The Bureau
of Meteorology

Style guide

The Bureau of Meteorology
October 2022 | Version 1.0

Welcome to the Bureau's style guide

Giving our customers a consistent experience is critical to building confidence and trust. This document helps everyone working at the Bureau of Meteorology communicate their work in a consistent way.

The guidelines are in 3 parts:

- **The Bureau story**
- **The Bureau voice**
- **Application.**

The Bureau of Meteorology acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea, space and community. We recognise and respect:

- their continuing culture

- the contribution they make to Australia

- their Elders, past, present and emerging

- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

For information about recognising Traditional Owners in your communications, see the Indigenous cultural protocols page on Breeze.

Contents

The Bureau story

The Bureau of Meteorology has ambitious goals of contributing to a reduction in lives lost from natural hazards and adding social and economic impact and value to the Australian community.

To accomplish these goals, the Bureau must gain the attention and confidence of its customers.

To do this we must build trust and deliberately position ourselves as the respected national authority on weather, climate, water and oceans knowledge.

Vision

To be an organisation of global standing, that is highly valued by the community for our pivotal role in enabling a safe, prosperous, secure and healthy Australia.

Mission

To provide trusted, reliable and responsive weather, water, climate, ocean and space weather services for Australia – all day, every day.

Ambition

Contribute to a reduction in lives lost from natural hazards and add social and economic impact and value to the Australian community.
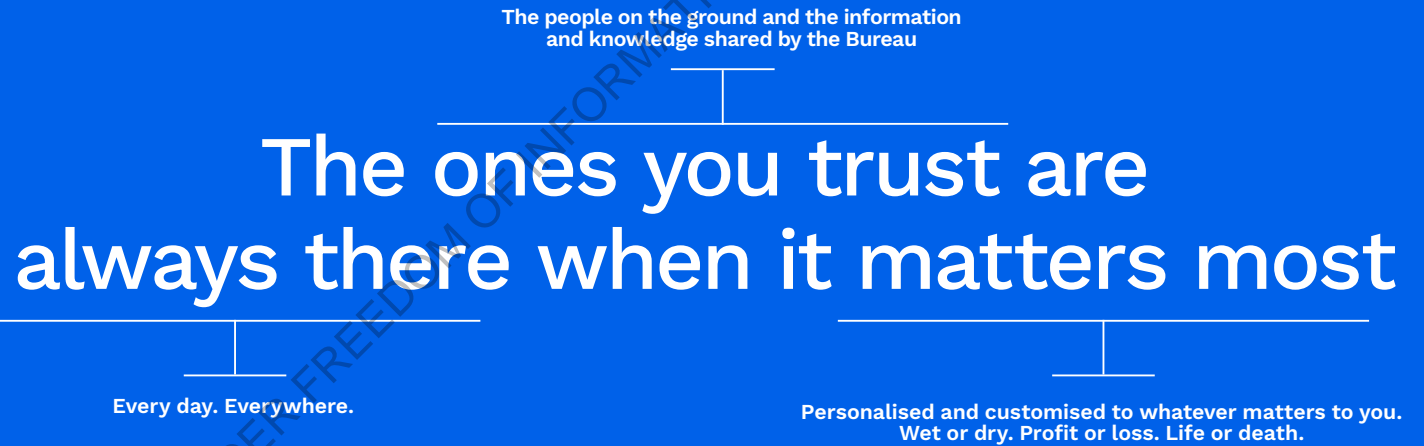
The Bureau story
Building trust

Trust matters. When people trust us they take action based on our advice.

'Participants who have higher trust are more likely to report intending to take the protective actions, so continuing to focus on trust maintenance (and building where needed) is important.'

Source: Amisha Mehta, et al. (QUT), 'How community members trust and respond to weather and emergency agency warnings in flood events: Follow-up to June 2019 report,' June 2020

The people on the ground and the information and knowledge shared by the Bureau

The ones you trust are always there when it matters most

Every day. Everywhere.

Personalised and customised to whatever matters to you. Wet or dry. Profit or loss. Life or death.

When our customers, partners and stakeholders think about us, the position we want to occupy in their hearts and minds is:

The Bureau is the most trusted source of weather, climate, water and oceans knowledge, every day, everywhere.

This positioning statement is for internal use and is designed to guide all interactions – written, verbal and other – with our customers.

The Bureau story
Narrative

While the positioning statement guides our approach, how we convey that sentiment in practice is through the statement: 'The Bureau is there when it matters most'.

This statement guides the way we act, the way we communicate and the way we engage.

'When it matters most' speaks to the impact that our work has on people's lives, every day, everywhere. Its power is that it can be tailored to the unique and multidimensional needs of our customers – when it matters most to them.

The Bureau equips Australians with the insight and information they need to navigate through any situation.

Because when it matters, you always turn to the ones you trust. The Bureau is there when it matters most.

The Bureau story
Key characteristics of our story

To tell our story, and ensure our customers know we're there when it matters most, we must share stories about what we do for them.

These characteristics help us tell our story in a consistent way, using words and images. This builds confidence in our work and positions the Bureau as the national authority.

People you can trust

We are more than 1,500 dedicated experts and professionals. We've made it our goal to contribute to a reduction in lives lost from natural hazards and add social and economic impact and value to the Australian community.

Making sense of the weather, climate, water and oceans

Context is everything. Alongside our ever-improving data gathering technology, we constantly seek to improve the way we describe data. This helps people understand how it will impact their lives

Here to serve

We listen so we can better serve. Our driving mission is to provide trusted, reliable and responsive weather, climate, water, ocean and space weather services for Australia — all day, every day. For you, your family, your business — and for Australia's economy and security.

Humble hero

When the going gets tough, the Bureau gets going. During extreme weather events, we're always there to help understand the situation. We provide useful information to everyone, everywhere who may be affected.

The Bureau voice

News about our name

What has changed?

You may have noticed an increased usage of the Bureau. To help accomplish our organisational goals and to reflect our role as the national authority, we have made a conscious and considered shift in the way we refer to our organisation. Instead of referring to ourselves as BOM, our new identity brands us as the Bureau of Meteorology or the Bureau for short.

What does shifting to the Bureau of Meteorology mean?

With many people already using the Bureau of Meteorology or the Bureau in their work, this will not be a big shift. However, it will provide a strong name for our work as the national authority. Through our professional and consistent identity, we can improve understanding, gain influence, grow confidence, and inspire action among the Australians who depend on us. Simply put, the point of this change is to build trust. Public trust in the Bureau has the potential to save lives and livelihoods, and we take that responsibility seriously.

The Bureau voice
Aim

Our voice aims to help people understand weather, water, climate and oceans better.

Increase people's understanding of weather, water, climate and oceans by making the science behind our work more accessible to everyone.

Our key traits are how we want others to view us. They describe what we are.

Knowledgeable

Dedicated

Experienced

Clear

Consistent

Relevant

Reliable

Reassuring

Tailored

Our voice

With more than 115 years devoted to analysing the weather, climate, water and oceans, we delight in any opportunity to share our knowledge. We strive for simplicity of speech and clarity of understanding, so that we can equip people with the information they need to make the right decisions for their own lives and livelihoods.

On a given day, we can be casually informative, warmly engaging with the public. But the moment something goes wrong — when challenges to personal safety or business arise — everything changes. We command the room and the Bureau becomes the unwavering presence Australians look to for direction and reassurance.

You can find more information about writing in the Bureau Writing Style Guide.

We are experts in our fields, committed public servants and empathetic educators. We use our profound knowledge and sincere energy to foster public discussion and spark action around weather, climate, water, oceans and space weather.

We confidently share our expertise. We ensure all Australians are covered by our information. Our proven commitment makes us the trusted national authority.

Our personality

Unpretentious	Sincere
Relevant	Accountable
Invested	Straightforward
Principled	Confident
Informed	Perceptive
Insightful	Relatable

The Bureau voice
Our voice in action

Help people feel prepared

One of the greatest public services we can offer is to make people feel prepared through provision of information.

Inspire action

Our role is as useful as the action we can inspire. By playing our role well, we can help improve people's days, protect livelihoods and save lives.

Be timely, not perfect

It's better to be good and on time than perfect and late. The faster we can share information, the better we can contribute to a reduction in lives lost from natural hazards and added social and economic impact and value.

Be accessible

Our subject areas of weather, climate, water and oceans affect all of us — regardless of education, cultural background and socioeconomic status. We aim to make our communications with our customers, partners and stakeholders simple and easy to understand. We also make them accessible in as many places as possible.

Always show up

We're there, all day every day. Transparency and empathy for the people we serve goes a long way.

We do

Explain the weather

Strive for clarity above all

Speak in a relatable tone

Focus on inspiring action

We don't

Announce the weather

Strive for completeness above all

Speak in a playful tone

Focus on winning attention

Approach

Direction and flexibility

This framework helps the Bureau's staff choose the appropriate tone of voice depending on the situation.

The Bureau voice
Tone framework

Experienced. Consistent. Personal. These adjectives represent the Bureau's tone of voice. While the Bureau has a clear personality and point of view, its tone may shift depending on the situation or topic.
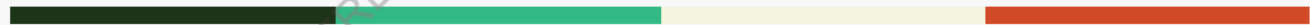
The Bureau is always experienced, consistent and personal in its tone, but how these characteristics are expressed may change based on the intensity of the situation and desired outcome.

Do we want to build understanding or prepare people for action? This sort of question helps us decide on the right range within our tone of voice.
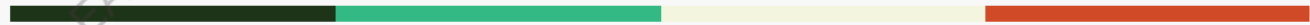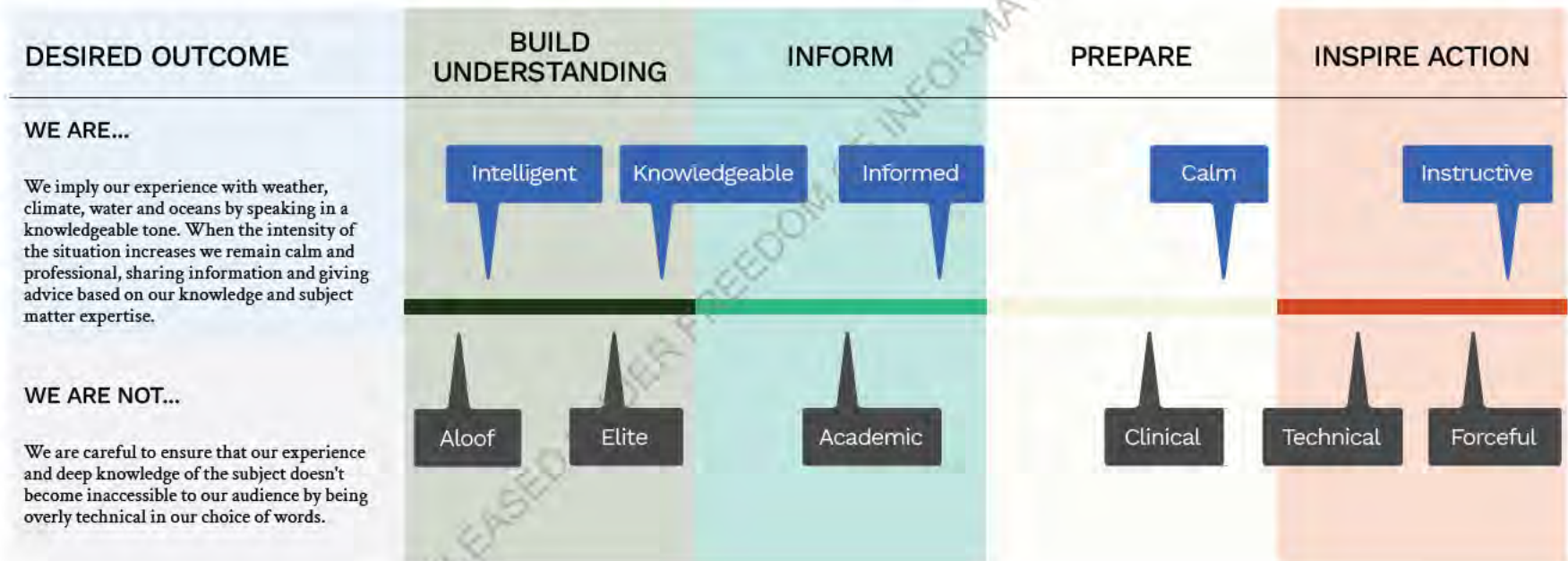
Experienced

Consistent

Personal

Experienced

DESIRED OUTCOME	BUILD UNDERSTANDING	INFORM	PREPARE	INSPIRE ACTION

WE ARE...

We imply our experience with weather, climate, water and oceans by speaking in a knowledgeable tone. When the intensity of the situation increases we remain calm and professional, sharing information and giving advice based on our knowledge and subject matter expertise.

WE ARE NOT...

We are careful to ensure that our experience and deep knowledge of the subject doesn't become inaccessible to our audience by being overly technical in our choice of words.

	BUILD UNDERSTANDING		INFORM	PREPARE	INSPIRE ACTION	
We are...	Intelligent	Knowledgeable	Informed	Calm		Instructive
We are not...	Aloof	Elite	Academic	Clinical	Technical	Forceful

Consistent

DESIRED OUTCOME	BUILD UNDERSTANDING	INFORM		PREPARE	INSPIRE ACTION
WE ARE... We are measured and thoughtful in the way we speak, creating a level of consistency that drives confidence and builds trust. When the intensity of the situation increases, we show our tireless commitment to the topic.	Easy to understand	Intentional	Measured	Committed	Focused
WE ARE NOT... Despite being dependable, we are not rigid. We are at the forefront of weather, climate, water and oceans, and we adjust our tone to the situation using the guidance in this document.	Uniform	Unchanging		Rigid	Anxious

Personal

DESIRED OUTCOME	BUILD UNDERSTANDING	INFORM	PREPARE	INSPIRE ACTION

WE ARE...

We are experts first, but we are always personal and human in our communication. When weather, climate, water and oceans situations arise, we are appropriately empathetic and recognise the impact on real Australians.

Approachable · Plain spoken · Clear · Reassuring · Specific

WE ARE NOT...

We avoid being insensitive with blunt language or a worried tone that might compromise our professionalism. While we are approachable in less intense situations, we are not folksy or lighthearted. We are an unwavering public resource and speak in a way that reflects this role.

Folksy · Light-hearted · Blunt · Worried

Writing and speaking in the Bureau's tone of voice

Anything the Bureau writes must be easily understandable to as many Australians as possible — regardless of background or reading level. In line with Australian Government standards, we do our best to keep our content at a year 7 reading level or below.

Remove complexity, simplify language and cut down sentence length. If you need to communicate information that requires more than basic weather, climate, water or oceans knowledge:

- define any technical words

- briefly explain

- offer an extra information source.

You can find more information about writing for the Bureau in the Writing Style Guide.

In all our communications, written and spoken, we should avoid value judgement.

For example, if winds are easing, our communication shouldn't specify that as good or bad. Our audience will assign their own value to the information. Someone enjoying the sun at the beach might think it's great, while a sailor or windsurfer might have the opposite response. Likewise, if heavy rain is coming. This may be great news for a community in drought, but bad news for a farmer who has just fertilised their crop.

Conveying information neutrally, or in a way that considers different impacts, puts us in the mindset of our customers. It's being there when it matters most.

Social media example

This is an example of a post intended to build understanding. It doesn't contain timely information, but it does clearly and simply explain an aspect of meteorology. The tone remains smart and intentional, and the post is approachable in its explanation.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's new tone of voice

bureauofmeteorology

Lightning lit up the night sky over Gawler in South Australia on Wednesday night, as a cold front moved through. This stunning image was captured by @examplename_photography.

Thunderstorms can occur at any time of the year in Australia, although they are not as common during the winter months. Most strike between September and March when the supply of solar energy is greatest. However severe winter storms linked to coldfronts are common in the southwest of Western Australia and southeastern South Australia.

Post could be simpler and more focused

Mention of complex weather concept without explanation

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's tone of voice today

bureauofmeteorology

We tend to think of sunny days and thunderstorms as opposites. But the reality is that thunderstorms and lightning occur when the supply of solar energy in the atmosphere is greatest – between September and March in Australia.

These spring and summer storms result in incredible photos like this one captured today at Bondi Beach by @examplename_photography.

Choose images with a 'human element' that match the information provided

Speak in a tone that is both intelligent and relatable

Make explanations accurate but simple

Relate it back to a topic relevant to the reader

Annual Climate Statement example

In an Annual Climate Statement, information is read in a slightly more academic context by audiences interested in weather beyond the day-to-day forecast. However, it is still important to speak plainly and to put the humanity of the Bureau into the writing.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's new tone of voice

Title doesn't clearly explain what the report is about

What has the temperature been like?

Australia's maximum temperature for January to November was the fifth warmest on record. Maximum temperatures have been very much above average or above average across most of Australia except parts of the south-east of the mainland and northern Tasmania.

Does not explain larger context of bushfires and misses an opportunity to educate

The year started with large bushfires continuing across Victoria and New South Wales and extreme heat across eastern Australia in January. Temperatures were much cooler across the south-east in February and into autumn when several cold fronts brought cooler air over the region.

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's tone of voice today

Title clearly explains what occurred and who it impacted

Warming temperatures for most of the country led to bushfires

Australia's maximum temperature for January to November was the fifth warmest on record. Temperatures were above or very much above average except for parts of the south-east mainland and northern Tasmania.

Clear, short main topic sentences

Partly due to the higher temperatures and extreme heat in the beginning of the year, January saw large bushfires across Victoria and New South Wales. These fires burned 18 million hectares and 5,900 buildings while taking a large toll on human and animal lives.

