

## Advocacy in New South Wales

### The basics: campaigning through public advocacy

Public interest advocacy is one component of a campaign. Depending on the scale or urgency of change you are trying to bring about, it can be used in conjunction with media and communications, non-violent direct action, corporate activism, and community mobilisation. Sometimes Government and regulatory processes deliver important successes that lead to community victory. Other times, they suck you in and monopolise your time so that you are really just feeding the status quo. Discerning the difference is not always simple.

This information is drawn from multiple sources, including Aiden Ricketts' *Activists' Handbook*, NEFA's *Tips for Troublemakers*, both of which are recommended reading.

You might also want to attend a training with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, also highly recommended: <http://www.piac.asn.au/>

## Contents

<b>Getting information .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Understanding the laws and regulations that affect your cause.....	2
Government databases and registers you need.....	2
<b>Processes you need to know.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Agencies .....	5
Parliament and politics .....	6
Development consent – State Significant Development .....	8
EPBC Act referral.....	9
<b>Using information.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Writing documents .....	9
Lobbying.....	12
<b>Further reading and information.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Getting information

To be an effective advocate, the first thing to do is know what you're talking about.

### Understanding the laws and regulations that affect your cause

Acquaintance with NSW environmental law will help you be a better advocate. You can find these laws on [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au) and <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

The legislation website produces weekly summaries of statutory instruments that have been created or brought into force, and exposure bills, bills introduced to parliament, bills assessment to, passed or coming into force, as well as the Gazette, and the status of all statutory instruments and laws.

### Useful laws to know

- Any activity that will cause air or water pollution generally needs an Environment Protection Licence under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (there are exceptions – read the Act to understand them!)
- Any activity that will have a “significant impact” on the environment also requires development consent under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- Exploration and mining for coal is regulated under the *Mining Act 1992* and exploration and production of onshore gas is regulated under the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991* and needs a lease or licence, and an activity approval.
- The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007* outlines what needs to be considered when deciding coal and gas development applications, which activities need development consent and what activities are prohibited.
- Other Acts that might be relevant are the *Forestry Act 2012*, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the *Water Management Act 2000* and *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

### Ideas for campaign opportunities

The licences and approvals issued to environmentally-damaging activities have conditions on them imposed by the agencies responsible. What will these conditions be? Will they protect the values that matter to you? Could they be written in a way that effectively mitigates impacts? Or in a way that provides further campaign opportunities – like timed reviews or mandated publication of monitoring data? Could they be constructed in a way that makes the company less likely to go ahead with the activity at all?

It's quite unusual for these licences and approvals to be refused altogether. What sort of effort, scandal and opposition would be necessary to achieve such an outcome?

## Government databases and registers you need

### The Major Projects register

Major projects which are seeking, or already have, development consent under Part 4, Part 3A or State Significant Development provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act are listed on the

Major Projects register, as are site verification certificates:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects>

### **Plans and policies**

The Department of Planning also has a register of their draft and completed “plans and policies,” which you can access here: <http://planspolicies.planning.nsw.gov.au/> Existing policies can be found here:

[www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation)

### **POEO Act public register**

Activities that cause pollution of air, land or water get Environment Protection Licences (EPLs) to protect them from prosecution under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act. The EPA is required to keep a public register of Environment Protection Licences, which you can search here:

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/prpoeoapp/>

Note that you can search for licences by proponent, location or activity. CSG is listed as “Petroleum Exploration, Assessment and Production” and coal mining as “Coal works” which includes licences for processing and handling of coal. The register includes licences, annual reports from the load-based licencing scheme, summaries of non-compliance and pollution reduction programs.

### **EPBC Act referral database**

If the activity you’re concerned about impacts on matters of National Environmental Significance, it probably also needs to be referred to the Commonwealth under Part 9 of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Federal Department of Environment keeps a register of referrals and public notices given for referred projects which you can access here:

<http://epbnotices.environment.gov.au>

### **The Gazette**

The Gazette is the permanent record of official notices by the NSW Government. There are a number of notices that formally need to be made in NSW in the Government Gazette, like proclamations of new laws and regulations, sale or reservation of crown lands, compulsory acquisition notices, water allocations. There is a dedicated section for mining and petroleum notices which notes applications for new titles and renewal of titles, and several other kinds of notifications. It is published weekly. You can access the current Gazette and browse or search Gazettes published since 2001 here:

<http://legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/epub> - Older Gazettes are available from the State Library.

