



Share4Rare

Guidelines

How to write a Letter to a Politician

Purpose

Writing informed and personal letters to Members of Parliament can make a significant impact on Government policy.

Structuring your letter

Include your return address in the letter.

The first paragraph:

- Include the topic of your letter. For example, “I am writing to express/voice (etc.) my concern/disappointment (provide details)...”
- If you are writing to your own Member of Parliament, state that you reside in their electorate early in the letter.
- Opening: Your pitch should be in your first paragraph, if not your opening sentence.
- Introduce yourself and why you are qualified to speak on this issue.

Choose three important points to focus on:

- Flesh out the most persuasive points likely to gain support for your position.
- Address a new point in each paragraph.
- Writing three short letters to individual people is more effective than writing one long letter.
- Ensure your facts are accurate and credible.
- Acknowledge opposing arguments and evidence.

Personalise the issue:

- Explain how the issue affects you, your family or your community.
- A personalised letter may be more persuasive and have more impact.

Personalise your relationship:

- Indicate if you have ever voted for them, met them, supported their election campaign etc.
- The letter may be more effective if the politician feels closer to you.

Be cautious in relation to their views:

- If unsure of the views of the politician or political party on the issue, research it, ask them or explain why they should support your views.
- Avoid making assumptions about their views and comments which could be construed as critical towards them or their party.

Be courteous:

- Do not offend needlessly. We all respond better to courtesy, friendliness and a pleasant approach than to abuse.
- DON'T TYPE IN CAPITAL LETTERS IN THE HOPE OF CONVINCING YOUR READER. It's not only hard to read – it's unprofessional.

Call for action:

- Ask them to act on the issue (e.g. “increase funding in the budget for...” or, “publicly commit to...”).

Ask for a reply:

- End the letter with a statement encouraging a reply (e.g. “I look forward to your response on this matter”).
- Write back if you do not receive a suitable response within a reasonable timeframe.
- Last words: Restate your pitch and thank your politician for taking the time to read your letter. Leave contact information (email address, school name, etc.).
- Sign your letter!

Quick Writing Tips:

- Keep your letter short – definitely not more than a page.
- Use accurate facts, quotes from community members, and statistics – but don’t overuse them. (A few sprinkled in each paragraph is a good amount.)
- Provide a “real-life” example in your neighbourhood to illustrate your reasons.
- Follow Up: Politicians are busy people! If you haven’t heard from your official or one of their representatives in a few weeks, send an email to thank them again for reading your letter. Say that you hope someone will respond to your query when possible.

Contacts Methods

Email and Letter

An effective approach that will greatly increase your chances of receiving a response is to send both an email and a hard copy letter by post. If you are contacting a Minister, this is particularly recommended, and you should also send a copy to the corresponding Shadow Minister, ensuring that you note this in the address portion of your letter. Letting the Minister's office know that their opponent has also received a copy will ensure it gets appropriately prioritised. This also gives you the opportunity to approach the Shadow's office if you get no response from the Minister's office.

Where to send letters

It is best to send letters to electorate offices rather than Parliament House. Parliament websites hold lists of Members’ contact details for their electorate office and Parliament House.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- https://www.slideshare.net/injuredw/talking-to-a-politician?qid=cc217675-ce96-4f51-abab-fc9693c72529&v=&b=&from_search=20
- <https://www.slideshare.net/bnwklr/from-moment-to-movement-and-beyond-1256515>
- https://www.education.com/magazine/article/How_Write_Letter_Politician/

Example: Letter to a politician

Mary Andrews
112 Warton Road
Gosnells WA 6008

Mr P. Abetz, MLA
PO Box 441
Gosnells WA 6110

22 January 2009

Dear Mr Abetz,

I am writing to you today as a constituent of the Southern River electorate to express my concern over physical activity and road safety issues relating particularly to local schoolchildren.

As I am sure you are aware, rates of overweight and obesity among Australian schoolchildren are already too high and are rising. The *WA Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey 2003* found that between 1985 and 2003, the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst 7–15 year olds in WA increased from 9.3% to 23.1% in males and from 10.6% to 30.5% in females (Hands, Parker, Glasson, Brinkman, & Read, 2004). Furthermore, 42.9% of WA adults and 31% of WA children were not sufficiently active during 2007 (Wood et al., 2008; CSIRO Preventative Health National Research Flagship & University of South Australia., 2008).

While these issues are of concern throughout the state and nation, there are significant ways in which we can begin to address them in the Southern River electorate with your support.

