

## **Draft for Discussion by FIAC**

### **Policy on Government/Industry Consultation**

#### **Rationale**

Industry representative groups have, at their core, a clear mandate to articulate their member's interests with regard to government policy development. While Government takes its advice from a broad church of interest groups, gathering the opinion of those people directly working in an area under consideration should be of prime importance when seeking to establish a balanced view between the various lobby groups. This policy is predicated on the desirability of holding "without prejudice, confidential" discussions "prior" to the development of any scoping documentation.

#### **Outcomes**

1. Government will be able to "test" proposed policy/regulatory changes in a hypothetical environment that will not force it into an adversarial or untenable public position.
2. Industry representative groups will be provided with an opportunity for ongoing dialogue that will ensure that the practical ramifications of proposed policy/regulatory changes are understood by regulators without the need for vexatious public bickering.
3. Other vested interest groups will be free to engage in the information/opinion gathering exercise and contribute to the broader understanding of all participants.
4. The Tasmanian public will develop confidence that the exercise of open-government through appropriate layers of consultation is being actively pursued.
5. Broader industry/investment proponents will acknowledge and engage in a process that allows for discussion of potentially contentious proposals without recourse to entrenched lobbying from established public positions.

#### **Guidelines**

1. Nominees will be called from all advocacy groups across the state to form a "Policy Reference Standing Panel" with a secretariat based within DPAC.
2. Where a specific industry sector becomes the focus for possible policy/regulatory change a Working Party with relevant skill sets will be drawn down from the

Standing Panel and provided with a consultation brief from the relevant state minister.

3. While activating the working party remains the responsibility of the relevant minister, an initial trigger for such action, besides the Government's own legislative agenda, could be the initiative of any individual or group through submission to the Secretariat in DPAC.
4. The Consultation Brief will detail Working Party membership, nominate a Chairperson, provide a minimum scope of matters to be covered by the discussions together with a recommended timeline for completion.
5. The Working Party itself has the power to co-opt other members who have expertise, stake or unique insight relevant to the matters under discussion.
6. Members of the Working Party are required to honour the "without prejudice & confidential" nature of the discussions.
7. The Working Party is required to prepare a report for the Minister at the conclusion of their discussions.

## **Conclusion**

While it is recognised that definitive "consensus" reports will be unlikely on most issues the opportunity to listen to challenging views within the group has value in itself in developing shared understandings. However, ultimately the Minister will receive a report that represents a far broader assessment of the opportunities and difficulties surrounding any matter being considered such that the merits of proceeding, abandoning or modifying are far clearer and the consequences of adopting any possible option are plain.

Once the working party is stood down and the Minister has determined a response, individuals or group representatives are free to support or oppose the resultant decision as appropriate for their constituency.

**Authorised:**

**Jane Bennett**

**Chairperson**

**Food Industry Advisory Committee**

**Writing Party:**

**Jan Davis, Neil Stump, Terry Brient**