

New Possibilities

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Keep it brief

Letters should be no longer than one page and should be about one issue only. Be as concise as possible. Politicians receive hundreds of letters from constituents every day. A lengthy message that covers lots of topics is likely to be overlooked. A concise and focused letter can be a powerful one.

Express your own thoughts

Politicians are not mugs! They can spot a copy of a proforma letter from 'Get Up' or a similar organisation a mile away, and are likely to ignore it.

Be passionate but polite

MPs are likely to be more receptive to a polite letter, and more engaged based on the passion of your writing. Remember that your MP is a human, not just a name on paper.

Make your letter stand out!

Make your letter stand out and be noticeable. Perhaps refer to a recent related news story

Contacting your Member of Parliament (MP)

AMUA members are encouraged to contact local members and relevant political leaders to let them know what you care about and what action you would like to see. Much can be achieved if individual members take the time to advocate for change. MPs are there to represent you in Parliament. The more people who contact their local MP on a given topic, the more likely this matter will be raised. Letters are one of the most effective ways to engage your MP. While it is most effective to contact your local MP, you could also consider contacting your state's Senators or the federal Minister whose portfolio relates to your topic.

Make sure you use your MP's correct title and details which can be found at https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members Start the letter by telling your MP who you are and why you are writing to them – make sure you have a specific and focused purpose. Mention that you are a constituent (a voter!). MPs tend to care more about the people they represent. You can mention you realise others within your electorate care about this issue but you cannot write on behalf of AMUA.

Pick your battles wisely. Know what you are writing about. Use facts and give reasons. You cannot ask for change just because you don't like something. Including facts will help get your point across. If your MP has made positive steps, thank them then let them know what else you would like them to do. Clearly state the facts that highlight the need for urgent action. Be brief and objective. You need to tell them what needs to change and why.

It's important to explain why the issue is important to you. Do this by including a relevant personal experience. For example, you could share how you've been impacted by the drought or bushfires. Or you could share a story about homeless people you have met. Let them know why taking action is important to you personally.

Be clear on what action you want your MP to take. Presenting facts is important and your letter is more effective if you can ask your MP to take a specific action such as raising the issue in Parliament, voting for or against a particular bill, speaking through the media, or attending an event.

Finish the letter by saying you look forward to their reply. Be patient as you wait for a reply. If you don't hear back from them, try again. Be both persistent and polite.

I would love to hear about your progress!

Susan Skowronski
Social Issues and Action Coordinator