



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

LOBBYING CODE OF CONDUCT

2019

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1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 Respect for the institutions of Government depends to a large extent on public confidence in the integrity of Ministers, their staff and senior Government officials.
- 1.2 Lobbying is a legitimate activity and an important part of the democratic process. Lobbyists can help individuals and organisations communicate their views on matters of public interest to the Government and, in doing so, improve outcomes for the individual and the community as a whole.
- 1.3 In performing this role, there is a public expectation that lobbying activities will be carried out ethically and transparently, and that Government representatives who are approached by lobbyists can establish whose interests they represent so that informed judgments can be made about the outcome they are seeking to achieve.
- 1.4 The *Lobbying Code of Conduct* is intended to promote trust in the integrity of government processes and ensure that contact between lobbyists and Government representatives is conducted in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty. Lobbyists and Government representatives are expected to comply with the requirements of the *Lobbying Code of Conduct* in accordance with their spirit, intention and purpose.

2. APPLICATION

- 2.1 The *Lobbying Code of Conduct* applies in conjunction with the Australian Government *Statement of Ministerial Standards* and other relevant codes.
- 2.2 The *Lobbying Code of Conduct* creates no obligation on the part of a Government representative to have contact with a particular lobbyist or lobbyists in general.
- 2.3 The *Lobbying Code of Conduct* does not operate to restrict contact with Government representatives where the law requires a Government representative to take account of the views advanced by a person who may be a lobbyist.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 “Client”, in relation to a lobbyist, means an individual, association, organisation or business who:
 - (a) has engaged the lobbyist on a retainer or other income to make representations to Government representatives; or
 - (b) has, in the previous three months, engaged the lobbyist to make representations to Government representatives, whether paid or unpaid.
- 3.2 “Communications with a Government representative” includes oral, written and electronic communications.

- 3.3 “Government representative” means a Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, a person employed or engaged by a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*, an Agency Head or a person employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*, a person engaged as a contractor or consultant by an Australian Government agency whose staff are employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* or a member of the Australian Defence Force.
- 3.4 “Lobbying activities” means communications with a Government representative in an effort to influence Government decision-making, including the making or amendment of legislation, the development or amendment of a Government policy or program, the awarding of a Government contract or grant or the allocation of funding, but does not include:
- (a) communications with a committee of the Parliament;
 - (b) communications with a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary in his or her capacity as a local Member or Senator in relation to non-ministerial responsibilities;
 - (c) communications in response to a call for submissions;
 - (d) petitions or communications of a grassroots campaign nature in an attempt to influence a Government policy or decision;
 - (e) communications in response to a request for tender;
 - (f) statements made in a public forum; or
 - (g) responses to requests by Government representatives for information.
- 3.5 “Lobbyist” means any person, company or organisation who conducts lobbying activities on behalf of a third party client or whose employees conduct lobbying activities on behalf of a third party client, but does not include:
- (a) charitable, religious and other organisations or funds that are endorsed as deductible gift recipients;
 - (b) non-profit associations or organisations constituted to represent the interests of their members that are not endorsed as deductible gift recipients;
 - (c) individuals making representations on behalf of relatives or friends about their personal affairs;
 - (d) members of trade delegations visiting Australia;
 - (e) persons who are registered under an Australian Government scheme regulating the activities of members of that profession, such as registered tax agents, Customs brokers, company auditors and liquidators, provided that their dealings with Government representatives are part of the normal day to day work of people in that profession; and
 - (f) members of professions, such as doctors, lawyers or accountants, and other service providers, who make occasional representations to Government on behalf of others in a way that is incidental to the provision to them of their professional or other services. However, if a significant or regular part of the services offered by a person employed or engaged by a firm of lawyers, doctors, accountants or other service providers involves lobbying activities on behalf of clients of that firm, the firm and the person offering those services must register and identify the clients for whom they carry out lobbying activities.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Code does not apply to any person, company or organisation, or the employees of such company or organisation, engaging in lobbying activities on their own behalf rather than for a client, and does not require any such person, company or organisation to be recorded in the Register of Lobbyists unless that person, company or organisation or its employees also engage in lobbying activities on behalf of a client or clients.