### **GIPA and disclosure logs**

*General Information (Public Access)* (GIPA) law requires Government agencies to publish or make available to us lots of information as a matter of course, including their annual reports, structure charts, corporate plans and other interesting bits and pieces. If the information you want is not available from any of the sources listed above, it’s a good idea to make contact with the agency to ask them for the information before you lodge a formal GIPA application, but if they won’t give it to you, then you should lodge a GIPA request.

Agencies are also required to keep disclosure logs of information they have already made available via GIPA – some of them publish the whole thing on the disclosure log and these can be interesting places to explore for information.

## GIPA & FOI requests

If you can't get the information you want from the Department you're dealing with, you can submit a request for information under the *NSW Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* or the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)*.

1. Go to the agency website and see if the info is there.
2. Find their "information public scheme" pages, they will list the information officer
3. Write a letter requesting the information. Be as specific as you can – specify titles of documents, types of documents (emails, records of meetings, Ministerial briefings, etc) dates, division or unit that created it, etc.
4. Send the letter, with the \$30 application fee
5. Follow up with phone call if you don't get a response.

Your name  
Return address  
Date

Governance & Information Unit  
NSW Trade & Investment  
GPO Box 7060  
Sydney NSW 2001

### Request for information

We seek access to the following documents under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA)*:

- Any correspondence and records of meetings between the Minister for Trade and Investment and Mr Mark Vaile from March 2011 to the present.
- Any correspondence and records of meetings between the Minister for Trade and Investment and/or the Minister for Energy and Resources and Santos Ltd regarding the Narrabri Gas Project.
- Any Departmental briefing notes regarding the Memorandum of Understanding with Santos Ltd about the Narrabri Gas Project announced in February 2014.

These documents are not related to my personal affairs. Release of these documents is of special benefit to the public generally in accordance with s66 of the *GI(PA) Act 2009* as the public has a special interest in transparency and accountability in decision making regarding mining projects and release of these documents will provide such transparency.

### Tips for GIPAs

- GIPA requests can be costly and time-consuming. Broad sweeps for information run the risk of being refused as "an unreasonable diversion of resources"
- Cabinet information is protected and so is commercially sensitive information.
- When you're writing your GIPA think about what it is you're trying to find – narrow it to times, types of documents, sectors of the agency to be more focused.

## Processes you need to know

In Australia, we have a parliamentary democratic system with three arms of Government that are separated in order to prevent despotism and abuse of power developing. These are:

1. **Parliamentary or legislative arm.** This is the part of Government that makes laws. There are two houses of parliament in NSW and in the Commonwealth, and new and changing laws must pass in both and then receive Royal Assent to be enacted.
2. **Executive arm:** this is the administration of Government by the Cabinet, which is appointed by the party/ies that form a majority in the parliament. In our system, everyone in the executive must also be in the parliament.
3. **Judicial arm – the Courts:** Parliament creates the laws, the Executive administers the laws, and the Courts *interpret* and *enforce* the laws. There are lots of different Courts, including the Land and Environment Court, which has its own legislation.

In addition to these, Government agencies and departments do the work of administering the laws, and other bodies, like the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) that are established by law to perform statutory roles.

### Tips for processes

*It's useful to step back and think about what change your advocacy is seeking: do you want the **existing law applied differently**, through a policy change? Do you want **a new law**, or a **change to an existing law**? Do you want the law **enforced**, or **clarified** by a court?*

## Agencies

NSW agencies provide contacts on their websites, with varying degrees of usefulness. They are a good port of call to get basic information. Who is responsible for what?

