



Youth Participation Kit

Resource sheet
for young people

5

Ideas for Advocacy

If you decide you want to participate as an advocate for a cause, there are lots of different ways you can make an impact. We've presented some ideas here, however some of the best campaigns are those that are innovative and new, so think outside the box and see what you can come up with!

Get creative!

Sometimes the best advocates are the ones who take people completely by surprise with how they share their messages. You can be creative and express your ideas in art, sculpture, film, dance or music, and share your creations in the community. You might do this through existing forums like local arts competitions and exhibitions, or social media channels, or you could even put on your own event to showcase your work. If you have a great idea, run with it—your idea might just be the next worldwide phenomenon like flashmobs, crowdfunding or the ice bucket challenge!

Writing letters or emails

When you believe that something needs to be changed, getting in touch directly with the people who can make that change is a good place to start. Work out who has the power to make the change—it might be a local government councillor, State or Federal Member of Parliament, or even the CEO of an organisation. Your correspondence should be respectful and offer practical and sensible solutions to the issues. Keep it short to have the best effect.

In most cases, someone will respond to you within a few weeks. Read their response carefully, and see if you think they might be able to help you later on in your campaign. There's no harm in asking, especially if they've given you a positive response.

Using online media

Online media gives you the opportunity to share your message widely, which can be particularly useful if your cause affects a lot of people. You might start a social media channel or page to share your messages and to engage in discussions about your cause. You could also start a written blog, video blog or even a podcast. If you're lucky, your online campaign might even lead to people contacting you to ask for more information, including journalists and/or decision-makers.





Sometimes the ability to share your message online has drawbacks, including that you are more likely to come across people who don't support your cause and who might want to attack, 'troll' or argue with you. The Children's eSafety Commissioner has some tips for dealing with this and can help if things get out of hand.

Using traditional media

Another way to spread your ideas more widely is by having them published in a newspaper or magazine. You might be able to have a 'letter to the editor' or even an article published. See what opportunities are available and take the time to read other people's contributions to get a feel for what the publisher is looking for. If you're really passionate, you could even publish your own newsletter or mini-magazine.

Local radio and TV can also be used to promote your message. Think about what kind of story your local stations usually share, then work out how you can make your message fit. Then, get in touch and ask if you could do an interview or story on-air.

Start a petition

When your cause involves something that you think should change, creating a petition is a good way to show that you're not the only one who believes in it. For some decision-makers to take notice of your petition you need to follow their rules, for example, the WA Parliament provides a set of rules on their website. It can also be a good idea to talk to a decision maker (local councillor, Member of Parliament) before you start the petition to get them to agree to accept it when it's done.

There are websites that allow you to conduct petitions online. When choosing which one to use make sure that the one you pick will allow you to meet all of the rules of the group you're petitioning.

When people sign a petition, they usually provide their name, address and contact details. You must keep these details safe and only use them for the purposes of your petition.

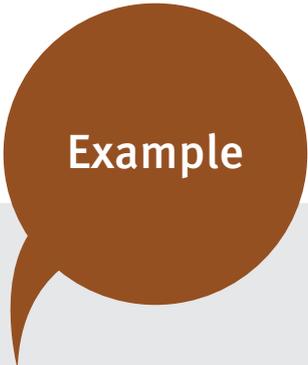
Hold an event

Putting on an event is a great way to bring people together in order to fundraise or raise awareness for your cause. There are many kinds of events you could host, and you can be creative in how you get your message across. There are tips relevant to hosting events in Resource 7.

More information

There are many resources with ideas on how to advocate for a cause. You might like to look at the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia's Advocacy Toolkit, or the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition's Creating Change Toolkit, both available online.





Example

Letter to the Editor

"It is too easy for young people aged under 18 years to obtain alcohol through their older friends and parents. When young people drink, their behaviour changes and how they act is not acceptable. Binge drinking can lead to serious injury and is also extra 'fuel' for violence towards other people and property.

I'm a young person myself and I find this very concerning. Something needs to be done about this issue. We need more education in schools about the risks associated with consuming alcohol. Parents can help by talking to their teens about drinking and also by not providing them with alcohol."

Gabrielle (16)





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