



Letters to the Editor

Step 1: Planning

1. Consider your issue. Is it local, or does it affect people state-wide? Does the issue you are writing about have wide appeal, or is it a special interest?
2. Try to isolate the reason you are writing the letter. Are you trying to spark debate, inform the public, make a point, or change something in your community?
3. Are you responding to a previously published article / letter? If so, are you criticising it, supporting it, or correcting wrong information?
4. Once you know exactly what you want to say and achieve through writing your Letter to the Editor, you are ready to begin writing.

Step 2: Contact Details

1. Before you start your letter, decide which newspaper will be most appropriate. If you are concerned about a local issue, then your local *Messenger* newspaper will be the best choice. If you are writing about a state-wide or international topic, *The Advertiser* is the way to go. Once you have decided, see below for the appropriate contact details.

2. *The Advertiser*

Letters should be addressed to: Letters to the Editor, GPO Box 339, Adelaide SA 5001. You can fax your letter to (08) 8206 3669, or email it to advedit@theadvertiser.com.au

Letters should be no more than **175 words**, must be signed, and need to include a name & address for publication, as well as a telephone number for verification. Emails must be plain text and not contain any formatting or graphics. *The Advertiser* may edit your letter, and has the right to reproduce it in electronic form. You may request that your name not be printed.

AdelaideNow, *The Advertiser's* web-based news service, also has the option of sending an electronic Letter to the Editor. The direct link for this service is: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/news/opinion/sendletter>

3. **Messenger Newspapers**

All *Messenger* newspapers have the same contact details for Letters to the Editor. Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, PO Box 339, Adelaide SA 5001. You can fax your letter to (08) 8341 0830, or email it to letters@mng.newsltd.com.au

Letters must be no more than **300 words** and must include your name, full address and daytime contact number for verification, although only your name and suburb will be printed. Letters may be edited and the publisher has the right to reproduce them in electronic form.

NOTE: There are several *Messenger* newspapers, each one covering specific suburbs of Adelaide (see list below.) Each one has an individual website which can be accessed from <http://messenger-news.whereilive.com.au>. To access each paper's site, select it from a drop-down list that appears under the heading "Go to a different newspaper" – this link is located on the top right of the page, immediately under the *Messenger* Community News logo.

On each of the individual *Messenger* websites, there is also the ability to send an electronic Letter to the Editor. To do so, scroll to the very end of the main page, and look for the "Contact Us" link, under the heading "Info." Clicking this link brings up a new page containing an online form for you to compose and send your Letter to the Editor.

4. **Messenger Publications Across SA**

East Torrens Messenger: Athelstone, Hectorville, Rostrevor, Payneham, Campbelltown, Newton & Magill.

Eastern Courier Messenger: Fullarton, Malvern, Mitcham, Parkside, Unley, Colonel Light Gardens, Burnside, Norwood, Goodwood, Beulah Park, Millswood & Beaumont.

Hills and Valley Messenger: Blackwood, Bellevue Heights, Aberfoyle Park, Flagstaff Hill, Glenalta, Hawthorndene, Coromandel Valley

Standard Messenger: Enfield, Gilles Plains, Kilburn, Walkerville, Windsor Gardens, Prospect, Klemzig, Hillcrest & Broadview.

Guardian Messenger: Ascot Park, Brighton, Glenelg, Marlestone, Marion, Netley, Plympton, Seacliff, Hallett Cove & Trott Park.

Southern Times Messenger: Morphett Vale, Port Noarlunga, Reynella, Willunga, Aldinga Beach, Seaford & Victor Harbor.

Leader Messenger: Tea Tree Gully, Golden Grove, Modbury, Banksia Park, Dernancourt, Hope Valley, Highbury & Holden Hill.

Weekly Times Messenger: Brompton, Brooklyn Park, Croydon, Findon, Fulham, Lockleys, Mile End, Richmond, Seaton & Torrensville.

Portside Messenger: Port Adelaide, Rosewater, North Haven, West Lakes, Semaphore, Largs Bay & Alberton.

City Messenger: Adelaide, North Adelaide, Medindie, College Park & Hackney.

News Review Messenger: Brahma Lodge, Craigmore, Elizabeth, Gawler, Munno Para, Parafield Gardens, Pooraka, Salisbury, Blakeview & Mawson Lakes.

Step 3: Write Your Letter

With thanks to Oxfam Australia for the general tips below.

<http://www2.oxfam.org.au/change-your-world/make-your-mark-in-the-media/writing-a-letter-to-the-editor>

1. Be timely and topical – if you are responding to something that appeared in the newspaper, you need to send your letter to the editor that very day or, at the latest, the next day. If you are not responding to something, think about whether there have been any related issues in the paper or on the news recently. If you can tie your letter into a current issue you will have a better chance of getting it published.
2. Keep it simple – there isn't space in a letter to the editor to cover more than one topic. If the issue is complex, select a couple of key points and write about those.
3. Be logical – your letter needs a beginning, middle and end. Begin your letter by briefly stating the argument you are making. The middle part of your letter is where you can set out the points you want to make and provide any evidence to back up your case. Close your letter by restating your position, making a pithy comment, or leaving the reader with something to ponder.

4. Get their attention – newspapers receive hundreds of letter to the editor every week. If your letter doesn't grab the interest of the sub-editor in the first two lines, it doesn't stand a chance of getting published.
5. Get to the point – remember that if the information isn't essential, you don't need it.
6. Advance the argument – ask yourself whether you are saying something new, or simply re-hashing arguments that have been made before. A letter with nothing to add to a debate is unlikely to be published.
7. Facts and figures – providing proof of your statements will add weight to your argument.
8. Edit and proofread – make sure your letter is written logically, your arguments make sense, and your spelling and grammar are impeccable.

Step 4: Send It!