

# CALL YOUR MP

Calling your MP is a great way to get important issues on their agenda and show that you're really committed to a cause. After all, it's much easier to fire off a quick email or sign a petition – calling your MP takes a bit more preparation and care. That being said, calling an MP's office doesn't need to be intimidating. Following are all the steps you need to follow to have an effective phone call with your MP. At the end you'll find a calling script is a rough guide for you to follow so you don't get stuck "um-ing and ah-ing" in the middle of the conversation.

Remember, doing your research is important, so make sure you contact us at [oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au](mailto:oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au) to make sure you have the latest facts and strategy for the campaign. We can also give you the insider information on our past engagement with the MP that you're planning to call, so you'll have everything you need to make it impactful!

*Tip: The person who answers the phone in an electorate office might be an office manager or they might be an electorate officer whose job it is to deal with constituent calls like yours. Either way, remember to be polite and respectful, especially as they might get hundreds of these calls a day.*

Calling your MP or Senator is easy:

- [Find the number for their electorate office here.](#)
- When the phone is answered, state your name and ask to leave a message for your local member.
- Explain why you are calling: "I am calling to ask that the MP support our calls to increase family reunion visas by 10,000 places..."
- Clearly state your message for the politician. "Please ask Ms Polly Tician to support increasing family reunion visas because..."
- Thank them for passing on the message and hang up.
- Done! This will raise the MP's awareness of the issue and that it matters to their constituents

*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.*

Make sure you have a clear purpose or something specific to ask of your MP. Reach out to us at [oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au](mailto:oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au) so we can work together on the strategy for your call. We are in regular contact with MPs about the big issues that cause poverty and inequality, so we can give you the insider info you need to make sure your call goes smoothly and makes a big impact.

*Tip: Write down your key points before calling. 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.*

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## SAMPLE CALLING SCRIPT

“Good **morning/afternoon**. My name is **Jessica** and I live in the electorate of **Banks**. I’m calling because I would like to speak to Mr Polly Tician about keeping refugee families together. Would he have time to speak to me now?”

*If Yes – that’s amazing! Follow the script below*

*If No: that is still great and the conversation can follow much the same format.*

*We’ve broken it up into steps to make it easy to follow, and so you can only use the parts that you need.*

### Step 1: Introduce yourself

“Good **morning/afternoon**. My name is **Jessica** and I live in your electorate. Thanks for taking the time to speak with me.”

*Take the opportunity now to build a rapport if you can – did you vote for this politician? Have they recently said or done something that you support? Have they made a statement about refugee rights in the past that you can complement them on? Contact us at [oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au](mailto:oxfamactivists@oxfam.org.au) to get some help with this step!*

### Step 2: Explain why you’re calling

“I’m calling because I believe all families are equal and none should be forced to live apart. But our current systems mean that refugee families are waiting years to reunite. Oxfam has recently launched the Families Together campaign that shows how reuniting refugee families is good for everybody – individuals, communities, and society at large. Have you heard about the campaign?”

*If Yes – then you can ask what they know about the campaign. If they are very familiar with it, then you might want to skip to **Step 4: Outline the solution**.*

*If No: Share a story. If you have your own story of family separation that relates to the campaign, that is incredibly powerful, and you should share the story in your own words. If you don’t have a story of your own, you can share [Lucy’s](#) or [Dabessa’s](#) story.*

### Step 3: Share a story

“Dabessa and his three children came to Australia seeking safety. But, he had to make the impossible choice to flee without his wife. He worked hard bringing up three kids by himself in a new country. He spent every moment looking after his kids with no time to study, work or connect with his new community. He missed his wife and was feeling isolated at home.

After a long wait, his wife finally joined him in Australia.

Now he has a degree, his wife is working, his daughter is a nurse and the rest of the family are studying. They have each other for support and are thriving.

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Dabessa was thankful the Australian government could reunite him and his wife but, some families aren't so lucky. Some families are separated for years and others never see their children, mothers, fathers or siblings again.”

## **Step 4: Share the solution**

“I'm calling on the Australian Government to keep families together by making an extra 10,000 spaces available for family reunions. The research shows that keeping families together is better for individuals, for communities and for society at large.”

## **Step 5: Ask for their support**

“Will you support the call to make an extra 10,000 spaces available for family reunions?”

*The MP may not feel that they have enough information to provide support for the campaign, in which case you can send them*

## **Step 6: Thank them and ask for follow up**

*Before you call, decide if you would like to follow up with the MP via email, phone or a meeting in person.*

“Thank you for your time today.

### ***If you want to follow up via email/phone***

“I will send you an email with a link to more information about the Families Together campaign and the research that informs it. I would like to hear back from you on the Government's response to the report and what you are doing in the Immigration portfolio to ensure families stay together.”

### ***If you want to follow up with a meeting***

“I would like to meet with you to brief you further on the report and to introduce you to other members of your electorate for whom families are important.”