

Political Lobbying Project

August 2023 Update

Welcome to our second newsletter for the Ministry of Justice's political lobbying project!

Why we are doing this project

To get a better idea of why we are doing this work, the approach we are taking and things to think about, see an overview [here](#).

First meetings on a voluntary code held

We've now held three initial meetings with government relations consultants on the concept of a voluntary code of conduct for "third-party" lobbyists. These were constructive and will help guide our work. The next step is to develop and discuss options for a voluntary code. You can read a detailed summary of what we heard [here](#).

A TASTE OF WHAT WE HEARD IN THE FIRST MEETINGS

- On balance there was support for a voluntary code but there is more work to do to develop options for a code's content, who it would apply to and how it would be administered.
- Participants thought a code might help to improve public trust in the work lobbyists do. However, some questioned how effective a code was likely to be when, in their view, New Zealand does not have the problems with lobbying that other countries do.
- Most agreed that the code should aim to improve public trust in any organisation who tries to influence decision-making rather than singling out any one group. They thought a code could also include industry and union bodies, interest groups, academics and businesses.
- The code could take different forms. It could be a simple code of ethics or one that sets enforced rules and requirements for registration.
- Suggestions for administering a code included lobbyists developing their own code, inviting an existing industry association to support a code, or using a government agency such as the Ministry of Justice or the Public Service Commission.

Upcoming meetings on wider policy work

In August and September we are holding meetings to explore what different stakeholder groups think the wider issues associated with political lobbying are. These discussions are a first step towards the development of wider options for regulating political lobbying.

If you would like to join one of these meetings email electoral@justice.govt.nz.

| Date | Time | Group |
|--------------|-----------------|---|
| 3 August | 3.00pm-5.00pm | Academics and think tanks |
| 10 August | 3.00pm-5.00pm | Interest groups (interested in transparency) |
| 11 August | 10.00am-12.00pm | Peak bodies, industry and professional associations |
| 17 August | 10.30am-12.30pm | Peak bodies, industry and professional associations |
| 18 August | 10.00am-12.00pm | General interest groups |
| 31 August | 10.30am-12.30pm | General interest groups |
| 7 September | 3.00pm -5.00 pm | Individual businesses |
| 8 September | 10.00am-12.00pm | Government relations consultants |
| 12 September | 10.30am-12.30pm | Government relations consultants |
| 21 September | 10.00am-12.00pm | Māori/Iwi |

About these updates

We send these updates every few months to keep you informed on progress and about opportunities to engage.

If you know of anyone else who would like to receive these updates or attend upcoming meetings, please pass this on to them. Anyone can [register their interest](#) on the Ministry of Justice political lobbying project webpage. These updates will also be posted online.

If you do not wish to receive these updates, unsubscribe.

Mā te wā
The Project Team