

Y ADVOCACY?

AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST TOOLKIT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise First Nations peoples as the custodians of the lands and waters of Australia, with more than 60,000 years of knowledge, strengths and expertise in caring for country. European settlers came to these lands and took them without authority, right or permission. We recognise that YWCA Australia has benefited from colonisation and we have a responsibility to acknowledge the harm done and to work towards respect and recognition. This land is Aboriginal land—always was and always will be.

Thank you to the fierce, bold and invisible women and people from marginalised genders that have advocated and participated in activism that has created hope for a future of gender equality in Australia and around the world. We also thank the countless hours and energy put into Australian and global resources on advocacy toolkits that have enabled us to create our own. We encourage you to seek out other toolkits listed at the end of the resource. Learning from and building upon the collective action of other feminists is a powerful piece in your own advocacy toolkit.

YWCA'S GLOBAL ADVOCACY

This toolkit is for practical use within Australia. However, if you're looking for global advocacy opportunities, then look no further!

YWCA Australia is part of one of the largest gender equality movements in the world. We work closely with World YWCA and our global sisters on key gender advocacy issues, as well as being an active part of Australia's own civil society community.

YWCA is part of Australia's large civil society that works with government and contributes to a human rights framework in Australia and advocates for human rights principles internationally. For YWCA, key global gender equality settings include attending the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), reviewing the Beijing Declaration and contributing to Generation Equality, Universal Periodic Review and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) processes.

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

If you're looking to make a difference and want to advocate for gender equality and/or other issues affecting women, young women, girls and people of marginalised genders in Australia, then this toolkit is for you!

The advice and information you'll find here is drawn from a multitude of resources written by policy and advocacy experts.

This collection of practical tips and advice will help you to identify policy areas of particular interest to you, and who you can talk to about creating change. We will show you how to make an advocacy plan, the different advocacy activities you can do, and offer some handy communications tools to help your campaign really stand out!

Whether you're new to advocacy or looking for a refresher, this toolkit will give you lots to think about and support you in taking the next step in your advocacy journey.

These international mechanisms provide a unique opportunity to meaningfully and effectively engage in international issues while amplifying domestic advocacy priorities.



As a young women's movement, YWCA is committed to elevating the voices of young women in global gender equality work.

If you're interested to find out more about our global advocacy please visit the dedicated page on our [website](#).

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WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

Intersectionality (a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989) is a feminist theory, a methodology for research, and a springboard for **social justice*** action.

Intersectionality acknowledges how different forms of oppression and privilege are experienced by different people. Its premise is that people's identities are shaped by different social relations, historical experiences and structures of power.

In the context of gender equality, intersectionality acknowledges there is no one common experience of gendered discrimination and structural oppression. Rather a person's experience is influenced by compounding factors such as race, ability, sexual identity, gender expression and class.

People can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege. For example, a woman may experience class privilege by occupying a senior corporate job. However, the same woman may experience structural discrimination because she experiences domestic violence in her home, and her workplace does not offer paid domestic violence leave policies.

An intersectional lens considers multiple factors and experiences that collectively make up a person's identity. Issues cannot be addressed in a silo, they must be considered as a whole, as people experience their identities.

Intersectionality considers historical, social and political contexts and recognises the uniqueness of an individual's experience. For example, the experience of a First Nations woman in Australia can be very different to that of a migrant woman. There are countless unique and distinct identities and experiences in Australia, and these need to be considered when planning your advocacy.



Social justice is the promotion of just societies and treatment of individuals and communities based on the belief that we each possess an innate human dignity. Social justice issues revolve around structures or human actions within society that result in people being treated unfairly or unjustly.

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

[in-ter-sek-shuh-nl fem-uh-niz-uhm]

If feminism is advocating for equality between sexes, intersectional feminism is the understanding of how gender and overlapping identities—including race, class, ethnicity, religion, ability and sexual orientation—impact the way a person experiences oppression.

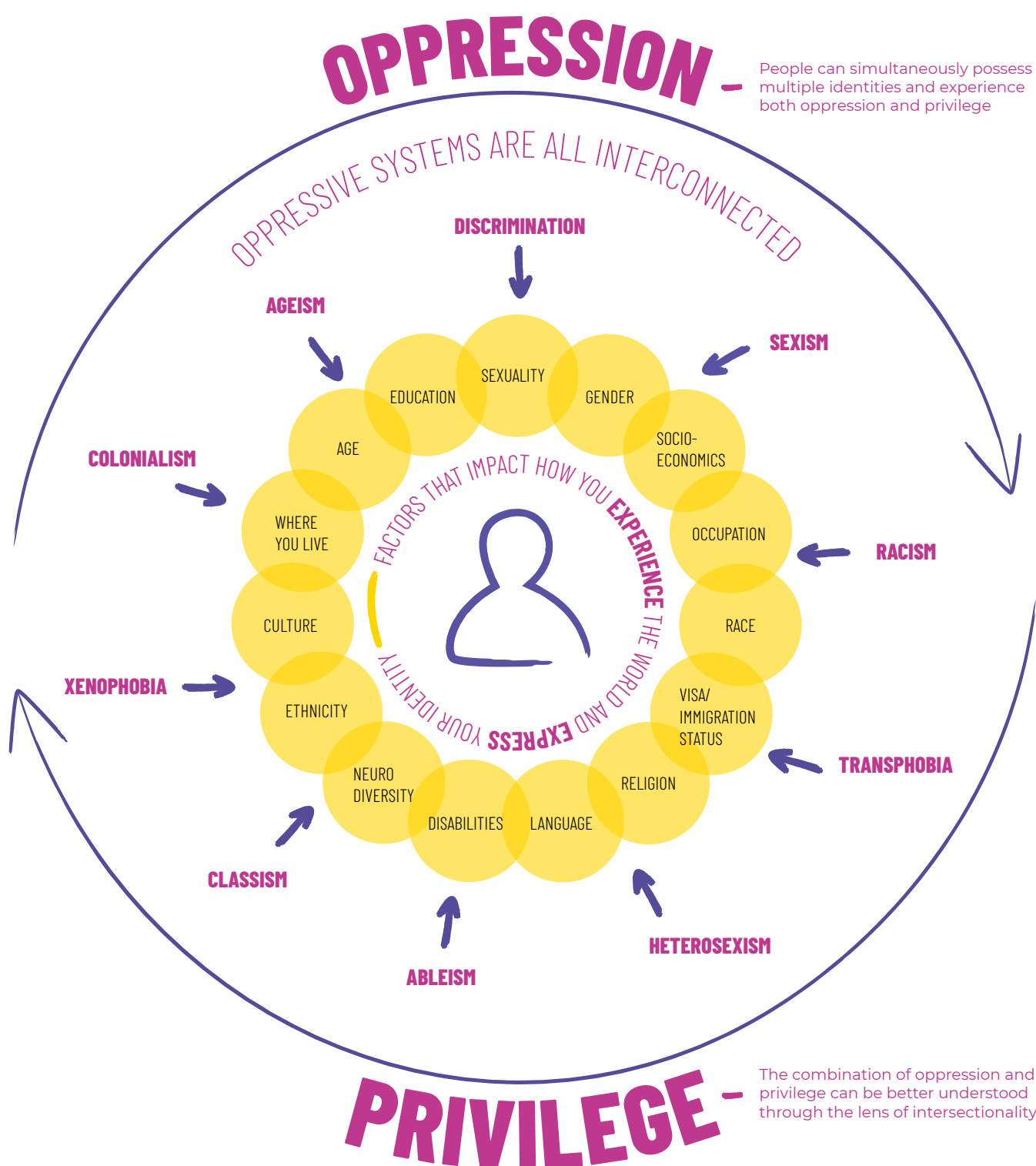
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MY FEMINISM WILL BE **INTERSECTIONAL**
OR IT WILL BE **BULLSH*T**

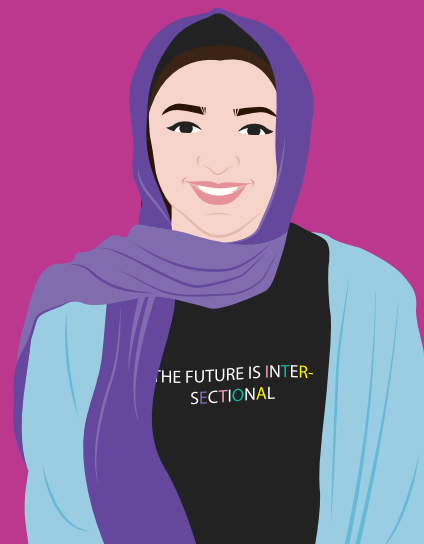
- FLAVIA DZODAN

INTERSECTIONALITY

This illustrates some of the oppressive structures at play in society, not all, and people experience privilege, dominance and oppression differently at different times in their lives.



