

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As an individual there is much you can do to support the campaign.

You can get involved in one or more of the following activities:

- letter campaigning
- blogging
- telling your story
- building relationships with politicians/candidates
- hosting a forum in your local area
- writing letters to the editor
- getting on air
- becoming a supporter of the disability alliance*

For guidance or support with these activities, please contact the Disability Alliance:

Email: disabilityalliance@gmail.com

Mobile: 0403 815 828

Post: Disability Alliance
PO Box 5236
WEST END QLD 4101

*By joining our mailing list as a supporter (visit www.disabilityalliance.org.au and click on "join mailing list") you will be demonstrating your support and keeping up to date with the latest Disability Alliance news, media releases, video stories, and newsletters.

Letter Campaigning

Writing to politicians/candidates

Writing to members of parliament (MPs) and candidates

You may find that arranging a time to meet with your local politician/candidate is difficult or if you have already had a meeting, you may find letters are an effective way to maintain communication and build relationships.

If you choose that writing a letter will be an effective way to communicate, consider doing the following to get the best out of it.

- Keep it short! Make sure your letter is no longer than one page - 2 or 3 paragraphs will be fine.
- Focus on one key point per letter. For example in your first letter you may choose to raise the issue about personal support including the approximate number of people with disability living in Queensland who currently receive no funding (refer to statistics from Fact Sheet 1 – Did you know?).
- Focus only on your key point and how that issue personally affects you, or people you know.
- Make sure you make it clear what you want them to do in response to your letter (e.g. to find out what they intend to do, what their party's policy is, etc.).
- When you receive their written reply, respond by either phoning them to discuss the contents of their letter (maybe organise a meeting to discuss) or write a letter thanking them for their response. You could take this opportunity to introduce a new issue to them such as the lack of support for families or carers.

How to address MPs or officials

Often the hardest part of writing a letter or meeting with a local MP or official is knowing how to refer to them.

The best way to find out is to simply phone their office and ask how they prefer to be addressed. Alternatively, if you have access to the internet visit www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

This Qld government site provides a list of all the local Members of Parliament, noting how they prefer to be addressed as well as their official address title such as 'Hon Mrs' etc.

You can also contact the Electoral Queensland Commission by phoning 1300 881 665 or go to: www.ecq.qld.gov.au

'Blogging'

Have your say online

Another way to communicate your point of view is to use Google 'News' website. This is an online opinion column where people get to make comments on issues about the disability sector. To participate do the following:

- go to www.google.com.au
- click 'News' from the top menu
- click 'Blog Search'
- enter "disability" and "queensland" in the search field
- scroll through the list of available blogs and click on the blog you would like to contribute to
- Complete the required fields then follow the links to post your blog

Telling your story

In an effort to raise awareness of the campaigns key messages, we are asking you to contribute your story to the campaign. While statistics are an important part of highlighting the issues and the impact of the issues on people, personal stories are powerful in a way that statistics are unable to be. They lessen the emotional distance between yourself and your audience (politicians, members of the public, media, etc.).

Make a video statement

Contribute a video testimonial online

Video testimonials are a powerful way to be heard. If you have something to say about disability in the lead-up to the state election, you can record your message on video and host it online. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Visit www.youtube.com/user/disabilityalliance to watch some examples of the kind of videos the Disability Alliance is using to support our campaign.
2. Record your video message about disability or a message of support for the Disability Alliance.
3. Go to www.youtube.com.
4. Click on 'Sign Up' in the top right hand corner of the screen.
5. Fill in the online form.
6. Verify your email address.
7. Sign into your new YouTube account, then click 'Account' in the top right corner of the screen.

8. Click the yellow 'Upload' button on your account page.
9. Upload your video.
10. Visit the Disability Alliance channel (www.youtube.com/user/disabilityalliance) and click the 'Send Message' button to alert us that your video has been created.
11. Also add Disability Alliance as a friend by clicking the add friend link.

More ways to share your story

Complete the Your Story template contained in the campaign kit and return the completed template to the Disability Alliance. You may want to return to the alliance via email

disabilityalliance@gmail.com

or post to

Disability Alliance
PO Box 5236
West End, Qld, 4101

(Please refer to the back of the campaign kit for your personal copy of the blank Your Story template).

Visit the Disability Alliance website (**www.disabilityalliance.org.au**) and select the "Stories" link on the main menu or click on the link entitled "Click here to submit your story to the Disability Alliance." Complete the fields in the online form and don't forget to tick the consent box before you click "Submit".

Get out there...

Building relationships with politicians/candidates

An effective way to get your message heard is to establish relationships with local politician and candidates. This can involve organising meetings and keeping in touch to help build productive relationships.

Organise a meeting

1. Ring your local politician's or candidate/s' office and arrange a time that suits you for the amount of time you need.
2. Prepare what you want to say using:
 - The statistics provided from fact sheet 1 – Did you know? and the key messages.
 - Your own story-how having your needs for disability support met would impact upon your life, the life of your family and your ability to live and work in your community.
 - Make it clear that the impact on families of not having your support needs met includes family breakup, negative effect on siblings, one or other parent needing to drop out of the workforce or close a business, the loss of friends and natural supports and a generally restrictive lifestyle. All of these consequences are very costly to the individual, their family, their community and the government
3. Ask them:
 - What will they do to address the three key messages of the campaign: additional personal support for 3000 people, reform of the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, and reform of Queensland Hospitals' patient care policy and procedures and community health system to include people with a disability and their family?

