

HOW TO: organise a meeting with your MP



1. ORGANISING THE MEETING:

Email the MP's office (with the email coming from someone in their electorate if at all possible), asking to meet with the MP as local young voters in their electorate who would like to discuss action on climate change and renewable energy. You can suggest specific date and time if you like but you will need to be a bit flexible, as they may not be able to do the one you suggest. It's good to suggest a time period to meet with them (ie. the week starting the 6th July) - and then they can respond with a specific day and time that works.

You can find your local MP's contact details here (remember to check if they are your state or federal MP): https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members

Follow up the email with a phone call to their office - don't just wait for them to reply to the email, this can take a long time! When you call your politician's local office, you will normally speak to the receptionist. Introduce yourself politely and explain the reason for your call, for example:

"Hi, my name is [insert name]. I live in [suburb], and I go to [high school name]. As one of [Politician's] constituents, I would like to request a meeting with [insert Politicians name], to talk about climate change and renewable energy. Could you please tell me what the best way to go about this is?"

If the receptionist is unable to book the meeting for you, they may:

- Give you the contact details for the politician's diary/program manager, in which case you can then call or email them directly.
- Say they will look into it and see what can be done, in which case you should follow up in a few days. You can expect to have to follow-up several times until you get an answer.

BE PERSISTENT!

2. BEFORE THE THE MEETING:

A standard meeting will go for something like 20-40 minutes. It's good to ask how long you'll have before you get stuck into things, just so you know how long to spend on each point. Also, politicians love to talk, so this time often goes really quickly.

In order to make the most of your meeting you will need to do a few things:

Make an agenda for the meeting

Politicians love to talk, and they can often steer the conversation away from what you're trying to talk about quite easily. So, it's important to keep them to an agenda (a clear plan for the meeting) and practice how you might interrupt and bring them back to talking about your issue. Also, it can sometimes be quite intimidating to talk to politicians, so being clear about what you want to talk about and how you're going to talk about it, can make the meeting go much more smoothly. Also, it's important to end the meeting by asking politicians to commit to taking action. So, you have to be clear on what you want them to do.

We recommend the following as a basic draft agenda:

- Introduce AYCC and the campaign you are working on
- Why you care about climate change
- Share about what you have been doing in your community for climate action, + get politicians thoughts
- Key asks - what do you want your state MP to do?

Intro AYCC : You should start by explaining that you are a high school student and volunteer with the AYCC.

Intro yourself + why you care: Then each person should introduce themselves and give a very brief story/personal narrative of why they there and why you care about climate change. This helps build a connection with the politician - even if they don't agree with our position! It also tells them our values, and often that helps them identify with our issue. Try and make your story as local as possible.

Climate action campaigns in your community: After that, you should share what you have been doing in your school and community (leading climate action campaign in your school, participating in the Stop Adani campaign.) Sharing stories of events, and what you have achieved in your school and community is very powerful.

The Ask: Then comes a very important part of the meeting - when you give your ask to your state MP. This is where you ask them what you want them to do to support the campaign goals - like speaking up in their party about stopping Adani, or hampioining a policy for 100% renewables by 2030.

At the end of the meeting, you want to do 2 key things:

- Repeat back to the MP what they have agreed to do, and that you will follow up with them on it in a couple of weeks
- Ask for a photo with the MP and thank the MP for their time and meeting with you to talk about renewables in schools

Allocate roles

It's a good idea to allocate roles to people who are attending the meeting with your state MP, and spread out the parts of the agenda to each person. Its good to make sure everyone is clear on their role so not everyone talks at once, and you have a productive and effective meeting with your MP. Some examples of roles could be:

- Note taker
- Someone to introduce AYCC
- Getting the photo
- Someone to do the ask

Research your MP

Doing some research on your MP to find out what they are interested in, what motivates them and their role in parliament is very helpful for ensuring you tailor your meeting agenda. Things that are helpful to research include:

- Their portfolio or ministry (ie. Minister for Enviroment)
- Their first speech

- Any committees or local groups they are part of
- Have they made any speeches or public comments about climate change?
- What did they do before they became an MP (ie. teacher, lawyer etc)
- Check out their social media pages to see what they have shared recently

P.S. We've put together a handy guide of all MP's positions on the Adani coal mine - so you can be equipped with all the info before your meeting.

Check it out at: http://www.aycc.org.au/labor_yourmp

3. AT THE MEETING:

Things to take:

- A mental or physical agenda and talking points
- A phone to take a photo
- A notebook and pen

Things to remember:

- You don't have to know everything! You are just there to express your views and concerns, let them know what you've been doing and ask them to take action- which could be as big as supporting a policy in their party-room, or coming to an event.
- Lobbying meetings are about expressing our community power and making a clear ask - they build pressure over time rather than getting an immediate change in policy.
- This meeting is important to build a relationship with the MP so we have open lines of communication with decision makers. We also listen to hear their points of view, objections, and understand the values that they hold and that influence their decisions.
- Keep the politicians on track - they like to waffle and get sidetracked!

GOOD LUCK! Let us know how your meeting goes, and feel free to get in touch with Hilly at hilly@aycc.org.au if you would like any support before or after your MP meeting.