YWCA TAKES AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACH TO ADVOCACY



Our advocacy is informed by our experience—we know the issues facing women, young women, girls and marginalised genders, and how best to address them.

We regularly work with local communities and consult with people in our programs and services, which means we have a real, human perspective on community, societal and structural issues.

Through our work, we're making sure that the issues affecting women, young women, girls and marginalised genders of all ages in Australia are brought to the attention of decision-makers. Our advocacy takes an intersectional approach so that our work reflects and meets the needs of those we advocate for.

OUR POLICY AND ADVOCACY ARE INFORMED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- We support **reconciliation***
- We value the lived experience of the individuals and families we work with.
- We work for the human rights of all people, with a specific focus on women, young women, girls and marginalised genders in all their diversity.
- We use an intersectional feminist analysis—does this policy or program have a different effect on certain women, young women, girls and marginalised genders?
- We promote the leadership of women, young women, girls, and marginalised genders.
- We support women, young women, girls and marginalised genders across their lifespan.
- We value diversity and work to eliminate racism and all forms of prejudice.
- We collaborate with others to create local, national and international change.
- We value volunteering and activism (Have you joined our CBF online advocacy group? ywca.org.au/CBF).
- We value an independent, **non-partisan voice***
- The future is intersectional and gender responsive.



Reconciliation is about unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.

Non-partisan voice. Not biased or partisan, especially towards any particular political party.

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST ADVOCACY & YOU

Now that you are familiar with intersectional feminism and how we use it in our work, it's time to think about how you can take an Intersectional Feminist approach in your advocacy.

Research is an important part of advocacy. It ensures you are informed on an issue and it will help you in addressing it. An Intersectional Feminist approach requires you to be reflexive, which is to know yourself, to be able to look inwardly and outwardly, and to understand your privileges and oppressions in relation to an issue.

HERE ARE SOME INITIAL STEPS TO ENSURE YOUR APPROACH TO RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY TAKES AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACH:



STEP 1

Identify who or what cause you are advocating for.



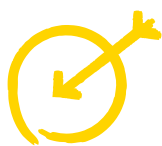
STEP 2

Consider the power structures within which your issue operates.



STEP 3

Consider what privileges or oppressions you bring to the table because of your identity/ies and lived experience.



STEP 4

Consider who is most impacted by the issue.



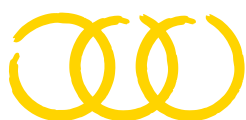
STEP 5

Ask yourself what you know about the issue, and what else you need to know—challenge your assumptions.



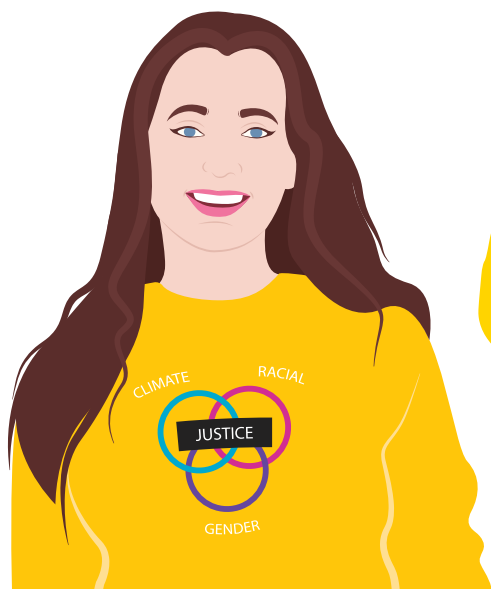
STEP 6

Ensure your advocacy includes marginalised voices, and the people who are the most impacted.



STEP 7

You don't have to do this alone—find your people! Chances are there are many people who can and want to mobilise on the same issue you want to advocate on and it's about finding them and creating and building connections. Good places to start are other YWCA members and CBF members but other places are Facebook groups, local community groups, women's collectives at university or influencers and activists online. Our collective power can be a driving force for change!



**South African disability rights advocates in the 1980's*

CENTERING VOICES

This is a popular slogan used to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of those affected by that policy.

This includes marginalised groups that have historically been excluded from political, social, and economic opportunities such as LGBTQIA+ people, Black, First Nations and people of colour, people with disabilities, women, and others. It is critical to centre their voices and experiences in your advocacy—not everyone has an experience relevant to the advocacy issue you are working on, but everyone can act for change! Centering other voices doesn't mean you have to remain silent, it means you can put energy into intentionally creating space for people experiencing oppression and being mindful of the space you yourself hold.

Even well-intentioned allies can disempower or speak over the very people they are hoping to support. For example, if you are a white, cis-gendered woman and you wish to advocate for youth homelessness, it is important you consult with young people, trans and gender diverse people, non-binary people, gender queer people, Sistagirls and Brotherboys and those who have experienced homelessness. You can also refer to any resources that have been created by allies. Local support services often have great resources to help with your research.

Also important in your research is to understand whether there are any other challenges your interest group are experiencing at the same time. For example, is there a disproportionate number of young First Nations people of marginalised genders experiencing homelessness? Are these young people also experiencing domestic and family violence? Is this happening in regional areas or in cities?



SUGGESTED ONLINE READING FOR ALLIES:

[10 things allies can do](#)

["Why Are White People So Bad At Talking About Race?"](#)

[How to be an anti-racist ally](#)

[How to be a trans ally](#)

[How to be an ally to survivors of gender-based violence](#)

[How to be a good Indigenous ally](#)

[Count me In—Mini guide to LGBTQIA+ allyship](#)

[What can our allies do to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sex workers in our struggle for rights and recognition?](#)

UNDERSTANDING POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Power and privilege can be used to fight oppression. However, it is important to reflect on your own power and privilege when doing advocacy to ensure you are not ‘part of the problem’, and that your advocacy and feminism is inclusive.



POWER

Power is the ability to control circumstances or resources. Gender discrimination is an example of power manifesting in our daily lives. Power may be having control or influence over a person, a group or a system. As individuals, there is both positive and negative potential to our power. For example, positively exercising your power may be to mobilise a group of people, provide resources, or campaign online for social change. Negatively exercising your power may be to uphold the status quo. Power can also be analysed at different levels, including individual, interpersonal, organisational and societal.

A key part of understanding advocacy and power is recognising that power relationships occur not just in the political sphere or in the workplace, but also within households and between individuals. Identifying power relations and the need to challenge them will influence your advocacy goals, the types of interventions you prioritise, and the methods you use. It will also highlight the importance of careful risk analysis and management. Risks are particularly pronounced for gender equality advocates because of the challenges our advocacy poses to accepted gender roles and norms, and to established power hierarchies.

The patriarchy is an example of an “invisible” power. In this form of power, people may be unaware of their rights, how to speak out, and might see power or domination over them as “normal” or “unchallenged”.



PRIVILEGE

Privilege is any benefit, opportunity or advantage given to someone because of their identity. Privilege is not something you need to be ashamed of, but it is something you need to understand. Sometimes people think of it as ‘luck’, but when we do this we miss an opportunity to think critically about power and the structures that uphold an unequal society.

Having privilege doesn’t mean your life isn’t hard, or you haven’t faced issues. It just means that your life hasn’t been made harder by things that are outside of your control, like the colour of your skin.

You can experience privilege for one part of your identity while also experiencing discrimination for other parts. You might be very passionate about an issue, but before you position yourself as a spokesperson for an issue ask yourself “is it my issue to speak on?” Perhaps it is, or perhaps you can find other ways to do equally important advocacy and still allow someone else to speak while you listen, support and share. ‘Centering a voice’ means actively listening to and respecting the expertise of members of a marginalised community while ensuring those voices are heard before people without lived experience. Advocacy is multifaceted and everyone has a role to play.



