

How to Write a Letter to your MP

Hand-written letters are one of the most effective ways to engage your Member of Parliament about any issue you care about.

Use the correct title for your MP

The correct title for your MP can be found through searching for the MP or Senator on the Parliament House website: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members. This website will also provide the address for your MP.

As a general rule: MPs should be addressed 'Mr/Mrs/Dr/Ms, first name, last name, MP'. Senators should be addressed 'Senator, first name, last name'. Politicians who have been or are government ministers will have the title "The Honourable" prefixing their name.

Introduce yourself

Start by telling the MP who you are, what you do and where you are from. Be sure to mention you are from the MP's electorate and any community links you may have i.e. with a community group, church, school or workplace. Briefly introduce the issue you are contacting the MP about. Make sure you are polite throughout the letter, and provide your contact details so the MP can respond.

Get your facts straight

Make sure you know what issue you are telling your MP about, and that what you are saying is correct. Try not to exaggerate or be overly emotive in regards to the issue. State the facts clearly, and then state what needs to change. You could refer to a recent news article or campaign that highlighted the issue to you. Also express that others within your electorate care about this issue. It is best to keep the letter succinct and only address one issue.

Don't be afraid to be personal

Share part of your own story: why you care about poverty and why you are acting on it. Was there a moment where you decided you needed to do something? Feel free to share about your faith if that is what motivates you to care for the poor. If you are making use of a template letter, or form letter, from an existing campaign – ensure you incorporate some personal discussion within the letter.

Tell the MP what you would like them to do

Specify how you want your MP to take action, or specify what decision you'd like their party to make. What you ask of them should be tailored to the issue you are specifically writing about, and how engaged your MP is in the issue already. You could ask them to help change their party's policy position by raising the issue at a party meeting, or make a speech in Parliament, or pass your message onto their party's leader, etc. Express that you will support the MP in the action they take. Also ask them to reply to your letter.

Follow Up

Be patient for a reply, as offices for Members of Parliament are often busy. Sometimes a reply may take over a month. After this time, you can call the MP's office to remind them of your letter and ask when you may expect a response. If you don't hear back after two weeks, try again. Do be persistent, but be polite. Ask to see if they've taken the requested action.

Pray

Make sure to pray for your MP and that your letter is effectual. Ask that other constituents will be informing the MP about the issue and that they will take notice.

For more tips, visit: www.micahchallenge.org.au/contact-your-politician