

Dealing with politicians



A Canberra firm, Client Solutions, conducted a survey of Members and Senators to determine their lobbying preferences. The conclusions of the survey are very interesting and help us to formulate an approach which will meet with the best response.

Initial meetings

- Politicians agreed that they preferred meetings to take place in their electorate or Parliament House office.
- After initial contact, some politicians indicated that they would be happy to meet organisations at their premises but this was dependent on the time, location and nature of the event.
- The ideal size of the delegation was two to three members of the organisation.
- The meeting should last for less than one hour.
- Most politicians indicated that their preference was for a written brief

prior to the meeting, a more detailed submission provided at the meeting and a summary of the issues discussed following the meeting.

- The majority of politicians objected to the recording of meetings by special interest groups.

Campaigns, petitions, letter-writing and surveys

Politicians indicated that campaigns which employed letters and petitions are not influential unless they specifically target electorate or portfolio issues.

Seventy per cent of politicians will sometimes respond and twenty per cent will never respond.

Perceptions of special interest groups and lobbyists

- Politicians indicated that special interest groups and lobbyists ask for too much.
- There was a particular concern that groups presented problems without suggesting solutions.

- Politicians indicated that they liked to be kept informed of developments on specific issues and this was particularly the case for small parties and independents.
- Face-to-face meetings and newspapers reports were the most useful source of information: no politician indicated that paid advertising was a preferred source of information.
- A very high proportion of politicians (80 per cent) said that lobbyists performed a useful function in bringing special interest groups to meetings which the researchers noted was an unexpected outcome given the reputation of lobbyists.
- There was a preference (thirty-one per cent) for a frequency of meetings of one each year in the absence of specific issues, however many respondents indicated that they saw no need for meetings in the absence of specific issues. ■



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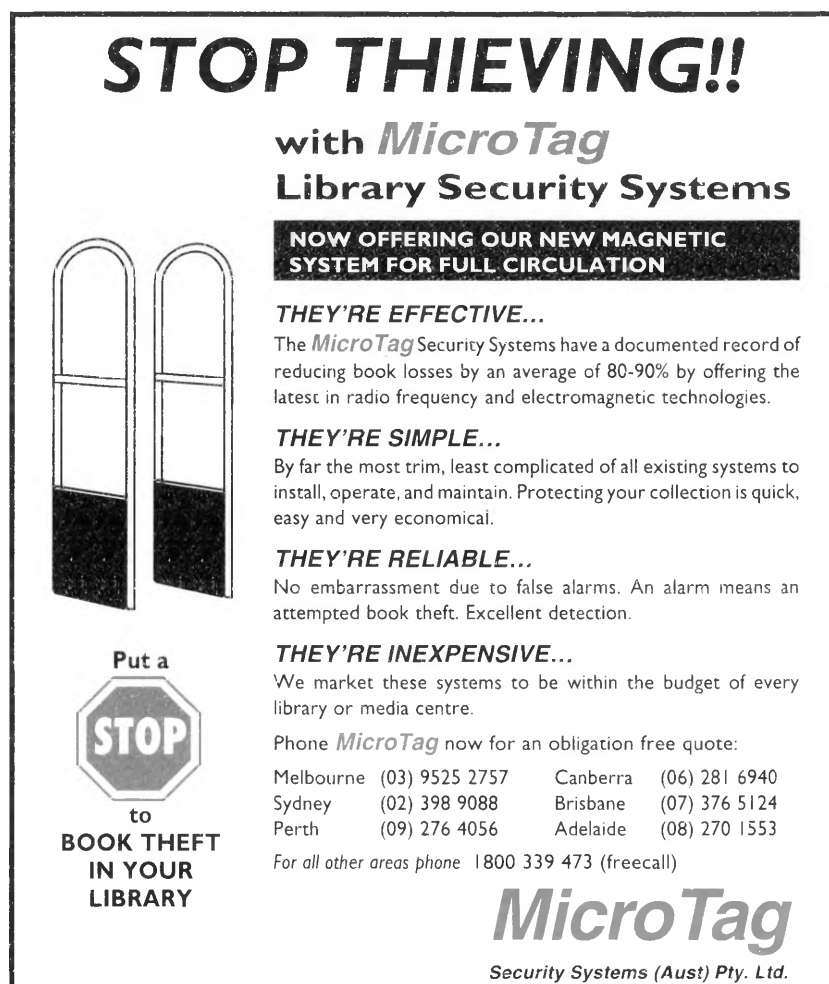
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