IDENTITY

Exploring identity is mostly about answering the questions “who are you?” and “what does it mean to be who you are?” and “what characteristics do you define yourself by?”. It can be about your basic values that influence the choices you make like in how you dress, what career you have and what relationships you have.

You can hold multiple roles that shape your identity—you could be a friend, a partner, a mentor, a soccer coach, an aspiring TikTok influencer or a gamer; each of these roles have their own meanings, expectations and internalised factors that you may manifest as your identity. Your own identity can be considered a never-ending journey as it develops over your life. Feeling like you have a choice and control over your own identity is incredibly powerful.

There can also be social and political implications to our identity, and sometimes assumptions are made about individuals and communities based on characteristics such as race and culture, gender identity, ability, or sexuality. These parts of your identity may bring strength or they may bring vulnerability, or both at different times. Your identity can influence and directly affect how your experience power and privilege.

One of the foundations of an intersectional worldview is that people have control of their own narrative and that individuals and communities have the freedom to self-identify however they wish. This allows people to choose what they share and how they represent themselves and it embraces the idea of “all of who I am”.



OPPRESSION

Oppression is the inequitable use of authority, law, cultural and/or religious norms or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal, and a type of injustice that people experience.

The verb oppress can mean to keep someone down in a social or economic sense—such as farmer underpaying or coercing a migrant worker—or how the patriarchy oppresses everyone in a society. It can also mean to mentally burden someone—for example by creating additional barriers to accessing services based on visa status.

Intersectional feminism is about challenging the oppression of all women, and to do this we need to understand all systemic forms of disempowerment and brutality so we can actively apply an intersectional lens. Importantly, we need to build compassion and empathy with others and underpin our social justice with kindness and openness.

HERE IS A REFLECTION EXERCISE THAT MIGHT HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND YOUR POWER AND PRIVILEGE:



MY POWER REFLECTION

Ask yourself:

1. When was the last time I acknowledged I had power?
2. When was the last time I gave my power away intentionally?
3. When was the last time I felt powerless?
4. When was the last time I took someone's power?

MY PRIVILEGE REFLECTION

Ask yourself:

5. How does the world see me?
6. How far ahead can I plan?
7. How predictable does the world (and my life) feel?
8. How much space do I take up?
9. How easy was it for me to go to school?
Get into university? Get a job? Find a partner?

CHANGE MAKERS AND DECISION MAKERS

YWCA holds a dual role of providing direct service delivery alongside gender equality advocacy.

Gender equality and our commitment to our vision means our intersectional feminist principles are woven into everything we do. Not just why we do what we do, but how we work together, and how we make strategic choices.

Strategic government relations are key for YWCA as there is a need to bridge the divide between intersectional feminist theory and its practice, and between individuals and collective action. Not just identifying problems, but also offering solutions that governments can support and work with.

In order to do this, YWCA aims to:

- React quickly to emerging issues whilst also continuing to build our profile as a gender equality thought leader, and planning for the long-term.
- Deliver strategic engagement opportunities and communications to better position YWCA.
- Conduct critical analysis of policy, risks and political decision-making via our relationships with other women's specialist services, gender equality evidence-based industry bodies, allied NGO's and peak bodies.

Campaigning to influence change and hold leaders accountable is a core part of our mission. There are six key policy areas that are essential to achieving gender equality and a just and equitable world for women, young women, girls and marginalised genders. They are:



POLICY AREA 1

Intersectionality and Gender Responsiveness



POLICY AREA 2

Safety



POLICY AREA 3

Housing and Homelessness



POLICY AREA 4

Young Women's Leadership



POLICY AREA 5

Women's Economic Security



POLICY AREA 6

Health and Wellbeing

WE CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE IN AUSTRALIA IN THESE
POLICY AREAS, AND WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

ADVOCACY, ACTIVISM AND CAMPAIGNING, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The aims of advocacy, activism and campaigning are similar as they all intended to build public support for change but the processes and tactics can be different. It's the same but different. How?

	Definition	Processes and tactics
ADVOCACY	A really general term used to describe purposeful actions that aim to change attitudes, policies and practices.	A deliberate or purposeful plan that attempts to influence policy makers and stakeholders to achieve a desired social change. Advocacy is more than just awareness raising.
ACTIVISM	Deliberate actions on behalf of a cause that goes beyond what is conventional or routine.	Activism can be an effort or collection of efforts to promote, impede, direct, or intervene in social, political, economic, or environmental change with the desire to make changes in society toward a perceived greater good. It can often be referred to as "Grassroots activism" and be more focused on building public awareness and pressure.
CAMPAIGNING	Actions, events and activities to achieve a change and to raise awareness on a specific issue working more widely across organised groups or people.	Campaigning includes lobbying those in power to make changes, and a combination of a number of actions to build public support for change.

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UNDERSTANDING **WHAT** YOU WANT TO CHANGE WILL HELP YOU TO IDENTIFY THE KIND OF ADVOCACY YOU SHOULD DO AND HOW TO DO IT.

ADVOCACY CAN BE DONE ON THREE DIFFERENT SCALES IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE.

1. SELF ADVOCACY

Taking action to represent and advance your own interests, e.g. advocating for your entitlements at work, such as equal pay.

2. PEER ADVOCACY

Taking action to represent the rights and interests of someone other than yourself, e.g. advocating for others who are being bullied or victimised in a social environment such as school or work.

3. SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

Taking action to influence social, political, and economic systems to bring about change for groups of people. e.g. advocating for women to have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare.

WHO CAN YOU SPEAK TO ABOUT YOUR ISSUE?

MPS AND SENATORS

It's a good idea to interact with your local representatives first. These politicians have made a commitment to represent the local community and can advocate on your behalf. Engaging senators is useful when you are looking to gain access to committees or when you are looking to enact (or block) a bill. Blanket approaches may help to flag your campaign with a wide range of representatives, but if you're looking for a champion or collaborator, consider who is in the best position to help you. Finding feminist allies can be difficult. Unfortunately, in many jurisdictions there are not as many women in government as there should be, but MPs and senators, regardless of gender, can often be very engaged around gender equality. It's important to identify your allies early and nurture those relationships.

MINISTERS AND SHADOW MINISTERS

Meeting a Minister is best for advocates seeking policy or **legislative change*** at a Federal or State level. However, Ministers and Shadow Ministers have responsibilities beyond their electorate, so there are extra demands on their schedules. When meeting with a Minister or Shadow Minister, it is essential that you are well prepared, well-rehearsed and have a strong advocacy case. Consult the Parliament House website for the current [Ministry list](#) and [Shadow Ministry list](#).

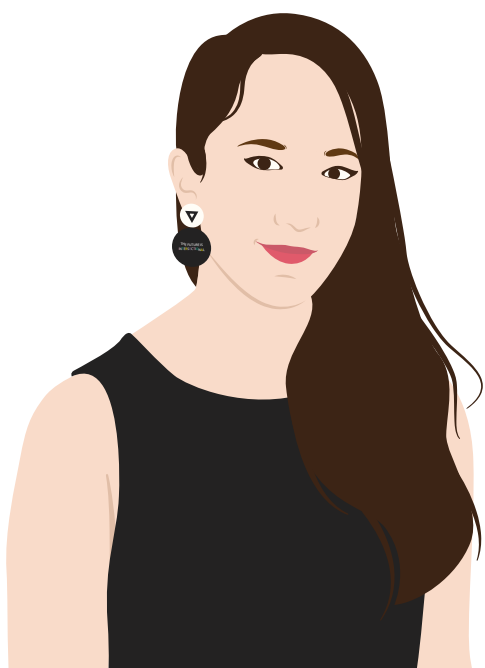
ADVISORS

If a Minister hasn't got time to meet with you, they might offer you a meeting with an advisor. Meeting with an advisor can be useful. Advisors see Ministers on a daily basis and hold their trust. If you can persuade an advisor to back your cause, they may convince the Minister. Advisors prepare briefs on bills going through parliament and help the Minister and their department engage with stakeholders to ensure their office is making decisions in full knowledge of the different perspectives on any issue. Advisors also play a role in researching policy solutions and developing legislation to enact those solutions



Legislative change. Federal Parliament's legislative powers. A new Commonwealth (national) law can only be made, or an existing law changed or removed, with the authority of the Federal Parliament, that is, by Parliament passing an Act. Amendments to existing Acts and their regulation frameworks or guidelines are permitted.

