Writing style guide

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Introduction

This guide sets out the writing styles for print, electronic and other forms of communication for the Department of Home Affairs (the Department or we/our) and the Australian Border Force (ABF), excluding additional writing styles for ministerial and parliamentary documents.

An abbreviated *Quick reference writing style guide* is also available in TRIM s. 22(1)(a)(ii) which outlines common writing style errors.

This guide has been prepared to complement the:

- Australian Government's *Style Manual: for authors, editors and printers* (Sixth edition)[1]

- Australian Government's preferred dictionary, the *Macquarie Dictionary*[2]

- Digital Transformation Agency's *Writing style*.

How to use this guide

This guide should be read in conjunction with the following guides and resources:

- Ministers' style guide is available in TRIM s. 22(1)(a)(ii) or from the Ministerial correspondence page. For enquiries, email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

- Branding identity guidelines are available on the Branding page. For enquiries, email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

More information

If you have feedback or questions about the writing styles in this guide, email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

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[1] Australian Government *Style manual: for authors, editors and printers,* (Sixth edition), 2003
[2] *Macquarie Dictionary,* 2012, Macquarie Dictionary Publishers Pty Ltd, Australia

Structure, content and writing tips

Active language

Using active language will make your writing easier to read and understand.

A sentence is in the active voice when the subject of the action—that is, the person or thing doing something—appears in front of the verb.

A sentence is in the passive voice when the subject of the verb appears after the verb.

Try using the first and second person instead of the third person to help you to write in active voice. For more information, see **Personalise content** in this guide.

For example:

Use (active language)	Do not use (passive language)
You (subject) must **lodge** (verb) your completed visa application in Australia.	It is required that your completed visa application **be lodged** (verb) by **you** (subject) in Australia.
The manager (subject) **cancelled** (verb) the workshop because it would not benefit the team.	The workshop **was cancelled** (verb) because it **was decided** (subject) that it would not benefit the team.
The manager (subject) **rejected** (verb) your application.	Your application **was rejected** (verb) by **the manager** (subject).

Audience and purpose

It is difficult to write information without a clear purpose and knowing your target audience.

Before you start to write, think about the following:

- What is the aim of your content? This will determine the level of detail required.

- Who is your audience and what information do they need to know? Use language the audience understands and never make assumptions about what the audience may know.

- What are your communication objectives? Do you want to inform, persuade or call your audience to action? Make calls-to-action clear. Focus on how your audience should do something, rather than giving them background information.

- What is the best way to reach your audience? Should you communicate through email, influencers, advocates, media release, website or another channel?

- What is the best time to communicate with your audience? This will ensure your audience is receptive to your communication and maintain good will.

- How will you measure your communication success? This will inform future communications and channels.

Headings

Headings are signposts in text and navigational aids. Readers use headings to scan content and to gauge the relationship between, and importance, of sections of text.

Limit headings to one level (heading one) if possible—be careful with the number of headings added beyond this. Readers will lose track if there are too many heading levels. Short content should only use two extra sub-heading levels (headings two and three). Longer content might require more headings (heading four and maybe heading five).

To aid readability and comprehension, use headings to break up text for easier comprehension and to engage the reader. For online writing, use a heading at least every 200 words (every two to four paragraphs).

Keep headings interesting and make them specific enough to catch the reader's attention. Headings should either provide information or answer a question. Remove meaningless words in headings that add no value.

Try to limit headings to one line. Headings that spill over to a second line are harder to read and to recall. Some communications products have character limits for headings—check these before approving the text.

Sentences and lists

Short sentences

Use short sentences that contain a single message. If you need to communicate other messages or thought, use a second sentence, comma or parentheses (brackets).

Vary the length of your sentences to make content less tiring to read, as well as easy to read online. For many people comprehension can start to fail after 25–30 words—so this should be the limit of your longest sentence.

Long sentences and lists

If you have a long sentence with many elements, use a list to break up the text to make it easier for your audience to scan and understand, especially when reading online.

Use bullet lists by default. You should only use list numbers or letters when it is necessary to show a priority order or chronology.

There are three types of bullet lists:

- Full sentences
- Sentence fragments
- Stand-alone items

Full sentences

When the dot points do not form part of the lead-in sentence, use a full sentence list. Lists made up of items that are full sentences are less common. This kind of list may be introduced by a full sentence, but more often by a sentence fragment. Capitalise the first letter and end each dot point with a full stop.

For example:

Plain English is important for a number of reasons:

- We can never be sure how much background information a reader will have so it's important not to make assumptions in our writing.

- Often we will have to revise content. If the original content is written in plain English it will be easier to revise than dense technical text.

Sentence fragments

The most common type of bulleted list comprises a series of sentence fragments. Sentence fragments flow logically from a lead-in introductory sentence (the first part of the sentence) and colon.

Use a lower-case first letter for each item and no punctuation at the end of each item listed. Only add a full stop at the end of the last dot point to mark the end of the sentence.

For example:

A sentence fragment list **should**:

- contain at least **two** items

- flow neatly from the introduction

- end with a **full stop**.

Each item in your list must make sense when read directly from the introduction. For instance, if there is a verb at the beginning of the first bulleted point, you need a verb at the beginning of all the others too.

For example:

Parallel structure in a fragmented list requires:

- **identifying** items that can be collected into a list

- **rewriting** items so they are not sentences in their own right

- **structuring** items to have the same kind of start, such as:

- nouns such as **cat**

- verbs such as **read**

- adjectives such as **quick**.

Do not include a full sentence within an item in a fragmented list. This destroys parallel structure, making the list difficult to understand. If the full sentence is necessary, the information is not suitable for a list structure and needs to be rewritten.

If a list, or part of a list, consists of a single item, it should be rewritten as a sentence or reworked as part of the previous item that led into it.

Stand-alone items

Stand-alone items run straight off a heading. The items are generally shopping-list style: a series of unrelated, typically short items that do not integrate easily into normal text or are more easily understood in list form.

For example:

Writing for the web

- Identify the aim of the content
- Work out the best format
- Edit and proofread

Inclusive writing

Communicating with a diverse audience is central to our business.

Inclusive language is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudice, stereotypes or discriminatory views. It is language that does not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people from being seen as part of the group.

Refer to **Appendix A** for information about the use of inclusive language.

Paragraphs

A paragraph is a section of text that contains a single idea. State your idea in the first sentence. This will attract your reader's attention and get your message across. Readers often scan headings and first sentences of paragraphs as they search for the information they want.

Structure your paragraphs so they range in length from one to four sentences. If appropriate to the content, vary the length of paragraphs to provide variety. This makes content more interesting and readable.

Personalise content

Personal content and messages are more engaging with your reader and will help your audience remember what you communicate.

To personalise your content, write using the first and second person pronouns where possible (**I**, **we**, **us** and **you**) rather than third person nouns (**Department** or **ABF**) or pronouns (**he**, **she**, **it** and **they**). It's important to only personalise content when it is clear to the reader.

For example:

√ If **you** are having difficulty creating content using markup, we can provide further guidance. Email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

X If the **author** is having difficulty creating content using markup, the **Web Services and Correspondence** Section can provide further guidance.

Plain English

Plain English is illustrated by the difference between the following two examples:

√ The new service portal makes it easier for you to communicate with us. (**13 words**)

X We are working to make your job easier by giving you access to communicate with us electronically through a new online service portal. (**23 words**)

Use language your audience will understand easily—generally this should be plain English.

However, there may be a business case for using technical or legal language in some instances. This may mean you will need to write the same content in a different way for different audiences. The rule is to make language as simple as possible so it is clear to the reader.

When you write:

- use familiar, everyday words the reader will understand
- do not use jargon and overuse of abbreviations and acronyms
- tailor your message for your audience
- be precise and use enough words to achieve clarity, but avoid unnecessary words
- vary sentence length—25–30 words maximum for each sentence
- use active language—position the subject before the verb/action.
- use personal pronouns to engage the audience, such as we and you, except in formal writing.

Preferred words

The Australian Government and our Department has a number of preferred words and phrases. Refer to **Appendix** C.

Readability

You can test how well the audience will understand your writing by using the Flesch-Kincaid readability index. Each grade means the number of years of education generally required to understand the writing.

If you are targeting the general public, aim for a Year 5 reading level (or a 10-year-old can understand). The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is available in Microsoft Office Word and Outlook.

To learn more, go to the Test your document's readability page.

Right word

Use the right word in the right context. See **Appendix B** for information about which word or phrase should be used or not used.

Proofreading

Proofreading is checking the final version of a document just before it is published. If the document is to be printed, it means checking the page proofs before approving the document for printing.

If the document is to be published online, it means checking the final form before sending it to Web Services and Correspondence for publishing on the intranet or internet.