The Walking School Bus™ is a group of primary school children who walk to school with one parent as a 'driver' and another parent at the rear of the 'bus'. The children are picked up at designated 'stops' along a planned route which is reversed on the way home. There are many examples of the Walking School Bus™ being successfully implemented and sustainable in WA schools. The bus provides a safe and active form of transport, teaches children road sense and reduces traffic congestion around schools. I seek your public commitment to introduce and support the Walking School Bus™ for Southern River schools. More information on the program and participating schools can be found at <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/travelsmart/14915.asp>

It has become clear that the limited existing cycle paths in the electorate you represent have become significantly degraded and are unsatisfactory in supporting existing local cyclists and encouraging residents and school children to cycle as a form of active transport. I have heard many deeply concerning stories of local children who have had near misses with cars on their way to school because of the lack of satisfactory cycle paths. I seek your commitment to funding an upgrade for the existing cycle paths in the Southern River electorate and engaging in a community consultation process to determine where additional cycle paths may be constructed so as to encourage your constituents to cycle and reduce reliance on motor transport.

I believe strongly in the importance of promoting physical activity and road safety in the local community and particularly with children. As the elected representative of the local community, I hope that you would also hold the health and safety of your constituents in the highest regard and would be open to ways of promoting physical activity and road safety in the local community so as to maximise the health, productivity and happiness of your constituents.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to discuss this further with you and look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary Andrews.

Sample Political Letter

Name
Address
Address
Phone

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Thank you for the political leadership you provide for our community. As a citizen who is concerned about the Earth's climate, I value the role you play in shaping the policies that can lead to greater sustainability for our city, our nation and our world. With the right incentives, policies that are good for the environment can also be good for creating jobs, improving our economy and lessening our dependence on foreign oil.

Our organization, Citizens Climate Lobby, is proposing such a policy. It works like this: Place a steadily-increasing fee on the carbon dioxide produced by fossil fuels and return all the revenue to every household. Increasing the cost of carbon creates a strong incentive to invest in clean energy. Returning the revenue from the carbon fee would shield households from the economic impact of rising energy costs. Eventually, the annual "carbon dividend" would be \$1,500 a year for every person.

Unfortunately, our politicians in Washington are paralyzed with fear on this issue and unable to act. They fear the power and money of the big carbon lobby. If I were them, frankly, I'd be afraid, too.

That's why we need the support of respected leaders like you. Your encouragement would help our members of Congress find the resolve to take the bold action that will lead our nation into the new era of clean energy. Our volunteers are taking this message to their senators and representatives, but your voice would make all the difference.

Enclosed is our legislative proposal. I will call you in hopes that I can meet with you in your office to discuss how we can work together to enact this legislation, which would reduce greenhouse gases and bring new jobs and cleaner air to our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name here, Citizens Climate Lobby

"I believe the American people want climate policy to be transparent, honest, and effective... I firmly believe it is not too late for Congress to consider a carbon tax as the better policy approach."

**Rex Tillerson,
ExxonMobil CEO**

"We very much believe that a straightforward graduated tax on carbon is better than the cap-and-trade."

Fred Smith, FedEx CEO

"If politicians remain at loggerheads, citizens must lead."

**Dr. James Hansen,
Physicist, Director of
NASA Goddard Institute
for Space Studies**

Letter Sample

[Date]

The Honorable [Name]

[Address]

[City], [State], [Zip Code]

Dear Senator/Representative [Name],

As your constituent and a member of the Board of Directors of Westside Family Healthcare, I am writing to urge you to vote for full funding for the Grant-In-Aid and Healthy Women, Healthy Babies programs.

Westside Family Healthcare provides high quality, affordable health care to over 28,000 Delawareans, regardless of their ability to pay. Our 6 sites and mobile health unit operate in underserved areas across the state, and many of our patients are uninsured or underinsured.

It is with the additional funding of Healthy Women, Healthy Babies that Westside is able to provide the best possible care to our patients. Despite the fact that Delaware has historically had a higher infant mortality rate and pre-term birth rate, 95% of our prenatal patients delivered babies at a healthy weight.

I again ask you to support full funding for state-supported health programs such as Grant-In-Aid and Healthy Women, Healthy Babies, should questions their funding come up in this legislative session. I also encourage you to speak to your colleagues about doing the same. A healthier Delaware benefits us all.

Please contact me to let me know your position on funding for Grant-In-Aid and Healthy Women, Healthy Babies or with any questions you might have about the health centers in your district. I can be reached at [Contact Info].

Sincerely,

Tip: Add personal touches whenever possible. For example, think about how have health centers, like Westside, have impacted you or your friends and loved ones.