

How to have effective survey conversations

Why are conversations important?

Having a conversation with someone in your community about the need for a faster transition to renewable energy is one of the most powerful things you can do to put this issue on the local agenda. People are not used to hearing from fellow community members who are not trying to sell them anything but rather volunteering their time to ask about their views on important issues like the need for action on climate change. No matter what the person says or thinks of the issue they will likely be impressed with your passion and altruism. Just by leaving each person you talk to with a positive impression of someone who is friendly, respectful, thoughtful and supportive of clean energy, you are making a big difference!

When you're asking people to do your survey, there are things you can do to make them more receptive, and more likely to get on board with your local Repower campaign.

Whether you're at a market stall, standing on the main street, going door-to-door, or talking to people you know, this guide will help you have effective survey conversations.

The 4 Cs

There are four main steps to having an effective conversation.

1. Connect

Use a friendly greeting to engage the person. Be confident in your voice and body language.

Introduce yourself and explain why you'd like to talk to them.

E.g. *I'm Sally, I live around the corner and I'm part of Repower Bentleigh - we're out surveying our community today.*

Ask them a question - you don't have to do all the talking.

E.g. *Do you live in this area?*

2. Context

Explain a bit more to encourage them to agree to do the survey.

E.g. *We want to talk to as many people in this community as possible, to hear what they think about renewable energy and re-powering our suburb with the sun and wind.*

3. Commit

Make the ask

E.g. *Would you do the survey with me now?*



4. Catapult

This simply means to give them a way to be more involved in your campaign.

E.g. *Would you like to hear the results of the survey? I'll take your contact details.*

E.g. *You seem really interested in this - would you like to help out? It can take a bit of time to get on an MP's schedule. Our advice is to be patient and polite, keep emphasising that you are a constituent of their electorate. In the meantime keep building community support for clean energy and climate action in the community.*

Expert tips

If you get into a conversation with someone, that's a fabulous chance to help them see the world through your eyes and encourage them to join your campaign. Have a practise of these tips:

- Try not to talk about feeling scared or fearful - this makes people shut off and feel disempowered.
Instead talk about what's unfair and makes you feel angry - this motivates people to act. E.g. *"I can't believe that our MP doesn't support the clean energy target - they should catch up with our community.*
Talking about the feeling of 'making a difference' is effective too.
- Tell the person your personal story about why you care about Repowering your community. And ask them to tell you more about themselves.
- Watch out for time-wasters. Some people will never agree with you and others will hog your time. You can politely say you have to move on.

Good practice

- Go out surveying with other people, not on your own. (If you're going door-to-door, go in pairs.)
- Stay safe - The most important thing to remember when you are conducting any public interaction is to stay safe. Keep away from big unchained dogs, don't go into strangers' houses, and it's ok not to engage with someone if you don't feel comfortable.
- Always remain calm and polite, even if people say things you disagree with.
- Write down everything as the survey respondent says it, and collect as many details as you can.

Getting seen

If you're set up with a street or market stall, it can really help to have big signs up so people can see what you're doing, or an eye-catching prop to draw people in.