

Dear Sir / Madam.

Please refer attached copy of my previous submission, the thrust of which is that Tasmania should not seek to reinvent the wheel but should adopt the best of what is available from other Australian jurisdictions, for example either the Commonwealth or NSW system. It should then provide the appropriate training to lobbyists and Government officials including Ministers, advisers and bureaucrats and then it should ensure compliance. Unique regulatory and administrative arrangements for Tasmania, with no training and no oversight to ensure compliance will achieve nothing.

I support the inclusion in the definition of lobbyists of inhouse company employees and industry association employees who are lobbying for their employer. The same should apply to former Premiers, Ministers, Ministerial staffers and senior bureaucrats who seek to “escape” the current system by calling themselves “Strategic Advisers” or similar, while in many cases effectively operating as lobbyists for their clients. This makes a joke of the current system, as does the Government’s own actions of engaging Public Relations firms to supply various media services and political support both within and outside of election campaigns. If Government truly wants to increase transparency, scrutiny and ethical conduct, then it needs to get its own house in order as well as regulating the activities of others.

I fail to understand how “peak bodies sharing their budget submissions” isn’t considered lobbying. In my view it is a perfectly reasonable and important activity, but it is clearly aimed at influencing the four activities listed under the definition of lobbying.

Similarly, the exclusion of “attendance at dinners and functions, including party political fundraising events” is another interesting recommendation of the review. While I regularly attend such events (for both major parties) with clients, the key objective of most attendees is to inform those persons present of the impact of Government policy in the real world, as distinct from the “filtered” advise they invariably receive through the bureaucracy. While there is nothing sinister about these events and the issues discussed are typically high level and not company specific, I find it hard to see how they are not captured under the four activities listed as lobbying.

Finally, I disagree with the recommendation to exclude “Opposition and independent members and their staff” from the proposed new reporting arrangements due to “unnecessary degree of administrative burden”. As a registered lobbyist I encourage my clients to have an open dialogue with all elected representatives, not just Government Ministers, advisers and bureaucrats. This is an important part of the democratic process and hopefully can inform better decision making across the parliament and government. These meetings are no different to meetings with Ministers, advisers and bureaucrats and should therefore be treated in the same way for reporting purposes.

Kind regards,

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