

White, Alex

From: John O'Callaghan
Sent: Friday, 2 May 2008 2:40 PM
To: lobbyistregister@pmc.gov.au
Subject: Comments on the Draft Lobbying Code of Conduct

The Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Canberra ACT 2601

I am a registered Director of a limited liability company involved in lobbying on behalf of a number of corporate clients. I have examined the proposed register of lobbyists and welcome most of its provisions. I offer some comments on a few of the provisions, as follows.

First, in regard to provisions 5.4 and 5.5, there appears to be something of an anomaly. I agree that a lobbyist should provide lobbyist details at commencement of the scheme and again every 12 months thereafter. However, for a one-person firm such as mine, with a stable client base, I think it is unnecessary to have to report so frequently as per the requirements of 5.4. It would make sense, though, to require a report to the Secretary whenever a new client were added or an old client removed from a small firm's clientele.

Second, in regard to provision 10.3, I can understand the need to have a mechanism to not register certain persons on the register. I'm concerned, however, that this can be done at the "absolute discretion" of the Cabinet Secretary where there appears to be no provision for giving reasons for doing so.

Also, it would make sense, I believe, that in situations where the Cabinet Secretary were to direct the Secretary not to register an individual, either that person or the lobbying company which employs that person should have a right of appeal to an impartial authority, perhaps the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Adding these provisions would assist to ensure fairness and even-handedness in dealings between the Commonwealth and individuals seeking to be involved in lobbying the public sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Lobbying Code of Conduct.

Your sincerely

John (Johnno) O'Callaghan