

MEET YOUR MP - STEPS & TIPS

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Introduction - Why Stand Up for Solar?

Our Plan

We know that there's almost 1.4 million solar homes out there - and there are 3,500 new systems going on rooftops every single week. We know that poll after poll tells us more than 75% of Australians want to see more solar and renewable energy, not less.

We have a plan to make sure Australia's solar future is strong, and that our representatives listen to the overwhelming community support for solar:

1. At least 50% renewable energy by 2030

Australians want to see more solar and renewables, not less. A national goal of at least 50% of our energy generated from renewable sources by 2030 will help millions of families go solar, create tens of thousands of jobs and ensure billions in investment for our sunny country.

2. A fair go for solar owners

Going solar should be easy but big power companies simply aren't playing fair. We want to see an end to discriminatory fees for solar owners, a fair feed in tariff for power fed back into the grid and a specialist solar ombudsman to protect consumers' rights in every state and territory.

3. Helping households with soaring power bills

The only guaranteed way people can take control of spiralling power costs is by installing solar. We want to see a strong national program to support low-income households and renters switch to solar and help with the rising cost of living.

Why meet with your MP?

Meeting face-to-face with your MP is one of the most effective things you can do to bring about change. As your local member, your MP's first priority should be representing your views - it's their job. To them, you are an important person – you live in their electorate and as such they are there to represent you.

Telling your story about why solar is important to you will help your MP understand how important it is for Australia and that they should do the right thing by their local constituents.

We know that it takes more than polling data to convince a politician. Our representatives pay attention when people show them what's at stake in their communities - so it's up to us to show them that millions of Australians are prepared to Stand Up For Solar.

The Steps

STEP 1 – Before the meeting

Get your team together

We suggest getting a team of 2 - 3 people together (definitely no more than 4). If you can find the right people, the ideal roles to have covered are: a solar owner, a solar worker/business person and someone who wants to get solar, but don't worry if you can't fill all those roles. The most important thing is that you're all from the MP's electorate.

Run through your meeting

Think about what you'll say and about your **solar story**: What has your solar experience been? Why are you standing up for solar? It may help to make notes on this to make sure it's concise and it's a good idea to practice with a family member or friend.

Before you go to the meeting, use our [Stand Up For Solar Meeting Sheet](#) to write up a clear agenda to guide you and your team through the whole meeting and go through it. This will help you decide things like:

- Who will be speaking when?
- What points is each person going to touch on?
- Who will be facilitating?
- Who will be taking notes on what they say?

Send out a **media alert** to let local media know that you're meeting with your MP and why. We can help with this - just contact us as soon as your meeting time is confirmed by emailing us at info@solarcitizens.org.au.

If you don't know much about your MP it's a good idea to learn more about them by heading to Google and searching and by looking at their biography on the Australian Parliament House website: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members.

STEP 2 - During the meeting

Things to bring with you

- Your adapted [Stand Up For Solar Meeting Sheet](#) - an internal document the MP will not see that will help you keep on time and on topic
- [Stand Up for Solar Pledge declaration card](#)
- [Stand Up for Solar Flyer](#)
- [The Solar Briefer for your electorate](#) - a great resource ranking solar uptake in your electorate
- A **camera** - or smartphone that can take good photos

In the meeting

- Confirm the amount of time the MP has available and make sure you've practiced your agenda and that it fits into your allocated meeting time.
- Respect your MP by arriving on time and not going over time.
- Introduce yourselves - tell them how long you've lived in this electorate and what you like about living there.
- Share your solar story - let your MP know if you have solar, want solar, know a solar worker or just want the better future for Australia that solar power will bring.
- Ask your MP to share their thoughts on solar – what do they think of it, what's their vision for a solar Australia? Remember to ask: Does she/he have solar? Finding out those stories, simply by asking your MP a few questions, can be a great way to connect with your representative in a real way and can give you the insight you need to talk to them in a persuasive way
- Ask your MP to support the campaign by signing the Stand Up for Solar Pledge
- Take some photos of your team members (ideally all of you) with your MP holding the Stand Up for Solar Pledge!
- Offer your sincere thanks for your MP's interest and let them know that you will be in touch again as the campaign progresses.



REMEMBER:

This is a big part of your MP's job: meeting with constituents, listening to them and representing their views. So be passionate and be yourself - they work for you! You may even want to remind your MP - politely of course - of this fact.

Make sure you are **polite** in the meeting - but also be **persistent**. While we want to avoid being negative, we don't want to understate the importance of solar and the Renewable Energy Target to Australians and it's okay to let that show in the meeting. **Make sure you don't leave the meeting without asking firmly for their support and to be in the photo.**

What if your MP won't sign the pledge?

Explain politely that MPs from all over Australia are being approached to support the campaign and that you are really disappointed they won't support these solar policies when the Australian community is so supportive of renewable energy.

STEP 3 - After the meeting

Reporting back is a very important step - we'll be recording how all the MP meetings are going around Australia and whether your MP signed the pledge so we can hold them to what they say, and let the rest of their electorate know where they stand on solar. We'll also upload your photo to the gallery.

So, as soon as you're back from your meeting please follow up by:

- Filling out the MP visit [report back form](#) (don't forget to attach your photo!) on our website.
- Getting your local media to run a story by sending out your media release.
- If you have Twitter, tweet at your MP (and at @solarcitizens) saying thank you with your photo attached.
- If you need to follow up with your MP about anything - e.g. you said you'd send them some information on solar - don't forget to do so. And just let us know if you need any help.
- **Celebrate and congratulate yourself – you did it!**

Summary of resources

- [MP Meeting Invitation Tool](#)
- [MP Meeting Registration Form](#)
- [MP Meeting Sheet](#)
- [Stand Up For Solar Pledge Card](#)
- [Stand Up For Solar Flyer](#)
- [Your Electorate's Solar Briefer](#)
- [Report Back Form and Photo Upload](#)

Contact us

If you have any questions please just let us know at info@solarcitizens.org.au

Good luck and enjoy your meeting!