

# EDFA members – Advocacy with your local Federal MP

## Handy tips

### 1. Role of Federal MPs

- Represent their electorates
- Members of a political party (or may be Independent)
- Sit on Parliamentary Committees
- Input into internal party policy committees

### 2. Why eating disorder families and carers are relevant to Federal MPs

- We are their constituents/voters
- There is a significant number of us (average 6,600 per electorate)
- Our issues are important and can be vote changing
- We are not just carers

### 3. Why Federal MPs are relevant to eating disorder families and carers

- MPs are influential with government decision makers
- Can be a powerful local voice (e.g. in local media)
- They may have relevant personal or policy interests/lived experience
- MPs are politically accountable to their electorate

### 4. Upcoming Federal election

- Likely in May 2022
- Federal MPs want to be seen to be delivering
- Some MPs retiring, others face re-election threats
- New Federal MPs likely post-election

### 5. Building a relationship with your Federal MP

- Do background research on them (e.g. websites, social media, speeches, local media)
- Identify any mutual interests and contacts
- Consider joining local groups/attend local events/street stalls
- Become known as an advocate (e.g. use local media, local stakeholders)

### 6. Build your Federal MP's knowledge about eating disorders

- Write to them (EDFA template that can be personalised)
- Outline the issues, your personal experience and the solutions
- Ask for a meeting (individually, with other carers)
- Suggest others the MP can talk to



## 7. Meeting with your Federal MP

- Be clear why you want to meet in your letter/request
- Be well prepared (EDFA has talking points)
- Tell your personal story (very powerful)
- Succinct leave behind (2-page Comprehensive Approach to Eating Disorders)
- Follow up with the MP
- Potentially involve other carers (EDFA can assist)

## 8. Advocacy on specific eating disorder issues

Need a comprehensive approach to address the many gaps, including:

- In-patient treatment for people with acute eating disorders
- Reduced Medicare out-of-pocket costs
- Lived experience mentors and coaches
- Specialised entry point, including for families and carers
- Eating disorders training for GPs, allied health, educators
- Clarity on the NDIS, prioritise eating disorders on Carers Gateway
- In-home meal and behavioural support by trained professionals to support carers.
- Inclusion in school wellness programs and support to stay at school
- Body image internet and social media literacy programs

## 9. Support materials

- [aph.gov.au](http://aph.gov.au) (addresses, contact details for local Federal MPs, backgrounds)
- [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au) (Australian Electoral Commission, find your Federal electorate)
- <https://www.edfa.org.au/> - support materials
  - o Comprehensive approach two-pager
  - o Template letter to Federal MPs
  - o Talking points
  - o Handy tips
- EDFA contacts (David Quilty – [david.quilty@edfa.org.au](mailto:david.quilty@edfa.org.au); Caroline Towers – [caroline.towers@edfa.org.au](mailto:caroline.towers@edfa.org.au))

## 10. Wrap

- Local Federal MPs important to eating disorders
- You can influence government policy and get action
- May seem daunting, but is rewarding
- Practical support available from EDFA