

Community briefing for local Members of Parliament

A million conversations campaign

Introduction

Why should you do this?

Right now, a pollution and extinction crisis threatens the web of life. Meanwhile, Australia lags behind the rest of the world when it comes stopping climate damage. Our politicians bicker and dither while temperatures and sea levels rise. Enough is enough.

Climate damage is here, now. But so are solutions – and so are we. It's time to put our living world back on the agenda, and to make the next federal election the climate election.

Sounds good – how?

People like you have been surveying their communities, talking about climate damage and what we can do about it for the last month. Having deep and personal conversations is powerful – but to make the most of them, we need to make sure our elected decision makers know what we're doing.

That's why folks across Australia will meet with their MPs during the parliament winter break. Think of this as an opportunity to brief your representative on the campaign – let them know our plans to make this the climate election!

How to request a meeting with your MP

Who is my local MP?

You can find out which federal electorate you're in and the local Member of Parliament that represents you here >> www.electorate.aec.gov.au

Requesting a meeting

Personalise [this template](#) and email your MP to request a meeting, preferably in the week commencing July 16. You can email them using our simple webpage >> www.acf.org.au/mp

Why that week?

Everything we do is more powerful when we do it together. If people everywhere gives their MP their survey results at the same time, it shows we are an organised, coordinated force to be reckoned with.

What if I can't get a meeting until later?

That's totally fine! Your first ask should be a meet during the winter break – any time before 10 August. However, this will be an ongoing campaign with ongoing relationships. This meeting should be the first interaction but not the last! MPs are busy and need to respond to urgent issues and their diaries change a lot. Don't be put off if your meeting gets cancelled, shortened or rescheduled at late notice – be polite but persistent!

If you can't get a meeting at all and want to do something else to put the pressure on, check out our escalation tactics on [page 30 of this handy guide](#) to meeting your MP!

Before the meeting

Let us know it's happening

[Register your meeting here](#) so we can get in touch with supporting materials, share the latest data on conversations in your electorate, and follow up with you after the meeting. If you're a member of an ACF Community group, create your event using Action Centre.

Attend a training webinar

ACF staff will run a lobbying training webinar at 7pm on Tuesday 10 July. [Register now](#) to share stories, hear from people who live and breathe the halls of parliament, and learn from fellow community volunteers who have met with their MPs in the past.

Prepare for the meeting

It's best to go into the meeting with a [prepared agenda](#) and asks. More on this below!

Got other questions?

- [Check out our detailed guide to influencing your MP](#)
- Join us on [Facebook](#) to compare notes with others
- Get in touch at community@acf.org.au and we'll give you a call!

During the meeting

1. **Assign roles** (e.g. facilitator and time keeper, sharing survey results, note taker, photographer, person who will ask the policy and action asks and get a signature). If there are more than four people, MP meetings can become unmanageable. If others are keen to come, they could talk to people outside the office or hold an action outside!
2. **Introduce yourself** and share a personal story of why you care about the issue.

3. **Show you've done your research** – congratulate them on something they've done well on climate, or something they may have said publicly about their values, and ask whether they agree we need to act more urgently to stop climate pollution.
4. **Outline how many surveys you have completed** and the results, with some interesting stories from the community.
5. **Tell them our policy asks** and ask what they are prepared to commit to.
 - a. If they have agreed that we need to act more urgently to stop climate pollution, explain that Adani and 100% renewable energy are the big tests right now on whether MPs and political parties are serious on climate.
6. **Ask for a written commitment.**
7. **Get a photo!**
8. **Thank them** and let them know you'll be having more conversations with people in the electorate and will be back!

What policy asks do we want them to commit to?

As per the petition you've been collecting signatures on in your electorate, constituents are committing to only vote for a party who will:

- Stop Adani's polluting mine
- End digging and burning coal
- Switch to 100% clean energy

We are asking MPs and candidates their position on these key policy asks and asking them to sign an MP pledge. However, we need to let them know **we will be sharing their party's position with voters throughout the election**, so if their party doesn't have good policies yet, the MP or candidate will need to DO something to shift their party.

What are we asking them to DO?

Often, an MP will privately agree with you on what needs to be done, or say that those asks are not possible for them to achieve on their own, or they may personally agree with us, but their party's position is different. We need to let MPs and candidates know that we'll be talking to voters in their electorates about their parties' position, so they'll need to take action to get their party to shift!

Here's what you can ask them to **actually do**:

- Publicly speak out (in the media, in parliament, write to your leader, or on social media) in support of those demands – and let you know when they do
- Publicly advocate for your party to change its position on these demands, or raise the issues in the party room
- Take a photo with us and share it with their commitment to do the above

Remember that our power is in numbers. While you are welcome to focus on the issue or impact that most motivates you during the meeting, this tactic will be most effective if the demands of all MPs are the same.

Keen for more detail on how a party's policy could achieve these things? [Check out our National Agenda.](#)

Be nice

Politicians are people too. Always be polite, professional and courteous. Arrive on time, with time to sign in at reception and gather your thoughts. If relevant, acknowledge any support they have given to your issue in the past. Try to connect with your MP by sharing the reasons you really care about this issue – they may have a story to share too. No matter how outrageous the decision a government has taken or their attitude towards the people who are campaigning against them, you are never going to influence someone by being abusive or impolite. Be professional, courteous and determined – rather than making it personal.

Pics or it didn't happen

Ask your MP for a photo together to share afterwards! If they are particularly friendly, they might even want to hold a 'Stop Adani' or 'Climate damage stops with us' poster during the meeting. If your MP will not take a photo with you, be sure to take one with the group outside the office with clear signage in the background.

What to do after the meeting

Let us know how it went!

We'll be in touch with a reportback form so you can share how it went and your photo.

Tell the world!

Share the story of your meeting on social media using the hashtag #HereNow and #OneMillionConversations. This helps to normalise community political action and lets your friends and family know about the campaign!

You might also like to contact your local paper and see if they're interested in a story about the meeting and the campaign.

Send a follow up email to your MP

Thank them for their time and confirm the commitments they made. Let them know how many conversations you plan to have in their electorate and that you'll be back!

Want more detail on how to influence your MP? [Check out our detailed guide!](#)

