

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT Why? When? How?

**Cooperative Research Centres Association Annual
Conference 2011**

17 May 2011

**GARRIE GIBSON
CPR Canberra**

CPR | Adelaide | Brisbane | **Canberra** | Darwin | Hobart | London | **Melbourne** | Perth | Sydney

t: 02 6239 4022 **e:** g.gibson@cprcomm.com.au **w:** www.cprcomm.com.au

CPR Communications and Public Relations Pty Ltd ABN 94 064 357 544



Why do we need to engage?

1. Money



- Federal Government provides \$180 million a year in funds for CRCs. This has just been cut in the recent Budget.
- A number of State Government Departments & Agencies are partners of CRCs. CRCs need the political support from State MPs as well.

Why do we need to engage?

2. Support for your Centre & its future opportunities

- Every CRC needs political allies who will fight for better financial support from Government, who know about your work & achievements and will sing your praises.



- The CRCA needs every CRC member to build a strong relationship & partnership with your local MP and some Senators. We need CHAMPIONS!

Why do we need to

engage?

What your local MP can do:

- Has direct access to Ministers and PM, as well as senior Executives in departments
- Participates in Caucus Committees that advise Ministers on policy issues and proposed bills
- Participates in Standing Committees that provide recommendations to Government on important policy issues
- Able to speak on important issues in the Parliament in debates and in Private Members Business
- Has the capacity to directly influence the delivery of Government services and funding in their electorates
- Has status and profile within their political party and can have a significant influence on the formulation of Party policy and priorities
- If they are not informed, they cannot act on your behalf

Why do we need to engage?

3. Competition



Australian Institute of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies



National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)



Australian Government
Australian Research Council



- There is a great deal of competition for the Government's Research investments.
- The CRC Program needs to continually demonstrate its achievements and successes to justify tax dollars.

Why do we need to engage?

4. To build other alliances & partnerships

CPR

Government Relations
Media Relations
Issues Management



Australian Food and Grocery Council



- Your local MP is usually well connected into the community, business sector and other levels of Government.
- They can help you to meet potential partners and investors who trust the opinion & judgement of the MP.

Why do we need to engage?

5. To strengthen your public profile

- The support of prominent Politicians builds your profile in the media and with business investors .
- This can help when you are seeking to commercialise your work, convert to a permanent Institute or strengthen international relationships.

CPR

Government Relations
Media Relations
Issues Management



When do we engage?

ALL THE TIME!

- Your local Federal & State MPs, and any Senators who are based near you, should be an integral part of all your PR, Communications events, announcements, presentations.
- You should invite them to be a member of an Advisory Committee, part of your Strategy Committee for your next bid preparation, and part of any team to make presentations to potential partners.
- Their political party is irrelevant to the process of representing & advocating your interests and achievements.

When do we engage?

Guiding Principles

- **“All politics are local”** – Tip O’Neill, Former US House of Reps Speaker
- **“In our system of Government, the squeaky wheel gets the grease”** – Mark D. Cowan, Patton Boggs Lobbyist and Former Reagan Administration Chief of Staff
- **Government won’t know your position unless you tell them**
- **Keep up regular communication with Government – don’t wait for problems to develop**

How do we engage?

Keys to Effective Communication/Lobbying

- Support your proposition with well argued submissions and research
- Make sure that you are ‘in synch’ with the Government’s policy priorities
- Engage support from third parties and relevant media
- Choose your timing for invitations & activities – be mindful of the parliamentary cycle and the media timetable
- Map decision-makers and talk to all relevant parties including cross-benchers

How do we engage?

Building an effective Engagement Strategy

- **Build a matrix of key targets, communications opportunities & strategies, events and announcements, in the local area/region.**
 - Identify the best vehicles for specific target groups: How do you get information and belief into their minds and motivate them to take action in support of your proposition?
- **Make sure the Minister &/or local MP are seeing & hearing stories and approaches about your work & achievements before & after you seek to meet with them. They need to be sensitized to the issue by:**
 - Articles in national & local media
 - Letters from businesses or organisations who have benefited from your work
 - Personal discussions from local community leaders about your successes

How do we engage?

Getting your messaging right!

- You need to draft a clear, concise set of key messages and stick to them. Have a brief paper to leave with the politician when you meet with them and with any other interest group whose support you are seeking.
- When you meet with a Politician, do your research before you go into the meeting:
 - Know their background, interests, previous policy positions on your work.
 - Know their electorate: demographic profile, local facilities, local issues or concerns.
 - Know their Party's policy position and previous decisions on your area
- Be positive; express your admiration for what they have achieved in this policy area or the stand they have taken on an important issue. Tell them you want to work in partnership with them to improve the position for the community, economy or nation.

How do we engage?

Make sure your meetings are successful:



- **Prepare your delegation before the meeting:**
 - Clearly plan the main points you wish to make and who will speak on each point – in most cases you will only have about 20-30 minutes in total for the meeting and you have to provide some time for the MP to respond
 - Do your research and ensure everyone is briefed on the background to the MP
 - Arrive a little early so you have a few minutes to relax and prepare yourself
- **Make sure you get a firm commitment for action:**
 - If they express support for your position, seek a firm commitment to raise the matter with the Minister, in the relevant committee, to speak on it in parliament
 - Ask them to write to you advising you of what they have done and the response they have received

How do we engage?

Follow Up!

•Generate follow up Stories:

- Tell the media of the outcome of the meeting and whatever commitments the politician made
- Get third party endorsement of your position
- Demonstrate continuing community or industry involvement and support through events



• Using other stories to generate coverage:

- Where stories emerge with some connection to your issue/work, make sure the local media understands the relevance of that development to your CRC or the Association.
- Parliamentary committee reports, industry positions, community efforts on the issue, etc. Make sure local media and community support groups are kept informed

Engaging with Government:

CONCLUSION

Why?

1. Money
2. To win support
3. To compete more effectively
4. To build other alliances
5. To build your profile

When?

ALL THE TIME!

How?

1. Build an effective strategy
2. Get your message right!
3. Make sure every meeting is a success
4. Follow up!

Thank You.

**I encourage all CRCs to contact me should you
require any advice or assistance in building an
effective Engagement Strategy.**

GARRIE GIBSON
CPR Canberra
g.gibson@cprcomm.com.au

CPR | Adelaide | Brisbane | **Canberra** | Darwin | Hobart | London | Melbourne | Perth | Sydney

t: 02 6239 4022 **e:** g.gibson@cprcomm.com.au **w:** www.cprcomm.com.au

CPR Communications and Public Relations Pty Ltd ABN 94 064 357 544