- When will they do it - what will they do now in the short-term and what will they do in the long term?
 - To provide you with a copy of their written policy commitment.
 - To get back to you with what action they have taken on your behalf-you may wish to pre-arrange a date to talk again.
4. Thank them for their time and leave them a copy of the Disability Alliance Campaign Key Messages (available on the disability alliance website).
 5. Follow up your meeting with a letter thanking them for their time and reinforcing how important the 3 key issues are.

Keeping relationships strong

- Politicians and candidates receive many submissions, meeting request and invitations from organisations and individuals with good causes, so its important that you make it easy for them to say yes to your particular request. Even after the election campaign ends it will be beneficial to maintain the relationships you have worked hard to forge. Here's some tips on how to do this.

Advise them about good news - Let your contacts know of progress in relation to the key messages and requests of the campaign with respect to your personal situation or community. Provide them with the opportunity to be part of positive announcements (invite them to speak at functions, provide positive media opportunities, mention them in media alerts or speeches, etc.).

Supply information that may be of interest or relevance to them, their portfolio area, and other government contacts. Keep it simple, relevant and concise, and make sure it is clear what you want them to do with the information.

Play to their self-interest - Most politicians or public servants have their own agendas.... so think about how this can work to your advantage. Celebrate their support - make it known that you appreciate their efforts and consider ways to publicly recognise it.

Be flexible and professional - When undertaking these meetings, you will be the public face of the campaign so good impressions are important. Be flexible and understanding of your contact's many other commitments. Arrange meetings to brief them, in your office, at their office, or over a coffee. Promptly follow up any requests for information or expressions of interest.

Stay informed -- keep in touch with other Disability Alliance campaigners around the State or contact the Disability Alliance on 0403 815 828. Visit www.disabilityalliance.org.au to make sure you have the latest information and press releases.

Understanding the role of your local State Member of Parliament

It may help to have clear understanding of what your State Member - or potential Member - is responsible for: They can:

- Make the Government aware of local concerns, lobby on behalf of their electorate, seek funding for local projects and generally represent their constituents.
- Table petitions in Parliament, make

speeches or ask questions of the Government.

- Provide information about new funding opportunities and write letters of support for community organisations seeking funding.
- Provide assistance and/or make representations in relation to access difficulties or problems concerning State Government departments and agencies including disability, health, police, housing, transport, and main roads, education, youth and community services, land tax, water, etc.
- Attend community events and functions.

Letters to the editor

Here are some tips to help get your letter published:

- Keep it short and simple! 50 words is most likely to be printed, 100 words is OK, and 200 is the absolute maximum.
- Start the letter by referring to the issue, then define the problem, offer solutions and call for action.
- Stick to one point only. You can't mention all aspects of the debate in a few lines.
- Keep the language plain and simple.
- Statistics impress some editors. Use the statistics provided in Fact Sheet 1 – Did you know? If you have local statistics such as the number of people/families requiring support in your community use them as well.
- Use a personal experience to give your comments more impact.
- Always proof-read and make sure your letter is free from typos and spelling errors.
- Don't give up if your first go doesn't get published.

Getting on air...

Preparing yourself for talkback radio

The idea of talking on the radio can be a little overwhelming for many people. Just remember though, there is no reason why you can't have your say just like hundreds of other people. Preparation, staying calm and focused on what you have to say are key to getting your point across.

Preparation

Plan your key points, have them written down but try not to memorise them as you want to sound natural (5-6 lines should be enough as you'll probably have 60 seconds maximum).

Before you call

- Have the numbers ready.
- Follow the radio show and listen for the cue to call from the presenter.
- When on hold make sure your radio is off and listen to the show via your phone.
- Remember why you're calling -- to question, educate or convince.
- Make sure you turn off your mobile phone!

When you're on the air

- Be quick and concise - a quick 'Hello' and then get straight on to your point. Don't waffle. Remember that radio listeners only get to hear what you say once, so speak clearly with lots of expression in your voice.
- Make it constructive. Don't just make a wise crack or let off steam -- that won't change anyone's mind. Tell a compelling first-hand story. Give a key statistic (but don't exaggerate).

- Talkback radio is about controversy-- be prepared for the host to challenge you. Try to stay as calm and reasonable as possible.
- Try to relax and be natural. Do not think of it as an interview, but a conversation in which you have the chance to get your message across.
- For radio it is important to talk in pictures so you can create the imagery for the listener. Describe what impact your support needs have on your life (e.g. your home life, work life, family).
- Use everyday language, which you would use when talking to your friends or family. In fact, pretend you are chatting at home.
- Don't forget to breathe. Speak slowly and clearly.

End on a positive note and thank the host.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

Disability Alliance

www.disabilityalliance.org.au

Get Involved

www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

Queensland Parliament

www.parliament.qld.gov.au

Electoral Commission Queensland

www.ecq.qld.gov.au

You Tube

www.youtube.com.au