

# Lobbying Your MP using the TEU Te Kaupapa Whaioranga The Blueprint for Women

Lobbying is using your right to meet your Member of Parliament (MP) as one of his or her constituents. You can do this either in your constituency or by visiting Parliament.

An MP should regard you as a constituent, whether you voted for them or not. MPs are meant to “represent” each constituent’s interests. This does not mean that they have to agree with you. However, it means they should listen and be prepared to pass on your views to the Government.

## How to contact your local MP

Most Members of Parliament (MPs) have offices at both Parliament and at their electorate or place of residence. You can write to them at either. They also have email.

Visit [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz) for a list of Members of Parliament and their contact details.

Use [this map](#) from the Elections New Zealand website if you need to find out which electorate you live in. Another way to find out which members of Parliament have an office near where you live is to look in your local telephone directory under ‘Members of Parliament’.

## Write to your local MP

### Tips on writing to your MP

Your MP probably gets hundreds of emails and letters so keep it short and to the point. Attach the Te Kaupapa Whaioranga The Blueprint for Women to support your key messages about the importance of tertiary education to your community and New Zealand.

- Write to your local MP, introducing your local branch/interest group and highlighting the importance of tertiary education to your (and their) community and request a meeting to discuss your concerns

### Some dos:

- Personalise your letter so that it demonstrates your personal interest in the MP and in the issue of tertiary education
- Keep it to one page, MPs are busy people
- Keep to the point - do not try to cover too many issues
- Summarise your key message in the opening paragraph
- Be courteous – the aim is to influence them and hopefully build a relationship
- Include your name and contact details
- Do run a spell and grammar check over the final letter
- Invite them to contact you for more information or to discuss further

## Visit your local MP

MPs are available to meet with people at their Electorate Office in sessions known as a constituency ‘clinic’. The clinic sessions are usually on Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays, as the House of Representatives (Parliament) tends to sit on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Some MPs also hold constituency clinics outside their main centre.

1. Follow up your letter with a call to the electorate office and the member’s electorate secretary will arrange an appointment for you.
2. Make an appointment to discuss the importance of tertiary education to your community.
3. Arrange a small team of TEU members to go to the meeting with you.



4. Download the Te Kaupapa Whaioranga The Blueprint for Women talking points, and make sure you are clear on them.
5. Take a letter/briefing paper to leave behind that highlights why tertiary education is so important to New Zealand and your community and highlights your main points.
6. Take a copy of Te Kaupapa Whaioranga, The Blueprint for Women to leave behind.
7. Leave a local news story or photo that underpins your argument if there is something appropriate.
8. If you use real stories involving people from the MP's own electorate this will keep the MP involved and make your issue "human-sized".
9. Keep it short and to the point - an MP is busy. If the MP wants to talk about something, do that, but try to bring the conversation back to the topic. Know your stuff and 'stick to your knitting'.
10. Keep calm. You may get a hostile MP or just someone who wants to play the devil's advocate. Use rational arguments, reiterating your most important points, don't exaggerate, and don't make things up, stay polite.

## Other Options

- Invite your MP to visit your institution and see it first-hand
- You can also invite your MP to events, public lectures, workshops, presentations, etc.
- You may invite them to be part of a panel
- Offer to be a sounding board for your local MP on tertiary education-related issues

## Follow up

1. Evaluate. Get your lobby buddies to immediately feedback to you on the meeting. Report back to TEU National Office to let us know how you went.
2. Show your gratitude. Follow up the meeting with a thank you note, email or phone call. Promptly forward to them any information they've asked for. Keep in touch. Offer to be a support person to him or her on tertiary education issues.

## Support resources:

Check out TEU's [Te Kaupapa Whaioranga campaign page](#) for resources to help you with your lobbying, including graphs, information and news.