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Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Style guide

1st edition

January 2024



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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About the *Style guide*

This guide brings together our preferred ways of spelling, punctuating, formatting and wording documents. We aim to make all departmental documents clear and consistent.

The guide is based on the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6th edition 2002, revised by Snooks & Co.), the [Australian Government Style Manual](#) (first released 2020) and the [Macquarie dictionary](#).

Follow this guide for all forms of writing produced on behalf of the department.

It is Australian Government and departmental policy to write in plain English. This recognises the need to make information accessible and easy to understand for all users, including people with limited access to technology, people with low English literacy or a disability, and people who are time poor. For more information about writing in plain English, see [Writing tips](#).

Some of our documents need to use a style that is specific to an audience and may not comply with official departmental style. For example, media releases are prepared in 'news style' and adopt the spelling and grammatical conventions used by most Australian media, such as the use of double quotes around direct speech.

To write a media release, follow the advice of the Media team. Email media@aff.gov.au.

For inquiries about department branding, contact the Design team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#) .

For inquiries about this guide, contact the Editing team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#) .

Departmental style A–Z

Abbreviations and other shortened forms

Abbreviations consist of the first letter of a word, usually followed by other letters, but not the last letter. They take the same capitalisation as the unabbreviated word and usually end with a full stop. But do not use a full stop after initials. For example:

Mon.	Dec.	cont.	Vic.	Co.	fig.
BUT	JM Witherspoon		P Nguyen		

Only use abbreviations if space is limited, such as in tables and figures.

Use the abbreviation ‘e.g.’, only in tables, figures and within brackets in body text. For example:

Australia exports many kinds of fruit (e.g. apples, pears and bananas).

Avoid abbreviating words that have another meaning. For example, use the whole word ‘figure’ to describe a graph – not ‘fig’, which could also refer to the fruit.

Contractions consist of the first and last letters of a word and sometimes other letters in between. They do not take a full stop and they have the same capitalisation as the unabbreviated word. For example:

Mr Rd Qld Cwlth Pty Ltd dept Bros can't I'm

One exception to this rule is ‘no.’, which is a contraction of ‘numero’. Write it with a full stop (‘no.’) to distinguish it from the word ‘no’.

See also [Acronyms and initialisms](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are distinct groups with different preferences about language, terms of address and local identity names. However, some people will identify as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. When writing to or about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, first consult with them.

Collectively, communities may choose to refer to themselves as:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples **NOT** ATSI, TI or TSI
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
 Aboriginal Australians
 First Australians
 First Nations Australians
 First Nations people **OR** First Nations peoples
 Indigenous Australians **NOT** Indig, Aborigines or Aborigines

Torres Strait Islander Australians

The government's preferred collective terms are:

First Nations people **OR** First Nations peoples
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 Indigenous Australians

Capitalise names of cultural practices. For example:

Acknowledgement of Country Welcome to Country

Capitalise the title 'Elder' and include the nation that the person belongs to and their name.

For example:

Wiradjuri Elder [insert person's name]

Also capitalise the terms:

Country [as in 'caring for Country'] Traditional Owners Traditional Custodians

Always capitalise 'Indigenous' when it refers to the original inhabitants of Australia. Do not capitalise 'indigenous' when it is used in a general sense to refer to the original inhabitants of other countries.

For example:

Indigenous-led research
 Partnering with Indigenous organisations for a sustainable environment
 Minister for Indigenous Australians

When referring to a community, use the name of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nation.

For example:

Palawa Nation

If the nation of the community you are referring to is not known or relevant to the context, name the location. For example:

the Aboriginal community in Melbourne
 the Torres Strait Islander community in Cairns

If you wish to use traditional place names, consult with the relevant Indigenous community or their registered representative body. If this is not possible:

- check the [AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia](#)
- check the [AIATSIS place thesaurus](#)
- contact the [National Indigenous Australians Agency](#) to confirm the appropriate approach.

For general guidance on rendering the names of places containing both Indigenous and colonial names, see [Geographical terms](#).

When using images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in your publications, include the wording:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain names and images of deceased persons. Users are warned that some words and descriptions may be culturally sensitive and might not normally be used in certain public or community contexts.

This advice is based on guidance from the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Accessibility

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Australian Government agencies must ensure information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory, accessible manner. As a disability-positive employer, we should also make our internal documents accessible to all our employees.

Accessibility encompasses both readability (so that information can be easily understood) and correct formatting (so that assistive technology such as screen readers can read documents to their users). For Word documents to be accessible, correct formatting must be applied to headings, lists, text boxes, tables, figures and maps. Use hyperlinks, bookmarks and cross-references to help users and screen readers navigate the document. Provide alt text for images, and ensure hyperlink text is concise and meaningful.

Use our branded accessible Word templates for your reports, short documents, fact sheets, forms, discussion papers, web content, video and audio transcripts. These have been created to ensure your documents follow a consistent departmental style and will be accessible to users, including those using screen readers.

To find these templates, open Word and select:

- File > New > Shared > 'Print and web writing' folder.

Open the template you need and save it with a meaningful title, your initials and a date. It will automatically save as a .docx file.

Use the styles from the vertical Styles menu, not the styles in the horizontal menu in the Font and Paragraph groups in the Home ribbon. To see the vertical Styles menu, go to the Styles group in the Home ribbon and click on the downward diagonal arrow in the bottom right-hand corner or type Alt + Ctrl + Shift + S. Tick the 'Show Preview' box at the bottom of the vertical Styles menu. Apply the appropriate styles to your text (e.g. Heading 1 for the document title, Heading 2 for chapter headings and Normal for body text).

When importing text from other documents, use 'Copy' and then 'Paste – Keep Text Only'. Do not use 'Paste', because the styles from your original document will be imported into the accessible Word document and corrupt it. When pasting the text, make sure you place the cursor into text that is styled Normal. Then apply the appropriate styles.

The Editing team can provide accessibility checks of your documents once you have completed our 2-hour Word formatting and accessibility training. Contact the Editing team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#).

For more information on readability, see [Plain English](#). See also [Hyperlinks](#).

Acronyms and initialisms

Acronyms are strings of initial letters (and sometimes other letters and numbers) pronounced as a word. For example:

ASEAN COAG DFAT NATO NAIDOC UNESCO COVID-19

Initialisms are strings of initial letters (and sometimes other letters) not pronounced as a word. Write all letters as capitals and do not use full stops. For example:

ACT SBS TV CPI RSPCA GPO PDF

Acronyms and initialisms are written without full stops.

Avoid using acronyms and initialisms, unless they are known to your audience (e.g. Anzac, RSPCA). Use alternative wording where possible. Always consider the audience. Readers not familiar with an acronym may struggle to remember what it stands for. Repeat part of the name or title rather than use the acronym or initialism. For example:

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority has released the draft report. The authority will release the final version next month.

OR The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has released the draft report. The MDBA will release the final version next month.

Don't use DAFF to refer to the department, except when the text contains references to multiple departments and for reference lists (see [‘DAFF’ or ‘department’ or ‘departmental’](#)).

Avoid using acronyms, initialisms, abbreviations or symbols in headings.

With some well-established acronyms (e.g. Qantas), only the first letter is capitalised because the acronym has become a word in its own right.

When an acronym or initialism is used for the first time, write the name, term or expression in full followed by the acronym or initialism in brackets. Follow this approach at the start of each web page and in the summary and introduction of a document:

the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)

If an acronym or initialism is well known, it is not necessary to write it out in full. For example:

RSPCA CSIRO ACTU UNESCO

Add 's' to make the plural form of an acronym or initialism. Do not add an apostrophe. For example:

MPs **NOT** MP's QoNs **NOT** QoN's EL2s **NOT** EL2's

Add an apostrophe + 's' ('s) for the singular possessive. For example:

CSIRO's research	NAQS's report
the secretary's video	the EL1's work plans

However, rewrite the sentence to avoid constructions ABS's or SBS's. For example:

The ABS survey ...	The SBS program ...
--------------------	---------------------

Add 's' + an apostrophe (s') for the plural possessive. For example:

the GMs' conference [conference of more than one GM]
the EL1s' work plans [work plans of more than one EL1]

To test whether to use 'a' or 'an', read the shortened form aloud and use 'a' for a consonant-sounding letter and 'an' for a vowel-sounding letter. For example:

a CSIRO-led delegation	an MDBA plan
------------------------	--------------

Age

Do not refer to a person's age unless it is necessary. Use neutral terms.

'Young people' and 'youth' (generally 12 to 18 years) are neutral terms but the terms 'juvenile' and 'youths' have negative connotations. The definition of a child varies across jurisdictions and depends on legal context.

Learn more about [inclusive language](#) in the Australian Government Style Manual.

'agriculture' or 'agricultural'

Use 'agriculture' as a noun and 'agricultural' as an adjective. For example:

Agriculture is the production of food and fibre.
The agricultural sector contributes to Australia's export earnings.

See ['industry' versus 'sector'](#).

Apostrophes

Use curly (') not straight (') quotes for all content. To set your Word default to curly quotes go to File > Options > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options and select the AutoFormat tab. Under Replace, select 'Straight quotes with smart quotes' and select OK. Then select the AutoFormat As You Type tab and under Replace as you type, select 'Straight quotes with smart quotes' and select OK.

Apostrophes to show possession

Use the apostrophe + 's' to indicate possession, as in:

the minister's decision [one minister]
--

If the word before the apostrophe is singular and ends in an 's', add an apostrophe + 's'. For example:

the atlas's pages	Ernie and Jess's farm
Thomas's car	Mr and Mrs Landers's house
Charles Dickens's novels	Robert Menzies's cabinet

If the word before the apostrophe is plural and ends in an 's', add an apostrophe. For example:

both governments' budgets	both students' answers
both scientists' theories	both ministers' decisions

It can be difficult to show possession for names ending in 's'. Rework the sentence for clarity.

For example:

the Jones's car **OR** the Jones family's car

If there is more than one noun but joint possession, insert the apostrophe after the second noun.

For example:

Jack and Jill's report

If there is more than one noun but individual possession, insert an apostrophe after each noun.

For example:

Jack's and Jill's reports

The pronouns 'his', 'hers', 'its', 'theirs' and 'yours' are already possessive and do not take an apostrophe.

Apostrophes in contractions

As well as indicating possession, the apostrophe can indicate a contraction, where letters of a word are omitted. For example:

can't [cannot]	it's [it is]
----------------	--------------

Be careful with 'it's' and 'its'. 'It's' is a contraction of 'it is', whereas 'its' is a possessive pronoun. For example:

It's not likely to be announced today.	It's = contraction of it is
The department revised its policy.	Its = possessive [the department's policy]

Apostrophes with acronyms and initialisms

As with other nouns, use the apostrophe + 's' to indicate possession with acronyms and initialisms.

For example:

CSIRO's latest research findings

Apostrophes in time expressions

Use an apostrophe in time expressions. For example:

1 day's holiday
6 months' time
15 years' experience

Apostrophes – when not to use them

Do not use apostrophes where the term is being used to describe a type of something. For example:

a farmers market [a type of market, not a market owned by farmers]
an FRDC report [a type of report, not a report owned by the FRDC]

Avoid using an apostrophe when using the department name as an adjective. Rewrite the sentence to avoid the construction ABARES's or Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's. For example:

The ABARES research was conducted under tight deadlines.
The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website was delivered to meet tight deadlines.

This usage is descriptive, not possessive, and does not need an apostrophe.

Apostrophes and numbers

Do not use apostrophes for decades. For example:

1990s **NOT** 1990's

Apostrophes in placenames and generic phrases

Australian placenames involving possessives and some generic phrases do not take a final apostrophe + 's'. For example:

Badgerys Creek Kings Cross a drivers licence

Appendixes

Use 'appendix' not 'attachment', except in ministerial briefs. Use the English plural form 'appendixes' not 'appendices'.

For documents published online, use an internal document hyperlink to link to the location of the appendix. For example:

The survey questions are at [Appendix A](#).

‘approved arrangements’ or ‘approved arrangement sites’

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, an ‘approved arrangement’ applies to specified activities at a particular location. For example:

approved arrangement

NOT compliance agreement or Approved Arrangement

An ‘approved arrangement site’ is a place where specified activities are carried out under an approved arrangement. For example:

approved arrangement site

NOT quarantine approved premises or QAP

Australian Government

Use ‘Australian Government’ to refer to the national government of Australia, particularly when writing for an international audience. Replace the term ‘Commonwealth Government’ with ‘Australian Government’. Only use the terms ‘the Commonwealth’ or ‘the Commonwealth of Australia’ to refer to the legal entity established by the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act or institutions (such as parliament) established by that Act. Commonwealth is always capitalised in this context. Avoid using ‘the federal government’. For example:

The Australian Government will raise this issue at the next APEC meeting.

The question was debated at length in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Defence is a Commonwealth responsibility.

The Australian, state and territory governments discussed the program.

Bibliographies

A bibliography includes sources that are not cited in the document but that were used as background material. Most published research does not include a bibliography – only a reference list. See the [References guide](#).

Biosecurity

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, officers are referred to as:

a biosecurity officer **NOT** Biosecurity Officer or Quarantine officer

biosecurity officers

a biosecurity enforcement officer

biosecurity enforcement officers

biosecurity industry participant **NOT** BIP

Use the terms ‘biosecurity officer(s)’ and ‘biosecurity enforcement officer(s)’ in place of ‘quarantine officer(s)’.

Use 'biosecurity' or 'Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry' in conjunction with a position name. For example:

biosecurity veterinarians
a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry veterinarian

Brackets

Use round brackets (parentheses) to enclose information that could be left out of the text without affecting the clarity but that provides further information. For example:

A management plan is in place to deal with cedar tip moth (*Hypsipila robusta*).

Round brackets are also used to enclose cross-references and in-text citations. If the brackets fall at the end of the sentence, place the full stop after the closed bracket. For example:

Australia is expected to contribute about 3% of the value of global food exports to 2050 (ABARES 2016).
The community services workforce consists predominantly of females, the majority of whom work part time (see Table 7.3).

Do not italicise brackets even if their contents are in italics.

Use square brackets in quotations to indicate additions by someone other than the author.

For example:

In her biography she writes, 'I was born in Wellington [New Zealand] to Maori and Pakeha parents.'

Buildings and public places

Always capitalise the full names of buildings, structures and public places but don't use capitals when the name is reduced to its generic element or when it is used in plural combinations. For example:

Sydney Town Hall	the town hall
Kings Avenue Bridge	the bridge
the Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue bridges	

Capitalise the names of private properties in the same way as other local names; do not use quotation marks. For example:

Mary River Downs	Glen Stewart
------------------	--------------

Capitalisation

We follow the rules of minimal capitalisation. With minimal capitalisation, only the first word of a title and any proper nouns and names are capitalised. Minimal capitalisation is used for the titles of all publications and for chapter headings within publications. For example:

ABARES announced the release of the report *Agricultural commodities, June quarter*.
... in the chapter called 'Three Australian farmers' in Mitchell's book *Life on the land ...*

For more information, see the [References guide](#).

In general, capitalise full or official titles but don't capitalise short titles or generic references. For example:

Australian Government	the government
Dairy Industry Code of Conduct	the code
Antarctic Treaty	the treaty
Scientific and Technical Market Access Panel	the panel

Classified material

Classified material must be handled according to the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework. The [Attorney-General's Department](#) provides information on classifying, protectively marking and handling sensitive and security classified material. See [Policy 8: Sensitive and classified information](#) for how to format classifications.

Climate and weather

Capitalise the terms:

Cyclone Tracy	Millennium Drought	Southern Oscillation Index
La Niña	El Niño	El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

Codes and standards

Capitalise all the significant words in the full titles of codes and standards but do not capitalise shortened or generic references. For example:

Full name of code or standard (maximal capitalisation)	Short name (lower case)
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code	the food standards code the code
Australian Standard for Production of Game Meat for Human Consumption	the game meat standard the standard

Only italicise the title of a code when referring to a publication of the same name and keep the full capitalisation. For example:

Australian Code of Practice for Poultry Processing or the poultry code [refers to the code]
Australian Code of Practice for Poultry Processing [refers to the published PDF or print document – fully capitalised because that is the title of the code]

Colons

A colon marks a shorter pause than a full stop. Use a colon to:

- introduce a word, phrase or clause that explains, enlarges or summarises. For example:

Three portfolios were represented at the meeting: agriculture, defence and health.

- introduce an indented list or series of items (see also [Lists](#)). For example:

The qualities we seek are:

- innovation
- integrity
- inclusiveness.

- indicate a ratio. For example:

1:100,000

- introduce a block quote. For example:

The report stated:

Editors are among the least appreciated language professionals on earth. Equally, they are an essential part of putting together a professional, readable document.

- introduce a direct question that amplifies or modifies the introductory word or phrase. For example:

The report raised the key issue: who will fund the project?

Only capitalise the first letter after a colon if it introduces 2 or more complete questions.

For example:

Funding remains an issue: Where will the funds come from? Who will assess the applications?

Do not insert a colon between a verb and its object in a sentence. For example:

Our responsibilities include agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
The qualities we seek are innovation, integrity and inclusiveness.
NOT
Our responsibilities include: agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
The qualities we seek are: innovation, integrity and inclusiveness.

Do not insert a colon after 'including' in a sentence. For example:

Ensure your container is free of contaminants, including soil, grain, snails, insects and plant and animal material.
NOT Ensure your container is free of contaminants, including: soil, grain, snails, insects and plant and animal material.

