



Welcome to AAWAA

Getting it done together



POLICY ACTION:
EFFECTIVE WRITING FOR
SUBMISSIONS, LETTERS, AND
FOIs
1120 - 1230
(1h, 10m)

Overview



- We have written a submission, letter, or FOI a fortnight this year.
- We are gaining in experience of how to do these things.
- We are also getting better at it.
- [REDACTED]

AAWAA' overall strategy is to



- Point out where current and established frameworks, policies, agreements, obligations, etc. designed to protect women and girls are being eroded, undermined, ignored, and/or disregarded.
- Engage with those who have legislative authority, political accountability, and social responsibility for the safeguarding, protection, and advancement of women and girls.



1125 - 1145



Submissions, letters, and FOIs



1145 - 1150

Karen

Submissions, letters, and FOIs

It isn't a journal article!



- The purpose is to win the outcome, not the argument
- Get and keep the reader onside
- Account for sensitivities
- Attend to style and tone: be courteous but firm, minimise the risk of offence
- Engage in constructive dialogue: guide them gently but firmly through your issues and concerns
- SOME linguistic compromises may be necessary
- Be sure of your claims!

Co-signatories and coalition partners



- Who aligns with us, politically speaking?
- Who should we NOT be seen to publicly align with?
- How would we approach them?
- At what stage?
- Do we want to present them with something for feedback, comment, endorsements? Or ask them to co-write?

Topic and target



- Choose a *specific* topic. What is the matter you want to address? (e.g., changes to the SDA, Nordic Model, surrogacy, access to female-only protections, gender medicine for girls)
- Make sure the topic is within your remit. Is it clearly within your group's scope or should it be tackled by a different group? If not, alert them to it or write it and hand it over.

Topic and target



- Topic and target
- Identify your strategy
- Planning and resourcing
- Team writing
- Is it SMART?

Topic and target



- Determine 'worthwhileness.' Should you bother with this? Don't waste time whistling into the wind.
- Aim for 'bang for buck'. Is there a current call for submissions or input or some other expression of interest that you can capitalise on?
- Choose who to engage. Why them? Do they have the right resources, authority, influence, power to be a useful target?

Identify your strategy



- Purpose. What will you try to achieve when addressing this topic and target? What does a successful outcome look like?
- Method. What is the most effective way of achieving that?
- Next steps. What response are you expecting? What will you do with the response?
- Account for misfires and backfires. What could go wrong with this strategy?

Planning and resourcing



- Make sure you can do the task. Do you have the resources and wherewithal (time, capacity, capability, skills)?
- Identify coalition partners as possible co-signatories. Who aligns with us, politically speaking? Who should we NOT be seen to publicly align with? How would we approach them? At what stage? Do we want to present them with something for feedback, comment, endorsements? Or ask them to co-write?

Planning and resourcing



- Develop an exact plan of action. Is it SMART?
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Action-oriented
 - Relevant
 - Time- and resource -bound

Team writing



- Establish the approach up front
 - What will the angle or argument be?
 - What are we trying to achieve?
 - What is the best way to do that?
- Decide on process and who will do what up front
 - Who will have early input at the ideas stage?
 - Who will be the main writer(s)?
 - Who will be the second reader?
 - Who will fact-check? Edit? Proofread? Approve?

Team writing



- Scope out basic ideas and research
- Scope out basic structure
- Dump ideas/brainstorm
- Seek feedback from a reader to make sure you are on the right track
- Integrate useful feedback

Team writing



- Establish good writing relationships
- Respect others' contributions
- Accept honest, good-faith critique

The writing



- The purpose is to win the outcome, not the argument
- Get your facts correct
- Using good evidence: do you need to do an FOI?
- Ensure focus, perspective, and clarity
- Remove side-tracks and irrelevancies
- Be sure you can make the claims you are making
- Keep things tight and polite

Build trust with the audience



- Get and keep the reader onside
- Attend to style and tone: be courteous but firm, minimise the risk of offence
- Account for sensitivities
- Engage in constructive dialogue: guide them gently but firmly through your issues and concerns
- SOME linguistic compromises may be necessary

Practicalities



- Structure, paragraphing, coherence, grammar
- Focus
 - Keep to topic
 - Get to the point quickly
 - Ditch stuff that isn't working or relevant

Avoiding perfection + mental health



- 85% is fine!
- Recognise the point of entropy/diminishing returns
- Know when to stop and move on to the next writing task
- Proofreading and a good-looking submission are essential
- Be aware of your personal background and experiences and how they might impact your mental health and ability to take on a topic

Checklist



- Reasoned
- Rational
- Charitable
- Courteous
- Sensible
- Accurate
- Credible
- Fact- and evidence-based
- Professional
- Legal

1150 - 1220
Karen
Small group discussions



Develop an outline for a submission, etc.



- Split into small groups, or work individually – it's up to you.
- Identify a call for input, a topic, a policy area, an institution, a department, a politician, an area you need to FOI, whatever
- What is your strategy, here?



1220 – 1230
Karen
Report-backs