



# Officers

## What to consider as an employee when supporting your executive to brief your minister

### If you're contacted by the minister's office

Unless you're a [department liaison officer](#), you normally won't engage with your minister's office. But if you do, your agency should have rules about how to do so, with the support of executives.

You shouldn't engage with your minister's office without a clear understanding and authorisation from your executive. And you should never take direction from a ministerial adviser.

Familiarise yourself with any guidance provided by your organisation, manager and executive on engaging with the minister's office. If you're contacted by someone from your minister's office without the knowledge of your executive:

- take care in responding to any questions. Your organisation may allow you to provide basic factual information, but never give advice without authorisation.
- let your manager know what the enquiry is about.

### Gaining experience

The more senior you get, the more likely it is that you'll work with ministers and their offices. Gaining experience in this area can be great for an officer's professional development.

Some officers, such as strategic advisers, work directly with executives to support them in their role. These officers may have been given authority to work more closely with the

minister's office. This should only occur with the approval of the relevant executive.

Department Liaison Officers (DLOs) also have a specific role in working with the minister's office.

You can also gain experience working with the minister's office if your executive asks you to attend meetings with ministerial advisers. These can be valuable learning opportunities.

## Identifying matters of significance

Your proximity to the day-to-day activity and management of projects may make you the first person to identify a matter of significance.

This doesn't make it your responsibility to ensure your organisation informs your minister. But it does make it your responsibility to raise the matter with the relevant executives — which you may need to do more than once.

It's also your duty to always give frank, impartial and timely advice to your colleagues, managers and executives.

## If you're unsure what to do

If you identify a matter of significance that you believe your organisation should brief your minister on, talk with your manager and raise it in writing with them first. Your manager will assess how to proceed.

If you think that a brief doesn't present frank and fearless advice and it's already progressing through the approval process, you should talk to your manager. You should also put it in writing in the form of an email explaining what you think the advice should say.

You shouldn't circumvent your line of management unless you have serious concerns about their integrity. If this is the case, consider formal processes for reporting this. For example through the [Public Interest Disclosure](#) process.

If you're in doubt about the seriousness of your concerns or want to know if they qualify as a [Public Interest Disclosure](#), you may be able to speak with your organisation's integrity unit for advice.