When proofreading, check for:

- errors in spelling, punctuation, typing, capitals, shortened forms, numbers, dates and percentages
- consistent styles in numbers and percentages
- consistent styles in headings (using template styles), footnotes and headers, spacing and alignment
- references, cross-references, page numbers, table and figure captions
- page or screen breaks that split words, sentences or paragraphs.

Spelling

Be aware of spellchecker shortcomings—some will recommend spelling that is not acceptable in the Australian Government. For example, some spellcheckers will adopt American or British English spelling.

To change Microsoft Word spelling and grammar checks to English (Australian), select **File-options-language-choose editing language.**

Do not change the spelling of formal nouns such as organisation names.

For example, use a **z** in:

- World Health Organization
- World Trade Organization
- World Customs Organization
- International Organization for Migration

Be mindful, a spellchecker will not pick up words that are spelt correctly, but are incorrect in the context. You will still need to review/read your document to check for writing style errors.

Common context error examples:

its/it's	who's/whose	your/you're/yore	they're/their	their/there
led/lead	practice/practise	principal/principle	that/which	dependant/dependent
licence/license	assure/ensure/insure	maybe/may be	past/passed	compared to/compared with
advice/advise	weather/whether	affect/effect	memorandum/memoranda	
formally/formerly				

For more spelling examples, go to either **Apostrophes** or **Use the right word** (Appendix B) in this guide.

Grammar checks

Other points of grammar to follows:

Grammar tips	Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
When referring to people, make sure to use **who**—and not **that** or **which**.	Visa holders **who** are found to have overstayed.	Visa holders **that** have been found to have overstayed.
Ensure you always use **singular** grammatical forms with **collective nouns**.	The division is developing a new policy.	The division are developing a new policy.
Do not end a sentence with a preposition.	The applicant joined the end of the queue **out of which** they were previously taken.	The applicant joined the end of the queue they were previously taken **out of**.
Do not use split infinitives.	They sought extra funding to **run** the program <u>better</u>.	They sought extra funding to <u>better</u> **run** the program.

Punctuation and consistency

Limit punctuation to what is needed to help the reader to comprehend and to deliver a clear message. It is easier to read several short sentences, than a long sentence broken up with punctuation.

Abbreviations

An abbreviation is the first letter of a word and some other letters, but not the last letter, and includes a full stop after the abbreviation.

For example:

√ Vic.

X VIC

√ Tas.

X TAS

Acronyms and initialisms

An acronym is a string of initial letters, and sometimes other letters, pronounced as a word.

For example:

√ ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

X A.S.E.A.N.

√ ICAC

X I.C.A.C.

An initialism is a string of initial letters, and sometimes other letters, not pronounced as a word.

For example:

√ NSW

X N.S.W.

√ IMAs

X IMA's.

Before using an acronym or initialism, spell it out first, followed by the acronym or initialism in brackets if repeated in the remainder of the document.

For example:

- Legislative reforms reintroduced **Temporary Protection visas (TPVs)** and introduced **Safe Haven Enterprise visas (SHEVs)** for illegal maritime arrivals.

For initialisms, use the correct article (a or an) and possessive apostrophe according to the letters and their pronunciation, not the full term.

For example:

- an Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor … a UHM
- a Memorandum of Understanding … an MOU
- Department of Social Services' policies … DSS's policies

Ampersands (&)

Do not use ampersands in general text unless it's part of a formal title, such as an organisation's name, program's name or a legislative title.

For example:

- International Relief & Development
- Angus & Robertson

Apostrophes

The apostrophe's role is to indicate:

- possession
- two-word contractions, meaning missing letters or characters.

For example:

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)	Explanation
It's an easy step to take.	Its an easy step to take.	**It's** is the contraction of **it is**.
The Government launched its new information package.	The Government launched it's new information package	**Its** is the possessive pronoun (**belonging to it**).
Who's the right person?	Whose the right person?	**Who's** is the contraction of who is.

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)	Explanation
Whose is this?	**Who's** is this?	**Whose** is the possessive pronoun **belonging to whom**
It's **your** choice	It's **you're** choice.	**Your** is the possessive pronoun **belonging to you**
You're right about it.	**Your** right about it.	**You're** is the contraction of **you are.**
These are **their** words.	These are **they're** words.	**Their** is the possessive pronoun **belonging to them.**
They're all over there.	**Their** all over there.	**They're** is the contraction of they are.
The documents are over **there.**	The documents are over their.	**There** meaning **in or at a particular place.**

Possession

Use an apostrophe for ownership, not to form plurals. For example:

- **Paul's** report was well written.
- The **Department's** reports were released yesterday.
- Use the *Ministers' style guide* (TRIM s. 22(1)(a)(ii)　　　) when writing ministerial and parliamentary documents.

Two-word contractions

When two adjacent words are contracted into one, you use a closing apostrophe to show that letters have been omitted. For example:

- **Don't** (do not)
- **We're** (we are)
- **They're** (they are)
- **They've** (they have)
- **We'll** (we will)
- **It's** (it is)

To indicate numbers that have been omitted, use a closing apostrophe. For example:

- **'17** (2017)

Do not use the following words, because these contractions are difficult to read:

- Should've
- Could've
- Would've

Also do not use an apostrophe with **hers, its, theirs, yours** or **place/street names.**

Capitals

Use minimal capitals in document headings and cover pages, as well as body text. The rule of thumb is to capitalise proper nouns and specific titles only, including formal job titles.

For example, do not capitalise:

- generic references of nouns [3]
- a document, unless it is a formal title [4]
- a sub-program [5]
- a service unless it's in the formal title, such as Translating and Interpreting Service.

Capitalise:

- all proper nouns [6]
- Commonwealth entities [7]
- companies
- departmental group, division, branch and section names
- documents [8]
- formal job titles [9]
- lead programs [10]
- visa titles but not the word **visa**. [11]

Commonwealth entities

The word **Government** should be capitalised as part of formal title or abbreviated title. Spell out the **Australian Government** in full first, followed by the shortened form **Government**. Lowercase **government** for generic references.

For example:

- the **Australian Government** … the Government … a government (generic use)

Only capitalise federal when it forms part of an official title.

For example:

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[3] For more information go to **Nouns** in this guide.
[4] For more information go to **Documents** in this guide.
[5] For more information go to **Program or programme** in this guide.
[6] For more information go to **Nouns** in this guide.
[7] For more information go to **Commonwealth entities** in this guide.
[8] For more information go to **Documents** in this guide.
[9] For more information go to **Job titles** in this guide.
[10] For more information go to **Programs or programmes** in this guide.
[11] For more information go to **Visa titles and streams** in this guide.

- the **Federal Court of Australia** … the Federal Court … the court
- a **federal** government initiative
- Home Affairs is a federal responsibility.

For more information, see **Government titles** in this guide.

Documents

When naming a document, do not use capitals after the first word, except for proper nouns unless it is the formal title, such as an inquiry, review, report, plan, strategy or framework.

After the first mention of the document's full title, you can refer to the shortened form thereafter, in lower case. For example:

- *Writing style guide* … the guide
- *Branding identity guidelines* … the guidelines
- *Work Health and Safety Report* … the report
- *Client Services Decision Support Review* … the review
- *Strategy 2020* … the strategy
- *Control Framework for Detention-Related Decision Making 2014* … the framework

Job titles

Capitalise formal titles and abbreviated references, except when used generically.

For example:

- the Prime Minister of Australia … the Prime Minister
- the Minister for Home Affairs … the Minister … a minister
- the Australian Border Force Commissioner … the ABF Commissioner … a commissioner
- the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs … the Secretary … a secretary

Always capitalise when referring to specific job titles.

For example:

- the Deputy Secretary of the Policy Group
- the First Assistant Secretary of the Strategy and Capability Division
- the Assistant Commissioner of the Strategic Border Command
- the Director of the Internal Communication and Engagement Branch
- the Assistant Director of the Governance and Regulatory Reform Team

Do not capitalise job titles if you are referring generically to a role such as officer, administrator, director or manager.

Members of parliament

Ministers

Ministers in the federal, state and territory parliaments take the title The Honourable and this is abbreviated The Hon without a full stop. Ministers appointed to the Executive Council retain the title The Honourable for life. Capitalise the word Minister for previous ministers, but only if they remain in parliament. Do not capitalise previous ministers if they are not in parliament.

For more information:

- email s. 47E(d)   @homeaffairs.gov.au

- read the *Ministers' style guide* available in TRIM s. 22(1)(a)(ii)   or from the <u>Ministerial correspondence</u> page.

Prime Minister

Capitalise Prime Minister when referring to the current Australian Prime Minister, but not when referring to former Australian prime ministers.

Nouns

Nouns are names for tangible and visible things such as **agency, building, person** and **dog**.

Capitalise nouns when referring to government agencies or governance to distinguish them from generic meanings.