Focus on explaining rather than reporting

Explaining the impact of the situation in terms people understand and demonstrate empathy

Weather narrative example

Weather narratives inform our communications with our customers, stakeholders and partners. The tone remains intelligent and informed. With the weather narrative being drawn upon to inform such broad audiences, it's important to be accessible, break down complex concepts and explain the importance of certain updates.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's new tone of voice

The Bureau of Meteorology NSW/ACT Weather Narrative

DATE:

AUTHOR:

E DL NE

 nds as ng. Rem ant sho ers on he   stern   pes wit snow to low eve s fo th   pine.

MPACT-BAS D KEY MESS GES

 Easing wi ds in the wake of a cold front.

-A few l ngering sho ers on we ter s opes oday, w t floodi g po s b e   a ready sa   ated catchments.

-Temperatures are expected to be near ave age for many areas across the state. Warm maximum temperatures expected on the weekend ahead of the next cold front. Monthly records could be broken. Could be up to 10C warmer than ave age.

Climate driver update
-Key messages 20/07/2021 and the announcement of a negative IOD developing:

-Climate outlooks for Australia a e forecasting a wetter than average winter and early spring for the eastern two-thirds of mainland Australia.

 Confidence in the outlook has been reinforced by the development of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole which has historically been associated with wetter conditions in winter and spring.

Headline does not outline a clear implication to the audience

Significance and potential threat of flooding is unclear

Advanced language above Year 7 reading level and no explanation of weather concepts

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's tone of voice today

The Bureau of Meteorology NSW/ACT Weather Narrative

DATE:

AUTHOR: | REV EWER:

HEADLINE

Winds are dec easing, but we ll see cold temperatures, continuing rain on the western slopes and some snow for the alpine regions. It s an opportunity for winter sports or some evenings indoors.

IMPACT-BASED KEY MESSAGES
-Winds are decreasing after a cold front.

-A few showers will continue on the western slopes today. Be aware that additional rain could cause flooding, so please continue to monitor the Bureau s app or website.

-Near average temperatures are expected across the state. But, before this, NSW/ACT will likely see warmer temperatures of around 21° C this weekend. t may be a good time to spend outside before getting ready for the upcoming cold weather.

 d i e upd te
Key messages 20/07/2021 and the announcement of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole developing:
-This year, Australia will likely get more rain than average for both winter and early spring for the central and eastern states.

-This prediction is partly based on the development of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (warmer temperatures in the eastern Indian Ocean). This often leads to wetter winter and spring seasons.

Easy-to-understand headline with clear suggestions

Include the 'why'

Explain implication and prepare for potential threats

Explain any technical concepts in simpler terms

Social media example

Social media is a valuable tool for building trust with our audiences. It is used to build understanding of the work of the Bureau and to share calls to action.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's new tone of voice

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's tone of voice today

Technical explanation

Easy-to-understand explanation

The Bureau ✓
@thebureau

What's the #BOMOutlook for August to October 2021? Due to an emerging negative Indian Ocean Dipole event and the chance of La Niña in spring, rainfall is more likely than usual over the eastern two thirds of the mainland.

11 May 2021

The Bureau ✓
@thebureau

#BureauOutlook August to October 2021: Due to a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (#IOD) – warmer temperatures in the eastern Indian Ocean – eastern and central states may see more rain than usual. Learn more about the science behind a negative #IOD: ow.ly/8Y6V50FvwH4

21 July 2021

Unclear -
The average person might not know what the geographic 'two thirds' would be

Educates audience on more complex weather concepts

Lacking explanation of impact on audience

Providing additional guidance

Warning example

A warning should encourage people to prepare for impending events. It's important to be clear, succinct and make the impact of the warning known. Recommendations for next steps also help direct people towards action and encourage them to alert others in their professional and personal circles.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's new tone of voice

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's tone of voice today

Most important information not included in title

Graziers Alert to warn farmers of an oncoming cold front

A warning for graziers has been issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, with temperatures expected to reach a maximum of four degrees in **Potential danger buried later in warning** — Orange on Friday. There is a high risk of losses of lambs and sheep exposed to severe weather conditions - especially those that are lambing. The affected areas included the Central and Southern Tablelands, South West Slopes, the Riverina and Snowy Mountains and parts of the North West **No clear instruction or encouragement to seek more information outside of the warning** — Slopes and Plains and Central West Slopes and Plains.

Sheep Graziers Warning: Cold, rain and wind may affect sheep graziers in Tablelands and West Slopes areas

Title contains most important information

Sheep graziers should get ready to shelter flocks – especially if lambing. Temperatures will drop this weekend in the Central and Southern Tablelands, South West Slopes, the Riverina and Snowy Mountains and parts of the North West Slopes. Temperatures will most likely stay below 4 °C.

Explain significance of temperature drop

The Bureau will be monitoring the temperature, rain and wind through the week. Check our website or app for updates.

Establish the Bureau's reliability to reassure

Give clear instruction

NB: Indicative wording only. Warnings under review within Community Services Group.

Social media example

When there is an intense event or situation, communicating the problem and inspiring action is the priority.
It's important to maintain the balance of urgency in tone with a calm, reassuring manner.

Incorrect usage

Does not reflect the Bureau's
new tone of voice

Correct usage

Correct usage of the Bureau's
tone of voice today

Technical explanation

Easy-to-understand
explanation

Positions the Bureau
as a news source
rather than national
authority

The Bureau @thebureau

#Fire Weather Warning issued for Saturday 3 April for Severe fire danger in the Lower South East district. Check http://ow.ly/Tcjc50Ef8su for details and updates; refer CFS for fire bans and further #bushfire into @CFSTalk.

21 July 2021

The Bureau @thebureau

⚠ Fire Weather #Warning issued for north-east #Victoria due to strong winds and maximum temperatures reaching the high 30s. View warning details at http://ow.ly/ggrt30livo and check http://ow.ly/ISf750GJVB4 for emergency information.

11 May 2021

Draw attention to most
important information

Give clear action

Too many links distract
from the most important
information and resources

Communicate urgency
without fear
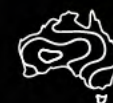
Design resources

Design resources
Logo, brandmark and official logo

Our visual identifier is made up of 3 elements.

Read on for:

- more about each element
- when to use each element
- guidance on visual presentation.

Logo

The Bureau of Meteorology

Brandmark

Official logo
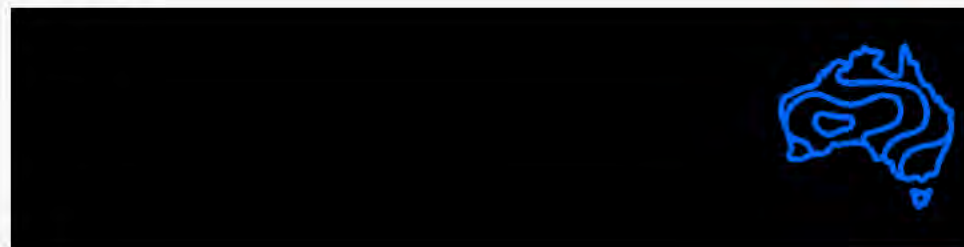
Design resources
Logo

Our logo is used to identify us in most situations.

It incorporates our brandmark – the map of Australia – and our name.

The logo should be in the primary brand colour. Black can be used on light backgrounds and white on dark backgrounds.

The stacked version should only be used where space is tight. Use it in situations where the full logo and minimum space around it look cramped or busy.

Standard version

Stacked version

Design resources
Logo – spacing and size

Standard version

For minimum clear space around the standard logo, X is determined by the distance from the x-height of the top line to the baseline of the lower line of the text.

The minimum height of the brandmark is:

- for print: 8.5 mm
- for digital: 30 px.

Stacked version

For minimum clear space around the stacked version, X is determined by the distance from the x-height of the top line to the baseline of the lower line of the text.

The minimum height of the brandmark is:

- for print: 14 mm
- for digital: 40 px.

The Bureau of Meteorology

The Bureau of Meteorology
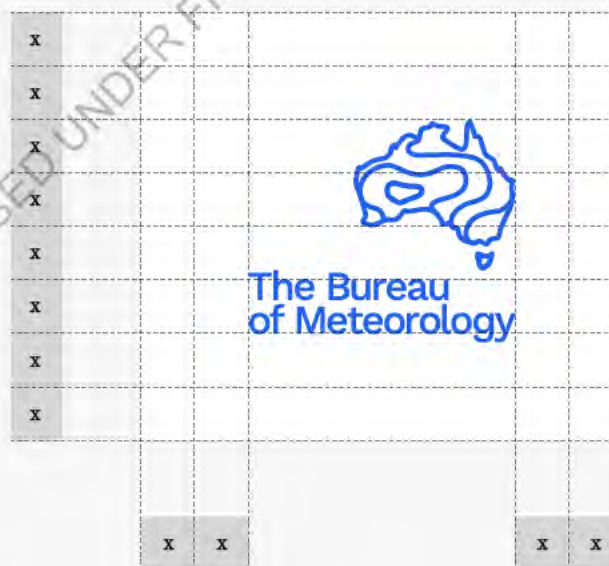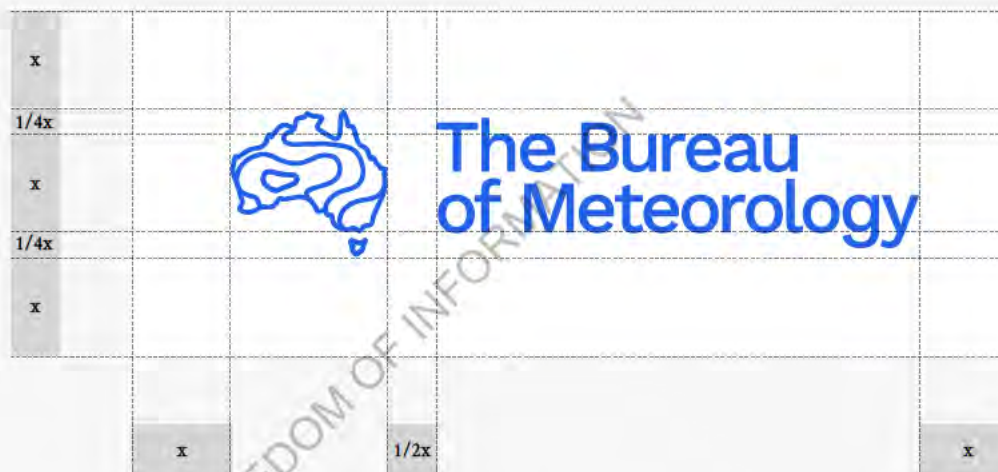
Design resources
Brandmark

The brandmark is inspired by the ever-changing synoptic charts that represent how we read the weather. The form of Australia creates an instantly recognisable modern visual representation of the impact and value of our work.

The brandmark is the map of Australia on its own, without any words.

Show the brandmark only in the Bureau's primary blue, black or white.

The brandmark is not to be used as an abstract graphic. It should always be viewed in full.

The brandmark can be used as a continued brand element, when the official logo has been featured on the same piece of communication already (see letterhead example).

The full logo (with 'The Bureau of Meteorology' text) should be used at all times, unless an exemption is provided. This would only be where space is very restricted.

Design resources
Brandmark – spacing and size

When used on its own, clear space around the brandmark should be equivalent to half its width.

For digital applications, the minimum height of the brandmark should be 16 px.

150%

100%
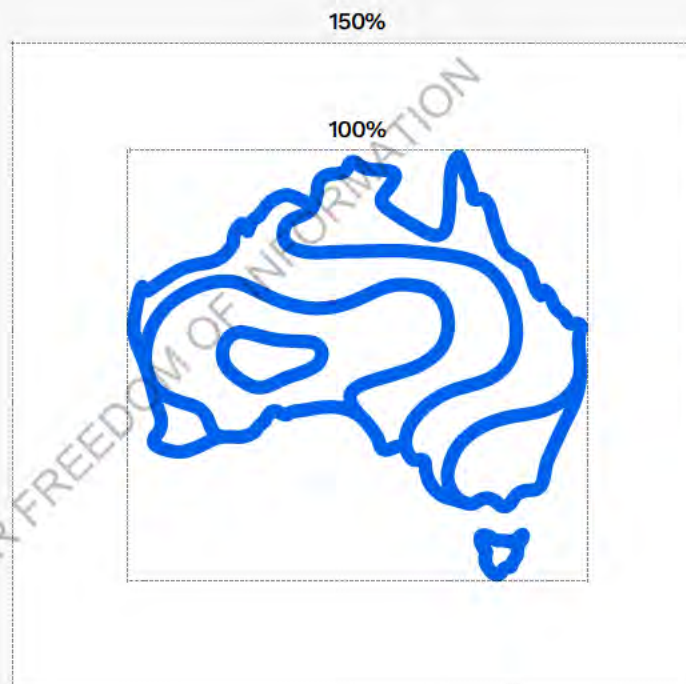
Design resources
Official logo

In official contexts we use the Australian Government Coat of Arms and our name, alongside our brandmark. Official logo uses include information:

- produced for our Minister or other elected representatives
- tabled in Parliament
- released to the media
- developed in partnership with other organisations
- produced as a report
- on our website and app.

For advice on which logo to use, contact the Creative Team in the Communications Program.

Use the official logo once only on each publication. It should be seen at the start of any official document with multiple pages.

The colour of the Australian Government part of the official logo should be:

- black on light backgrounds
- white on dark backgrounds.

The brandmark part of it may also be in the primary brand colour.

For further information please visit:

- Australian Government Branding Guidelines
- Commonwealth Coat of Arms, Information and Guidelines

Standard version
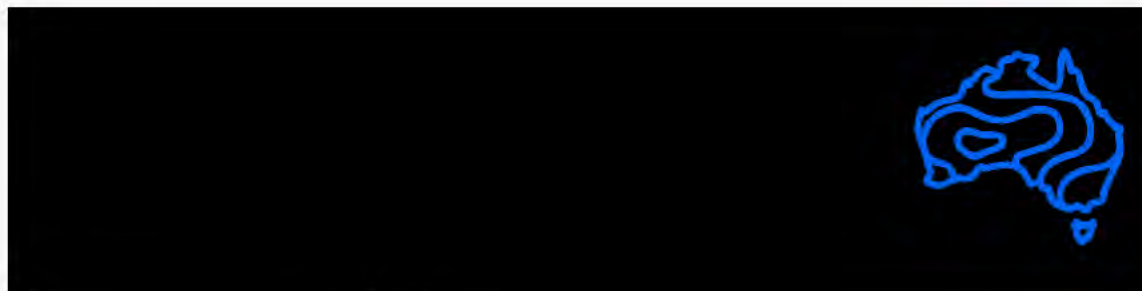
Stacked version

Design resources
Official logo – spacing and size

For minimum clear space around the official logo, X is determined by the distance between the top of the capital 'A' in 'Australian Government' and the bottom of the horizontal line beneath these words.

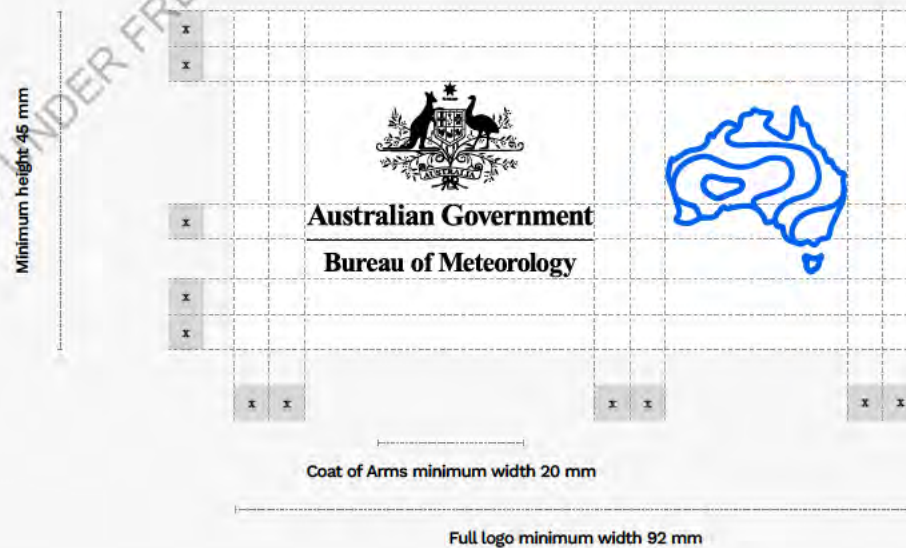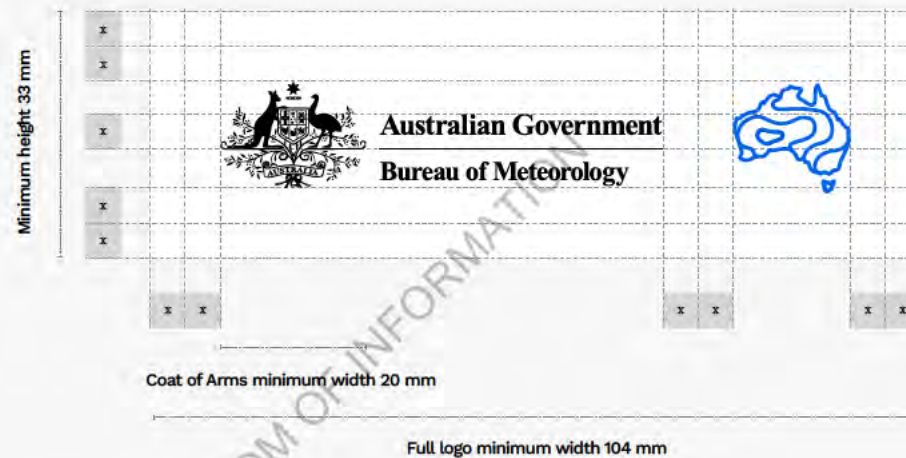This zone is a minimum dimension, and it applies to all forms of the official logo.

