



Solar Shindig 2015: Call Your MP Talking Points

Calling your elected member of parliament and talking to them in person is one of the most important things you can do to support solar. Your MP gets to hear a real live person (you!) who has strong feelings about solar speak directly to them. Remember your MP is elected to represent your community and your interests and making a personal call will help them work for you.

Before you make your call

You don't need to be armed with loads of fact and figures - the main thing is that you speak from your personal experience and the experience of people in your community. However, people tell us they like to have information on hand, just in case, so here are a few sources to help you:

1. Solar Citizens "Solar Briefers"

Don't forget to check out the [Solar Briefer](#) for your electorate so you can tell your MP how many solar homes there are. Not sure what electorate you're in? you can check this here: <http://apps.aec.gov.au/eseach/>

2. About Stand Up For Solar

Australians want more solar, and solar makes sense for Australia. We need strong leadership for the solar and renewable future we want to see. We want all political leaders to Stand Up for Solar.

This is Solar Citizens' latest campaign, which has three main goals:

- A strong solar and renewable goal of at least 50% by 2020. This will create at least 20,000 new, ongoing jobs.
- A fair go for solar owners. So many of the 5 million Australians who have tried to take control of rising power bills by putting solar on their roofs are hit with unfair charges or not given the fair amount for the energy they feed back into the grid. We want to see an end to the discriminatory charges and a national, fair feed-in tariff.
- Power bills are rising and many households are turning to solar to help - especially households in lower income and rural areas. But not everyone who wants to go solar can, so 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.

3. Solar in Australia:

- There 1.4 million solar roofs in Australia
- 21,000 people were employed in the renewable energy sector as of 2013¹
- Investment plummeted last year due to the uncertainty around the Renewable Energy Target
- Australians love their solar. Almost 90% of Australians supported keeping or increasing the renewable energy target² 71% of us think we should put more emphasis on producing energy from solar.³
- Those living in lower income suburbs or rural areas are more likely to install solar than those in wealthier suburbs

Making your call

A few pointers:

- You probably won't get through straight away, so remember to leave a polite message and if they call you back you can have the conversation.
- If you are calling to invite your MP to your Solar Shindig make sure you have all the details with you. You might want to follow up with an email to confirm the conversation and include the details of your event.
- If you are calling from your Solar Shindig event, you might want to follow up with an email that includes a photo of your event too.
- Remember be polite and in any conversation to explain why solar is important to you.

¹<https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/policy-advocacy/reports/clean-energy-australia-report.html>

²<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/02/almost-90-of-australians-support-renewable-energy-target-says-poll>

³ <http://www.essentialvision.com.au/energy-sources-2>

Voicemail message - Sample Script for a call from your Solar Shindig event:

You: Hi there, my name is (your name) and I am calling from (name your suburb).

Today we are having a (barbeque/ dinner party/ cup of tea) with my (neighbours/friends/workmates) as part of a national Solar Shindig. These events are happening all over the country for a whole week - people are coming together to Stand Up For Solar.

Solar is important to our community and we want to urge my MP to Stand Up For Solar in their party room (and if your MP is from the ALP) at the upcoming ALP National conference. We have sent/ tweeted a photo of our shindig. If you could call me back to discuss this that would be great.

Please return my call on (your phone number). Thank you.

If you get through - Sample Script:

MP Staffer: Hello, this is Jane, MP's assistant.

You: Hi Jane, my name is _____. I'm a constituent of (name of MP's) electorate, and I'd like to talk to her about something I'm very passionate about - solar, and the latest Solar Citizens campaign, Stand Up for Solar. May I speak with (name of MP) please?

Jane: Certainly, one moment please.

MP: Hello, this is MP

You: Hi, my name is _____. I live in your electorate, and I am calling to talk to you about solar power and the the latest Solar Citizen campaign, Stand Up for Solar.

MP: What's that?

You: Well, Australians love their solar. Almost three quarters of us think we should put more emphasis on producing energy from solar. But the industry is at a standstill in Australia - we're fast losing investments and jobs and are in danger of missing out on the solar revolution that's happening around the world.

[if you held a solar shindig]

MP: What do you want me to do about it?

You: I don't know if you've seen that photo we emailed/tweeted/facebooked to you of my street standing up for solar yet, I sent it through this morning, but you can see just how passionate your community is about this. So we're calling on you to help make sure strong solar and renewable policy is part of your party's election platform. It's something that could decide our votes in the next election.

[if you're calling you invite your MP to the shindig]

You: I'm hosting a Solar Shindig, where I'm inviting everyone in my neighbourhood - your constituents - to come to a BBQ [etc.] to express their support for solar. I'd love it if you could come and hear their stories.

MP: I'm very supportive of solar - I love renewable energy

You: So you've said, but this is a crucial time and we need to see actual policy supporting Australia's renewable future. Will you, like many of your parliamentary colleagues take the solar pledge?

If they say yes, they will Stand Up For Solar, thank them and tell them that Solar Citizens will be in contact to arrange a photo opportunity with the Stand Up For Solar Pledge card.

If they will not take the pledge, tell them that Solar Citizens will be in touch to arrange a meeting where we can talk more about Australia's solar and clean energy future.

Let us know how your call went

Once you've finished your successful Solar Shindig event, you'll need to fill in the [reportback form here](#).

Be sure to tell us who your MP is and how your phone call went. This will help us follow up with your MP later. If you would like to take on follow-up with your MP, let us know and we will support you to do this.