- **Department of Premier and Cabinet:** Coordinates policy and reform agenda for the Government. Leads implementation of cross-Departmental policy.
- **Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (aka DOPIE):** development consent, enforcing conditions on consents (except for gas), Gateway process, Environmental Planning Instruments, policies, assessments, strategic planning. This Department is currently a “cluster” that includes the Office of Environment and Heritage, the Division of Resources and Geosciences, and water resource management agencies.
- **EPA:** licences for air and water pollution, including noise (these are called Environment Protection Licences), enforcement of conditions on those for coal, “lead agency” for all gas approvals, contaminated lands.
- **Resources and Geosciences Division of the DOPIE:** mining and exploration titles and their conditions, exploration activity approvals, rehabilitation.
- **Office of Environment and Heritage:** biodiversity assessments, heritage matters, including Aboriginal cultural heritage (for now), concurrence for mining in State Conservation Areas,
- **Department of Industry – Water** is responsible for water licencing, water sharing plans and strategic water policy outside the metropolitan areas.
- **Natural Resources Access Regulator** is responsible for enforcement under the Water Management Act 2000 – conditions on water licences and water sharing rules.

## Parliament and politics

New South Wales has two houses of parliament, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The LA is the lower house, where members sit who have been elected to represent people in local electorates. After the election, a political party or group of parties that can command a majority in the Legislative Assembly forms Government. The Legislative Council is NSW's version of the Senate, or house of review. Members of the LC are elected proportionately across the whole state.

The website for NSW parliament has got lots of information ([www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)). On it you can find contact details and backgrounds of all the members, a calendar of sitting dates, and updates on all the parliamentary processes, most importantly, Bills and Committees.

The Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly both have daily programs to let you see what's scheduled to be debated. Every day, the program includes notices of motion (a member moves a motion commending someone in their community, expressing concern about something, putting something of note on the record, expressing condolence etc) papers (reports from Committees, reports from agencies etc), petitions, Bills, and time for questions and answers. You can generally watch proceedings live online and in person. Both houses also have running text updates on proceedings as the day progresses.

If you want to go back and find anything that happened in parliament, you can search Hansard, which is the formal record of the proceedings.

### Bills

Bills are draft laws introduced by members of either house of parliament. In order to become law, a Bill needs to be passed by a majority vote of both houses. You can search for and keep up to date with the Bills on the website, and find information about who proposed the Bill, what it's for, and its progress through the process of debate and voting.

### Parliamentary Committees and inquiries

Parliament has Committees to help the parliament do its job – to inquire into issues and bills, and perform tasks assigned to them by legislation. There are three kinds of committees: **statutory committees** (formed because there is a law somewhere that mandates it), **standing committees** (ongoing committees established by the parliament with specific roles or terms of reference) and **select committees** (committees formed for a particular task). They can reside in one or the other house of parliament, or be joint committees, with members from both. The Legislative Assembly, for example, has a standing committee on Environment and Planning.

Committees can conduct public inquiries into issues (eg the management of natural resources, sale of public assets or conduct of public agencies) and into Bills that one of the houses has decided needs closer attention. Inquiries are established by a majority vote in the house the Committee belongs to. Once established, committee inquiries can call for public submissions and hold public hearings and they eventually produce a report which is tabled in parliament, usually with recommendations, to which the Government responds.

Every year special hearings are held by Committees called "Budget Estimates" which inquire into the budget and management of the state. Senior public servants and Ministers attend the hearings and answer detailed questions on their portfolios. Sometimes parliamentarians that are members of these committees take suggestions from community groups about matters that should be queried.

## Questions and answers

Parliamentarians can ask questions of Ministers about their portfolio responsibilities. Sometimes they are asked and answered straight away, and sometimes they are questions on notice which take weeks to get answers for. These can be really useful ways of finding out what the Government is doing.

## Cabinet

The executive arm of Government is the Cabinet. This is made up of Ministers given responsibility for administering laws. Who has responsibility for which Acts and which agencies is determined by an Administrative Order by the Governor. You can find these orders on <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

Cabinet makes high level decisions for Government. If you're dealing with a controversial and complex issue, then it's likely that the Minister responsible will not make the decision on her own – the whole of Cabinet may be involved, or a Cabinet committee. Cabinet is subject to strict confidentiality rules. The secrecy of Cabinet processes and its conventions more generally are usually treated with stern respect by politicians and journalists, because it is seen as crucial to functional government.

Environmental issues are not just under the control of the Environment Minister, who generally must get the backing of or overcome objections by Ministers with portfolios related to mining, planning, environment, primary industries, industrial relations and treasury.

