

Political Lobbying Project

29 September 2023 Update

Welcome to our fourth newsletter about the Ministry of Justice's political lobbying project.

Themes emerging from our meetings on lobbying issues in New Zealand

A huge thank you to the more than 100 people who helped us explore the many issues to consider in the policy work.

We heard a wide range of views from academics and think tanks, general interest groups, interest groups focussed on transparency, industry and professional bodies, companies and government relations consultants. We also heard from tangata whenua about te ao Māori perspectives.

We've highlighted a few interesting themes below. For more, visit our [political lobbying webpage](#) for a fuller overview, and detailed summaries of the meetings.

These issues are complex. Many overlap with other government work areas. The next step is to prepare a draft issues paper that will draw together our background research and the issues raised at the meetings. This paper will help us develop future policy options.

ISSUES RELATED TO THE FOUR OECD PRINCIPLES GUIDING THIS WORK

FAIR ACCESS

Larger, better resourced organisations are getting better access to decision-makers

People don't feel that the government's public consultation processes are providing fair access

TRANSPARENCY

New Zealand's "mates calling mates" culture lacks transparency

New Zealanders are complacent about indirect harmful lobbying techniques such as pretending to be a grass-roots organisation, AI-generated submissions or use of misleading op-eds and research

INTEGRITY

There is no common understanding of expected ethical lobbying practices

The "revolving door" between political and lobbying roles creates distrust

ACCOUNTABILITY

There is limited monitoring of lobbying activities with no dedicated watch-dogs, compounded by low-funded independent media.

WIDER POINTS MADE

The focus should be on harmful lobbying activities rather than trying to define lobbyists

There's a difference between perception versus reality. With little data on lobbying harm in New Zealand, we don't know if there is problem or not. However, negative perceptions of lobbying may be eroding trust in democracy

Decision-makers need to be included in the scope

Te ao Māori perspectives on lobbying need to be integrated into this work

Survey on a code of conduct – there is still time to respond

Thanks also to everyone who answered our survey on the approach to a political lobbying code of conduct. We would like to hear from more people, and there is still time to respond before the survey closes on 1 October. A summary of the responses will be posted online after the survey closes.

Your responses will inform our wider regulatory analysis.

Please [complete the survey](#)

Find out more

More information on this project can be found on the Ministry of Justice [Political Lobbying webpage](#).

About these updates

We send these updates regularly to keep you informed on progress and about opportunities to engage.

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

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

Mā te wā
The Project Team