Standard version – print

The minimum width of the Coat of Arms on printed material is 20 mm. This makes the minimum height of the logo 15 mm. With clear space this becomes 33 mm.

Stacked version – print

The minimum width of the Coat of Arms on printed material is 20 mm. This makes the minimum height of the logo 26 mm. With clear space this becomes 45 mm.

Standard and stacked versions – digital

For digital applications the recommended minimum heights are:

- standard version – 40 px
- stacked version – 69 px

Minimum height 33 mm

Coat of Arms minimum width 20 mm

Full logo minimum width 104 mm

Minimum height 45 mm

Coat of Arms minimum width 20 mm

Full logo minimum width 92 mm

Design resources
Logos – colour options

The logo should be in the primary brand colour. Black can be used on light backgrounds and white on dark backgrounds.

The Australian Government elements of the official logo are black on light backgrounds and white on dark backgrounds.

The brandmark element of the official logo follows the same rules, but may also be the primary brand colour.

Logo

Official logo

Design resources
Logo misuse

Our logo must be correct, clear and accessible. Don't change its visual presentation. Be mindful of backgrounds and their impact on accessibility.

This guidance applies to both the logo and the official logo.

Use only permitted logo colours.

Don't add gradients or drop shadows.
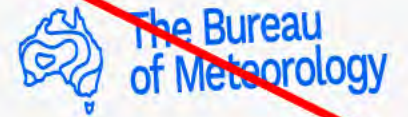
Don't squash, rotate, skew or distort.

Don't place on low contrast background.

Don't place on clashing background image.

Don't change font or kerning.

Design resources
Logo – partnerships

When the official logo is used in partnership with other organisations' logos, it should be on the left. The logos should be scaled so they have equal visual weight.

Where possible, the standard version of the official logo should be used. However, where space is limited the stacked version is an option.

When the official logo is used in partnership with another government agency, the Coat of Arms for both logos should be the same width.

When multiple agencies are in partnership with the Bureau, all logos should be positioned on one line, where possible.
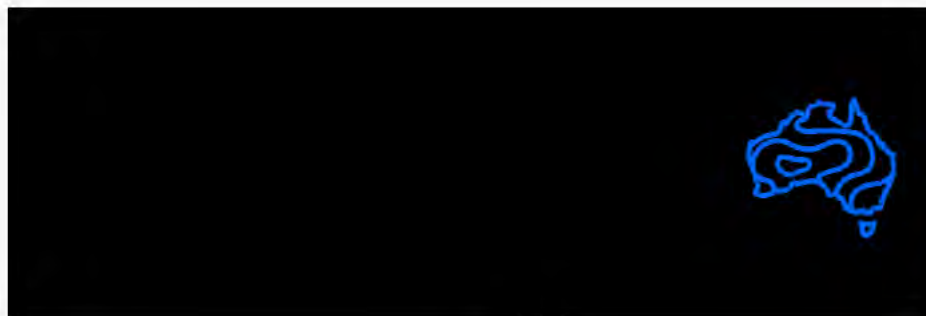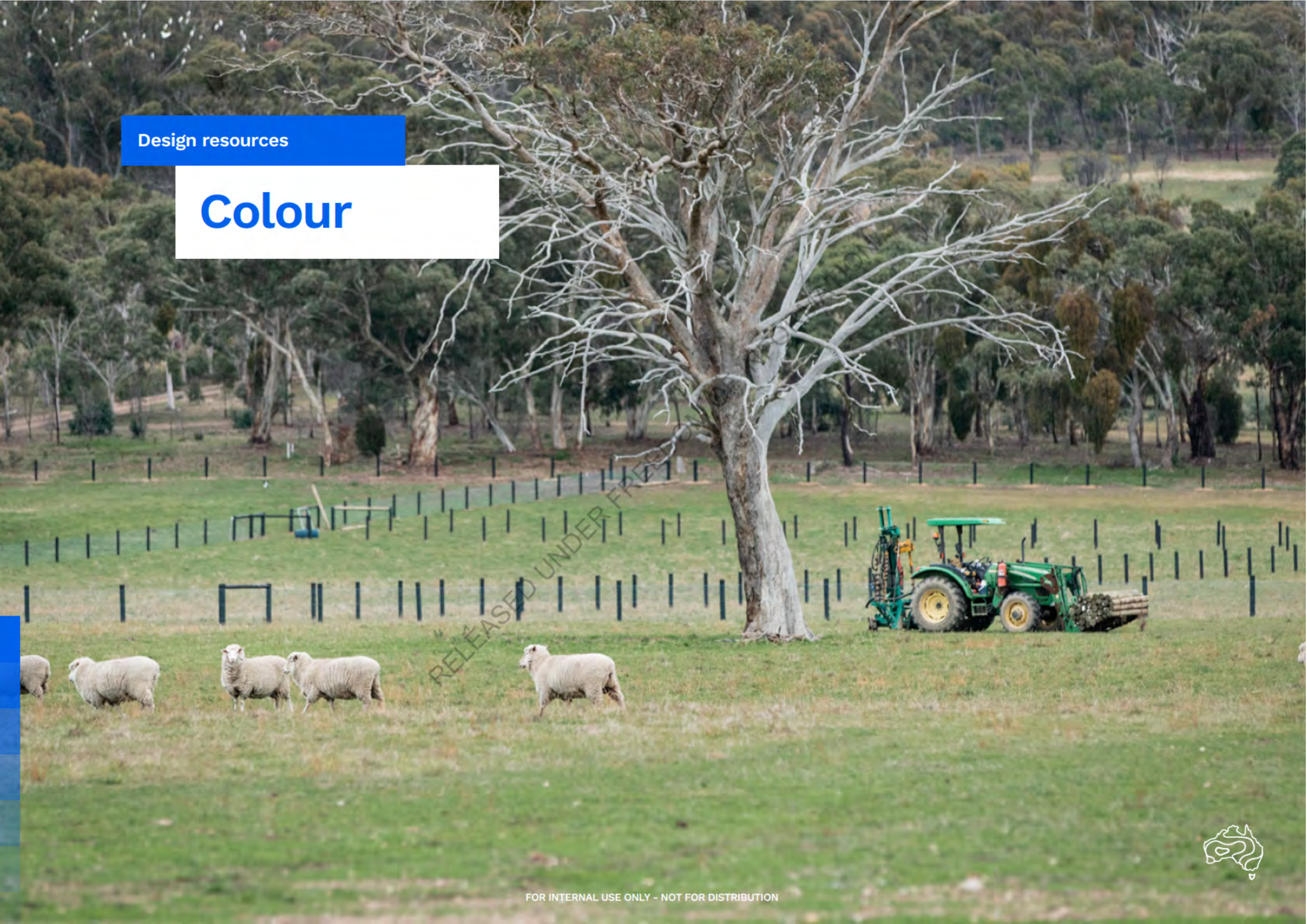
Design resources

Colour

Design resources
Primary colour

Our colours are modern, bold and progressive. The strong, credible palette can be used across all areas of communication. It positions us as the national authority by distinguishing the Bureau from others.

Tints, inspired by the gradation of the colour keys in the weather maps, can also be used.

Most people choose blue as their preferred colour. Research into colour has shown that blue communicates:

- trust
- security
- reliability
- dependability
- high quality.

Source: Various including Philip N. Cohen. (University of Maryland), *Colour study*, 2003

Bureau blue

Tints

100%

80%

40%

15%

5%

Colour breakdowns

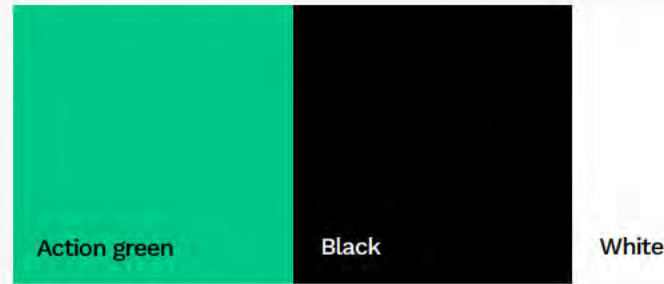R=36, G=97, B=229

C=95, M=60, Y=0, K=0

HEX# 2461E5

PMS 2386

Design resources
Secondary colours

Secondary colour combinations are typically used in graphics such as charts, maps and diagrams when a greater range of colour is required than that provided by the primary colour.

Note that these are 'support' colours, and must not be used as the dominant colour in any communication.

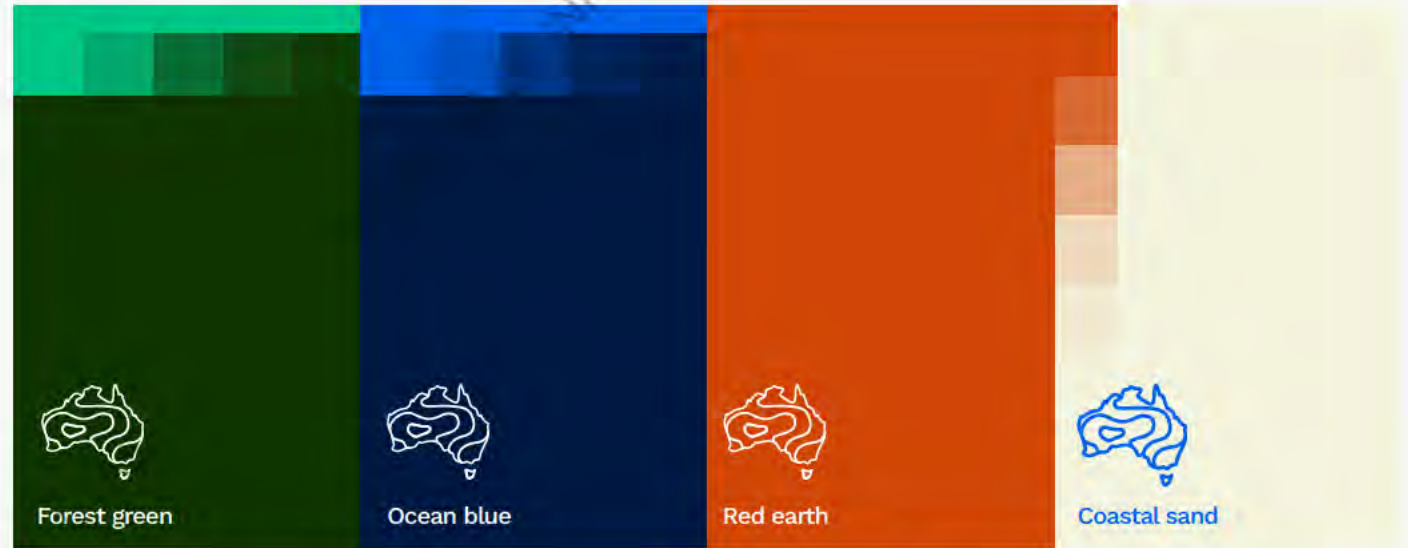Tints of these colours can also be used.

Action green

Black

White

R=0, G=198, B=137

C=97, M=0, Y=72, K=0

HEX# 00c689

PMS 3395

Forest green

Ocean blue

Red earth

Coastal sand

R=36, G=55, B=0	R=0, G=31, B=67	R=182 G=73, B=22	R=242, G=242, B=221
C=73, M=25, Y=99, K=76	C=100, M=82, Y=14, K=61	C=2, M=77, Y=95, K=7	C=5, M=2, Y=15, K=0
HEX# 243700	HEX# 001f43	HEX# b64916	HEX# f2f2dd
PMS 5747	PMS 282C	PMS 167	PMS 9064

Design resources
Colour accessibility rating

To comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, these examples indicate which colour combinations pass either AA or AAA standards for contrast in onscreen applications. This helps low vision, low contrast vision and color-vision deficient users read the information.
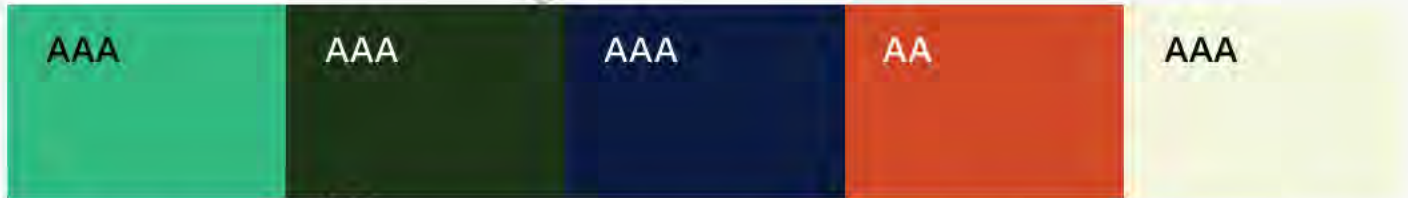
The combinations shown refer to both large and normal text. Large text is defined as 14 point (typically 18.66 px) and bold or larger, or 18 point (typically 24 px) or larger.

Level AA is the minimum level standard requirement and level AAA is the highest level standard requirement.

AA

White on Bureau blue

Contrast
5.4:1

AAA	AAA	AAA	AA	AAA
Black on action green	**White on forest green**	**White on ocean blue**	**White on red earth**	**Black on coastal sand**
Contrast 9.43:1	Contrast 12.95:1	Contrast 15.16:1	Contrast 5.31:1	Contrast 18.52:1
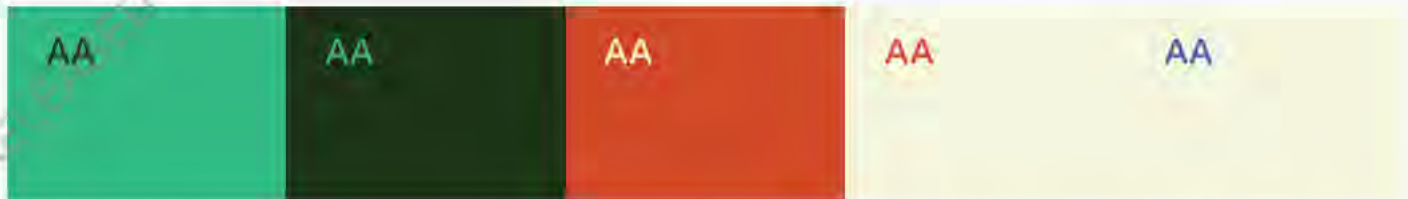
| AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
Forest green on action green	**Action green on forest green**	**Coastal sand on red earth**	**Red earth on coastal sand**	**Bureau blue on coastal sand**
Contrast 5.82:1	Contrast 5.82:1	Contrast 4.68:1	Contrast 4.68:1	Contrast 4.72:1

Design resources
Colour palette combinations

The use of tints and shades is encouraged across simple infographics. As with the primary brand colour, the recommended gradation of colour percentages is 100, 80, 40, 15, 5.

Text Text Text Text Text Text
Text Text Text Text
Text Text

A A
A A
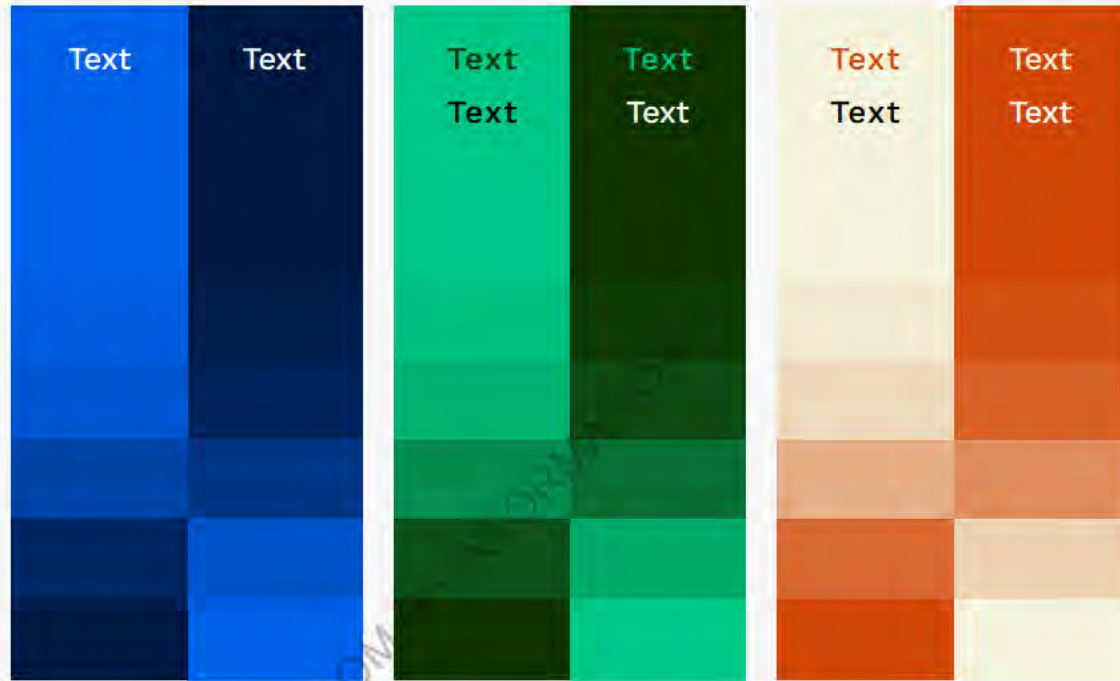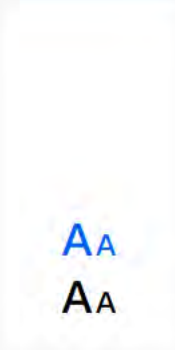
Accent colour combinations can be used for more complex graphics

Design resources
Warning colours

The Bureau follows the Australian Warning System when providing warnings for severe weather. These include warnings for bushfires, floods, severe storms, cyclones and extreme heat.

