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Writing to your State or Territory MP

Tips for an effective letter or email

Introduce yourself and your issue

- Who are you? Which electorate do you reside in? Which community/church congregation are you a part of? Why are you writing?
- **Tell them why the issue matters to you.**
  Perhaps based on your professional experience, family and community life and/or personal convictions.
- **Typed and handwritten letters** are more effective than email.

Keep it brief

- MPs receive a lot of correspondence, so try to keep your letter clear and succinct. Some advice states: "**be short, be simple, be human**."
- **Keep to one issue** – multiple topics can reduce your impact and complicate responses.

Consider who to write to

- **Consider whether your MP is a member of the Government, Opposition, from a minor party or an independent**. This may affect how you word your letter.
- **Indicate that you're writing to them as the Member for (your electorate), or as a government minister.**
  If the latter, address it to their parliamentary, not electoral, office.
- **Consider how the issue is relevant to their responsibility or constituency.**
  A Federal MP represents an electorate; a Senator a State/Territory; a Minister, their government portfolio.

Find your Federal Member of Parliament:

- To find your federal electorate and member, search your postcode on They Vote For You. If you're not sure you can cross-check by searching your suburb on the Electoral Commission website
- Once you know your local MP: you can search their electorate office details on the Australian Parliament website: https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members

Uniting Climate

Uniting Climate sits within Uniting's Advocacy Team, which helps mobilise the wider Uniting Church NSW.ACT in pursuing social justice and the renewal of creation.

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Use your own words

- **Politicians and their staff recognise (and disregard) form letters** – rewrite these in your own words

Be polite and fair

- A respectful letter is far more likely to get a response. Try not to be too critical and calmly explain your position.
- **Acknowledge** any achievement or progress their government/party has made on the issue.

Tell them what you want them to do

- **Ask for action and follow up.** Include your address so they can write to you in response.
- **Make a clear ask about what do you want your MP to do.**
  Move or support legislation/amendment? Speak in parliament? Raise the issue in their government or party or with the relevant Minister? Take local action?
- **You can follow up later to see what happened.**

Finally, don't think too much.

An imperfect letter that is sent beats an unsent perfect letter every time.

The Uniting Advocacy team can help with more guidance and support as needed.
Contact Jon O'Brien at: joobrien@uniting.org or Jono Row at: jrow@uniting.org.

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Sample letter/email

Below is a sample of a letter or email you can send to your MP. Feel free to follow this structure to craft your own letter.

Dear (name),

I'm writing to express my deep concern over the impacts of climate change and the cost-of-living crisis in *[electorate].*

[Share personal story about why this concerns you] I am a single mother of 2 and renting in Western Sydney. When I received my last quarter's electricity bill, I had a shock. That week I had to make difficult decisions about what groceries I could afford so I can pay my bill and keep my lights on. I know why my bill was so high. During summer, I had to keep the air-conditioning running all night so my two children can be comfortable. They have barely gone to the playground because it's been too hot to go outside. I worry about the future my kids will inherit if we do not tackle climate change.

[Share how this issue affects other people in your electorate or community] I know I am not alone in my concerns. I worship at Blacktown Regional Uniting Church and all of us are struggling. I have heard stories of people taking their children to the 24hr Kmart to get some respite. I have heard of fellow renters sleeping in their garden because they could not afford to turn on the air-conditioning inside. We are concerned that climate change is hurting those who can't afford it the most.

[Recognition of their efforts] I have seen stories about the government investing in renewable energy to tackle climate change. I have seen government announcements about programs to help social housing tenants to upgrade homes. However, when will we also benefit from affordable clean energy, especially us in the private rental market?

[Make your ask of the MP] I am writing to you to advocating within your party to:

- Urgently invest in a program for all renters to be able to access clean energy upgrades like energy efficiency, rooftop solar and batteries.
- Stop supporting fossil fuel projects.

Will you respond to my letter to inform me about how you plan to represent my concerns to your party?

[Close] I believe that climate solutions can be win-win-win: lowers bills, protects the planet and helps people who are struggling. Australia has more sun and wind than almost any other country on Earth. Harnessing that sun and wind is the fastest way for us to reduce our energy bills.

Yours sincerely,

(your name, email/phone contact and address – showing you're a constituent, living in the electorate/jurisdiction)