



The

Tool Kit for Arts Advocates

Effective
campaigning on
a shoe string

Young People and the Arts Australia
in association with Social Change Media
and Les Robinson



Australian Government



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Arts advocacy that works

If you've ever put on a show, promoted a project, tried to get funding or contacted the local paper — then you're already an advocate for the arts.

This is a guide to more effective advocacy and lobbying for anyone working with young people in the arts. It's about:

- > communicating the value of your work
- > fostering stronger community support, and
- > influencing funding decisions and government policy.

By following the steps in this kit you can find out how to:

- > be more strategic, so you get a bigger bang for your efforts
- > express the value of the arts for young people in fresh and exciting ways to a range of audiences
- > increase support from governments, your community and the media
- > access more resources to help you in your quest
- > make it easier for the people who follow in your footsteps when you move on.

These are all things that you can do without much cost — just a little planning.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of supporting or arguing in favour of a cause, a policy or an idea. Advocates typically seek to influence public opinion, social attitudes and government, community or institutional policies.

Advocacy can help to:

- > Raise awareness of the issues affecting young people and the value of arts participation
- > Generate support within government, the community and the media
- > Build networks with other supportive organisations or people
- > Build a case and a support base for increased arts funding
- > Increase participation in the arts.

The key to advocacy lies in building a network of supporters who'll act on your behalf.

Lobbying is a kind of advocacy that tries to influence legislation, policy and funding decisions.

Special interest or lobby groups play a big role in the process of determining government policy. Remember that the currency of politics is votes — and votes are cast by people. So if you can show that you represent people, you have currency to play the lobbying game in politics.

The more people you can show you represent, the more power you'll have for your cause ... and the more seriously you'll be taken by politicians.

MYTH:

Funding decisions by government are made by bureaucrats behind closed doors and are set in concrete.

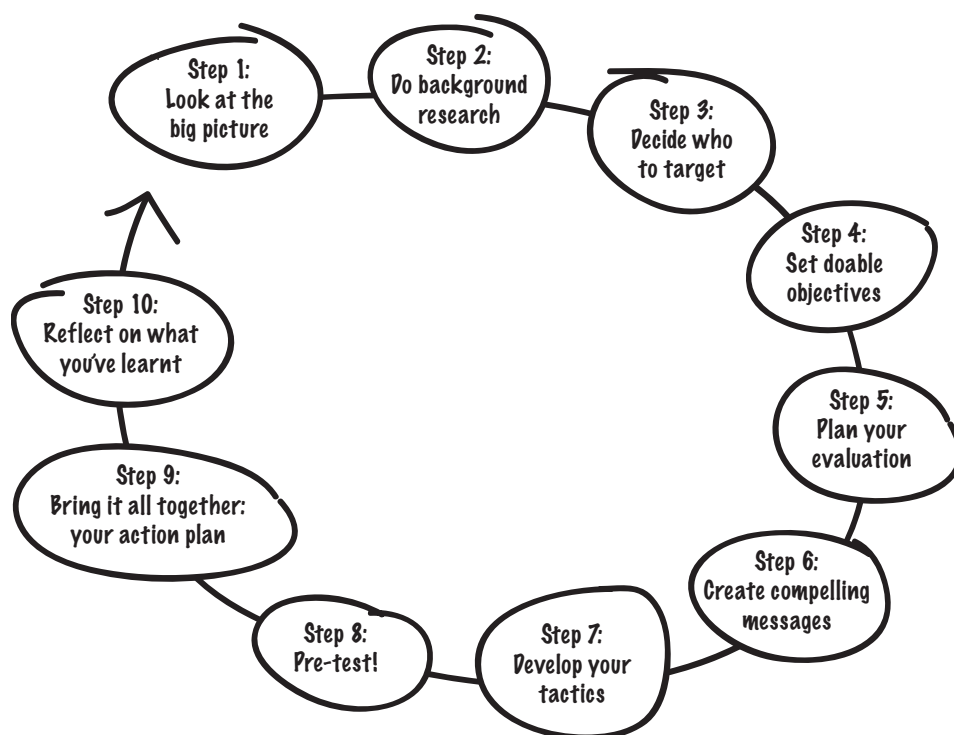
FACT:

Most funding decisions made by government are heavily influenced by outside people — the media, arts industry groups, community organisations and noisy individuals.

Ten steps to planning a successful campaign

This kit outlines 10 steps to making a successful advocacy, lobbying or promotional campaign. No matter what your resources, if you commit to following these simple steps you can be more effective in the long run.

- Step 1:** Look at the big picture
- Step 2:** Do background research
- Step 3:** Decide who to target
- Step 4:** Set doable objectives
- Step 5:** Plan your evaluation
- Step 6:** Create compelling messages
- Step 7:** Develop your tactics
- Step 8:** Pre-test!
- Step 9:** Bring it all together: your action plan
- Step 10:** Reflect on what you've learnt



A **CAMPAIGN** is any coordinated effort, usually by a group of people, to achieve an agreed goal. It includes lobbying, building relationships with supporters and promoting an organisation or event.

Normally a campaign has a leader or coordinator, support people, an agreed purpose or vision, a strategy, targeted communications and a way of evaluating impact.

STRATEGY is about getting the biggest 'bang for your buck'. You don't have to reach 10,000 people. Influencing the right 10 people can often achieve the same effect.

Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever achieved without it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Some hints before you start

- > A great way to start planning is to involve your supporters and young people from the very beginning. They'll reward you with a sense of ownership for the campaign, fresh ideas and helping hands.
- > Book in time to work on your plan. This sounds screamingly obvious, but it's too tempting to just say 'I'll do it after the next show ... when I've finished my budgets ... or next week'.
- > In meetings, start by agreeing how much time you have to spend. Designate someone to be the 'meeting nazi' — their role is to stop the meeting from getting off track or going overtime.
- > Take notes and make sure someone draws up the results at the end of the meeting. This document then becomes your blueprint for action. It also gives you something to refer back to, so that you can measure your progress.
- > Divvy up the tasks among you so that everyone can share the workload. Allocate deadlines to tasks, and follow these up at your next meeting (another vital role for the 'meeting nazi').



Look at the big picture

All successful campaigns start with a big picture — or ‘vision’ — in mind. Once you’ve decided on your overall vision for the campaign, you can then develop some more concrete goals that will help you achieve this vision.

Getting in touch with your ‘reason why’

Your vision is your ‘reason why’ — your hope or dream for the future. Start by thinking about the need you intend to address. Ask yourself: ‘Why are we advocating? What are we trying to achieve?’ Connect your campaign to its source of passion. Not ‘because we need the money’ but ‘because these young people are exploding with hope and creativity, and self-expression will make a giant difference in their lives’. If you’re successful in addressing young people’s needs, how would their lives be different in the future? How would your group be different?

Establishing some practical goals

To come true, your vision will need some practical goals. Goals are major changes that provide the *shortest and most achievable pathway* to achieving your vision. (In later steps we’ll break these goals down even further into measurable objectives, but for now we’ll concentrate on the bigger picture.)

Example:

The XYZ Youth Arts Centre came up with the following goals in a brainstorm session:

- > ‘To increase our level of visibility at local council and in the wider community’
- > ‘To ensure that members of the local council, service clubs and school council members are informed and supportive of our programs for young people’
- > ‘To improve the facilities at our venue to support a wider range of arts activities’

Step 1



Example:

The XYZ Youth Arts Centre has a grand vision: ‘to be the best known and most respected youth arts organisation in the district’. They want to be a company that teachers, parents and local politicians talk about with respect, a company that helps young people launch careers that change the world.

Brainstorm

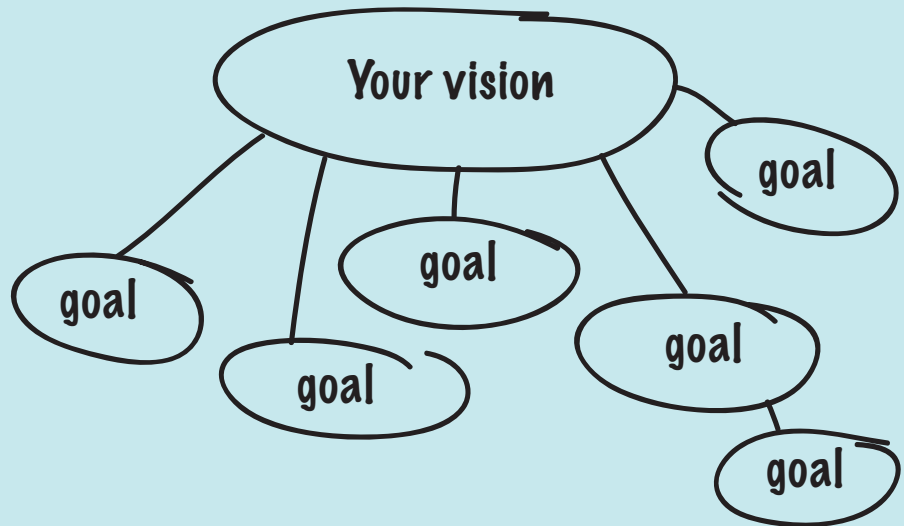


Brainstorming your goals

To brainstorm your goals:

- > Get a group together (the more brains the better!)
- > Draw a 'mud map' (imagine you're drawing in the mud with a stick) using a white board or large sheet of paper.
- > Start by writing down your vision.
- > Then attach goals that could meet this vision.
- > After writing down some goals, try to agree on one *primary goal*, the one you'll focus most of your effort on.
- > You may also decide on some secondary goals which are worth keeping in mind.