For example, capitalise:

- the Department of Treasury

- the Department of Finance

- the Cabinet

- the Treasury

- the Crown

- the House, meaning either parliamentary chamber

- the Budget (when used as a noun, but not when used as an adjective or in plural form, such as:

  o budget provisions

  o budgetary process

  o successive federal budgets).

In legislation, some other words are always capitalised:

- Act(s)

- Ordinance(s)

- Regulation(s)

- Bill(s).

When used alone and in a legal context, the **Bar** and the **Bench** are also capitalised, but not when referring to the **full bench**.

Organisational titles

Capitalise specific names of groups, divisions, branches and sections.

For example:

- Intelligence and Capability Group
- Intelligence Division
- Strategic Assessments and Intelligence Management Branch

Do not capitalise if you are referring to groups, divisions, branches and sections generically.

Commas

Use commas in sentences and lists. For example:

- Globalisation is changing the way migration, trade, citizenship, maritime security, revenue, **travel and humanitarian** policies are managed across borders.

No need to use a comma before the final item in a short list, unless it is unclear.

For example:

- The ABF is responsible for investigations, compliance and immigration detention operations across our air and seaports, **and** land and maritime domains.

You can also use commas or em dashes in place of parentheses (brackets).

For example:

- The Secretary, Michael Pezzullo, is responsible for all departmental functions.

Compliance

Legally binding words/phrases when referring to compliance matters follow:

Word or term	Application
Illegal foreign fisher (IFF)	An IFF is a person who has been located and detained under suspicion of illegally fishing in Australian waters.
Illegal maritime arrival (IMA)	The term **illegal maritime arrival** (IMA) is not defined in the *Australian Migration Act 1958*; however, the term is used generally by our Department to refer to people who are unlawful non-citizens and who arrived in the migration zone other than by aircraft.
Illegal worker	An illegal worker is someone who has been found to be working in breach of their visa conditions.
Overstayer	An overstayer is a person who enters Australia on a valid temporary visa, but does not leave Australia before their visa expires.
Unauthorised air arrival	An unauthorised air arrival is a traveller arriving with: - no electronic travel authority (ETA) or visa on record - bogus or damaged travel documents

Word or term	Application
	• incorrect visa details • a ceased or cancelled visa.
Unauthorised maritime arrival (UMA)	An **unauthorised maritime arrival** (UMA) is defined in the Australian Migration Act 1958 as a person who enters Australia by sea at an excised place outside Australia at any time after the excision time for that place and becomes an unlawful non-citizen as a result of their entry.
Unlawful non-citizen (UNC)	A UNC is a non-citizen who does not hold a valid visa. Under the *Australian Migration Act 1958*, a UNC must be detained and removed from Australia as soon as practicable.
Removal	If a person has no lawful basis to remain in Australia and does not depart voluntarily from the community, our Department may detain them as a UNC and remove them under *section 198* of the *Australian Migration Act 1958*. Even if a person chooses to depart from immigration detention, it is classed as a removal rather than a voluntary return.

Contractions

Contractions are shortened forms of a word or words. However, in business writing, it is better to spell the word in full, where possible. Do not use a full stop for those that include the first and last letter of a word.

For example:

- Mr (Mister)
- Qld (Queensland)

Use a full stop when the contraction uses the first few letters of a word.

For example:

- Use Vic. (not VIC) for Victoria
- Use Tas. (not TAS) for Tasmania

A grammar contraction is a word made by shortening and combining two words. For example:

- Won't (will not)
- Shouldn't (should not)

Grammar contractions are more common in speech than writing. Contractions should not be used in formal writing, such as ministerial correspondence, but they are permitted to be used on the website and in less formal communication.

Country names

Write country names in full first, followed by the abbreviation.

Use the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) country list available at www.dfat.gov.au.

The countries on the DFAT website have been checked against the DFAT country list.

Dot points

Colons

Use a colon only to introduce a list of items. For example:

We contribute to three national outcomes:

- Strong national security

- A strong economy

- A prosperous and cohesive society

Full stop

A full stop marks the end of a sentence that is not a direct question or exclamation. Follow a full stop with a single space. Do not use a full stop after headings, page headers or footers.

Also use full stops in a shortened form (as a decimal point) to indicate legislative subsections and paragraphs, to express time or in table notes. For example:

- s. 417 of the Migration Act

- ss. 4–7 of the Copyright Act

- 5.15 pm

Email address

Email addresses in text are to be dealt with in the same way as normal text. If the email address ends a sentence or full sentence list or sentence fragment list, add a full stop after the email to mark the end of the sentence.

For example:

- If you have feedback or for more information, email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

- To report a workplace health and safety incident, complete an incident report in easySAP as soon as possible after the incident. Certain incidents (death, serious injury/illness or dangerous incident) must be immediately reported to National WHS who will notify the Regulator, Comcare. For more information:

  - visit the Incident reporting intranet page

  - phone: 1800 279 059

  - email: s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

If the email is in a stand-alone item, do not add a full stop after the email address.

For example:

- Email: s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au

Font styles

To ensure consistency and professionalism, all documents should use:

- **Arial font suite** for documents developed by staff and officers for internal audiences
- **Helvetica Neue font suite** for all publications produced by graphic designers for external audiences.

Remember to use the communications templates provided which include embedded font styles and correct formatting.

Refer to the Branding identity guidelines for more information about font styles. The guidelines are available on the Branding page or by emailing s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au .

Government titles

Where possible, personalise your content to make it more engaging with the reader. Use first and second person pronouns (**I**, **we**, **us** and **you**) rather than third person nouns (**Department** or **ABF**). See **Personalise content** in this guide. When you are required to formalise your writing, use the following formal Government titles.

As a federation, Australian is known as the **Commonwealth of Australia** and the primary governing body is the **Commonwealth Parliament**. In this context, the Commonwealth and Parliament are always capitalised.

For example:

- the Commonwealth Parliament … the parliament (second reference and generic use)
- the Parliamentary Library … the parliament
- Parliament House … the parliament

Given the **Commonwealth** is more readily associated with the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly the British Empire), to avoid confusion, do not use **Commonwealth**.

Use the Australian Government instead, followed by Government in the second reference. Lowercase generic references to government.

For example:

- the Australian Government … the Government … a government (generic use)

When referencing Australian Government entities, spell these out in full first, followed by the shortened form Government. Do not use **Commonwealth Government** or **Federal Government** or shortened forms **govt**, **Cwth** or **dept**.

For example use:

- the Department of Home Affairs … the Department or we … a department (generic use)
- the Australian Border Force (ABF) … the ABF (do not use the Force or Border Force)

When listing a group of government entities, the Australian Government should be set apart from the other government entities.

For example:

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
Australian Government and state and territory governments	Australian and state and territory governments

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
Australian Government	Commonwealth Government or Federal Government

Hyperlinks

When referring to a website or webpage in electronic communication, write the title of the webpage or website and add a hyperlink.

For example:

- People holding a BVE are limited to the types of visas they can apply for. To apply for a visa, lodge an application through ImmiAccount or phone the enquiry line on 131 881.
- More information is available on the Department of Home Affairs website.

Do not add URLs in the body of the text, but if you have to, for example in printed material, remove the http:// and only write the web address (**www**.xx). Best practice is not to write the URL name in the body text, but use the style mentioned above.

Hyphens and dashes

Hyphens

Hyphens are used to join words to clarify meaning. When a word consists of two adjectives, or a noun plus an adjective, the expression is hyphenated no matter whether it precedes or follows the noun.

For example:

- Whole-of-government
- Long-term unemployed

En dash (–)

An en dash is the width of an **N** '–'. To write an en dash, hold down the Ctrl + '–' dash on the number keyboard.

Use an en dash to link words while maintaining their individual meaning. You can also use it to link figures or expressions of time and distance. For example:

- January—March
- pages 30—40

When joining two words, do not use a space between the en dashes. For example:

- Commonwealth–New South Wales Agreement

When linking more than two words, use spaces on either side of the en dash. For example:

- A Subclass 417 – Working Holiday visa[12]

Em dash (—)

An em dash is the width of an **M** '—'. To insert an em dash, hold down the Ctrl + Alt key + '–' dash on the number keyboard.

In informal writing, the em dash can replace commas, semicolons, colons and parentheses (brackets) to add emphasis or an interruption or an abrupt change of thought.

For example:

- The ABF—a law enforcement authority responsible for enforcing customs and immigration laws—is an operationally independent agency within the Home Affairs Portfolio.

Italics

Use italics for:

- titles of books and periodicals, for example: the *Department of Home Affairs Annual Report 2015–16*
- titles of newspapers and similar publications, for example: *The Sydney Morning Herald*
- films, videos and television shows, for example: *Border Security*
- names of ships, aircraft and other vehicles, for example: *Cape York*
- full citation of Australian Acts, Ordinances and Regulations, but not Bills
- cited words or letters, for example: the word *yardstick* is of German origin
- foreign words or phrases, including accents, for example: a *bona fide* doctor (Latin term meaning in good faith).