Under Australia's Constitution the Federal Parliament can make laws only on certain matters. These include: international and interstate trade; foreign affairs; defence; immigration; taxation; banking; insurance; marriage and divorce; currency and weights and measures; post and telecommunications; and invalid and old age pensions. If an issue isn't covered in the Constitution, it's usually a State or Territory responsibility. States and Territories make laws about local government, roads, hospitals, housing and planning and schools.



COMMITTEES

Parliamentary Committees

Parliamentary Committees periodically conduct inquiries into issues where consensus or compromise has not yet been reached. Inquiries are initiated by politicians referring a matter to the relevant Committee. Parliamentary Committees can also decide to conduct an inquiry into an issue that the members see as relevant. It's also possible for advocates to write to the Chair of a Committee to encourage them to undertake an inquiry into a particular issue.

Before doing this, it is a good idea to speak to the Committee Secretary for advice on how to frame such a suggestion. Consult the Parliament House website for the current list of [parliamentary committees](#).

Policy Committees

Policy Committees are internal party committees. These groups often discuss specific policy areas to provide advice to **Caucus**.*



Caucus. A collective party group of members in the House of Representatives or the Senate who belong to a political party.

The key women's Policy Committees are:

- Australian Labor Party Status of Women Caucus Committee
- Liberal Federal Women's Committee
- National Women's Federal Council
- Green's State Women Committees

The best way to in touch with these women's Policy Committees is through an MP as they function more like working groups.

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

Parliamentary Friendship Groups can offer a useful platform for cross-party conversations on topical matters. Although they do not hold any formal political power, they influence politicians by sharing information and raising awareness. Events held by Parliamentary Friendship Groups can be an efficient and enjoyable way to reach a range of different politicians at the same time.

OTHER NGOS

If you are tackling an issue related to gender equality, there's probably a group out there looking for the same change you are. Key organisations and community groups often have relationships with everyone listed above. Feminism often means coming together to combine your collective impact. If you Google "issue and Australia/local area" you will often find places and people to connect with.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

This could be a person who works for the state or for local government, such as a judge or teacher. People in all levels of public service can also be great people to talk to for connecting you to others or helping you analyse the invisible power at play.



FURTHER READING:

[The Dilemma of Ethical Consumption](#)

[Putting My Money Where The Planet Needs It](#)

[Leave It On The Shelf](#)



CORPORATES AND BUSINESSES

People in leadership across corporations and business are increasingly stepping up; for many, silence on issues that oppress or discriminate against others is no longer an option. Examples include; [Lush and Trans inclusion](#), [CBA and domestic violence](#) and [Ben and Jerry's and the Black Lives Matter movement](#). It doesn't mean they are perfect in the application of their allyship, but they can be large powerholders with lots of influence. Local business trade halls for example are another great way to connect into a community and advocate. They may be able to support the amplifying of your message, connect with you on days of significance, provide financial support or connect you into others.

THE POWER OF YOU

After reading a list about all the levels of power, it can feel like you are looking at a mountain of an advocacy challenge. But don't overlook the power you hold within yourself that you have more control over! You have power—whether as a consumer living in a capitalist society you have vowed to never buy from Amazon and buy only locally crafted gifts, or who you choose to manage your superannuation or how your electricity is generated and what the supplier's commitments are for climate action. We can't avoid being consumers entirely but we often have alternative options that are more aligned with our identity and values.



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THIS LIST IS NOT A LIMITING ONE!
THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHERS THAT HOLD
POWER AND INFLUENCE ON THE ISSUE
YOU ARE WORKING ON!

LET'S ADVOCATE!

7 STEP ADVOCACY PLAN

We know that long term social change takes time. When planning your advocacy, it is important to keep sight of the longer term structural change you are trying to achieve.

However, it is also important to be realistic about what you can achieve in the short and medium term depending on your context, resources and existing relationships.

At the Y we don't need to reinvent the wheel and we highly recommend the [Plan model taken from Womankind's Plan Your Power Toolkit](#).



POWER ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT

A power analysis is a way of understanding who has power over the factors which are causing your issue and is critical to understanding the context in which your advocacy will take place.

In order to challenge unequal power relations and structures, we need to identify and understand the existing forms and expressions of power to tackle the root causes, not just the 'symptoms' of inequality. A power analysis can help you to work out who has the power to help you and what your own level of power is. This tells you who you need to be talking to or working with and might also tell you what actions you need to take in your advocacy.

If you have time constraints, be careful not to spend too much time on context mapping or you may run out of time for the strategic decision making later. In a workshop setting, workshop participants may be able to do some pre-reading to inform this stage of the process. If you discover you have evidence gaps that you need to fill in order to understand your context, consider how you can find out what you need to know. You may need to undertake further research, interview power holders or communities most affected by the problem or take some time to discuss the issue with community organisations.

Many of the traditional tools used for context power analysis focus on oppressive forms of power, such as formal decision-making power and access to resources. While this analysis is important, it is equally important to think about transformative power—including your power as individuals, staff and as members of a coalition, network or alliance.

POWER CHECK

- How does your own power impact on the context in which your advocacy is taking place?
- How are you creating space for the perspectives, skills and experiences of women, in all their diversity, to be included in your analysis?
- What relationships and knowledge do you already have on this issue within your own or partner organisations? How can you share and build on this?

Consider power in social, economic, political and cultural spheres and the relevant processes you might be trying to influence. Understanding these processes is important so that you can think about the most strategic points for engagement.

For example, if you are trying to influence a decision-making process, such as the passage of new legislation through parliament or a community development planning and budgeting process, you may find it useful to map out the stages of this process and identify the points at which key decisions will be taken.



RESOURCES

[Plan Your Power](#)

TRANSFORMING YOUR ISSUE INTO AN OBJECTIVE

Advocacy objectives are the changes which need to be made in order to address your issue. You should have between one to three objectives for each advocacy planning cycle.

First spend time working out what the specific issue is that you are trying to change. Try and summarise it in one sentence e.g. "Abortion is legal but restricted in South Australia" or "Universities are not doing enough to prevent sexual harassment" or "Government paid parental leave is inadequate". It can be useful to break your process down into steps:



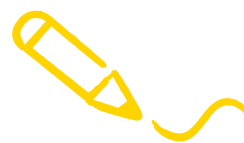
STEP 1

Identify your issue and your endgame (e.g. Problem = climate change, End Game = a sustainable planet)



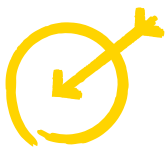
STEP 2

Is there another step here in breaking down the large issue into smaller addressable objectives (e.g. Problem = gender inequality, End Game = women live free from violence, small steps = funding for legal clinics, national primary prevention programs, parental leave)



STEP 3

Draft objectives by brainstorming ways to address the issue with your group. Make sure your objective is tangible (e.g. what policy are you seeking to change? What program do you want funded?)



STEP 4

Remember to consult with those most impacted by the issue, and if you can't speak to people directly, perhaps someone has done research on the issue that you can reference. For example, there are studies where researchers have spoken with university student victim survivors of sexual assault.



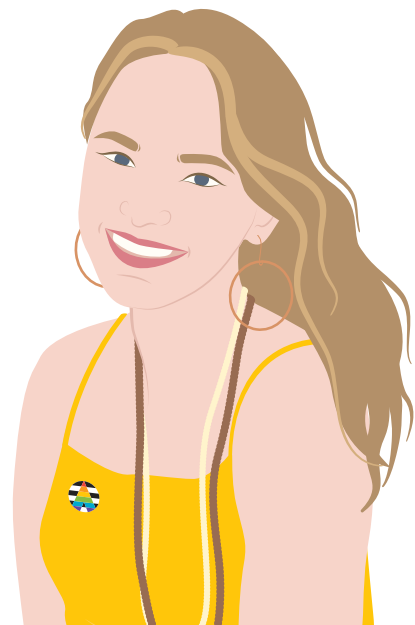
STEP 5

Check that your objectives are **S.M.A.R.T.I.E.E.***



STEP 6

Prioritise your objectives



S.M.A.R.T.I.E.E.