The hazard colours shown can only be used for this purpose. They're not part of the Bureau's Style Guide.

Designers should ensure that any designs involving warning messages don't detract from these important colours or messages in any way.

For more information on correct use, see the Australian Warning System.

Hazard yellow

Hazard orange

Hazard red

Colour breakdowns

R=251, G=224, B=50

C=3, M=7, Y=91, K=0

HEX# fbe032

Colour breakdowns

R=255, G=121, B=0

C=0, M=65, Y=100, K=0

HEX# ff7900

Colour breakdowns

R=214, G=0, B=28

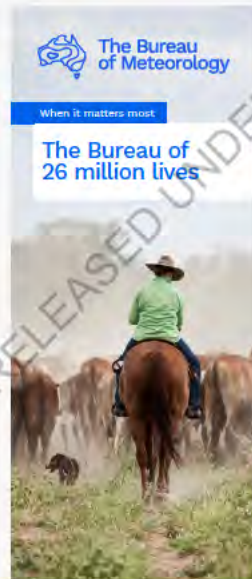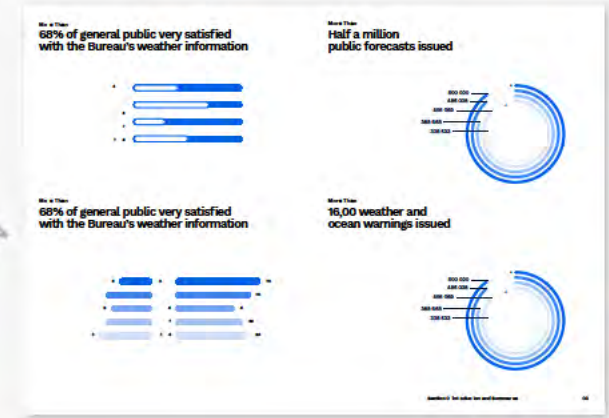C=9, M=100, Y=100, K=2

HEX# d6001c

Design resources
Primary colour in application

Design resources
Secondary colour in application

Design resources

Fonts

Design resources
Primary fonts

Our font for everyday use is Arial. This includes situations such as email, Word and PowerPoint documents which may be shared externally.

Information produced by the Creative Team for print or PDF distribution uses Work Sans as the primary font, with the option of Crimson Text if a secondary font is required. Contact your Communications Business Partner to discuss whether your information needs this treatment.

Our website and app use Inter, which is closely aligned to Work Sans. If you're creating content for the app and website, you don't need access to Inter as it's built into the tools and systems that host those products. You can find out more about Inter in the Design System.

Arial
Most people will use Arial for all their font needs. It's built into our templates and is able to used across internal and external environments.

Work Sans
For graphic designers using Work Sans:

- light and bold font weights suit large headlines and should be used sparingly

- semibold and medium suit headings and subheadings

- use the light font weight for body text (main text, not headings)

- the regular font weight suits captions, menus, button text and page numbers.

Arial

The Bureau regular

Work Sans

The Bureau light
The Bureau regular
The Bureau italic
The Bureau medium
The Bureau medium italic
The Bureau semibold
The Bureau semibold italic

Optical kerning.

-40 tracking.

80-100% line spacing.

Design resources
Secondary font

Crimson Text

For graphic designers using Crimson Text:

- use Crimson Text in in partnership with Work Sans if the project would benefit visually from a secondary font with a different look

- use it for large text blocks and to help with hierarchy in design

- use regular and medium weights.

Crimson Text

The Bureau regular
The Bureau italic
The Bureau medium
The Bureau medium italic

Best used for paragraph text. Optical kerning.

5 tracking.

80-100% line spacing

Design resources
Examples of fonts in use

Work Sans semibold

Work Sans medium

Work Sans medium

Discover your weather

We're The Bureau of 25 million lives

Guy Rundle
Janet and the apes

Fire Warnings
The Bureau of Meteorology Coffee Runs
The Harvest
The Weekend
The Morning

Section 3:
Group
performance

The Bureau
of 25 million lives
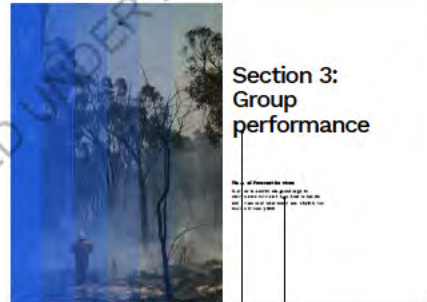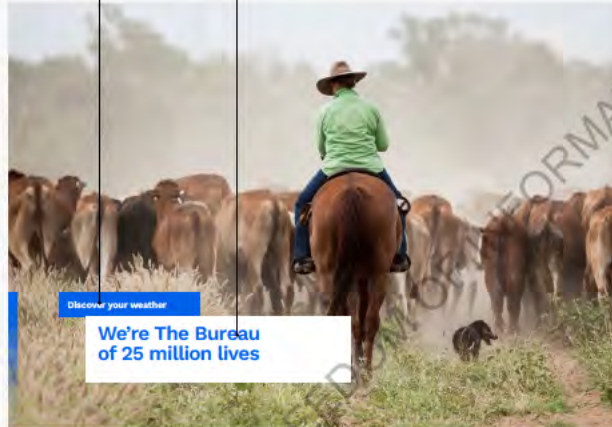
Crimson Text regular

Work Sans medium

Work Sans medium

Section 4.0

Applications

Collateral
Printed reports

Cover examples for printed reports.

Collateral
Co-branded reports

Cover examples for co-branded reports.

Collateral
Letterhead

Letterhead to use logo on first page only.
Subsequent pages need only use the
brandmark.

First page of letter

Follow-on page of letter

Collateral
Pull-up banners

Collateral
Logo on email signatures

Email signatures use the logo.

Use Arial as the font. The name and title should be 12 pt with the information below smaller at 9 pt.

Email banners will be developed and managed centrally. Banners will be used to promote key initiatives and programs across the Bureau.

Standard social media icons are available with links to the Bureau's accounts.

The email signature block also features an Acknowledgement of Country.
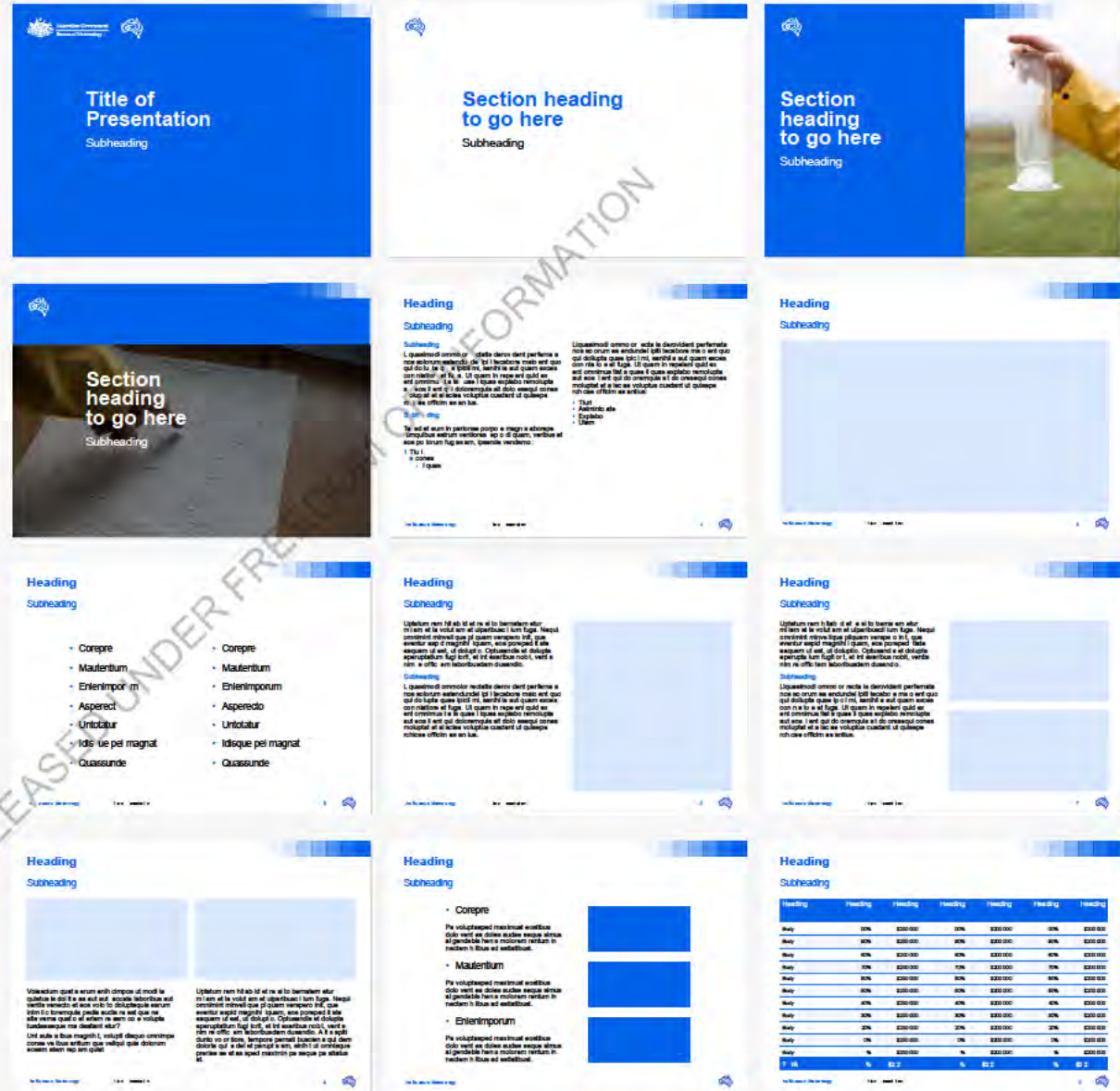
Collateral
Presentations

Example PowerPoint template covers.

Collateral

Presentations

Example PowerPoint template pages.

Applications

Images

Applications
Categories of image style

Our images should humanise our work, whether we're showcasing:

- our staff and customers

- the environments we work in

- the reasons for our activities.

Our image style captures real moments, celebrates Australia's vast landscapes and above all, is thought-provoking. It shows the harsh and beautiful realities of weather, climate, water and oceans.

These principles can be applied to static photography and moving footage.

We have a strong preference for images that include people and movement rather than static landscapes.

Our image style covers 4 categories. They bring our people and our customers into shot. Aerial images show the scale of the Bureau's work.

Images are not to be used unless they're licensed.

The Bureau at every scale

The people behind the Bureau

Life and the weather that makes it

Corporate profiles

Applications
The Bureau at every scale

This category is about the industries and experiences that rely on the Bureau. These images are impactful and engaging.

Images can portray everything from the individual to large businesses. They can be used to highlight the different parts of people's lives affected by the work of the Bureau. This could be taking their kids to school, travelling to the office, working in the paddock, or going fishing with friends and family.

These images should use light, colour and composition to produce interesting, evocative visuals that support the surrounding language.
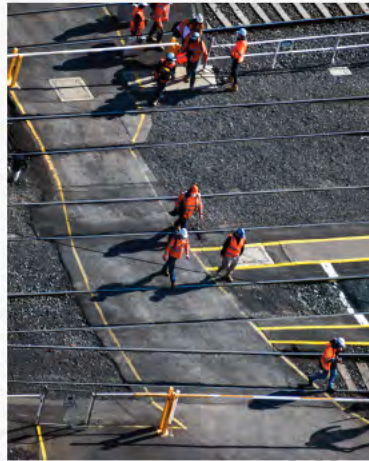
4.0 Applications

The Bureau at every scale

4.0 Applications
The people behind the Bureau

We're looking to humanise our work. The Bureau and the people behind our activities will always be there when it matters most.

When reading the newspaper or scrolling through the Bureau's weather app it can be easy to forget the humans behind the scenes.

These images are shot documentary style. At the Bureau, it's not a room full of computers that spits out forecasts. It's teams of experts tracking and reporting a range of variables for the millions of Australians who depend on the information every day.

This category shows the diversity of the Bureau's people. It shows the viewer what goes on within the organisation.

Applications
Life and the weather that makes it

These images tell stories.

The Bureau equips Australians with the insight and information they need to navigate through any situation. Images like these can be used to connect the viewer to the weather that surrounds them.
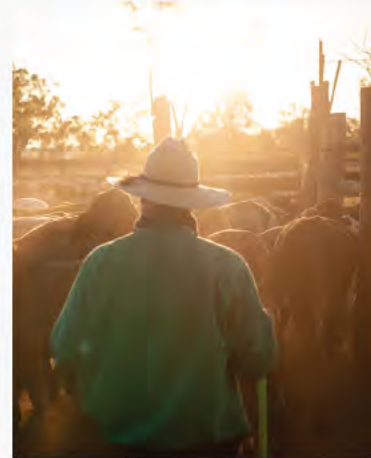
Applications

Life and the weather that makes it
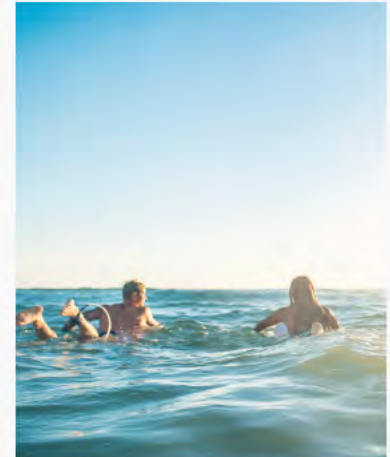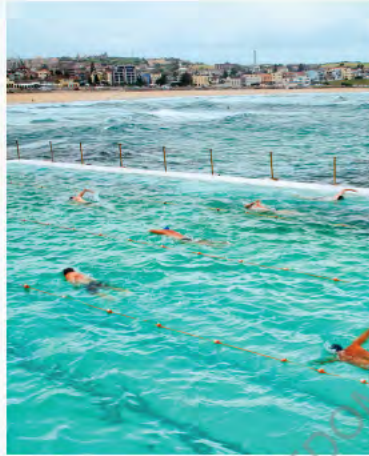
Applications
Corporate profiles

Staff portrait style should be consistent.

Images must demonstrate the confidence and approachability of our people.

Applications
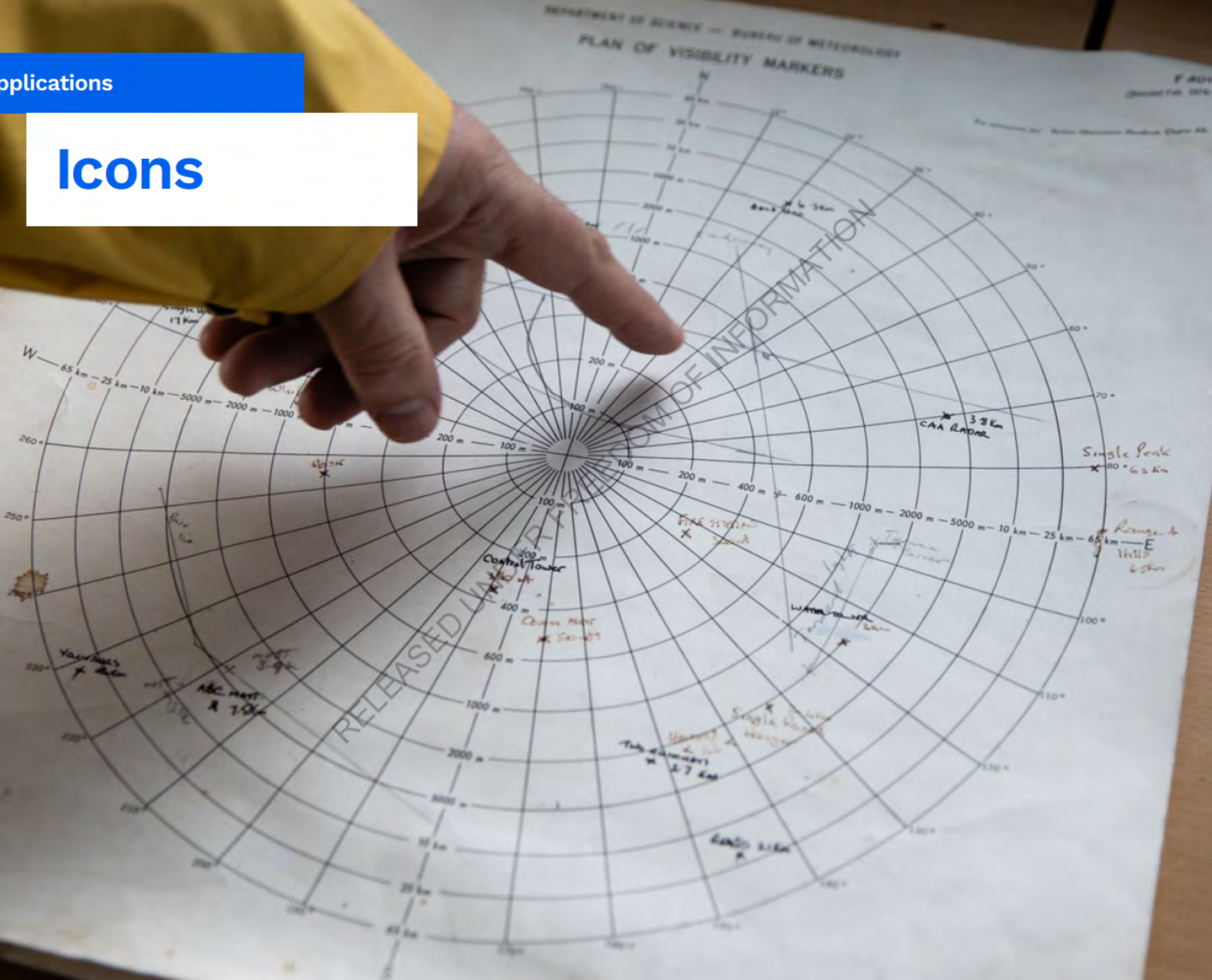
Icons

Applications
Icons

Where possible, icons should be designed using a 10x10 grid shown below, however it's acceptable to go beyond the padding of the key lines if doing so improves the optical balance of the icon.