Your mud map might look something like this:



Worksheet



Write down your goal(s)

Record your agreed goals here

Primary goal

Secondary goals (if any)

Do background research

Step 2



This step is about getting the basic facts straight early on by doing some background research. You'll probably find you need to do more specific research at later stages of the campaign, but right now you need to see the 'lay of the land'.

Why do background research?

Background research can help you to understand:

- > if there are any social or demographic trends that would support or work against your case, such as trends in young audiences
- > external forces such as current issues, looming elections, or other community projects that might affect your campaign (such as an urban renewal plan for your area)
- > which government policy objectives are relevant to your campaign
- > who makes decisions on funding or other forms of support (Are there certain people that you need win over for your cause? Do they hold certain attitudes that may support or work against you?)
- > what support you can realistically ask for (If your goal is funding — how much money is handed out each year through the programs you're interested in? Which projects have been successful in attracting funding?).

Background research will help you to be strategic. You may find out, for example, that:

- > a particular issue is beyond your control and that you're more likely to achieve success via other activities
- > instead of approaching your local MP, you're more likely to achieve success through your local council and by building up community support
- > certain community leaders have a great track record in influencing government when it comes to supporting community projects
- > there are facts and figures that will make your case more convincing.



Carrying out research

How you do research depends on your needs and what you're trying to achieve. This is where setting a clear goal (see Step 1) becomes important. It helps you define exactly what you need to know, so that you don't waste your time on endless research that isn't useful.

If you have helpers, decide together what you're going to research, then distribute the tasks amongst yourselves. Then come back together and report on what you've found.

Some research ideas to get you started:

- > Look at what resources (time, money, people) you can devote to this campaign.
- > See if there is any relevant social research you can draw on to support your case. Ask your local council if they can provide you with a copy of their latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demographic analysis report for the area. The website fuel4arts.com provides a good list of ABS arts and cultural activities information. See 'Useful web links' (page 53) for more sites.
- > Talk to others in your sector who've run similar campaigns. Check that you're on the same wavelength. Learn from their successes or mistakes.
- > Contact your local council — find out who looks after recreation, youth affairs and related services in your local government area. Arrange to meet them and discuss how you might work together.
- > Contact other organisations or agencies and see how they might support you.
- > Talk to people in your community. How do they perceive your work? Is it how you want to be seen? Are there ways you can involve your community leaders? Who would you contact?
- > Research who determines arts or youth services policy and funding levels in your local, state and federal governments. Look for current government policy statements relevant to your objectives.
- > Find out which non-arts departments or organisations (e.g. youth affairs, recreation, community development, drug and alcohol services) support arts programs for young people.
- > Check out average funding levels for similar work. Check funding trends over the last three years (this is usually available on agency websites).
- > Monitor your local papers. Also check out who reports on arts, youth or community matters in the metropolitan, regional and national media.
- > Collect evidence to show the positive community impacts of your activities. Arts Victoria has produced an easy-to-use guide about this: *Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well Being*. See 'Useful web links' (page 53).

Write down your research ideas on the following worksheet, adding details of who will do the research and by when.

What are you going to research?

Worksheet

Research subject	Who'll do the research?	When by?

How XYZ Youth Arts Centre researched its case

The Centre started its advocacy campaign by uncovering this valuable information:

- > Examples of young people from the Centre who have gone on to achieve recognition as professional arts practitioners.
- > Testimonials from local residents. Some had previously worried about young people 'hanging about' the Centre and 'causing trouble', but have since come to appreciate the good work and great kids involved in the Centre.
- > Research showing that participation in professionally run arts programs significantly develops young people's work-ready skills. This research was then linked to the programs run by the Centre. Real-life examples were researched.
- > Council's last census analysis showing population growth of young people in the area. This was compared to Centre attendance records and shown to correlate with a steady demand for programs among a particular age group at the Centre.
- > Recent print articles showing parents and community organisations calling for more things for young people to do in their recreational time.
- > A crime prevention report on the local area identifying young males (aged 16-24) as most likely to be involved in anti-social and criminal behaviours. The report cited boredom as the most commonly reported reason for this behaviour.
- > Australian and international studies showing professionally run arts programs to be highly effective in engaging young 'at risk' males.

Case study



Step 3



Decide who to target

Change happens not just through *what* you know but through *who* you know, and how effectively you can enlist them to your cause. Step 3 will help you understand who you'll need to reach to make your campaign a success, and who can help you in doing this. The important thing to remember here is that you don't have to convince everyone, just the people that count.

The 'acupressure points'

The art of acupressure is to affect the whole body just by touching on a few small pressure points. Similarly, in your campaign you don't need to 'massage' all the players to get results. (In fact, you'll end up exhausted if you even try). You just want the 'acupressure points'. Who you target is one of the most important decisions of your campaign.

No matter what your objective, it's worth considering at least three possible acupressure points:

- 1 your 'sales force'
- 2 the influencers, and
- 3 the decision-makers.

Campaigns can be a lot like pyramid selling. You mobilise your sales force (the people who help you), the sales force contacts the influencers, and the influencers work the decision-makers.

Each of these players is quite different. They have their own motivations and will generally require different approaches and different kinds of messages.

Acupressure point 1: your sales force

Your sales force are the people who'll actively support your cause. They may be fellow arts workers, parents, teachers, board members, a sympathetic journalist or radio presenter, community supporters or volunteers. Working with your sales force can be a cost-effective way of enhancing the credibility and reach of your efforts.

Your sales force needs to be motivated and feel part of your campaign. They also need to have a clear idea of their role and what actions they need to take to help.

And remember, you don't have to convert everyone — harnessing five committed people is a doable task, and it can make a huge difference.

The Gushers

Have you ever done an opening or a show and had people come up to you afterwards and 'gush' about how impressed they are with your work? These are 'the gushers', and you should harness their enthusiasm by recruiting them for your sales force.

Acupressure point 2: The influencers

These are credible people or organisations that decision-makers respect and listen to. Examples of influencers include: academics, leaders in your sector, peak body representatives, media, parent groups, school management bodies, celebrities, business leaders and ministerial advisers.

Potential influencers exist everywhere. Once you sense you have an ally — capture them!

You may find them in unlikely places. Try to think beyond the arts community, to people who share a concern about opportunities for young people. Get a group of these people together and talk to them about successful arts programs. Things will start to happen.

Once you have an influencer on board, be clear about what they can do to help your campaign. Influencers need to know what action you would like taken, why it's important to do this, and how your campaign serves their own agendas.

A word of warning: not everyone will be on your side, and in fact some potential influencers will end up blocking your efforts. You need to keep these people in mind as you plan your campaign.

Acupressure point 3: Decision-makers

These are the people that you *ultimately want to influence* to take action or to make a certain decision that will help achieve your campaign goal. Examples of decision-makers include: state and federal government ministers, local councillors, council executive managers, arts funding program managers and assessment panel members, and local business owners (potential sponsors).

Decision-makers can't make a favourable decision unless you inform them. They need to know what action you want taken, what they stand to gain by supporting your cause, and what other influential or credible people are involved.

Note that, just as with influencers, some decision-makers may actively block your campaign, so you need to build this into your planning.

For hints on how to work with communities see **'Connecting with your community'** on page 46. For hints on working with the media see **'Getting noticed by the media'** on page 47.

For hints on how to influence decision-makers in government see **'Weaseling your way into government'** on page 35.



Brainstorm



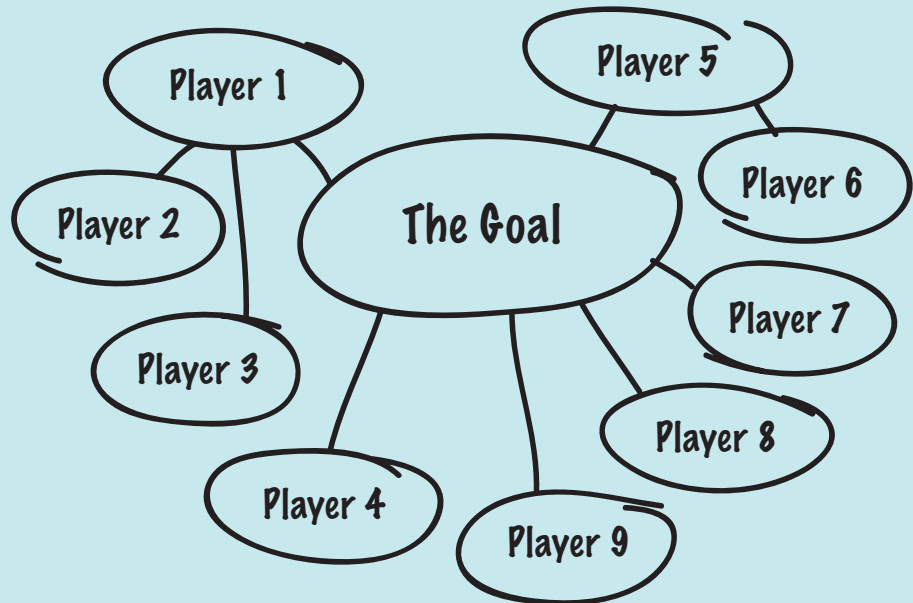
Map the players

You guessed it: another mud map! Together with your supporters, draw a map of all the people who may play a role in your campaign. (At this stage it's a general brainstorm: you don't need to divide them into sales force, influencers and decision-makers.)