Only italicise the word **the** if it forms part of the title, for example: *The Daily Telegraph.*

Do not italicise the name of the Department or program or project titles.

Latin shortened forms

Do not use Latin shortened forms such as **e.g.**, **i.e.**, **viz.** and **NB**. Replace these with their longer form.

Use **e.g.** and **i.e.** only where space is limited, for instance in tables, illustrations, notes and captions.

Also do not use **etc.**, as it can suggest the facts are incomplete.

For example:

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
for example	e.g.
that is	i.e.
namely	viz.
note	NB

[12] This visa style is written exactly as described in the *Migration Regulations 1994* and must be written this way when writing legal correspondence.

Legislation

Cite titles of legislation including Acts, Ordinances and Regulations and other delegated legislation such as rules and bylaws, exactly as they appear in legislation.

Do not alter the spelling or capitalisation of legislative titles.

Acts and Ordinances

The first reference to an Australian Act or Ordinance should cite its exact formal title, italicised and in full. In subsequence references, the title should not be italicised and the date omitted. For example:

Australian Citizenship Act 2007 … the Citizenship Act

Do not italicise Bills before the parliament because they are unpublished. For example:

- Customs Depot Licensing Charges Amendment Bill 2015

Do not italicise Acts and Ordinances of other countries, and add the jurisdiction in brackets if it is not obvious from the title. For example:

- The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (UK)

Regulations

The first reference to a Regulation should cite its exact formal title, italicised and in full. In subsequent references the title is not to be italicised and the year is to be omitted.

For example:

- *Customs Regulations 2015* … Customs Regulations

Instruments

The first reference to an instrument should reflect the exact name of the instrument itself, italicised and in full. An instrument may thereafter be cited by reference to its **IMMI number**, which takes the form of **IMMI XX/XXX**.

For example:

Title: *Migration (**IMMI 17/045**: Specification of Training Benchmarks and Training Requirements) Instrument 2017.*

Note: Section 1 of this instrument states: 'This instrument is the *Migration (IMMI 17/045: Specification of Training Benchmarks and Training Requirements) Instrument 2017*. It may be cited as IMMI 17/045.'

First reference in a document:

- *Migration (**IMMI 17/045**: Specification of Training Benchmarks and Training Requirements) Instrument 2017*.

Subsequent references:

- **IMMI 17/045**

If the instrument's IMMI number is not included in the title of the instrument, it should be provided in brackets immediately after the initial reference, but should not be italicised. An instrument thereafter may be cited by reference to its **IMMI number**.

For example:

Title: *Citizenship (Authorisation) Revocation and Authorisation Instrument 2017*

Note: the commencement provision of this instrument states: 'This instrument, *Citizenship (Authorisation) Revocation and Authorisation Instrument 2017*, IMMI 17/098, commences…'

First reference in a document:

- *Citizenship (Authorisation) Revocation and Authorisation Instrument 2017* **(IMMI 17/098**)

Subsequent references:

- ☐ **IMMI 17/098**

More information is available on the [Federal Register of Legislation](#) website.

Units of division

The basic units of division are the sections for Acts, Ordinances and Instruments and the sections or regulations (note lower case) for Regulations.

Use the following styles to cite units of division (sections and subsections) for Acts and Ordinances:

- **Section 30** of the Customs Act 1901… under **s30** of the Customs Act

- **Subsection 30(1)** of the Customs Act 1901… under **s30(1)** of the Customs Act

Units of division in Regulations may be either sections or regulations. When units of division in Regulations are regulations, for example in the Migration Regulations 1994, use the following styles to cite units of division:

- **Regulation 2.10** of the *Migration Regulations 1994* … under **reg 2.10** of the Migration Regulations

- **Subregulation 2.10(1)** of the *Migration Regulations 1994*… under **reg 2.10(1)** of the Migration Regulations

When units of division in Regulations are sections, for example in the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* and the *Customs Regulation 2015*, use the following styles to cite units of division:

- **Section 12** of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* … under **s12** of the Australian Citizenship Regulation

- **Subsection 12(1)** of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* … under **s12(1)** of the Australian Citizenship Regulation

For units of division that are smaller than sections/subsections or regulations/subregulations for both Acts and Regulations use:

- Paragraph 30(1)(a)

- Subparagraph 30(1)(a)(i)

- Sub-subparagraph 30(1)(a)(i)(A)

For units of division in a schedule to an Act or a Regulation, use either a clause or item (or a subclause or subitem). When the unit of division in a schedule is in a list, it will be an item.

For example:

- **Item 1104AA** of Schedule 1 to the *Migration Regulations 1994*

- **Subitem 1104AA(2)** of Schedule 1 to the *Migration Regulations 1994*

When the unit of division in a schedule is a full sentence, it will be a clause.

For example:

- **Clause 163.213** of Schedule 2 to *the Migration Regulations 1994*
- **Subclause 163.213(1)** of Schedule 2 to the *Migration Regulations 1994*

Line breaks

Do not break items over lines, especially:

- words
- abbreviations and contractions
- people's names
- figures and dates.

A non-breaking space can be inserted by holding down the **Ctrl + Shift + Space** keys. A non-breaking hyphen can be inserted by holding down the **Ctrl + Shift + '-'** keys. The standard dash '-' key is located above the alphabetical keys and next to the **=** key, left of the backspace.

Naming conventions

Where possible, personalise your content to make it more engaging with the reader. Use first and second person pronouns (**I**, **we**, **us** and **you**) rather than third person nouns (**Department** or **ABF**). See **Personalise content** in this guide. When you are required to formalise your writing, use our formal agency title.

Department's name

When referring to the Department of Home Affairs for the first time, spell out the name in full first followed by the **Department** (capital D) or **Home Affairs**.

For example:

- At 30 June 2017, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) had two Ministers: the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Home Affairs, and the Hon Alex Hawke MP, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs. The Department is a global organisation with more than 14,000 people working in every Australian state and territory and in 53 locations around the globe.

- The former Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the former Australian Customs and Border Protection Service were consolidated into a single Department on 1 July 2015, which included a single frontline operational entity, the Australian Border Force (ABF), established within the Department.

  On 20 December 2017, the Department of Home Affairs was established, which comprised the entirety of the former Department of Immigration and Border Protection along with elements from other Government Departments, and the ABF became an operationally independent agency under the broader Home Affairs Portfolio

When referring to departmental staff, use the term **staff**—not **employees**—and lower case **departmental**. When referring to ABF officers, use the term **officers**.

Australian Border Force

When referring to the Australian Border Force for the first time, spell out the name in full followed by **ABF**. Never refer to the Australian Border Force as **the Force** or **Border Force**.

Also use the term **officer** when referring to those in ABF operational roles—never use **staff** or **employee**.

For more information about Home Affairs and ABF classifications and titles, see **Appendix D**.

Buildings

All buildings should be referred to by their street address.

For example:

- 1010 La Trobe Street, Docklands, Victoria

- 5 Constitution Avenue, Canberra City, Australian Capital Territory

- 6 Chan Street, Belconnen, Australian Capital Territory

The exception is where the building has a specific name, such as Allara House.

The only buildings that can be referred to as **Customs House** or **Custom House**, in capitals, are those that are heritage listed with the name:

- Custom House, 89 The Esplanade, Launceston, Tasmania

- HM Customs House, 7 and 9 Francis Street, Geraldton, Western Australia

- HM Customs House, 1 Cliff Street, Portland, Victoria

- HM Customs House, Victoria Parade, Thursday Island, Queensland

Immigration detention facilities

There are three types of immigration detention facilities in Australia, with each facility intended for a different purpose. Do not capitalise our Department's facilities because they are not proper nouns. For example:

- immigration detention centre (IDC)

- alternative place of detention (APOD)

- immigration transit accommodation (ITA)

Immigration detention centres

Section 189 of the Act provides the legislative authority to detain unlawful non-citizens in held detention in an IDC. An IDC is generally only used for people who are deemed to require a higher level of risk management.

Unlawful non-citizens placed in an IDC can include those refused entry at Australia's air and seaports, including visa overstayers and those who have breached their visa conditions, illegal maritime arrivals, people whose visas have been cancelled under s.501 of the Act, and adult illegal foreign fishers (IFFs).

An IDC is different to an IDF (immigration detention facility). Be mindful to reference these correctly.

At August 2017, our Department managed five IDCs:

- North West Point IDC (Christmas Island)

- Maribyrnong IDC (Maidstone, Vic.)

- Perth IDC (Redcliffe, WA)

- Villawood IDC (Villawood, NSW)

- Yongah Hill IDC (Northam, WA).