Rounded and square terminals can both be used and corners should have a radius of 8 px. Single and consistent stroke weight to be used.

These icons are examples. They are to be used as a guide.

Forecast example

Warning	Temperature	Flood	Agriculture	Wind

Applications

Digital and motion

Applications
Digital

This style guide is supported by the Design System, which provides specific guidance for the Bureau's website and app.

Examples of such guidance include:

- use of Inter as the font for the website and app, given its closeness to Work Sans

- placement of the logo lockup in the footer of the website and throughout the app

- additional colours for graphs and data visualisation

- detailed layout of various aspects of the website and app including buttons and system warnings.

Where the brandmark is used as an icon, it should be a white outline on a solid Bureau blue background.

As noted in Fonts, where users may be unable to view Work Sans/Crimson Text, substitute with Arial/Georgia. This occurs in situations like email and digital marketing where recipients/users can't be assumed to have our fonts installed.

On other digital platforms, Work Sans in semibold and medium weights suits headings and subheadings, while the light weight suits body text. If needed, Crimson Text suits blocks of body copy. Work Sans in the regular weight suits menus, button text and captions. For more information on font use, see Fonts.
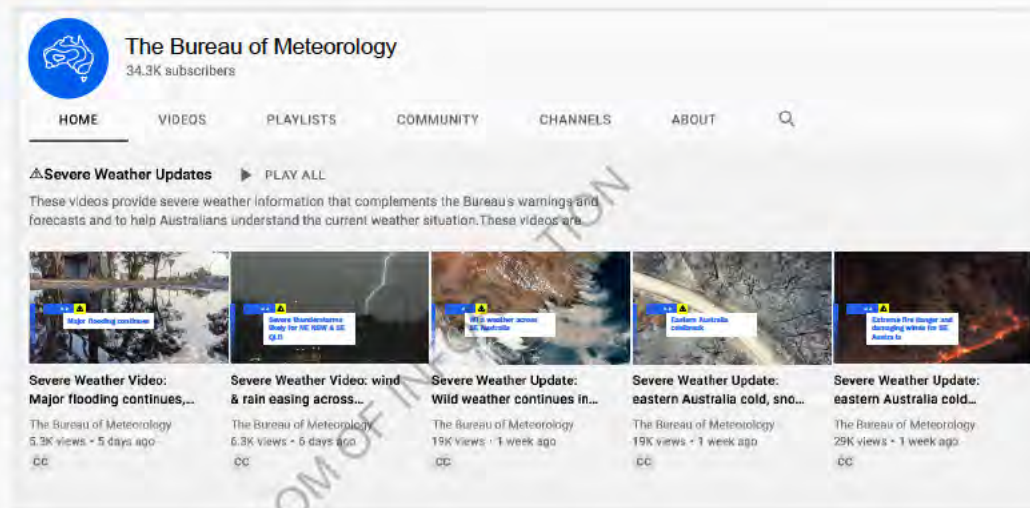
Open screen

Current app screen

Applications
Motion

Examples of title options, to be applied or adapted as appropriate. When applying to mobile versions ensure the size of text allows for good legibility.
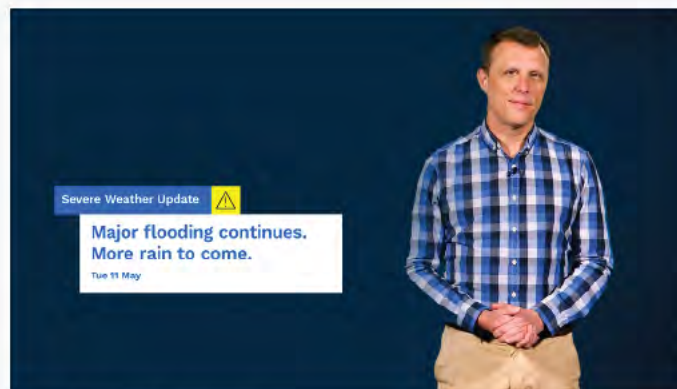
Severe Weather Outlook Intro

Following overlay with name label and the Bureau watermark

Ticker rolling transition for time of day
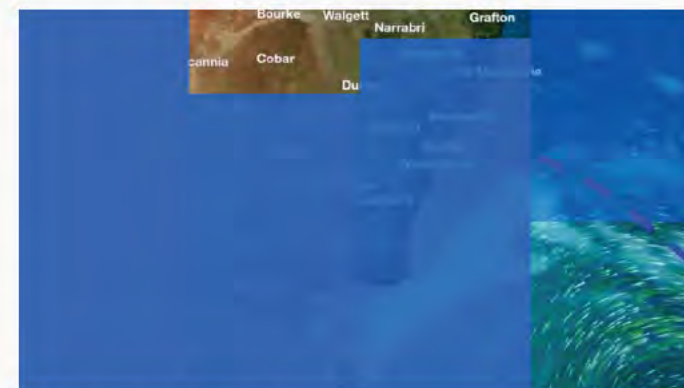
Overlay transitions pre-outer screen
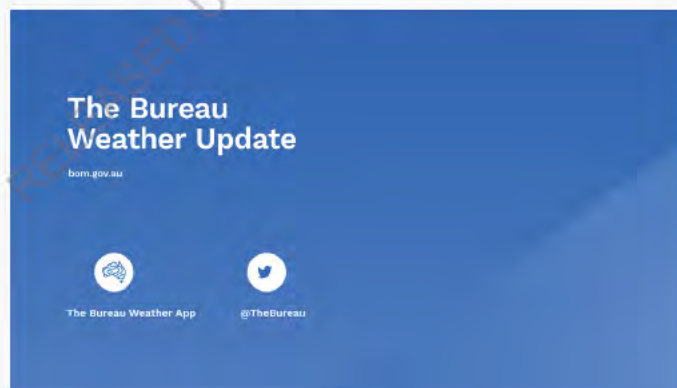
Outro screen
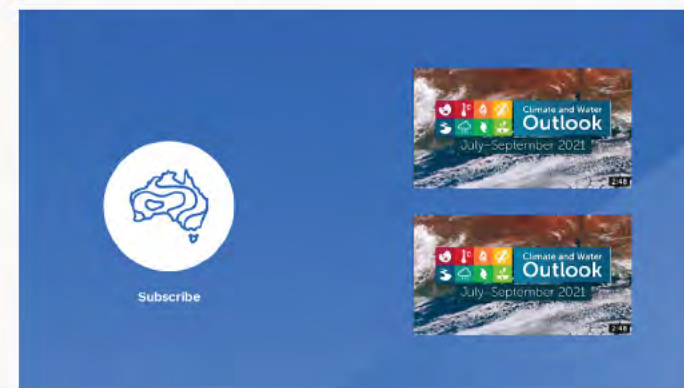
Subscribe and automated up next x2 video tile

Visit Elements style guide Breeze site for resources and information.

Please contact your Communications Business Partner with any questions.

The Bureau of Meteorology

The Bureau writing style guide

Clear, consistent, accessible content

1 September 2022

Version and governance information

Version	Approved	Review date
1.0	GM Communications	April 2022

Section 1: About this guide

This guide outlines the standards we use to develop high-quality content. It helps us create clear, accessible and consistent content that meets the needs of our customers, partners and stakeholders – and staff, where our audience is internal.

This makes it easier for everyone to find, understand and act on our information.

The guide helps us communicate on behalf of the Bureau, using appropriate language and tone. It's a resource to guide and empower us all in best-practice content creation.

It also helps us build trust and position ourselves as the most trusted source of weather, climate, water and oceans knowledge, every day and everywhere.

Who should use this guide?

If you create, review or approve content, this guide is for you. It is our rule book and our source of truth. It will help to give our audience a consistent experience – one that builds trust.

Do you have questions feedback about this guide? Contact your **Communications Business Partner**.

For information about the Bureau's story, voice and visual style, check out other areas of the Elements Style Guide Breeze site.

How this guide was developed

This guide was developed using best-practice principles. It considers key documents that Australian Government agencies are obliged to follow. These include:

- content guides produced by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) – an Australian Government agency focused on improving government digital services
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) – international standards. Australian government websites are required to comply to at least WCAG 2.0 AA standard. The DTA strongly advises meeting WCAG 2.1 standard.

It also considers advice contained in:

- the Bureau's Accessibility Action Plan 2019–2022
- content strategy and UX governance documents delivered by Deloitte Digital in 2019
- Australian Government Style Manual and Macquarie Dictionary
- best-practice style guides used by international organisations such as gov.co.uk, Apple and MailChimp.

Development history

This guide was created in 2020 to inform content preparation for the new website. It was adapted in 2021–22 to apply to all Bureau content.

It's a living document and will be updated as needed. If you're using a downloaded version, check it's current.

Content and design work together to create a cohesive customer experience. This guide is complemented by the:

- Bureau's visual style guidance, which covers visual aspects such as logo and icon usage, fonts, colours and imagery
- [Design System](#) for developers, which covers the visual presentation of the Bureau's website and apps.

Section 2: Content foundations

Our content influences how people regard us and the level of trust they place in us. Through content we can build confidence among our customers, partners and stakeholder.

We have principles and policies that guide and govern the content we produce. Understanding our audience is also critical, to target content correctly and understand who we're speaking to.

This all helps us produce consistent, best-practice content that meets Australian Government standards.

Principles to guide our content development

Discoverable

All content is presented in a way that means it's easy for customers to find it when they need it. It's also easy for them to understand and navigate.

Relevant

All content is created and designed to meet user/business needs, validated by research/practice and supports the Bureau's strategy. It is guided by the outcome we are trying to achieve, is aligned to impact and value and is based on a clear understanding of the audience.

The channels we select for our content are informed by strategy and an understanding of what's of interest to the audience at that time.

Our information is humanised, wherever possible and appropriate. We consider the varying impacts information may have on audiences – one person's good news may be another's bad news.

We measure the effectiveness of our content and continuously improve it to ensure it is achieving its objective.

Expert

We provide expert practical advice that's easy to understand and implement. We break down complex ideas using clear, plain language that our audiences understand, so everyone can benefit from our expertise.

Our content meets our statutory obligations.

Accurate

Our content is up-to-date, reliable and approved through established workflows. All content creators and managers set review dates and actively manage their content through its life. These measures protect the integrity and quality of our content.

Lean

Our content gets straight to the point. We use short, readable sentences and break paragraphs into logical, bite-sized pieces. This helps our users more easily digest information. We speak in a way that's direct, calm, respectful and professional.

Actionable

We focus on building understanding of the impacts of weather, climate, water and oceans, to drive considered and informed action.

Our content considers the action the user needs to take next. We give enough information to help them make an educated, informed decision, with opportunities to learn more.

Consistent

We are consistent, in the way we look and the way we sound.

We follow the Bureau style guides to achieve consistency across our channels. Our audience experiences the same style of content across all our channels.

Accessible

Our content is inclusive. Our audience is from all backgrounds so we choose words everyone will understand.

We share stories, context and insights that are meaningful to the average member of our community.

We maximise accessibility in all the content we create. We meet accessibility standards, such as WCAG 2.0 AA for our website.

Content policies and procedures

These policies apply to content produced by the Bureau.

[Public Communications Policy](#)

This policy commits the Bureau to safeguarding the authoritative nature of information disseminated, through a range of channels, to the Australian community and industry sectors.

[Social Media Procedure](#)

This procedure sets out the acceptable use of social media by Bureau staff in a personal and professional capacity at work or in relation to work.

Channels

The Bureau connects with its customers, stakeholders and partners using a wide range of channels. Refer to the **Bureau Communications Plan** to see which channels we use to reach particular audiences.

You can also learn about our internal channels by contacting your Communications Business Partner.

Audience

Having a clear understanding of the audience for your content is essential. It informs how you design, write/produce and where you publish your content.

The Bureau is Australia's national authority on weather, climate, water, oceans and space weather information. For most of our content, we need to ensure all Australians can access and understand it.

The audience for some content can also be more specific, which can change how we target it. Examples of specific audiences are Bureau staff, certain industry stakeholders, elected officials and event participants.

Readability standards

While our content can be technical, we aim to meet national and international readability targets.

- Australian Government standards recommend aiming for Australian Year 7 (age 12–14) reading level.
- International standards recommend aiming for age 12–14 reading level (WCAG 2.0 AA).

Why these standards are best practice

These standards are based on comprehensive research into how people read. They're best practice regardless of literacy levels.

- For online content, search engines like Google prioritise clearly structured content containing words that people use. People find our information and they find it faster.
- Even informed and highly educated users prefer plain language. It makes reading faster.
- Busy or stressed people need to grasp information quickly and easily.
- Up to 3.5% of Australians report that they don't speak English well (2016 Census). Using plain language makes our content more accessible for this large group. It also makes the translation more reliable when people use an online auto-translation tool.
- More people are using voice technologies. This means our digital content needs to be conversational, in words that people use.
- No one should have to work hard to understand our information.

Website user research and our audience archetypes

The Bureau's website is one of the most visited sites in Australia. Through it, we reach more Australians than through any other channel.

Research on our website users helps us understand who is using our content, and how they're using it. It's important to understand this so that our content can meet the needs of our audience and inspire them to act.

In 2019, Deloitte Digital conducted user research and identified **behavioural archetypes** for our digital products. These are relevant for all content that appears on our website or app. The archetypes help us understand user purpose and goals at a high level.

The research identified 'moments of truth', or things we can do, so that each archetype becomes an advocate for the Bureau. For more detail, see our **Customer Insights document**.

Section 3: Writing content

We follow the [Australian Government Style Manual](), produced by the Digital Transformation Authority (DTA).

It helps government agencies produce clear, effective and accessible communication for all Australians.

Ten rules for writing content

1. Focus your message

Make sure your content is unique – for online content, check if there's existing content that covers similar ground. Could that content be adapted to include your message? If creating fresh content, develop a hierarchy of information. Lead with the main point or the most important content, in sentences, paragraphs, sections and pages.

2. Be concise and specific

Use short words and sentences. Avoid:

- unnecessary adjectives – for example, instead of 'majestic, powerful, category 5 tropical cyclone' use 'category 5 tropical cyclone'
- vague language – be specific in your descriptions and instructions and where relevant include a clear call to action, so the customer knows what to do next
- 'please' or 'thank you' – it isn't necessary and is more direct without.

3. Use pronouns, where appropriate

For online channels use pronouns where possible – in general use 'you' and 'we', not 'the Bureau of Meteorology' or 'the Bureau'. However, at times it may be appropriate to use 'the Bureau'.

Like this: We provide a range of observations, forecasts and warnings.
Not like this: The Bureau provides a range of observations, forecasts and warnings.

For content that won't appear online, there are times when it's not appropriate to use pronouns. Consider:

- the context in which the content will appear – will it be clear who is performing the action if you say 'we' rather than 'the Bureau'?
- the tone of the content – if you are using a formal tone, such as in policies, ministerial correspondence and reports – first-person pronouns (we, us) are not appropriate.

4. Write in active voice

We write in the present tense and use active voice. Active voice gets straight to the point. It is clearer who did what.

Like this: We deliver weather services.
Not like this: Weather services are delivered by the Bureau.

Learn more about **active voice** and **passive voice**.

Use **passive voice** only if there's a good reason. For example, if you can't say who/what performed the action or to conceal information for legal/ethical reasons.

5. Write in small scannable chunks

Break the content up into smaller chunks of information. Use meaningful headings and subheadings so people can quickly scan the page to get to the information they need. On websites in particular, people don't read every word – they skim. See tips on structure, headings and scannable content.

6. Use words our customers use

By using words our customers use, we help them understand the content. We also make it easier for search engines like Google to find our information. This process is called search engine optimisation (SEO). See the **Style Manual guidance to understanding search engines**.

Like this: We provide weather, climate, water and oceans services.
Not like this: We provide meteorological, climatological and hydrological services.

7. Make content relevant and actionable

The customer is coming to our information for a reason, so design the content for the action they need to take. Sometimes, they want to gain knowledge. Make this easy by following these writing principles. Provide opportunities to learn more, by including relevant links and calls to action. A call to action invites the audience to do something. For example, a social media post promoting the Annual Climate Statement may say, 'For more information on 2021's climate, read the Annual Climate Statement.' (hyperlinked to the report).

8. Give each piece of content a clear purpose

Each piece of content needs a purpose, relevant to the audience. Identify what your audience needs to know and give information that suits their context, experience and needs.

For example, each web page should have one purpose. This also avoids duplication and makes our content rank higher on search engines like Google.

For a report like State of the Climate, the purpose may be to inform the audience about key trends observed in climate and their likely future impacts. Each paragraph in the report should clearly link to that purpose.

9. Make it accessible and inclusive

Accessibility is removing barriers. Inclusion is avoiding them in the first place. Break down complex ideas using plain language. Our customers are from all backgrounds so we choose words everyone will understand.

Avoid jargon, slang, acronyms and idioms:

- Jargon is language used within groups, such as team/project-specific terms. For example, 'click to open rate' is a term used by marketers that others don't necessarily understand.
- Slang is similar to jargon, but less formal. For example, brolly is a slang term for umbrella that not everyone will understand.
- Acronyms are terms made up of initial letters that are pronounced as a word. For example, ACCESS. See guidance for using acronyms.
- Idioms are expressions where words are used in a non-literal way, such as describing something easy as 'a piece of cake'.

