

HCIA

Hearing Health Advocacy Forum

Engaging with Government



Hearing Aid
Audiometrist Society
of Australia
APPROVED PROFESSIONAL BODY



Engaging with Government

'It is about a relentless focus on building strong relationships'

- Politicians want to do the right thing but they are under a lot of pressure. If you understand how the process works, you can help them get the information they need to do the right thing.
- A minister's or senator's time is keenly sought. No matter how good you are, in the end it's all a blur to them.
- Know what you want. It is very frustrating for ministers to have people come in to ask for something without a specific objective. The "ask" must be realistic.
- Get what you want by making people feel they *want* to do it, not that they *have* to do it.

How do you start?

Know what you want; package it properly; use every opportunity to engage – local members, caucus committees, parliamentary committees; use the budget process; develop a briefing program; attend dinners, functions, policy forums and conventions, and make other informal contacts.

Who do you target?

The people to focus on are the same for government and opposition. Ministers, parliamentary secretaries, members of the Expenditure Review Committee, members of cabinet, key members of the outer ministry; members of "Friends of" groups, individual members who have shown an interest in your issues; members of House of Representatives and Senate committees in relevant portfolios; key party organisers.

How do you do it?

Be known, be trusted; have access; educate politicians about your issue, get them to own it and, in time, influence the policy debate. Understand that this is different from other areas of business management – the timeframes are longer and often you will be unsuccessful.

Your approach needs to be:

- Consistent, with clear objectives
- One that adds value to policy
- Professional
- Proactive not defensive

General rules of engagement with government

Be honest and transparent; know your audience; governments act in the public interest – frame your representations that way; know what you want to achieve, but be flexible; use different methods of communicating with government and, importantly, follow up.

Dr Michael Wooldridge
Former Federal Minister for Health and Ageing

About the Hearing Care Industry Association

The Hearing Care Industry Association represents Australia's hearing healthcare retailers who, between them, care for thousands of hearing-impaired Australians in more than 440 locations around the country. Its members employ more than 500 professionals in teams of clinicians and client service officers to provide excellence in hearing care.

The clinicians are industry-trained and government-accredited specialists and they work with the latest technology. Many are members of international groups which deliver hearing services to clients around the world.

As an association, HCIA aims to provide a unified voice to all stakeholders about the needs of hearing-impaired Australians and this includes government, the bureaucracy, the media, professional bodies, and the public.

The Hearing Care Industry Association

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