For advocacy to be effective in driving change, it needs to be:



STRATEGIC

It reflects an important dimension of what you or your organisation seeks to accomplish.



MEASURABLE

It includes standards by which people can agree on whether the goal has been met (by numbers or defined qualities).



AMBITIOUS

It's challenging enough that achievement would mean significant progress.



REALISTIC

It's not so challenging as to indicate lack of thought about resources or execution; and is possible to track and worth the time and energy to do so.



TIME-BOUND

It includes a clear deadline.



INTERSECTIONAL (INCLUSIVE)

It brings marginalised people, particularly those most impacted, into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making in a way that shares power.



EQUITABLE

It includes an element of fairness or justice that seeks to address systemic injustice, inequity, or oppression.



EVOLUTIONARY

Consider whether you can evolve your advocacy over time? If so, how?

POWER MAPPING – TARGETS AND ALLIES

Having identified the change you want to see, we now need to look at who has the power to achieve your objectives, who stands in the way and who you could build relationships with to help you.

This stage of the advocacy planning process focuses on two key steps. Firstly, you need to identify who your advocacy targets (power holders and influencers) and allies are, and secondly, you need to understand as much about them as possible. This will inform exactly what you will do (your strategic approach) in the next section. Refer to section 2 'Change Makers and Decision Makers' to help you identify your targets.

Understanding your own power, connections and levers for influence is a great activity to brainstorm with others

- Who are your people/community/allies? What makes your people impactful or unique?
- What skills do you have (e.g. social media, online campaigning, film-making, sports etc.)
- Do you have lived experience of this issue?
- Does your group have any personal connections with people of influence? Who are your local representatives? Are you in a marginal electorate?

RESEARCHING PARLIAMENTARIANS' FIRST SPEECHES

Politicians use their first speech to indicate the issues that closely affect them and are of significance to their constituency. This is a great starting point when researching your politician and can help you frame your issue for maximum relevance to their electorate. First speeches may be found on parliamentary profile pages on the [Parliament House website](#).

VOTING HISTORY

The majority of votes on legislation will reflect the collective position of the party to which a member belongs. Considering a politician's voting history can give a fairly reliable indication of their party's platform. In the case of the crossbench, voting histories can be helpful in directing you to which members you should work with or work on. This data is available at the [TheyVoteForYou](#) and [OpenAustralia websites](#).

OTHER MATERIALS

[Hansard](#) provides an online written record of parliamentary proceedings. You can use this to get a sense of what a politician has been willing to speak about in the past. Media reports and social media profiles can also provide up-to-date information on their interests and activity. Being able to discuss what your politician is passionate about shows that you have invested some effort in finding out what they stand for.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Your politician will be a member of various policy committees. Knowing what committees they are on will help you understand their interests and networks. This information is readily available on parliamentary profile pages on the [Parliament House website](#).

PARTY PLATFORMS

Unless you are approaching an independent, your target for advocacy will have made a commitment to support their party's policies and platform, so check these out and shape your ask accordingly. Even if a politician can't publicly advocate for your position, they may be able to give an insight into the kinds of conditions under which their party would consider changing their position.



MORE RESOURCES

[aph.gov.au](#)

[openaustralia.org.au](#)

[theyvoteforyou.org.au](#)

AGREEING ON STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The kinds of strategies you use will reflect your strengths and values. You might use mostly insider or outsider strategies. 'Insider' refers to working inside the system (such as official policy spaces and processes) and 'outsider' refers to working outside of these official spaces and processes to pressure for change.

Insider strategies can be efficient but pose the danger of **co-option*** and may be less effective in building transformative power as they tend to operate within existing power structures. On the other hand, outsider strategies can alienate targets and exclude you from future access. A mixture of both can be effective, especially in an alliance, but it's then important to ensure that everyone respects each other's methods.

In addition to any specific objective on movement building it is also important in gender equality advocacy to ensure that building transformative power is integral to all advocacy strategies.



Co-option refers to the process of adding members to an elite group at the discretion of members of the body, usually to manage opposition and maintain the stability of the group. Outsiders are 'co-opted' by being given a degree of power on the grounds of their elite status, specialist knowledge, or potential ability to threaten essential commitments or goals. Informally speaking it's a form of manipulation.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO ADVOCATE?

There is no time like now [#TimesUp] but lots of advocacy can occur in cycles, for example at Federal or State Budget time, or when a new bill is up for debate, it can occur on an International Day of XXX or after an incident has occurred and an issue is in the news cycle already.

At YWCA we differentiate types of advocacy by their drivers. We call them Advocacy Activation Points, things we know are happening ahead of time like International Day of Violence Against Women and Advocacy Activation Opportunities, things that we can react to as they present.

They can be trigger events such as the death of a young woman at the hands of a violent male partner, an investigative journalism piece that sparks social conversation and more often than not examples of everyday stereotypes and/or discrimination played out in popular culture—a Prime Minister talking over a female minister at a press conference or a high kick photograph of a women's AFL player. It can be hard to find perfect timing but the opportunities are endless.

It can be really useful to understand the processes of Federal and State parliaments and to work out if there is an opportunity to build on that momentum with your advocacy. It can also be useful to look at sitting days and work out when MPs are more likely to be in their electorate and more available to meet or talk. During unprecedented times such as natural disasters like bushfires or drought or during global pandemics it can be even more difficult to time your advocacy and it is always useful to look for alternative ways to advocate such as targeting MPs on social media or at events held to canvass the local community.



IDENTIFYING RISK AND HOW TO MANAGE IT

You will have noticed in the advocacy plan diagram on page 16 that 'Identifying Risk and How to Manage It' crosses over all steps of the advocacy process.

Always consider the possible risks and develop a contingency plan for every action. Problems are always easier to manage when you've prepared for them, and sometimes you can avoid them all together. Good luck!



STEP 1

Identify the risk.

You and anyone you are working on this with will uncover, recognise and describe risks that might affect your project or its outcomes. Create a risk register table to keep a record, you will review this in step 5.



STEP 2

Analyse the risk.

Once risks are identified, you determine the likelihood and consequence of each risk. You develop an understanding of the nature of the risk and its potential to affect project goals and objectives. **Add it to the risk register.**



STEP 3

Evaluate or rank the risk.

You evaluate or rank the risk by determining the risk magnitude, which is the combination of likelihood and consequence. You make decisions about whether the risk is acceptable or whether it is serious enough to warrant treatment. **Add it to the risk register.**



STEP 4

Treat the risk.

During this step you assess your highest ranked risks and set out a plan to treat or modify these risks to achieve acceptable risk levels. How can you minimise the probability of the negative risks as well as enhancing the opportunities? You create risk mitigation strategies, preventive plans and contingency plans in this step. **Add it to the risk register.**



STEP 5

Monitor and review the risk.

This is the step where you monitor, track and review risks in the risk register. **A risk register should be a regularly updated document**—make it a standing agenda item in any planning meetings you have on this issue.

CHOOSING YOUR ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Now you have identified your priority strategies and outcomes, the next step is to plan the activities which will help you achieve your outcomes.

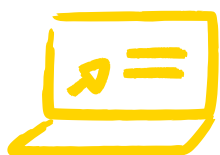
Don't choose an activity just because it may have worked for others before, make sure that it is a strategic way of achieving your desired outcome. Also check that your activities meet your longer term ambitions.

To do this, you can ask yourself two questions: 1. what are the things which need to change to achieve the outcome we want? and 2. what actions would cause that change?

It is important to prioritise activities and check whether they are realistic and achievable. Consider:

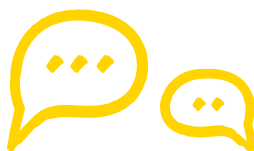
- Do you have the necessary capacity, resources or money for a particular activity?
- Are the timeframes achievable or do you have multiple activities taking place at the same time?
- Who will lead, support and contribute to the activities? Identifying who is responsible is really important for ensuring an activity happens.
- Is the leadership shared and does it reflect the intersectional nature of the discrimination people face?
- Are you considering risks and the mitigating actions that might be necessary?

ADVOCACY ACTIVITY EXAMPLES



Research

- Desktop research and analysis of existing information points.
- Collaborating with someone to write a research paper and/or develop advocacy materials.
- Undertaking research projects using an intersectional approach.
- Partnering with research institutions, such as a university.
- Providing technical and advisory support to power holders.
- Presenting at conferences and/or creating space for diverse voices in public forums.
- Piloting new approaches and sharing learning.



