



## **MEETING YOUR MP AS AN AMNESTY ACTIVIST**

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*Having a meeting with your MP may seem nerve-wracking at first, but these tips will help you feel more comfortable.*

### **WHEN TO SEEK A MEETING**

The best time to seek a meeting with your MP is when you have a specific *ask* for them relating to a campaign.

### **SEEKING A MEETING**

Sometimes half the battle is getting through the door!

- Check the parliamentary [sitting calendar](#) first – on sitting days your MP will be in Canberra.
- [Find your MP's electorate office phone number and their email address.](#)
- Send an email with a detailed outline of who you are and what you would like to talk about.
- Follow it up with a phone call. You might have to do this more than once. Be persistent but not overbearing – leave at least four days between calls.
- Don't take it personally if you don't hear back straight away, or if your request is declined. Parliamentarians get *lots* of requests and can't accommodate them all. Just try again another time.

### **GETTING READY FOR YOUR MEETING**

#### **Prepare**

Start preparing for your meeting as soon as you put in your request – you don't want to be caught off guard if you get a quick response!

- [Get to know Amnesty's position on the issue you are going to be discussing.](#) Don't feel you have to know everything. If you happen to get a question you can't answer, tell them you'll get back to them (and remember to do so).
- Get to know the MP: look at their bio, first speech and other speeches to parliament and elsewhere. [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au) will help you!

This fact sheet series compliments Amnesty's 'MP Engagement for Activists' training. We encourage activists interested in MP engagement to take this training. Contact [guy.ragen@amnesty.org.au](mailto:guy.ragen@amnesty.org.au). Find more resources for engaging with MPs at [amnesty.org.au/activist/skill-up](http://amnesty.org.au/activist/skill-up)

- Ask your community organiser how many Amnesty supporters are in your electorate. This will show the MP that you represent an important segment of the community.

### Plan the meeting

- Work out who in your group will attend the meeting – at least two but no more than four people.
- Identify someone to lead the meeting. This person will talk first and introduce the group, keep an eye on the clock, and if you have a few things to discuss, move the discussion on if you get stuck on one thing.
- Choose your key topics to discuss. You'll probably only have 20–30 minutes so be selective.
- Order the topics you want to cover.
- Give an estimated time for each topic (adding up to 20–30mins)
- Identify questions – those you want to ask and those you may be asked.
- Think about what you want to ask your MP to do.

**Tip:** Practice! It might seem silly, but role-playing in the group is a great way to settle any nerves. Think about what your MP might ask and try to workshop responses.

### DURING YOUR MEETING

- Be polite. Even if you disagree remember you are asking them for something – would you do something for someone who is rude to you?
- Take a photo. You can use this on social media after the meeting or include it in your follow-up letter.
- Remember Amnesty is impartial – we advocate for human rights irrespective of the politics of an issue.

### AFTER YOUR MEETING

- Celebrate! You have made a huge contribution to Amnesty's impact.
- Write to thank them for the meeting and make sure you include any commitments they have made eg *'Thank you for committing to raising these issues with the Minister'*. Include any answers to questions you were unable to answer at the meeting.
- Now that you have established a relationship with the MP – don't forget them! Continue to write, call and tweet, and invite them to events and meetings.
- **Please let your community organiser know about your meeting!** They'd love to hear how it went, what your MP committed to and to get a copy of any photos. This is vital to help us track our impact.