

A guide to running an electorate-based 'Create to Advocate' event

Introduction to Create to Advocate 07

Create to Advocate 07 is a national art competition and exhibition coordinated by Micah Challenge Australia. It encourages artists to use their creativity to speak out the issues surrounding global poverty. Create to Advocate 07 is an exciting and powerful way to engage and inspire artists, political leaders and the Australian public to make poverty history

The initiative began as part of Voices for Justice, an event organised by Micah Challenge, which gives Christians the opportunity to pray, learn and speak with political leaders about Australia's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. Australia is one of around 190 countries that signed the Millennium Declaration and committed to the Goals, which have the important overall aim of halving global poverty by 2015. This year is an important time in the campaign. July 2007 is being marked as the half way point in our commitment to achieving the Goals.

We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected.

Millennium Declaration, 2000

The national Create to Advocate 07 Art Competition and Exhibition is held at Parliament House, Canberra during June and July and focuses on the themes of poverty and the Millennium Development Goals. The Exhibition Opening takes place during 'Voices for Justice' in June.

You can add your voice by running a 'Create to Advocate' event in your electorate. This Guide outlines how to organise your event and engage your local MP in support of the aims of Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History.

Local 'Create to Advocate' events exhibit artworks by individuals within a given electorate to communicate the messages of Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History campaigns to the MP and community. The events can take place at any time but we hope many local events can happen during July and August to build on the success of the national Create to Advocate Exhibition and Competition.

Artwork can include visual art, photography, multi-media, film and 3D. The concept could also be extended to include music & dance pieces depending on capacity of the organising group.

Create to Advocate Art 07 is jointly promoted by Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History. See www.micahchallenge.org.au and www.makepovertyhistory.com.au for more information.

The goals of electorate-based 'Create to Advocate' events

- To inspire and persuade your local member in a different and creative way that Australia can do more to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and halve global poverty by 2015.
- To engage artists and creative people in the issues of global poverty and the Micah Challenge and MPH campaigns; and create an opportunity and platform for artists to use their creativity for justice.
- To equip and inspire Australians in their local electorates to speak out in support of the Millennium Development Goals. To empower Australians to be more active and engaged in the political process in their local community and electorate in support of achieving the MDG's.
- To raise awareness of the issues and the campaign through local media.

Your 'Create to Advocate' electorate event can be as big or as small as you want to make it. However it can become quite a large project so start small and bring together a group of people who can take responsibility for the various jobs that are involved.

Your 'Create to Advocate' To Do List:

1. Create a project plan

A simple project plan is just a list of all the jobs you will need to do and the time you will take to get them done. Use this 'to do' list as a guide. Three months is a good total time frame.

2. Register your event

Email your name, group/organisation, electorate and MP to info@micahchallenge.org.au.

3. Schedule the dates of your exhibition and book a venue

It will need to be when your local members are based at their local offices rather than when Parliament is sitting. For example, if you hold the exhibition during August you'll need to avoid the Parliamentary Sitting week 7 - 16 August. Possible venues to explore are a local community centre, library, art gallery, school or church space. Try to find a community space where you don't have to pay.

4. Decide the closing date for entries

Your entry deadline needs to allow time for artists to deliver their artworks and for the exhibition to be set up prior to opening.

5. Promote your Create to Advocate Competition & Exhibition to artists

- a. You should start promoting the competition to artists as soon as venue and dates are set, around two to three months before the opening if you can.
- b. Use the 'Create to Advocate' postcard and poster template. You can print hard copies or email copies. Type or print in the date and details of your exhibition.
- c. Consider promoting the competition and exhibition to artists through any art networks you know including schools, art colleges, churches, art shops, galleries and businesses in your electorate. Use our sample promotion letter to contact these groups.
- d. Ask Micah Challenge & Make Poverty History to promote your event on their websites.

6. Invite entries and provide guidelines to artists

Ask artists to enter their works by sending you a digital image of the work. Use the [sample artist application form](#) as a basis for your own entry form. This form has some guidelines about how artists can present work. Be clear to artists about entry deadline and when and to where artworks need to be delivered.

7. Select and invite competition judges

Contact potential judges one to two months before your exhibition opens. Judging should take place approximately three weeks before exhibition opens to give artists time to mount and frame their artworks and deliver them to you. You may want to invite a local MP, artist or art teacher to be a judge.

8. Awards and prizes

- a. Consider offering awards and prizes in more than one category, for example, a student award and prize.
- b. Create simple artists awards or certificates. Ask local businesses to donate prizes.

9. Invite your local MP to the Create to Advocate Art Exhibition Opening.

Use the [sample invitation](#) and **send it 4 – 6 weeks prior to your exhibition opening date**. Telephone the MP's office shortly afterwards to follow up and confirm that the MP is able to attend.

10. Promote the event to members of your electorate

Start this around three weeks before exhibition opening. Invite as many people from different groups as you can to the Exhibition Opening. The more schools, churches, businesses and groups represented the more effective the event will be. Also invite any local councillors or other influential people who may be interested in supporting the event.

