



TIPS SHEET ON PROTOCOLS FOR MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

As social workers we know that our message will best be heard if we engage, build rapport and communicate effectively and respectfully with others who are interested in this issue.

This is especially the case when talking to politicians and their staff.

Helpful hints when meeting with members. It's good to remember:

- Politicians are people too
- Passion is persuasive
- Lecturing is not
- Politicians have limited time
- Politicians often think they know what the problem is
- Politicians want solutions

Before meeting with your Member of Parliament, review the Briefing Document sent from the AASW and remind yourself of the key points you want to make. If it helps highlight those points in the Briefing you most want your MP to hear or write your own dot points/case studies.

Your personal experiences count a great deal in your meeting. Don't try to make too many general statements about policy, they are also interested in how the policy affects you, your clients and your community.

Appropriate Ways to Address Your Local member

A suggested outline for your meeting would be as follows:

- **Step 1** – introduce yourself – and say where you live or work. Remember your voices are getting heard.
- **Step 2** – explain the purpose of the visit – this will be different depending upon whether you are an accredited mental health social worker, social worker, client or family member, other health or welfare professional, or general supporter.
- **Step 3** – ask the MP or Senator what they want from your visit.
- **Step 4** – state the problem and move to recommendations – see briefing sheet.
- **Step 5** – discuss ways in which you could assist them – i.e. to provide further information or put them in contact with AASW.
- **Step 6** – restate recommendations.

After the Meeting

- It can be effective to follow up with your MP via letter/email and/or phone thanking them for the time and support of this issue.