



Style manual

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ARPANSA Style Manual Contents

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ARPANSA Style Manual

This guide aims to provide assistance with writing, editing and proofreading communication material and documentation produced by ARPANSA.

For information on brand identity, including visual elements such as fonts, logos and colours, refer to the ARPANSA [Brand identity guidelines](#).

The below information has been compiled with reference to the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Writing for your audience

4 tips to remember when communicating to a general audience

1. Use [everyday words](#) that people commonly use.
2. Keep [words and phrases with special meaning](#) to a minimum.
3. Writing style is a result of [voice and tone](#).
 - use 'we', 'you' and 'us' (personal and friendly) for informal communications, such as intranet news posts.
 - use more formal language (e.g., 'The Regulatory Service Branch is revising regulations regarding...') for documentation aimed at external audiences.
4. Avoid jargon, slang and idioms.

Inclusive language

Use inclusive language by choosing words that respect all people, including their rights and heritage.

The [Australian Government Style Manual](#) includes guidance on writing appropriately and respectfully for people's [age](#), [cultural and linguistic background](#), [gender and sexuality](#) and for those with [disability](#).

First Nations peoples

1. Naming protocols

ARPANSA uses the naming convention of 'First Nations' peoples, rather than 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' peoples, or 'First Australians'.

Where relevant (or possible), content creators are advised to consult with traditional owners, local elders, community and content experts to ensure appropriate and respectful language and naming for places, people and other terminology.

Here are some other useful tips:

2. Respectful language use starts with the basics

Respectful language means using:

- specific terms, like the name of a community, before using broader terms

- plurals when speaking about collectives (peoples, nations, cultures, languages)
- present tense, unless speaking about a past event
- empowering, strengths-based language.

Avoid language that can be discriminatory or offensive, including:

- shorthand terms like 'Aborigines', 'Islanders' or acronyms like 'ATSI'
- using terms like 'myth', 'legend' or 'folklore' when referring to the beliefs of First Nations people
- blood quantum (for example, 'half-caste' or percentage measures)
- 'us versus them' or deficit language
- possessive terms such as 'our', as in 'our Aboriginal peoples'
- 'Australian Indigenous peoples', as it also implies ownership, much like 'our'.

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*.](#)

3. Acknowledgement of Country – written publications

Documents published on the ARPANSA website, or presentations for an external audience should include an Acknowledgement of Country in the front section. Please refer to our intranet page, '[First Nations cultural protocols](#)', for guidance. This page also contains information on the use of flags, cultural identity and other useful information.

General conventions

- [Italics](#)
- [Capitals](#)
- [Lists](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Dates and times](#)
- [Contractions](#)
- [Choosing numerals or words](#)
- [Percentages](#)
- [Dashes](#)
- [Quotation marks](#)
- [Spelling](#)
- [Referencing and attribution](#)

Italics

Limit your use of italics to the titles of published works, such as:

- primary legislation and legal cases (not delegated legislation such as Regulations)
- books and publications
- television and radio programs
- films, videos and podcasts
- blogs.

Examples:

Section 15 of the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* (ARPANS Act) confers on the CEO of ARPANSA a number of different functions.

The ARPANSA *Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006)* (RPS. No. 12) sets exposure limits for occupational exposure to artificial and solar UVR in the workplace. The Franklin Dam Case is the informal title of *Commonwealth v Tasmania* (1983) 158 CLR 1.

David Williamson's play *Emerald City* was first performed in 1987.

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual.](#)

Capitals - general

Capitalise the first word in a sentence. Use lower case for all other words, unless those words include proper nouns (specific names of people, places and things e.g., Uluru, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Sydney Harbour Bridge).

Proper nouns generally have an initial capital letter for each word in the noun.

Use capitals when referencing the job title of staff members.

Example: s 22(1)(a)(ii) - Irrelevant, Assistant Director Assessment and Advice at ARPANSA, has been appointed to the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection...

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual.](#)

Capitals – government terms

Remember to use the correct term and follow the rules for capitalising government terms.

Examples:

The Australian Government coordinates emergency management with the states.

Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

For Departments and agencies, you should use initial capital letters only for the formal names of government departments and agencies. Don't use capital letters for generic mentions.

Example: The Department of Finance owns the policy. The department has been working on it for months.

Use an initial capital letter for 'federal' when it forms part of a formal name. Don't capitalise it when it is used as an adjective.

Examples:

The Federal Court of Australia is responsible is a superior court of record.

The Minister stated that there are a number of federal issues that need addressing.

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*](#)

Lists

Don't use a semicolon (;) at the end of each item in a bullet list.

Unless each item is a full sentence or the last item in a list, don't use a full stop for items in bullet lists. Each bullet item should form a full sentence with the text at the beginning of the list.

Write all list items so they have the same grammatical structure. This is called 'parallel' structure and it makes lists easier to read.

Example:

Queensland is famous for its:

- islands and coral reefs
- abundant wildlife
- tropical rainforest
- beautiful beaches.

For sentence lists, start each list item with a capital letter and end it with a full stop.

Example:

The committee members decided the following actions:

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

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*](#).

Links

Links (hyperlinks) are words or images that users can click to go to other online content. Make sure you only link to something if it helps meet the user's needs.

Write link text that makes the destination clear. Links need to make sense when read out of the context of surrounding content. Links using 'click here' or 'more information' do not give the user any information about the destination.

Example:

Find out about our upcoming meetups on our [Eventbrite page](#).

