

HOW TO LOBBY YOUR LOCAL FEDERAL MP OR CANDIDATES TO RAISE THE RATE

1. Find out who your local MP is

You can do so by looking up your postcode or electorate on the Australian Electoral Commission [website](#).

To find out who the candidates are in your electorate, [go here](#).

2. Find out how many people are on Newstart or other allowances are in your electorate

To find out how many people are in your electorate at the moment, go to the Department of Social Services [spreadsheet here](#) and look up the tab 'CED'.

A number of the electorates will be closely contested. In some cases, there are more people who are on Newstart than the number of people whose vote could change the candidate elected.

3. Contact them!

You can phone, email or write a letter. If you phone, you may speak to one of the MP's advisors. Tell them why you support the Raise the Rate campaign, and if you are directly affected by the issue, try to tell your story of why it's important to Raise the Rate as soon as possible. The advisor should relay your key points to the MP.

If you're writing and have direct experience of living on allowances, again, try to tell your own story as much as possible. This will highlight to your local MP why they must act and increase Newstart and related allowances by at least \$75 per week immediately. Also feel free to draw from the Raise the Rate briefing material.

You can find your local MP's [contact details here](#).

4. Seek a meeting

If you would like, you may want to meet directly with your MP. Your MP represents you, so it's important that they meet with constituents such as yourself to hear about the impact of Federal Government policy on people's lives. It is best to seek the meeting in writing (either by email or letter) and then follow up with a phone call two or three days later. You will need to explain why you are seeking the meeting and the key points you wish to discuss. This could be as simple as stating:

Dear MP,

I would like to meet with you to discuss why increasing Newstart and other allowances is so important. I would like to share with you my experience of living on allowances (if this is the case) and explain the difference that raising the rate of Newstart and other allowances by a minimum of \$75 per week would make to me.

Please contact me on (email/phone/address) to arrange a suitable time to meet.

Yours sincerely,

XXX

5. If you get a meeting, great!

It's always good to send through some briefing material to your MP about a week before the meeting. If this is not possible, take the material with you and hand it to them in the meeting. The Raise the Rate briefing note is a good document to send through or take with you.

If you are taking someone with you to the meeting as well (which is a good idea!), let the MP's office know about this, too.

6. At the meeting

- ▶ Introduce yourself and whoever is accompanying you to the meeting. Explain to them why you have sought the meeting.
- ▶ If you can, it is always helpful to have someone take notes of the meeting. This helps with any follow-up that may arise.
- ▶ Put forward your key ask in the meeting (for example, I want you to commit to increasing Newstart and related allowances by a minimum of \$75 per week).
- ▶ Provide the MP with any briefing material you may have brought with you.
- ▶ If you feel comfortable doing so, ask if it would be okay to take a picture of you with the MP. If you plan to do this, take along a Raise the Rate sign to hold up in the pic! If you plan to post this picture onto social media or share it publicly, let the MP know.
- ▶ Seek an outcome from the MP (eg., ask them to make Raise the Rate a key issue when they next meet their party colleagues).

7. After the meeting

It's a good idea to write a follow-up email or letter to the MP recapping what was agreed to in the meeting and seek an update on how they are travelling with the commitments they have made.

8. Tell us how your meeting went

You can let ACOSS know about how your meeting went – we would love to hear!

Contact Pas Forgione, Raise the Rate Campaign Coordinator at Pas@acoss.org.au or call 02 9310 6216.