Explain in plain language any scientific terms you must use the first time they appear. Use apps to help check the reading age – see **Section 10: Resources**. For content that will be viewed online, you also need to write text to describe any visual elements, so screen readers can tell the audience what's there. For example, to explain photos and infographics. This is known as alternative text, see **Alternative text (ALT tags)**.

10. Collaborate

Producing great content is a team effort. It's hard for one person to write content that's both accurate and easy to read. It's important to seek peer review or feedback, so that what you write has the perspective of more than one person. Sometimes you understand what you've written, but it takes another person to spot areas that are unclear.

Writing for specific audiences

We avoid creating content for specific audiences that is difficult for others to understand, where it can be accessed by others. It suggests that no one else is curious about the topic and might want to understand what the Bureau does in the area. It also narrows our audience and misses the opportunity to build understanding among other customers, stakeholders and partners about the value and impact of our work.

On the website, as much as possible, we use analytics and user testing to guide whether we need to develop content for a specific audience. And if we do, this content is subject to the same review process as other content, to make sure it meets user needs.

For non-website content, the audience can sometimes be very specific, for example, ministerial correspondence and briefs. In such cases, it's important to understand the needs of that specific audience to meet its needs.

Tools to help improve readability

There are apps that can check if our content meets the standards we aim to achieve. See the Resources section for links to popular tools.

Content should score 80 or above on the Flesch Reading Ease scale. See [instructions for using the Readability statistics and Flesch Reading Ease test in Windows and Mac](#).

To hear how your content might sound in a conversational interface like Google Home or Alexa, use the [Read Aloud function](#) available under the Review tab in Word.

For examples of well-written content for various channels, visit Our voice/Examples.

Tools and templates to help you prepare content

The tools and templates on the Elements Style Guide Breeze site make it easy to create content that meets our standards. Head here to find resources including:

- templates for PowerPoint presentations and Word documents
- letterheads
- logo files.

Structure and headings

This information is written for web pages. However, using headings, subheadings and short paragraphs is appropriate for many types of content as it helps the reader navigate the information.

Page headings

Page headings (H1) appear at the top of the page, in navigation and in breadcrumbs (the series of hyperlinks at the top of a page). They need to be short, to avoid wrapping in the menus.

Other tips:

Use conversational headings.

Keep headings short where possible (30–50 characters).

Include the primary keyword to enable SEO (search engine optimisation) near the start of the heading – contact the Content Design Team for help with keywords.

Subheadings

Keep subheadings short (30–50 characters). Use only two or three paragraphs after a subheading. Use the heading levels (H2, H3, H4) in order – don't skip any. This helps with consistency and is necessary for accessibility.

- For pages 100–300 words in length try to have at least 1–2 subheadings.
- For pages 300–500 words in length try to have at least 2–3 subheadings.
- For pages 500+ words try to have 3+ subheadings.

Paragraphs

Keep sentences short (2 or 3 lines) with a maximum of 25 words per sentence. Use two or three paragraphs after each subheading.

RELEASED UNDER FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Scannable web content: what good looks like

These are examples of good online content. However, the principles of using headings, subheadings and short paragraphs suit most content because they help the reader navigate it.

Links provide summary of page and allow instant access

Subheadings provide 'entry points' to the story

SEO-friendly headline

Use of rich media to break up long articles

Consistently short paragraphs and bullet points rather than long sentences

Examples of web content written for customers

UK Met Office | Relevant and direct

Agriculture and Horticulture - meteorological services

Directly addresses user

Relevant to user's need

Our meteorological services help you maximise production and efficiently use equipment whilst complying with environmental standards, now and in the future.

We deliver meteorological services to the whole agriculture value chain - including farmers, growers, food producers, professional associations and recognised bodies, agrochemical companies, agriscientists, government and independent agencies.

Explains what the Met Office can do for the user

We can help you:

- identify weather windows for key activities such as crop spraying and harvesting
- use resources effectively, for example, reducing the risk of agrochemicals leaching into water courses
- demonstrate due diligence for environmental regulations
- run threat models for crop diseases, such as potato blight and septoria

Active, plain language with examples to illustrate meaning

Get in touch

Call us
We are available 24/7.
0370 900 0100

Email us
Fill out this short form and we'll get back to you.
Contact us form

CSIRO | Explaining technical terms

Australian Community Climate and Earth System Simulator (ACCESS)

🏠 / ... / Oceans and Atmosphere / Climate

Assessing our climate

Climate Science Centre
Atmospheric monitoring and modelling
Latest Greenhouse gas data
ACCESS climate model
Decadal climate forecasting
National research hub
Smoke forecasting
State of the Climate 2018
Climate Change: Science and Solutions for Australia
Climate change Q&A
Climate adaptation

Last updated: 7 May 2019

Scientists have built a weather and climate model for Australia using earth system modelling.

The challenge

Modelling the Earth system is complex

Coupled earth system models seamlessly link together models of the oceans, atmosphere, sea-ice, land surface, global carbon cycle and chemistry, and aerosols, to simulate changes in the Earth's climate systems with ever-increasing precision.

These models enable scientists not only to project major changes in the Earth's climate in the longer term, but to make short and medium-range weather forecasts and seasonal predictions for particular regions.

Skill and reliability on one time scale engenders confidence for other time scales (such as climate change), and vice versa.

Our response

Investing in modelling Australia's own Earth system model

Scientists at The Collaboration for Australian Weather and Climate Research, a partnership between CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, have developed Australia's next generation climate model: the Australian Community Climate and Earth System Simulator (ACCESS).

ACCESS is a fully coupled earth system model being developed with several Australian universities on the nation's most powerful supercomputers operated by the National Computational Infrastructure and the Bureau of Meteorology.

Explains a technical term in plain language – coupled earth system models

Why it's important to everyone, including the user

Then uses the technical term when needed

Section 4: Tone of voice

People form an impression of the Bureau by the words we use and how we use them.

This is our tone of voice. It's important because we want people to trust our information. Trust comes from an appropriate, consistent approach.

We speak as the most trusted source of weather, climate, water and oceans knowledge, every day, everywhere. Our tone of voice for every piece of content reflects this.

Adapt the tone of voice to engage your audience, so the content can meet their needs. For example, briefs for ministers will use a different tone from a social media post or information on our website. Urgent calls to action in severe weather content will have a different tone from content aimed at increasing understanding of weather, climate water and oceans.

The Bureau's tone of voice

Our tone of voice should further people's understanding of weather, climate, water and oceans by making the science behind our work more accessible to everyone.

See our tone of voice information, including:

- our persona and personality
- our flexible framework for communicating in different situations
- examples of our tone of voice in action.

Tone formality

Match the formality of your tone to the customer, stakeholder or partner. Tone can be [formal or standard](#).

A **standard tone** is appropriate for most of our content because most people find this easiest to understand.

A standard tone uses contractions (such as 'it's' rather than 'it is') and personal pronouns (such as we and us).

It doesn't use idioms, metaphors or slang.

Examples where standard tone is appropriate: web pages, corporate communications, media releases, articles.

A **formal tone** doesn't use contractions, and often uses the third person (he, she, they, them).

Examples where formal tone is appropriate: policies, reports, ministerial letters.

We don't use an **informal tone** at the Bureau as it doesn't support our position as the most trusted source.

Tone of voice on the website

On the website, we convey tone in a natural, helpful and conversational way.

To do this, we:

- use contractions (for example, 'it's' rather than 'it is')
- use pronouns to address readers (you) and to refer to the Bureau (we)
- use plain language wherever possible
- write in conversational style (this also helps with voice interfaces)
- aim to engage the reader and reassure them while explaining and informing.

Section 5: Content in different formats

We have specific rules for some types of content, though we generally follow the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

This section contains information about:

- content on our website – how we manage it
- specific details for web content writers about some content formats
- content formats common across web pages and digital documents
- physical formats such as print.

About our website content

Digital content is a business asset.

It is valuable and must be approached strategically because it:

- provides information that helps people make critical and sometimes life-saving decisions about their safety, livelihood and wellbeing
- empowers people to act
- educates and engages people about the value and impact of our work
- generates revenue by helping people understand the value of our paid services.

We manage digital content in a different way to traditional publications because people engage with it in a different way. They scan to find relevant information, so we break up blocks of text and structure content with subheadings and dot points. They usually find our digital content through search engines like Google, so we include search words and use headings in the right way. They may be using mobile devices, assistive technologies or voice user interfaces (like Siri or Google Home), so we make our content accessible and appropriate for these devices. They may also have low literacy or low English skills, so we favour plain language.

Our digital content is one of the most visible and used customer tools. It plays an important role in our positioning and gives people a lasting impression of the Bureau.

What content must do

All content must support a business objective and meet a user need.

Content that doesn't do this makes it harder for people to find the information they need. It also fills our website with information no one wants or needs. It doesn't respect our customers. We're making them spend their valuable time looking through information that is difficult to read and doesn't meet their needs.

People are coming to our digital channels to find and act on information. They want to get the information they need quickly.

What we base content decisions on

As much as possible, we are evidence based – making content decisions based on research, data and analytics. No area of the business can base decisions on guesswork,

hunches or personal preferences. Evidence-based decision-making keeps our content high quality and focused on our customers.

How the content life cycle works

Content is never 'set and forget'. It is constantly somewhere in the life cycle of define, draft, edit, build, review, approve, publish, monitor, learn and optimise (see graphic). It needs thought, attention and questioning at every step. This is how we maintain quality and achieve our goals.
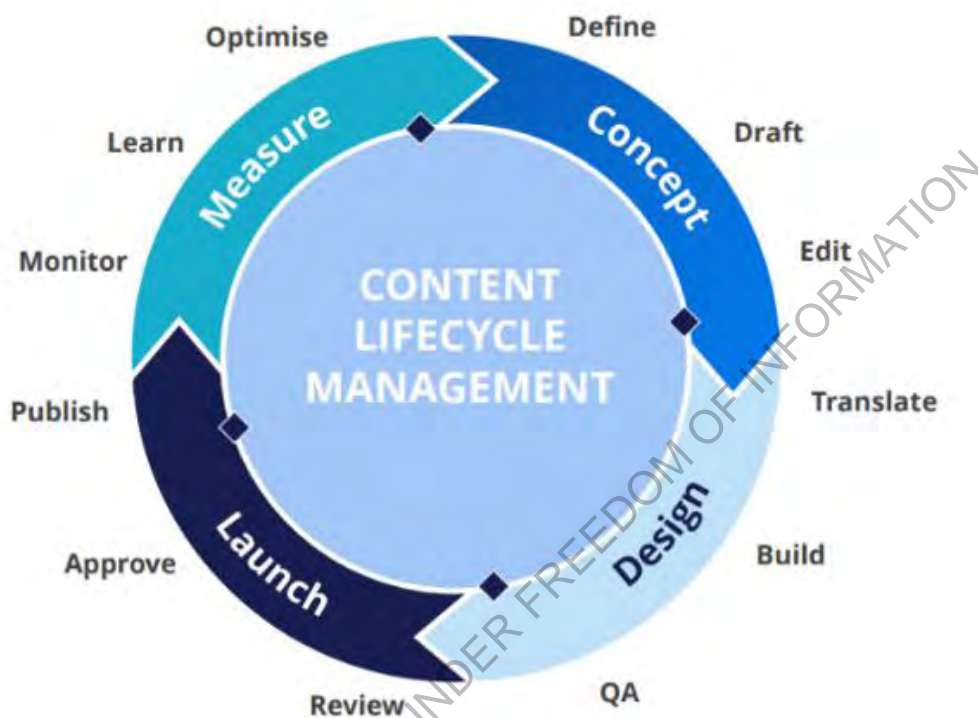
Content life cycle Reference: Bureau Content Strategy v4 – Deloitte Digital 2020

Myth-busters

'Making content easy to understand is dumbing down.'

Even well-read and highly educated people want to absorb information quickly. Wanting to understand quickly has little to do with intelligence. It has a lot to do with time and respect. Helping customers understand our work, its value and impact is not dumb. It's smart.

'This is for specialists. Everyone knows what we're talking about.'

We'll always write for a target audience when developing content. It's good practice to make sure our content is designed for the people who will use it. But we don't want to exclude others by using specialist language. Not only specialists will come to a page – in fact, it's likely to be someone without technical knowledge.

Our digital platforms are an invitation to people to understand our world. We want anyone who is curious and interested in our work to understand its value and impact. We need to write for a wide audience.

Also see Section 3: Writing content and Section 9: Measuring success.

'Most people can read from a computer or phone screen, so we don't need to bother with accessibility.'

As an Australian Government agency, our content must be able to be viewed and understood by all Australians. We are also obligated to meet standards for this:

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA, with 2.1 standard strongly advised by the DTA
- the DTA's Digital Service Standard.

These have implications for how we design our website and other digital formats. They affect the kind of content we produce, from the language we use to the formats we provide information in.

Accessibility is a key part of reinforcing our positioning as the most trusted source, every day, everywhere.

Also see Section 8: Accessibility.

Web writers: cross references, calls to action, microcopy and more

This section is for those working on content for our website. It has specific information on content situations that are relevant only to them.

Beta referrals to old website

There is a standard cross reference for sending people back to the old website from the new website:

You'll find [reference to content] on our current website – we're still building this new one.

Calls to action (CTA)

For warnings, follow the guidance from the Bureau's Future Warnings Framework and AIDR handbook. See Warnings.

We use full stops in the sentences in CTAs.

Microcopy

This information is for web content writers working on customer engagement channels, such as the app and dynamic web pages, and when using call-to-action components.

Microcopy is the words or phrases that are directly related to the actions a user takes. It motivates an action, guides the user in taking the action and gives them feedback afterwards. For example, the text that:

- encourages a user to add locations to customise their Bureau website home page
- tells them how to choose a location as their favourite place
- confirms their choice was successfully submitted.

Buttons

Make the destination clear – if using a page title, there's no need to say 'visit' or 'view' in the button text. For example, instead of 'Visit Climate Data Online', just say 'Climate Data Online' for the button text.

Radio button list items are not capitalised unless they are part of a sentence construction.

Numbers, dates and time

Numerals are used in microcopy and tables in the app and on the website. This helps save space and allow for numbers that are pulled through from other systems – for examples, the number of warnings at a location will update automatically with a number, not words.

Use the short form of date and time measurements – for example:

4 hours 32 minutes can be abbreviated to 4 h 32 min. Using min rather than m avoids confusion with metres.

For non-microcopy style see numbers, and dates and time.

Register and Log in

The words Register and Log in have been tested with users. Existing users are familiar with this terminology and the concept of 'registered users' is well established.

- 'Register' not 'sign up'.
- 'Log in' not 'sign in'. Don't hyphenate log in. Login is the noun, log in is the verb. For example, you need to use your login (noun) to log in (verb) to the site.

References to Trove

On our website we refer people to Trove to access Bureau materials stored there. This is the standard reference:

You'll find this information on Trove, an archive service managed by the National Library of Australia.

Self service portal

This is a portal on our website that our customers use to access our data products, such as environmental data, forecasts and analyses. The portal is adapted from Magento software for the Bureau's use. Changes to terms can affect other parts of the user flow – for example, renaming orders as invoices when these refer to different things in the flow.

Account type – Individual or organisation, not personal or company/business

Create account – When a user is registering to use the portal, they are asked to create an account.

Geographic coverage (in filters)

Product title – not product name

Product code – not ID or number

Product description

Product type

Quantity not unit (tax invoice page)

Subscribe and unsubscribe

'Subscribe' and 'unsubscribe' are used when referring to email subscription, such as for the Bureau's blog and newsletters.

Common content formats

FAQs

Avoid using FAQs (frequently asked questions) for Bureau content. Instead, include the information where the customer will expect to find it, in context. If FAQs are not related to Bureau content or are considered essential (for example, FAQs about using the new website), make sure they're useful, succinct and link directly to the places the customer needs to go next. Group any FAQs under topics for quick reference and regularly update them.

Images and graphics

See [Section 6: Images, graphics and video](#).

PDFs and other digital documents

PDFs can stop people accessing our information. PDFs must be optimised for accessibility or they're not accessible to people using screen readers. In addition, research shows that people become frustrated having to pinch and scroll around information in a PDF when using a mobile phone.

There are [tools](#) in the Pro version of Adobe Acrobat to check whether a PDF is optimised for accessibility, which also help make it so. This version is not available to

everyone at the Bureau. Contact your **Communications Business Partner** for advice on how to manage your PDF's accessibility.

Digital documents are also commonly created in PowerPoint and Word. Use their **accessibility checker** to help you make them accessible.

PDFs on the website

In keeping with **Style Manual guidance**, PDFs and documents (such as Word and PowerPoint) are published on the website if there is a strong user need. In general, new content should be published in HTML – the language used to create our web pages. It's accessible and easier to update. The non-HTML format (for example, PDF) should be a secondary source of the information.

Transitional arrangements for new website launch

We won't automatically move PDFs and documents to the new website. When there is a strong user or business need, we publish a PDF or document and create a HTML content summary. This gives website users a responsive summary of the PDF, even if it won't open on their device. The summary enables people to decide whether to open the PDF or request an accessible version of the document.

When an update to the PDF or document is needed, the preference is to transition to HTML or, at minimum, a PDF/document that's optimised for accessibility. Talk to the Content Design Team about your situation. See Section 8: Accessibility.

Print and other physical formats

Information should only be produced in a physical format if there is a strategic business need for it. Examples may include business cards and event collateral such as posters and pull-up banners.

Surveys and questionnaires

If you're designing a survey, see Style Manual forms information for advice.

Tables

Follow Style Manual guidance if the tables are static. The Design System has some specific information for dynamic content styles.

Video

See Section 6: Images, graphics and video.

