

Mueck, Brendon

From: Abigail Walters
Sent: Monday, 7 April 2008 7:32 AM
To: Lobbyists Register
Subject: Lobbying from Religions
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o Whom It May Concern:

I am greatly concerned at reports in the media, and having read the code myself, that the lobbying code requires all lobbyists *except* those who belong to a religious group to register their interests. I am aware through personal knowledge in addition to media reports that religious groups are actively campaigning and meeting with not only politicians, but staff of both opposition and Government in the hopes of creating relationships that will result in actions, policy decisions and directions that will favour the views of that religious group/s.

I strongly disagree with a code that requires all but religious groups to register – I am aware that there are sundry other groups who are also excluded but am disturbed at the level of influence religious groups have and seek to have with the Government. I do not think it fair to exclude the more powerful lobby groups simply because they cloak themselves with the "respectability" of their religion. I understand that "cults" are not considered religions and will therefore be required to be registered; however, as this is a subjective determination, I fear this will still allow extremist religious groups' unfettered access to politicians and Government.

If the intention of this code is to ensure an open and transparent process for all lobbyists to access politicians and government representatives then it **MUST** also include religious groups or not be imposed at all. This is discrimination in its rawest form. If it is to be a transparent process for one group, it must be a transparent process for all groups. Why should religious groups be granted a privileged status?

Thank you for noting my comments. I would be happy to comment further if needed, please find my contact details below.

Yours truly,

Abigail Walters

