

— ANNE SUMMERS AO —

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Dear

I do not live in the Balmain electorate, so I cannot vote for Verity Firth on March 26.

But I strongly support her and hope very much that she will still be a member of the NSW Parliament after the election, and that is why I am writing to you today.

Whatever the outcome of the election, it is vital that the Parliament contain strong, ethical and committed champions of women's equality.

Verity is such a champion – as her legislative record demonstrates.

I am impressed by her initiatives on domestic violence, in education and by her courageous and historic proposal (since endorsed by the NSW Cabinet) that ethics classes be available as an option in NSW public schools for parents who do not wish their children to attend Scripture classes.

Verity's achievements for women are impressive, especially her track record on the issue of domestic violence.

Verity introduced legislation that specified domestic violence as a crime; she greatly increased funding for services and she initiated a grants program to benefit services such as women's refuges and rape crisis centres. It is a terrible indictment of our society that such services are still needed – and needed in ever-increasing numbers – but this makes it all the more essential that women have champions such as Verity working for them in NSW Parliament.

I am also impressed by Verity's reforms in her education portfolio, particularly some of her initiatives to benefit Aboriginal students.

The women of New South Wales have been well served by Verity Firth and I hope that she will be given the opportunity to continue to work for us after March 26.

I wish I could vote for her; I hope that you will.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne S" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Anne Summers AO