Start with your goal in mind. Then think of all the people or organisations who may help you achieve the goal, and how they interrelate. Consider:

- > Who makes the decisions (i.e. who has the power to control the change you want)?
- > Who do they listen to?
- > Who else has an interest?
- > Who'll support you?
- > Who may block your campaign?

Your mud map may look something like this:



Case study



The XYZ Youth Arts Centre Management Committee and their arts workers held a 20-minute brainstorming session where they identified all the players that could influence the outcome of their goal — in a positive or negative way. The kinds of people they mapped were: local councillors, council executive managers, local business sponsors, local residents around the centre, the residents association committee, service club representatives, parents, young people and peak bodies.

Who's influencing who?

Worksheet

Now that you've mapped all the players, you can divide them into sales force, influencers and decision-makers. Write your answers on the white board or butcher's paper, and record them here.

Type of player	Name of person or organisation
Decision-makers <i>(Who makes the decision that ultimately achieves your goal? This may be only one or two people)</i>	
Influencers <i>(Who has influence on the decision-makers? There might be a number of key people involved.)</i>	
Sales force <i>(The people who help you. The more the merrier!)</i>	

Don't waste time targeting the wrong people

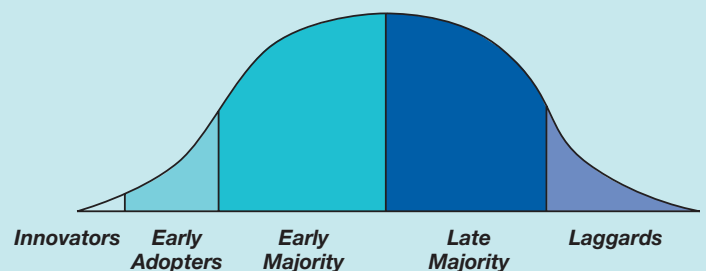
In your campaign you're trying to do something new – and not everyone will take to it. In fact only a few people will latch on immediately.

This model by Everett Rogers, used in sales training programs around the world, treats change like a wave passing through society. New ideas are typically picked up first by the 'Innovators' and from there they spread over time to the 'Early Adopters', the 'Majority' and finally (if at all) to the 'Laggards'.

From an arts perspective, Innovators are the 'converted' — they understand what you do and will support you. Don't waste time preaching to them — instead, enlist them as allies in your campaign.

Early Adopters are on the verge of being converted to your message — they are much easier to influence than the Majority (who are slow to catch on) or the Laggards (who probably don't see any value in the arts and never will).

The point here is that you're better off identifying the Early Adopters and focusing your efforts on them.



Step 4



Set doable objectives

Action is eloquence.

William Shakespeare

Now that you've set your goal and mapped out your players, you need to work out the details of what each player will need to do. This means setting objectives. An objective is a measurable action — something you want a specific person or organisation to do in order to achieve your goal. An objective has two parts: the *player* and the *action* you want them to take.

Here are some examples of objectives:

- > 'Three of our young participants (sales force) will create a gripping visual presentation about the Centre and present it to Council and the Board of the local RSL (influencers).'
- > 'Two local councils (influencers) in our area will agree to approach the Arts Ministry (decision-maker) to seek funding for a pilot arts project for young people.'



Brainstorm

Who'll do what?

With your supporters, assign a specific action to each player. Make sure you include people from the three key groups: decision-makers, influencers and sales force. List them in a table, like this:

Player	What you need them to do — OBJECTIVE

But are these objectives realistic?

You'll need to test these objectives to make sure they're realistic. To help you decide, run each objective through the following '**ATTRACT-ORS**' test.

(*Hint:* Aim to end up with only 2-3 objectives. Any more and your resources are sure to be spread too thin.)

The ATTRACT-ORS test

For an objective to be realistic, you'll need to be able to tick ALL of the first six points (**A-T-R-A-C-T**). Even if some of these points are not ticked, you can still keep the objective if it meets one of the three exceptions (**O-R-S**).

Achievable

Does it have a reasonable chance of success given your understanding of the players involved?

Targeted

Is your person or group reachable? Be as specific as possible. Many campaigns fail to have impact because they defined audiences too broadly. Groups such as 'community' or 'parents', for example, are such big groups that they can never be realistically reached.

If you can think of specific pathways to reach a player, then they are reachable. Examples of reachable players include:

- > 'Households with young people aged 12-24 living within a 2km radius.'
- > 'Schools in the XYZ local government area with principals who are supportive of the arts.'
- > 'Elected councillors on XYZ Municipal Council.'

Realistic

Do you have the resources to make a significant impact? (**Tip:** Don't take on too much for your resources, and then get disappointed when the world does not change! Be realistic — relentlessly focus down to match your objectives to your resources).

Action-oriented

Does your objective relate to a definite, measurable *action* or *decision* by a player?

An action is measurable *when you can tell if it has happened*. If your objectives are measurable, you'll be able to:

- > measure your progress
- > know whether your efforts have succeeded
- > use your measures of success to attract further support or funding.

Example of a non-measurable action:

- > 'Increase community awareness of the arts'

Examples of measurable actions:

- > 'Three representatives from XYZ Youth Arts Centre will participate in a presentation to local councillors'
- > 'One or two funding panel members will attend at least one opening night'.

Step 4 Set do-able objectives

Compelling case

Are the benefits of your message compelling for the player? Benefits are critical to your campaign — we cover these in more detail in Step 6.

Timely

Do you have enough time to plan, prepare and implement your project, and for the player to respond?

Even if your objective fails any of the above, you may still want to keep it if it has:

Opportunity value

Is this an opportunity that's just too good to miss even if you're not presently sure of the outcome of your efforts (i.e. it's a calculated risk)?

Recognition value

Is this a major opportunity for exposure and profile-building for the campaign or your organisation?

Strategic value

Is this strategically essential for supporting existing relationships or allies?

Worksheet **Your game plan**

Write down the objectives that have survived the ACTRACT-ORS test. Your objectives may look something like this:

Player	What you need them to do — OBJECTIVE
Three young participants	Create a presentation about the centre and present it to XYZ Council.
Council XYZ	Approach the Arts Ministry to seek funding on our behalf.
Funding panel members	Attend at least one opening night

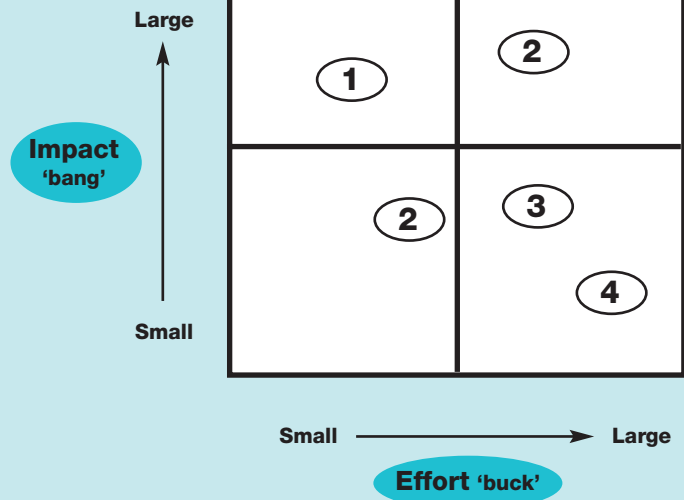
If you still have too many objectives and you're having trouble deciding which ones to keep for your campaign, use the '**Bang for your Buck**' tool below:

The 'bang for your buck' tool

This tool helps you to map out your objectives in terms of the effort required and the potential impact in achieving your goal.

How to use it

- 1** Ask: How much effort is likely to be required to meet the objective?
(Small, medium or large)
- 2** Ask: How much impact would we have if we were able to achieve the objective?
(Small, medium or large)
- 3** Now place them in the square above, giving each objective a number.
- 4** Make the ones that are closest to the top left corner *(small effort, large impact)* your priority objectives.



Step 5



Plan your evaluation

So now you have doable objectives. Excellent! However you need to know when they've been achieved. That's where evaluation comes in.

Evaluation simply means figuring out beforehand how you'll know that such-and-such an event has occurred, and consciously deciding to collect the evidence to prove it happened.

Evaluation is easy if you plan it in advance. By planning in advance you can collect evidence throughout your campaign (not just at the end), and identify and fix problems as the campaign unfolds. You may also need to report back to your organisation and supporters on an ongoing basis.

Collecting evidence as you go

Here are some easy ways to collect evidence as you go:

- > Keep records of all materials developed for your campaign.
- > Keep a record of all incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- > Count heads relentlessly (How many people responded to your survey? How many people attended a community meeting? etc).
- > Distribute feedback forms at events and performances. Ask people on the form if they're interested in offering their support. Give people space to write their feelings about your activities and programs — this anecdotal evidence can be very compelling because it helps you (and decision-makers) tap into people's real feelings.
- > Take photographs at all events. Try to capture people's facial expressions — these are also very compelling.
- > Keep a press clippings file.