Commas

Commas between adjectives

The way to avoid using too many or not enough commas is to write short, concise sentences.

Use commas between 2 or more adjectives unless one of the adjectives defines the type of noun.

For example:

a dark-red, shiny sports car [sports defines the type of car]
 curly, ridged, heart-shaped leaves
BUT a rich chocolate cake [chocolate defines the type of cake]

Test whether to use a comma in the description by replacing it with 'and'.

Commas in lists

Use commas to separate items in a simple run-on list but do not put a comma before the final 'and'.

Only put a comma before the final 'and' if the sentence is ambiguous. For example:

He added apples, oranges, grapes and figs to the fruit salad.
 He bought a landscape, and a portrait by Vickery. [only the portrait was by Vickery]

A comma before the final 'and' is known as an Oxford comma, a Harvard comma or a serial comma. This is not standard Australian Government style (unless used to avoid ambiguity).

Do not use commas at the end of bullet, number or letter points.

Commas to avoid ambiguity

Use commas to avoid ambiguity. For example:

He was not killed, mercifully. [thank goodness he wasn't killed]
 He was not killed mercifully. [he died a horrible death]

Commas with descriptive clauses

Descriptive, or relative, clauses add more meaning about an element in the clause or about an entire preceding clause.

Defining relative clauses

A defining relative clause gives essential information about the noun or noun phrase: it uniquely defines the noun. Defining relative clauses begin with 'who' if the element they describe is a person and 'that' if they add more information about non-animate things or whole clauses. For example (defining relative clause in italics):

When I was at Senate estimates last week, I met the person *who used to do my job*.
 [Defining relative clause tells us which person the author saw]

The authority rejected the recommendations *that industry stakeholders had put forward*.

[Defining relative clause identifies exactly which recommendations the authority rejected – only those recommendations that industry had put forward]

Don't use commas with defining relative clauses.

Non-defining relative clauses

A non-defining relative clause gives non-essential information about the noun or noun phrase: it offers some extra description of the noun. Non-defining relative clauses begin with 'who' if the element they describe is a person and 'which' if they add more information about non-animate things or whole clauses. For example:

When I was at Senate estimates I saw Lok Nguyen, *who used to be an adviser in the minister's office*.

[Non-defining relative clause gives us some extra, non-essential description of Lok – it could be deleted]

The authority rejected the recommendations, *which industry stakeholders had put forward*.

[Clause in italics just adds some extra information about the recommendations – it could be deleted]

Use commas (often paired commas) with non-defining relative clauses. For example:

Lok Nguyen, *who worked in the minister's office for 4 years*, now has a position in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The funding recommendations, *which local farming groups had proposed*, called for increased subsidies.

Defining elements

Defining elements add information that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. For example:

My colleague Mr Fennell has worked hard to improve relations with the Riverina farmers.

NOT My colleague, Mr Fennell, has worked hard to improve relations with the Riverina farmers.

Parenthetical commas would imply that the author had only one colleague.

The names of the author's brothers are essential to the sentence because she has 2 brothers. For example:

I have 2 brothers. My brother Peter is an architect. My brother Anthony is a teacher.

NOT I have 2 brothers. My brother, Peter, is an architect. My brother, Anthony, is a teacher.

Non-defining elements

In non-defining elements the information in the parenthetical commas is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. For example:

His wife, who is called Jane, is a singer.
NOT His wife who is called Jane is a singer.

Use commas around non-defining elements to show that John has only one wife. For example:

John's wife, Jane, is a singer.
NOT John's wife Jane is a singer.

Without the commas the second sentence implies that John has more than one wife, one of whom is called Jane.

The name of the author's brother is not essential to the sentence because she has only one brother. For example:

I have one brother. My brother, Geoff, is a physiotherapist.
NOT I have one brother. My brother Geoff is a physiotherapist.

Commas with introductory clauses and phrases

Use a comma with an introductory clause or phrase if it makes the sentence clearer, particularly if the clause or phrase is long or complicated or is potentially ambiguous. For example:

In this context you may not want a comma.
 On the other hand, you may think this sentence needs one.
 When the initiative was introduced last year, we received more than 40,000 complimentary emails.
 In 2010 we answered 10,000 letters. **NOT** In 2010, we answered 10,000 letters.
 In 2010, 10,000 letters were answered. **NOT** In 2010 10,000 letters were answered.

Put a comma after expressions such as 'however', 'for example' and 'in contrast' when they introduce a statement. For example:

Exports to Europe have increased markedly. However, exports to China continue to fall.

Commas with linking words (conjunctions)

Conjunctions are words we use to join or link words, clauses and phrases – for example, 'and', 'or', 'but', 'yet', 'so'. Use a comma to join clauses that are linked by conjunctions only when the subject of each clause is different. For example (subject in italics):

The report was due on Friday, but *Ernest* did not meet the deadline.
I thought it was a great article, and *my friend* liked it too.

If the subject of both clauses is the same, do not use a comma. For example:

She not only ran the whole way but *she* also jumped the fence.
The minister announced the new policy and *he* then toured the region.

When the subject of 2 clauses is the same, the second mention is often omitted. Again, do not use a comma. For example:

The minister announced the new policy and then toured the region.

When not to use commas

Do not separate the subject (who or what is doing the action) from its verb (what action is happening) with a comma. For example (subject in italics):

Farmers whose farms end up underwater as a result of continued rain will be eligible for assistance.
NOT *Farmers* whose farms end up underwater as a result of continued rain, will be eligible for assistance.

Do not use commas to separate clauses – use a conjunction (joining word) or a semicolon. For example:

The dog ran after the rabbit and the rabbit fled under the hedge.
 The dog ran after the rabbit; the rabbit fled under the hedge.
NOT The dog ran after the rabbit, the rabbit fled under the hedge.

Do not use commas to mark off a defining relative clause. For example:

Farmers *who fail to adapt to climate change* are likely to experience declining incomes. [This refers only to some farmers – those who fail to adapt to climate change.]
NOT Farmers, who fail to adapt to climate change, are likely to experience declining incomes. [This indicates that all farmers fail to adapt to climate change.]

Do not use commas to mark off a defining element. For example:

Deputy Secretary Rosemary Deininger announced the new program. [More than one deputy secretary.]
NOT The deputy secretary, Rosemary Deininger, announced the new program.
BUT The secretary, Adam Fennessy, releases a weekly video update. [Only one secretary.]

Do not use commas before ‘and’ or ‘or’ in a series or list of items in a sentence, unless the meaning would be ambiguous without a comma. For example:

The minister, secretary and deputy secretaries attended the event.
NOT The minister, secretary, and deputy secretaries attended the event.

BUT The minister, the secretary, and deputy secretaries and their partners attended the event.

Do not use commas in dates. For example:

Wednesday 11 May 2022 **NOT** Wednesday, 11 May 2022

Conferences, seminars and inquiries

When referring to the formal title of an inquiry, seminar or conference, capitalise all the main words (not, for example, 'of', 'the' or 'in') and do not use quotation marks. Do not italicise the title.

For example:

Outlook 2022 **OR** the Outlook 2022 conference
 the Australasian Vertebrate Pests Conference
 the Corporate Finance Introductory Seminar
 13th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention

Do not capitalise nouns like inquiry, seminar or conference when they are used generically – but do capitalise them when they are part of the official title. Do not italicise the title but enclose it in single quote marks. For example:

The parliamentary inquiry 'Milking it for all it's worth'
 the 'Inquiry into the impact of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in regional Australia'

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words and phrases that link grammatical elements to other elements. Some conjunctions – for example, 'and', 'or', 'but' – can be used to link words to other words, phrases to other phrases, clauses to other clauses, or sentences to other sentences. For example:

bread, butter and potatoes ['and' links words]
 around the corner, along the block and to the right ['and' links phrases]
 The minister announced the policy, gave a media conference and called his state counterpart. ['and' links clauses within a sentence]
 The minister announced the policy, and he later called his state counterpart. ['and' links sentences]

The conjunctive adverbs 'however', 'moreover', 'in addition', 'therefore' and 'consequently' can be used to link one sentence to another sentence. They should not be used to link 2 clauses within the same sentence, unless the clauses are separated by a semicolon. For example:

The opinion poll gave mixed results. However, the government decided to go ahead with the revised policy. ['however' used correctly to link 2 sentences]
 The opinion poll gave mixed results; however, the government decided to go ahead with the revised policy. ['however' used correctly to link clauses within the same sentence]

NOT

The opinion poll gave mixed results, however the government decided to go ahead with the revised policy. [‘however’ used incorrectly to link clauses within the same sentence]

Conventions, treaties and agreements

Capitalise the titles of conventions, treaties and agreements but do not capitalise generic references or shorthand references to the title. Do not italicise the titles. For example:

Official name of treaty or agreement (maximal capitalisation)	Short or generic term (lower case)
the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement	the agreement the trade agreement
the International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships	the convention the marine pollution convention
the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	the treaty the genetic resources treaty

Conveyance

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, ‘conveyance’ can mean an aircraft, a vessel, a vehicle, a train or any other means used to transport goods. Some application forms approved under the Act use ‘conveyance’ in place of method of transport. In these cases, use ‘conveyance’ also in any accompanying explanatory material. In all other instances, use ‘aircraft’, ‘vessel’, ‘vehicle’ or ‘train’.

Copyright

All documents we publish externally must include a copyright statement. For example, our report template in Word > New > Shared includes a standard copyright page, with mandatory sections not to be removed and highlighted fields for you to update.

If you wish to reproduce work by other authors (such as photographs, images and maps) in your document, you must seek permission from the copyright owner and include an attribution.

For a cover image, insert the attribution on the copyright page on a separate line under the cataloguing data. Use the wording ‘Cover photograph: © Beatrice Banes.’

If a staff member took the photograph as part of their duties, the department isn’t required to acknowledge them. But if you would like to acknowledge them, use the wording ‘Cover photograph: Beatrice Banes, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.’

For a photograph within the body of the document, include the attribution immediately after the image. Use the attribution ‘Photograph: © Beatrice Banes.’ or ‘Photograph: Beatrice Banes, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.’, and apply the Figure/Table Note/Source style from the vertical Styles menu.

Countries, placenames and regions

Capitalise the names of countries or official groupings of countries. For example:

the Asia-Pacific	the Commonwealth of Independent States
the Balkans	Southeast Asia
Central America	Vietnam

For some economies, a common short version of the official name is used. For others, the full official name should always be used. For example:

Common name	Use this name	Official name to use when required
Brunei	Brunei Darussalam	Brunei Darussalam
China	China	the People's Republic of China
East Timor	Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste
Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China
North Korea	North Korea	the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Russia	the Russian Federation	the Russian Federation
South Korea	the Republic of Korea	the Republic of Korea
Türkiye (formerly Turkey)	the Republic of Türkiye	the Republic of Türkiye [to insert umlaut above the letter 'ü': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the Insert tab, in the Symbols group, select Symbol > More Symbols in the Symbol menu, scroll to select 'ü' (or in the Character code box, type 00FC) select Insert.]

For economies not listed here, see DFAT's [referring to countries, economies and regions](#) or email our Trade, Market Access & International Division at market.intelligence@aff.gov.au.

Do not capitalise purely descriptive – and unofficial – names for parts of a geographical entity. For example:

northern Australia	southern Italy	north-eastern Victoria
--------------------	----------------	------------------------

However, use initial capitals for descriptive names that have a semi-official status. For example:

Central Australia	Far North Queensland	South-East Queensland
the Adelaide Hills	the Western District	the Top End

Use initial capitals (and spaced en rules when linking 2 or more words) for the names of areas designated in legislation or program guidelines, such as local government areas. For example:

South Coast – Moss Vale	Central North – North West
-------------------------	----------------------------

To confirm the spelling of an Australian placename, check it using Australia Post's [Postcode search](#) or the [Composite Gazetteer of Australia place name search](#).

Creative works (films, works of art)

Italicise and use minimal capitalisation for the titles of films, television and works of art. Omit an article ('a', 'an', 'the') if it would be awkward to include it. For example:

Border security: Australia's front line
 the *Four corners* program
The old king, by Roualt, is in the Carnegie Institute Museum of Art.
 Rodin's *Thinker* is perhaps his most well-known work. *The thinker* is in the Musée Rodin in Paris.

Place song titles in quotation marks and do not italicise them. Use minimal capitalisation. For example:

We sang 'The road to Gundagai' 20 times in a row.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

Australians have different cultural backgrounds and speak many languages. Use inclusive language that respects this diversity. Learn more about [cultural and linguistic diversity](#) (CaLD) and [inclusive language](#) in the Australian Government Style Manual.

See [Accessibility](#) in this guide.

Currency

In general writing, give amounts of money with the dollar sign and write the word 'cents' out in full, unless space is restricted. Use commas for figures in the thousands or millions. For example:

\$160 \$189.45 10 cents \$2,000 \$20 million

We are an Australian department, so all currency is assumed to be in Australian dollars unless stated otherwise. When referring to more than one currency in the same paragraph, indicate Australian currency. For example:

A\$100 A12 cents

Use the appropriate symbol for foreign currency to distinguish it from Australian dollars:

Economy	Currency	Subunit	Small amounts using subunits	Larger amounts	Keyboard shortcut	Alphanumeric value
Australia	dollar	cent	A10 cents a	A\$500 a	–	–
Canada	dollar	cent	C10c	C\$500	C\$	$ ¢
China	yuan	jiao	¥0.1	¥500	Alt + 0165	¥
European Union	euro	cent	€0.10	€500	Alt + Ctrl + e	€
Japan	yen	–	¥1	¥50,000	Alt + Num 0165	¥
New Zealand	dollar	cent	NZ10c	NZ\$500	NZ\$	$ ¢

Economy	Currency	Subunit	Small amounts using subunits	Larger amounts	Keyboard shortcut	Alphanumeric value
United Kingdom	pound	pence	10p	£500	Alt + Num 163	£
United States	dollar	cent	US10c	US\$500	US\$	$ ¢

a Use only when referring to Australian currency and another currency in the same paragraph.

Use this format to include the term 'GST' in a dollar amount:

\$43,050 (GST inclusive)

Currency names, such as dollar and euro, are not capitalised.

Dashes

The word dash refers to several different marks – including the [em rule](#), the [en rule](#), the [hyphen](#) and the [minus sign](#) – all of which have their own uses.

Dates

In body text, write out dates in the format 'day, month, year'.

When the date is preceded by the day, do not use a comma. For example:

The submission deadline was 18 July 2021.
The last day for submissions was Friday 18 July 2021.

Join the dates with non-breaking spaces (Ctrl + Shift + spacebar) so they don't separate across lines.

Use words for dates at the beginning of a sentence, or rewrite the sentence. For example:

The first of March marks the beginning of autumn.
OR Autumn begins on 1 March.
NOT 1 March marks the beginning of autumn.

Where space is limited, such as in a table, use figures in the format 'day, month, year' with forward slashes. For example:

8/3/2022

For international readers, write the date out in full.

Use a hyphen when the element following a prefix is a date. For example:

pre-1988 post-1954 mid-2015
BUT late 2015 early 2016

Do not use an apostrophe with decades. For example:

1990s 1850s

Date spans

Use the word ‘to’ for a date span. To represent financial years, use 4 digits for the beginning date, followed by an en rule (Ctrl + Num –) (see [En rules](#)) and 2 digits for the end year. It is not necessary to include the words ‘financial year’. Do not use a forward slash. Do not use an en rule for calendar year ranges or with the words ‘from’ or ‘between’. For example:

26 to 30 June 2022
 13 June to 28 July 2022
 the July to September quarter
 between 1969 and 2009 **NOT** between 1969–2009
 from 1969 to 2009 **NOT** from 1969–2009
 2021–22 [financial year] **NOT** 2021/22 or 2021–2022
 in 2021–22 ... **NOT** in the 2021–22 financial year
BUT 1999–2000 [financial year] **NOT** 1999–00

‘DAFF’ or ‘department’ or ‘departmental’

Use ‘DAFF’ only in [references](#). For example:

DAFF 2022, *Style guide*, 1st edition, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, August.

Use personal pronouns like ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ to refer to the department online and in print. Our website and report template are already branded, so repeating the department’s full title is redundant. Personal pronouns allow users to access your key message more quickly. For example:

Submit your feedback to us. **NOT** Submit your feedback to the department.
 our programs **NOT** departmental programs

In some legal documents, ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ may not be appropriate. Once you’ve introduced the full name of the department, use ‘department’ unbracketed as the short form in body text.

For example:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is the regulator. The department ...
NOT The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) is the regulator. The department ...

When referring to several departments, use personal pronouns for our department and spell out other departments’ names in full. For example:

Our department works with the Department of Home Affairs. We ...
NOT The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry works with the Department of Home Affairs.

Write the name of other government departments in full, followed by the acronym, if referring to them several times in the same document. For example:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is a key government department. PM&C is located in Barton.

Capitalise the titles of branches and divisions in the department. Lower-case the word ‘program’ if it is not part of the official program name. Capitalise the words ‘unit’, and ‘team’ only if they are clearly part of the section’s name. For example:

Agricultural Policy Division	Biological Imports program
Biosecurity Account Team	Governance Branch
BUT Media team	

Use ‘department’ as a noun and ‘departmental’ as an adjective. For example:

The department is responsible for policy development and advising government. Departmental staff work in offices, airports, mail centres, shipping ports, laboratories and abattoirs.

