Date

Dear Minister for Women Hon Jacquie Petrusma,

**Re: The right of girls to have appropriate uniform choices in 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 rights 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, as 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 Tasmania, the *Anti-**Discrimination Act 1998,*states that direct discrimination takes place if a person treats another person on the basis of any prescribed attribute less favourably than a person without that attribute or characteristic. The Act clearly states that a person cannot discriminate against another due to gender. While girls are not afforded the option of wearing the shorts and long pants that the boys beside them are able to wear, one could argue that this is an example of direct discrimination.

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”.

You may be aware of a national group, Girls’ Uniform Agenda (see www.girlsuniformagenda.org), who have made great strides in bringing this issue to public attention. Through their campaigning, the Western Australian government has changed the WA Education Department’s Student Dress Code to add that shorts and pants must be offered to all girls as part of the uniform policy. I would like to see a similar change enacted in the Tasmanian education uniform policy document. The Tasmanian representative of Girls’ Uniform Agenda, Dr Diane Caney, is keen to work with the Education Department to make these changes (email: enquiries@girlsuniformagenda.org).

I am saddened that this discrimination is allowed to continue in schools. I wanted to ensure you were aware of this issue, and the fact that the rights of girls are being overlooked in state schools across the state, as I know that once aware you would do all you can to support change in this area.

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? 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 believe that they should receive equitable treatment within educational institutions. If you could discuss this issue with the Minister for Education, and work toward finding a solution that supports girls in schools, that would be a wonderful way to demonstrate your commitment to the rights of our girls.

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)**.