

Meet your Federal Member of Parliament



Your Member of Parliament (MP) represents you. It is important that they hear from you and other constituents about how Federal Government policy affects you and your community. Meeting with them and sharing how you or people you know are directly affected by inadequate income support payments is the best way to turn them into champions for 'Raise the Rate'.

Before you start

Who is your Federal Member of Parliament (MP)?

- The first step is to confirm [which federal electorate you're registered to vote in](#).
- To see who your MP is, search for your electorate on the [Australian Parliament House \(APH\) website](#).
- (If you aren't registered in the correct electorate, you need to [update your address details](#) on the electoral roll and then find your correct MP by [finding your current electorate](#)).

Getting to know your MP

The second step is learning more about your MP, including their background, experiences, beliefs and values, to find areas of commonality and connection. Here are some ideas:

- In your MP's [Parliamentary profile page](#), you can see any ministerial or parliamentary positions they hold, committees they sit on, qualifications and occupations they have, as well as any military service or publications.
- Their profile page will also include their first speech to Parliament, which usually outlines the issues they're passionate about. Most MPs also have a presence on [social media](#), and you may get insights from seeing what they talk about and who they follow and engage with.

Asking for a meeting

- It is best to seek a meeting in writing (either by email or letter). 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 [NAME, MP],

I am one of your constituents and I would like to meet with you to discuss the urgent need to increase JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and other income support payments. I would like to share my experience of living on income support and explain the difference that a permanent adequate increase to JobSeeker and other allowances would make to me and your other constituents.

Please contact me on [YOUR EMAIL/PHONE/ADDRESS] to arrange a suitable time to meet.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR SUBURB]

- If you don't receive a response, it's appropriate to follow up your request by phone two or three days later.

Preparing for the meeting

If you get a meeting, that's great!

- Let us know that you have a meeting arranged so we can support you before the meeting and check in with you after.
- It's a good idea to have someone else attend the meeting with you, like a family member or friend. Let the MP's office know who will be attending the meeting with you. A lot of these meetings take place online or over the phone so be prepared for it to not be in person (which is fine).
- Spend some time making dot points of your story. Focus on the challenges you have faced, how you've overcome/adapted to them and what impact receiving an adequate income support payment would have on your life.

At the meeting

- As MPs are generally busy, often meetings don't last for very long. You may get 15 minutes with them, or 45 minutes – it really depends on the day. If you get a short meeting, don't despair! It's an excellent result to get any time at all.
- At the meeting, introduce yourself and whoever is accompanying you. Explain to them why you sought the meeting.
- It is helpful to have someone take notes of the meeting. This helps with any follow-up actions that may arise.
- Focus on telling your story and personal experiences, especially around social security and housing, and how increasing payments and the availability of affordable housing would impact you.
- Put forward your key ask - for example: that your MP raises the need to lift JobSeeker when they next meet with party colleagues. Or you may ask them to do a speech in Parliament about this issue.
- Ask if it is okay to take a picture with the MP. [Let us know](#) if you want a Raise the Rate for Good sign to use in the pics! Let them know if you plan to post the picture on social media or share publicly. If they do not wish to have a photo taken, you can take a photo of yourself outside their office.
- Reiterate the outcome agreed to by the MP.
- Remember to stay COVID-safe (if meeting in person) and follow any health guidance the MP's office provides.

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. If you can, aim to send a follow-up email or letter within a week.
- Feel free to stay in touch with their office and ask for an update on how they have progressed with the commitments they have made.

What next?

Let us know how it went! Email michelle@acoss.org.au or call 0444 590 297.