Meeting face-to-face with your local Member of Parliament is one of the most powerful and effective ways to show that you and your community care about Australian Aid.

Regardless of party affiliations, ideologies, or attitudes toward issues you care about, the vast majority of MPs genuinely enjoy and value meeting with and hearing from local residents, and understand that their role in Parliament is to represent the views of their constituency.

Right now, politicians are saying that Australian Aid is not a priority because people in their communities aren’t talking to them about it. That is why it is so important to deliver your message in person to them: your MP already has the facts and figures, they just need to know you care.

In 2018 Australian Aid will hit its lowest level in our nation’s history, at only 0.22% of our Gross National Income.

This means people in poorer parts of the world will not get to enrol in school, will not be vaccinated, will remain without access to safe water, will go unassisted during natural catastrophes, and worse.

Right now, Campaign for Australian Aid supporters all over the country are meeting with their local representatives to ask that we stop further cuts to aid, and do our part in making the world a fairer and better place by increasing Australian Aid.
Step 1: Before the meeting

Join your electorate group
Join the Campaign for Australian Aid Facebook Group for your electorate and introduce yourself! You can find the link to your electorate group at: australianaid.org/meetyourmp/

Make an appointment
It really is as easy as emailing or calling your MP’s office to arrange a time to meet. You can find their contact details on www.aph.gov.au, and there is an example “Meeting Request” email at the end of this document.

MPs’ offices can be pretty busy, so make sure to follow-up if you don’t hear back after a few days. If your MP offers to have one of their advisors meet with you instead, feel free to take them up on it, but be sure to follow up on your meeting to make sure your message was delivered.

If you need help locking in a meeting with your MP, get in touch with us at campaign@australianaid.org. Also, don’t forget that you can set up a meeting with a Senator in your state, too!

Optional: bring a mate
Bringing along a friend to your meeting can help share the load, and it shows your MP that there are more people who care about Australian Aid!

Ask your electorate Facebook group to find out if there are people near you who you can team up with. If you’re having trouble finding people, email campaign@australianaid.org

Prepare for the meeting
Once you have a meeting time locked in, make sure to ask how much time has been allocated to your meeting so you can plan what you want to say. Meetings with MPs are usually 15-30 minutes.

Prepare a rough outline of how you want the meeting to go, and what you want to say. If there are other people attending the meeting with you, divide up the speaking time so everyone gets a chance to tell their story. You should allow for around half of the time allocated to be used by your MP to respond to you and discuss Australian Aid with you.
Example meeting outline:

Welcome and introductions (5 min) Thank your MP for meeting with you and introduce everyone who is attending with you.

Deliver your message and make the ask (10 min) Tell your stories of why you care about Australian Aid, and clearly ask your MP to support and advocate for Australian Aid in Parliament and their party.

Discussion/response from MP (10 min) Hear your MP’s views on Australian Aid, and explore the specifics of how they will represent your views.

Wrap up and follow-up plan (5 min) Thank them again, and make a plan to follow up with them on any commitments they made.

Finding out what your MP cares about and what causes they support can be helpful to target your message to appeal to their values. You can Google your MP, or use online tools like www.openaustralia.org.au and www.theyvoteforyou.org.au to find out their voting history and read their speeches to Parliament.

If you are meeting your MP with a group of Campaign for Australian Aid supporters, make sure to meet at least 45 minutes before your appointment to go through the outline and allocate speaking roles.

Quick Figures on Australian Aid:

- Australian Aid is 0.22% of our Gross National Income. That is the lowest it’s ever been in our history, and less than 1/3 of the UN target of 0.7%.

- The OECD recently called on Australia to “shore up its development aid” and “reverse the trend” of aid cuts, and we dropped to 19th of our 29 OECD nations on aid.

- Go to www.australianaid.org/why-aid for real stories of how Australian aid is helping communities to build a better future.
During the meeting

**Be yourself!**
Making a personal connection with your MP in a great way to set yourself up to have a genuine and effective discussion with them. This is as easy as saying a few words who you are, and give them a chance to do the same. This meeting is just the first step in building a relationship with your MP, so be yourself!

**Deliver your message**
This is your chance to make your case for why your MP should care about Australian Aid, and the most important thing is to make it personal.

Your MP can access Government information on Australian Aid any time they want, so giving them facts and figures is not telling them anything new. The purpose of the meeting is to show how important Australian Aid is to their constituents, and the best way to do that is to tell the personal story of why you care.

**Have a discussion**
Give your MP a chance to explain their position on Australian Aid and how they plan to act on it.

If your MP has follow-up questions for you, don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know”. You’re meeting with them as a constituent, not an expert, so you are not expected to have all the answers. If you want, you can offer to get in touch with the campaign at campaign@australianaid.org and get more information.
During the meeting: continued

Make the ask
This most important part of your meeting: asking your MP how they plan to support the Campaign for Australian Aid goal of 10% increases to aid each year for the next 6 years, toward 0.7% of GNI by 2030 to meet UN target.

Try to get as specific a commitment as possible, including a timeline. Some ideas for what you can ask your MP to do are:

- To send a letter to the relevant Minister to advocate for Australian Aid,
- To make a speech in Parliament about your meeting,
- To advocate for action on Australian Aid within their party,
- To make a public statement in support of Australian Aid,
- To include your meeting in their newsletter.

No matter what the outcome of the meeting is, always thank them for their time and make a plan to follow up on the commitments they have made to you.

Take a photo!
No MP will ever pass up a photo-op, and neither should you! Ask if one of their advisors can take a photo of your MP and you holding the Campaign for Australian Aid sign, or take a selfie with them if you have to!

Don’t forget to post it on social media and tag Campaign for Australian Aid, or send the photos to us at campaign@australianaid.org.
After the meeting

Let us know how it went!
Go to www.australianaid.org/mp-meeting-report and fill out the questions to let us know how your meeting went. A campaign volunteer will be in touch with you to debrief your meeting and provide support in following up with your MP’s commitments.

Follow up with your MP
Always follow up with MP on any commitments that they made to you. Make sure you get copies of letters to Ministers, speeches in Parliament, public statements, and anything else. If you need help keeping your MP to their word, email us at campaign@australianaid.org.

Don’t forget to celebrate
Meeting your MP to ask them to take action on an issue is one of the most powerful things you can do in a democracy.

By speaking up, telling your story, and asking that they take action on Australian Aid, you are helping to make a huge difference to millions of people all over the world.

If you will allow us a single corny quote, Margaret Mead said it best: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Good on you!
Dear [Mr/Ms] [Surname],

My name is [Name] and I am a resident of [suburb] in your electorate. I am writing to you as your constituent and on behalf of a group of Campaign for Australian Aid supporters in your electorate to request a meeting with you to discuss the state of Australian Aid.

I believe we can do better as Australians to help people from some of the poorest part of the world to build a better future for themselves. [Include a sentence or two about why this is an important issue for you, in your own words]. This meeting would be an opportunity to learn where you stand on this issue and to discuss how the views of Campaign for Australian Aid supporters in your electorate can be represented in Parliament.

I look forward to speaking to your diary manager to discuss your availability, and would appreciate the courtesy of responding via email within a week.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Postal address]
[Email address]
[Phone number]