



## CONTACT YOUR MEMBER of PARLIAMENT

In a democracy like Australia, Members of Parliament (MPs) are accountable to the voters. This means you! MPs rely on you to tell them which issues are important and that you want them to champion. MPs want to be involved in their communities and hear about what matters to you, and it is their job to represent your concerns in parliament.

**WHY** In Australia the refugee debate is fuelled by fear and misinformation, leading to heightened community concerns about boat arrivals.

If we want to change this, we need to remind MPs that many Australians (like you) believe that protecting refugees is something to be proud of, not worried about.



I am so thankful to Australia and all Australians. If you hadn't saved us, I would probably be dead. Now, I am safe and happy.

*Farida Dad, former refugee*

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### BE CLEAR ABOUT WHO YOU ARE

MPs get letters and calls from all sorts of people and organisations wanting their attention. **Who they really want to hear from is you**, a person who lives in their electorate.

Make it clear that this is a letter/call/email is from a member of their electorate; maybe even give your name, phone number or address.

Remember that the message is more powerful coming from you than it is coming from Amnesty International. MPs already know what Amnesty International thinks but they don't know what you think.

### STAY ON MESSAGE

The core of your letter/call/email should be why you are concerned and why you want refugees and asylum seekers' rights respected. Remember to be clear about what your values are and how they relate to the facts of the issue. The fact sheet will help with this, but remember your MP doesn't want to know what Amnesty International's position is, **they want to know how you feel about this issue.**

### BE POLITE

Politicians are people too. **Put yourself in their shoes, how would you react to certain language and tone?** Would you respond positively if you received an abusive letter or phone call from someone you have never met? Or would you respond better if you heard from someone who outlined their concerns calmly and clearly?

### BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

**MPs genuinely want to hear from you about this issue and other issues in the future.** It is important to remember that this letter/call/email is about opening a new line of communication between you and your MP. Who knows? In the future they may want to call back to arrange a meeting.



## WHAT TO SAY?

It is important that you stick to the facts but to really have impact, your letter/call/email should be personal and reflect your feelings about asylum seekers and refugees in Australia.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How do I feel about asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat?
- How do I feel about the way the government treats asylum seekers who arrive by boat?
- How would I feel if my family and I had to seek asylum?
- Why exactly have I decided to take this action?
- What do I expect my federal representative to do about my concerns?
- How would I like to see the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees change?

## CHECKLIST

### Before:

- To find the name and contact details of your federal MP, visit [apps.aec.gov.au/esearch/](http://apps.aec.gov.au/esearch/) and enter your suburb
- Decide how you want to inform your MP of your views: a personalised letter, an email, or a phone call.
- Write your letter/email or prepare bullet points for your phone call

### After:

- Email us a copy of your letter or email, or tell us how your call went: [rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au](mailto:rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au)
- If you get a reply, send it to us at: [rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au](mailto:rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au)
- Think about what you are going to do next!

## HOW WILL YOU KNOW IT'S WORKING?

Experience shows that direct communication between MPs and people in their electorate is one of the most powerful ways to effect change. Your MP might not immediately rethink their position on refugees, but every letter, call and email brings them one step closer! Remember, your action is part of a large campaign made up of many other people like you who are taking action all around Australia.

So we can track the progress of the campaign, don't forget to let us know how you went and share your successes. Send us a quick email at [rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au](mailto:rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au) - we'd love to hear from you.

**And if you need help with your email/call/letter, just email the team at [rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au](mailto:rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au)**

Spread the word and inspire others through your action...



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Let us know about your action by emailing [rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au](mailto:rethinkrefugees@amnesty.org.au)