

Engaging with Members of Parliament (MPs)

Everyone has the right to engage with MPs. A general election gives new opportunities to engage with your electorate MP and local list MPs, to let them know why arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori are important to you. Here are some tips to engage with them.

How to engage

- Timing** You can engage with MPs at any time during the parliamentary term, but the first 100 days after any election are a particularly good time. While they spend lots of time in Wellington, MPs usually return to their electorates or home areas when Parliament isn't sitting. [Check the Parliament calendar to see when Parliament sits.](#)
- Ask for a meeting** Evidence shows that face-to-face communication about things that matter to you impacts the topics that MPs bring to caucus meetings (the team meetings with MPs of the same political party). Call your local MP's office to ask for a meeting or ask to be part of an upcoming 'clinic'. Clinics happen regularly following an election and are a chance for MPs to talk to people in their community about what's important to them. [Find ways to contact MPs on the Parliament website.](#)
- Quality over quantity** Face-to-face conversations with MPs are more effective than digital communication. Ten calls to electorate offices from ten different people can be more effective than 50 emails. Quality engagement also means staying in touch. Don't forget to follow up – invite them to events that help remind them of the value of arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi.
- Team up and encourage others** Find a friend from your community and go together. The power of multiple voices is even more convincing and likely more fun. Once you've done it, mobilise others in your community by letting them know how easy the process was and encouraging them to get in touch too. Sometimes people just need to be reassured that their MP will be nice to them!

Things to remember

- It's your right** Talking to MPs shouldn't be scary or hard – they're people too and many are new to the job. They represent you and your community, whether you voted for them or not. You don't need to be an expert, simply tell them what matters to you personally, for example "I care about arts and culture in my community because...". Telling them what you care about helps them do their job. If you have ideas for specific changes, you can talk about those too.
- Use the power of your vote** If you voted for your local MP, or for the party a list MP represents, let them know you've given them your support and that you'd like to ask for something in return. If you didn't vote for them, let them know what policy positions or specific changes would make you more likely to support them next time.

Practice honing your messages

Use the [Narratives for Change guide](#) to help you with framing and messaging. It uses evidence-based strategies to communicate your message clearly and persuasively.

Have a think about policy

If you want to know where parties currently stand on arts and culture policy, there are tools that helpfully outlined party positions in the run up to elections, including [ArtsActionNow.org](#) and [Policy.nz](#)

