



MEETING YOUR MP AS AN AMNESTY ACTIVIST

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 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. Find more resources for engaging with MPs at 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.