## Departmental liaisons, briefings and advices

Government agencies have statutory responsibilities under NSW laws. Which agencies are responsible for which laws is established by the **administrative orders**. All agencies and Departments have liaisons with their Minister – someone whose job it is to go between the minister and the Department. Most of the work of policy development is done by the Department working with directions given to them by the Minister or the Cabinet.

Cabinet makes direction-setting and legislative decisions, Ministers make portfolio decisions, but it's the people in the Department who draft the policies that implement those decisions, so it's very important to know them and talk to them.

If you have a meeting with a Minister, the Department will draft a briefing note for the Minister and her staff ahead of the meeting, outlining the background information and Government's current position. They also draft decision briefs when important decisions are due, outlining what decision they think the Minister should make, and why, and briefs to help Ministers answer questions in parliament and from the media.

### **Campaign ideas for using parliament**

Friendly parliamentarians can ask questions of the Minister and get the answers on the record. The Minister will ask for a briefing on the issue from her public agency. Will they be sympathetic or hostile to the change you're seeking? If there is a media report about it, the Minister might become embarrassed. Perhaps this will make her more open to change? Especially if you have a well-founded argument for how change can be done and have briefed the agencies on it.

Petitions with more than 10,000 signatures are debated in parliament. Often not many parliamentarians participate. If you send letters to them beforehand, the issue might grab their attention

Committee inquiries bring new information to light and make recommendations to which the Government needs to respond. If lots of different organisations of different kinds make similar recommendations to the Committee, it's more likely to make it into their report.

## **Courts**

The Land and Environment Court hears planning and environmental matters. It is part of both the civil and criminal court system in NSW.

Some environmental laws have "open standing" which means members of the public or groups can prosecute breaches of them. Some administrative decisions can be challenged in this way too.

## **Development consent – State Significant Development**

Exploration activities for coal and gas generally do not require development consent, unless there is a significant impact on the environment. Production of CSG and mining for coal, however, both require consent under the *EP and A Act*. These projects are dealt with under Division 4.1 of the Act – State Significant Development. Like the notorious Part 3A of the Act which it replaced, the SSD assessment process is very difficult to intervene in to actually prevent a development from proceeding. If this is your aim, then you will likely need community mobilisation, media, legal and other tactics to assist you.

Stages in securing State Significant Development Consent.

1. Request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements: There are standard EARs currently being finalised, but previously, they were specific to each project. At this stage, the project will be listed on the Major Projects register. The proponent must declare political donations they have made.
2. Application: the proponent lodges their EIS with their application for consent.
3. EIS exhibited: The public and Government agencies make submissions. The Department of Planning may ask the proponent to respond to the submissions that have been made. This response is then also published.
4. Project assessed: The Department of Planning reads the submissions, and writes an Assessment Report.
5. If a political donation has been made or more than 25 objections are made, or the local council objects, then the project is sent to the Independent Planning Commission to determine. If there are less than 25 objections, no objection from local government and no political donations, the Minister determines State Significant Development projects.



## EPBC Act referral

If the project will have a significant impact on a “matter of national environmental significance” protected under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* it also needs to be referred to the Federal Government for assessment and approval under that Act. At the outset, there are public comments sought on referrals, after which the Federal Department of Environment decides if the project is a “controlled action” (ie, needs EPBC decision) and, if so, which protected matters it affects and what form the assessment will take.

NSW has a bilateral assessment agreement with the Federal Government which means that in many cases, the assessment undertaken for the EP&A Act will also serve as the Federal assessment. The current bilateral assessment agreement leaves little power or responsibility with the Federal Department, and makes the NSW Department of Planning responsible for assessing the projects and proposing conditions that meet Federal requirements.

Matters of national environmental significance are nationally-listed threatened species and communities, Ramsar-listed wetlands, migratory species listed under international agreements, World Heritage, National Heritage and water resources (if it’s a coal mine or a coal seam gas project.)

### Campaign ideas for development assessment processes

Assessment processes are a mixed blessing. They create angles for you to mount pressure against a development: submission opportunities, media story opportunities, and legal opportunities. But they can also define the story of your campaign in unhelpful ways, leading towards a sometimes inevitable approval and disappointment from which it can be hard to bounce back.

Think about how to plot a series of activities for your campaign that **keeps your momentum independent of the Government’s and proponent’s processes**, while at the same time using these processes to expose scandals, garner allies and supporters, build the profile of your issue and of course limit or prevent environmental harm.

