



MEMBER RESOURCES

Writing to your local member

This Member Resource follows on from Getting in touch with your local member. Be sure to read that one first.

What should my letter say?

Writing to an elected representative is a formal matter. Your letter should:

- Are you writing simply to inform them of your work at this time? Is there a particular response you are hoping for? Are you writing to ask for a specific action? Make this clear at the outset. Begin with a clearly stated aim e.g. “I am writing to let you know about [X]” or “understand your views on [Y]” or “seek your action on [Z]” or “invite you to my show at [time] on [date].”
- Name and briefly describe the work of your organisation or project.
- Recognise and commend the work that your elected representative and their colleagues have done in the arts, and orient the letter to that work.
- Be clear, concise and positive – and be inspiring, conveying your passion for the arts in your own words.
- Be no more than one page long.

When is it best to get in touch?

- When you’d like to invite them to your exhibition, performance, festival or other arts event – even if that event wasn’t funded by government.
 - For invitations, be sure to check the Sitting Dates calendar to avoid clashing with parliamentary sessions –
Victorian Parliament sitting dates:
<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/daily-calendar/yearly-sitting-dates>
Australian Parliament sitting dates:
http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Sitting_Calendar.aspx
- When you’ve just presented an arts event, and you have photographs, stories, quotes and testimonials to share.
- When you’re contributing to state-wide advocacy led by Regional Arts Victoria.
- When you have a specific concern on which you’d like their feedback or action.

What if you need to raise a difficult matter?

When you have a specific concern, take good care with how you express yourself. Your letter should:

- State the issue clearly and briefly, and be specific on how it affects you, your practice, and your organisation or project.
- Use language that encourages a positive response, and offers constructive suggestions.

Important: Do not send an abusive, ranting or rude letter or email. This will undermine everything you wish to convey, and damage your relationship – potentially, permanently. Do not take that risk.