Alternative place of detention

An APOD is a place of immigration detention, other than an IDC or place identified as part of a residence determination (also known as community placement). APODs are used by our Department to meet the specific needs of detainees who cannot be appropriately managed in an IDC.

The types of places that can be APODs include, but are not limited to:

- sites leased by our Department and managed by the facilities and detainee services provider, such as hotels and motels

- short-term accommodation, including hospitals and other health-related institutions

- contingency accommodation, such as town halls and gymnasiums

- home-based care in private accommodation owned or leased by relatives or people with established close relationship with the person in detention

- places where people in detention spend part of their day and where it is not appropriate or possible for them to be accompanied at all times, such as schools.

Immigration transit accommodation

ITAs provide detainees with flexible, supported, semi-independent living in hostel-style accommodation to enable them to attend appointments in the community under supervision. ITA facilities were designed to provide short-term accommodation for detainees presenting a low security risk, low flight risk, and with no known health concerns.

At August 2017, we manage three ITAs:

- Brisbane ITA (Pinkenba, Qld)

- Melbourne ITA (Broadmeadows, Vic.)

- Adelaide ITA (Kilburn, SA)

Regional processing centres

Always use **regional processing centres (RPC)** and do not refer to the RPCs as **offshore processing centres** or **offshore detention** because they are in the sovereign countries that run them.

For example:

- A person transferred to a regional processing centre is not detained under the Migration Act.

When referring to matters relating to the **Nauru RPC**, the correct language is **in Nauru** (not **on Nauru** or **at Nauru**) because Nauru is a sovereign nation.

When referring to matters relating to the **Manus RPC**, the correct language is **in Manus Province** or **in Papua New Guinea** because these are political entities controlled by the sovereign Government of Papua New Guinea.

The above rules also apply when referring to Manus. Do not use **on Manus** or **Manus Island**, as these are references to a geographic feature.

In addition, do not use the shortened forms **RCs** and **RDs** when referring to **Regional Commands** and **Regional Directorates** respectively.

Numbers

Currency

It is sometimes necessary to distinguish between Australian and American currencies when developing communications for international audiences, such as informing that our visa, tariff or other fees and charges are in Australian dollars (not American dollars). Use only when referring to sums of money in both Australian and other dollars to avoid confusion. This will reduce client enquiries and complaints to our Department.

For example:

√ AUD10,000

X AUD$10,000

X $10,000 (AUD)

X (AUD) $10,000

Dates

When writing date ranges, use an en dash without spaces between the designated days of the month. Do not include the day of the week (such as Friday) with the date—the day cannot be any other day.

Also, to avoid confusion, do not use the word **from** where possible.

For example:

√ 1–31 July 2017

√ 1 July 2017

X Friday 1 July 2017

X From 1 July 2017

Times

When writing times, use an en dash without spaces between the designated time ranges.

For example:

- Open 2–5 pm, seven days a week
- 9 am to 5.30 pm

To avoid confusion:

- use lower case for **am** and **pm**
- include a space after the number
- use **noon** or **midnight** rather than **12 am** or **12 pm**
- do not use the word **from**.

Do not use an apostrophe when writing decades. However, if you are referring to the '90s, use an apostrophe to represent the missing numerals (19).

For example:

√ 1990s or '90s

- When writing Australian time zones, use the following initialisms:

- Australian Eastern Standard Time … AEST
- Australian Eastern Daylight Time … AEDT
- Australian Central Standard … ACST
- Australian Central Daylight Time … ACDT
- Australian Western Standard Time … AWST

Millions of dollars

Millions may be expressed in two ways:

- By the use of the word million or billion, for example:
    - $2 million or $2.6 million or $2.62 million (in text)
- Entirely in numerals, for example:
    - $1,100,000 or $1,100,000,000 (in table)—use in text if you want to be exact.

Always spell out millions in text unless you need to be precise such as $2,624,893.

Whichever number style you chose, be consistent throughout the document.

Numbers and commas

Write numbers between 1000 and 9999 without a comma or space, except in tables. For example:

- 1000 (text) and 1,000 (table)

Use a comma between thousands for numbers from 10,000 and above. For example:

- 10,000 (text and table)
- $10,000 (text and table)

Ensure numbers are not broken across a new line. To keep the number together when a space is used (10 million), use **Ctrl + Shift + Space bar** keys.

Numbers in tables

Align numbers in table columns to the right. To ensure consistency and even alignment in tables, use a comma in four-digit numbers to align with five-digit numbers and above.

For example:

Table: Size of the 457 program for 2016–17 to 31 December 2016

Criteria	2015–16 at 31/12/15	2016–17 at 31/12/16	% difference
Primary applications lodged	27,330	27,000	-1.2%
Primary applications granted	22,870	24,270	6.1%
Number of primary visa holders in Australia	85,900	81,300	-5.4%

Numbers in text

Spell out numbers between **one and nine** except:

- when expressing percentages, for example: the success rate is 3 per cent

- in decimals

- in tables

- in date and time references.

Write numbers in numerals for 10 and above.

Do not start a sentence with a number—if it's unavoidable, write the number in full at the start of the sentence. It's better to reword the sentence if possible.

For example:

- Twenty containers were seized in the operation.

- The ABF seized 20 containers in the operation.

Ordinal numbers

Use words to write ordinal numbers in general text. For example:

- Third example

- Two-hundredth case

In more numerically dense text or where there is limited space, such as references and captions, use numbers with the relevant suffix. For example:

- The **127th** World Customs Organization Regional Integration Conference.

Always write numbers in official titles correctly. For example:

- The **12th** United Nations International Counter-Terrorism Focal Points Conference on Addressing Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism and Promoting Regional Cooperation.

Percentages

You can write percentages in various ways, but ensure you use the same decimal places in quantities being compared, whether in the text or in a table. Also use the same decimal places throughout the document to ensure consistency. For example:

- Use **per cent** in text (not %) and use a % symbol in tables.

- Round to a single decimal point where possible, for example: **4 per cent** in text or **4%** in tables.

- Round to two decimal points if you need to be precise, for example: **4.28 per cent** in text or **4.28%** in tables.

When decimals numbers are less than one, use a zero before the decimal point. For example:

- Use **0.25** in text (not **.25**).

Spans of time and distance

Use an un-spaced en dash to write a span of numbers and to express time and distance. For example:

- pages 8–26

- April–June

- Brisbane–Sydney

- 2015–16 financial year (not 2015/16)

Phone numbers

Write phone numbers as follows:

- Phone: 1800 179 242
- Phone: 02 6295 0056
- Phone: +61 2 6295 0056
- Phone: 134 567
- Phone: 0419 615 911

Program or programme

Use the official Australian Government spelling program with a single m, except:

- referencing a specific Cabinet measure where programme was the agreed spelling
- when communications is to go on our Secretary's letterhead, use programme—this is the Secretary's personal preference.

When referencing an old program or programme, ensure the formal title is spelt correctly.

Capitalise lead programs only. Do not capitalise sub-programs or generic references. To identify lead programs, these are agreed to by Cabinet.

For example:

- At 2016–17, our lead programs were:
- Border Enforcement Program
- Border Management Program
- Onshore Compliance and Detention Program
- IMA Offshore Management Program
- Regional Cooperation Program
- Citizenship Program
- Migration Program
- Visas Program
- Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance Program
- Border-Revenue Collection Program
- Trade Facilitation and Industry Engagement Program

Posts outside Australia

Refer to our overseas offices as **posts outside Australia**.

For external communication, refer to these offices as **Australian Home Affairs offices overseas**.

Our officers overseas are normally located in an Australian embassy, high commission or consulate. The generic name is **Australian diplomatic mission**.

Refer to the overseas cohort as the **overseas network**.

Ministerial styles

The Minister and Assistant Minister for Home Affairs have specific correspondence writing style preferences. Use the *Ministers' style guide* (TRIM (ADD2015/750436)) when writing ministerial and parliamentary documents. For more information, go to the Ministerial correspondence page or email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

For further information about ministerial or parliamentary documents, email:

- general enquiries to s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au

- Parliamentary Questions on Notice to s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au

- Question Time Briefs to s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au

- Senate Estimate Briefs and Questions on Notice to s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au

- tabling enquiries to s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

Quotation marks

Quotation marks are used to show direct speech and the quoted work of other writers. Other uses are for enclosing the title of a song or an article in a periodical, and for drawing attention to a term that is unusual or recently coined.

Use single quotes in all departmental documentation, except for media releases. Use double quotes in media releases (an accepted media industry style) and within single quotes (quotes within quotes).

For example:

- 'The website is very easy to use and all the instructions are simple,' Gladys said.