Disability

Do not use terms (such as ‘handicapped’ or ‘the disabled’) that define people solely by their disability. Use person-first language. For example:

person/people with disability	musician with low vision/who is blind
person/people without disability	people who are hard of hearing/deaf

Use the term ‘accessible toilet’ instead of ‘disabled toilet’ and ‘accessible parking space’ instead of ‘disabled parking space’. Learn more about [inclusive language](#) in the Australian Government Style Manual.

‘e.g.’ or ‘for example’

Use either the abbreviation ‘e.g.’ between brackets or an en dash before ‘for example’ in a sentence. Do not use a comma after ‘e.g.’ but use a comma after ‘for example’:

Ensure your container is free of contaminants (e.g. soil, grain, snails, insects and plant and animal material).

OR Ensure your container is free of contaminant – for example, soil, grain, snails, insects and plant and animal material.

NOT Ensure your container is free of contaminants, for example: soil, grain, snails, insects and plant and animal material.

Do not use ‘etc.’ with ‘for example’ – it is redundant. For example:

You must declare all fruit – for example, apples, oranges and pears.

NOT You must declare all fruit – for example, apples, oranges and pears, etc.

Ellipses (...)

An ellipsis (Ctrl + Alt + .) is 3 full stops with a space either side. Use it to show that words have been omitted from quoted material. Use only 3 points (with one space before and after). Do not include any punctuation mark before or after them. For example:

The new system will simplify current reporting requirements and ... will reduce the number of audits over the term of the grant.

Em rules

An em rule (Ctrl + Alt + Num –) (—) is a dash the width of the letter ‘M’.

Do not use unspaced em rules to enclose extra information in text. Use a spaced [en rule](#) instead.

Use 2 em rules in reference lists and bibliographies to avoid repeating an author’s name when more than one work is cited. For example:

Smart, SR 1973, ‘Climate change – the next challenge’, *American Scientist*, vol. 44, pp. 103–12.
 —1977, *Reading the sky*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

En rules

An en rule (Ctrl + Num –) is a dash the width of the letter ‘N’. It is slightly longer than a hyphen. The shortcut for an en rule will only work on a numpad. Alternatively, on the Insert tab, select Symbol > More Symbols > Special Characters > En Dash. Use en rules:

- to indicate ranges in spans of figures
- to join subjects of equal weight
- to mark an abrupt change in continuity
- to introduce an explanation or provide additional detail.

Use unspaced en rules (with no spaces before or after the en rule) to link single words or sets of numbers. Link similar subjects – adjectives with adjectives, and numbers with numbers. For example:

pages 115–22	202–205 Northbourne Avenue
1999–2000 [financial year]	2021–22 [financial year]
Sydney–Yass–Melbourne	Murray–Darling Basin
Australian–Japanese research team	NOT Australia–Japanese research team

Also use unspaced en rules to link words that remain separate entities. For example:

arthritis–encephalitis virus cost–benefit ratio public–private partnership

Use an unspaced en rule when a prefix is linked to more than one word or a compound adjective consists of more than one word. The en rule shows the extended link. For example:

fruit fly–free region

horticultural industry–based proposals

If a prefix such as ‘non-’, ‘pre-’ or ‘anti-’ acts on more than one word, or if part of the phrase is already hyphenated, use a second hyphen not an en rule to link all words in the phrase. For example:

a non-English-speaking candidate

COVID-19-related restrictions

Do not use an en rule for time spans. For example:

1969 to 2005

between 1969 and 2005 **NOT** between 1969–2005

from 1969 to 2005 **NOT** from 1969–2005

Use unspaced en rules between 2 nouns that both retain their original meaning. These are called ‘coordinate nouns’. When describing something, coordinate nouns can function as adjectives. For example:

The Murray–Darling Basin [The Murray River and the Darling River combine to form the Basin river system.]

A Sydney–Melbourne flight [Sydney and Melbourne combine to form a single travel route.]

If one part of a coordinate noun is made up of more than one word, use a spaced en rule. For example:

Australia – New Zealand relations [The relationship is between Australia and New Zealand, not ‘Australia’ and ‘New’.]

a Commonwealth – New South Wales agreement

Liberal Party – National Party coalition

Use spaced en rules to mark an abrupt change in continuity, to introduce an explanation or provide additional detail. Keep the phrase between the en rules concise. For example:

The skink – a threatened species – has been seen at the site.

Alternatively, use commas or brackets rather than en rules.

Endnotes

Do not use endnotes. Use the author–date referencing system (the ‘Harvard AGPS’ style), as set out in the [References guide](#).

‘etc. (et cetera)’ or ‘and so on’

Avoid using ‘etc.’ or ‘et cetera’ because it does not often add meaning. For example:

Australia exports grains including wheat, barley and oats.
OR Australia exports grains such as wheat, barley and oats.
NOT Australia exports grains including wheat, barley, oats, etc.

Fonts and styles

Calibri is the font used in our Word templates. For more information on applying styles correctly, see [Accessibility](#).

Footnotes

Do not use footnotes. Use the author–date referencing system (the ‘Harvard AGPS’ style), as set out in the [References guide](#).

Forward slashes

Limit the use of forward slashes. Use a forward slash (/) in web addresses, to indicate dates (in tables not in body text), a fraction in mathematical expressions and the words ‘per’, ‘a’ or ‘an’. For example:

agriculture.gov.au/about 01/07/2023 1/3 60 km/h

Do not use a forward slash to mean ‘and’ or ‘to’. For example:

the Sydney–Brisbane flight **NOT** the Sydney/Brisbane flight

Do not use a forward slash to show a financial year. Instead, use an en rule. For example:

2021–22 **NOT** 2021/22

Fractions and ratios

Use decimal fractions (e.g. ‘6.95’) for numerical information, using the same number of decimal places for any decimal quantities being compared. Always try to keep to 2 decimal points.

For example:

In 2020 the level was 8.56, but in 2021 the level was 9.54.

Use non-decimal fractions for less precise numerical information. Write the fraction out in words if appropriate for descriptive writing and hyphenate the 2 parts (unless using ‘a’ or ‘an’). For example:

one-third three-quarters a third a quarter

Otherwise, use numerals. If a fraction is combined with a whole number, use figures. For example:

$\frac{3}{4}$ a 1½-year-old The concert lasted 3½ hours.

Use this format for ratios, leaving no space before or after the colon. For example:

1:50 3:1

Frequency

Some prefixes used to show time frequency are ambiguous and often misunderstood. ‘Bimonthly’ can mean twice a month or every 2 months. If possible, use a more specific alternative. For example:

fortnightly **NOT** twice weekly
every 2 months **NOT** twice monthly

Writers often confuse biannual and biennial. Biannual means ‘twice a year’; biennial means ‘every 2 years’. Rework to avoid using these words. For example:

twice a year **NOT** biannual
every 2 years **NOT** biennial

Full stops

Always end a sentence with a full stop even if that sentence finishes with a URL.

Use a full stop after the last bullet, number or letter point in a list.

Use only one space after full stops. But do not include a space between a full stop and a paragraph return, for accessibility reasons.

Do **not** use full stops:

- at the end of a title of a book or chapter
- after bullet, number or letter points that are incomplete sentences
- after headings and subheadings
- after captions that are not complete sentences
- after dates or signatures
- within or after abbreviations consisting of more than one capital letter.

Gender and sexual diversity

Use gender-neutral job titles – for example, firefighter, tradesperson, worker, chairperson, web manager and milk vendor.

In correspondence use titles carefully. Use the same title as the correspondent uses for themselves. If you don’t know their preferred title, use their first name and family name.

To write in gender-neutral or inclusive terms:

- use plural instead of singular terms. For example:

Applicants must provide copies of *their* application to *their* referees.
NOT Every applicant must provide copies of *her* application to *her* referees.

- use the gender-free pronoun ‘you’ or (plural) ‘they’. For example:

You must provide copies of *your* application to *your* referees.
They must provide copies of *their* applications to *their* referees.

- use the alternative pronouns ‘his, her or their’, ‘his/her/their’ (or ‘her/his/their’). For example:

Every candidate must provide copies to his/her/their referees.

- leave the pronoun out altogether. For example:

Every candidate must provide copies of the application to referees.

- recast the sentence to avoid pronouns. For example:

Copies of the application must be provided to referees.

- repeat the noun. For example:

Every candidate must provide copies to *the candidate’s* referees.

When creating application and other forms that ask applicants to indicate their gender, use these terms in this order:

- Man/Male
- Woman/Female
- Non-binary
- Different term
- Prefer not to answer.

Learn more about [inclusive language](#) in the Australian Government Style Manual and the [Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables](#).

Geographical terms

Capitalise the full names of topographical features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys, bays and islands). Do not capitalise names reduced to a generic element. For example:

Name of topographical feature (maximal capitalisation)	Short or generic term (lower case)
the Blue Mountains	the mountains
the Barossa Valley	the valley
Aldgate Creek	the creek
the Murray River	the river
Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park	the national park
Lord Howe Island	the island

However, when the generic element of a well-known topographical feature becomes a conventional abbreviation for the place, capitalise the generic element. For example:

the Great Barrier Reef	the Reef
the Murray–Darling Basin	the Basin

Do not capitalise plural geographic elements. The exception is the word 'Mount', which is capitalised even in plural use. For example:

the Murray and Darling rivers the Barossa and Hunter valleys
Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Booderee national parks
BUT Mounts Alexander and Macedon

For geographical elements with dual names containing Indigenous and colonial names, use a spaced forward slash. For example:

Darling / Baaka River Edward / Kolety–Wakool river system

Government

The word 'government' is only capitalised when part of a formal title. For example:

Full formal name (maximal capitalisation)	Short or generic term (lower case)
the Australian Government	the government
the Chinese Government	the government
the Queensland Government	the government

Use lower case for government when using the plural. For example:

the Thai and Chinese governments the governments of Thailand and China
the Australian, state and territory governments

Certain government-related words are always capitalised. For example:

the Cabinet the Crown the Treasury Senate estimates
the Budget (but use lower case when it is used as an adjective or when plural – for example, budget provisions, the budgetary process, successive federal budgets)

See also [Australian Government](#).

State and territory governments

Use capitals for official titles but not for generic or plural references. Spell out the full title when using it as a noun, but use the acronym when using it as an adjective. For example:

Official name	Short or generic/plural term
the Australian Capital Territory	the territory
the Northern Territory	BUT the Territory
the Queensland and NT governments	the state and territory governments
the SA Government	the government, the state government

See also [State, territory and country names](#).

Hyperlinks

External hyperlinks are links to external websites or documents. Internal hyperlinks are links from one location to another within the same document (e.g. cross-references).

All hyperlinks should be in blue and underlined, not italicised, using the Hyperlink style in our accessible Word templates. For information on how to create accessible hyperlinks, see [Making accessible Word documents](#). See also [Accessibility](#).

External hyperlinks

When linking to a PDF or Word document, point to the landing page where the document can be downloaded. Do not link directly to a PDF or Word document.

Do not italicise hyperlinks, including for commonly italicised terms such as Acts and scientific names. For example:

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* commenced on 16 June 2016. [no hyperlink]
The [Biosecurity Act 2015](#) commenced on 16 June 2016. [external hyperlink]

Copy and paste electronic addresses to ensure you have the exact spelling, spacing and punctuation. If you are displaying the URL, remove the protocol and server name (e.g. 'http://', 'https://', 'ftp://', 'www.') from the display text.

Online documents

In documents to be published online, use concise, clear and meaningful hyperlinked text (and ensure the item is included in the reference list if relevant). Do not use bare URLs. For example:

We provide information on [bringing or mailing goods to Australia](#).
NOT We provide information on bringing or mailing goods to Australia on our website at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/travelling/bringing-mailing-goods>.

Print-only documents

In print-only documents, avoid including URLs because most people will search for content using keywords rather than typing in the URL.

If you must use URLs, ensure they are short URLs that allow the reader to easily locate the resources referred to. Use this form of words to introduce a website home page:

For information about government grants and assistance for individuals, businesses and communities, see [grants.gov.au](#).

Use this form of words to introduce a web page or other online resource (not a home page):

Download the standards from CSIRO Publications at [csiro.au/Portals/Publications.aspx](#).

For advice on referencing websites and electronic publications, see the [References guide](#).

Internal hyperlinks

Internal document links are used to help readers navigate within a document. For example:

The recommended food safety standards are in [Appendix B](#).

For advice on inserting internal links and cross-references, follow the instructions in [Making accessible Word documents](#).

Hyphens

Follow [Macquarie dictionary](#) style for compound words – on whether to hyphenate, join as one word or set separately as 2 words. For example:

agribusiness	anti-aircraft	antisocial
cooperate	cross-section	email
multilateral	non-English-speaking country	reallocate

Use a hyphen:

- to prevent misreading with 2 vowels that could be read as one syllable. For example:

de-ice **NOT** deice
re-enter **NOT** reenter
pre-entry **NOT** preentry

- with compound words that have another meaning when they're unhyphenated, are ambiguous or hard to read without a hyphen. For example:

COMPARE re-cover [meaning 'to cover again'] with recover [meaning 'regain']

- in prefixes followed by a capital letter. For example:

pre-Christian era un-Australian activities

- with the suffixes –fold and –odd with numerals. For example:

300-fold 200-odd

- in compound nouns made up of verb + adverb. For example:

He gave the go-ahead.

- when a compound adjective is made up of 2 adjectives or of a noun plus an adjective (whether it precedes or follows the noun it is describing). However, use an en rule when a compound adjective consists of more than one word on either side of the hyphen. For example:

red-hot coals	the animal is disease-free
industry-based proposals	government-led reforms
BUT horticultural industry-based proposals	fruit fly-free region

- in compounds with adverbs that do not end in *-ly*. Do not use a hyphen when the adjective is modified with a word like ‘very’, ‘extremely’ or ‘particularly’. For example:

a well-known book a high-income area
 a smart-looking lawyer post-entry quarantine
BUT a very well known book a particularly smart looking lawyer

- in compound adjectives involving numbers. For example:

a 2-part series a 21-gun salute

- many compound verbs. For example:

to cold-shoulder to gift-wrap

For compound adjectives that are made up of a word that is usually hyphenated and another word, do not use an en rule and a hyphen to indicate that they make up one compound term. Instead use 2 hyphens. For example:

non-English-speaking candidate COVID-19-related restrictions

Unless the *Macquarie* indicates otherwise, do **not** use a hyphen with compound adjectives with an adverb ending in *-ly*. For example:

a commonly held argument
 a widely known story
 a sweetly sung tune

For some compound words, use a hyphen when the term is used as an adjective, to differentiate this from the adverb. For example:

Long-term projects require ... **BUT** In the long term some projects will ...
 Out-of-session approval **BUT** Submit the paper out of session.

Avoid hanging hyphens. It is usually clearest to write each hyphenated word out in full. For example:

They are advertising for full-time and part-time positions.
NOT They are advertising for full- and part-time positions.

For advice on joined words that retain separate identities (e.g. NSW–Victorian border) and connections between more than one word before a noun, see [En rules](#).

‘i.e.’ or ‘that is to say’ or ‘in other words’

Avoid using ‘i.e.’ or ‘that is’. Rewrite sentences containing ‘i.e.’ or ‘that is’ to remove redundant clauses and ensure clarity. For example:

We support Australian farmers.
NOT We support Australian farmers. That is to say, people who live off the land.

Inclusive language

Use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of Australia's peoples.

See [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#), [Accessibility](#), [Age](#), [Cultural and linguistic diversity \(CaLD\)](#), [Disability](#), [Gender](#) and [Plain English](#).

'industry' versus 'sector'

In some cases, how you use 'industry' or 'sector' will be determined by your target audience. As a general rule, when referring to all 3 portfolio industries (agriculture, fisheries and forestry), use 'agricultural sector', but always define the term in the first instance and, where relevant, in your glossary. For example:

We work with the agricultural sector (agriculture, fisheries and forestry).

When referring to one industry, use 'agricultural (or 'forestry' or 'fisheries') industry'. For example:

We met with representatives of the agricultural industry.
The regulations will affect the forestry industry.
The fisheries industry is involved in talks with the government.

If you're using 'industry' generically (without 'the'), ensure there is no ambiguity about which industry you are referring to.

Internet terms

Use lower case for:

internet	the net	online	email
website	the web	web page	web server

Latin abbreviations

Write these Latin abbreviations in regular type, not in italics. For example:

Abbreviation	Stands for	Means
c.	circa	about a certain date
e.g.	exempli gratia	for example – only use e.g. in tables, figures, and within brackets in body text
et al.	et alii	and others
etc.	et cetera	and so forth
ibid.	ibidem	in the same work – avoid wherever possible
i.e.	id est	that is – do not use
NB	nota bene	take careful note
op. cit.	opera citato	in the work cited – avoid wherever possible

Abbreviation	Stands for	Means
v.	versus	against

However, avoid Latin words and abbreviations. Delete if possible or use everyday English words instead.

Legal cases

When citing the exact name of a legal case, italicise the title and put the year (not italicised) in brackets. For example:

New South Wales v Commonwealth (1915)

Legislation and legislative instruments

When referring to legislation, always capitalise the words:

- Act(s)
- Bill(s)
- Order(s)
- Ordinance(s)
- Proclamations
- Regulation(s)
- Rules.

