

Ten Top Tips for Standing Up & Speaking Out at Political Meetings - Election Season 2023



Motivated to stand up and speak out, but not 100% sure how to go about it? Here's a useful guide to help you be brave, be strong, and make some (polite, impactful) noise.

Depending on the size of the event, your first hurdle to overcome is getting selected to ask a question. In larger meetings, these opportunities may be limited.

1. **Present yourself well.**

Dress smartly and carry yourself with integrity. The aim is to blend in with the crowd and not stand out as someone likely to disrupt.

2. **Go with a friend.**

Not only will you feel more confident with a like-minded friend, this person can also act as an ally to video both your question and the answer, so you don't have to worry about it. *Don't have a friend to go with? Join a local VFF group and find one in no time!* <https://www.voicesforfreedom.co.nz/local-sign-up/>

3. **Don't let your emotions overtake you.**

These sorts of meetings are closely controlled, and the organisers will be looking for troublemakers. Do your utmost not to yell out, interject, snort, or look visibly frustrated or upset. You may be passionate about the topic, but the organisers are highly unlikely to direct a microphone your way if you look like you might derail the prevailing sentiment of the presenter(s).

4. **Work the crowd.**

If you're part of a larger group in attendance, be sure to split up and sit at various locations around the audience. This way, the group won't be targeted as 'troublemakers', one group may be able to support the other (eg making 'let her speak!' type comments if others are being shut down), and you'll have more chances to talk to strangers about the issues, if you want to. *Consider taking some VFF materials like our Cash Is Cool cards, or RCR flyers, so you can share these with members of the public before or after the event.*

5. **Be prepared.**

Think carefully about the information you want to get out of this opportunity, and the questions you want to ask. Be authentic, do your research, get some (verified) facts and stats, and write everything down clearly. Why not read from a prepared script? No-one else's opinion about that matters, you won't miss any important points, and it's far easier to read in public than speak off the cuff.

... OK, so you've got the mike. Now what?

6. Take the microphone, if possible.

Try not to let anyone hold the mike while you talk—it's easy for them to move it away if they don't like what you're saying. Take hold of the microphone if you can and turn your body slightly away from the person who brought it to you to indicate you intend to hold it until your two cents' worth has been heard.

7. Be sensible, respectful, and polite.

Begin by thanking the speaker or panel for coming to speak or share their views. Even if you don't agree with the person, their beliefs, or policies, this is a good way to begin. If there is anything you particularly like about their content, policies, or mission, be sure to say so in a complimentary way. Then proceed with your comment / question.

8. Educate others.

Write your question in a way that presents some information to the crowd first; a short background to your query. You probably won't get a right of reply, so get the information out while you can. Don't miss the chance to include referenced statistics and information which is more likely to stand out to those listening. This strategy will also provide context for other listeners, as well as the speaker or panel.

9. Be eloquent.

Speak slowly and clearly to ensure you are heard. Practise at home in the mirror, or ask your friends to critique you, honestly and constructively!

A preparatory reminder...

10. Work together.

There may be someone else in your group better suited to presenting a question you've composed. There may also be someone else who can research the topics and find good statistics or information to back up your points. If you all agree on the top three questions to ask, and you all have a copy of the questions, you'll have a much better chance of being heard. Pool your talents in a group in preparation for the event.... It could be lots of fun, as well as satisfying.

And one final BONUS tip...

11. DON'T FORGET TO RECORD YOUR INTERACTION!! Video recording is best, but an audio recording is still useful. It's surprisingly easy to forget this crucial point... don't let your efforts to stand up and speak out go to waste.

GOOD LUCK! We can't wait to see your videos and hear your audio recordings. If you need to, mail them in to us at hello@voicesforfreedom.co.nz and we'll help you work out how they can be shared.