

100% Independent

Andrew Wilkie

Independent Member for Clark



How to make yourself heard and get results from government

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF LOBBYING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

This information sheet has been compiled based on the experiences of the office of Andrew Wilkie MP and is not exhaustive.

Meeting with MPs

If you want your MPs help a meeting is a good first step.

Do

- Request a meeting in writing (preferably email) and state who you are and what you want to discuss;
- be persistent – follow up with a phone call and if you are initially denied a meeting then try again;
- if you can't meet the MP, ask to speak to an electorate officer or an adviser. They can then discuss your issue with the MP; and
- be clear about what it is that you want the MP to do and why. Meetings might be as short as ten minutes so it is important to explain immediately what you want so the MP has time to ask questions and consider their position.

Don't

- Don't come to a meeting with pages of information and a long drawn out story. Keep it short and to the point;
- if you know the MP already supports your policy, don't waste time trying to convert the converted, start with how you want them to help; and
- don't be disheartened if the MP refuses to meet because you are not a constituent or the matter is not relevant to their electorate. In any case they should meet with you if they are a Minister and your issue is relevant to their portfolio.

Letter-writing

Is it necessary to send a letter or would an email be just as clear? Emails now hold as much weight as a letter and are also more environmentally friendly and often much faster. Think about which MPs would be the most interested and supportive of your issue and best positioned to assist you.

Do

- It is better to target individuals rather than send a letter to all;
- keep your letter short, preferably one page or two at the most;
- clearly state the issue and what it is that you want from the MP, preferably in the first paragraph;
- be professional and respectful even if you are frustrated or angry;
- personalise it - this could help your letter stand out in a large pile of daily correspondence;
- include clear contact details – email, phone and address;
- check the correct title for the MP. For example Andrew's title is Mr Andrew Wilkie MP, not the Hon Andrew Wilkie or Senator Wilkie. See the State and Federal Parliamentary websites for correct titles;
- use the MP's electorate office email or postal address. Only use the Parliament House address if you are writing to a Minister; and
- follow up with a phone call a week later.

Don't

- Send form letters to all MPs. It is both time and resource intensive and generally has limited results; and
- send attachments, reports and documents. If they are relevant, state that they can be supplied on request.

Emails

Do

- Mobilise your networks – if an MP receives hundreds of emails on the one issue in a short time frame it will be noticed;
- target your local MPs and the relevant Minister and Shadow Minister;
- try to personalise the email so that the point is clear but it is not a form email;
- keep it short and the font simple; and
- use a clear subject line

Don't

- Add a lot of attachments or cut and paste large sections of information; and
- send it to every MP – if all MPs' emails are in the 'To' box it may be taken as information and will not be actioned.

Petitions

A petition will only be considered and responded to by Parliament, both State and Federal, if the required format and rules are followed.

Do

- Correctly identify whether the matter is a state or federal issue – Parliament must have the power to act on the matter raised by the petition;
- identify a principal petitioner – rules for petitions require full contact details of the person who organises the petition;
- go to the website outlining the required form and content of petitions:
 - Federal – www.aph.gov.au/house/petitions
 - State – www.parliament.tas.gov.au/HA/petitions.htm; and
- ask an MP to present the petition in person – it can be mailed to a petitions committee but an MP presenting it would have more impact.

Don't

- Rely on online petition sites – these are useful for raising awareness of an issue on social media but cannot be accepted by the Federal Parliament at least; and
- collect signatures before checking the required format of the petition.

**ANDREW WILKIE MP
YOUR INDEPENDENT
IN CANBERRA**

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