

# BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MP

Oxfam groups are an essential part of bringing attention to and creating change on the issues that are important to us. There are many ways you can make your voice heard, including through your federal or state Members of Parliament (MP).

For some people, the idea of engaging with their local MP can be intimidating. Remember, they are just a person, with particular concerns, just like you do.

Take the time to research your MP and find out what their existing passions and primary concerns are. You can refer to these when writing to, or meeting with, your MP. Find links between their interests and the concerns and the objectives of your group. This will help to foster a positive working relationship with your MP.

## Why build a relationship with your MP?

Your local MP works for you; they are your connection to Canberra or your state or territory government. They rely on your support and the support of others within your electorate to get elected. Your views and concerns count, so make sure your MP knows what issues you care about and how they can better represent you in parliament. You can influence your MP's decisions just by taking a few simple steps:

- Write to your MP.
- Follow and tag your MPs on social media.
- Call your MP.
- Organise a meeting with your MP.

There are a number of ways to contact your MP when asking them to demonstrate their support for your issue or respond to your concerns. But when contacting your MP, remember, it is about **developing a relationship**, so it's important to think about what will be most effective and make the biggest impact with them. Here are some suggestions to get you going.

### 1. Who is your MP?

Do your research.

- Find out who they are, which party your MP belongs to, whether they hold any particular positions in their party structure, how long they have been in parliament, and whether they are a member of any parliamentary committees.
- Make sure you know how to pronounce their name and how you should address them. See the Writing to your MP section for some tips on the usage of correct titles.

- Try to get an idea of where your MP stands on issues that Oxfam campaigns on: particularly the issues you want to talk to them about.

### 2. Write to your MP

Writing a letter is a great way to make initial contact with your local MP. Start by introducing yourself and your group, what issues you care about, and outline any events or other activities you are running in your community.

Once you've introduced the group to your MP, you may wish to write to them about a particular issue that's important to you and your group; this could be to provide an update on your group's activities in the community or to organise a face-to-face meeting. We've developed some templates to assist you in writing your letter.

### 3. Social Media

Connect with your local MP on social media: like your MP on Facebook to follow what they are posting to the community. There may be opportunities to engage on a particular issue or share posts with your group. You can also follow them on Twitter, tweet at them when you're holding an event or meeting, or tag them in photos or posts related to your event.

### 4. Call your MP

Give your MP a call. Make sure you have a clear purpose and something specific to ask of your MP. Introduce your group and what you do, or invite them to an event or meeting that you're holding. It may be helpful to write down your key points before phoning. You might not get to speak directly to your MP, but leave a message with the staff member and follow up with an email or letter.

### Useful links:

[How to address Senators and Members](#)

[List of Senators and Members](#)

See relevant link below for parliament sitting dates for your state:

[Parliament of Victoria](#)

[Parliament of Queensland](#)

[Parliament of New South Wales](#)

[Parliament of Northern Territory](#)

[Parliament of South Australia](#)

[Parliament of Western Australia](#)

[Parliament of Tasmania](#)

### Search for your MP online

Many MPs have their own websites, blogs and are on Facebook and Twitter.