## Using information

### Writing documents

It’s important to remember that Government agencies are subject to GIPA and FOI laws and that mining companies and other opponents are just as able to use these laws as you are – so do not send emails or other documents to bureaucrats that you would not want made public.

### Letters

You can use letters to request meetings, share information, request actions, invite people to events, or introduce yourself.

Tips for letters:

- Use a letterhead if you have one, and make sure you include a return address and the date, aligned to the right at the top of the page.
- Address the letter to the person you're sending it to using their correct title, and correctly spelled name. You can use CC: (carbon copy) to send a copy of your letter to other people, indicating to the addressee that you've done so. BCC: means blind carbon copy – this means you've sent it without the primary addressee knowing a copy has been provided to someone else.
- Keep letters short – two pages at most is best – and make your request or purpose in writing the letter clear.
- Sign it “Yours sincerely” if you do not know the person you're writing to.

### ***Reports***

Use reports to present detailed information. This could be reporting on field work that you have done, research, analysis or a report on activities undertaken by your group.

Tips for reports:

- If appropriate, include recommendations – and collect these upfront at the end of the Summary, so people can easily see what you're proposing.
- Document the process or method you followed. Is this a literature review? Unique research? How did you obtain the information?
- Include pictures, tables and graphs to illustrate your text.
- Make sure you use citations for all information you obtain from other sources – so that anyone reading it can verify what you're saying.
- Include a date, and a summary.
- Send copies of your reports to decision-makers and allies and follow up with meetings.

### ***Submissions***

Write submissions to have formal input into specific Government inquiries and processes.

*What can submissions do?*

- Writing a submission can be a good way to get yourself across the information you need to be an effective advocate. The details of the project and its impact, or, in the case of policy or legislation, close knowledge of these and their effects.
- Submissions can acquaint Government agencies with your group and its interests and positions. Later, when you ask them for a meeting, they will have some background info on your ideas.
- Submissions can and have made important incremental change. In many instances, mining companies cut corners in their assessment, if you write a detailed submission highlighting these gaps and mistruths, you can impede the project from proceeding, require the company to take more time in the assessment, or change details of the project.
- Submissions on policy and legislation can introduce agencies to consequences of their policies that they had not previously considered.
- You can use substantial submissions to get media attention for your issue, or as the basis for meetings with allies, politicians or agencies.
- A large number of hand written or personal submissions will indicate high levels of interest in a project and hone the government's attention to it.

### *What **can't** submissions do?*

- For a major resource project, a submission from a community group however well-prepared is unlikely to be a defining moment in whether the project is approved or not, though this might be the case for submissions by agencies and local Government.
- Submissions are unlikely to change the broad parameters of established Government policy.

### *Tips for submissions:*

- First, decide how important it is. Sometimes, long and detailed submissions can seriously impeded mining projects or improve a piece of legislation or policy, but they are time-consuming. Are you going to just lodge a one page objection, or dig deep and commit yourself to detail? The answer to this question often depends on whether the problem you're addressing with the submission is political or technical in nature.
- Stick to the terms of reference. It's tempting to write a treatise of the fossil fuel industrial complex, but unless what you're writing is relevant to the regulatory considerations and mandate guiding the person that's reading it, they'll mostly ignore it.
- Situate what you're saying in law and regulation. This requires them to pay attention. Have they followed the guidelines for the kind of document you're commenting on? There are guidelines for EIS's, ecological surveys, conduct of public consultations and all sorts of things. If they haven't adhered to them, you can cause them trouble.
- Include information they must follow up – scientific research they haven't addressed, your original research like surveys or breach reports.
- Send copies of your submission (if it's a detailed one) to relevant decision makers and allies, your local MP, relevant bureaucrats, etc.

### ***Briefing notes***

Use briefing notes to encapsulate complex issues in a short summary, summarise or update on an evolving situation, prepare a person, journalist or organisation with the essential background for an event or meeting, provide the background or starting point for larger research project.

### *Tips for briefing notes:*

- Keep to one page – two at most! Use dot points, short sentences and keep the words to an absolute minimum. Edit for concision more than once.
- Use headings to break it up: Background, Issues involved, Current situation, Action needed etc.
- Be targeted and strong, but keep the language dispassionate and free of brands – the person you give it to can then show the brief to others without revealing it came from you.
- Always try to include a section for “action required” – in a short meeting with a busy person, this is the nub of what they want to know.