11. Organise exhibition space, equipment or materials needed, as well as time and volunteers to install exhibition.

This should be done around a month or more before exhibition opens.

- Consider if you want to serve drinks and/or food. Organise the catering.
- Order Micah Challenge or Make Poverty History resources to sell or distribute at your event such as T-shirts, wrist bands, postcards or the Micah Challenge 'What can one person do?' DVD.
- Make a running sheet for the opening event. Include someone to introduce and briefly speak about campaign. Invite your MP to speak and a couple of artists to speak about their artworks.

12. Contact local media a week ahead of the Exhibition Opening Day/Night.

Use the [draft press release](#).

13. Create a guest book for the opening.

Buy a book to create a guest book to record people's attendance and feedback.

14. Install exhibition.

You should allocate at least one entire day. It will depend on how many artworks you have.

15. De-install exhibition.

After your event you will need to allocate time to take down all the artworks and make plans to return them to their owners.



Further tips for organising your event

Involve the entire electorate

The Create to Advocate Electorate Event will be much more effective if you involved more than just one school, church or group. Try to promote the exhibition and competition to as many artists, schools, colleges, businesses, churches and community groups across your electorate as you can. You can also contact your local council and ask them to help promote it.

Your electorate event will be more effective if you engage the expertise and creativity of other people in your community and electorate. You will also get more ownership and commitment to the event this way.

You can find information about your electorate, the areas it includes and your local Federal Member of Parliament at www.aec.gov.au and www.aph.gov.au

Contacting Churches, Schools or Colleges

- 1) Contact the Art Departments in schools art students involved. Use our sample letter to schools.
- 2) Explain that you are organising a Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge Art Exhibition in your electorate, and a bit about the Make Poverty History campaign. You may need to give background information about the Millennium Development Goals, and the Australian Government's response. You can get this information from the Make Poverty History website.
- 3) Explain that your group intends to present an Art Exhibition to your local MP and that you would like to give a number of local schools/churches and young people the opportunity to be involved in this exciting event. Let teachers know resources are available for students and artists on the websites. Mention prizes if you have them.
- 4) Give them the entry deadlines and the date of the Create to Advocate exhibition opening with the MP.

If you are contacting a Christian school you can also ask for the teacher in charge of community service, religious education, Christian studies or social justice. Principals are often very busy and unlikely to have the time to deal directly with these events. It would be good to invite school principals to the exhibition opening though, especially if their school is involved.

Contacting the media

- 1) Find the contact details for local newspapers, radio, and TV.
- 2) Check the publication date of the local newspaper
- 3) Email or fax the media release 3 – 4 days ahead
- 4) Call the organisation to confirm that your media release was received
- 5) Email or fax the media release on the morning of the event
- 6) Call to confirm that your media release was received
- 7) If your contact details are on the media release, leave your mobile on until the meeting with the MP.

Contacting the MP's office

- 1) Contact the MP's office at least a month before the Exhibition.
- 2) Invite the MP to Open the Exhibition and to say a few words about MPH, use the attached invite letter for help with wording.
- 3) Indicate the date for the Opening, but present a couple of options, be flexible as possible as MPs are very busy.
- 4) If there will be other well-known people involved in the exhibition, indicate this and how many people you think attending.
- 5) Indicate if you have contacted, or intend to contact, local media to cover the opening. If so, invite the MP to be photographed or interviewed as part of the Exhibition.
- 6) Sample script:

I represent group X. We are strong supporters of Make Poverty History and the Micah Challenge, a global campaign calling on political leaders to do all they can to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A few days ago we sent -the MP's name, an invitation to our Micah Challenge & Make Poverty History Electorate Art Exhibition. We would like him/her to open the exhibition and would like to confirm that he/she is able to attend the proposed date of the opening.

Community support

- The support of the local council can also be sought. Local councillors can be invited to the exhibition opening to speak. The attendance of local councillors will make it easier to interest the local print media in covering the event.
- The presence of a well-known local figure or celebrity could make it more interesting to local media.

Introducing Micah Challenge & Make Poverty History at the exhibition opening

- 1) Decide who will do this
- 2) Prepare a brief speech beforehand, so you know what points to make and how you might handle any questions from the MP
- 3) Address and speak to the MP in a friendly & polite way
- 4) Emphasise the level of support among local Australians and Christians for the Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History campaign
- 5) Use the MP Briefing Sheet to make the key points that the campaign wishes to communicate to MPs
- 6) Be clear what you want the MP to do – this will be on the MP briefing sheet
- 7) Thank the MP for coming and supporting the event.
- 8) If you have asked the MP to do anything – speak in Parliament, contact the Foreign Minister, put information in the electorate newsletter, etc. – confirm that you will contact them in the future (a month later might be a good timeframe) to see how the action went.

The resources listed in this guide are available to download from www.micahchallenge.org.au.