Planning your evaluation

In Step 4 you did a worksheet of your objectives, so you're already half way towards your evaluation strategy. Now you need to take these objectives and add two more columns, as shown below.

Worksheet



Player	What you need them to do	What evidence will you use in your evaluation?	Which member of your team will collect the evidence?

Step 6



Create compelling messages

This step will help you to 'press the right buttons' with each of your target audiences.

Stepping inside their heads

Once you've identified who to target (Step 3), you'll need to think about how to convert them to your cause. The real art of communicating is to get inside people's heads. This will determine how to pitch your message.

There are three things to consider when developing messages that will get inside people's heads: negative beliefs, positive beliefs, and the 'What's in it for me?' factor.

Negative beliefs

What negative beliefs, or barriers, in each person's mind might get in the way of your campaign? For example, do they have negative attitudes about young people or the arts in general? If they hold deep-seated misconceptions you should carefully prepare a case to defuse them. Don't assume that people naturally understand the value of arts participation.

Example of a misconception:

- > 'The arts is something you do for fun — it's just fluff. Spending money on the arts is an extravagance.'

To defuse this message you might say:

- > 'Learning to dance is not just about children standing on a stage and twirling in a tutu — it gives a child confidence, self-esteem and the ability to focus.'
- > 'In a theatrical performance, a young person learns to get outside of their own head and into the head of the character. They're learning to see from another person's perspective. Through this they improve their people skills and become better problem-solvers.'
- > 'Many young people at risk of dropping out of school and becoming unemployed respond favourably to professionally run arts programs. Often they only need to find an activity where they can be successful to re-engage them, and help them see that they have other life choices.'
- > 'The arts have many of the same benefits as organised sport, such as developing teamwork skills and learning what can be achieved through perseverance and self-discipline.'

Positive beliefs

What beliefs in a person's mind could you use to your advantage? Even the most curmudgeonly opponent of youth arts will concede a few potential benefits. These positive beliefs are the seeds that can grow into future support.

The 'What's in it for me?' factor

You might have a good case for youth arts, but the real question is: what can you do for the person who's listening to your message? If they're a politician, they'll crave media opportunities, the reflected glory of successful projects, and a chance to be seen in a positive light by their constituents — so give them these things.

Put yourself in their shoes. What do they REALLY care about? Does your communication answer fears, doubts, concerns and issues which are 'top of mind' for a particular target audience? This is where audience research is vital.

Don't make the mistake of trying to impose your own values and assumptions on your audience. Different audiences respond to the value of arts programs in different ways. For example:

- > If the audience is FUNDERS talk about: value for money, in-kind support, the degree of funding coming from other sources, outcomes that meet their own objectives, the number of volunteers you've attracted, how you're continually improving management standards.
- > If the audience is POLITICIANS talk about: community support, academic results, crime prevention, or other 'hot topics' your research has uncovered.
- > If the audience is PARENTS talk about: opportunities for their children, safety, academic results, personal development.
- > If the audience is YOUNG PEOPLE talk about: fun, friendships, safety, personal fulfilment through art.

Understanding your target audience

Don't fly blind. Never try to *guess* someone's beliefs and values. You can be wrong 90% of the time! Understanding where people are coming from will make a huge difference to the campaign. And the best way to understand them is to get in contact with them. You'll always be surprised and heartened by what you find out.

Here are some ways to make contact with your audiences:

- > Go out and talk to some of the key players in your campaign. Tell them you're planning to improve your advocacy work — ask them what they think are key points to address.
- > Consider meeting with one of your influencers. See if they can advise you about your decision-maker's agenda. Ask them what they think might be the key points for you to address when meeting that person.
- > Run a user discussion group with potential supporters. This could be as simple as a get-together with a couple of people over coffee. For example, you might want to talk to a group of parents — ask them about their concerns and how they think participating in the arts benefits their kids.

A key to successful communication is to be clear on what the benefits are for your audience — from their point of view.

Step 6 Create compelling messages

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you talk to your target groups:

- > What are their concerns (as parents, teachers, community representatives, etc)?
- > Do they think the arts, and youth arts in particular, are important? Why or why not?
- > Do they believe that participating in the arts helps young people develop? Why or why not?
- > Do they think art/youth arts funding is sufficient? Why or why not?
- > Do they know of your organisation and the work you're doing? What do they think about it?

Activity



Try this role play

Role plays are powerful tools for getting inside the heads of different players. They're also a lot of fun. For this role play you will need three or more people.

Assign roles to each member of your support group, for instance

- local member of parliament
- mayor or councillor
- editor of local newspaper
- council arts officer
- arts funding decision-maker
- chair of local P&C
- other players you've identified in your players mud map (Step 3).

'Invite' them all to a 'forum'. At the forum, present your case (e.g. for more funding) and see how they respond. You'll learn a surprising amount about how to make your messages more powerful!

Crafting your message

To target a particular audience you need to craft messages that will hit home with them (so that you can get them to take action on your behalf at a later stage). For example,

- > 'Studies show that music, dance, art and drama bolster self-confidence and improve overall academic performance' (this would appeal to parents)
- > 'Youth theatres are a good way of engaging at-risk young people and provide an alternative to delinquent behaviour and truancy' (this would appeal to local government politicians).

The following Messages Matrix is a powerful tool for developing messages like these. It's best used in a creative brainstorm with members of your support group. Once you work through the first five columns, the right message will usually come easily (especially if you're having some coffee at the same time).

The Message Matrix

Players Who are you trying to influence?	Objectives What do you want them to do?	Negative beliefs Barriers to them supporting you	Positive beliefs Perceived advantages for them	What's in it for them? Benefits you can offer them	Message What will hit home (and influence them to act)?

The Elevator Pitch

This is a good exercise for improving your messages.

Imagine your target audience is standing in an elevator. You walk into the elevator just as the doors close. You have one minute before the elevator stops and they leave. This is your only chance to sum up what your project does, how it can help them, and how they can help you. Gather your thoughts and start talking (you can talk to yourself or to one or more others).

Try this exercise a few times with different audiences in mind, changing your message accordingly.

Exercise



Step 6 Create compelling messages



TIP: A good habit is to make a clipping file with examples of:

- > images you like
- > writing you like
- > reviews or promotional materials that you think work well.

Kurruru Indigenous Youth Performing Arts (SA) (Photo courtesy The Advertiser)

Using compelling imagery

A picture paints a thousand words. If you can explain your message with a visual image, or a performance, then do so. Images are essential for the media, where a good photo opportunity is vital to give a story the placement it deserves.

Ask yourself: how can I express my key messages in an image?

Here are some interesting examples of images which might be used to add force to a campaign message.



'Music and drama help young people learn how to work in teams and develop problem-solving skills.'



'Better than being a couch potato.'

Australian Choreographic Centre, Quantum Leap Youth Ensemble (ACT)

Using compelling statistics

Statistics and information are critical to an effective lobbying campaign. Here's why:

- > State and federal government decision-making and policy creation are strongly linked to ABS statistics.
- > Local governments rely heavily on statistics to develop their community plans, such as social plans, cultural plans or recreational plans.
- > The media thrive on statistics. All editors know that statistics lend credibility to an argument. They also know that amazing facts demand attention!

Sources of useful social data include the ABS, your local council or community workers, and the Australian Council of Social Service. Some sources of arts-specific data include the Australia Council, Young People and the Arts Australia (download the latest YPAA Fact Sheets from the web), the National Association for the Visual Arts, and AUSDANCE. See 'Useful web links' on page 53.

Statistics in the raw can be very dry, with lots of qualifications. Keep your statistics pithy and interesting — and remember to acknowledge the source!

For examples of how statistics can be used in an advocacy campaign, check out **ART. ASK FOR MORE.** campaign at www.americansforthearts.org.



Summary: 8 tips for creating compelling messages

Here's a handy checklist to help you translate the passion you have for your work into compelling messages. Use these tips when developing your media releases, submissions or promotional materials.

- 1** Get inside the heads of your audience. What's important from *their* point of view? What's in it for them? Link your message to what they care about.
- 2** Target your message. Design different approaches for different people. Make sure the right message goes to the right person in the most appropriate format.
- 3** Avoid jargon and speak to your readers in language that ordinary people can relate to. (For some language tips see 'Making words work for you' on page 48).
- 4** Carefully choose your 'voice' — the person or people that speak for your group. They must be the most believable or credible person you can mobilise. If you're talking to funders, the best voice may be your organisation's general manager or program coordinator, or young people talking about the impact of an arts program on their life.
- 5** Use true stories, especially engaging human interest stories, case studies, testimonials and quotes from credible, real people. Make it local and personal.
- 6** Be visual. Use arresting images, and break up your text using headlines, captions, break-out boxes and quotes.
- 7** Use amazing facts or statistics. Amazing facts can be attention-grabbing, while statistics can lend your argument credibility.
- 8** Always include a call to action. Let people know what to do to support your campaign (approve funding, vote to approve a project, be a volunteer, etc). But don't overwhelm them -- give just one or two things to do.

Develop your tactics

We had a sympathetic councillor on our local council who was very pro-arts. We gave her the facts and figures and she used her networks to influence on our behalf. We just had to wind her up and send her off.