### ***Emails***

An email is like a letter, but usually less formal and **infinitely more shareable**. There are different types of emails: you send them to politicians, to supporters, allies and public servants. Each of these need a different tone and different content.

### *Tips for emails*

- Emails are infinitely shareable. You have no control over the words in it once you have sent it. Keep all confidential matters out of emails and never send anything by email that you would be sorry to see on the front page of a newspaper.

- If you're emailing someone in a public agency or Government, remember that your email can be subject to GIPA law and obtained by someone that does not support your cause. Could they use it to damage you or the cause, or damage the person you are sending it to?
- If you're emailing a lot of people with an update or a call to action it's important to get to the point quickly: practice writing the logic of your action, including the outcome you're seeking, the urgency, and the reason why your supporter's participation is important, in one or two sentences: "we need **Minister Roberts** to hear from **people in Cessnock** that we **don't want CSG exploration** in our area **before he makes his decision** on 5 April."
- For supporter emails, keep them short, and repeat the main call to action so they don't miss it.
- For supporter emails, urgent timeframes get better results (24 hours to go!), as do specific actions that relate to something that has already been happening (add Clarence Valley to the list of the ALP's gasfield free council areas!)
- Make sure you include the information people need to do the action: the email address, phone number, proper title and name of the target, dot points to help people think about what they'll say. Ideally, you will also be able to include a way for them to let you know they took the action – tweet it, send a carbon copy to someone in the group, record the conversation on a webform.

## Lobbying

**Warning:** Lobbying bureaucrats, politicians and advisers can be very useful and very frustrating. It can be a complete waste of time, and it can even be dangerous (ie, if you tell someone unfriendly to your cause information they can use to undermine it)

There might be different purposes of your meetings with these people, so it's useful to think beforehand about why you're doing it. Do you want to **share information**, **obtain information**, **establish a relationship**, **demonstrate power** or insight, **influence** a particular decision? Think about who you're meeting, and what they have power or influence to achieve.

If you want to wield influence or demonstrate power, you need to be able to do that. How many people support your cause? Are they people the person you're lobbying cares about? Do you have the power to embarrass them, disrupt their plans, or give them something they want?

Sometimes getting lots of media attention is enough to give you power. Other times, you must show there are real political, commercial or other risks for the person if they don't listen to you. Be honest with yourself about this, because it will help you adopt the most effect tone in your lobbying.

### **Who to lobby?**

**Backbenchers:** backbenchers do not have power over major government decisions, but can play a hugely important role in your advocacy. A group of backbenchers that are sympathetic to your cause can raise your issues in party meetings, seek inside information for you, and wear away opposition to you, like water on stone.

**Public servants:** depending on the scale of your demands, public servants can have a profound influence on your advocacy. You need to know if the relevant bureaucrats agree or disagree with your position. They are the ones writing the draft decisions for the Minister or writing options papers for policy change. They write the answers to your letters! They cannot change Government policy, but have insight into why your change has not already happened.

*Ministers:* The engagement and attention to detail of Ministers varies, as does their meeting style. Some are friendly, some hostile, some challenging, some impassive. Most have policy advisers on whom they rely for advice about the detail and context of what you're saying. Making contact with these advisers can provide you with a crucial avenue for influencing the Minister's decision-making. Ministers move in circles of power and money. *Who you are* makes a big difference to how they hear what you say.

#### *Tips for lobbying*

1. Choose who you're meeting and what you're saying based on that person's interest, background, mandate and powers.
2. Know what you want them to do, and acquaint yourself with whether what you're asking is legally possible, and who can make it happen.
3. Write a briefing note outlining the situation and what you want them to do.
4. Follow-up – write and thank them for the meeting, following up on any actions committed to by you or them.

### Further reading and information

*EDO's Mining Law in NSW*

*Aiden Ricketts' Activists' Handbook*

*NEFA's Tips for Troublemakers*

Advocacy skills training session with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre

*Fixing the government: everybody's guide to lobbying in Australia*, by Katherine Beauchamp

*Campaign Strategy* by Chris Rose