

Instructions for letter to politicians about boys' education

Here's some advice about how to write to parliamentarians. The draft letter is below. Feel free to edit it as you prefer.

We have supplied email addresses for state and federal education ministers and shadow ministers – see below. We'd love you to write to the relevant ones plus your local members and Senators.

Put the name and address of the parliamentarian at the top of the letter.

You must sign the letter with your full name and address in order to receive a reply. All parliamentarians are required to respond to properly signed letters. Include your telephone number and email address.

You might like to add a comment at the start of the letter about the relevance of this issue to you, such as something like this:

"I have X sons/grandsons and feel strongly that they should be given the same opportunities and educational support as received by my X daughters."

Here is the draft letter

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the growing crisis in boys' education. This is a very serious issue which needs to be urgently addressed at both the Federal and State levels.

The latest NAPLAN results show that twice as many boys as girls are seriously failing in writing and numeracy at every level – years 3,5,7 and 9. Almost half (47%) of all year 9 boys fail grammar vs 36% of girls.

Nearly half (44%) of boys in year 7 failed to reach minimum writing standards. In reading boys are around 13 months behind similar girls. And almost as many males as females are seriously failing the NAPLAN numeracy test at every grade level.

Last year Catholic Schools NSW released results of a national inquiry – *The Echoes of Disparity Report* – which called the underperformance of boys an "overlooked crisis" describing this as "the social justice issue nobody is talking about."

Education should be aimed at promoting academic achievement of *all* children. Yet in Australia, for almost forty years we have seen our school education authorities prioritising girls' academic achievement. Our boys have been forgotten.

During that time the education gap between the sexes has widened – now in favour of girls – so that now it far exceeds the gender differences that led to the 1987 *National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools*. Yet attention and resources continue to be focussed on girls, neglecting boys' education.

I am dismayed that our education departments appear to be avoiding any proper analysis of gender differences in achievement – by, for instance, failing to include gender in the list of achievement gaps listed in annual reports. The only explanation I can see for this is to divert public attention away from the growing educational disadvantage suffered by boys.

Further, a *Productivity Commission* report on educational equity failed to include any gender-specific data on literacy gaps. Similarly, The *Australian Education Research Organisation's* report on student writing deficits ignored highly unequal outcomes for boys, despite the NAPLAN data showing massive gaps in literary results.

This grossly unfair approach to education in our country cannot be justified. Ordinary Australians expect fair treatment for *all* children in our education system.

We owe it to our children. We owe it to the Australian ethos of a fair go for all.

Yours sincerely,

Email addresses for Education Ministers

Federal

Minister	Jason Clare	Jason.Clare.MP@aph.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Jonathan Duniam	Senator.Duniam@aph.gov.au

State

South Australia

Minister	Blair Boyer	minister.boyer@sa.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Heidi Girolamo	girolamo.office@parliament.sa.gov.au

Victoria

Minister	Ben Carroll	ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Jess Wilson	jess.wilson.mp@parliament.vic.gov.au

NSW

Minister	Prue Car	Londonderry@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Sarah Mitchell	sarah.mitchell@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Queensland

Minister	John-Paul Langbroek	education@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Dianne Farmer	Bulimba@parliament.qld.gov.au

WA

Minister	Sabine Winton	sabine.winton.mla@mp.wa.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Liam Staltari	liam.staltari@mp.wa.gov.au

Tasmania

Minister (Lib)	Jo Palmer	jo.palmer@parliament.tas.gov.au
Shadow Minister	Brian Mitchell	brian.mitchell@parliament.tas.gov.au