

# Get Active: Let them know you care!



## Meeting in person with your local candidates

Did you know that one of the most powerful differences you can make for Queensland's environment is to educate your local candidates about the environment ahead of the election?

You can help educate local candidates in a number of ways including meeting with them, writing to them or calling them. But the best way of doing this is to go off and meet with them in person!

In the lead up to elections, sitting MPs and aspiring politicians are at their most receptive to your ideas and feedback. They help shape their personal views and their party's positions. If we are silent on issues that matter to us, then existing and want-to-be politicians will be silent on the issues too!

You do not need to be an expert to educate your local MP/Candidates. However, it is a good idea to research and note down some facts to take into your meeting. This will guide your discussion, keep the information fresh in your mind and will make you feel more comfortable during your discussions.

Here's how to get active and be heard:

### 1. Find out who are the Candidates for your Electorate

Below are for each Party candidates:

The Queensland Party <http://www.queenslandparty.org.au/>

The Australia Party <http://www.ausparty.org.au/who-we-are/our-people>

LNP <http://lnp.org.au/index.php?Itemid=6>

ALP <http://www.alp.org.au/federal-government/labor-people/>

Greens <http://qld.greens.org.au/about-us/branches/>

Find out what your electorate is by visiting the electoral commission of Queensland <http://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/> or calling their office on 1300 881 665. You can research your candidates contacts, interests and background through political party websites, candidate websites/facebook pages, media and google searches!

### 2. Your Message: Queensland's Top 5 Environmental Priorities need addressing

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure your candidates understand the Top 5 environmental issues for Queensland, and act positively to address them. Be sure you are clear about what you want to say for each of the priorities.

#### These are Queensland's top 5 environmental priorities:

1. Safeguard our **forests** and control landclearing.
2. Preserve our unique wild **rivers**.
3. Apply strong environmental **controls on mining** development.
4. World Heritage protection for **Cape York Peninsula**.
5. Save our **marine life** from overfishing.

### 3. Contacting your local Candidates

Request a meeting with your local candidates by phoning, emailing or asking in person if you see them at events. Your current Member of Parliament (MP) will normally agree to meet with you quite quickly, so you should be able to make an appointment for a meeting with their office. Other candidates may need more persuasion!

Introduce yourself and explain that you live in their electorate and would like to discuss some important issues, and briefly explain what each are so they can prepare for your meeting. Ask where you can best meet them to properly discuss your issues.

### 4. Meeting your local candidates or current MP

You don't need to dress up really formally, but it's a good idea to wear respectable and comfortable clothing to the meeting. Introduce yourself tell the candidate/MP why you wanted to meet with them. Confirm how long the meeting will be so you know how much time you have.

Next, **ask them what they think are the main environmental issues for Queensland and note these down.** Then discuss the Top 5 list of environmental priorities and find out what is their position/view on each. If they don't have a position on any of the Top 5, find out their understanding of the issue and what information they would like to have provided.

Reiterate the issues of importance to you and ask that they address your concerns as their party forms its policy position for the coming election. Finally, ask for a follow up meeting to share further information and give them the letter you have prepared for them.

It is important that during the meeting you allow your MP/Candidate to speak as often as you speak yourself. Listen carefully to what they say so you understand their position on the issue, how much they already know and take note of any misunderstandings of the issue that they need clarified.

**Remember: you can take one or two friends/family or request that a Wilderness Society Campaigner accompany you.** Having more than one person at the meeting is ideal so you can agree on what took place, allows one of you to focus on non-verbal communication, gives you each an opportunity to think about what to say next and one of you can take notes if required.

### 5. Follow up after your meeting

If any key commitments are made, or you feel the need for a formal record, you may wish to follow up with a letter confirming the outcome of your meeting and thanking your candidate. Always ensure that any promises made during the meeting are followed up as soon as possible. As soon as the meeting is over, check with your partner that you both agree on the meeting's proceedings.

*The best way to develop your advocacy skills is to go and do it!*

Pop-in to your closest TWS Campaign Centre, email or call us about how you went letting your political leaders know they need to protect our rivers, reefs & rainforests.

**Cairns:** (07) 40 416666 or email Di Horsburgh [di.horsburgh@wilderness.org.au](mailto:di.horsburgh@wilderness.org.au)

**Brisbane:** (07) 38461420 or email Julie Biddulph [brisbane@wilderness.org.au](mailto:brisbane@wilderness.org.au)