

# Advocacy and Campaigning

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## WHY: the purpose of advocacy

- The purpose of advocacy is to raise awareness and influence decisions to promote and support positive change around specific issues.
- For your group or initiative this means advocating for the issue that brought you together, whether that is a single species or a natural area, such as a green space or a waterway.
- The species or natural area that you advocate for does not exist in isolation. It is part of the natural world, and is therefore connected to, and influenced by, many factors.
- So ideally, your advocacy work should be broader than just the species or natural area that you focus on. All environmental issues can be considered, including biodiversity, climate change and pollution (water, air, soil, noise, light).

## WHAT are the main advocacy actions

- Position Statements: develop a set of position statements that outline your stance on key issues and guide you in all other advocacy actions
- Networking & Lobbying: foster effective relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers
- Representation: advocate for positive change through roles on boards, committees and panels in varied organisations
- Campaigns: create and run campaigns on specific issues
- Documents & reports: advocate for your Friends group/initiative and your species or natural area using documents that outline key positions and recommendations

## HOW do we advocate

### People Skills & Attributes

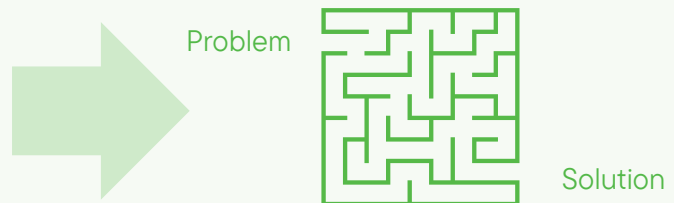
Diverse and varied skills, attributes and experiences are needed for advocacy. Finding your strengths and the strengths of your members is essential to build a competent team for successful advocacy. Everyone has skills, attributes and experience that can be directed to advocacy - you just need to identify them! See the section below for more details - Know your advocacy superpowers.

## The Actions

The big picture, 3-step explanation of how to advocate is:

1. Define the problem
2. Develop the solution, destination or outcome
3. Determine the path to take the problem to the solution (called the Change Pathway or Theory of Change)

The **solution** will include actions from the list mentioned above under How do we advocate, so here is more detail about each of those actions.



## Position Statements

- This is the first critical stage of advocacy because these position statements will define and describe the change you want to see.
- They will outline key stances and recommendations that are the foundation and narrative of all other advocacy actions to raise awareness, influence decisions and promote positive change.
- Position statements may be very specific and local, directly addressing the goals of your Friends group and the species or natural area that you focus on.
- Position statements may address a broader issue that is detrimental to your cause, e.g climate change, pollution, urban development.

## Networking and Lobbying

Effective advocacy requires you to build positive relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers. Some may call this stakeholder liaison.

What can you do?

- Identify individuals and organisations who have an interest or are impacted, or have influence
- Build your own network by creating relationships, especially in your Local Community
- Have conversations; raise issues; pose change (use your Position Statements)

## Representation

Throughout society, citizens of diverse expertise and backgrounds are assembled to advise on strategic directions, policy and decision-making. These formal groups include boards, committees and advisory groups and they are powerful opportunities to have influence and make change. These include:

- Community advisory groups in LGAs,
- Community advisory groups and committees, in organisations such as hospitals, schools and sports clubs.

### What can you do?

- Look for opportunities, especially in the Local Community,
- Encourage members and supporters of your Friends group or initiative to apply to join these boards, committees and advisory groups
- Build relationships with the members of any boards, committees and advisory groups that you identify as having the potential to drive positive change

## Campaigns

A campaign is a project with strategic actions to address a specific issue and achieve key outcomes. Campaigns can be created in various areas, e.g. marketing campaign, election campaign.

An advocacy campaign aims to make critical changes in policy and/or action to achieve positive outcomes for a specific issue of interest. In your case the issue of interest is the species or natural area that your Friends group or initiative is focussed on, and more broadly the environment.

### What can you do?

1. The Issue: understand the issue, the legal framework around it and the existing powers and interests that keeps it in place;
2. The Change: define the sequence of changes that will lead to the desired outcome and identify the actions needed (i.e. Change Pathway, Theory of Change)
3. The Liaison: build a network and relationships with the key stakeholders, who may include politicians and political parties, advocacy groups, community leaders, and others, and convince them of your identified issue and proposed change.

## Documents and Reports

Written documents and reports that advocate for the environment, species and the specific changes you want to see can be powerful lobbying tools. Your position statements will be central to your reports and the included recommendations.

### What can you do?

Examples of possible documents and reports are:

- submissions to public consultations (government and independent)
- planning objections to councils
- briefing notes and reports about key issues to MPs, government departments, Councillors and Council Officers, and other stakeholders.
- Response to decisions, e.g. state government and LGA decisions

## WHO should advocate

- Your Friends Group/or initiative can formerly advocate
- You can encourage your members and supporters to advocate
- You can encourage your community to advocate
- Encouraging members, supports and the community to advocate is raising awareness about issues and is an essential advocacy action within a campaign

## WHERE do we advocate

- Everywhere: you are always an advocate in everything you do and say, with all of the choices you make. So be mindful and aware as you make personal choices and choices within your Friends group or initiative.
- In your local community and local government area (council or shire) there are many opportunities to advocate, e.g. make a submission to an LGA public consultation, hold an information session, present at a Council Meeting
- At state and federal level: you can develop relationships with Victorian and Federal MPs, and make submissions to Victorian and Federal consultations

## WHEN do we advocate

- Always: you are always an advocate in everything you do and say, with all of the choices you make. For example, if you have an event, such as a planting day, how do you supply drinks for attendees to minimise the impact of your event on the environment?
  - Idea:
    - Carry water in large refillable containers
    - Request people to bring their own water bottles
    - Have some reusable cups for people who did not bring their own water bottles
- The timing of some actions is controlled by other entities and you need to plan accordingly, e.g. public consultations, government elections.
- The timing of other actions is under your control, e.g. targeted campaigns and reports

## Advocacy resources

- Open Society Foundations - [An Introductory Guide to Successful Advocacy](#)
- Australian Progress - [Community organising reading and resources](#)