Direct influencing of parliamentarians

- Face to face formal and informal meetings.
- Sharing information with allies and the wider movement.
- Briefings or letters.
- Attending events and opening space for under-represented people to attend.
- Inclusive input into existing consultation processes.
- Attending regional and international policy forums as a group which includes under-represented people.



Activism (including campaigning and public outreach)

- Campaign materials with key messages.
- Community-led marches, events and community forums.
- Public actions such as petitions and pledges.
- Media engagement (including social media and digital campaigning).
- Tools and training to support community and workplace activism.
- Convening spaces (such as gender equality forums) to connect with voters.
- Fostering connections across movements by sharing knowledge and tools and opening space.
- Creative campaigns
- Collective care and reflection debriefings.
- Engagement with creative industries such as artists, sculptures, street-art artists, graphic designers.

66

...THE OPTIONS ARE **ENDLESS.**

DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES

Communicating your ideas effectively is essential for advocacy. A campaign works best when the key messages are repeated. You may become bored with them, but your target audience needs to hear it several times before it has impact.

Well-developed key messages are an important way of ensuring that all your different advocacy activities are directed towards your agreed objective. It is essential that your key message accurately reflects what you are trying to achieve with your advocacy, with your targets and strategy in mind.

Once you have your key message, you can tailor and adapt this for different audiences. The tone, length and style you use will depend on the audience, but the basic message should remain the same.

Each message should include what, when, why and how to act. It should capture people's attention and persuade them of the argument, without overwhelming them with too much information.



SOME GREAT TIPS CAN BE FOUND IN

[Community for Change's Messaging this Moment Handbook](#)



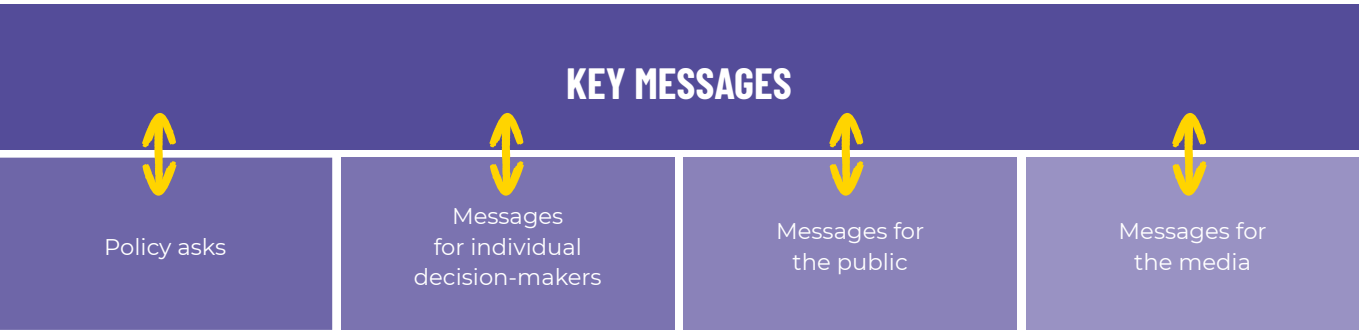
KEY MESSAGE EXAMPLE

The Climate Crisis is an issue that impacts all of us, but the burden is not equal. Women & girls are generally the most impacted when it comes to natural disasters, and this only gets more complex when also considering the added intersections of: race, geographic location, financial income, disability or chronic health issues, family caring responsibilities and so on.

On the flip side of this, many of the solutions to address the climate crisis are connected to empowering women. This includes everything from creating addressing financial inequality, childcare, accessibility needs included in emergency responses, to having access to education, power in making decisions on every level of government.

TAILORING YOUR KEY MESSAGE

It is a good idea to develop different framing of messages for audiences such as the media and the general public. You could think about developing a slogan and a hashtag. For this you need a message that's emotive, eye-catching and that will inspire people to act. Think about what each of these audiences might be interested in and focus on this. Just make sure your messages are all saying the same thing and supporting your long term aim—just framed in different ways.



COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES

Having agreed on your key message you will need to think about how to communicate it, and what channels you will use.

The earlier work you did on understanding your targets will have revealed who they listen to, which may give you ideas. Combine this with the existing knowledge and contacts you have, such as in local or national media.

Think about using social media too. Make sure though that you focus on the communication channels that actually influence your targets—not just the ones that appeal to you.

If you're looking for some inspiration here are some examples of effective key messaging, in the forms of protest signs, costume and occupying space:



HOW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH POLITICIANS

When working with politicians, it's ideal to meet with them face-to-face. However, during times of crisis, that might not be possible. There are a couple of steps you can take before doing that.

A short letter or email requesting a meeting and a brief outline of why you would like to meet with them is sufficient. If you plan on asking for something (such as signing a pledge or petition), include this in the letter. Recent media briefs that mention you or your cause are also appropriate to send through. Once you confirm a meeting, make sure you include your contact information and a short bio in a follow up email.

WRITING LETTERS

The best first step in parliamentary advocacy is to write to your politician. Depending on their position, you may need to send a letter anywhere from two weeks (local MP) to two months (Minister) in advance of a meeting.

CALLING THE OFFICE

You may wish to follow up written communication by calling their office to remind them of your previous communication and request a brief meeting. Don't hesitate to call again if you don't get a response.

EFFECTIVE FACE-TO-FACE ADVOCACY

WHO SHOULD I TAKE?

It is always good to bring someone with you to a meeting. Limit your group to three if possible and assign roles and delegate tasks to each member for clarity. Also ensure that all members are clear on the issue, its framing and your request. Make sure you introduce every member of your group at the beginning of your meeting and always let them know in advance who will be attending. If you are using personal stories to illustrate your case, it can be useful to bring the subject of those stories and let them talk about their experiences.

WHAT SHOULD I TAKE?

Prepare a one to two page document in support of your case that you can leave behind. This should include the key points covered in the meeting, as well as more detailed evidentiary data. Make sure you include your contact details. If you are referencing research it is a good idea to bring copies to offer to your politician. However, do not spend large sums of money producing information documents.

You may wish to take a photo with your politician. In this case, feel free to take a prop as politicians are usually open to this (again, they will appreciate forewarning).

HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE?

Meetings can last anywhere from 10-30 minutes. It's important to clarify the length of the meeting in order to prepare your material with a time frame in mind. Always leave time for questions. Don't linger on niceties; politicians will not be offended if you politely begin your advocacy after your initial introductions. If you are scheduling meetings while parliament is sitting, be aware that there may be unavoidable delays (for example, caused by parliamentary votes). To avoid being impacted, try not to book meetings back-to-back.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Begin your meeting by briefly introducing yourselves. Explain who you are, who you represent, what work you do, and why you have asked to meet with them. Make sure you use a mix of evidence. It's important that you illustrate that your issue exists (by using data) and that it matters (by using case studies). Provide examples and stories, but make sure to stay on track. Don't let your passion drag you away from your main pitch.

WHAT IF I GET A BAD RESPONSE?

Ask politicians for feedback if they seem unconvinced. Respect that their opinion is based on experience and beliefs. Remember to view your meeting as the beginning of a relationship. After the meeting, revisit any articulated obstacles and ensure that none are based on misunderstandings.

WHEN SHOULD I FOLLOW UP?

Following your meeting, compile any notes taken and any information requested and send it through to the politician's office. Remember to thank them for their time and reaffirm any course of action that may have been agreed upon in the meeting. Do not send through unsolicited documents that may distract them from what is important.



CAMPAIGNING TOOLS

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Social media platforms have long been a place for like-minded people to build online communities. These platforms give users the opportunity to share and discuss their views in an open forum.

The spectrum of content shared on social media that has broadened over time has given rise to a new opportunity to share news of social injustices and call agreeing users to unite in the face of inequality. Social media platforms can educate and inspire people to make positive changes in the world.

Wrongdoings can be captured on a mobile phone and uploaded straight to social media for the world to see in seconds, which means holding people accountable has become easier than ever.

