



Ending Deforestation NSW Campaign MP and Candidate Engagement Toolkit

This is a guide to meeting with your local member of parliament and candidates standing for election at the upcoming NSW election. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Shirley by emailing shall@nature.org.au or call the NCC office on 02 9516 1488.

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Resources

MP and candidate engagement [webinar recording](#) and [slides](#)

[Meeting request email template](#)

[Meeting agenda template](#)

[Meeting Summary Form](#)

[Print out posters](#)

[Policy brief](#)

NCC Reports: [Towards Zero Deforestation](#) and [Bulldozing of Bushlands](#)

[Report back form](#)



Nature Conservation Council

The voice for nature in NSW

Why meet with your MP and candidates?

Nature in NSW is in crisis. New laws allow for devastating deforestation and land clearing of important wildlife habitat. As a result of these new laws, 99% of identified koala habitat on private land can be bulldozed and a staggering 8 million hectares of forest and bushland has no protection from deforestation.

The destruction of trees and bushland is pushing our wildlife to the brink of extinction, causes carbon emissions, accelerates soil loss, pollutes streams and rivers, harms human health and wellbeing, and reduces soil fertility and farm productivity for generations to come.

NSW urgently needs strong laws to protect biodiversity – laws that allow nature to thrive, encourages landholders to protect and restore native trees and forests, and makes deforestation and land clearing a thing of the past.

Your local MP and candidates respond to the issues they hear about from their community. The more of us who talk about the importance of taking action to protect nature by ending deforestation and land clearing, the more seriously your MP and candidates will take the issue.

Your meeting is one vital step in the campaign to get better action from all political parties.

With the NSW state election just around the corner - now is a great time to ask your local MP and candidates to make commitments to ending the deforestation crisis in NSW.

Who is your local Member of Parliament?

To find which electorate you are in, enter your postcode [at this website](#).

Then find your Representative (Member of Parliament) using the name of your electorate on the [NSW Parliament website](#).

Still having trouble? – contact Shirley at shall@nature.org.au

Who are your local candidates?

Finding your local candidates may take a little investigation. Keep an eye on the [electoral commission's website page](#)- candidate's details will be added here soon. You can also search on political party websites (such as NSW Liberal Party, NSW Labor, The Nationals, NSW Greens etc) or try a google search, such as 'candidates NSW 2019 election Willoughby'.



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Put yourself in their shoes

Our MPs and candidates deal with a large range of issues and represent about 55,000 people. It is likely that your meeting with them will be the first time someone has met with them to talk about deforestation and land clearing. It's important not to assume too much knowledge about the topic.

You don't have to be an expert on the issue, your role is to show your representatives that you care about the issue and to be clear on what you want them to do. If they ask questions that you don't know the answer to, just let them know that you will find out and get back to them. We can help you find answers.

It is very rare for all members of a political party to share the same view. Just because you may not agree with the policies of a party, that doesn't mean you won't find common ground with your MP or candidates. There are real champions for changes to the deforestation and land clearing laws in each party - our job is to show them what the community wants and to encourage them to do more.

Building a relationship with your MP and candidates

It can be helpful to build a relationship with your local MP and candidates. Signing up to your MP and candidates newsletters and following them on social media can be a great way to keep up to date with their work and see how they're engaging in your community. If you see an event that your MP or candidates are attending, or hosting, and you're able to go too, having an informal chat can help build a relationship. You can also invite your MP and candidates to events that you are attending or hosting. MPs and candidates are also often at local markets or fairs, providing another opportunity for you to talk to them and start to engage with them on the issues you most concerned about.

4 Steps to having a constructive meeting with your MP and/or candidate

1. Get in contact with your MP and/or local candidates

- You can find your MPs contact details here: [NSW Parliament website](#).
- Your local candidates can often be found on their parties website or by searching your local candidates name, many candidates have their own websites and social media page - you can email them, use their contact form or direct message them on social media.
- Use our [meeting request template](#) and make it personal by editing the relevant sections.



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- It is often helpful to follow up your email with a phone call if you haven't heard back from them with a response after a couple of days.
- If you don't hear back from your MP or candidates, you might have to be persistent by contacting them again. It is common for MPs and candidates to arrange a meeting 2 to 3 weeks in advance, so it's best to suggest a meeting date that is a few weeks away.

2. Prepare for your meeting

- It's important to think about what you want your MP to do after your meeting. We suggest focusing on 3 main asks for your MP or candidate.
- If you're meeting as a group, it can be helpful to meet beforehand to agree on a plan for the meeting - who will take notes, who will lead the meeting, what key points each participant will make, and what material you will leave with your Representative or candidate. We suggest you take the following materials with you and leave them with you representative
 - A copy of our [Towards Zero Deforestation](#) Campaign Report
 - A copy of the [Ending Deforestation policy brief](#)
- The easiest way to set the agenda for your meeting is to think about the key points you would like to make - just 3 or 4 is ideal. You can use the policy brief to help formulate your asks.
 - Our [meeting agenda template](#) can be used to help guide your meeting
- It is also important to consider your MP's or candidate's stance, and their party's stance on land clearing and deforestation before hand to help guide your approach.

3. Have your meeting

- Arrive on time - If you are meeting in Parliament, arrive 15 minutes early to get through security, then look for a sign to the 'Legislative Assembly' where the receptionist will be. Ask any staff to help if you can't find your way - they're always friendly.
- Be respectful – being polite will earn the respect of your MP - being grumpy may just make them defensive and not help your cause.
- Tell your story – personalising the issues will help get your message across. Try and present your information as clearly and succinctly as possible.
- It is okay if you don't know the answer to everything that is asked. Let your Representative know that you will provide the information after the meeting.
- Don't forget to ask for a commitment. Remember why you are there and try not to get sidetracked.



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- Ask for a picture of your meeting, you can take printouts of our Ending Deforestation posters (upload to website and then link) to hold up in the photo. Ask your MP or candidate to share the picture on their social media platform and their commitment to ending deforestation crisis.
- Make sure you leave time to fill out our [Meeting Summary Form](#) with your local MP or candidate. You fill out the form together, ask your MP or local candidate to tick the box or write their explanation for why they cannot. Ask your MP or local candidate to sign the bottom of the meeting summary. It's important that you take this meeting summary with you when you leave.

4. Follow up and keep in contact

- Write to thank your MP for making the time to meet with you, and reiterate why the meeting was important to you.
- Remind them what they committed to doing after the meeting and let them know you're looking forward to their response.
- Follow up any outstanding action. If you agreed to provide additional information, make sure you provide that within a reasonable time frame. If you were promised additional information, then follow this up too. If you need help with more information email us on shall@nature.org.au or call 02 9516 1488.

Key asks of your MP and/or local candidate

I call on the all parties to:

- Ban clearing of koala and other threatened species habitat, and all high-conservation value land on all land tenures;
- Release prompt, transparent, and regular statewide clearing data; and
- Establish a \$1.5 billion Land and Biodiversity Fund to support landholders to restore the health of our living landscapes.

More policy details can be found on our 11 point [policy brief](#).

Action we want our MPs and election candidates to take:

- Raise concerns with environment spokesperson in your party and ask for written response that can be sent on to us.
- Publicly advocate for your party to act on the deforestation and land clearing crisis with stronger laws to protect wildlife, forests and bushland. This could be in local media, through local newsletters, on social media or with a direct mailout to constituents.
- Take a photo with us from our meeting and share your commitment to doing the above.

We would love to know how your meeting went, please fill out our [report back form](#) or email shall@nature.org.au.