Regional youth theatre arts worker

Now that you've decided who to target and what the benefits and messages are for each player, it's time to plan out the practical details of your campaign and decide HOW to best reach each of the players.

Planning tactics

An integrated campaign aims to reach people from a number of angles while repeating and continually reinforcing its messages. To do this, there are three basic types of communication to consider:

Face-to-face meetings and conversations. These are the most powerful kind of communication. They're time consuming, but the only way to really change people.

Information tools to support your activities, such as letters, newsletters and leaflets. Remember that these cannot be expected to achieve much on their own but are important to reinforce your face-to-face efforts.

Media stories. These can give credibility to your efforts, creating a climate of acceptance among a wider audience for your cause.

On the next page is a simple tool developed by Social Change Media to help you plan campaign tactics. It lets you lay out the elements of your campaign so that you don't forget the needs of any particular player. It works like this: list your specific players down the left column. Then, depending on your available resources, list ways that you can realistically reach each player.

Step 7



Step 7 Develop your tactics

Tactics planning tool

	Face-to-face communication	Information tools	Media promotion
Sales force <i>(Aim: involve, inspire and reward)</i>			
Influencers <i>(Aim: win over to your cause)</i>			
Decision-makers <i>(Aim: make a decision in your favour)</i>			

Your tactics planning tool might look something like this:

Tactics planning tool

	Face-to-face communication	Information tools	Media promotion
Sales force <i>(Aim: involve, inspire and reward)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Phone contact > Meetings > Email > Training > Briefings > Public events > Performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > An information leaflet on how they can help you, with contact details > Background information about you and your work > Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Place motivating stories about your inspiring work
Influencers <i>(Aim: win over to your cause)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Phone contact > Letters > Meetings > Speak at gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Lobby document > Briefing papers > Letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Place stories about the importance and value of your work
Decision-makers <i>(Aim: make a decision in your favour)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Phone contact > Letters > Arrange a meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Lobby document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Place stories about the value of your work, and who else has benefited

Once you've mapped out how you'll reach each player, your next step is to decide who does what, when and with what resources. It's a good idea to choose a launch date and work backwards to make sure you have time for each activity.

Pre-test!

'What we think we are saying is not necessarily what our audiences hear.'

Arts Worker

Pre-testing your message (be it a one-line slogan, a press release or a funding proposal) is one of the most important things you can do to sharpen the impact of your communications. By pre-testing, you can check:

- > Am I in touch with what matters to my audience?
- > How is my audience responding to my message? Is it being well received?
- > Does my audience understand what I'm trying to say?
- > Are there any flaws or ambiguities in the language, messages or imagery?
- > Is there any way I can improve my materials?

Simple pre-testing methods for the shoestring budget

The best way to test a piece of communication is with someone from your intended target audience. If that's not possible, then at least try to find someone who's not part of your project, so they can offer you a fresh eye.

There are professional market research and market testing companies around. However, the easiest and cheapest way to pre-test is to have a chat with a group of people over coffee.

Questions to ask:

- > What do you think is the main message?
- > Is this information interesting or useful? Why or why not?
- > What grabs your attention most?
- > Where did you stop reading? Why?
- > What did you like most or least? Why?
- > Is there anything that isn't clear?

The Highlighter Test

This is a useful tool for written materials such as press releases and funding proposals. Find someone who hasn't seen your draft document. Give them a highlighter pen and ask them to read it, highlighting anything that's unclear or repetitive. Also ask them to note the interesting bits and the boring bits.

Step 8



Step 9



Bring it all together – your action plan

Now's the time to gather your thoughts into a simple, practical action plan. To do this you need to decide what tasks are required, who will carry out each task, when, and with what resources. Resources may include money, materials and helpers. Try filling out the table below:

Worksheet

Your action plan

Players	Objective <i>(What do you want them to do?)</i>	Tasks required	Who? <i>(Which member of your team will do them?)</i>	When by?	Resources needed

Once you have filled out this table, you're ready to launch your campaign. And don't forget to collect evidence as you go!

Campaign planning: final points to keep in mind

Here's a recap of the main points to keep in mind when planning your campaign:

- > Planning focuses your energies and ALWAYS saves time later.
- > Research your issue and each player as the first step.
- > People change for their own reasons, not yours.
- > Allow time to reflect on your progress and make improvements.
- > Pre-test before you jump.
- > Relationships are everything.
- > You don't have to convert everyone. Start with the likely supporters and build your constituency.
- > Your greatest impact may be when people are exposed to, and inspired by, your work. Capture them and arm them with knowledge about how they can help you.

Step 10



Reflect on what you've learnt

Taking time out to reflect on your campaign to date will help you to continually improve your approach.

It's good to set aside a special 'critical reflection' time, say three months into the campaign, to stand back, review the evidence and decide if the campaign is on track. This should be done with your core support team. If the campaign has problems, decide how to fix them. If you find you're 'banging your heads against a brick wall' trying to achieve some of your objectives, change them.

When you reflect on your activities, don't just ask yourself 'Did I succeed?' but also 'What did I learn?'

Evaluating your progress will also give you an opportunity to report back to funders (and possibly get more support), and report back to supporters (to acknowledge and celebrate their success.)



Tips and tricks for advocates

The 10 steps we've looked at so far were all about planning your campaign. When you get to the nitty gritty of running your campaign you need proven tactical methods. The following four sections show you how to work with government, your community and the media, as well as how to make words work for you.

Weaseling your way into government

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless in the face of government. But it is possible to make a difference. The first thing is to understand the system and how it works — to know where the power lies and how you can use it to maximise your impact.

This section will show you how to find the relevant decision-makers, influencers and potential allies within government. It will give you tips on how to approach them, what to ask for, and how to get the biggest 'bang for your buck'.

The three tiers of government

Australia has three tiers of government: federal, state and local. While each level of government has its own responsibilities, many responsibilities are shared in various ways.

The federal government, or the Commonwealth, decides on matters that affect the whole country. These are things like arts, foreign affairs, defence, trade and communication services.

State governments are responsible for education, arts, health, police, railways, main roads and public housing.

Local government (or your local council) is the third tier of government, and is responsible for a much smaller geographical area than the federal or state governments. Check your local council website and make yourself familiar with their activities.

Should I hire a professional?

Sometimes it's tempting to hire a professional lobbyist or advocacy organisation to run your campaign. If you have a clear and universal task (e.g. improving industrial conditions), professional help can be useful.

However, when it comes to advocating the value of your own work, nobody can craft and argue your case as well as you.

If you do enlist the help of a professional, be sure they understand the subtleties of your work and the values you promote. Otherwise, you run the risk of having someone misrepresent your work to the outside world.

Working with politicians — will my voice count?

Many people think members of parliament (MPs) take no notice of constituents who contact them. But you'd be surprised.

MPs and their staff keep a record of every letter, phone call, fax or email they receive. It's their way of keeping track of what voters are thinking. Good MPs use this process to shape their responses on issues. Remember, for a politician to keep their job they have to stay in power. To do this they need to win the support of a majority of voters in their electorate. This means delivering for voters wherever they can.

A common rule of thumb used by politicians is:

1 contact = 100 votes

(A contact may be a visit, letter, phone call or fax by a voter).

The 2001 federal election was decided by less than 4,000 votes, and individual seats can quite often be decided by less than a few hundred votes. So contacting your MP can make a difference.

Marginal seats and safe seats

If you live in a marginal seat then you have even more power. Marginal seats are electorates where the MP's margin is less than 5%. These are the seats that tend to decide elections — and the ones that political parties pay a lot of attention to. MPs in these seats will be keen to help you whenever they can.

Even if you're not in a marginal seat, your local MP should still be receptive. More people are becoming 'swinging voters', which means that many 'safe' seats can no longer be considered safe. MPs in these seats cannot take voter support for granted — it's in their interests to listen to you.

Always remember that your local MP is there to work for you. A core part of their job is listening and responding to the interests and concerns of the people they represent. You can ask your MP for help in:

- > Dealing with government departments.
- > Approaching local businesses.
- > Bringing a petition to parliament.
- > Passing on information or requests to a minister on issues relevant to their portfolio.
- > Providing statistics on government spending and relevant policy documents.

Other MPs can help too

In addition to your local MP, there are other MPs that are worth lobbying. Governments are run by a group of ministers. Each minister is given a particular area of responsibility (portfolio) to look after. Ministers who are responsible for looking after a portfolio relevant to your issue can be a good lobbying target. The same goes for their opposition ('shadow ministers').

The XYZ Youth Arts Centre was keen to make their performance space environmentally sustainable. So they wrote to the State Minister for the Environment for assistance. They also copied this correspondence to the Shadow Minister for the Environment.

The Minister's office wrote back to the XYZ Youth Arts Centre providing them with:

- > a how-to kit on making buildings more environmentally sustainable
- > an offer to have a sustainability officer from the Environment Protection Authority come out to assess their building
- > an information pack on how to apply for an environmental sustainability grant.

Case study



How to contact your elected representatives

Finding out who represents you in government is easy. The quickest way to do this is on the web.

For federal government

To find your local MP at the federal level:

- 1 Go to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) website at www.aec.gov.au/esearch/ and type in your suburb or postcode to find your electorate and the name of your MP.
- 2 Then go to the Australian Parliament House (APH) website at www.aph.gov.au/house/members and type in your MP's name to look up their contact details.