- Miguel remembers the day he became an Australian citizen very well. 'I was so excited. I had to hide a little tear … when I was singing the anthem, and doing my pledge. Everyone was like, "woo hoo!" It was very special,' Miguel said.

Note that punctuation, such as commas or full stops, at the end of a phrase in quotation marks goes inside the final quotation mark.

Referencing sources

When citing in text from books, journals and websites, use the **author–date system**—sometimes also called the **name–year systems** or the **Harvard system**. When providing full reference, for example in footnotes, endnotes, or a bibliography or reference section, provide the full citation, as described below.

Print-based publications

Print-based publications include books, reports, newspapers, journals, and more.

When citing in print-based publications—and elsewhere when providing full reference details—cite the author's name, year of publication, and page number if applicable in the text. Place the citation in the text at the end of the clause or phrase to which it relates.

For example:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Disability, aging and carers: summary of findings*, cat. No. 4430.0, ABS, Canberra, 1999 (**a book citation**)

- D. Light, 'A tax of the jitters', Bulletin, 18 January 2000, pp. 50–1 (**a magazine citation**)

- Marchelier, PM & Hughes, RG 1997, 'New problems with foodborne diseases', *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 275, pp. 771–5 (**a journal citation**)

- Watersmith, C 2000, *BHP enters new era*, media release, BHP Limited, Melbourne, 1 March (**media release citation**)

Electronic materials

Electronic materials may include websites, videos, CDs, emails, electronic mail lists, Usenet groups and other online resources.

When citing electronic material, use the **author–date system**. Cite the author (person or organisation responsible for the site) and the site date (the date of the site's creation or most recent update).

For example:

- *Department of Finance 2001* report, Department of Finance, Canberra, viewed 7 August 2001, www.finance.gov.au.

- International Narcotics Control Board 1999, United Nations, Vienna, viewed 1 October 1999, www.incb.org.

States and territories

Do not use capitals when writing the **state and territory** names in a general sense, including territory or state governments. Only when referring to a specific government should state or territory entities be capitalised, along with the word **Governmen**t.

For example:

- The State Government of Victoria … the Victorian Government … the state government

Use either NSW or New South Wales—both are acceptable, but the second style (in full) is preferred. Use the shortened version:

- when space is limited, such as in a table

- to avoid repetition within a document.

The shortened forms for each state and territory follows:

- Australian Capital Territory … ACT

- New South Wales … NSW

- Northern Territory … NT

- Queensland … Qld.

- South Australia … SA

- Tasmania … Tas.

- Victoria … Vic.

- Western Australia … WA

You can order states and territories in a variety of ways, though alphabetic order is preferred.

TRIM RM8

All departmental documents must be saved in TRIM RM8 and be referenced with a TRIM document number.

For example:

- Minutes
- Letters
- Reports
- Fact sheets
- PowerPoint presentations
- All other departmental records

For more information, email the Records Management Section at s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

Visa titles and streams

Visa titles

Visa titles pose a specific challenge because they are legislation and it is necessary to refer to them exactly as they are described in the *Migration Regulations 1994*, particularly in legal correspondence.

When referencing a visa type in full, you must capitalise the visa type, but not the word **visa** or **subclass**. It is important to position the word **visa** after the visa type and (subclass xxx) because the word **visa** is not included in subclass names in the Regulations.

For example:

- Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa

In subsequent mentions, only use the visa title unless there is a need to refer to the subclass number for clarity.

For example:

- Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa … subclass 457 visa (or 457 visa)

There is no need to capitalise generic descriptions of visa types and other generic visa references.

For example:

- visitor visa program
- visa applications
- visa holders
- visa status
- visa overstayers
- visa conditions

Visa streams

Visa streams (also referred to as **activities** and **sectors**) are within a subclass.

For example:

- Visitor (subclass 600) visa **streams** (such as Business, Tourist, Sponsored Family, and more).

- Student (subclass 500) visa **sectors** (such as Foreign Affairs or Defence, Postgraduate Research, Non-Award, and more).

- Temporary Activity (subclass 408) visa **activities** (such as Special Programmes, Religious Work, Sport, Entertainment, and more).

However, note that not all visa subclasses have streams. For example, Refugee and Humanitarian subclasses do not have streams.

Appendix A: Inclusive language

Our Department is committed to building and valuing a diverse workforce that represents the community we serve. A workforce that fosters inclusiveness and embraces the diversity of its people, such as differences in cultural backgrounds, race, ethnicity, disability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Used constructively, inclusive language can reflect diversity in a positive and accurate way, and avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes about individuals and groups.

Inclusive language

Inclusive language positively reflects diversity and is integral to our Department's work. Acknowledging and respecting diversity requires using language that is inclusive of diversity.

People, regardless of their backgrounds, are first and foremost, individuals. Reference to an individual's attributes is only appropriate if it is relevant to the context.

Language is discriminatory if it:

* excludes people or makes them invisible to the reader

* focuses on a single characteristic, to the exclusion of other more relevant ones

* stereotypes people

* insults or denigrates people

* portrays some people differently from others.

Indigenous Australian audiences

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences come from a diverse range of places and backgrounds. For some, English is a second language and written English may be difficult to understand.

Use correct terminology.

* Do not try to mirror Aboriginal English.

* When talking about or to an individual or a group of individuals, the preferred term is **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or peoples**. Do not use the term **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians**.

* The term **Indigenous** should also not used when referring to individuals who are **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or peoples**.

* If the terms **Aboriginal** and **Torres Strait Islander** are used, capitalise the titles.

* **And/or** must be used instead of **just** or to reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. When a shorter version is needed, for example on a publication cover or online menus, this term can be abbreviated to **Indigenous Australians**.

* Do not use **Australian Aborigine** or the acronym **ATSI**.

* **Indigenous** is the preferred term when referring to a business entity or business function, for example: the Indigenous Specialist Officer, Indigenous Services Branch.

Culturally and linguistically diverse audiences

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse society. When preparing content for culturally and linguistically diverse audiences, you should recognise cultural diversity and specific needs while not stereotyping or making assumptions.

Consider:

- religious affiliations
- generational differences
- gender roles
- values or philosophical differences
- political impacts on life events
- pre- and post-effects of wars
- differences in educational levels and systems
- perceptions of social and support concepts
- differences in socioeconomic background.

Writing about disability

When referring to people with disability, refer to the person first, and the disability second and only if relevant. Do not put people with disability on a pedestal or talk about them in patronising terms as if they are performing normal or everyday activities exceptionally. It is also important not to use demeaning phrases or stereotyping labels. Use **person with disability** (singular) and other preferred terms listed below. Give people with disability the same recognition as people without disability.

For example:

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
people with disability staff with disability person with disability adult with disability child with disability	people with a disability staff with a disability person with a disability disabled person
person with paraplegia	paraplegic man handicapped crippled
hearing impaired	deaf
vision impaired	blind

Language and gender

Use gender-inclusive language to avoid creating bias towards a particular sex or gender. For example, using the generic term **man** excludes other sex and gender diverse people and the use of **ladies and gentlemen**, reinforces gender stereotypes that may not be inclusive of some people in an audience.

It is important to use gender-inclusive job titles and roles that do not use gender-specific pronouns, such as **him/her, his/her or he/she**.

In general, if a person's sex or gender is unknown, do not to make assumptions.

For example:

√ business manager or business person

X business man or business woman

√ chairperson, chair or spokesperson

X chairman or chairwoman

Use gender-neutral titles when addressing your audience.

For example:

√ John and Jane Brown

X Mr John Brown and Mrs Jane Brown

√ Dear John Brown

√ To Jane Brown

X Dear Sir/Madam

√ Good afternoon everyone

X Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen

Writing about sex and gender

Our Department is committed to providing a safe and supportive workplace for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) staff. Sex and gender is a complex topic, particularly if we try to define or label it.

Ensure the language you use to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is accurate and appropriate, for example, using terminology such as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex, gender X (or indeterminate), and not derogatory and outdated terminology, such as homosexual.

Use language that promotes visibility of LGBTI people. For example, using the term **partner** over husband or wife acknowledges that not all personal relationships are heterosexual.

Intergenerational language

Our Department values its staff, regardless of age, and acknowledges the contribution that every age can make to the workplace.

Examples of appropriate language include:

√ older people or older person

√ mature or mature age

X pensioner, old-age pensioner or the aged

√ young people, youth or younger person

X juveniles.

For more information, go to the <u>Diversity and inclusion</u> page or contact the Diversity and Inclusion team by emailing s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au.

