



A national advocacy movement
Breaking Down Barriers Together

Writing to your Member of Parliament

From the CPActivist Toolkit

Getting started

Engaging with your Member of Parliament, or MP, can be a key way of growing support for the change you want to see. MPs want to hear about issues of concern to the community and they can help raise the profile of your campaign in parliament, through the community and in the media.

While MPs generally get far more emails than letters, you can also write to them through the traditional mail.

Who is my MP?

There are a few short steps you can take to find out who your MP is.

1. **Find your electorate:** <https://electorate.aec.gov.au/>
2. **Once you know your electorate, find your MP:**
https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members
3. **Find contact details for your MPs office:**
https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members

A good MP will take notice of correspondence from community members, and many will reply directly to your concerns. This is especially true for younger people, even if you can't vote yet. Post a photo of yourself mailing your letter if you feel comfortable and encourage others to do the same. Or get some friends together and send a group of letters.

Your letter can be anything, you can thank them for their stance on an issue, inform them about something you think doesn't get enough attention, or tell them you wish they'd voted in another direction.

A personal story of how you'd benefit from the change you'd like to see or how an issue impacts you, your family and friends can be very effective.



A national advocacy movement
Breaking Down Barriers Together

Things to keep in mind

Keep it short: MPs get a lot of letters and they're not going to read an essay, so keep it 1-2 pages max!

Be polite: MPs aren't going to respond to someone rude, they're not going to want to start an email war and you're not going to get your way by insulting them.

MPs often have very specific titles, which you can find on the Parliament House website:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian_Search_Results?q=&mem=1&par=-1&gen=0&ps=0

Make it personal: Share your story – why are you interested, how will this change benefit you or your friends and family, what have you been doing to help bring about change.

Be specific: MPs can't make an action if you can't give them an action to take. If you want something, ask for it.

Writing your letter

Introduce yourself and your issue.

State your name, where you live (preferably their electorate).

If you are writing about an issue personal to you list that as part of your introduction, for example if you are a person with disability writing about DIS funding, say so.

Start your issue briefly, one to two sentences max. You can expand on this later.

Add any connections you have to the community, if you work locally, go to school, are a member of a club. Also list any previous interactions with the MP, if you've volunteered for them say so, if you've met before them mention it briefly.

Expand on the issue

Keep the letter short but state your issue in a short paragraph so the MP knows which side you land on.

If you are sending a topical issue or using a prewritten letter, try to personalise it, especially if you want a reply.

Make sure the letter has statistics or facts if you know them or include excerpts from a recent news article. Find a local connection to this issue to highlight and make it more personal.



A national advocacy movement
Breaking Down Barriers Together

Include a personal story

Try to include a personal message about what this issue has meant to you or will mean. If additional funding to NDIS has given you more community access or if installing a ramp at the local school has meant you could watch your daughter's ballet recital. Or the opposite. Has reduced funding meant you can't get out as much, has the price of rat tests meant you've had to skip a semester of uni because you can't afford the textbooks anymore.

Tell them what you want

You need to be specific if you have a specific request. If there's a particular vote tell them how you want them to vote. If you want them to attend a local event, make sure you give them all the details. If you want them to talk to other members of their party or the media, be clear about it and clear about when these needs to be done by.

Include your contact details

If you want them to get back to you make sure you give them your name and a number or email that you will answer or check regularly.

Follow up

If you haven't heard back in a month, give them a call and mention your letter and ask when you are likely to hear back from them. Give them a few weeks and try again if you still haven't heard but remember to be polite.

Have a look at Every Australian Counts letter on NDIS CEO's new powers
<https://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/email-the-senate-ask-them-to-scrap-new-ndis-ceo-powers/>