3.6 “Lobbyist's details” means the information described under clause 5.1.

3.7 “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department.

4. NO CONTACT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND UNREGISTERED LOBBYISTS

4.1 A Government representative shall not knowingly and intentionally be a party to lobbying activities by:

- (a) a lobbyist who is not on the Register of Lobbyists;
- (b) an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist to carry out lobbying activities whose name does not appear in the lobbyist's details noted on the Register of Lobbyists in connection with the lobbyist; or
- (c) a lobbyist or an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist to carry out lobbying activities who, in the opinion of the Government representative, has failed to observe any of the requirements of clause 8.1(e).

5. REGISTER OF LOBBYISTS

5.1 There shall be a Register of Lobbyists that shall contain the following information:

- (a) in the case of a person, company or organisation who conducts lobbying activities, or whose employees conduct lobbying activities on behalf of a client with a Government representative:
 - (i) the business registration details, including trading names, of the lobbyist including, where the business is not a publicly listed company, the names of owners, partners or major shareholders, as applicable;
 - (ii) the names and positions of persons employed, contracted or otherwise engaged by the lobbyist to carry out lobbying activities;
 - (iii) whether a person referred to in clause 5.1(a)(ii) above is a former government representative (as defined in clause 3.3), and if so, the date the person became a former government representative; and
 - (iv) subject to clause 5.2, the names of clients on whose behalf the lobbyist conducts lobbying activities.

5.2 A lobbyist is not required to list a body corporate as a client on the Register if disclosure of the lobbyist’s relationship with the body corporate might result in speculation about a pending transaction involving the body corporate and that transaction has not previously been disclosed by the body corporate in accordance with its continuous disclosure obligations under Chapter 6CA of the *Corporations Act 2001*. Where the lobbyist relies on this clause, they must advise any Government representative they are lobbying of such reliance and also the

anticipated date when they will add their client to the Register and the Lobbyist must add the name of their client to the Register promptly once the market sensitivity has passed.

- 5.3 A lobbyist wishing to conduct lobbying activities with a Government representative must apply to the Secretary to have his or her lobbyist's details recorded in the Register of Lobbyists.
- 5.4 The lobbyist shall submit updated lobbyist's details to the Secretary in the event of any change to the lobbyist's details as soon as practicable and within 10 business days after the change occurs.
- 5.5 The lobbyist shall provide to the Secretary, within 10 business days of 31 January of each year, confirmation that the lobbyist's details are up to date.
- 5.6 The lobbyist shall provide to the Secretary, within 10 business days of 30 June 2009 and each year thereafter, confirmation that the lobbyist's details are up to date together with statutory declarations for all persons employed, contracted or otherwise engaged by the lobbyist to carry out lobbying activities on behalf of a client, as required under paragraph 10.1.
- 5.7 The registration of a lobbyist shall lapse if the confirmations and updated statutory declarations are not provided to the Secretary within the time frames specified in clauses 5.5 and 5.6

6. ACCESS TO THE REGISTER OF LOBBYISTS

- 6.1 The Register of Lobbyists shall be a public document that is published on the website of the Attorney-General's Department.

7. PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 Persons who, after 6 December 2007, retire from office as a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary, shall not, for a period of 18 months after they cease to hold office, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 18 months in office.
- 7.2 Persons who were, after 1 July 2008, employed in the Offices of Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* at Adviser level and above, members of the Australian Defence Force at Colonel level or above (or equivalent), and Agency Heads or persons employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* in the Senior Executive Service (or equivalent), shall not, for a period of 12 months after they cease their employment, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 12 months of employment.

8. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- 8.1 Lobbyists shall observe the following principles when engaging with Government representatives:
- (a) lobbyists shall not engage in any conduct that is corrupt, dishonest or illegal, or unlawfully cause or threaten any detriment;
 - (b) lobbyists shall use all reasonable endeavours to satisfy themselves of the truth and accuracy of all statements and information provided by them to clients whom they represent, the wider public and Government representatives;
 - (c) lobbyists shall not make misleading, exaggerated or extravagant claims about, or otherwise misrepresent, the nature or extent of their access to Government representatives, members of political parties or to any other person;
 - (d) lobbyists shall keep strictly separate from their duties and activities as lobbyists any personal activity or involvement on behalf of a political party (noting that there are certain restrictions on registration at 10.1(c) below); and
 - (e) when making initial contact with Government representatives with the intention of conducting lobbying activities, lobbyists who are proposing to conduct lobbying activities on behalf of clients must inform the Government representatives:
 - (i) that they are lobbyists or employees of, or contractors or persons engaged by, lobbyists;
 - (ii) whether they are currently listed on the Register of Lobbyists;
 - (iii) the name of their relevant client or clients, including a client whose identity is not required to be made public under clause 5.2; and
 - (iv) the nature of the matters that their clients wish them to raise with Government representatives.

9. REPORTING BREACHES OF THE CODE

- 9.1 A Government representative who becomes aware of a breach of this Code by a lobbyist shall report details of the breach to the Secretary.

10. REGISTRATION

- 10.1 The Secretary shall not include on the Register the name of an individual unless the individual provides a statutory declaration to the effect that he or she:
- (a) has never been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 30 months or more;
 - (b) has not been convicted, as an adult, in the last ten years, of an offence, one element of which involves dishonesty, such as theft or fraud; and
 - (c) is not a member of a state or federal political party executive, state executive or administrative committee (or the equivalent body).

- 10.2 Where an individual was registered on the Register on or before 20 September 2013 and the person was, at that time or subsequently, a member of a state or federal political party executive, state executive or administrative committee (or the equivalent body) the individual may remain on the register until 20 March 2014 but not beyond that date.
- 10.3 The Secretary may remove a lobbyist or a person who is an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist, from the Register of Lobbyists if, in the opinion of the Secretary:
- (a) the conduct of the lobbyist or of the employee, or a contractor or person engaged by the lobbyist to provide lobbying services for the lobbyist, has contravened any of the terms of this Code;
 - (b) the registration details of the lobbyist are inaccurate;
 - (c) the lobbyist fails to answer questions within a reasonable period of time relating to the lobbyist's details on the Register or the lobbyist's lobbying activities (in particular questions relating to allegations of breaches of the Code) or provides inaccurate information in response to those questions; or
 - (d) the registration details have not been confirmed in accordance with the requirements of clauses 5.5 and 5.6
- 10.4 The Secretary shall, after 20 March 2014, remove the name of an individual from the Register if satisfied that the individual is a member of a state or federal political party executive, state executive or administrative committee (or the equivalent body).
- 10.5 The Secretary shall not remove a lobbyist or a person who is an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist, from the Register under clause 10.3 and 10.4, unless the Secretary has advised the lobbyist or the individual concerned of the reasons why he or she proposes to remove the lobbyist or individual concerned from the Register and given the lobbyist or individual concerned an opportunity to state why the proposed course of action should not be followed.
- 10.6 The Secretary:
- (a) must not register a lobbyist, a person who is an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist, if the Attorney-General, in his or her absolute discretion, directs the Secretary not to register the lobbyist or the individual; and
 - (b) must remove a lobbyist, or a person who is an employee of a lobbyist, or a contractor or person engaged by a lobbyist, from the Register if the Attorney-General, in his or her absolute discretion, directs the Secretary to remove the lobbyist or the individual from the Register.
- 10.7 The Attorney-General shall not issue a direction under clause 10.6 to the Secretary unless the Attorney-General has advised the lobbyist or the individual concerned of the reasons why he or she proposes to issue the direction and given the lobbyist or the individual concerned an opportunity to state why the direction should not be issued.