Appendix B: Use the right word

Word	Meaning and example
a or an	The use of 'a' or 'an' depends on the first sound of the following word or if the word begins with a vowel. For example: • **An** appropriate topic for the report is trade increases. • They were asked **an** hour ago for the report. • **A** uniform must be complete and presentable at all times.
adverse or averse	**Adverse** means to have a negative or harmful effect on something. Whereas **averse** means to strongly dislike or oppose something. For example: • We employed an environmental management system to help meet its environmental policy objectives to reduce **adverse** impacts on the environment and to meet its statutory obligations under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. • The director was **averse** to implementing the recommendations of the report because of the **adverse** feedback the report had received.
advice or advise	**Advice** is a noun meaning an opinion given about what to do or how to behave. For example: • The assistants gave the director **advice** about the report. **Advise** is a verb meaning to give advice to someone. For example: • The director **advised** the assistants not to worry too much about the report.
affect or effect	**Affect** is a verb meaning 'to make change happen'. For example: • Will the change to the New Zealand residence rules **affect** the number of New Zealand migrants? **Effect** is used as both a noun and a verb, although most commonly used as a noun meaning 'the result'. For example: • Noun: What **effect** will the changes to the New Zealand resident rule have on migration? • Verb (less common): The New Zealand residential rule was updated to **effect** change in New Zealand migration
alternate or alternative	**Alternate** means to take turns, to change between states or every other item in a series. For example: • She couldn't decide where she wanted to work, so she **alternated** between Sydney and Melbourne.

Word	Meaning and example
	Alternative refers to one option out of two possibilities.
	For example:
	• He could have chosen to work in Canberra or Sydney, but neither *alternative* suited his needs.
assure, ensure or insure	**Assure, ensure and insure** all have the general meaning to **make sure**, but there are subtle differences.
	Assure means to say or do something that removes doubt or anxiety.
	For example:
	• **I assure** you the weather will be fine on the weekend.
	Ensure means to make sure, to make something certain or to happen.
	For example:
	• The author will **ensure** the report is ready on time.
	Insure means to protect against risk.
	For example:
	• The director **insured** her car against accidents.
compared to or compared with	Use **compared to** when the subjects are of **different cohorts**.
	For example:
	• **Compared** to the 'private sector', 'public servants' stay in the same job for longer.
	Use **compared with** when the subjects are of the **same order**.
	For example:
	• More than 3.1 million 'VEVO checks' were recorded by organisations in 2015–16, **compared** with more than 2.6 million 'VEVO checks' in 2014–15, an increase of 18 per cent.
complement or compliment	**Complement** means to make something seem better or more attractive.
	For example:
	• The user guide **complemented** the report.
	A **compliment** is an expression of approval, admiration, praise, a greeting or a positive comment.
	For example:
	• The feedback on the report was **complimentary**.
comprise or consist	**Comprise** and **consist of** have the same meaning; however, the grammar is different. Also note that neither should be used in the passive voice.
	For example:
	• The branch **comprises** five sections.
	• The branch **consists of** five sections.

Word	Meaning and example
	Do not use: The branch is comprised of five sections.
Department or Portfolio	When referring to the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force, refer to the **Department** and **ABF** not the **Portfolio**. Organisation can also be used; however, the **ABF**, the **organisation** or the **agency** should not be used interchangeably.
dependant or dependent	**Dependant** is someone who depends on another for support. For example: • A child is a **dependant**. Being **dependent** means relying on someone or something. For example: • The manager was **dependent** on the author to complete the report on time.
document or documentation	A **document** is a publication such as a book, article, fact sheet or computer file. For example: • These **documents** are available on the Department's website. **Documentation** is the use of documentary evidence, such as providing documents or recording an event. For example: • You will need **documentation** to support your claim.
enquiry or inquiry	An **enquiry** is an informal request for information. For example: • If you have a communications **enquiry**, email s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au. • New business process initiatives will be extended to all **enquiry** types managed by the Department's client service centre. An **inquiry** is an official process to discover the facts about something that has happened. For example: • The Department continued to address complaints from the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian Human Rights Commission, including
formally or formerly	**Formally** describes the manner or form of something. For example: • Staff were expected to dress **formally** for the event. • The employee was **formally** reprimanded as a result of the investigation. **Formerly** refers to a previous or earlier point in time. For example: • The Department was **formerly** known as the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Word	Meaning and example
historic or historical	**Historic** refers to something standing out in time, while **historical** means pertaining to history: For example: • The number of asylum seeker boats coming to Australia reached **historic** highs in 2013. • The main cause of the First World War is a matter of **historical** debate.
Incidence, incidents or instances	'Incidence' means the rate. Its use in the plural ('**incidences**') is usually an error reflecting confusion with the '**incidents**' or '**instances**'. For example: • The **incidence** of polio is now starting to rise in many countries around the world. 'Incidents' is the plural of '**incident**', which is an event that is usually problematic. For example: • Saturday's break-out was the first of many disturbing **incidents** at the detention centre. An 'instance' is a neutral way to refer to and count occurrences or cases of something. For example: • There are many **instances** where a temporary visa-holder has found a pathway to permanent residence.
it's or its	Use **it's** only when you intend to abbreviate '**it is**' or '**it has**'. For example: • **It's** an easy step to take. **Its** is a pronoun that replaces a noun. For example: • The Government launched **its** new information package.
less than, fewer than or under	When referring to numerical figures, do not use **under** in place of **less than** or **fewer than**. For example: • There were **fewer than** 250 people at the presentation of the report.
licence or license	The word **licence** is a noun that means a permit to own or do something. For example: • I have a **licence** to drive a truck. The word **license** is a verb that means to grant a licence or to authorise. For example: • I am **licensed** to drive a truck.
may or might	**May** indicates permission. For example: • You **may** use the foyer until 10 minutes prior to the speech.

Word	Meaning and example
	Might indicates probability. For example: - Failure to follow the instructions **might** injure someone.
may be or maybe	**May be** is a verb meaning might be or could be. For example: - The team **may be** celebrating when the report is tabled. Whereas **maybe** is an adverb meaning perhaps or possibly. For example: - **Maybe** I will go get a drink of water.
memorandum or memoranda	**Memorandum** is used when the proposal or agreement is singular. For example: - A **Memorandum of Understanding** was signed. **Memoranda** is used when there is more than one proposal or agreement (plural). For example: - The **Memoranda of Understanding** were signed.
more than or less than	It's always **more than** and not over 15 years' experience. Foxes jump **over** fences. For example: - At 30 July 2018, there were **more than** 23,000 staff employed by the Home Affairs Portfolio.
organisation or organization	**Organization** with a 'z' is American spelling. Use the Macquarie Dictionary's version '**organisation**' preferred by the Australian Government. For example: - The Department is a global **organisation** with more than 14,200 people working in offices in every Australian state and territory, and in 53 locations around the globe Only use **organization** if the business name is the American spelling. For example: - International **Organization** for Migration.
passed or past	**Past** locates something in time or space. For example: - **That is all in the past.** - **He read 100 books during the past three years.** **Passed** is the action of passing something/someone or moving in relation to it. For example: - She **passed** the training course with distinction.

Word	Meaning and example
practice or practise	**Practice** is a noun that **makes perfect**. For example: • I certainly need more **practice**. **Practise** is a verb or a doing word (describing the act). For example: • They **practise** acquired skills in the training course for 10 weeks before they are sent out.
principal or principle	A **principal** is in charge of a school or the first in order of importance. For example: • The **principal** goal of the Department is to work together with the trust of our partners and community to keep Australia safe and secure, and support a cohesive and united Australia open for global engagement. A **principle** is a basic idea or rule that explains or controls how something happens or works. For example: • Privacy is one of the Department's most important **principles**.
stationary or stationery	**Stationary** means fixed, immobile, unmoving, still or static. For example: • He drove the car in a negligent way and hit a **stationary** lorry. **Stationery** refers to writing equipment such as pens, paper and envelopes. For example: • The branch will place a **stationery** order to provide its staff with new 2017 diaries.
stage/coordinate or run/hold	We **run** races, we do not run conferences. We **hold** a baby, we do not hold an event or conference. When referring to an event, conference or meeting, use **stage** or **coordinate** or **promote**. For example: • We **staged** an event. • We **coordinated** a meeting. • We **promoted** the conference.
that or which	If the sentence does not need the clause that the word in question is connecting, use **which**. If it does, use **that**. For example: • Our office, **which** has two kitchens, is located on level 5, 6 Chan Street, Belconnen. • Our office **that** has two kitchens is located on level 5, 6 Chan Street, Belconnen.
waved or waived	**Waved** means to have motioned **to and from** or **up and down**—like when you wave your hand.

Word	Meaning and example
	For example: - The ABF officer **waved** the truck by. **Waived** means to give up a claim or right voluntary, or to refrain from enforcing something, or to set something aside temporarily. For example: - The truck driver **waived** responsibility for the cargo.
weather or whether	**Weather** is the state of the atmosphere with respect to wind, temperature, cloudiness, moisture, pressure, etc. For example: - The **weather** was warm. **Whether** is used to introduce the first of two or more alternatives. **Whether** is also sometimes repeated before the second or later alternative and used in correlation with the word **or**. For example: - It matters little **whether** we go **or** whether we stay. - The director asked the manager **whether** she was interested in reading the report.

