

Terms of Reference – Advocacy Leadership Group (ALG)

Public Relations Institute of New Zealand

Background

The Advocacy Leadership Group (ALG) was established to guide PRINZ’s advocacy efforts on behalf of members, ensuring that the Institute proactively and reactively engages on issues that impact the profession and its reputation.

Members have consistently expressed the expectation that PRINZ should champion the value of public relations, uphold high ethical standards, and advocate on matters that affect practitioners and the industry.

Purpose

The ALG exists to:

- Identify, assess, and prioritise advocacy opportunities.
- Recommend positions and messaging to the PRINZ Executive Committee.
- Promote transparency and safeguard trust in the profession.
- Provide expert insight on current and emerging issues impacting public relations and communications.

Scope

The ALG will focus on:

- Advocating for accurate, informed, and nuanced perceptions of public relations professionals.
- Promoting the PRINZ Code of Ethics as the standard for industry professionalism.
- Responding to legislative or regulatory changes affecting the profession (e.g., Plain Language Act repeal, Charities Act amendments).
- Advancing agreed advocacy priorities, such as:
 - **Reputation of our sector** – ensuring stakeholders understand the value and professionalism of PR practitioners (83% of members prioritised).

- **Misinformation and disinformation** – addressing false or misleading narratives affecting the industry (74%).
- Elevation of PR practitioners to the top table (69%).
- Plain Language initiatives (57%).
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (41%).
- Honouring Te Tiriti (40%).
- Lobbying code of practice (37%).
- Greenwashing and sustainability issues (27% each).
- Celebrating and acknowledging World PR Day.
- Supporting a mandatory one- to two-year stand-down period for former Ministers and Beehive staff before becoming lobbyists
- Other issues as determined by the Executive Committee following member consultation or ALG recommendation.

Intent

The ALG's work will:

- Promote transparency, ethical practice, and public trust in the profession.
- Reflect members' priorities, ensuring advocacy aligns with the issues they care most about, such as strengthening the sector's reputation and countering misinformation.
- Avoid questioning individuals' integrity or implying improper influence.
- Encourage robust discussion, recognising that complex issues benefit from diverse perspectives.
- Avoid implied or direct criticism of any person or organisation.
- Prioritise advocacy activities that cement the profession's reputation, visibility, and influence, and that of PRINZ.

Risk vs reward

In developing an advocacy programme to be executed by the ALG, PRINZ recognises that taking public positions on issues comes with the risk of attracting criticism from various parties. This must be balanced by understanding the benefits that will accrue to the profession as a whole, to members, and to the organisation itself, through efforts to raise the profession's profile and standing, and educating stakeholders, particularly employers and potential clients, about our professionalism and skills/expertise.

The Risk/Reward equation also means PRINZ will select advocacy issues with this balance in mind; if we feel confident an issue, and our position on it, has the support of 80% of our key stakeholders, especially members, we can feel confident about pursuing it.

Advocacy vs promotion

For the purposes of the ALG's work:

- **Advocacy** is the act of representing PRINZ members and the profession on issues that impact our practice, ethics, or reputation. This may involve making submissions, public statements, or engaging with decision-makers.
- **Promotion** is activity that markets PRINZ services, events, or products. While promotion may be beneficial, it is not the primary focus of the ALG and should be managed through PRINZ's marketing and member engagement functions.

Decision-making and approval process

To ensure efficiency and agility:

- **Agree** the three to five priority issues PRINZ will advocate on.
- **Approve** position papers outlining PRINZ's stance on each.
- **Approve** key talking points for each issue.

Once this strategic work is complete, no further approvals are required before making comment on one of the agreed advocacy issues. The Chair, Deputy Chair, or CE may speak on these issues as long as they adhere to the agreed talking points and this Terms of Reference.

Ways of working

- The ALG will coordinate using agreed channels (including WhatsApp for urgent matters).
- Not all members need to approve a statement unless they are directly quoted.
- Member consultation will occur only where deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.
- Media opportunities and coverage will be recorded and shared with members.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee to ensure relevance, clarity, and alignment with PRINZ's strategic priorities.