



Lobbying Guide

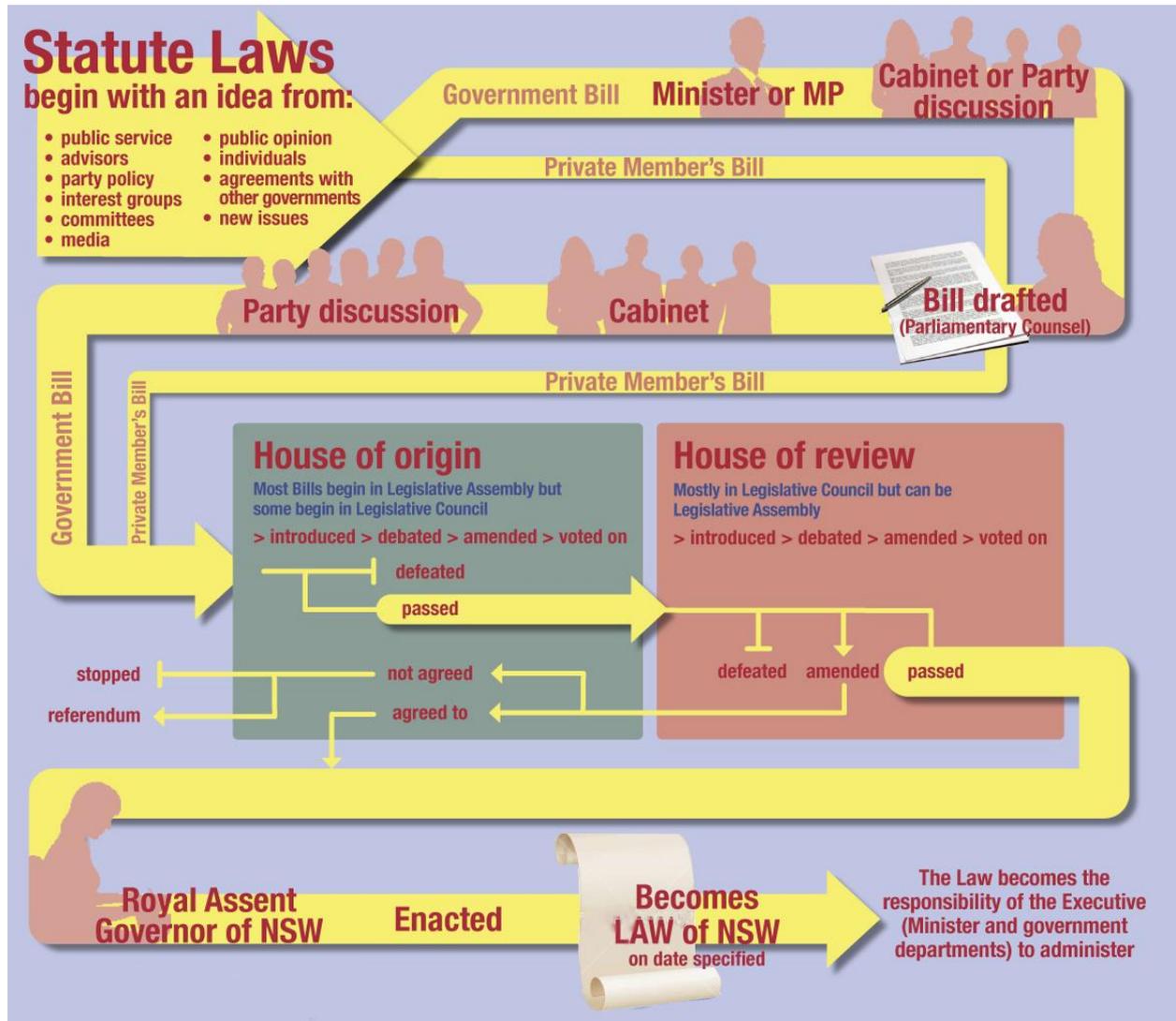
Why Lobby?

- Lobbying is a crucial element in the political process and to lobby effectively you will need to maximise your effectiveness. Lobbying involves the membership and the majority views of any organisation.
- Policy of government is driven in large part by the pressures that groups place upon our decision makers. Lobbying should always provide a two way channel of communication by which either side can effectively listen and understand each other. There will be points along the way where issues can be raised and dealt with.
- Remember however that the political system is geared towards votes. What issues do you raise that will impact on the voter?

Keys to Lobbying

- Your plan needs to be well timed, well executed and most of all well-coordinated.
- You need to understand whom you should lobby. Sometimes you should lobby Ministers and their advisors, other times you should lobby backbenchers and opposition and when it comes to more technical issues of a proposed bill or current act, you should lobby departmental heads and advisors.
- You should take into account the parliamentary timetable and plan well in advance if you wish to see a member of parliament, especially Ministers. You should also try to avoid the last 3 months of the year.
- Get hold of the parliamentary timetables and plan well.

How does an idea become law?



*Image courtesy of NSW Parliament Education Unit

Do your research

- You should research the member of parliament you plan on lobbying. Understand their values and why they became involved in politics.
- Research the policy platforms of the party you plan to ask for help from. Do they support your ideals?
- Prepare any briefing materials and don't go to a meeting with the shopping list approach. Be succinct and straight to the point.
- Set out clearly what you are asking the politicians to do.

The Meeting

- Set out in the first instance a formal letter stating the issues concisely. Then follow this up with a phone call. Don't call the day after you sent the letter. Give it a week or two. Remember you are not the only group writing to the elected representative.
- If you get a meeting confirm it in writing and provide the names of those from your group that are attending.
- Everyone that attends the meeting from your group should be disciplined. Meetings never fare well if one of your group is a rogue and decides to raise the roof.
- Don't overstay your welcome. Politicians and their staff have short windows, usually 30 mins. Be punctual, polite and straight to the point. Most of all, don't argue and don't be rude. Diplomacy is the key.

After the Meeting

- Follow up with a thank you note.(Please don't send this note with a bottle of Grange)
- In your note confirm the points that were agreed to.
- Provide the politician with any updates and changes that they should know about.
- Keep your group informed.
- If everyone knows the same information, then everyone shall be informed and on the same page.

Final Notes

- 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.
- 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.