Use the full title of legislation or legislative instruments at first mention. Define the short title in brackets and use the short title for subsequent mentions. For example:

The Exposure Draft Export Control (Plants and Plant Product) Rules 2020 (draft Plant Rules) set out the proposed Plant Rules. Under the draft Plant Rules...

Acts and Ordinances

Capitalise and italicise the titles of Acts and Ordinances where they include the year of passage. Include the Act's full title and year the first time it appears. Subsequently, capitalise the title but do **not** italicise it if the year is not included. For example:

the *Biosecurity Act 2015*
the *Christmas Island Casino Control Ordinance 1988*
BUT the Biosecurity Act

If appropriate, clarify the legislation's jurisdiction. Don't italicise the jurisdiction. For example:

Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* explains how ...
The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) provides for ...
The *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth) prohibits ...

Do not italicise legislation from countries other than Australia.

Acts and Ordinances are divided into sections, subsections, paragraphs and subparagraphs. The abbreviations 's', 'ss', 'para' and 'subpara' can be used. Do not use spaces between the elements of the section. For example:

section 73A	s 73A
subsection 73A(2)	ss 73A(2)
paragraph 73A(2)(a)	para 73A(2)(a)
subparagraph 73A(2)(a)(i)	subpara 73A(2)(a)(i)

Bills

Capitalise but do not italicise the titles of Bills. Include the year of presentation to parliament, because occasionally the same Bill has different versions. For example:

Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011

Bills are divided into clauses, subclauses, paragraphs and subparagraphs.

Legislative instruments

Capitalise but do not italicise the titles of Orders, Proclamations, Regulations, Rules and other legislative instruments. For example:

the Basin Plan 2012
 the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956
 The Export Control (Fees) Amendment Orders 2011 (No. 1) and the Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Amendment Orders 2011 (No. 1) are made under the Export Control (Orders) Regulations 1982.

Regulations are divided into regulations (lower case), subregulations, paragraphs and subparagraphs. The abbreviations 'reg', 'regs', 'subreg' and 'subregs' can be used. For example:

The Copyright Regulations, regs 18–19, ...

Lists

Bullet, number and letter lists

Use bullet lists to summarise key information and to break up large chunks of text. Ideally, keep points short (maximum 2 lines) and use them to highlight key information (maximum 8 bullets). Try to keep the levels of bullet lists to a maximum of 2. Too many levels can be disruptive for readers and create formatting problems.

Use bullets instead of numbers or letters for lists except when showing a hierarchy or chronology. When citing the list in the document, use numbered lists. List items in alphabetical order unless they are in a specific order, such as size.

Use the List Bullet and List Number styles in our [accessible Word templates](#), not the bullet options in the Paragraph group in the Home ribbon. Find out more about [making accessible Word documents](#).

Punctuating and structuring lists

Lists with only one level begin with a lead-in sentence, followed by a colon. The final point closes with a full stop. Ensure all the points that follow the lead-in are parallel in structure – the reader should be able to read the lead-in and then each point as a well-formed sentence. For example:

The support includes:

- loss-of-income relief
- monetary assistance
- relocation allowance.

NOT

The support includes:

- loss-of-income relief
- monetary assistance
- you can also benefit from relocation allowance.

[The third item in this list is not structurally consistent. It does not meet the lead-in test: The support includes you can also benefit from relocation allowance.]

Bullet lists with complete sentences

If all the points are complete sentences, start each with a capital letter and end each with a full stop. Introduce the points with a colon. For example:

The committee considered several suggestions:

- Officers should develop guidelines for future investigations.
- Management should provide training in a range of investigative skills.
- Research should be funded in the 3 priority areas.

Number lists with complete sentences

Only use number lists for hierarchical or chronological information (like instructions). Start each point with a capital letter and end each with a full stop. Introduce the points with a colon. For example:

To complete your end-of-cycle performance review:

- 1) Write your self-assessment against each criterion in your work plan.
- 2) Choose your self-rating in Aurion.
- 3) Book an appraisal discussion with your supervisor.

Bullet lists with full paragraphs

In some internal documents, full paragraph bullet lists are standard. However, do not use this style in documents for public release.

Use succinct language and ensure paragraphs are of similar length and structure. Start each sentence with a capital letter and end each with a full stop.

Ensure bullet points do not break across pages. Avoid separating the lead-in sentence and bullet points across pages. Do not have more than one paragraph under each bullet point so the reader does not lose the connecting thread.

Bullet lists with incomplete sentences

If each point consists of, or begins with, an incomplete sentence or clause, do not use an initial capital. Do not use punctuation at the end of points that are not full sentences – except for the last point, which takes a full stop to show the series is complete. For example:

Bullets with incomplete sentences

Assistance is available if:

- you achieved a ‘distinction’ average
- you completed your studies before 2009.

Bullets with incomplete clauses

Assistance is available in several forms:

- advisory services
- equipment or environmental modifications
- financial.

If possible, avoid mixing incomplete and whole sentences by rewriting the text. For example:

Assistance is available in several forms:

- advisory services
- equipment or environmental modifications
- financial, including income support and specialist disability allowances.

[All items in the list are incomplete sentences.]

NOT Assistance is available in several forms:

- advisory services
- equipment or environmental modifications
- financial – income support and specialist disability allowances fall into this category.

[The last item in this list includes a whole sentence, but the others are incomplete.]

Do not add ‘and’ before the last point. The format, line spacing and wording of the lead-in are enough to show the relationship between the items.

The List Bullet style in our templates aligns the bullet or numbered points with the left-hand margin. Line spacing is built into List Bullet style.

If the items in the list are alternatives, show this through a carefully worded lead-in that includes ‘either’. If the list has 2 or more items, add a comma and the word ‘or’ at the end of the second-last line in the list.

For example:

Applications must be accompanied by either:

- a current drivers licence
- a tax return, or
- a valid passport.

Number lists with incomplete sentences

Use List Number style in our templates for hierarchical or chronological lists only. Use an introductory clause followed by a colon, an initial capital letter for each entry and no full stop (or other terminating punctuation). For example:

The top 7 items seized at the border were:

- 1) meat
- 2) pome fruit
- 3) goods/footwear/packaging
- 4) other fruit and fruit products
- 5) seeds
- 6) plant products
- 7) citrus.

Bullet and number lists with 2 levels

Use a colon only at the end of the lead-in that introduces first-level points (List Bullet or List Number style in our templates). Use a full stop only after the last item in the list. For example:

These features can be summarised as:

- physical characteristics
 - considerable climatic variability
 - extensive coral reefs and offshore islands
- ecosystem characteristics
 - many unique species of plants and animals
 - limited and highly variable water resources.

AND

These features can be summarised as:

- 1) physical characteristics
 - a) considerable climatic variability
 - b) extensive coral reefs and offshore islands
- 2) ecosystem characteristics
 - a) many unique species of plants and animals
 - b) limited and highly variable water resources.

Lists in sentences

Ensure items in a list have the same grammatical construction. Make all the items nouns, noun phrases or clauses but don't mix different elements. For example:

The committee discussed *prices, availability and quality*.

[listed elements in italics are all nouns]

The committee discussed *the milk report, the review panel's decisions and the committee members' leave plans for July*.

[listed elements in italics are all noun phrases]

The committee discussed deadlines for *writing, editing and publishing* the final report.

[listed elements in italics are all verbs]

The committee discussed *how the report needed to be produced, to whom it would be circulated and when it would be made available*.

[listed elements in italics are all clauses]

NOT The committee discussed the milk report, the review panel's decisions and when it would be made available.

[list contains 2 noun phrases and one clause]

When listing points, be consistent. For example:

(1), (2), (3) **NOT** one, two, three

first, second, third **NOT** firstly, second, third

firstly, secondly, thirdly **NOT** first, secondly, thirdly

Measurements

Use figures not words for the numbers in measurements. Use a symbol not a word for the measurement, unless the meaning could be confused.

Use a non-breaking space (Ctrl + Shift + Space) between the number and the symbol to keep them together on the same line, but do not insert a space between the number and '%' or '°C'.

For example:

8% **NOT** 8 per cent, eight per cent or 8 percent

3 km **NOT** 3 kilometres

BUT 3 metres **NOT** 3 m (where the meaning could be confused with 3 million)

If using the symbol in a table, use the forward slash. Use 'per' or 'a(n)' only when writing out measurements in words. For example:

25 km/h **NOT** 25 km per hour

25 kilometres an hour **NOT** 25 kilometres/hour

Capitalise the symbol if it represents a proper noun. For example:

15°C

Use these symbols for the measurement of data storage:

KB for kilobyte(s)
 MB for megabyte(s)
 GB for gigabyte(s)

Measurement symbols do not take a plural, but the names of units take a plural. For example:

1 kilogram 25 kilograms
 1 metre 1.5 metres
 2 kg [in tables and HTML] **NOT** 2kgs

However, the measurements hertz, lux and siemens do not change in the plural. For example:

10 kilohertz 3 lux 1.5 siemens

Write most measurement units in lower case but capitalise Celsius. For example:

megatonnes litres million billion **BUT** Celsius

Use maximal caps for short forms of gigalitres and megalitres (as per Murray–Darling Basin Authority) and for measurements of data storage. For example:

2,000 ML for megalitres 2,000 GL for gigalitres **BUT** 200 mL for millilitres
 435 KB for kilobytes 8.5 MB for megabytes

For minus numbers with a symbol, use an unspaced minus sign rather than a hyphen. To create the minus sign, use the unicode (2212, Alt + X) not an en rule. For example:

–3% –8°C

Ministers' titles

In the full title, the title precedes the name of the minister. Use 'Minister for' **not** 'Minister of'. For example:

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Honourable Murray Watt

'Honourable' can be abbreviated to 'Hon' without a full stop. For example:

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Hon Murray Watt

When referring to the minister's portfolio responsibility, include only the relevant portfolio. For example:

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt

Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Hon Murray Watt

In subsequent references to the minister use either:

Minister Watt said ...
The minister said ...

Use lower case for generic or plural references. For example:

The minister said ...
State and territory ministers agreed ...

Minus sign

Use an unspaced minus sign (2212, Alt + X) for negative numbers and a spaced minus sign for simple formulas or equations. For example:

-42 [minus 42] always in tables
farm cash income: total cash receipts – total cash costs
15 – 5 = 10

‘n/a’ (‘not applicable’ or ‘not available’)

Use ‘n/a’ in tables, figures, notes and where space is generally limited. Define the meaning of n/a in the table or figure note. For example:

n/a Not applicable. **OR n/a** Not available.

Otherwise use the words ‘not applicable’ or ‘not available’. Do not use ‘na’ or ‘N/A’.

Names – Australian Government products and systems

Use the full name of the product or system the first time, followed by the acronym/initialism in brackets. Use the acronym/initialism consistently afterwards. Use these standardised names. For example:

Agriculture Import Management System (AIMS)
Biosecurity Import Conditions system (BICON)
Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS)
Next Export Documentation system (NEXDOC)
Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS)
Integrated Cargo System (ICS)
Manual of Importing Country Requirements (Micor)
Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS)
Parliamentary Document Management System (PDMS)
Plant Export Management System (PEMS)

Tracking Animal Certification for Export system (TRACE)

Names – organisations

Use the spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and general formatting used by the organisation itself. Refer to the organisation's website, copyright details or letterhead to establish the correct form. For example:

beyondblue	Snooks & Co.
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Meat & Livestock Australia
Victorian Farmers Federation	National Farmers' Federation

Some organisations favour the short form of their name. For example:

CSIRO **NOT** Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
 FAO **NOT** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Only use capitals for the full title of the organisation or for a specific element that identifies the organisation completely. For example:

Full name (maximal capitalisation)	Part-name or short form containing specific identifying elements (capitalised)	Short or generic term (lower case)
the Commonwealth Bank Westpac Banking Corporation	the Commonwealth and Westpac banks	the banks
the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	DAFF	our, us, we
the Embassy of the United States of America	the American Embassy	the embassy
the Port of Newcastle [administrative body]	port of Newcastle [location]	the port
the Reserve Bank of Australia	the Reserve Bank	the bank

Generally, treat organisations as singular. For example:

The committee is considering the report.
NOT The committee are considering the report.

Names – people and position titles

Capitalisation

Use the correct name and title of any person mentioned; double-check with an authoritative website. Use initial capital letters for the position title when the full official title is used. In most cases, use lower case where the full title is not given. For example:

Full official title (maximal capitalisation)	Short title (lower case)
the Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	the deputy secretary
the Australian Ambassador to Japan	the Australian ambassador in Tokyo the Australian ambassador the ambassador
the Chancellor of the Australian National University	the university chancellor
the Member for Barker	the member
NOT the Federal Member for Barker – this is not the official title	
Minister [family name]'s office	the minister's office
the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	the secretary
Senator Jacqui Lambie	the senator

For example:

According to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry ...
 The minister's view is shared by ...
 The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry invites you ...
 The secretary will meet with senior staff ...

These positions are considered to be equivalent to full titles so should be capitalised:

the Attorney-General
 the Governor-General
 the Leader of the Opposition
 the Premier of Victoria, the Premier
 the President of the United States of America, the President
 the Prime Minister of Australia, the Prime Minister
 the Queen
 the Treasurer

When writing about previous incumbents, do not capitalise the position title. For example:

When John Howard became prime minister ...
 She served as premier for a decade.
 He is supported by the former secretary of the then Department of Agriculture.

Use lower case for plural references. For example:

the premiers of Victoria and New South Wales

Commas with position titles

Do not use commas between the title and the name when the job title uniquely identifies the person or when the title is introduced without 'the'. For example:

Secretary Adam Fennessy will speak at the conference.
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt is expected to announce a revised policy.

When referring to the job title and the person's name, use paired commas around the person's name. Use commas between the title and the name when the title is introduced with 'the'.

For example:

The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Adam Fennessy, will speak at the conference.
[the secretary – who happens to be Adam Fennessy – will speak ...]
The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt, will announce a revised policy.
[the minister – who happens to be Murray Watt – will announce ...]

Titles

The advice in this section applies to all writing other than correspondence. For advice on using titles in correspondence, refer to the [Correspondence guide](#).

Use a person's position title (if relevant) and full name the first time a person is mentioned in a document. Insert titles other than 'Mr', 'Ms', 'Mrs' and 'Miss'. For example:

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Minister Watt, said ...
The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Adam Fennessy, said ...
The ABARES Executive Director, Dr Jared Greenville, said ...
Local farmer Meredith Jones said ...
Acting Director of Stakeholder Engagement, Carla Ginoni, said ...

Subsequently use their preferred title and family name. For example:

Minister Watt said ...
Mr Fennessy said ...

In a list of board members or award recipients, insert titles other than ‘Mr’, ‘Ms’, ‘Mrs’ and ‘Miss’, or just use their names if you are unsure of their title. For example:

Richard Clark
Dr Lidia Borsalino
Professor Robert Lewis

Avoid using the short form of the word ‘acting’. If space is limited, follow this approach:

A/g Director Carla Ginoni said ...
A/g Director Ginoni said ...
Carla Ginoni is the A/g Director of Stakeholder Engagement [where full title is used]
BUT Carla Ginoni has been appointed acting director [where full title is not used – generic]

Names – plants, animals and other organisms

Common and scientific names

Generally use lower case for common names unless they contain a proper noun, a registered trademark or a specialised term that is always capitalised. For example:

Norfolk Island pine orange-breasted fig-parrot

However, some classification systems use title case for common names.

Norfolk Island Pine Orange-breasted Fig-parrot

Always check your business area’s preferred specialist databases or the relevant reference (e.g. international agreement) and consult subject matter experts to ensure you are using the correct common name and capitalisation convention.

To avoid confusion, when referring to a specific species, do not use a common name that applies to several other species. If the species has more than one common name, ensure that you use the name that is familiar to the target audience. Insert the scientific name in brackets after the common name at first mention. Then use the common name for all other references. Italicise the scientific name (genus and species) of plants, animals and other organisms. For example:

Orange-breasted Fig-parrot (*Cyclopsitta guliemitertii*) **then** Orange-breasted Fig-parrot
brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) also known as BMSB **then** brown marmorated stink bug **or** BMSB

Do not use common names if you are drafting briefs, guidelines or legislative instruments – other than for clarification. Some legislative instruments written before 2009 use common and scientific names in threatened species listings. When referring to this legislation, use the common and scientific name of a species together, as they appear in the instrument. For example, in this entry from the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*:

Leadbeater’s Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*)

Use lower case and no italics for common names that refer to a group of species. If the common name contains the names of people or places, capitalise that part of the name. For example:

borers whiting
BUT European house borer King George whiting

If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander common name is used, include a reference to the relevant language group. For example:

Pittosporum angustifolium (Gumbi Gumbi in Gamilaraay)

Italicise the scientific name, but only capitalise the genus name. For example:

Botany

Genus *Eucalyptus*

Species *Eucalyptus marginata*

The genus *Acacia* has over 1,000 species. One of the best known is *Acacia baileyana*.

Zoology

Genus *Blatta*

Species *Blatta orientalis*

When a binomial species name appears subsequently at the start of a sentence, render it in full. For example:

The European shore crab, *Carcinus maenas*, has been introduced to southern temperate Australia. *Carcinus maenas* is known to feed extensively on bivalves, gastropods and polychaetes.

But generally, when a genus name is repeated, abbreviate it to the first letter and use a non-breaking space. For example:

Pristipomoides multidens and *P. typus* are tropical snapper species found off the coast of northern Australia.