To find out whether you're in a marginal electorate:

- 1 Look up what electorate you live in by using the Australian Electoral Commission's search engine at www.aec.gov.au/esearch/
- 2 Then look-up the latest election results at the AEC at www.aec.gov.au/_content/when/past/index.htm and check to see if the winning margin (the two-party-preferred result) in your electorate was less than 5%.

To find out which ministers are responsible for different portfolios:

- 1 Go to the APH website at www.aph.gov.au
- 2 Click on 'Who's who'
- 3 Then click on 'Ministry'.

(This page is currently at www.aph.gov.au/library/parl/40/ministry/ministry.htm)

To find out the contact details of shadow ministers:

- 1** Go to the APH website at www.aph.gov.au
- 2** Click on 'Who's who'
- 3** Then click on 'Shadow Ministry'.

(This page is currently at www.aph.gov.au/library/parl/40/shadow/index.htm)

For state government

To find your local MP and other MPs at the state government level, use the parliament house website for your state government.

Australian Capital Territory	www.legassembly.act.gov.au
New South Wales	www.parliament.nsw.gov.au
Northern Territory	www.nt.gov.au/ntg/parlia.shtml
Queensland	www.parliament.qld.gov.au
South Australia	www.parliament.sa.gov.au
Tasmania	www.parliament.tas.gov.au
Western Australia	www.parliament.wa.gov.au/index.htm
Victoria	www.parliament.vic.gov.au

For local government

There are hundreds of local councils in Australia. The best way to find your local councillors online is to use the state government department in your state that looks after local government.

All of these sites list contact details for local councils. Most councils have their own websites, where they will usually list elected councillors. If you have trouble finding your local councillors, then call your local council and ask them to send you a contact list.

New South Wales	www.dlg.nsw.gov.au
Northern Territory	www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au
Queensland	www.dlgpsr.qld.gov.au
South Australia	www.sa.gov.au/government/local_gov
Tasmania	www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgo
Western Australia	www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/
Victoria	www.doi.vic.gov.au/doi/internet/localgov.nsf

Who's who in government

Use the online resources listed on the previous pages to complete the table below. This will help you to identify the players that most affect your work within federal and state government. Find out:

- > Who does what
- > Why they are relevant to you and what you can ask for
- > Where to get in contact.

Worksheet



Who	Responsible for	Relevance to you and what help you can ask for	Web links
Federal Government			
Minister for the Arts			
Shadow Minister for the Arts			
Your local MP — House of Representatives			
Your local MP — Senate			
Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts — ministerial advisers, bureaucrats			
Australia Council			
State Government			
Minister for the Arts			
Shadow Minister for the Arts			
Your local MP (Legislative Assembly)			
Departmental staff — ministerial advisers			
Departmental staff — bureaucrats			
Local Government			
Your local councillors, your mayor, local council staff			

How to make your MP work for you

Here are some pointers on getting the most out of your local MP at each level of government:

1. Always start at the top

Try your federal MP first. Even though they usually look after federal issues, they can always help you deal with any state or local government issues. Remember they are there to work for you!

2. Get in contact

Write a letter to your MP about your concerns in your own words. Then follow up with a phone call to the appointment secretary make an appointment.

3. Build your network

The bigger your network of supporters, the more bargaining power you'll have. Organise a meeting of your allies, or attend a local precinct committee (or sector committee) meeting to gather support for your issue. Check with your local council to see if they have a local precinct committee. Other useful contacts may include:

- > **The MP's office staff** — you'll probably meet or talk to an MP's support staff before you meet the MP. While not a substitute for seeing the MP, they can be a good source of information about what matters to your MP (especially if you're polite and friendly). They may also have a budget for printing and postage, plus access to faxes, photocopiers, phones and computers. You've nothing to lose by at least asking for help.

- > **Political advisers** — these people are very influential players on the political field. They can also be a bit easier to reach than the actual MP.

- > **Community leaders** — these people can also be very influential. Talk to people that you know, and see if you can use your networks to find a pathway to contact the person you want to meet. (Remember the six degrees of separation — the theory that you're connected to anyone in the world via just six personal links!)

4. Be clear about what you want and ask for it

MPs are extremely busy people and you may only get 15-20 minutes of their time, so be prepared. Make sure you:

- > Know your issue. Have a good understanding of the most common arguments against your case and be prepared to defuse them. Use technical data and relevant research to support your case.

- > Understand the political agenda of the person you're meeting with. For example, knowing what your MP is up to, or cares about, will allow you to prepare your case within the context of something that's relevant to them. This increases your chances of getting support. Make sure you also include evidence of local support for your issue.

- > Write down a few points about your issue beforehand so you can clearly explain your position when you meet your MP. If you're going there with supporters, decide who'll speak when and why before you go in.



5. Be reasonable

Make sure what you're requesting of your MP is reasonable. It also helps, where possible, to recognise any difficulties your MP may have in meeting your requests. Doing this will allow you to find ways around the difficulties. Encourage and thank your MP when they take action on your behalf.

6. Be political

You know what you want but have you ever thought about what the MP wants? Create a situation in which they will see some opportunities to get recognition (and ultimately votes) from their constituency.

Make a special effort to demonstrate the connection between what you're requesting and the interests of your MP's constituency. If appropriate, discuss how you and others can be of assistance to them. Offer to become an expert resource to your MP when issues arise in which you have particular knowledge or experience.

7. Be informed

Follow local, metropolitan and national media. Seek out answers to the following:

- > What are the key issues in the area you live in?
- > What are the 'hot' issues of the moment?
- > How can you connect these issues to your own work?
- > Can you identify issues related to young people, recreation, health, etc?

Use the web to keep informed. Browse through the council, local, state and federal government websites. See if you can find out anything relevant to your issue. The key is to link issues back to your work — make it relevant.

Meeting your MP

Before you meet your MP, you may want to prepare a clear, one-page lobby document to leave with them. Your document might include:

- > A clear statement of what the issues are.
- > The main arguments that you're making.
- > What your position is on these arguments.
- > The specific requests that you're making.
- > Your contact details.

Limit your group to two or three people. Designate someone to take notes so that you can refer back to them in future correspondence.

Dress in something that makes you feel comfortable but don't attract attention to yourself. You want the MP to remember your message, not your fashion statement.

Don't be put off by power structures. Remember people are only human.

Arts worker

How to conduct yourself during the meeting

Be assertive

When you meet your MP, thank them for meeting with you and ask how much time they have available. Then just be up front: go straight into why you've come and what you're hoping to achieve. For example: 'Thanks for seeing us ... We have come here to talk about ... and we would like to ask you for your support and commitment to ...'

In the meeting be polite and natural, like you would be with a new work colleague. Remember you employ them so they'll normally be keen to impress.

If they stray off-topic then politely ask them to go back to your issue and answer your concerns. For example, you can say 'I'm aware we only have 15 minutes left. Can we talk about the funding?'

Some people will disagree with you and may not support your cause. A good thing is to ask the MP to justify their position. Through this you can develop your arguments into touching something that is of more relevance to the MP — be ready to negotiate.

Listen

Ideally the MP should speak as much as you. By listening to what they have to say you can:

- > find out how much they already know about the issue
- > understand where they're coming from (and how to pitch your message)
- > keep an ear out for any misconceptions so that you can tackle them
- > be sure they're committing to concrete action.

Ask for a commitment

Make sure you don't leave the meeting without asking what your MP is going to do about your issue and when they'll get back to you. Be sure to make your requests tangible, for example:

- > 'Are you ready to commit to X?'
- > 'What can we expect to have done about X?'
- > 'Would you be happy to write a letter to the minister regarding X?'
- > 'Would you be happy to raise this issue with other MPs? In parliament?'
- > 'Would you be happy to come to a community meeting?'
- > 'By what date can we expect to see a result?'
- > 'Can you get back to me to confirm that you've done X?'
- > 'When will you get back to me?'

Just imagine 100 other voters are walking in with you when you visit your MP, because that's how they see it! (Remember 1 contact = 100 votes in the mind of a politician.)



Follow-up

Keep in mind that your meeting is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Your meeting is just the first step in a long-term process of relationship-building and so follow-up is critical. Follow-up can include:

- > A post-meeting thankyou letter. Use this opportunity to recap the commitments made during the meeting.
- > Positive feedback. MPs get requests from people all day every day. If they met some of your requests, be sure to thank them in writing. They'll be more supportive next time if they feel they're being acknowledged for their efforts.
- > Further contact if your issue is not addressed. Let them know that you're not content, why you're not content and how they can assist.
- > An invitation to an upcoming event, such as an opening or a performance.

In their quest for a venue upgrade, the XYZ Youth Arts Centre was guided by the cultural planner at the local city council. The planner was a useful ally — she knew the local area well and had extensive networks. She gave great advice on who to contact and which MPs and councillors to meet.

These connections meant that the Centre was able to get a meeting with the local MP quite quickly. The Centre used lots of interesting statistics and quotes in their submission, and made sure that they had a quote from a young person who was from the same cultural background as their MP.

The Centre staff also tapped into 'leaders' in the community, such as the local mayor and councillors. They were quite excited about the project — it seemed that they really wanted to know what young people were thinking and had a genuine sense of responsibility to their area. Council also —supplied in-kind support, including free meeting space in the local library.

