

ASAP! Systemic Advocacy Project
Notes from lobbying workshop
13th May 20010

GRANT ROBERTSON, LABOUR MP FOR CENTRAL WELLINGTON.

Brevity always wins

- M.P's get on average 100 letters (Snail mail) per week
- Briefly state the issue
- Highlight the **values** behind your concern
- Provide a policy solution (what do you want them to do)
- Finish with a call to action

Timeliness is critical

- Find out when the decision is being made -lobby at the correct point of the policy cycle
- October and November of the previous year is the key time to lobby anything to do with budget or expenditure

Well researched, clearly sourced and referenced

- Be careful if you are being selective or only telling one side of the story because that can backfire. If there is a report stating the opposite interpretation it is best to mention it.

Personal

- A face-to-face meeting or actual visit/ experience at your workplace will always have a bigger impact. In general the more personal the contact –the greater the impact
- real life examples or good numbers/ statistics
- A hand written letter will have more impact than a typed letter
- If you do use email- make sure they are single subject emails

Persevere

- Grant gave the example of lobbying for interest free student loans. There was consistent action and lobbying for 10 years before any results were seen.

Legislation

- If you feel strongly enough to make a submission then it is worth doing an oral submission
- You only have 20 minutes and so it is not a good use of your time to simply read out your written submission
- Don't just critique- also talk about what you **would** support in a Bill- provide solutions
- Leave time at the end for questions
- Don't forget the smaller political parties. - They do not have the resource to do much of their own research and are more likely to use/ be influenced by research that you provide.

PART TWO- ALEX HANDISIDE

We are lucky in Wellington to be close to the action politically

It is important to have someone within your organisation or group who stays up-to-date on the issues, for example, listen to morning report; subscribe to the Mental Health Foundation news feed, NZ Herald and Kiwi blog.

Need to get clear on some key issues before you start

- Why doing this?
- Who speaking on behalf of?
- Who has the power?
- Know your audience
- Where is the issue at in the policy cycle?

- Personal stories are a powerful tool for influence
- DHB Funders- have a low attention span; they operate in crisis mode so communication needs to be brief and to the point.
- It is worthwhile to maintain and invest in relationships
- Alex agrees with Grant about the importance of longevity and the need to be in it for the long haul with a consistent message.
- The public can go and observe at select committee hearings, city council meetings and DHB Board meetings. There are examples of submissions on the parliamentary website