Some journals also prefer the full species name to be used at the first mention in each section and in captions and headings.

Capitalise genus and subgenus. Italicise genus, subgenus, species, subspecies and variety.

Do not italicise or capitalise the abbreviation for species ('sp./spp.') or for subspecific or varietal names (e.g. 'subsp.' and 'var.'). These terms are usually abbreviated:

Acacia leucoxylada has 2 subspecies: subsp. *leucoxylada* and subsp. *argentinaefolia*.
A. leucoxylada subsp. *leucoxylada*
Acacia spp.

Do not italicise scientists' names, commercial names or trademarks in a species name. For example:

Avena sativa var. Bannister
Pharmachus mocinno mocinno De la Llave

For named serovars (serotypes), the word 'serovar' and the serovar name are not italicised and the first letter of the name is capitalised. When a serovar name is repeated, abbreviate the word 'serovar' to 'ser.' and put the serovar name in full. For example:

Researchers isolated *Leptospira biflexa* serovar Patoc from stream water. From this source, they sequenced 2 strains of *L. biflexa* ser. Patoc: the Paris strain and the Ames strain.

Specialist databases

- [Atlas of Living Australia](#)
- [Australian Algae NSL Services](#)
- [Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme](#)
- [Australian Faunal Directory](#)
- [Australian Fungi NSL Services](#)
- [AusMoss NSL Services](#)
- [Australian Natural Heritage Assessment Tool](#)
- [Australian Plant Census](#) (for vascular plants)
- [Australian Plant Name Index](#) (for vascular plants)
- [Bryophytes of Australia](#)
- [Catalogue of Life](#)
- [Flora of Australia](#) (for vascular plants)
- [Lichens NSL Services](#)
- [Pest and Disease Repository](#)
- [Species Profiles and Threats Database](#)
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA) [PLANTS Database](#)
- [WoRMS – World Register of Marine Species](#)

Viruses and diseases

Do not capitalise common names of diseases and viruses unless they contain a proper name. For example:

lumpy skin disease	foot-and-mouth disease	myrtle rust	monkeypox
African swine fever	bovine Johne's disease	Hendra virus	

In virus classification the names of orders to genus take particular suffixes; they are also capitalised and italicised. The species name is in lower case and is not italicised. For example:

Virus classification	Suffix	Example: rabies
Order	–virales	<i>Mononegavirales</i>
Family	–viridae	<i>Rhabdoviridae</i>
Subfamily	–virinae	n/a
Genus	–virus	<i>Lyssavirus</i>
Species	n/a	rabies

n/a Not applicable.

Use an initialism to abbreviate a virus serovar (serotype) if it is mentioned repeatedly. For example:

bluetongue virus serotype 9 BTV-9
NOT BTV serotype 9 or bluetongue virus-9

Always define the initialism first. Do not abbreviate species.

Numbers

Use figures not words when the focus is on the number of elements. For example:

3 farms 23 people 12 days

Some fonts make it difficult to distinguish between the lower-case ‘l’ and upper-case ‘l’ and the number ‘1’. Use ‘one’ rather than ‘1’ unless the focus is on comparing figures. For example:

Australia is one of the most food secure countries in the world.
BUT from 1 tonne to 20 tonnes

Don’t begin a sentence with a figure. For example:

Twenty-five years ago biodiversity was unheard of.
NOT 25 years ago biodiversity was unheard of.

Where numbers occur consecutively, express one as a word and one as a figure if possible. Consider the focus of the sentence. In this example, the focus is on ‘3 cows’:

3 five-year-old cows

Where a noun is followed by a number, use figures. For example:

Chapter 3 Figure 9 milestone 3

In any kind of writing, give the units in figures. Abbreviate measures when using a number. For example:

Sums of money
45.50 \$10.00 or \$10 \$10,000 US\$5 million
Percentages
5%

Dates

7 August 2022

Times

10:30 am 72 hours

Fractions

7½ years ago

Weights and measures

120 kg 5 mm 50 g 16 m 2 ha

Temperatures

15°C -7°C 0.5°C

Thousands, millions and billions

Generally, write out thousands using figures. Use a comma for 1,000 and above. For example:

The project directly influenced 4,500 people out of a target group of 10,250.
The total project cost of \$15,000 includes \$6,000 of in-kind support.

For numbers in the millions or billions, generally write out the word 'million' or 'billion', using a non-breaking space between the figure and the word. In tables, the symbol 'm' for million can be used, without a space. For example:

\$2 million 54 million people 67m [in tables]
between \$2 billion and \$5 billion \$2 billion to \$5 billion

Always right-align columns that contain all numerals. For example:

Category	Price per unit (\$)
Widgets	1,000
Gadgets	19,000
Other	220,750

Numbers when linked

Hyphenate expressions that link numbers and nouns as compound objectives. For example:

4-stage program 30-year-old harvester
BUT The harvester was 30 years old.

Numbers in ordinal form

In general text, use words from first to ninth and figures from 10th onward. Do not put the abbreviated ordinal in superscript. For example:

the sixth meeting the 25th student the 21st century

Parliament and associated terms

Capitalise 'parliament' and associated terms only in full formal titles. Do not capitalise when the term is used generically or as an adjective, such as 'the parliament' or 'the parliament building'.

For example:

the Parliament of Australia	Parliament House
the Commonwealth Parliament	the SA Parliament
the Parliamentary Library	2022 Parliamentary Sitting Calendar

Use lower case for plural references. For example:

the Victorian and SA parliaments

Always capitalise references to the Senate and the House of Representatives, part or full, and the equivalent bodies in the states and territories. Capitalise 'House', meaning either parliamentary chamber, but be careful to distinguish between the Senate and the House of Representatives.

For example:

The Bill was debated and passed in the Senate today. The House of Representatives will vote on it tomorrow.

The Legislative Assembly will vote on the matter tomorrow. The Assembly ...

The Bill was debated for 12 hours straight in both Houses.

For other common parliamentary terms, follow these examples:

Budget estimates
 first reading, second reading, third reading
 questions on notice (QoNs)
 Senate estimates
 question time
 royal assent

Plain English

Plain English is a writing style that readers can understand in one reading. It combines clear, concise expression, logical structure and good document design.

Writing in plain English is Australian Government policy. Whether you are writing letters, emails, briefs, minutes, reports, speeches or publications, follow these principles:

- Respect your readers and write to meet their needs.
- Organise your documents and plan before you write.
- Use short, everyday words where they match your meaning (such as 'use' instead of 'utilise').
- Make your average sentence 15 to 20 words long.
- Edit yourself ruthlessly and seek a second opinion.
- Prefer the active voice.

- Use powerful verbs.
- Consider using personal pronouns.
- Always check your writing carefully.
- Follow the design and layout of our Word templates.

Plurals

The plural of most English nouns is formed by adding 's' or 'es'. This also applies to proper names – the Smith family become the Smiths, the Jones family become the Joneses and the James family become the Jameses.

For the plural of foreign words, use the [Macquarie dictionary](#) for the preferred form.

Only use the suffix 'ae' for words associated with science. For example:

larva larvae

Use these plural forms:

Singular	Plural
appendix	appendixes [not appendices]
consortium	consortiums [not consortia]
datum	data
forum	forums
index	indexes [not indices]
medium/media	media
memorandum	memorandums

Some words are always in the plural form and take a plural verb. For example:

premises [buildings] are ... goods are ... earnings were ...

For more departmental spelling preferences, see [Spelling](#).

'point of entry' or 'port of entry'

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, a 'first point of entry' refers to specified activities at a particular location. For example:

Use first point of entry **NOT** first port of entry **or** quarantine proclaimed port

'post-biosecurity' and 'post-border' detections

Use a hyphen in 'post-biosecurity' and 'post-border'.

'post-biosecurity detection'

This occurs when a pest or disease that has remained in or on imported goods or conveyances is detected:

- beyond the biosecurity intervention point, or

- in a consignment of goods that have passed through or were never subject to biosecurity controls.

Use a hyphen in 'post-biosecurity'. For example:

A post-biosecurity detection occurred when an importer, who was unpacking a container of imported goods that had been cleared through biosecurity, found khapra beetle in the cardboard packaging.

'post-border detection'

This occurs when an exotic pest or disease is detected after it has moved from imported goods into the surrounding environment. These detections are managed across Australia under deeds and arrangements.

Use a hyphen in 'post-border'. For example:

The importer rang the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline to report a post-border detection after finding brown marmorated stink bug in vegetation outside their premises.

Postnominals

Initials placed after a person's name – postnominals – show a person's qualifications, rank, status or any awards they hold. Australian honours, or 'standard postnominals', are awarded by the Australian Government.

Include postnominals after the person's name in all formal references to them.

The government's [It's an Honour](#) website lists 55 Australian honours and their postnominals. The most common are those in the Order of Australia – for example, Companion of the Order of Australia (AC), Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) and Member of the Order of Australia (AM). People are 'appointed' to the Order of Australia as a member, officer or companion. They do not 'receive' the/an Order of Australia.

Within the Order of Australia, the highest award is the only postnominal used. For example, if Ms Ornella Ricci has received the OAM, the AM and the AC, she should be addressed as Ms Ornella Ricci AC.

Academic qualifications ('occasional postnominals') usually occur only in academic correspondence or where the qualifications are cited as evidence of expertise. Examples are:

BA PhD LLB BSc DLitt

In address blocks, write postnominals without full stops and separated by a space (no commas). For example:

Dr Ornella Ricci AC LLB

Within the body of a document, when referring to somebody who has more than one postnominal, separate the list of their honours from their name with paired commas. For example:

The inquiry will be led by Dr Hilda Smith, AC LLB, and will invite public submissions ...

If an individual has only one postnominal, do not use commas. For example:

The inquiry will be led by Dr Suyin Spall AC and will invite public submissions ...

Correct sequence

If a person holds an Australian honour, write that postnominal in the order of precedence outlined in the 'Order of wearing' section on [It's an Honour](#).

Next in priority, place any postnominals for Queen's Counsel (QC) or Senior Counsel (SC) and Justice of the Peace (JP), in that order.

Then write any other postnominals in this order:

- university degrees and diplomas
- membership of professional associations
- membership of parliament.

For example:

Dr Hilda Smith AC SC JP LLB FRACGP MP

See the parliamentary website of the relevant jurisdiction for details on the postnominals that may be used for particular parliamentarians. Use the [Parliament of Australia ministry list](#) to check the full titles of Australian Government ministers. For example:

The Hon Julie Collins MP

Programs, plans, policies and projects

Use 'program', not 'programme'.

Capitalise the full names of government programs, plans, policies and projects. Also capitalise part-names that remain specific and contain all necessary keywords. Do not capitalise generic elements.

For example:

Full name	Part-name	Short or generic term (lower case)
the Crown-of-thorns Starfish Control Program	the COTS Control Program	the program
the Murray–Darling Basin Plan	the Basin Plan	the plan

Do not italicise the titles unless referring to a document of the same name published in print or on the web. For example:

When referring to the plan or strategy	When referring to the published document
Reef 2050 Plan	<i>Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan</i>

When referring to the plan or strategy	When referring to the published document
Australia's Strategy for Nature	<i>Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019 to 2030</i>

Reproduce exactly the name, spelling, capitalisation and punctuation of government programs. Check whether 'program' is part of the name, in which case it also takes an initial capital. Use 'programme' if it forms part of the official program name. For example:

Biosecurity Business Grants Program
Emissions Reduction Fund
National Heritage List
Rural Research and Development for Profit
Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture
Stronger Communities Programme
World Heritage List

Do not capitalise the words 'funding', 'grant' or 'allowance' for funding made under a program. For example:

Interim Farm Household Allowance payment Farm Finance assistance

Publications

Italicise and use minimal capitalisation for the titles of reports, books, booklets and brochures, including draft publications. For example:

Our *Style guide* is based on the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*.
Yesterday I read the parliamentary report *Milking it for all it's worth: competition and pricing in the Australian dairy industry* in its entirety.
The draft report *Editors: what are they good for?* mounts a robust defence of editors.

Where only part of the specific title is cited, italicise and use minimal capitalisation – so long as the full title has already appeared in the text. If a generic title is used, do not italicise or capitalise. For example:

Full name (minimal capitalisation)	Part-name containing specific identifying elements (minimal capitalisation)	Short or generic term (lower case)
the <i>Style manual for authors, editors and printers</i>	the 6th edition of the <i>Style manual</i>	the manual
the <i>Milking it for all it's worth</i> report	the <i>Milking it</i> report	the report
the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> article	the <i>Herald</i> article	the article

Use an initial capital for each word in the titles of periodicals, including journals and newspapers. For example:

Business Review Weekly *Courier-Mail*

For web content, do not use italics for publications if they are hyperlinked. Use italics if publications are not hyperlinked. For example:

ABARES announced the release of the report [Agricultural commodities, March quarter 2019](#). [hyperlinked]

The [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry annual report 2022–23](#) is published in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. [hyperlinked]

The *People Strategy 2019 to 2023* complements and supports our strategic priorities. [not hyperlinked]

Quotation marks

Use curly (') not straight (') quotes for all content. Use single quotation marks for all quotations, whether full or incomplete sentences. Only use double quotation marks for quotations within quotations. For example:

The officer responded, 'Exporters I've spoken to have said, "The new program saves us time and money"', and they've endorsed it fully'.

Media releases use a different style for quotation marks. To write a media release, follow the advice of the [Media team](#).

Quoting from sources

To quote a source, use single quote marks and place the closing quotation mark before the full stop. For example:

Martin (2003) suggests 'industry would suffer if such a policy change were implemented'.

If the citation is more than 30 words or runs for more than 3 lines, set it as a block quotation. Introduce it with a colon, indent the left-hand margin of the quotation block and do not use quotation marks. Place the reference in brackets after the final punctuation for the quotation and do not use full stops in or after the reference. For example:

The study found that:

Improved crop varieties and cultural practices suited to the soils and climate of central Brazil have helped large scale mechanised agriculture expand into previously undeveloped interior regions. (Agriculture and Food Policy Group 2006)

If words from a quotation are omitted, use a spaced ellipsis (Ctrl + Alt + .) to show this. For example:

The study found that in Brazil:

Improved crop varieties and cultural practices ... have helped large scale mechanised agriculture expand into previously undeveloped interior regions. (Agriculture and Food Policy Group 2006)

Use an ellipsis at the beginning or the end of a quotation if original text is omitted. Do not place a full stop after an ellipsis. See also the [References guide](#).

Quoting full sentences

Place the closing quotation mark before the full stop (or other terminating punctuation) if the sentence has a carrier expression (such as ‘she said’). For example:

When interviewed, the survey respondent said, ‘I’ve invested in solar technology’.
The officer responded, ‘Exporters I’ve spoken to have endorsed the program’.

Place the closing quotation mark after the full stop if the sentence does not have a carrier expression. For example:

‘I’ve invested in solar technology.’
‘Exporters I’ve spoken to have endorsed the program.’

Quoting incomplete sentences

Do not use an introductory comma or an initial capital letter (unless the quote begins with a name or official title) for incomplete quotations. For example:

The minister said the report was ‘an indictment of the system and its processes’.

Referencing

Use the author–date referencing system (the ‘Harvard AGPS’ style) for citations, as set out in the [References guide](#). Do not use footnotes or endnotes.

Semicolons

Use semicolons sparingly. Do not use semicolons at the end of bullet, number or letter points.

Use a semicolon to separate items in a series if they are long or also contain commas. For example:

The committee included members from Clovelly, a suburb of Sydney; Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay; and Columbus, a town in Ohio, United States.

Don’t use a semicolon to introduce a series or explanation. Use a colon instead. For example:

In looking at the proposal, I wish to examine 3 things: background and context, major themes and the tasks still ahead of us.

NOT In looking at the proposal, I wish to examine 3 things; background and context, major themes and the tasks still ahead of us.

Ships and planes

Capitalise and italicise the names of specific ships, aircraft and other vehicles. Do not use italics for the article (‘a’, ‘an’, ‘the’) or for the abbreviation. For example:

RSV *Nuyina* is Australia's new Antarctic science and resupply vessel.
The MV *Oceanic Viking* was an armed patrol vessel of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.

Use 'vessels' for ships or boats, and 'aircraft' for planes.

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, in some instances we must use 'conveyance' when referring to vessels and aircraft.

Spacing and soft returns

Use a non-breaking space (Ctrl + Shift + Space) to keep related elements such as numbers and symbols together on the same line.

For accessibility reasons, do not insert:

- more than one space between sentences in a paragraph
- a space after the final full stop in a paragraph
- word or paragraph spacing or soft returns (Shift + Enter) to modify the layout of your content.

Spelling

Ensure spelling and hyphenation are consistent within a document. Apply minimal hyphenation.

Set Word's spellchecker to Australian English and use it before finalising a document. The spellchecker is not based on the [Macquarie dictionary](#) so prefer Macquarie spellings. If the dictionary provides alternative spellings, use the first spelling listed.

In general writing, use '-ise' rather than '-ize' (e.g. realise, organise **NOT** realize, organize) and '-our' rather than '-or' (e.g. colour, harbour **NOT** color, harbor).

Reproduce any quoted material, including its spelling, exactly as it appears in the original text. Spell the full name of any official body exactly as the body itself spells it – for example, the World Trade Organization (not Organisation).

Use the [Australian Government Directory](#) to check the spelling of Australian Government agency names and the names of officers. Use the Parliament of Australia lists to check the names of [senators](#) and [members](#).