Section 6: Images, graphics and video

We publish photos and a range of other graphics, such as diagrams, illustrations, charts and maps. We also produce and publish video. This section outlines the guidance that applies to these visual elements and mediums.

Visual principles and style for images

The images we publish should humanise our work. We strongly prefer images that include people and movement, rather than static landscapes. They should feature our people and our customers, where possible.

Our image style captures real moments, celebrates Australia's vast landscapes and is thought-provoking.

See detailed information about our image principles and examples of our image style.

Permission required for all images and graphics

All images and graphics not owned by the Bureau must have appropriate permissions/licences or we can't publish them. Find out how to gain consent to publish images.

Sourcing images

See 'Visual principles and style for images' below, to find out about suitable images to illustrate your content.

There is a collection of Bureau-owned images. These include photos of our staff at work in offices and in the field, and images that relate to some of our key customer sectors. These images are preferred for use over generic images from iStock.

The Bureau has a licence with iStock that is managed by the Creative Team in the Communications Program. You can select images from its Essentials collection. Contact your Communications Business Partner to request the downloaded image.

You can use images from other sources, providing you have a signed Bureau consent form or have legally licenced the image another way.

Image and graphics specifications

Social media

Dimensions are provided in pixels in the table below.

	Instagram	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
Profile	320 x 320	170 x 170	400 x 400	400 x 400
Landscape	1080 x 566	1200 x 630	1024 x 512	1200 x 627
Portrait	1080 x 1350	630 x 1200	N/A	627 x 1200
Square	1080 x 1080	1200 x 1200	N/A	N/A
Stories	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920	N/A	N/A

Cover photo	N/A	851 x 315	1500 x 1500	1128 x 191

Website

- Width: 2432 pixels or larger. To find this information, right-click on your image file then view Properties/Summary tab.
- Format: JPG or PNG
- Aspect ratio: 16:9. If you need your graphic resized, contact digitalcontent@bom.gov.au.

Tips

If you need help with any of these tips, or have an image that doesn't meet specifications but is a 'must have' for web content, **contact the Content Design Team**.

- Don't copy graphics embedded in documents as this reduces quality. Use the original graphics file.
- Graphics files should be named using keywords that customers might search on. The words should be separated by hyphens, not underscores. This is so they can be read by search engines.

Alt text (ALT tags)

See **Style Manual guidance on alt text, captions and titles for images**.

With most images and graphics used in digital formats you need to supply alternative text (alt text) describing the image for those who can't see it.

Alt text is an accessibility requirement. It's a piece of copy added behind the scenes of a digital interface such as a website. It describes non-text content such as images, maps, charts and diagrams – anything you need to see in order to understand the content. Alt text helps people using a screen reader to understand what is shown. It also displays when an image doesn't load on a web page, perhaps due to low bandwidth.

Website alt text should contain relevant keywords – **contact the Content Design Team** if you need help with these.

Alt text on our website is limited to 255 characters.

Alt text should begin with a noun. Don't put an article before the noun.

Alt text should end with a full stop, to signal to screen readers that it is a discrete element.

Like this: Thunderstorm moving across a mountain range towards the coast

Not like this: A thunderstorm moving across a mountain range towards the coast

For more complex situations, such as describing a table or diagram, you may need to use multiple sentences.

For more information on alt text see the [W3C Web Accessibility Images tutorial](#) and the [Alt decision tree](#).

Captions

See [Style Manual guidance on alt text, captions and titles for images](#).

Most images require captions. These are brief descriptions (up to 255 characters) related to the image that give it context. They also credit the copyright owner, where required.

Captions don't need to be complete sentences. Even if they are full sentences, in general, don't conclude them with a full stop. However, if your caption also attributes a copyright owner or has multiple sentences, use a full stop. For example:

Large hail damaged 55 houses in Port Macquarie in February 2020. Credit: Peter Pan

Don't include text within a graphic or image, as this isn't accessible. Use a caption instead.

Consider how your alt text and caption work together. They shouldn't be identical or someone using a screen reader will hear the same information twice.

Video

Video is an effective way to convey certain information. It's typically created as part of an overarching communication plan for a Bureau service. Your [Communications Business Partner](#) can provide information and advice about whether video is the best format for your information and how it can be produced.

Video we publish needs to be of high quality and have captions. It must also include a transcript to meet accessibility requirements, where the platform supports this, such as our website.

Our videos are hosted on YouTube. They're embedded on our website but uploaded to social media platforms.

See also [Style Manual guidance on video](#).

Words associated with video

Type of words	Definition and use	Style
Words appearing as part of video	These appear on screen within the video as part of an animation or other visual element. They give impact to or help explain the messages presented in the video.	See below
Captions	Captions appear at the bottom of a video as it's playing, if selected by the user. They show the words being spoken in the video. Captions are useful for people who have a	Standard Bureau style

	hearing impairment and those who can't or prefer not to switch the sound on.	
Transcripts	Transcripts reproduce the words spoken within the video. They are viewed independently from the video. All videos on our website have a transcript for accessibility reasons.	Standard Bureau style

How words are used in video

Words appearing within video have greater significance than just the meaning of the word. They're also a visual element that is part of the experience of graphical, motion-led communication. They interact not only with each other, but with other elements in the wider design of the video to create meaning. They may:

- draw the eye to something at a certain point, influencing the viewer's journey through the video/story
- help signal hierarchy of information
- add visual drama and interest.

Balancing style, design and function

Video follows the Bureau's visual style. Written style is also part of our visual identity. Using it consistently helps build trust. However, there is a balance to be struck. To achieve the aims of a video it's necessary to consider the unique characteristics of the medium. For example:

- Full sentences are not required. These can distract from the visual messages.
- Words may be bolded – sparingly and for emphasis.
- Words may appear in capital letters. This should be used sparingly, for emphasis and only if the emphasis can't be achieved by other means.
- Ampersands (and other well-understood abbreviations such as shortened forms of months and days) may be used if space is tight and it's the only way to achieve a better/optimum balance between the text and other visual elements.
- Punctuation (commas, full stops) is used differently, or not at all as the video scenes determine pacing. Ellipses may be used if it's useful to connect words across screens.

Words must appear on screen for long enough to allow people to read and absorb them, in conjunction with surrounding visual elements.

Section 7: Style, grammar and formatting

We follow the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

More specific guidance on the Bureau's use, as well as changes from previous style, is outlined here.

Ampersands (&)

In general, don't use ampersands (&) unless they appear as part of an organisation's proper name. However, they may be used in tweets because the character count is so restricted.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and place names

Our style is to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities.

The Australian Government Style Manual has more information about [style matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#).

Place names – dual naming

Sometimes a place or a feature has two official names, to reflect both the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and introduced European names. Separate the names with a forward slash (also called a solidus) and spaces. For example, kunanyi / Mount Wellington and Kennaook / Cape Grim in Tasmania.

In the kunanyi example above, it's correct that 'kunanyi' doesn't have an initial capital. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre decided that the reconstructed language of palawa kani has only lower-case letters. 'Kennaook' does take an initial capital, as per its listing in the Tasmanian government's [Placenames Tasmania database](#).

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre is the official name for this lake. The unspaced hyphen is correct, while nonstandard.

Acronyms and initialisms

Acronyms are terms made up of initial letters that are pronounced as a word (for example, radar ACCESS). Initialisms are made up of initial letters pronounced individually (for example, ABC, WMO).

We avoid acronyms and initialisms where possible. Unless it's a common one, like CSIRO, consider if you can convey the information without using it.

Use an acronym or initialism when:

- you need to refer to a term more than once
- it will make content easier to understand.

If you need to use one, follow the Style Manual guidance on [acronyms and initialisms](#).

Don't use initial capitals when spelling out the acronym/initialism in full, unless the words usually have initial capitals (such as a proper name). For example:

- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- ... automatic weather station (AWS).

Capitalisation

Follow the Style Manual guidance on capitalisation.

Capital letters make our content harder for people to read. We take a minimal approach to capitalisation.

Use sentence case for most things (only the first word of the sentence has an initial capital). This includes headings and categories. For example, Forecasts and warnings.

Document titles

Use title case for the names of specific documents, such as Bureau of Meteorology Annual Report 2018–19 or specific products, such as the Climate and Water Outlook January–March 2020. Don't italicise. Don't capitalise when using the term generically, for example 'We publish an annual report in November each year' or 'Our annual reports are available on the Bureau's website'.

Job titles

Follow the Style Manual guidance on **organisational titles**. In general:

- In paragraph text use lower case.
- In non-paragraph text use upper case if the title precedes the person's name and lower case if it follows it. For example:
    - Senior Meteorologist, Jane Nguyen.
    - Jane Nguyen, senior meteorologist.

For general references to the role, use lower case. For example, '...forecaster Jane Nguyen...'.

The Bureau

'The Bureau' is used as the shortened form of the Bureau of Meteorology. 'Bureau' always has a capital 'B'.

Contractions and abbreviations

See the Style Manual guidance on contractions for full information.

Grammatical contractions join two words. Examples: aren't (are not), we're (we are) and don't (do not).

We use grammatical contractions in line with our tone of voice. They help us communicate in a natural, helpful and conversational tone. However, their use must be in context. In more formal content, such as strategy documents, they're not used.

Coordinates – latitude and longitude

Coordinates are expressed in decimal. To convert from degrees-minutes-seconds to decimal, use a conversion calculator.

Use a degree symbol next to the number and a non-breaking space between the degree symbol and the direction. For example, 35.17° S.

For coordinate ranges, use an en dash between the numbers: 90–180° E or 'to' when the range is complex 145° E to 160° W, 10° N to 35° S.

Dates and time

See the Style Manual guidance on dates and time for full information. App developers, see the Design System as there are minor differences. In other situations:

- Use lower case for centuries (the 20th century).
- In general, use numerals for the date and year, but spell out the day (if using) and the month in words. Don't use commas or other punctuation. Follow this example for the order: Friday 1 May 2020.
- Abbreviate months and days only if space is limited, for example, in tables and on social media, especially Twitter. The standard abbreviations for days are Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun. The standard abbreviations for months are the first three letters of each month (Jan, Feb etc.) except for September (Sept). For other options refer to the **Style Manual guidance**.
- In a sentence, use 'from' and 'to' in a span of years and write the year in full (from 2015 to 2017). However, financial years are an exception. Use an unspaced en dash to indicate the span (the 2019–20 financial year). Treat the date span associated with summer the same way (summer 2019–20). We don't use a forward slash for this purpose.
- Don't use an apostrophe for decades and expressions of time (2010s not 2010's).
- To express time, use a colon between the hours and minutes (8:22 am, not 8.22 am) and a non-breaking space (Alt+0160) between the time and 'am' or 'pm'. This means the time won't break over a line.
- For approximate times, use words (The meeting finished at about 10 o'clock).
- 24/7 is fine to use (means continuously).

Emojis

Emojis are **standardised pictographs**. They are only to be used in social media.

Use emojis sparingly. Don't use multiple emojis in a row.

Emojis must be functional rather than playful, in character with our tone of voice. For example:

- Weather/wave symbols, such as ☁️ 🌦️ ⚡ 🌊 act as visual cues and help break down longer posts so people can more easily navigate and understand them
- the warning symbol ⚠️ draws attention to a serious message, such as a weather warning

- the camera symbol 📷 is standard on social media to credit a photographer.

Make sure people can understand the message if the emoji is removed.

Source emojis from **Emojipedia**.

You can use an exclamation mark or question mark after an emoji, but not a full stop.

Hashtags (#)

Hashtags are important in social media, especially on Twitter. They help people find and follow topics of interest. If you are publishing a new topic, try to use an existing or trending hashtag rather than creating a new one.

Use 'camel case' for compound hashtags. The first letter of each word in the hashtag starts with a capital letter – for example, #BureauOutlook.

You can use an exclamation mark or question mark after a hashtag, but don't use a full stop.

Italics

Use italics in limited circumstances. See the Style Manual guidance on italics for full information.

We most often use italics for ship/vehicle names (such as *RV Investigator*), and the titles of books, newspapers and Acts of Parliament (for example, *Meteorology Act 1955*).

We no longer use italics for the names of tropical cyclones (see Cyclone names and other natural phenomena).

Lists

Lists make it easier for people to skim content and navigate pages. They can often help convey information without using overly long sentences. Follow the Style Manual guidance on lists.

The main list types are shown below.

Fragment list

Fragments are phrases or incomplete sentences. These lists have:

- a lead-in phase or sentence followed by a colon
- a list of fragments, each marked by a bullet and starting with a lower-case letter
- a final bullet point that ends with a full stop.

For example:

Queensland is famous for its:

- islands and coral reefs

- abundant wildlife
- tropical rainforests
- beautiful beaches.

Sentence list

As the name suggests, these are lists of sentences. They have:

- a heading (no colon) or a lead-in (with colon)
- a list of sentences, marked by bullets or numbers
- sentences that start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

For example:

The committee members decided the following actions:

- The committee secretary will respond to each recommendation.
- The secretary will allocate responses that need more work to members.
- Members will discuss the recommendations at the next meeting on 9 March.

Stand-alone list

Technical documents often contain stand-alone lists. These have:

- a heading without a colon, rather than a lead-in
- no full stops
- fragments that start with a capital letter.

For example:

My weekly tasks

- Answering phone enquiries
- Booking conference venues
- Ordering stationery
- Taking meeting minutes

Numbered list

Use a numbered (ordered) list when the order is important or signals a hierarchy of actions, such as a list of instructions.

For example:

How to register for the conference:

1. Choose the days you will attend.
2. Pick the workshops you want to join.
3. Enter your discount code (if you have one).

Numbers and measurements

Follow the [Style Manual guidance on numbers and measurements](). For microcopy and tables on the website or app, see the [Design System]() and the Numbers, dates and times in microcopy section of this site, which outline some exceptions.

Numbers or words?

In a sentence:

- use numerals for 2 and above
- write out the numbers zero and one in words.

However, use words for numbers when:

- starting a sentence
- writing a fraction (about two-thirds of the team attended the meeting)
- quoting a figure of speech (two's company but three's a crowd)
- in media releases – use words for numbers below 10, to align with the style of media organisations.

The Australian Government Style Manual provides detailed guidance on when to use all numbers as numerals, including zero and one. These include:

- in units of measurement
- to show mathematical relationships (such as equations and ratios)
- when showing decimals
- in tables and charts
- for dates and times, and various other contexts detailed in the guidance.

Writing numbers

When using numbers of 1,000 or more, use commas to separate the numerals into groups of three (working right to left). For example:

- 1,000
- 15,000
- 7,200,300.

Negative numbers and subtraction

To express a negative number, use the minus symbol from your numerical keypad at the right side of your keyboard.

The minus symbol is:

- spaced to show subtraction in an equation (for example 8 - 4)
- unspaced to show a negative number (for example -4).

Measurement and units

See the [Style Manual guidance on measurement and units]() for full information.

- Use symbols/abbreviations for common units of measurement (for example, m, mm, cm, km, km/h). If the unit is less well known, such as hectopascal (hPa), use the word followed by the abbreviation in brackets on first mention, and the abbreviation thereafter.
- Use numerals for numbers with units of measurement (5 km not five km).
- Spell out units of time (years, days, hours, minutes, seconds). Don't abbreviate them unless they're in a table, list or chart and easy to understand.
- Use symbols for units that come from time measurement, such as speed (km/h, not kilometres per hour).
- Put a space between the number and its unit (5 km, 10 °C, 5 m). However, it needs to be what's called a non-breaking space, which prevents the unit ending up on a different line from the number.
  - Create a non-breaking space by holding down the Alt key and using your numeric keypad at the right-hand side of your keyboard, to type 0160.
- On social media platforms, where non-breaking spaces aren't enabled, remove the space between the number and its unit to ensure they don't appear on separate lines. This also saves space on Twitter where characters are limited.
- There's no space between the number and a unit of currency ($5) or a degree of plane angle (180°).

Fractions and decimals

See the Style Manual guidance on fractions and decimals for full information.

You can express a number as a decimal or a fraction. In text, decimals are written as numbers and fractions as words.

Use decimals when you need to be precise. For example:

Australia received 412.8 mm of rainfall this year.

Use fractions when you don't need to be precise. For example:

The dam was three-quarters full.

Decimal numbers of less than 1 have a zero before the decimal point (for example, 0.75).

Use the same unit of measurement and number of decimal places throughout a piece of content, to help people compare quantities. For example:

- The Green Wattle Creek fire burnt almost 3,000 km², of which more than 1,000 km² was national park.
- The smaller jug held 1.5 L and the bigger jug held 2.0 L.

Percentages

See the Style Manual guidance on percentages for full information.

Use the percentage (%) sign next to a numeral in text. Don't put a space between them. For example, 15%.

We no longer spell out per cent in text.

Ranges of numbers

Use unspaced en dashes for spans and ranges in technical content where there are many numbers, and in tables. For example:

There were 25–30 head of cattle in quarantine in June and 50–60 in July.

Telephone numbers

To format phone numbers, follow the Style Manual guidance. In summary:

- 02 1234 4321 format for landline
- 0400 000 000 format for mobile
- Prefix with +61 for international callers.

Telephone numbers on the website

You need approval from the website product owner (General Manager, DCCED) to add a phone number to our website. We limit the number of public contact points to improve customer service and security.

We use click to call functionality, which allows users to call a telephone number by selecting (clicking or tapping) the number shown in content.

Pronouns

For online channels use pronouns where possible – in general use 'you' and 'we', not 'the Bureau of Meteorology' or 'the Bureau', to connect with the audience. However, at times it may be appropriate to use 'the Bureau'.

