

Writing an effective letter to a Member of Parliament

State and Federal members of parliament receive a great deal of correspondence by post and email from local constituents and other members of the public. Here are some tips to ensure that your letter is as effective as possible.

1. Send it to the correct address. Electorate offices, parliament house office addresses and email addresses are available on the relevant web sites: for Federal Parliament see www.aph.gov.au and for NSW State Parliament, see www.parliament.nsw.gov.au
2. Use the correct title and salutation. These are also listed on the web sites.
3. You can write to any MP you wish, including the Prime Minister and the Premier. However, letters to your local MPs in NSW, including Senators (C'wealth) and Members of the Legislative Council (NSW MLCs) will have more impact than a letter sent to an MP in WA. That said, the volume of letters received on any given issue by an MP is always noticed by their office.
4. The web site of the Federal Parlt has formatted mailing labels ready to download and print if you want to do a mass-mailing.
5. A personally-addressed, personally written letter to a member of parliament, either typed or written by hand, has much more impact than an email or sending a campaign postcard, which is much better than signing an online petition. That said, if you are concerned about an issue, saying something is better than saying nothing.
6. Keep the letter to a maximum of one page in a readable font size. Keep it to two or three key points.
7. Avoid underlining key phrases, emphasizing sentences in capital letters or using different coloured ink. The letter should look and sound like normal, sensible correspondence.
8. If you are using a 'model letter', then adapt into your own words.
9. Write your opinion honestly *as a citizen*, who is a Christian. But where possible also include arguments that may appeal to those who do not share your beliefs.
10. Be direct about what you are asking for, never be rude or aggressive.
11. Consider writing to thank MPs from time to time for their work, and assure them of your prayers, independently of any current issue, e.g. at the beginning or end of a term of parliament.
12. Do not necessarily expect a reply, especially to form letters or emails. A proper letter sent in the mail to your local Member is more likely to receive a reply.