

Write a letter to your local paper

Letters pages in newspapers are a great way to respond to current issues and get an issue into public view.

Politicians often keep an eye on the letters page and have a file of opinions published in the community newspaper. It is an easy way for them to keep their finger on the pulse of what is happening in their constituency.

Find your local paper's contact details and send your letter through our 'letter to the editor' webpage:

>> www.acf.org.au/letter-to-editor

Capital city and national newspapers receive hundreds of letters to the editor every week. They have a bigger circulation and the competition for the space will be more intense.

Writing to a free, small community newspaper is also worthwhile. Editorial teams are generally small and often look for letters to fill the weekly space, so you will have a good chance of getting your letter published.

Tips to get published

- **Keep your letter short** – Stay under 200 words; some great letters are just 20-50 words. Make a brief, clear and punchy argument that grabs the reader's attention and focus on one important point. Remove every non-essential word. Don't say, "I think..." – it's obvious. This also minimises the chance of editors changing the letter.
- **Be relevant** – link pollution, the reef and clean energy to breaking news and articles published yesterday or today.
- **Try to get your letter in before noon** – it's more likely to get printed.
- **Be creative** – Funny or clever letters are more likely to be published, but avoid sarcasm. Use your own voice.
- **Keep it about the issue** – don't make personal attacks.
- **Include your full name, address and a daytime phone number** with your letter – the paper does not print all of this information but may use it for verification. If you email it, include the letter in the body of the text (not as an attachment).

Things to avoid

- **Don't overstate or exaggerate your points** – one overstatement makes every following point suspect.
- **Don't get angry** – don't insult the editor, the newspaper, or the authors of previous letters
- **Avoid jargon or acronyms** – spell out any name the first time you use it, followed by the acronym in parentheses.