Appendix C: Preferred words and phrases

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
A	
a year	per annum
about	concerning, in relation to, regarding, approximately
act of grace	Act of Grace
adult with disability	people with a disability staff with a disability person with a disability disabled person
affect	impact on
after	subsequently
afterwards, then	thereafter
although, despite	despite the fact that
among	amongst
apply	make an application
ask	request
at 30 June 2015	as at 30 June 2015, as of 30 June 2015
Australian Government	Commonwealth Government, Federal Government
Australian Government and state and territory governments	Australian and state and territory governments
aware of, know	cognisant of
B	
because	as a consequence of, in the light of, in view of, the reason is because
before	prior to
begin, start	commence
bona fide	bona fide

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
C	
child with disability	children with a disability
	child with a disability
	disabled child
complain	make a complaint
consider	give consideration to
create, set up, form	establish
D	
decide	reach a decision
despite, although	despite the fact that
detainees (used only for people in detention)	clients (all people the Department services except those in detention)
documents	documentation
E	
effect, affected by	impact
email	e-mail, Email, eMail
expect, think	envisage
extra, more	additional
F	
family members	members of your family, members of family unit
fax	facsimile
fill in a form	fill out a form
find out	ascertain
focused	focussed
for	on behalf of
foreign national (excluding the use of **unlawful non-citizen** which has basis in legislation)	non-citizen

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
for example	e.g.
G	
get, have, receive, receiving	in receipt of
H	
have, get, receive, receiving	in receipt of
hearing impaired	deaf
help	provide assistance with
I	
if	whether, not
if not	if this is not the case
if so	if this is the case
if when	in the event of, in the event that
in line with	in accordance with
in September	during the month of September
in Australia	onshore, inside Australia
J	
judgement	judgment (used in the legal profession)
K	
know, aware of	cognisant of
L	
later	at a later date
letter	correspondence
live	reside, settle
login	logon, log-on, log-in
local government	Local Government

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
lodge an application	make an application
M	
in Manus	on Manus Island
migrant	immigrant
more, extra	additional
more information	further information
more than	over
most	majority
must	will need to, will have to
N	
na (in tables and data) not applicable (in sentences) not available (in sentences)	NA, N/A
in Nauru	on Nauru
need or must	require
note that, remember that	it should be noted that
now	at this point in time
O	
on	upon
online	on the web, on the internet
organise	organize
outside Australia	out of Australia, offshore
P	
partner	wife, husband
pay	disburse
people	persons

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
people with disability	people with a disability staff with a disability person with a disability disabled person
permanent residence	permanent residency
permanent resident	Australian permanent resident holder of a permanent visa
person with paraplegia	paraplegic man handicapped crippled
phone	contact, call
post	mail
R	
reason for decision	basis for decision
receive receiving	in receipt of
regarding	with reference to, with regard to, with respect to
regional processing centre (RPC)	offshore processing centre (OPC)
regional processing countries	RPCs
residence	residency
respond to	provide a response to
re-use, reusing	reuse, re-using
S	
send	dispatch
so	consequently
some, many, several	a number of
staff with disability	people with a disability staff with a disability person with a disability

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
	disabled person
start, begin	commence
state and territory, and local governments	State and Territory and Local Governments
stop	discontinue
T	
that is	i.e.
that is why, the reason why	that is the reason why
the reason is, because	the reason is because
their	his/her
then, afterwards	thereafter
they	he/she
think, expect	envisage
to	in order to
total	aggregate
through	via
U	
under	pursuant to
unlawful non-citizen	illegal immigrant
until	until such time as
use	utilise, usage
user-centred design	user centred design
you should declare	it is requested that you declare
V	
valid	legally made
vision impaired	blind

Use (correct)	Do not use (incorrect)
W	
at the weekend	on the weekend
whether	whether or not
while	whilst

Appendix D: Departmental and ABF classifications

Departmental classification structure	ABF classification structure	ABF nomenclature
Graduate	Graduate Trainee	Border Force Trainee Graduate Trainee
APS1	APS1	Assistant Border Force Officer
APS2	APS2	Assistant Border Force Officer
APS3	APS3	Border Force Officer
APS4	APS4	Leading Border Force Officer
APS5	APS5	Senior Border Force Officer
APS6	APS6	Border Force Supervisor
Assistant Director EL1	EL1	Border Force Inspector
Director EL2	EL2	Border Force Superintendent
Assistant Secretary SES1	SES1	Commander
First Assistant Secretary SES2	SES2	Assistant Commissioner
Deputy Secretary SES3	SES3	Deputy Commissioner
Secretary	Commissioner Comptroller-General of Customs	**ABF Commissioner**

Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Brand identity guidelines

February 2018
Communication and Engagement Branch

Contents

Abbreviation and logo application

Department of Home Affairs abbreviation

If you need to abbreviate the Department of Home Affairs you must use 'Home Affairs', not 'DHA' or 'DoHA'.

Home Affairs logo

The departmental logo is available in two primary layouts—stacked and in-line versions. As a general rule, the stacked version works well centred and the in-line version lends itself to be aligned to the left or right. All versions of the logo consists of four elements:

- the Commonwealth Coat of Arms (Conventional Version 3A Solid)
- the words 'Australian Government' (Times New Roman Bold)
- an underline
- the Department (Times New Roman Bold).

Stacked

Australian Government

Department of Home Affairs

In-line

Australian Government

Department of Home Affairs

Logo

Correct application

Consistent application of the Home Affairs logo is critical to establishing and maintaining a single recognition device for the Australian Government. The integrity of the logo and its use should be maintained at all times.

Home Affairs logo

The guidelines below apply to every application of the logo.

- The Home Affairs logo may only be reproduced in black on a white background.
- The logo can be reversed—white on black, or white on any corporate colour that is dark enough to allow for suitable legibility.

Positive logo application colour

Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Reversed logo application colour

Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Logo

Positioning

The Home Affairs logo should always have prominence over and above other images and graphic elements. Where possible, the logo should be placed at the top of the item on which it appears.

Isolation zone

An isolation zone around the logo ensure the design is not crowded. This zone is defined as 'X' and is based on the distance between the top of the capital A in Australian Government and the bottom of the horizontal line under these words. This zone is a minimum dimension and applies to every form and application of the design.

X

X

X

X

Australian Government

Department of Home Affairs

X

Minimum size

The coat of arms is required to have a minimum width of 20 mm or 54 px. The Home Affairs logo should not be reproduced smaller than this size.

Australian Government

Department of Home Affairs

Minimum size

20mm / 54px

Colour

Colours for all reproduction methods—including printing, vinyl, paint, fabrics, embroidery, cotton and plastics—must be matched as closely as possible to the Pantone colours.

All digital/on-screen applications—including TV, websites and PowerPoint—should use the RGB values as a guide only.

Home Affairs colour palette

Swatch	Colour name	Pantone	Four colour process	RGB	Web	Usage
	Royal blue	PMS 2945C	C100 M80 Y0 K0	R3 G78 B162	#024DA1	Headlines, border device (on white) and subheads
	Mid blue	PMS 3005C	C100 M42 Y0 K0	R0 G123 B195	#007AC3	Subheads (on white background)
	Dark grey	PMS 431C	C65 M50 Y45 K20	R92 G103 B109	#5B666D	Type/graphics to provide appropriate emphasis of information
	Light grey	PMS 428C	C25 M20 Y15 K0	R191 G191 B199	#BEBFC7	Type/graphics to provide appropriate emphasis of information
	Black	PMS Black 6	C100 M100 Y100 K100	R0 G0 B0	#000000	Type/graphics to provide appropriate emphasis of information
	Gradient		Royal blue to mid blue			Backgrounds only

Type

Preferred typefaces

The Department's corporate typeface, Helvetica Neue was chosen for its modern, simplistic and readable features.

Where Helvetica Neue is not available Arial is the substitute font. Arial is the preferred typeface for all internal documents created in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

For internal documents please use the templates provided on *bordernet*.

Preferred typeface

**Helvetica Neue
75 Bold**

***Helvetica Neue
75 Bold Italic***

For headlines, paragraph headers

Helvetica Neue
65 Medium

*Helvetica Neue
65 Medium Italic*

For subheads, paragraph headers or body copy

Helvetica Neue
45 Light

*Helvetica Neue
45 Light Italic*

For subheads, paragraph headers or body copy

System font alternative

Arial Bold

Arial Bold Italic

For headlines, paragraph headers

Arial Regular

Arial Regular Italic

For subheads, paragraph headers or body copy

Always…

- align to the left
- use sentence case
- use italics for emphasis *only*