

# Guide for Writing Letters to Politicians and Decision-makers

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## Why do it?

A letter is worth a hundred emails:

*"Politicians are more likely to reply to a letter than an email, particularly if your letter has a personal touch"*

*- Australian Conservation Foundation*

Many members of WATCH are actively writing letters to politicians.

## What to write

Each month the WATCH e-mail bulletin **WATCHWORD** contains many ideas and talking points and assistance for writing letters about local and national climate change issues.

## Tips for letters to politicians

- Present a clear and reasonable argument and keep to one issue per letter.
- Do your homework so you include accurate and up to date information.
- Use short sentences and dot points to make your views easier to summarise.
- Define the problem and ask questions that require specific answers.
- Avoid sending form letters but use them as a format to write a personalised version.
- Always sign the letter and print name and address below. Handwritten letters are well regarded.
- Keep your letters and responses for reference.
- Follow up if you do not receive a response or your questions have not been answered.
- Be strategic – opposition MPs and non-Government Senators may be more sympathetic.

## Extra tips for letters to newspapers

- Keep it short and simple (up to 250 words).
- If you know an issue or report is coming up, try to time your letter to coincide with this.
- Timing is vital for the national newspapers. Read paper in the morning and write before midday because response letters are rarely published more than two days later. Local papers are more likely to publish your letter but may take several days.