Case study



Exploiting election and budget cycles

Elections

A politician's most sensitive time is in the lead-up to an election. Here's a good tactic that can help you put your issue on the political agenda during this time:

- > Write to all the candidates in your electorate about your issue. Ask them to respond in writing about how they would support your cause if elected.
- > Make it clear that you'll be collecting responses from all the candidates and circulating them to your membership — and then do so.
- > Write a media release turning their responses into a story.
- > Get a good photo relevant to your story
- > Then contact the local paper to sell your story.

Budgets

Funding decisions tend to be made at the same time each year. This is because they follow a cyclical decision-making process based on the annual budgets of governments. The cycle typically works this way each year:

- 1 Government department prepares a budget for the treasury
- 2 The Treasurer then brings down a budget for the government
- 3 The department then embarks upon spending its budget for the year
- 4 The department at the end of this year then starts preparing budgets for the following year.

There are two opportunities for funding here:

- 1 At the start of the budget year when departments are preparing budget submissions
- 2 Near the end of the financial year.

Not many people know about this second opportunity. If departments don't spend all their allocated money for the year they usually have to hand it back to treasury. So if they've got any leftover money near the end of the budget year they're usually keen to spend it on something rather than hand it back.

Using policy to your advantage

If you know the policy surrounding your issue, then you can zero in on the opportunities and avoid the dead-ends. Government policy or legislation will usually give you a good indication of how a government department will handle an issue or request.

Finding policy

Get to know the policy around your issue. Research policy at all three levels of government, as there is usually some overlap of responsibility on an issue between local, state and federal government. Government department websites usually have plenty of policy information.

If you're finding it difficult to track down relevant policy then contact your local MP — that's what they are there for!

The pay-offs

Getting on top of policy can be hard work but it can pay off. If you're well armed with relevant policy information you'll be able to:

- > Make the right arguments when discussing issues with your local MPs
- > Get more information or help from government departments
- > Argue your case in the media more effectively.

When there's no policy

If there's no specific policy on your area of interest then treat this as an opportunity: this is your chance to get your local MP to make new policy. It's much easier for a government to make new policy than it is to change existing policy.

Working with bureaucrats

When working with bureaucrats it's important to keep in mind what they can, and can't, do for you.

Bureaucrats can:

- > help you understand how arts policy is developed at the state and federal government levels
- > help you find good programs to learn from
- > let you know how to apply for funds to support your project
- > help you to access the minister and provide advice on how to approach them, including advice on their strong or weak points.

Bureaucrats cannot:

- > secure funding on your behalf
- > make new policy decisions (that's what ministers do).

Keep in mind that those who make decisions often relegate actions to middle management — and if they're not supported or in contact with you, your request may get lost in the system.

People who work closest to program delivery or service delivery — such as council youth officers, arts officers, or project officers in funding bodies — are often most able to see the potential benefits of your work. Keep them in the loop because they can provide a valuable link to middle management on your behalf.

Working with local government

Working with local government can be a great way for you to build the community support that's so vital to gaining the attention of state and federal politicians. Your local council can be a source of:

- > venues to run your program
- > publicity in council newsletters
- > public spaces or noticeboards to include your promotional material
- > funding — see if there is council money earmarked for your kind of program
- > opportunities for networking in your community and building support.

Check with your local council to see if they have any policies, plans or committees relevant to your cause (e.g. a five-year recreational or arts development plan for the area, policies to improve the community's health or support young people). Look up their website or your local community services directory, or call the council call centre.

Who to contact in your local council

Elected councillors — see if any of the councillors are particularly interested in your program. Ask them to join your steering committee. Keep them briefed and up to date so that they use their contacts to work for you and spread the word. Quote them in press releases and invite them to opening nights or launches. Start at the top — get in contact with the mayor then work your way down to other councillors.

Council staff — ask if your council has a recreation officer, someone who works with young people, etc.

Connecting with your community

The power of networking

If you want to be a successful advocate, it's important to become a champion networker. Networks will help you get into the minister's office, reach top-level public servants, gain access to that council meeting, build support within your community and get that media release published.

In the political game, your community are your best supporters. Be wary of reaching for decision-makers or politicians without building up this critical mass of allies and supporters. Do everything you can to involve your community and get them behind you – to be seen to have their support.

Tips on networking for political power

- > Get organised and recruit people to your cause. Keep your eyes peeled for potential allies and be prepared to let them know how they can help you.
- > Advertise your work or organisation (website, newspapers, letterboxing flyers).
- > Work out who your potential new supporters or members are (by age, place, occupation, etc) and then go after them in a targeted fashion.
- > Keep an up-to-date record of how many people you represent, and publicise this.
- > Don't just have supporters as passive people on your books, get them working too — turn them into campaigners for your cause.
- > Build alliances — find like-minded groups that can support your cause and ask them to lobby on your behalf. Offer to help them on their causes as well.
- > Work the circuit — give presentations at meetings, have a presence at local community events and openings.
- > Find out who your community leaders are and meet them — get in contact with your local mayor, chamber of commerce, P&C organisation, Apex or Lions clubs, etc. Invite them to launches and openings. Let them know you exist, invite them to see your work and ask for their support.
- > Write letters to your local paper.



Getting noticed by the media

You may have had a lot to do with the media already, through generating publicity for your activities and programs. Media advocacy is about using the media to bring real change in society through your actions.

In this section we look briefly at how to work with the media as an advocate, with the aim of influencing both the kinds of issues selected by the media and the shaping of debate around those issues. There's a lot of information on the web about working with the media, so we won't be covering it in detail here. Here are a few tips just to get you thinking:

- > **Build relationships.** Contact journalists direct instead of just sending out press releases en masse. Make an appointment to meet the editor of your local paper, including the arts editor if they have one, and the journalist covering your local area. Do the same for all other media outlets: TV, radio, publications, etc. Put yourself on their radar!
- > **Become an expert on your issues.** Feed the media quality information. Learn about the news values that determine whether stories get a run (impact, urgency, proximity, novelty, human interest, humour, celebrity, topicality, conflict) and make sure your information fits these criteria.
- > **Make your contacts timely.** Keep an eye on the media and ride the wave of current issues.
- > **Learn how to find good stories.** Write them up into a media release and supply photos that will work.
- > **Do a journalist's job for them.** The more you do this the more they'll come to rely on you. Journalists tend to return to contacts they know are helpful and who can be reached at short notice.
- > **Be visible:** Organise letter to the editor campaigns amongst your supporters. Get on talkback radio and raise your issues.

Tips for creating compelling stories

- > use interesting facts or statistics
- > avoid jargon like the plague
- > get a quote or endorsement from a celebrity or local identity
- > tell a human story
- > find an angle that's relevant to the local area or a topical issue. Show how your program addresses this issue.



'Most projects, when written up, sound really boring, because they are lost in the jargon. You need to be able to express people's passion in plain English.'

Arts worker

'I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.'

Mark Twain

Making words work for you

Clear communication lies at the heart of any effective advocacy campaign. When talking about the arts, it's easy to fall into 'arts-speak'. But to outsiders arts-speak can sound like an impenetrable mass of jargon and cliches.

To be an effective arts advocate you'll need to master the use of plain English — clear, precise and straightforward language. Plain English has many benefits:

- > It's inclusive.
- > It shows that you're professional and approachable.
- > It can help you to truly express the passion of your art, instead of hiding it under a blanket of words.
- > It saves time for the reader and is more likely to hold their interest. It's also less likely to be misunderstood.

Seven easy ways to immediately improve your language

1 Keep your sentences short

Long, waffly sentences are a great obstacle to a reader or listener. Research shows that anything longer than 30 words puts a strain on the short term memory of the reader. So:

- > If you spy a long sentence, try cutting it into two or three shorter ones.
- > Cut out any repetition.
- > Make use of bullet points.
- > Look for ways you can use one word instead of two or more.

2 Avoid jargon

Try to be aware of when jargon pops up, so that you can replace it with plain English words. If you use acronyms (like ABS or APRA) make sure you explain them.

Here are our Top 10 Meaningless Buzz Words to Avoid (and some alternatives):

- Facilitate ➔ assist (or help)
- Integrate ➔ bring together
- Prioritise ➔ list the most important
- Proactive ➔ active
- Strategise ➔ plan
- Interdisciplinary ➔ mixing different art forms
- Cultural diversity ➔ seeing many cultural perspectives

- Performing arts ➔ theatre, dance, music
- Collaborative ➔ working together
- Participatory ➔ involving others, such as audience members.

3 Use short, easy words, instead of long, complex ones

Try to use words as if you're speaking to someone. Here are some examples:

<i>Complex word</i>	facilitate	rectify	discontinue	give consideration to
<i>Easy word</i>	help	fix	stop	consider

INSTEAD OF:

'Our company uses collaborative youth protocols to guide our group devising processes'

TRY:

'Our creative work with young people is developed through trust, respect and accepting individual perspectives.'

INSTEAD OF:

'The work we create is based on community cultural development processes which validate young people's lived experiences, empowering them by giving them a voice in performance work, supported by professional arts practitioners'

TRY:

'Our shows allow young people to create theatre about their lives and how they see the world. They are helped in doing this by trained theatre workers. This is important to many young people, whose views are often dismissed as unimportant.'

