

IDENTIFYING AND ANALYSING LOBBY TARGETS

- ten things for the potential lobbyist to remember

- Attention junkies** MPs (Electorate and List, opposition and Government, in different ways) are driven by media coverage.
- Expert on a few things** Given the complexity of it all, most MPs specialise – mainly on what they did (and possibly plan to do) in life on the outside.
- Spectator** Most MPs from whatever party are less powerful than they think they are.
- Friendless** MPs work in a highly competitive atmosphere, finding friendships are not easy to make or maintain. Also, all MPs realise just how unpopular their profession is and seek constructive mutual lobby relationship.
- Human, after all...** MPs are also women or men, Maori, gay, Aucklanders, parents..... looking to life after Parliament. Average time there 6 years. Fearful of losing their job.
- Kangaroo** MPs spend their days and lives hopping from one issue to another, from one place to another.
- The paper war** MPs are overwhelmed by an endless stream of faxes, letters, E-mails, newspaper clippings, internal memos and telephone messages (to a variety of telephone numbers).
- Not knowing who to believe....** On many issues, MPs receive directly contradictory information arguing opposite points of view, both of which use facts selectively.
- The same vices...** MPs don't demand that information comes to them in a different way to other people. But the pressures they are under do mean that if the information is to make that special impact, it needs to have that extra edge.
- Whipped (and manifestoed and coalesced) into submission** The Party *whipping* system in Parliament, Coalition and other agreements and General Election manifestos – even Party policy – takes many decisions out of the hands of individual MPs.