For most people social media is a part of their everyday lives, so when deciding what social media platform you would like to use for your advocacy campaign, have a think about what platforms you are most comfortable on and use often. If you are on Instagram everyday but never use Facebook, Instagram would be the obvious choice for rallying a community of like minded people. However, when you're wanting to connect with people in power (politicians, power holders, decision makers) you may be able to reach them easier on Twitter or LinkedIn.

SOME KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CAMPAIGNING ONLINE:



1. TAG

Ensure that you're tagging politicians in the right way—have you got the Prime Ministers' correct Twitter handle or have you tagged a parody account?



2. HASHTAG

Make sure your hashtag is relevant, searchable, is using [Camel Case](#) (Capital letters for each new word) for accessibility and has no spelling mistakes otherwise it will not be effective e.g. #EndRapeOnCampus ✓ #EmdRapeOnCampis ✗.



3. GRAPHICS

Bold graphics, powerful images, memorable slogans and short videos can make a significant impact when campaigning online. Do everything you can to grab people's attention and make them want to share your message. Online graphic design tools like Canva can make your campaign stand out.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE SOME INSPIRATION FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE CAMPAIGNING CHECK OUT:

[#TamponTax \(stop taxing our periods\)](#)

[This Girl Can](#)

[The Equality Campaign: Marriage Equality Australia #VoteYes.](#)

HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

There are things you can do to maximise the chances of the media reporting your issue.

Thousands of media releases are generated every day, and many will not succeed in attracting media coverage—at least not on television or in mainstream newspapers.

That's why it's important to remember that the media is broad and diverse and there are many thousands of small publications and radio programs focusing on specific areas of interest. So, while you may not make it on to the evening news, you could find yourself reaching audiences you were never even aware of!

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED ON YOUR MEDIA RELEASE:

THE IDEAL FORMAT

A media release should be set out on a standard size (A4) sheet of paper with a margin of at least two centimetres on each side and at the top and bottom. It should include the words 'Media Release' in large, bold font near the top of the page, so that it is clear what it is.

It is also important for the media to know exactly who has issued the media release. If you are writing it on behalf of an organisation, you can use a letterhead or a small logo. If you are writing it on your behalf, you will need to make sure your name and a relevant description of yourself are set out near the top of the page—for example, 'Jasmine Gasowski, Smith Street High School Student'. Don't use graphics or pictures on the release.

CATCHY HEADLINE

The headline of your media release will be the first thing a reader looks at. Put it in bold, large font. The headline serves two purposes: the first is to make it clear what the issue is and what the main message of the media release is, and the second is to catch the reader's attention and inspire them to read on. For these reasons, the title should be short, punchy, bold and clever.

MAKE YOUR POINT IN THE FIRST SENTENCE

Think about the most important point you want to make and put it in the first sentence. Remember the journalist may never make it to the bottom of the page!

KEEP IT SHORT AND SHARP

A media release should never exceed one page. Don't forget that the main purpose of the release is to catch the media's attention. If they need more information, they will contact you to follow up.

STYLE MATTERS

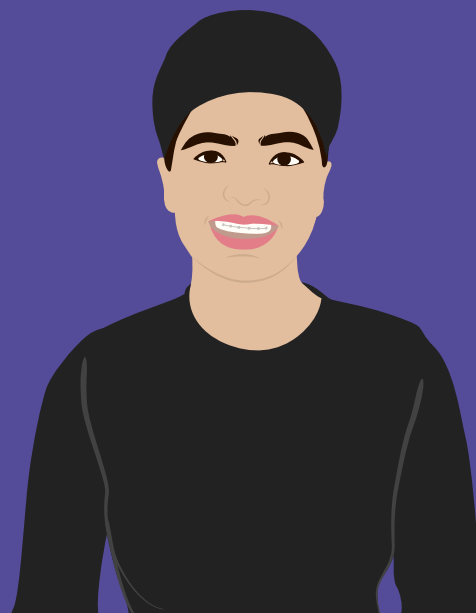
Your sentences and paragraphs should be short and sharp. Set your other points out clearly and logically and delete any unnecessary words or phrases. Try not to use acronyms, abbreviations or jargon. Although it may seem like stating the obvious, try not to make your media release boring. Boring stories do not make news.

INCLUDE QUOTES

Direct quotes are essential in a media release. They enable a journalist to report on the issue or event as if they had conducted an interview with you. Remember, you may only get one quote into a radio story or newspaper article, so each quote should be worthy of publication. Ideally, quotes should be short, punchy and contain an interesting piece of information or argument. Individuals quoted in a media release should be identified by their position—for example, 'Jess Chang, Chair of the Hume Women's Health Action Group'.

DOES IT PASS THE 'NO IDEA' TEST?

If someone with no background on your issue read your release, would they understand it? Your release must be informative, interesting, relevant and, most importantly, easy to understand. You must inspire the reader to want to do something about your issue.



BACK IT UP

If you are making claims, you need to have facts and figures to back them up. Try not to make generalisations.

DON'T BE DEFAMATORY

It is critical that you don't make statements in a media release that could get you sued. Statements like, "The Minister is a liar", even if they may be true, it's probably not a good idea.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Ask yourself what you are trying to achieve by having your issue covered in the media. If someone hears about your issue on the radio or reads about it in the newspaper, is there any follow up action that you want them to take? If you would like them to attend a rally or sign a petition, for example, make sure you include all the information they will need to do this.

INCLUDE CONTACT DETAILS

The last thing on your media release should be the name of a contact person and their contact details. Make sure the contact person is going to be available to take calls from the media on the number you have provided.

FINAL PROOFREAD

If you have time, put the release aside for an hour then re-read it. Ask yourself whether it is logical, informative and compelling. Is everything spelt correctly? Is it something that will advance your issue or organisation? If so, it's ready to go!

DISTRIBUTION

Sadly people aren't going to see your press release if you don't distribute it. It can be difficult especially when starting your advocacy to be connected to the vast array of media networks that could help amplify your issue. You can try specific Facebook and Slack groups, or look up and tag journalists on Twitter connected to audiences you would like to reach. For example, you might want to reach women so you look up journalists at Women's Agenda or the Guardian. If you were looking to pitch something to young people, look up people connected to Triple J, Pedestrian TV or Teen Vogue.

DISTRIBUTION CHECKLIST

- Find journalists who might be interested in your press release—Google your issue or key message and click the News tab.
- Find their contact details or reach out to them on social media like LinkedIn and Twitter.
- Have a short rundown of your media release and link to it—some people get 200 and more pitches a day so yours needs to stand out.
- Make the subject line pop—grab their attention from the start.
- Timing is crucial—most journalists get media releases in the morning and have a stack to go through especially after the weekend. Think about timing, the news chatter and what day of the week it is! Tuesdays and Wednesdays are known for their golden timing.
- Follow up on your press release—some friendly post release contact is encouraged and can help you establish great relationships with journalists. Even if your first media release isn't picked up, don't be discouraged and keep trying different avenues until you find someone who wants to explore the topic more. You can also switch up the techniques you use and the language you use to try different scenarios out.

SEVEN TIPS TO HELP YOU INTERVIEW BETTER

As a spokesperson for an advocacy group or organisation, it will be your job to speak to the media about your cause. Here are seven tips to help you prepare for your interview and feel confident when speaking with journalists:



TIP 1.

Research your interviewer and their media outlet.

Before being interviewed, do your research so you know the format, the tone, and the interviewer's style.



TIP 2.

You can ask for questions ahead of time.

Send an email or call to request more details or ask for a list of questions ahead of time. This way you will have an opportunity to prepare and you won't get caught off guard. Most people will oblige upon request.



TIP 3.

Avoid hosts that could hinder your campaign.

With plenty of media outlets to choose from, there's no need to get insulted or made to feel uncomfortable for your cause. Pick an outlet that will give you a chance to deliver your message in a supportive environment.



TIP 4.

Use accessible language.

You are the expert on your cause, but that doesn't mean everyone else is. Refer back to your key messages and consider how you can adapt them for that media outlet's target audience



TIP 5.

Mention your campaign or organisation's name at least twice.

If you're being interviewed for a non-print media outlet, just because you were introduced at the start of your interview doesn't mean all listeners heard it. Give them ample opportunity to hear about your campaign or organisation.



TIP 6.

Speak in full sentences

It makes it way easier for media outlets to take grabs of your sentences for vox pops and short media pieces on social media



TIP 7.