Spelling preferences

Use the [Macquarie dictionary](#) for most spelling preferences. For example:

Preferred spelling	Not/if
adviser	not advisor
agri [one word]	if noun following starts with a consonant [e.g. agribusiness]
agri- [hyphen]	if noun following starts with a vowel [e.g. agri-environment]
benefiting, benefited, targeting, targeted	not benefitting, benefitted, targetting, targetted
decision-maker, decision-making	not decision maker, decision making
fact sheet	not factsheet

Preferred spelling	Not/if
focus, focusing, focused	not focussing, focussed
forum, forums	not fora
policymaker, policymaking	not policy maker, policy making
task force	not taskforce
time frame	not timeframe
timeline	not time line
travelling, travelled, trialling, trialled	not traveling, traveled, trialing, trialed

Spelling exceptions

Use 'enquire' in the context of asking for information and 'inquire' to mean officially investigate. For example:

Use our enquiry form to submit suggestions, concerns or complaints.
The government announced a formal inquiry into the issue.

State, territory and country names

Use lower case for 'state' and 'territory' in singular or plural form. For example:

The Australian Government will continue to work with state and territory governments to implement the initiative.
The department will work with states and territories, importers and major retailers ...

Generally, spell out the names of Australian states and territories in full:

the Australian Capital Territory farms in New South Wales

However, use the short form of state and territory names if they are used as adjectives before a noun:

NSW farms SA wineries WA fisheries NT outback ACT Government

Use this form before the noun for these states and territories. For example:

Victorian farms Queensland outback Tasmanian fisheries

If an abbreviated form is part of the official name of an organisation, retain the abbreviation – for example, the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

Spell out state, territory and country names in full when using them with placenames. For example:

Narrandera, New South Wales Rockhampton, Queensland

When listing the states and territories, particularly in a table, use this order and these abbreviations:

State and territories	Abbreviation
New South Wales	NSW
Victoria	Vic.
Queensland	Qld
South Australia	SA
Western Australia	WA
Tasmania	Tas.
Northern Territory	NT
Australian Capital Territory	ACT

Generally, spell out the names of countries and groups of countries in full each time. For example:

European Union India Japan New Zealand United States

However, use the short form before the noun for these countries or markets:

EU dairy industry NZ wineries US agriculture lobby

Symbols

Symbols are internationally recognised representations of units of measurements, words and concepts. They are not abbreviations. They are written without full stops and are capitalised if the symbol represents a proper noun. For example:

12 km 75 W [watt] A\$10 5 g 10 Hz 25°C c/-

This table shows how to specify commonly used symbols in Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign as HTML character entities.

Character	Name	Keyboard shortcut	Alphanumeric value
&	Ampersand	Shift + 7	&
*	Asterisk	Shift + 8	*
¢	Cent	Alt + 0	¢
©	Copyright	Ctrl + / + c	©
°	Degree	Ctrl + Shift + 2 + spacebar	°
...	Ellipsis	Ctrl + Alt + .	…
—	Em rule	Alt + Ctrl + Num -	—
-	En rule	Ctrl + Num -	–
€	Euro	Alt + Ctrl + e	€
>	Greater than	Shift + .	>
<	Less than	Shift + ,	<
	Non-breaking space	Ctrl + Shift + spacebar	
#	Number sign [pound sign, hash]	Shift + 3	#

Character	Name	Keyboard shortcut	Alphanumeric value
½	One-half	1 / 2 + spacebar	½ ½
¼	One-quarter	1 / 4 + spacebar	¼
£	Pound	Alt + Num 163	£
'	Prime	Alt + Num 8242	′
''	Prime – double	Alt + Num 8243	″
¾	Three-quarters	3 / 4 + spacebar	¾
¥	Yen/Yuan	Alt + 0165	¥

If your document contains mathematical symbols, include this statement at the start of your document:

Accessibility

This document contains mathematical symbols. Screen reader users may need to adjust their settings to read all content in this document.

See [HTML entity list](#) for more symbols.

Tables

Use tables for tabular data. Do not use tables to control page design or create columns. Do not leave any cells blank. Follow the instructions on table formatting and table notes in [Making accessible Word documents](#).

Technical terms, colloquial words and nicknames

The use of technical terms and language depends on the audience – that is, if the audience is technical, some technical language may be appropriate but sentences should be kept simple. If the material is for the general public, avoid overusing technical terms but explain them if they are necessary.

Avoid colloquial words, nicknames, humorous words and technical terms the audience may not be familiar with. If they are essential, use quotation marks the first time. For example:

This 'time-division multiplexing' technique will provide significant benefits.

If familiar words used to describe a technical term could be confused with the familiar meaning, provide the technical definition in brackets. For example:

Symptoms of foot-and-mouth disease include the appearance of fluid-filled blisters (vesicles) on the lips, tongue and palate.

Telephone numbers

Write telephone and fax numbers following the spacing and punctuation in these examples:

Free call numbers 1800 123 456

International code	+61 2 6272 1234
Mobile	0412 123 456
Special networks	132 345
STD numbers	02 6272 1234

Temperatures

Write temperature readings in figures followed by the degree symbol (Ctrl + Shift + 2, then spacebar). Then type the upper-case letter 'C'. If the temperature is less than one degree, put a zero before the decimal point. For example:

It was hot in Rockhampton: 37°C in the shade.
15.6°C to 7°C
0.5°C

Do not use an en rule to show a span of temperature. Instead, use the word 'to'. For example:

–8°C to 4°C **NOT** –8°C–4°C
15°C to 25°C **NOT** 15°C–25°C

'that' or 'which' or 'who'

Relative clauses add information to a sentence. We use 'that', 'which' and 'who' to introduce relative clauses.

Use 'that' or 'who' (if describing a person) when the information in the clause is essential to the sentence. Do not use commas to separate the clause from the rest of the sentence. For example:

The authority rejected the recommendations **that** *industry stakeholders had put forward*. It accepted the recommendations put forward by community representatives.
[The authority rejected only those recommendations that industry had put forward.]
The managers **who** *completed the review* briefed the secretary. The other managers did not brief the secretary.
[Only the managers who worked on the review briefed the secretary.]

Use 'which' or 'who' (if describing a person) when the information in the clause is not essential to the sentence – that is, if the clause could be deleted and the sentence would retain its meaning. Always use commas to separate the clause. For example:

The authority rejected the recommendations, **which** *industry stakeholders had put forward*. Community representatives did not make any recommendations.
[The authority rejected all of the recommendations.]
The managers, **who** *completed the review*, briefed the secretary.
[All the managers worked on the review.]

Time and time spans

In general writing, use the 12-hour system. Write am and pm in lower case and without full stops. Separate the hours from the minutes with a colon, not a full stop. Use a non-breaking space between the numerals and am, pm or hrs. Two zeros are not needed to indicate full hours. For example:

9 am 9:35 am 05:30 hrs 23:00 hrs

When describing spans of time, adopt the general principles set out in [Dates](#). For example:

Time: 2 to 5 pm, Saturday 14 April
Time: 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday 14 April

In text, use 'from' and 'to' rather than an en rule. For example:

It runs from 2 to 5 pm on Saturday 14 April.
It runs from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday 14 April.
NOT It runs from 2–5pm on Saturday

If your content includes reference to a time-critical action, specify your time zone. For example:

Applications close at AEST 18:15 hrs [international audience]
Applications close at AEST 6:15 pm [domestic audience]

If your reference to time is location based, specify the city time in brackets. In most cases, use 'am' and 'pm'. For travel, scientific or military contexts, use the 24-hour system. For example:

Our office is open between 9 am and 5 pm (Adelaide time). [general audience]
Our office is open between 9:00 hrs and 17:00 hrs (Adelaide time). [travel, scientific or military context]

Trademarks

Capitalise registered trademarks, brand names and proprietary names. Do not insert trademark or registered trademark symbols. For example:

Woolmark Vegemite

Where a trademark or proprietary name has become part of the language, write it in lower case. For example:

bubble wrap [noun] google [verb] happy little vegemites [noun]

Underlining

Do not use underlining for emphasis. Underlined text is used to indicate a hyperlink, even in hard copy documents.

Writing tips

Contact your Communication team

Before you begin writing content for publication, contact your [Communication team](#). They will help you plan content that meets user needs and prepare a communication strategy if required.

Plan and structure your content

Develop your content in the correct template. See [Accessibility](#).

Organise your content into a logical structure, using headings, subheadings and bullet lists to group and highlight key information. These also help to break up content and make it easier for the user to scan.

Make sure you:

- don't use question marks, colons or full stops in headings
- use only 2 to 3 levels of headings
- don't skip heading levels
- front-load titles, headings and subheadings with meaningful keywords (not articles 'the', 'a', 'an' or question words 'how', 'what')
- keep [bullet lists](#) parallel in structure.

If you're writing for the web, you must also:

- define the purpose of the content in the first sentence of the page
- highlight a clear call to action within the first 3 to 5 sentences
- place the most important content near the top of the page.

Use the right language and voice

All users benefit from content that is simple, direct and written in [plain English](#).

Many of our users have disabilities or low literacy, speak English as a second language, have limited access to online services, or live in regions with slow internet speed.

When drafting content:

- aim for grade 5 to 9 reading level
- write in active voice (subject-verb-object)
- use inclusive language
- use personal pronouns like 'you', 'we', 'our' (not 'the department')
- avoid industry jargon
- be concise
- use simple words
- keep sentences short.

This will help users quickly and easily understand your information and take action.

Check the reading level of your content by using the free online tool [Hemingway App](#). (Don't copy sensitive or classified information onto the page, and remember to clear your content before you leave the page.)

Make content findable

Most users will find your HTML page or document through a search engine.

Search engines use a process called indexing to look for and organise content. The index is generated by algorithms, which use keywords in titles and metadata. Ensure you complete the title and author fields in the Document Properties pane of your documents (File > Info > Properties > Advanced Properties). This title must match the Heading 1 title that appears on the first page of your document.

To optimise your content for users and search engines, use keywords in your title, headings, content and link text that reflect your users' typical search terms (e.g. 'flowers' not 'floral resources').

Make page titles informative and short (under 70 characters long). Titles that are too long will get cut off by search engines.

See also [Hyperlinks](#).

Document control

The *Style guide* is maintained by the Editing team in the Communication and Media Branch.

Version	Date of issue	Author	Reason for change
1.0	July 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Updated department name and removed environment content to reflect post-MoG operational requirements.
1.1	August 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Incorporated language preferences of Minister for Indigenous Australians; updated advice on inclusive language and ministers' titles.
1.2	August 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Updated advice on scientific names.
1.3	August 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Updated advice in Countries, placenames and regions section; and updated advice in scientific names and Names – organisations section.
1.4	August 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Updated reference to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; added WoRMS – World Register of Marine Species to 'Specialist databases list'; updated internal links.
1.5	December 2022	Communication and Media Branch	Updated reference to Türkiye (formerly Turkey); email addresses and font used in Word templates.
1.6	June 2023	Communication and Media Branch	Updated reference to Southeast Asia; removed reference to and/or; added copyright page; updated spelling preferences for 'enquire' and 'inquire' and TMAID email address.
1.7	December 2023	Communication and Media Branch	Added advice about 'industry' versus 'sector'; how to use 'department' as the short form; updated advice on 'premises' and legislative instruments; time; gender classification terms; 'post-biosecurity' and 'post-border'; and links. Standardised formatting.
1.8	April 2024	Communication and Media Branch	Inserted cross-reference to 'industry' versus 'sector'; updated advice on lists; updated links to Macquarie dictionary.



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

References guide

January 2024



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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Introduction

This guide provides examples of reference and in-text citations in the author–date referencing style ('Harvard AGPS'), modified for accessibility and useability. You'll find examples for citing both online and print-only content. For more information see the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, 6th edn, chapter 12.

Embed a link behind the titles of all items that are available online. For instructions on citing a journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI), see [Journal and magazine articles](#). Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Do not use footnotes or endnotes. If you use Endnote software, deactivate the links before submitting your document for editing or publication.

Items that can be cited in text but not in reference lists

Include in-text citations of the following items, but do not include them in your reference list:

- [personal communications](#)
- [legislation](#) (Australian and international)
- [dictionaries](#)
- [short encyclopaedia entries](#).

For more information about referencing, email the Editing team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#).

Examples of reference and in-text citations

Acronyms for long corporate author names

Only use established acronyms/abbreviations for long organisation names (for example, ABARES or CSIRO). Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (GRDC 2011) The GRDC (2011) noted that ...
In references (online)	GRDC 2011, GRDC annual report 2010–11 , Grains Research and Development Corporation, Canberra, accessed 12 January 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (ISO 2011) The ISO (2011) noted that ...
In references (not online)	ISO 2011, <i>Sugar yearbook 2011</i> , International Sugar Organization, London.

Books

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Jones 2010) Jones (2010) noted that ...
In references (online)	Jones, R 2010, Green harvest: a history of organic farming and gardening in Australia , CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, accessed July 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Beale 2000) Beale (2000) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Beale, R 2000, <i>Permaculture</i> , Harvest Publishing, Sydney.

Chapters

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Books

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Henzell 2007) Henzell (2007) noted that ...
In references (online)	Henzell, T 2007, 'Working bullocks and horses', in Australian agriculture: its history and challenges , CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, accessed July 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Wu 2011) Wu (2011) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Wu, X 2011, 'Traditional Chinese farming techniques', in <i>A history of farming</i> , Jonus Publishing, Elwood, Victoria.

Edited works

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Luck 2011) Luck (2011) noted that ...
In references (online)	Luck, GW 2011, 'Demographic change and rural nature', in GW Luck, D Race & R Black (eds), Demographic change in Australia's rural landscapes: implications for society and the environment , vol. 12, Landscape series, Springer Science+Business Media, Netherlands, pp. 23–44, accessed June 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Menadue 2000) Menadue (2000) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Menadue, L 2000, 'Fish species', in FC Doust, L Craven & G Landis (eds), <i>Fishing Australia's coastal waters</i> , Camden Publishing, Sydney, pp. 20–35.

Agricultural commodities

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Brown 2020) Brown (2020) noted that ...
In references (online)	Brown, A 2020, 'Wheat', in Agricultural commodities: March quarter 2020 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5e41e0021fedb, accessed 12 July 2020.

Citing 2 or more works in an in-text citation

To cite 2 or more works in the text, organise the works alphabetically by author and use a semicolon to separate them.

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Gleeson 2013; Mifsud 2012; Zapata 2018) Gleeson (2013), Mifsud (2012) and Zapata (2018) noted that ...

Conference papers (published)

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Gleeson 2012) Gleeson (2012) noted that ...
In references (online)	Gleeson, T 2016, Where's the beef? Contending with declining herd numbers , paper presented at ABARES Outlook 2016 conference, Canberra, 1–2 March, accessed August 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Gupta 2009) Gupta (2009) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Gupta, G 2009, 'Mapping the continent', paper presented at 12th ABVNS conference, Darwin, 5 to 8 June.

Databases (online)

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (WTO 2017) The Tariff Download Facility (WTO 2017) ... The WTO (2017) provides statistics on ...
In references	WTO 2017, Tariff Download Facility , World Trade Organization, Geneva, accessed 12 January 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 2015) Data from MiCoR: Manual of Importing Country Requirements show ... (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 2015)

Item	Example
	The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (2015) provides ...
In references	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 2015, MiCoR: Manual of Importing Country Requirements , Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra, accessed 10 September 2019.

Dictionaries and short encyclopaedia entries

Do not list dictionaries or short encyclopaedia entries in the references. However, if the entry has an author by-line, cite as per [Journal and magazine articles](#). For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text (online)	The Macquarie dictionary (2020) is asking readers to nominate their Word of the year.
In text (not online)	The 1986 edition of the <i>Macquarie dictionary</i> ...
In references	not applicable

Edited works

Use 'ed.' or 'eds' after the author(s) name(s). Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (eds Stokes & Howden 2010) ... edited by Stokes & Howden (2010)
In references (online)	Stokes, C & Howden, M (eds) 2010, Adapting agriculture to climate change: preparing Australian agriculture, forestry and fisheries for the future , CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, accessed 12 July 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Menadue 2000) Menadue (2000) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Menadue, L 2000, 'Fish species', in FC Doust, L Craven & G Landis (eds), <i>Fishing Australia's coastal waters</i> , Camden Publishing, Sydney, pp. 20–35.

Forthcoming works (not yet in the process of publication)

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES forthcoming) ABARES (forthcoming) notes that ...
In references	ABARES forthcoming, <i>Groundcover modelling</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra.

In press (in process but without a publication date)

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES in press) ABARES (in press) notes that ...
In references	ABARES in press, <i>Food security</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra.

Journal and magazine articles

Use maximal capitalisation for journal and magazine titles. In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'.