4 Create word pictures

Plain English doesn't have to be dry, boring language. Replace abstractions with concrete word pictures.

INSTEAD OF:

'Jane Smith has a superb voice and can sing with great expression'

TRY:

'Jane Smith could sing a shopping list and still sound like an angel'

5 Don't exaggerate

Avoid using over-the-top language, too many exclamation marks!!!, or words that have been done to death. Here are some examples:

- hilarious ➔ funny
- unique ➔ special
- world premiere ➔ new
- leading ➔ best

'Never use a long word where a short word will do.'

George Orwell, 1946

'Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very'; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.'

Mark Twain

On using the word 'arts'

The word 'arts' can be a convenient as a catch-all, but it can also make your communication flat and hide the real meaning of your message. Instead of just saying 'arts', allow yourself the space to describe what people are doing. For example: 'When young people participate in the arts, such as learning to play a musical instrument, or rehearsing a play ...'

Adjectives like 'key' and 'highly' can be overused to the point of being meaningless (sorry if we've used them in this tool kit!). They can mostly be dropped.

6 Be succinct

Try not to overwhelm people with too much information or long lists of activities. Focus on the concrete *benefits* of your work, rather than the process of how you do it. Try to limit your messages to no more than three main points:

- > What you do
- > Who you do it with
- > The concrete benefits of your activities.

7 Tell a story

There comes a time in your campaign when you have to stand up in front of a group of people and 'sell them'. The most powerful way to do this is with a story. Stories are compelling in a way that facts are not. Stories touch hearts. They help listeners visualise what's at stake.

So what's in a good story? A sympathetic character, hopes and dreams, a perilous journey, danger, and the promise of triumph. Here are some examples:

Rachel's story

Rachel loves music and dance, has Down's syndrome and when she was nineteen lived at Port Augusta in South Australia. Every week, Rachel travelled four hours by bus to attend Restless Dance workshops in Adelaide.

Her mother says: 'Rachel was accepted into the [Restless Dance] Ensemble when she was 18. From the outset she was drawn into a magical world of complete acceptance, where it mattered not what you looked like, how you spoke or how you dressed. It was a world of mutual respect. Her daily world, outside Restless, was, on the whole, one of isolation. A world where she had to work very hard to keep up with her peers and was always socially on the outside ... Restless was able to provide her with the necessary social environment that enabled her to continue her own emotional growth.'

As Rachel herself says: 'What I like best about it is the good friends, it's good for me to know people'.

(Source: Testimonial courtesy of Restless Dance Company)

Debby's story

Debby joined the Women's Circus when she was 17 and, as she puts it, 'off the rails a bit'. The circus became a place where she could use her body and all the energy she had in an environment where she was accepted.

As Debby says: 'Circus is such a great tool for so many different groups. I recently gave a workshop for a group of wild young boys and there were so many ways to engage them, putting them in harnesses and bungee jumping. They could engage in risky behaviours in a safe place. Suddenly this group of young boys were working in teams, relying on each other to make a routine work.'

Debby sees a show or annual performance as the outcome of a journey, sometimes a watershed in a young person's life.

(Source: VicHealth Letter, Issue no 23, Winter 2004)

Your group or centre will have many stories like this. Telling these stories will help explain how your work impacts on real people, and makes personal change possible. Sometimes other people can tell your story more readily than you, particularly a young person ('I did this and it changed my life ...').

ART. ASK FOR MORE

ART. ASK FOR MORE is an ongoing campaign in the United States aimed at promoting the need for more arts education opportunities for children.

The campaign offers some good examples of campaign strategy, campaign resources, testimonials and compelling messages. Check out this campaign at www.americansforthearts.org. While this is a big-budget campaign, the basic planning principles are relevant for smaller campaigns.

Here's a taste of their website

Why should we invest in young people's imagination and creativity?

Because the arts are like timeless seeds planted in our young people. With minimal attention, these seeds will grow. But with nurturing, they will grow and bear fruit that will feed the whole community.

The less art kids get the more it shows!

Traditionally, recreational activities for young people are focused on sport. A lot of young people are left out, boys and girls. We need to tip the balance towards recreational arts programs for our young people.

There is not enough art in our children's lives.

Did you know that:

- The arts teach kids to be more tolerant and open
- The arts allow kids to express themselves creatively
- The arts promote individuality, bolster self-confidence and improve overall academic performance
- The arts can help troubled youth providing an alternative to delinquent behaviour and truancy while providing an improved attitude towards school.

Case study



What makes the advertisement below powerful?

- > it has an immediate and compelling story: in this case, the true story of an American icon.
- > it connects with its audience's values: in this case, it is parents' concerns that their 'kids aren't getting their fair share' of arts education.
- > it provides an action people can take to express their concerns: make some noise, visit us on the web.

THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ART IN OUR SCHOOLS.

NO WONDER PEOPLE THINK

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

WAS THE FIRST MAN TO
WALK ON THE MOON.

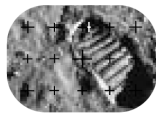
It's a long way from the Apollo Theatre to the Apollo program. And while his playing may have been "as lofty as a moon flight," as *Time* magazine once suggested, that would be as close as Louis Daniel Armstrong would ever get to taking "one small step for man."



Instead of a giant leap, Louis Armstrong delivered one giant free-form crazy jazz groove for mankind.

the trumpet was as a guest in a correction home for wayward boys. If only today's schools were as enlightened as that reformatory was.

Alas, the arts are dismissed as extravagant in today's schools. This, despite all the studies that show parents believe music and dance and art and drama make



Armstrong left his footprints on the jazz world, wearing lace-up oxfords.

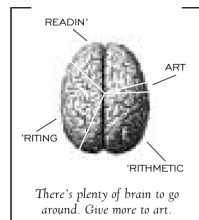
But as the jazz musician of the 20th century, giant leaps were a matter of course for Satchmo. For no one has ever embodied the art form the way he did. It was he who helped make virtuoso solos a part of the vocabulary. It was he who was honored with the title "American goodwill ambassador" by the State Department. It was he who was the last jazz musician to hit #1 on the Billboard pop chart.

Not bad for a kid whose first experience with

their children better students and better people.

If you feel like your kids aren't getting their fair share, make some noise. To find out how, or for more information about the benefits of arts education, please visit us on the web at

AmericansForTheArts.org. Like the great Louis Armstrong, all you need is a little brass.



ART. ASK FOR MORE.

If you want to see the original ad, go to www.americansforthearts.org

Click on:

Art. Ask For More icon

Go to:

campaign information

Click on:

View the print ads



For more information about the importance of arts education, please contact www.AmericansForTheArts.org.



Useful web links

Working with government

Links to all federal government departments, and state and territory government pages:

www.fed.gov.au/

Lobbying Australia:

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~trc/lgpt1.html>

Contacting your Legislator — Effective Communication Techniques:

www.vilaw.com/govern2.html

Federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts:

www.dcita.gov.au

For advice on how to write effective submissions:

www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/finding_funds

For links to resources on advocacy and lobbying — see the National Association of Community Legal Centres site:

www.naclc.org.au/activist/campaigns_general.html

Working with communities

Community Builders (NSW):

www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/

Working with the media

For tips on working with the media:

www.fuel4arts.com/content/view.asp?id=3200

Using plain English

How to write reader-friendly materials:

www.media.socialchange.net.au/people/les/Get_read.pdf

Arts resources

Fuel4arts – Arts Marketing tools and ideas. This site also has a good list of ABS arts and cultural activities summaries within the resources listing:

www.fuel4arts.com/

Sauce: hot tips for effective arts promotion:

www.fuel4arts.com/sauce/12_communicating/communicating.htm

Australia Council:

www.ozco.gov.au/artsResources.aspx

Arts Council England:

www.artscouncil.org.uk/information/index.php

Regional Arts Australia Online:

www.regionalarts.com.au/raa1/support/links.asp

ART. ASK FOR MORE. campaign website by Americans For the Arts:

www.americansforthearts.org

Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well Being — An Evaluation Guide for Community Arts Practitioners. An easy-to-use guide to help you collect evidence about the positive impacts of community arts projects:

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au — go to 'resources'

also at www.arts.vic.gov.au/index.htm — go to 'publications'

Glossary

Here are a few terms that are often thrown around in the arts world. They are not exhaustive definitions — just a taste.

Marketing

There are many definitions of marketing, but, in general, marketing activities involve identifying the particular wants and needs of a target market of customers, and then satisfying those customers better than your competitors. Marketing activities include: market research on customers, analysing their needs, and then making strategic decisions about product design, pricing, promotion (advertising, sales, publicity) and distribution.

Publicity

Publicity is closely related to public relations and is one of the variables that comprises the promotional mix in marketing. Publicity is the management of product or brand-related communications between an organisation and the general public. It is primarily an informative activity (as opposed to a persuasive one). The ultimate goal of publicity is to promote an organisation's products, services or brands through favourable press coverage.

Public relations

Public relations is the management of all communications between an organisation and the general public.

Advertising

Places *paid* messages in either the media or public spaces to increase awareness of and support for a product or service.

Media advocacy

Seeks to change the social and political context in which decisions that affect resourcing to the arts sector are made. A media advocate works to influence both the kinds of topics selected by the mass media and the shape of the debate around those issues.