying is a **Pākehā concept**, Māori may look at this differently

**Whanaungatanga:** Open discussions and relationships behind the scenes are needed

**Iwi should not be defined as lobbyists**, they have absolute access as Treaty partner

As Treaty partner, there is an **obligation for the Crown to consult and listen to Māori** – regardless of lobbying by others

**Māori can wear different hats** e.g. revolving door: “there is difference between someone who leaves the public service to work for their Iwi, compared to leaving to be a lobbyist for a commercial entity”

**Te ao Māori could be reflected** in any codes or regulatory work