Yes to farshun but check the scene

Bold prints or clothes that blend into the background or a greenscreen can sometimes just not work on camera, we do however fully encourage feminist apparel such as [earrings](#) or a logo or statement tee!

BLOGGING

Set up your own blog or publish articles to educate your community and the general public on platforms like [Medium](#).

These platforms are designed to be user-friendly with WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) text editors that don't require you to know any coding!

If you have the time and resources we also recommend building your own website. Here are some build-your-own website options: [Wordpress](#), [Squarespace](#), [Wix](#), [Weebly](#).

After building your website you might like to set up a regular e-newsletter for your community. [Mailchimp](#) is a great tool for this.

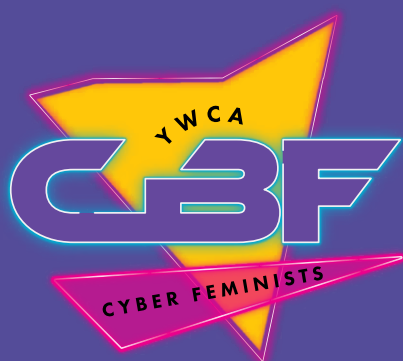
ORGANISING ONLINE

Our Cyber Feminists (CBF) make diverse feminist voices stronger by engaging in collective online advocacy. The CBF works like an online flash mob, mobilising at critical Advocacy Activation Points (AAPs) to amplify our advocacy and awareness raising priorities.

The CBF provides members with opportunities to advocate on key issues relating to gender equality.

Your role as a CBF member will include sharing social media content at critical AAPs, fostering a safe and supportive online community and informing and creating advocacy content for the CBF. Find out more about CBF [here](#).

Online advocacy is an integral part of mobilising today. We can build communities and spread messages quicker than ever, and in times when we can't physically be together, the internet is what keeps us connected. WEDO and WECF, two global women's advocacy organisations have developed [an excellent resource](#) on organising online which covers everything from virtual meetings to accessibility and digital safety. If you would like to learn more about staying safe online, and what support is available in Australia, check out the esafety Commissioner's website [here](#).



COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS DO'S AND DON'TS

Tips adapted from “[Young Feminists Want System Change](#)” a global advocacy toolkit, for the Beijing+25 process and beyond by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF).

PHOTOS HAVE CONTEXT

When choosing a photo for your communications always consider the context of the image and what message you are trying to communicate. Look at the photo and analyse it. What is the photo, without any description, actually telling me? Is it upholding gender roles? Or is it pushing boundaries in a positive way?

DIVERSITY MATTERS

Think about what your photo is really saying, is it adding to a ‘white saviour’ narrative? Ask who the narrator of the story is in the image.. Stories should always be told from the person whose story it is. Same goes for class, gender identity and other social factors.

BINARIES ARE THERE TO BE BROKEN

When developing key messages, try to use inclusive language that is not binary and doesn’t reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, if writing about periods you could refer to someone as a ‘menstruator’ instead of ‘menstruating women and girls’. Also consider the audience - ‘menstruator’ might be totally appropriate for a younger audience, but if you are writing for a more mature audience you might want to change it to ‘people who menstruate’.

ALWAYS CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE!

Always check before using someone else’s photo if they are ok with you using it (and credit them of course!). Don’t appropriate people’s content, or ideas.

AVOID TAGGING PEOPLE’S PERSONAL ACCOUNTS, IF THEY HAVE A PREFERRED PROFESSIONAL ONE

Check in with the photographer or subject of the photo before using it and ask them where you can send people if they’d like to learn more about them or their work e.g. a professional website, a public Instagram page or Twitter page.

APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Make sure you match the content with what the person in the photo is representing (their expertise, what they work on etc). If you are writing an article about someone, and using a photo, check in with them before publishing for permission.

USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE

It’s good to point out structural barriers in your advocacy, but then what?! People want to know how you overcome them, so offer solutions. Empower your audience with inspiring and uplifting language.

TAKE A STEP BACK AND ANALYSE

Being able to see the bigger picture of an issue is a valuable skill. For example, you might be advocating that sustainable stoves are better for women’s health, but could you challenge the gender stereotype that women do most of the cooking at home?

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU REFER TO PEOPLE IN YOUR ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Do you refer to men by first and last name, but others only by their first name? Same goes for when writing about white people and people of colour, and people of different socio-economic classes. Be respectfully consistent in how you refer to others.

DON'T BODY SHAME OR FOCUS ON APPEARANCES

In short, don't shame anyone, ever. Don't make differences in how you address people's relationship to their children based on their gender.

PAY FOR CONTENT, WHEN YOU CAN

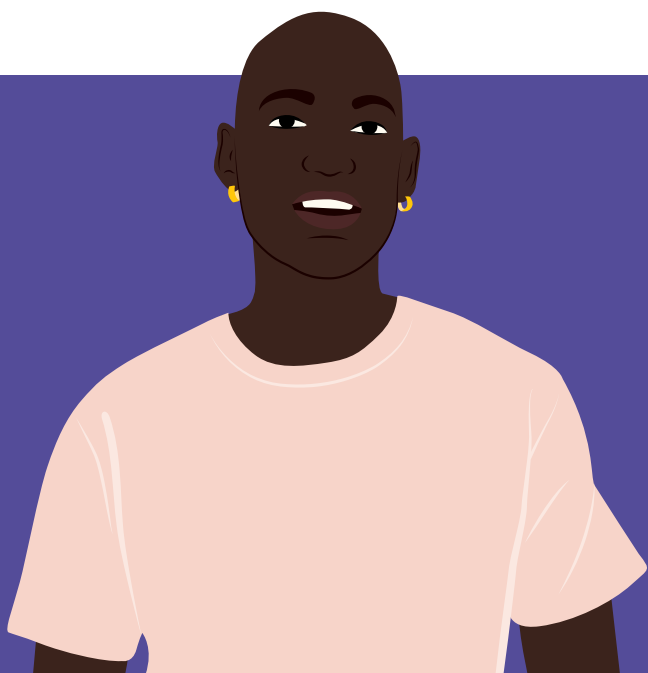
You might already have realised that free online stock databases are very full of mainly white people and photos depicting old narratives around gender roles. It might be worth hiring a professional photographer who takes photos of new transformative narratives that better represent your message.

Always remember - you cannot buy food and pay rent with Instagram followers and fame, so make sure you pay for the designs that you commission!

[Gary Radler](#) has stock images of First Nations people and people with disabilities for purchase.

[Aus Stock Photo](#) also has some options for purchase.

[Unsplash](#) has both free and licensed images.



STORIES SHOULD ALWAYS
BE TOLD FROM THE PERSON
WHOSE STORY IT IS. SAME GOES
FOR **CLASS, GENDER IDENTITY**
AND OTHER **SOCIAL FACTORS.**

A FINAL NOTE ON FUNDRAISING

Your advocacy efforts may need money to get off the ground or you might want to fundraise specifically for the issue you are working on.

There are lots of rules and regulations in Australia to do this so best to head over to our [Fundraising Toolkit](#) for lots more information on how to fundraise.

If you are wanting to fundraise on behalf of YWCA, or use our name or logo associated with an event or fundraiser, head on over to ywca.org.au/fundraise and register with us!



OTHER REFERENCES

[Plan Your Power Toolkit—IWDA](#)

[YWCA Canberra Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[JASS We Rise Toolkit](#)

[AWID Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice](#)

[Oxfam \(2018\), The Oxfam Guide to Feminist Influencing](#)

[Womankind Worldwide, Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to advance women's rights and gender equality: An advocacy guide](#)

[UNICEF—Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Girls Advocacy Alliance—Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Womankind Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Girl guides—Speak Out For Her World](#)

[Young Feminists Want System Change](#)

[50/50 Foundation—Advocacy Toolkit](#)



VIDEOS

[Kimberlé Crenshaw: The Urgency of Intersectionality?](#)

[YWCA Advocacy Videos](#)

[CBF—Let's Mobilise](#)

[CBF—Get active Online](#)

[CBF—Get Connected](#)

[CBF—Black Lives Matter](#)

[What happened at CSW64](#)

[Young Female Free](#)

[16 Days of Activism 2019](#)

[She Votes](#)

[Young Women's Voices CSW64](#)

[What is CSW](#)



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