Embed the URL behind the article title. Provide the online digital object identifier (DOI) – without a hyperlink – if available. Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text: one author	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2023) ABARES (2023) noted that ...
In references (html article)	ABARES 2023, Snapshot of Australia's agricultural workforce , <i>ABARES Insights</i> , issue 3, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, October, DOI: 10.25814/x21d-td14, accessed 10 January 2024.
In text: one author	Statistics show that ... (Ferrante 1998) Ferrante (1998) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Ferrante, G 1998, 'Developments in animal genetics', <i>Journal of Veterinary Science</i> , vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 12–44.
In text: 2 authors	Statistics show that ... (Rouse & Radigan 2016) Rouse and Radigan (2016) noted that ...
In references: (html article)	Rouse, T & Radigan, J 2016, What's in your hot dog? A histological comparative analysis , <i>Medical Journal of Australia</i> , vol. 205, no. 11, pp. 519–20, DOI: 10.5694/mja16.01095, accessed 15 February 2020.
In text: 2 authors	Statistics show that ... (Larssen & Chang 1970) Larssen and Chang (1970) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Larssen, P & Chang, J 1970, 'Foot-and-mouth disease', <i>Journal of Veterinary Science</i> , vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 10–30.
In text: 3 authors	Statistics show that ... (Sheng, Jackson & Gooday 2016) Sheng, Jackson & Gooday (2016) noted that ...
In references: (html article)	Sheng, Y, Jackson, T & Gooday, P 2016, Resource reallocation and its contribution to productivity growth in Australian broadacre agriculture , <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> , vol. 61, Issue 1, pp. 56–75, DOI: 10.1111/1467-8489.12137, accessed 20 March 2020.
In text: 3 authors	Statistics show that ... (Fellini, Kronski & Jao 2015) Fellini, Kronski & Jao (2015) noted that ...

Item	Example
In references (not online)	Fellini, U, Kronski M & Jao, P 2015, <i>A question of style</i> , 3rd edn, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne.
In text: 4 or more authors	Statistics show that ... (Rangan et al. 2008) Rangan et al. (2008) noted that ... OR Rangan and colleagues (2008) noted that ...
In references (html article)	Rangan, AM, Randall, D, Hector, DJ, Gill, TP & Webb, KL 2008, Consumption of 'extra' foods by Australian children: types, quantities and contribution to energy and nutrient intakes , <i>European Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i> , March, vol. 62, no. 3, pp. 356–64, DOI: 10.1038/sj.ejcn.1602720, accessed 10 January 2020.
In text: 4 or more authors	Clayborn et al. 1996 Clayborn et al. (1996) noted that ... OR Clayborn and colleagues (1996) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Clayborn, E, Kempf, T, Sato, M, Vela, O, Coen, M & McGraw, T 1996, 'Red meat diseases', <i>International Nutritionist</i> , vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 31–52.
In text: author unnamed	Statistics show that ... (<i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> , November 2012, p. 6) As noted in <i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> (November 2012, p. 6) ... According to the November 2012 issue of <i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> (p. 6) ...
In references	Do not cite in references; provide a more detailed in-text citation that includes the name of the publication (in italics and initial capital letters), month and year of publication and page number. Do not cite using 'Anonymous' or 'Anon.' as the author. If you embed a link behind the title, it must point to the page where the article is available not to the publisher's home page.

Journal and magazine articles (published online ahead of print)

Use maximal capitalisation for journal and magazine titles. In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on citing a journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI), see [Journal and magazine articles](#). For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Fischer et al. 2013) Fischer et al. (2013) noted that ... OR Fischer and colleagues (2013) noted that ...
In references (html article)	Fischer, M, Hoffmann, B, Goller, KV, Höper, D, Wernike, K & Beer, M 2013, A mutation 'hot spot' in the Schmallenberg virus M segment , <i>Journal of General Virology</i> , vol. 94 (pt 6), pp. 1,161–7, DOI: 10.1099/vir.0.049908-0 [epub ahead of print], accessed 10 January 2020.

Journal and magazine articles (supplementary issues)

Use maximal capitalisation for journal and magazine titles. In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on citing a journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI),

see [Journal and magazine articles](#). For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Dubinsky et al. 2001) Dubinsky et al. (2001) noted that ... OR Dubinsky and colleagues (2001) noted that ...
In references (portal page)	Dubinsky, P, Boor, A, Kencekova, J, Tomasovicova, O, Reiterova, K & Bielik, P 2001, Congenital trichinellosis? Case report , <i>Parasite</i> , vol. 8, no. 2 (suppl.), pp. S180–2, DOI: 10.1051/parasite/200108s2180, accessed 4 April 2020.

Journal and magazine articles (foreign language)

Use maximal capitalisation for journal and magazine titles.

For instructions on citing a journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI), see [Journal and magazine articles](#). For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Langhi & Cariou 2010) Langhi and Cariou (2010) noted that ...
In references: original and translated title (html article)	Langhi, C & Cariou, B 2010 Metabolisme du cholesterol et fonction bêta-cellulaire (Cholesterol metabolism and beta-cell function), <i>Med Sci</i> , vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 385–90, DOI: 10.1051/medsci/2010264385, accessed 10 January 2020.

Legislation

Do not list legislation in the references. Italicise full names of Acts and Ordinances unless they form part of a text link. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Under the Biosecurity Act 2009 , goods must ... or Under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2009</i> , goods must ...
In references	not applicable

Media/press releases

For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Australians are being reminded to be biosecurity aware ... (Canning 2020) Canning (2020) stated that ...
In references (online)	Canning, E 2020, Safeguarding Australia from seedy biosecurity risks , media release, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, 5 August, accessed 10 August 2020.
In text	A new policy that ... (Marinello 2009)

Item	Example
	Marinello (2009) stated that ...
In references (not online)	Marinello, M 2009, <i>Water – a diminishing resource</i> , media release, Climate Foundation, 9 April.

Multiple authors

In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on citing a journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI), see [Journal and magazine articles](#). For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text: one author	Statistics show that ... (Mullen 2007) Mullen (2007) noted that ...
In references (html article)	Mullen, JD 2007, Productivity growth and the returns from public investment in R&D in Australian broadacre agriculture , <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> , vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 351–84, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8489.2007.00392.x, accessed 10 April 2020.
In text: one author	Statistics show that ... (Ferrante 1998) Ferrante (1998) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Ferrante, G 1998, 'Developments in animal genetics', <i>Journal of Veterinary Science</i> , vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 12–44.
In text: 2 authors	Statistics show that ... (Rouse & Radigan 2016) Rouse and Radigan (2016) noted that ...
In references: (html article)	Rouse, T & Radigan, J 2016, What's in your hot dog? A histological comparative analysis , <i>Medical Journal of Australia</i> , vol. 205, no. 11, pp. 519–20, DOI: 10.5694/mja16.01095, accessed 10 January 2020.
In text: 2 authors	Statistics show that ... (Larssen & Chang 1970) Larssen and Chang (1970) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Larssen, P & Chang, J 1970, 'Foot-and-mouth disease', <i>Journal of Veterinary Science</i> , vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 10–30.
In text: 3 authors	Statistics show that ... (Sheng, Jackson & Gooday 2016) Sheng, Jackson & Gooday (2016) noted that ...
In references: (html article)	Sheng, Y, Jackson, T & Gooday, P 2016, Resource reallocation and its contribution to productivity growth in Australian broadacre agriculture , <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> , vol. 61, Issue 1, pp. 56–75, DOI: 10.1111/1467-8489.12137, accessed 16 February 2020.
In text: 3 authors	Statistics show that ... (Fellini, Kronski & Jao 2015) Fellini, Kronski & Jao (2015) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Fellini, U, Kronski M & Jao, P 2015, <i>A question of style</i> , 3rd edn, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne.

Item	Example
In text: 4 or more authors	Statistics show that ... (Rangan et al. 2008) Rangan et al. (2008) noted that ... OR Rangan and colleagues (2008) noted that ...
In references (html article)	Rangan, AM, Randall, D, Hector, DJ, Gill, TP & Webb, KL 2008, Consumption of 'extra' foods by Australian children: types, quantities and contribution to energy and nutrient intakes , <i>European Journal of Clinical Nutrition</i> , March, vol. 62, no. 3, pp. 356–64, DOI: 10.1038/sj.ejcn.1602720, accessed 10 January 2020.
In text: 4 or more authors	Clayborn et al. 1996 Clayborn et al. (1996) noted that ... OR Clayborn and colleagues (1996) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Clayborn, E, Kempf, T, Sato, M, Vela, O, Coen, M & McGraw, T 1996, 'Red meat diseases', <i>International Nutritionist</i> , vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 31–52.
In text: author unnamed	Statistics show that ... (<i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> , November 2012, p. 6) As noted in <i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> (November 2012, p. 6) ... According to the November 2012 issue of <i>Australian Stonefruit Grower</i> (p. 6) ...
In references	Do not cite in references; provide a more detailed in-text citation that includes the name of the publication (in italics and initial capital letters), month and year of publication and page number. Do not cite using 'Anonymous' or 'Anon.' as the author. If you embed a link behind the title, it must point to the page where the article is available not to the publisher's home page.

Multiple editions/issues, same publication, same or different years

List each year of publication separately, with the oldest entry first.

Arrange the items in the reference list in **alphabetical order by title** (ignore initial articles – a, an, the). Add consecutive lower-case alphabetical markers (a, b, c, etc.) after the publication year for each entry. When citing ABARES publications, include the DOI listed in the [ABARES publications library](#).

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	... the <i>Australian forest and wood products statistics</i> report (ABARES 2018a, b, 2019) ... ABARES reported ... (2014a, b, 2015)
In references (online)	ABARES 2018a, Australian forest and wood products statistics: March and June quarters 2018 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, November, DOI: 10.25814/5becfce145812, accessed 20 April 2020. —2018b, <i>Australian forest and wood products statistics: September and December quarters 2017</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra. —2019, Australian forest and wood products statistics: September and December quarters 2018 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, November, DOI: 10.25814/5cf8f713b3782, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	... the <i>Preliminary statistics</i> report (ABARES 2014a, b, 2015) ... ABARES reported ... (2014a, b, 2015)
In references (not online)	ABARES 2014a, <i>Preliminary statistics: March and June quarters 2014</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, November.

Item	Example
	—2014b, <i>Preliminary statistics: September and December quarters 2014</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, May.
	—2015, <i>Preliminary statistics: September and December quarters 2015</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, June.

Multiple volumes from the same series, same or different years

In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Carruthers, Laurence & Stich 2005–2008) Carruthers, Laurence & Stich (2005–2008) noted that ...
In references (online)	Carruthers, P, Laurence, S, & Stich, S (eds) 2005–2008, The innate mind , vols 1–2, Oxford University Press, New York, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Devi 2004–2009) Devi (2004–2009) included ...
In references (not online)	Devi, B (ed.) 2004–2009, <i>Economies of scale</i> , vols 1–3, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne.

Newspaper articles

Use maximal capitalisation for newspaper titles. Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text: author named	Statistics show that ... (Sherman 2012) Sherman (2012) noted that ...
In references (html article)	Sherman, B 2012, Finally, we are on the brink of calling for a halt to factory farming , <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 31 December, accessed 10 September 2019.
In text: author named	Statistics show that ... (Chan 2010) Chan (2010) noted that ...
In references: (not online)	Chan, D 2010, 'Organic farming', <i>The Age</i> , 20 September, accessed 2 January 2010.
In text: author unnamed	... in the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (24 May 2012, p. 12)
In references	not applicable

No date (works with no publication date or where date is uncertain)

Use full stops for n.d. (no date). Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Department of the Environment and Energy n.d.) Department of the Environment and Energy (n.d.) noted that ...
In references (online)	Department of the Environment and Energy n.d., Species targeted for eradication , Canberra, accessed 10 January 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Marchand & Huon n.d.) Marchand & Huon (n.d.) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Marchand, V & Huon, T n.d., 'Species targeted for eradication', Canberra.

Parliamentary committees

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Long investment periods ... (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2011) The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (2011) noted ...
In references (online)	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry 2011, Seeing the forest through the trees: Inquiry into the future of the Australian forestry industry , Canberra, accessed 20 April 2020.
In references (not online)	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry 2011, <i>Seeing the forest through the trees: Inquiry into the future of the Australian forestry industry</i> , Canberra.
In text	The marine environment ... (Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee 2017) ... The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee (2017) noted ...
In references (online)	Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee 2017, Increasing use of so-called Flag of Convenience shipping in Australia , Canberra, accessed 20 April 2020.
In references (not online)	Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee 2017, <i>Increasing use of so-called Flag of Convenience shipping in Australia</i> , Canberra.

Parliamentary debates and proceedings in Hansard

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Minister Watt stated that ... (Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee 2023)
In references (online)	Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee 2023, Estimates: Final , Official Committee Hansard, Canberra, 14 February, page 7, accessed 12 July 2023..
In references (not online)	Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee 2023, <i>Estimates: Final</i> , Official Committee Hansard, Canberra, 14 February, page 7.
In text	Minister Watt tabled the ... (Senate 2000)
In references (online)	Senate 2000, Journals , no. 25, 29 November, page 753, accessed 3 November 2023.
In references (not online)	Senate 2000, <i>Journals</i> , no. 25, 29 November, page 753.
In text	The ... Bill was passed (House of Representatives 2022)
In references (online)	House of Representatives 2022, Votes and Proceedings , no. 18, 27 October, page 257, accessed 18 October 2023.
In references (not online)	House of Representatives 2022, <i>Votes and Proceedings</i> , no. 18, 27 October, page 257.

Personal communications

Do not list personal communications in the references. Obtain permission from the person you are citing. Give the date of the communication.

Item	Example
In text	A representative confirmed that ... (David Summers [NSW Department of Primary Industries] 2016, pers. comm., 24 April). When interviewed on 24 April 2016 David Summers (NSW Department of Primary Industries) confirmed ...
In references	not applicable

Place of publication

If the place of publication is a major Australian city (such as Canberra or Sydney) or an internationally well-known city (such as Geneva, London, New York or The Hague,), just give the city name.

If the place of publication is in Australia but not necessarily well known, include the state name (in full). If the place of publication is overseas and not necessarily well known, include the country name.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2020) ABARES (2020) noted that ...
In references (online)	ABARES 2020, Agricultural commodities: March quarter 2020 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5e41e0021fedb, accessed 12 July 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (ed. Mayne 2008) Mayne (2008) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Mayne, A 2008 (ed.), <i>Beyond the black stump: histories of outback Australia</i> , Wakefield Press, Mile End, South Australia.

Reports (ABARES, Australian Bureau of Statistics, other government)

In your reference list, provide the names of all authors of a publication. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author name. In your in-text references to publications by 4 or more authors, use the name of the first author followed by 'et al.' or 'and colleagues'. When citing ABARES publications, include the DOI listed in the [ABARES publications library](#).

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

ABARES

Item	Example
In text: authors unnamed	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2020) ABARES (2020) noted that ...
In references (online)	ABARES 2020, Agricultural commodities: March quarter 2020 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5e41e0021fedb, accessed July 2020.
In text: authors unnamed	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2012) ABARES (2012) noted that ...
In references (not online)	ABARES 2012, <i>Timber products: statistical tables</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra.
In text: authors named	Statistics show that ... (Steven et al. 2018) Steven et al. (2018) noted that ... OR Steven and colleagues (2018) noted that ...
In references (online)	Steven, AH, Mobsby, D & Curtotti, R 2018, Australian fisheries and aquaculture statistics 2018 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5de0959d55bab, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text: authors named	Statistics show that ... (Loewe et al. 2013) Loewe et al. (2013) noted that ... OR Loewe and colleagues (2013) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Loewe, P, Norqvist, A, Salmon, B & Spawn, L 2013, <i>Australian fisheries profile</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABS 2015) According to the ABS (2015), ...
In references (online)	ABS 2015, Principal agricultural commodities, Australia, preliminary, 2016–17 , cat. no. 7111.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, accessed 4 February 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABS 1980) According to the ABS (1980), ...
In references (not online)	ABS 1980, <i>Principal agricultural commodities: Australia, preliminary, 1979–80</i> , cat. no. 7111.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Other government

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that (Dunlop & Brown 2008) ... Dunlop and Brown (2008) noted that ...
In references (online)	Dunlop, M & Brown, PR 2008, Implications of climate change for Australia's National Reserve System: a preliminary assessment , CSIRO report to the Department of Climate Change, Department of Climate Change, Canberra, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (AIHW 2012) AIHW (2012) noted that ...
In references (not online)	AIHW 2012, <i>Australia's food and nutrition</i> , Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

Same author, different years

For works by the same author but published in different years, arrange the citation and reference list in **chronological order** by date of publication. After the first reference, use 2 spaced em rules to avoid repeating the author's name.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (AHA 2012; 2013) AHA (2012; 2013) noted that ...
In references (online)	AHA 2012, Annual report 2011–12 , Animal Health Australia, Canberra, accessed 4 May 2020. — — 2018, National farm biosecurity reference manual – grazing livestock production , Animal Health Australia, Canberra, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Farms Australia 1966; 1967) Farms Australia (1966; 1967) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Farms Australia 1966, <i>Annual report 1965–1966</i> , Canberra. — — 1967, <i>Pest control</i> , Canberra.

Same author, same year

Arrange the items in the reference list in **alphabetical order by title** (ignore initial articles – a, an, the). Add consecutive lower-case alphabetical markers (a, b, c, etc.) after the publication year for each entry. When citing ABARES publications, include the DOI listed in the [ABARES publications library](#).

If the precise timing of the publication is important, you can include the month of publication at the end of the citation. If 2 publications have the same title but different months of publication, arrange them in chronological order, starting with the most recent date.

