Date

Dear Education Minister Hon Eva Dina Lawler,

**Re: Girls uniform choices in state schools**

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I understand how many letters you receive, and how busy you are.

I am writing to you about [an issue that I feel passionately about, and one that impacts on the education of every girl in this country; school uniform options for girls. **– adapt this for how you would like it to read].**

Many schools in Australia allow girls to wear a range of uniform options, choosing between dresses, skirts, shorts and pants. However, a surprisingly large number do not allow girls this choice, and require female students to wear a dress or skirt to school. This is even more pronounced in high school.

I am sure you can appreciate that for some girls (and their parents), this is problematic.

This issue is important to me because………[**write your story here. Why do you care about this? Were you affected personally? Was your child/niece/cousin affected? Are you concerned as a women, a man who believes in the rights of children and girls? Discuss here, and try to keep it brief. They won’t want to read an overly long letter].**

In the Northern Territory, the *Anti-Discrimination Act* states that a person shall not discriminate against another person on the ground of sex. The Act outlines that discrimination takes place if a person treats or proposes to treat another person who has or had, or is believed to have or had an attribute (sex) less favourably than a person who has not, or is believed not to have, such an attribute. When boys are allowed to wear shorts and long pants, and girls are not, there is a clear disadvantage to female students. Adding a girls’ formal shorts and shirt option, alongside the boys’ formal shorts and shirt option can enhance equity for girls at school. Similarly, making the unisex sports uniform of shorts and polo shirt acceptable wear for each gender every day would also meet anti-discrimination requirements.

 Surely all girls, in all state schools, deserve to have the option of shorts and pants as their formal uniform. The Northern Territory Department of Education School Uniforms policy does not directly address anti-discrimination legislation, nor the need to provide choice for all students. Perhaps direct inclusion of the legislative requirements of schools in a school uniform policy from the Education Department that supports choice for female students, would lead to better outcomes in this area in schools.

I am sure you are aware that the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission identified school uniforms as an area where schools could be open to legal challenges, and stated that "requiring female students to wear dresses instead of pants may amount to direct discrimination”.

I am saddened that this discrimination is allowed to continue in schools. This letter is to request [**state here what you would like to happen. Do you want a meeting with the Minister or one of her representatives in the Department of Education? Do you want a written response outlining answers to your concerns? Ask for a clear, detailed response.]**

I know that you support the rights of girls and women, and I look forward to hearing from you the ways in which the Northern Territory government, and the Department of Education, plan to support the rights of girls in schools.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Name**

**Position** - let them know your influence here. Are you a coach? On a P&C?

An academic? A public health official?

Do you write or speak in the media? Are you a blogger?

**Contact details (email, address, phone number)**.