



This training is about finding and lobbying your local politicians.

## What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is about speaking up about the **issues and problems** faced by people with a disability.

Lobbying is about speaking up about the **changes that need to happen** to make life better for people with disabilities.

### ★ HOT TIPS

Talking to people who make decisions is a really good way to **have your voice heard** about the issues that are important to you and the changes you want.



## Who can I Lobby?

The people or groups you might lobby include:

- Politicians
- Government workers
- Service providers e.g. where you work, your day program etc.
- Housing providers
- Local community groups





## STEP 1 Who do I contact?

There are three different types of local politicians you can contact. They are:

- Councillors who are on your **Local Council**
- Politicians who are in your **State Government**
- Politicians who are in the Australian **Federal Government**.

You need to find out which politician you should contact.





## Local Council

You contact your local government councillors if you want to talk about:

- Car parking including disabled parking
- Neighbourhood houses and libraries
- Rubbish Collection
- Disability Advisory Councils
- Home care for people with disabilities
- Meals on Wheels
- Footpaths including access
- Community Health centres

### ★ HOT TIPS

- **Invite** your local councillor to give a talk at your meeting ask them how you can bring your issue to the council.
- Find out how you can **join** the Local Disability Advisory Council.



## State Government

You contact your local state government member of parliament to talk about:

- Justice and Consumer Affairs
- Health
- Education
- Public Transport
- Community Services
- Public housing
- Community access.



### ★ HOT TIPS

- **Invite** your local Victorian State Government MP to come and talk to your group to talk about your issues and the changes you want.
- **Visit** your local Victorian State Government MP in their local office every couple of months to give an update on the work you are doing.



**centrelink**



## Australian Government

You contact your Australian Federal Government local Member of Parliament (also called MP) to talk about:

- Disability, including advocacy, sheltered workshops, employment, and Supported Residential Services.
- The NDIS
- Centrelink, including disability support pensions
- Child Support and Carers
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability.

### ★ HOT TIPS

- **Invite** your local Australian Government Federal MP talk to your group about issues you care about such as the UN convention and the NDIS.
- **Visit your MPs** in their office every couple of months to give an update on the work you are doing.



## STEP 2 Finding your Politician

### 1. Contacting your *Local* Councillors

Visit your local council and ask them to tell you the name and contact details of your local councillor or the mayor.

### 2. Contacting your *State* Member of Parliament

To find the name and contact details of your local state Member of Parliament you will need to ring the parliament in your state or territory as follows:



Canberra	(02) 6205 0439
Northern Territory	(08) 8999 5511
New South Wales	(02) 9230 2111
Queensland	13 74 68
South Australia	13 23 24
Tasmania	(03) 6212 2300
Victoria	(03) 9651 8911
Western Australia	(08) 9222 7222

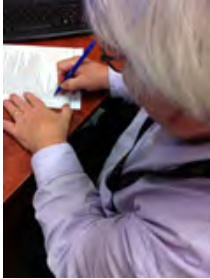


### 3. Contacting the Australian Parliament

Ring the ***Australian Parliament House*** on 02 6277 7111 and ask them for the name and contact details of your local Member of Parliament.



## STEP 3 Making Contact



Here are the main ways to contact your local politician:

- **Mail** - you can write a letter and send it to either their electoral office or to their parliament office.
- **Phone** – you can ring their electoral office.
- **Email**- you can send them an email.
- Call into their office and ask for an appointment.

In the next part of this training we will talk about:

- **What to say** when you phone a politician
- Ideas for **writing letters** and more!



## Ideas about what to say

Some ideas about what to say when you write, phone or email your local politician include:

- Tell them about your group and invite them to your self advocacy group meeting.
- Ask if you can come to their office for a meeting.
- Tell them about the problems people with a disability are facing and the changes needed.
- Ask them about the work they are doing to support people with disabilities.
- Ask them to come to an event or forum you are running.

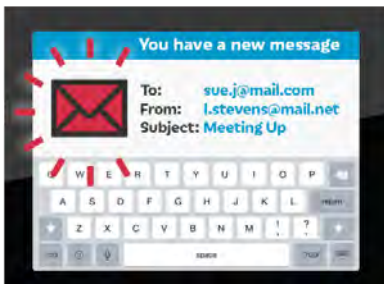




## Writing a Letter

Here are some tips for writing a letter to your local politician:

- Include your group's name, address and phone number.
- Use your own words.
- Keep the letter short – no more than one page.
- Say what you want your local MP to do e.g. meet with you, come to an event, help with a problem etc.
- If you are writing about a problem explain what it is and why it is important and talk about the changes you think should happen to make things better.
- Ask for a reply.



## Sending an Email

Some politicians like to receive their letters using email.

When sending an email, follow the same tips for letter writing but also:

- Make sure you remember to include your full name and address.
- Be clear about what you are asking for.
- Make sure you check your emails all the time for the answer.
- When you get an answer through the email from your local politician make sure you thank them for getting back to you.

## Phoning a Local Politician



Some of the reasons you might ring your local politician's office are:

- To find the best way to get in contact with the politician e.g. letter, email, or phone.
- To invite the local politician to a meeting of your group.
- To ask for an appointment to meet with the local politician.
- To talk about issues or problems that you are not happy about.
- To congratulate them on something you think they have done well.



## Ringling a Local Politician

Here are some tips when ringling your local politician.

### ★ HOT TIPS

- Before you call write down the points you want to talk about.
- Say your name, where you are ringling from and why you are ringling.
- Keep the message short and be polite.
- Keep a pen and paper next to the phone so you can write down the persons answers.
- Don't forget to give the person your contact details including your phone number and your address.
- If you get the answering machine leave a short message with your name and contact phone number and ask them to ring you back.



## STEP 4 Meeting with Politicians

There are different ways you might meet with your local politician including:

- Going to their office.
- Inviting them to come to your meeting as a guest speaker.
- Inviting them to attend an event you are running.
- For each of these meetings there are different things you will need to do to plan for the meeting.



On the next pages are some tips when meeting with local politicians.



## Going to their Office



Here are some tips when you are going to a meeting:

- Make sure you know the address, the meeting time and how long the meeting will go for.
- Get there at least 10 minutes early.
- Take your notes with you.
- Take someone with you to take notes if needed.
- Keep it short - tell them about your group, the issues and change you want to see and how they can help.
- After the meeting write a thank you note and remind them about the things they said they would do for you.
- If you have not heard anything back after one month get in touch and ask what is happening.

### ★ HOT TIPS

**Role play** a meeting in an office:

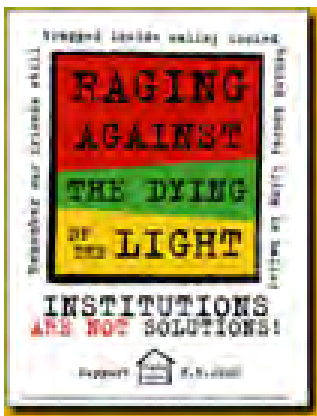
Take turns to be the politician. Everyone then has a go at practicing the things you want to say in the meeting.



## STEP 5 Lobbying Ideas

If nothing happens from your meeting or things are not getting better, other ideas you can do to have your voices and issues heard include:

- Start a petition.
- Contact your local newspaper and ask them to write an article.
- Organise a community event such as a big meeting, a theatre performance etc.
- Make posters about your group and the issues you care about and send them to your local politician.
- Contact other local politicians to see if they can help.
- Send emails out to different organisations asking for help with the issues.
- Setup a Facebook page about the issues.



# Good Luck!