



TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH MPS

There is a range of ways you can communicate with your MPs.

The idea is to become more visible to them – so start small and work up as you become more comfortable.

No matter which method you use, always be polite and remain impartial.

Ways to engage with your MP:

- write
- call
- social media
- email
- meet
- all of the above!

WRITING

See pg 5, [advocacy guide](#)

Politicians get a lot of letters from organisations wanting their attention and asking them to do something, but they really want to hear from their local voters.

- Always make it clear that you are a member of their electorate.
- There's a letter template on [Amnesty's activist portal](#) – use it as a guide, but make sure your letter is personal and in your own words. Clearly show that it is from the *local* Amnesty group.
- Tell them how you feel about the human rights issue you're highlighting and recount some of your own experiences if you like. They will pay more attention to a personal letter than a form or template.
- Always be polite! This includes using their correct name and title.
- Be short and concise. Try to keep your letter to one or two pages.
- Ask for action. Try to include an action that you would like your MP to take – eg: raise the issue with their parliamentary colleagues, or speak out on the issue.

CALLING

See pg 5, [advocacy guide](#)

MPs rely on communications with their office as one way of knowing the level of concern or support an issue has in their electorate. It only takes a few phone calls for them to notice new trends.

Calling your MP is easy:

- [Find the number for their electorate office here.](#)
- When the phone is answered, state your name and that you're a member of the local Amnesty group. Ask to leave a message for your local member.

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

- Explain why you are calling: *“I am calling to ask that the MP not support the legislation to ...”*
- Clearly state your message for the politician. *“Please ask Ms Polly Tician to vote against this legislation because...”*
- Thank them for passing on the message and hang up.
- Done! This will raise the MPs awareness of the issue and that the local Amnesty group is concerned about it.

Tip: Calling works best if you don’t call too often. If you have left a message, why not get your friends to leave a message as well? Or call your Senator if you have already called your local MP.

SOCIAL MEDIA*

Social media allows you to connect with your politicians in a short, informal way. It is quick, timely and alerts an MP to issues immediately.

- Find your MP or Senator on Facebook or Twitter – keep an eye on them to see if they are already engaged on issues of interest to you.
- Use social media to call on your MP to take action on an issue – remember that it is a short form of communication, so ensure keep to your key point.
- Maintain your impartiality: everything online must reflect Amnesty’s strict rules around political impartiality.
- Encourage others to tweet or facebook the MP on the same issue.
- Invite them to like your group’s Facebook page or follow you on Twitter.

INVITE THEM TO A GROUP EVENT

See pg 6, [advocacy guide](#)

A good way to get to know your MPs and where they stand on human rights is to get them along to your group meetings.

- Give them plenty of notice – it’s a good idea to contact their office and give them a range of dates that the group meets – so they can identify one that suits them.
- When they come along, use it as an opportunity to talk generally about the work of the group and the issues you work on.
- Make sure that you highlight how your group is active in their community.

Tip: Before you invite them to a meeting, check the [sitting calendar](#). On sitting days your MP will be in Canberra and unable to attend.

*Amnesty International has great social media training – contact your [action centre](#) if you would like to take the training.