Do not use: [Click here](#) to find out about our upcoming meetings.

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Dates and times

Use numerals for the day and year but spell out the month in words.

Example: Friday 1 May 1997

If referring to a date but not specifying the month, use a number with a suffix (don't put the suffix in superscript).

Example: She will leave by the 20th.

Use 'am' and 'pm' in lower case, with a non-breaking space after the number. (Use a non-breaking space instead of a regular space if you don't want Word to break a line at a certain space. To do this, hold down the Ctrl and Shift keys as you press the spacebar. Word will then not break the line at that point.)

Example: 9 am or 9:00 am

Use 'from' and 'to' in spans of years, with the exceptions of financial years and information in brackets, such as terms of office and years of birth and death. Refer to [Dashes](#) for further information.

Example: from 2015 to 2019.

The 2019–20 budget.

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Contractions

Grammatical contractions join two words. They use an apostrophe to show that there are missing letters. For example, 'don't' instead of 'do not'.

Grammatical contractions are not generally used in formal content. You can use them in less formal content which aims to create:

- A conversational tone (for example, in an intranet news post).
- A friendly or collaborative tone (for example, in brochures and manuals).

Example:

The department has not breached its staffing cap. [Formal high-level briefing or a response to a parliamentary question]

The department hasn't breached its staffing cap. [Less formal briefing or other less formal communications]

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*.](#)

Choosing numerals or words

Use numerals for 2 and above in text.

Write the numbers 'zero' and 'one' in words.

Examples:

Only one person agreed to it.

Their aim is zero net emissions by 2050.

There are 3 options to discuss.

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*.](#)

Percentages

Use the percentage sign next to a numeral in text. Do not use a space between numeral and percentage sign.

Example: 15%

[More information in the *Australian Government Style Manual*.](#)

Dashes

Spaced **en dashes** can separate a clarification, an interruption, a correction, numeric spans, a short list or a summary from the rest of the text. Do not use a minus sign for an en dash. In Word, en dashes can be inserted by using the shortcut Ctrl + - (using the number pad minus symbol) or by going to Insert > Symbol > More Symbols, selecting the Special Characters tab, and selecting the en dash option.

En dashes are half the width of the font height (–).

Avoid using en dashes for spans in paragraph text and headings. The exceptions to this general rule are date ranges for financial years, terms of office and lifespan (birth and date). For specific rules on when to use 2 or 4 digits for a year, refer to the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Examples:

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

The 2019–20 budget

5,000 – 90,000

Australia’s prime minister at the start of the Depression was James Scullin (1929–1932).

Em dashes are the same width as the font height. (—)

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Quotation marks

Quote direct speech in single quote marks.

Example: The opposition leader asked, ‘But where’s the money going to come from?’

For quotations within quotations, use double quotation marks inside single ones.

Example: He also wrote, ‘The decisions of the department for “major procurement” were always political choices.’

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Spelling

Use the Macquarie dictionary to reference spelling. If the dictionary lists variable spellings, use the first entry in the list.

Copies of the Macquarie dictionary are available on-site at Yallambie and Miranda. Please contact the [Communications team](#) for assistance.

Referencing and attribution

Attribute other content so users can find original sources. You must properly attribute copyright material you cite or reference, including text, images, video and sounds. Read how to attribute Creative Commons [here](#).

The author-date system is suitable for most content. This includes details for the author and date in the text with a full citation in a list of references.

In-text citation

An in-text citation gives the author's name and date of publication. Don't separate the name and date with a comma.

Examples:

Jones (2017) reported similar results.

Other results were similar (Jones 2017).

Reference lists

A reference list includes the full details of every cited work. Use the heading 'References'.

The general order is:

1. author or authoring organisation's name
2. publishing date
3. title (and series or issue details)
4. publisher details
5. accessed date (for digital content).

Use italics for the formal title of a complete published work.

Do not use italics if the reference is a book chapter, an article, a poem, an episode, or a page that is part of a series of similar division.

If it's part of a publication, use single quotation marks around the title and use italics for the name of the series, book or periodical.

Use the full date of publication for works like newspaper articles and social media posts.

Examples:

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), 2002. *Maximum Exposure Levels to Radiofrequency Fields – 3 kHz to 300 GHz*, Radiation Protection Series; No. 3.

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), 2020. *Guide for Classification of Radioactive Waste*, Radiation Protection Series; G-4.

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), 2006. *Occupational Exposure to*

Ultraviolet Radiation, Radiation Protection Series; No. 12.

Alam M, White LE, Martin N, Witherspoon J, Yoo S and West DP, 2010. Ultrasound tightening of facial and neck skin: a rater-blinded prospective cohort study, *J Am Acad Dermatol*, 62:262–269.

International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection, 2010. ICNIRP Guidelines for Limiting Exposure to Time-varying Electric and Magnetic Fields (1Hz – 100 kHz), *Health Physics*, 99(6):818-836.

Cancer Council Australia, 2019. Sun safety, online: accessed 24/05/2019, <https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/>.

Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM), 2018. Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine, online: accessed 20/05/2019, <https://www.asum.com.au/standards-of-practice/>.

[More information in the Australian Government Style Manual.](#)

Revision history

Version	Author	Description of changes	Release date
1.0	s 22(1)(a)(ii) - Irrelevant	New Issue	1/12/2020
2.0	s 22(1)(a)(ii) - Irrelevant	Updated and revised	01/09/2023