For content that won't appear online, there are occasions when it's not appropriate to use pronouns. Consider:

- the context in which the content will appear – will it be clear who is performing the action if you say 'we' rather than 'the Bureau'?
- the tone of the content – if you are using a formal tone, such as in policies, ministerial correspondence and reports – first-person pronouns (we, us) are not appropriate.

Avoid gendered pronouns to keep language inclusive. Follow the Style Manual guidance on inclusive language.

Punctuation

Follow the Style Manual guidance on punctuation marks. It covers many topics that can be a source of confusion. These include:

- apostrophes
- colons
- commas – we don't use the Oxford/serial comma (a comma before the final item in a list)

- [dashes](#) – also see [below](#)
- [forward slashes](#) (soliduses) – don't use a space on either side of the forward slash, except if you're using it to show a dual place name
- [full stops](#) – also see [below](#)
- [hyphens](#)
- [quotation marks](#) – in most instances we use single quotation marks ('), with double quotation marks (") used only for a quote within a quote – also see below, and note media release exception
- [semicolons](#).

En dash

The en dash is used with spaces to create a pause in a sentence to add extra meaning. It can also be used to include non-essential or parenthetical information. For example:

> Three rivers – the Murray, Darling and Murrumbidgee – were discussed in the report.

It's used without spaces to show spans and ranges of financial years, terms of office and lifespans. For example, the 2019–20 budget.

It's used to join two nouns that both retain their original meaning (coordinate nouns). For example:

- Murray–Darling Basin
- Madden–Julian oscillation.

If one part of the coordinate noun has more than one word, use a space on either side of the en dash. For example, Australia – New Zealand relations.

It's not used for spans in general text but is used for spans and ranges in technical content, where there are many numbers. For example:

- There were 25–30 head of cattle in quarantine in June and 50–60 in July.
- Air quality declined during the 2003–2006 reporting period.

For spans in general text, use the following constructions:

- She worked from 10 to 28 January.
- Annual rainfall between 2017 and 2019 was lower than the long-term average.

Full stops

See Style Manual **[guidance on full stops](#)**.

Full stops on the website

We don't use full stops in the page description field of the website. This line functions like a subtitle.

We do use full stops in the descriptive lines of calls to action on the website.

Quotation marks and quoting speech

We use single quotation marks ('), with double quotation marks (") used only for a quote within a quote.

Media releases are an exception to the above. We use double quotation marks for direct speech in media releases.

When attributing/referring to quotes we use past tense. For example:

- Like this: 'The new Heatwave Warning Service will be available on 1 November', Brent Davidson said.
- Not like this: 'The new Heatwave Warning Service will be available on 1 November', says Brent Davidson.

Referencing and citation

Accurate references help people find source information. Attributing your sources supports the credibility and usability of your content.

If you quote or refer to the work of another person, you must cite and reference it properly.

In content such as scientific articles, we use the author–date system of citation. For full details refer to the Style Manual guidance on this system. This uses:

- in-text citations with the author's name and the year of publication
- an alphabetical reference list with the full information about the source.

Special characters

These are characters you need that you won't find directly on your keyboard. You need to use 'alt codes' to access them. Hold down the Alt key while you type the code using the numeric keypad on the right side of your keyboard.

Name	Character	Alt code
Degree	°	0176
En dash	–	0150
Non-breaking space (use between number and unit of measurement to make sure they don't break over a line)		0160
Lower-case n with a tilde (e.g. use for El Niño and La Niña)	ñ	0241

Underlining

We don't underline, in any formats.

In digital formats it could look like a hyperlink. This could confuse people.

Words we use

The Bureau's name – what we call ourselves

We refer to ourselves as 'the Bureau of Meteorology' or 'the Bureau', not 'BOM'.

When 'the Bureau' is used as the shortened form of the Bureau of Meteorology, 'Bureau' always has a capital 'B'.

See also Tone formality. In many cases we refer to ourselves as 'we' and 'us', rather than 'the Bureau'.

It may be necessary to refer to ourselves in the third person (as the Bureau of Meteorology or the Bureau) throughout a piece of communication. This could be needed where multiple organisations are being referenced or where it's necessary to clarify or emphasise the Bureau's role.

In this case, use 'the Bureau of Meteorology' on the first mention, followed by 'the Bureau' in brackets. For example, Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau). Use 'the Bureau' thereafter.

Bureau offices

Use the location name followed by office or hub (for example, Melbourne office, Brisbane office, Cairns hub). 'Office' and 'hub' don't have an initial capital.

We no longer refer to 'head office' or 'regional offices'.

Cyclone names (and other natural phenomena)

When using tropical cyclone generically, do not capitalise. For example, tropical cyclones are common in northern Australia.

Capitalise when using the term as a proper noun (with a human name). For example, Tropical Cyclone Owen. Do not italicise.

See the Style Manual guidance on natural phenomena for drought, flood, fire and so on.

Directions of the compass

These are expressed as lower case and with hyphens, for example:

- north-east
- north-north-west

It also extends to descriptive uses, for example:

- north-eastern areas of the country
- north-easterly winds.

In some cases administrative regions that use these terms are proper nouns and should be treated as such. For example, South East Queensland is the proper name of an administrative region and when used in that context should have initial capitals and not be hyphenated. However, generic references to the south-east part of Queensland would receive general treatment.

Government terms

See the [Style Manual guidance on government terms](#). It includes information on:

- how we refer to the Australian Government and local governments
- how we capitalise various words, such as the different governments, government-related terms, legislation and publication names.

Government

Refer to the national government of Australia as the Australian Government. Use an initial capital for both words only when they occur together. Don't use Commonwealth Government or Federal Government.

Use an initial capital for the word 'government' if it is part of a formal name. Use lower case everywhere else. For example:

- the Victorian Government
- the Australian and New Zealand governments
- the governments of South Australia and Tasmania
- Road maintenance is a local government responsibility.

Organisation names

Spell the name of the organisation in the way it spells its own name, even if that's not how we would usually spell one of the words. For example, World Meteorological Organization (not Organisation).

States and territories

Follow the [Style Manual guidance on Australian place names](#). Spell out the names of the state/territories in full in formal contexts. This isn't necessary where space is tight and you're satisfied the meaning is clear, such as on social media. It's fine to use the abbreviations below when space is limited and the full name would result in repetition.

NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA, Tas, ACT, NT

We no longer use an initial capital for the word 'state' or 'territory' unless it starts a sentence.

We no longer use full stops after any abbreviated state or territory name.

When states and territories are to be presented in an order, the default order is as above.

The default capital city order is the same as the corresponding state order.

Warnings

Warnings are published on our website and app. While the principles in this guide apply to warnings, the primary guidance is provided by the Bureau's Future Warnings Framework (currently in draft). It lists resources to help you create best practice warnings, including:

- [AIDR Public Information and Warnings Handbook](#)
- [Warning Message Construction: Choosing your words](#)

We refer to warnings being 'issued', not 'released'.

Preferred spelling

Use Australian English, referring to the [Macquarie Dictionary](#), unless shown differently below. Contact the [Content Design Team](#) to register as a user and receive login details.

A

adviser

air mass

anticlockwise

aurora australis

automatic weather station (AWS)

B

broadscale

bushfire

C

Celsius

cloudband, including 'north-west cloudband'

cloudburst

cooperate

coordinates

Coriolis effect

Coriolis force

CSIRO (not 'the CSIRO')

D

data – treat as singular, so 'data is' not 'data are'. This [Macquarie Dictionary blog](#) explains the rationale for this approach

database

dataset

daytime (but night-time)

day-to-day (adjective)

decision-making

dew-point (adjective), dew point (noun)

downburst

downpour

dry-bulb (adjective)

dust devil

dust storm

E

Earth (initial capital if using as a proper noun, otherwise earth)

east coast low

El Niño–Southern Oscillation

enquire, enquiry

equator

extratropical

F

firefighter

firestorm

first-hand

flash flood

flood tide

floodplain

floodwaters

focused

fractions (three-quarters, two-thirds)

freshwater

G

gale force

geomagnetic induced currents

greenhouse effect

ground-based

groundwater

H

hailstone

hailstorm

heat-resistant

heatstroke

heatwave

hemisphere (also see southern hemisphere)

high pressure system

high-resolution (adjective)

high seas – or High Seas Forecast for the specific product. High seas areas are capitalised if used as a proper noun, for example, Western Area.

high tide

homepage

I

ice-bound

icebreaker

ice core

International Date Line

intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ)

J

jet stream

K

kelvin (degree) but Kelvin scale

L

land-based

large-scale (adjective)

life cycle

login (noun) but log in (verb)

long-range (adjective)

long-term (adjective)

low pressure system

low-level (adjective)

M

macroscale

Maritime Continent

mesoscale

metadata

METAREA 10 – we follow the IOC all capitals format with a non-breaking space between the word and the number. Don't use Roman numerals.

microclimate

mid-latitudes

mock-up

modelling

month-to-month (adjective)

morning glory cloud

multiagency

multidisciplinary

multi-purpose

Murray–Darling Basin

N

nationwide

night-time (but daytime)

North Pole

north-east

northern hemisphere

north-west

nowcasting

O

offshore

onshore

P

polar-orbiting satellite

program (not programme, unless it's the proper name)

publicly

R

radiosonde

rainband

raindrop

rainstorm

real-time (adjective), real time (noun)

record-breaking (adjective)

reissue

roaring forties

roll cloud

round-the-clock (adjective)

runoff

S

sandstorm

seabed

sea breeze

sea fog

sea-ice (adjective), sea ice (noun)

sea surface temperature

sea water

short-term

snowdrift

snowstorm

South Pole

South East Asia (region)

southerly buster

southern hemisphere

Stevenson screen

storm belt

storm cell

storm-cloud (adjective), storm cloud (noun)

storm surge

streamflow

sub-antarctic

subtropical

subtropical high pressure belt

Sun (initial capital if using as proper noun, otherwise sun)

supercell

supercomputer

supercooled

T

thunderbolt

thundercloud

thunderstorm

time frame

timeline

timescale

time zone

tornado (plural: tornadoes)

trade wind

travelling ionospheric disturbances

Tropic of Cancer/Capricorn

tsunami (plural: tsunamis)

U

underway

updraught

upper air

upper-level (adjective)

upwelling

up to date

W

Walker circulation

warm front

water-level (adjective), water level (noun)

water table

waterspout

web page

website (not web site)

wellbeing

wet-bulb (adjective)

wheat belt (but if specific WA region then Wheatbelt)

willy-willy

wind-chill (adjective), wind chill (noun)

wind shear

wind speed

Section 8: Accessibility

Accessible content means that we provide text and other elements in a way that everyone can access the information.

People with disabilities often use assistive technologies to access information. For example, people who have visual impairments or dyslexia may use screen readers. A screen reader uses a text-to-speech (TTS) engine to translate on-screen information into speech. The person can hear the content through headphones or speakers.

Making our content accessible on all devices is good for everyone. It's also good for the Bureau, as accessible content makes it easier for search engines to locate relevant information. It helps everyone find and use our content.

As an Australian Government agency, we have an obligation to provide content that is accessible to a set standard. We have made a commitment in our Accessibility Action Plan to provide content that meets at least WCAG 2.0 standards.

Accessibility guidance

We follow the guidance on accessibility throughout the Australian Government Style Manual.

Also see the Web Accessibility Initiative's Writing for Web Accessibility summary for creating accessible content.

See Alternative text (ALT tags) Captions and PDFs and documents for specific guidance on creating accessible content.

Accessible documents

Any document longer than a few paragraphs requires structuring to make it easier for readers to understand. See:

- WebAIM Microsoft Word guide
- Office Support: Make your Word documents accessible
- Office Support: Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible.

Accessibility resources

- Accessibility checklist for web writers
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0

Section 9: Measuring performance

An important part of managing content is understanding whether it's successful or not. Is it doing the job you need it to do? If not, what action will you take? That means setting clear, measurable goals when you're creating content, and measuring its performance against them.

All content should be created with clear goals and a plan for measuring its success. Work with your Communications Business Partner on how to measure the performance of your content.

For content on our website, read about how performance is measured below.

Website and app content

We use metrics to check whether content is meeting our goals.

The Content Design Team and Analytics Team will work together to routinely collect and analyse data that measures how content is performing. This is to make sure:

- the content is meeting user needs
- people can easily find and use our content
- people know about our services and choose to use them
- we identify any issues people have with our content (or lack of content).

Data insights tell us where our content is performing well and areas that need improvement. It helps direct our effort and resources into areas that have the most impact.

The Content Design Team is responsible for communicating with the business about the success of website pages and sections (for example, climate pages). The team works with the business to identify where a page or section may need changes and makes recommendations based on evidence.

Using metrics to improve performance

Before we publish anything, the Content Design Team and the business area agree on:

- how a page is expected to contribute to our overall website objectives and goals
- what metric (measurable tactic) is most appropriate to measure
- what results would indicate how well the page was performing
- when it is appropriate to review the page – each page will have an expiry date.

Example objectives, goals and tactics

Table heading	Table heading	Table heading
Grow our user base	Increase overall traffic to the website	Year-on-year volume subscriptions

	Increase reach of outbound communications	Volume of new subscribers
Increase user satisfaction	Satisfy user with the content	User satisfaction scores per page Amount of page scrolled CTA (call to action) clicks Video views Links into our content from other sites
	Make content easier to find	Average page views per session
	Become the preferred source for the weather forecast	Number of page views for forecasts and observations
Convert users to customers	Increase number of registered users	Number of registered users and conversions
	Increase volume of paid subscriptions	Volume of online transactions

Reviewing page performance

After website content is published, the Content Design Team and Analytics Team are responsible for ongoing reviews of page performance. This occurs up to and including when content is formally due for review.

If the content is not meeting user needs, or is not performing against other agreed metrics, we consult with the content owner to decide changes.

In some cases, a page may need to be removed. This might happen before the review date set when the page was published. If we republish content, we set a new review date. This helps keep our website current, useful and manageable.

Archiving content

We archive pages that have been removed in the website Content Management System (CMS) and record the rationale for removal, so we can revisit them again if needed.

When we archive significant content that may still be required by a limited audience in future – for example, presentations and papers from conferences – we submit it to the National Edeposit/Trove and can link to it when appropriate.

Section 10: Resources

Resources to help you create quality content.

References

- [Australian Government Style Manual](), produced by the Digital Transformation Authority (DTA)
- [Macquarie Dictionary]() – Contact the [Content Design Team]() for login details.

Best practice content

- [UK Readability Guidelines]()
- [How people read – UK Readability Guidelines]()

User research

[Gov.uk Service Manual – User research]()

Value of content design

[Content Design London blog post: Value of content design]()

Accessibility

- [DTA Digital Service Standard – Make it accessible]()
- [Accessibility cheatsheet by Bits of Code]()
- [Service Providers' Accessibility Guide]()
- [How to write more accessible social media posts]()

SEO (search engine optimisation)

- [Understanding SEO workshop slide deck]()
- [Understanding SEO workshop video recording]()

Apps to help improve writing

These reading level tools provide a helpful indicator. However, it's only one part of the story. Understanding the audience and testing content remains important.

- [Hemingway App]() – don't use for sensitive, confidential or classified content
- [Grammarly]() (available to download from the software centre)
- [Readability formula tests]()

Recommended books on content

- *Content Design*, Sarah Richards, 2017, Content Design London

- *Content Strategy for the Web*, Kristina Halvorson & Melissa Rach, 2012, Pearson Education
- *Nicely Said writing for the web with style and purpose*, Nicole Fenton & Kiefer Lee, 2014, New Riders

Writing checklist

Before you start, consider:

- Audience – who is my primary audience?
- Purpose – what is the task they need to complete? How can this content best help?
- Uniqueness – is my content already on the website/intranet/available elsewhere?
- Location – am I creating the content in the right place?
- Accuracy – is my content accurate and up to date?
- References – have I referenced any source material where applicable?
- Structure – do I need to create several pages or one longer page?
- Linking – for online content, are there any related pages I should link to and vice versa?

Creating web content

When creating a web page:

- The first sentence sets an expectation for what's on the page.
- Your main content contains your key message or user need.
- Use a heading hierarchy (H1, H2, H3) to signpost the user's journey through the page.
- Use text that describes any links (including the URL) in brackets.
- Add a call to action so the user knows what to do (if appropriate).
- Use steps or bullet points for instructions.
- Use header rows for tables.

After you've written web content, review it and make sure you've:

- Used words that our customers use. By using the same words that they enter in search fields, you will help them understand the copy and will help optimise it for search engines.
- 'Chunked' your content. Chunking makes your content more scannable by breaking it into manageable sections.
- Front-loaded the important information. Use the journalism model of the 'inverted pyramid'. Start with the content that is most important to your audience, and then provide additional details.
- Used pronouns. The customer is 'you'. the Bureau is 'we'. This creates cleaner sentence structure, higher engagement and more approachable content.
- Used active voice. 'We analysed the data' not 'The data was analysed'.

- Used short sentences and paragraphs. The ideal standard is no more than 20 words per sentence, five sentences per paragraph. Use en dashes instead of semi-colons or, better yet, break the sentence into two. It is OK to start a sentence with 'and', 'but', or 'or' if it makes things clear and brief.
- Used bullets and numbered lists. Don't limit yourself to using this for long lists. One sentence and 2 bullets are easier to read than 3 sentences. Keep bullet lists to a maximum of 7 items.
- Used clear headlines and subheadings. Put the most important words at the front of the headings. It's faster and easier for people to understand the content. Questions, especially those with pronouns, can be effective in the right context but are longer and harder to scan.
- Used images, diagrams or multimedia to visually represent ideas in the content. Videos and images reinforce the text on your page.

Reference: usability.gov Writing for the Web

For more information

Contact your Communications Business Partner or visit Elements Style Guide on Breeze

RELEASED UNDER FREEDOM OF INFORMATION