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2019a) ... (ABARES 2019b, c) ... ABARES (2019a) noted that ...
In references (online)	ABARES 2019a, Australian crop report: February 2019 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, DOI: 10.25814/5c63543a223b0, Canberra, accessed 20 April 2020. —2019b, Australian crop report: June 2019 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5cf8e645b377e, accessed 28 April 2020. —2019c, Australian crop report: September 2019 , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra, DOI: 10.25814/5d71bf5551775, accessed 18 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2013a) ... (ABARES 2013b, c) ABARES (2013a) noted that ...
In references (not online)	ABARES 2013a, <i>Groundcover inventory: June 2013</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra. —2013b, <i>Groundcover inventory: March 2013</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra. —2013c, <i>Groundcover inventory: September 2013</i> , Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra.

Same lead author, multiple authors, same year

For multiple works by groups of authors with the same lead author and published in the same year, cite the necessary number of author family names to distinguish one entry from another. In these 3 examples published in 2016, the lead author is Sheng. The first in-text citation (Sheng, Davidson et al. 2016) lists the names of only 2 of the 4 authors, separated by a comma and followed by 'et al.' This distinguishes the entry from 'Sheng & Jackson 2016' and 'Sheng, Jackson & Gooday 2016'. In the reference list, arrange the items in **alphabetical order by author**.

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Sheng, Davidson et al. 2016) ... (Sheng & Jackson 2016) ... (Sheng, Jackson & Gooday 2016) Sheng, Davidson et al. (2016) noted that ... Sheng & Jackson (2016) noted that ... Sheng, Jackson & Gooday (2016) noted that ...

Item	Example
In references (online)	Sheng, Y, Davidson, D, Fuglie, K & Zhang, D 2016, Input substitution, productivity performance and farm size , <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resources Economics</i> , vol. 60, pp. 327–47, DOI: 10.1111/1467-8489.12136, accessed 16 February 2020. Sheng, Y & Jackson, T 2016, Resource reallocation and productivity growth in the Australian dairy industry: implications of deregulation , ABARES technical research report, Canberra, July, accessed 5 March 2020. Sheng, Y, Jackson, T & Gooday, P 2016, Resource reallocation and its contribution to productivity growth in Australian broadacre agriculture , <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> , vol. 61, Issue 1, pp. 56–75, DOI: 10.1111/1467-8489.12137, accessed 16 February 2020.

Standards

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Standards Australia 1999) Standards Australia (1999) includes ...
In references (online)	Standards Australia 1999, Timber – hardwood – sawn and milled products: part 1: production specification, AS 2796.1:1999 (PDF 182 KB) , Standards Australia, New South Wales, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Standards Australia 1980) Standards Australia (1980) includes ...
In references (not online)	Standards Australia 1980, <i>Timber – hardwood – sawn and milled products: part 1: production specification, AS 2796.1:1980</i> , Standards Australia, New South Wales.

Submission to parliamentary committee

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (FFIC 2011) The FFIC (2011) noted that ...
In references (online)	FFIC 2011, The new forest industry , submission no 19 to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Inquiry into the Australian forestry industry, Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania, March, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (FCA 2012) The FCA (2012) noted that ...
In references (not online)	FCA 2012, 'Forest logging', submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Inquiry into the Australian forestry industry, Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania, March.

Theses

Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online. For instructions on hyperlinking text and URLs and citing content in formats such as PDF, see [Websites and electronic publications](#).

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Balmford 2011) Balmford (2011) noted that ...
In references (online)	Balmford, DS 2011, Spatial and temporal water quality in the River Esk in relation to freshwater pearl mussels , MSc thesis, Durham University, accessed 20 April 2020.
In text	Statistics show that ... (Daniele 2009) Daniele (2009) noted that ...
In references (not online)	Daniele, P 2009, 'Waste disposal solutions in Naples, Italy', MSc thesis, Durham University.

Unpublished internal documents

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABARES 2023) ABARES (2023) noted that ...
In references (not online)	ABARES 2023, <i>Agricultural anomalies</i> , internal report to Dryden Panel by Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Canberra. Unpublished.

Websites and electronic publications (web pages, PDFs and other formats)

If the content you are citing is available online, include a hyperlink. Don't italicise hyperlinks. Don't link directly to Word, PDF or Excel documents unless you are unable to find the html portal page. Include the day, month and year accessed if you are citing HTML, PDF, Word or Excel content that you accessed online.

To hyperlink text:

- copy the URL from the website
- select the relevant text and on the **Insert** tab, in the **Links** group, select the **Hyperlink** button
- in the **Insert Hyperlink** dialogue box, the 'Text to display:' field will automatically show the text you have selected
- in the 'Address:' field, paste in the URL
- select **OK**
- check that the link works.

See also [Databases](#) and [Newspaper articles](#).

Websites

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (ABC 2020) The department explained its policy on the ABC's Heywire program (2020).

Item	Example
	NOT
	The department explained its policy on the ABC's Heywire program (http://www.abc.net.au/heywire).
In references	ABC 2020, Heywire , Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Melbourne, accessed 4 January 2020.

Web pages

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (DAFF 2022)
	The department provides information on bringing or mailing goods to Australia (DAFF 2022).
	NOT
	The department provides information about bringing or mailing goods to Australia at https://www.agriculture.gov.au/travelling/bringing-mailing-goods .
In references	DAFF 2022, Bringing or mailing goods to Australia , Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, accessed 1 July 2022.

PDFs

In your reference list, only cite a PDF if no portal page is available. Do not insert hyperlinks to PDFs in the main body of your document.

Item	Example
In text	Statistics show that ... (Almond Board of California 2012)
	NOT
	In 2012 the Almond Board of California published 'International aflatoxin tolerances' at almonds.com/sites/default/files/content/attachments/march_2012_international_aflatoxin_tolerances.pdf .
	NOT
	In 2012 the Almond Board of California published International aflatoxin tolerances .
In references	Almond Board of California 2012, International aflatoxin tolerances (PDF 268 KB) , <i>Industry Backgrounder</i> , March, accessed 20 April 2020.

Writing print and web content

▾ On this page

- [Identify audience and purpose](#)
- [Develop content in the correct template](#)
- [Structure your content](#)
- [Use the right language and voice](#)
- [Make content findable](#)
- [Edit for style and accessibility](#)
- [Publish your updates](#)
- [Review your content regularly](#)

Writing good content starts with understanding our users – who they are and what they need to do.

Our users will scan, not read, our web pages and downloadable documents. They want to quickly find information, complete their task and leave. They need content that is clear, concise, accurate and current.

Follow these steps to plan and write content for our websites and intranet that meets user needs.

You should also consult the department's:

- [Document style guide](#)
- [Web style guide](#).

For items not covered by our guides, consult the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Identify audience and purpose

When you're updating existing content or writing a new web page or document, first identify:

- your target audience (users)
- what users need to do (task)

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- what users need to know to complete their task
- useful and relevant content to link to
- duplicated or outdated content
- related content that may also need to be updated.

Use this to inform the content and structure of your content.

Before you begin writing, contact your:

- [Internal comms account manager](#) – internal communication channels, including the intranet.
- [External comms account manager](#) – external communication channels, including the website.

They will help you plan content that meets user needs. They can also prepare a communication strategy if required.

For writing guidance, contact [s. 47E\(d\)](#) .

Develop content in the correct template

If you're publishing a PDF on the website, you must include a branded accessible Word version.

Use our [branded accessible templates](#) to structure your content.

Documents

- Audio transcript template
- Discussion paper template
- Fact sheet template
- Report template
- Short document template
- Video transcript template

Web pages

Use the Web content template to update or draft new web pages. When making an update, copy and paste the existing content into the template. Remember to make your changes with track changes turned on.

Follow the steps in [Making accessible Word documents](#).

Tip

Use a separate template for each web page.

Find the correct template

To find branded accessible department templates:

- open Microsoft Word
- go to **File > New > Agriculture** (Windows 11) or **File > New > Shared** (Windows 10)
- open the 'Print and web content' folder
- select the relevant template.

Structure your content

Use formatting elements like headings, bullet lists and hyperlinks. This will help users quickly scan and summarise the page.

Organise your content into a logical structure. Use headings, subheadings and bullet lists to group and highlight key information.

For web pages

- define the purpose of the content and our role in the first sentence of the page
- highlight a clear call to action within the first 3 to 5 sentences
- position the most important content near the top of the page.

Good information structure will help users quickly find what they need.

Tip

Start by identifying possible headings for the web page or document. Order them in a logical sequence. Move existing content under these headings. This can help you spot repetitive or redundant text.

Call to action

Include a call to action, or at least a reference to it, at the beginning of your web page.

All web content should include some kind of call to action. The call to action reflects the purpose of the page. It is what we expect the user to do with the information on the page.

Common actions might be to read a publication, submit a comment or apply for something.

Title and headings

Headings help our users (and search engines) summarise text on the page.

Make web page and document titles easy for users to understand out of context. This will ensure that search engine results are also easy to understand.

Subheadings break text into logical chunks and are read in context. So keep them short and simple.

Write meaningful page or document titles and subheadings. This will help users scan and understand your content.

Ensure you:

- avoid question headings
- don't skip heading levels
- front-load with meaningful keywords (not articles 'the', 'a', 'an' or question words 'how', 'what')
- keep wording parallel
- use sentence case (capitalise only the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns).

Paragraphs

People scan web and print content in an F-shaped pattern. They will often only read the first 2 to 3 words of a heading or paragraph.

On web pages, concise one-sentence paragraphs help users scan the page. They will also highlight key points that would otherwise be buried. This is helpful for people reading on a small screen (e.g. smart phones).

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Front-load your paragraphs with meaningful keywords to draw the user's attention.

Lists

Eye-catching text elements help break up content and highlight key points.

Bullet lists are a great way to reduce large chunks of text on your page, but don't overuse them.

Use a bullet list to draw the user's eye to the key information they need to know. Non-essential lists can remain in a sentence.

Keep each bulleted point short and the grammar parallel (e.g. start all items with a verb).

Learn more about [writing lists](#).

Hyperlinks

Include good quality hyperlinks to pages on our site and other credible websites.

Write short, meaningful text links that suggest the hyperlink's destination. Avoid vague wording like 'click here' or 'on the department's website'. This will help sighted users scan and summarise information on the page. It will also help people using screen readers to understand where the link will take them.

Link to an HTML page rather than a PDF or other electronic document. Learn more about citing electronic documents in the [References guide](#).

Use the right language and voice

All users benefit from content that is simple, direct and written in plain English.

Many of our users will be people with disability or low literacy or speak English as a second language. They may have limited access to online services. Write content that suits their needs and vocabulary.

When drafting content:

- aim at lower secondary reading level
- avoid jargon, business speak and product-driven language
- keep sentences short
- use personal pronouns like 'you', 'we', 'our' (not 'the department')
- write in an active voice (subject-verb-object).

LEX-31964 This will help users quickly and easily understand the information and take action.

Check your writing is between grade 5 to 9 readability level. Use the free online tool [Hemingway Editor App](#). Don't paste sensitive content into the app.

Make content findable

Most users will find your page or document through a search engine.

Use keywords in your title, headings, content and link text that:

- accurately describe the purpose and task of the page or document
- reflect typical user search terms (e.g. 'flowers' not 'floral resources').

Make page and document titles informative and short (under 70 characters long). This will ensure that the engines, browsers and bookmarks show only a portion of the title.

Edit for style and accessibility

Style mistakes and inconsistencies can be a distraction. They make it hard for users to concentrate on what we want them to know.

Get the style right before you send your content for approval. Follow the advice in the:

- [Document style guide](#)
- [Web style guide](#).

Ensure your content meets accessibility requirements:

- animation, sound and video – email the Video Services team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#)
- apps and HTML web pages – email the Web User Experience team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#)
- Word documents, PDF forms and Word training – email the Editing team at [s. 47E\(d\)](#)

Rules

Follow these rules for online style and accessibility:

- Don't underline text – this will confuse users who expect underlined text to be a hyperlink.
- Avoid abbreviations and initialisms – they're not findable in search engines and can be hard to comprehend.

- Only use italics for scientific names and full titles of documents, Acts and Ordinances, and never in hyperlinks.
- Include alternative text (alt text) for photographs, maps and graphs that are not described in the text. Don't use alt text for illustrative images and logos).
- Insert a non-breaking space (**Ctrl + Shift + Spacebar**) to keep digits and units of measurement on the same line (e.g. 20 kilometres).
- Style tables with a header row. Ensure all header cells have titles and no cells are blank or merged.
- Write numerals for all numbers, including 1 to 9 (where it makes sense), except when starting sentences.
- Use a comma in numbers over 1,000.
- Use symbols with numerals ('%' not 'per cent').

Learn more about writing rules in our:

- [Document style guide](#)
- [Web style guide](#).

Publish your updates

Learn how to publish content on our websites and our intranet (The Source).

See:

- [How to publish on our external websites](#)
- [How to publish on The Source](#).

You can also become an intranet author to manage and publish updates for your work area.

Review your content regularly

Print and web content that is accurate and current makes it easier for users to quickly find what they need.

Outdated information reduces the credibility of your content and leaves our clients dissatisfied. Redundant text can create confusion for users and attract irrelevant page visits. This skews website analytics, which makes them less useful when evaluating web content.

Build user confidence by regularly reviewing your web content, including downloadable documents. Ensure information is still correct and relevant. Remove or update anything that is no longer current. See more about [maintaining your online content](#).

It is your responsibility to [archive your content](#). Do this every time you remove or significantly update a web page.

Contacts



Editing

Contact us for Word formatting and accessibility training and template support

[Email the Editing team](#)



External Communication

Contact us to speak with your Communication Account Manager

[Email the External Communication team](#)



Social Media and Corporate Communication Team

Contact us for staff awareness and engagement

[Social Media and Corporate Communication Team](#)



Web User Experience

For queries about web user experience (UX)

[Email the Web User Experience team](#)



Web Publishing

Contact us for help publishing or updating content on our department's website

[Email the Web Publishing team](#)

Related websites




[Web style guide](#)



[Australian Government Style Manual](#)



[Style guide](#)

 This page is current

Writing import industry advice notices

▼ On this page

- [Cargo Consultative Committee consultation](#)
- [Preparing an import industry advice notice](#)
 - [Obtain SES approval](#)
- [Submitting an approved IIAN for publication](#)

Import industry advice notices (IIANs) are used to advise industry stakeholders of changes in departmental import policy, procedures or importing requirements. They are not substitutes for policy documents and/or web content. IIANs differ from the notices issued for exported and imported food.

Most IIANs are sent to members of the department's [Cargo Consultative Committee](#) (DCCC) for review or comment. This process is managed by the Import Industry Advice Notices team in Biosecurity Operations Division (BOD).

Where the notice is of a routine nature – such as planned system enhancements or changes to operational hours due to specific circumstances or events – DCCC members are provided with an advance copy of the notice ahead of publication.

IIANs relating to system outages are managed by the relevant business area. Forward all other IIAN requests to the BOD IIAN team to coordinate publishing at **s. 47E(d)**

Cargo Consultative Committee consultation

To ensure clear and timely messaging to industry, the department circulates IIANs to the DCCC for information or comment.

Time frames for circulation are:

- 1 business day or 8 business hours for DCCC advance notice – where an IIAN does not refer to a significant change in policy and/or process that affects industry.
- 3 business days or 24 business hours for DCCC consultation – where the IIAN informs industry of a change to policy or process that may be

contentious or sensitive or have a significant impact on industry:

- If no feedback is received after the DCCC review period, the IIAN team will publish the notice and copy in the drafting area.
- If comments are received, these will be provided to the business area owners for consideration and response directly to the DCCC member, cc'ing the Import Industry Advice Notices mailbox.
- If the IIAN is amended as a result of the DCCC consultation, it should be resubmitted with the relevant SES approval for publication.
- Immediate publication – where the notice is urgent, such as for an immediate biosecurity threat, the relevant SES lead may authorise the IIAN to bypass DCCC consultation. The IIAN team will publish the notice and send a notification email to DCCC members.

Preparing an import industry advice notice

When drafting an IIAN:

- prepare the content using the approved [Import industry advice notice template](#)
- consult with relevant business areas that may be affected by the contents of the notice
- ensure the document meets accessibility requirements, including plain English expression and adherence to departmental style guidelines.

The IIAN must:

- identify affected stakeholders
- outline the purpose of the notice, what stakeholders are being asked to do, what is changing or has changed and the impact (including benefits) on stakeholders
- reference previous consultation or related IIANs, as required
- include links to relevant web pages or documents on the departmental website, where relevant (e.g. BICON cases, FAQs or process guides)
- include contact details for industry to respond with queries, such as a hotline or departmental switchboard number and a business area mailbox (hyperlinked).

The IIAN template includes specific styles for formatting to ensure IIANs have a similar look and feel. Use the vertical Styles menu (Alt + Ctrl + Shift + S) to apply headings and other template styles. Use 'Emphasis' style to italicise the full names of Acts and Ordinances or scientific names. Insert meaningful text links and tables where relevant.

Obtain SES approval

The drafting area is responsible for seeking approval from the relevant SES before submitting the notice to the IIAN team for consultation with the DCCC and publication. In cases where responsibility for IIAN subject matter involves more than one division, multiple SES approvals may be required.

Submitting an approved IIAN for publication

Email the completed Import industry advice notice template to the IIAN team at **s. 47E(d)**

Contacts



Import Industry Advice Notices

For information about developing and publishing import industry advice notices

 [Email the Import Industry Advice Notices team](#)

Related documents



Import Industry Advice Notice template



This page is current