



# DEC corporate communications stylesheet

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) corporate communications stylesheet is for use by people who write and edit information for DEC publications and electronic media.

The stylesheet does not purport to include every matter of style or usage. It is a continually updated handy alphabetical reference list of many of the more frequently encountered style questions in our day-to-day written communications.

The stylesheet has been developed by staff of Corporate Communications Branch, using the State Government Media Office's style guide, the *Australian Government Style Manual* ([australia.gov.au/publications/style-manual](http://australia.gov.au/publications/style-manual)), the former Department of Environment and Department of Conservation and Land Management styles and the *Macquarie Australian Dictionary*.

For spelling of words not covered here, please use the first reference in the *Macquarie Australian Dictionary*.

While the stylesheet's rules provide the basis for a uniform standard for all DEC material, there are some exceptions. For example, media releases prepared by Public Affairs Branch must follow the Government Media Office style guide. Other regular publications may, for specific reasons, adopt different style rules to the standard. Where known, these are noted in the column 'Exceptions'.

Corporate Communications coordinates regular editorial conferences with a broad representation of DEC editors. If you have other common-use style points you would like resolved, please refer them to the editorial conference for consideration, by emailing [decmatterseeditor@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:decmatterseeditor@dec.wa.gov.au).

Style item	Exceptions and clarifying information
<p><b>abbreviations</b> – Omit the full point after a contraction when the last letter of the word or title ends the abbreviation, for example Mr, 2nd, St (saint and street), Lt (not Lieut), Ltd for limited.</p> <p>Full points are usually used if the word ends in a different letter from the word itself, for example Capt. Jones, the Rev. John Smith and Prof Hancock.</p> <p>Omit the full point with abbreviations printed in capitals, e.g. USA, QC.</p> <p>Use verbs in full e.g. cannot, will not, we will rather than can't, won't or we'll.</p> <p>Abbreviations formed from capital letters or years take plural without apostrophes (unless possessive), e.g. MPs, 1990s.</p>	<p>It is the preferred style for <i>LANDSCOPE</i>, saleable publications and other corporate publications that abbreviations are avoided. For example, use hectares, kilometres and tonnes.</p> <p>Where required (such as in tables or graphs), lower case abbreviations for measurement are joined to the preceding figure, e.g. 8ha, 60kmh, 7am.</p> <p>Where abbreviations are required use 'km' for kilometres; 'ha' for hectares; 'm' for metres; 'kmh' for kilometres per hour' and tonnes' not 't' for tonnes.</p> <p>(See also distances/speed.</p>

<b>ABC TV</b> – is referred to as the ABC, not Channel 2.	
<b>Aboriginal</b> – with cap 'A' and 'Indigenous' with cap 'I' when referring to Aboriginal or Indigenous people or communities.	
<b>about</b> – use about, not approximately or around.	
<b>accuracy, brevity, clarity</b> – be accurate, brief and to the point in active writing and be clear in what you say.	
<b>acid sulfate soil</b> – not acid sulphate soil	
<b>acknowledgment</b> – not acknowledgement.	
<b>acronyms</b> – should be spelt out in full the first time they are used, followed by the acronym in brackets and then referred to by the acronym thereafter.	
<b>Act</b> – use with a capital 'A' in a legislative sense. Italicise the Act name only when it is written in full with the year at the end, e.g. <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986, Conservation and Land Management Act 1984</i> (CALM Act).	
<b>Acting</b> – avoid using except for Directors	
<b>active voice</b> – usually preferred to passive, e.g. 'DEC translocated 45 bilbies' is preferable to 'Forty-five bilbies were translocated by DEC'.	
<b>added</b> – should usually be avoided in reporting speech and not used as a variant of 'said'.	
<b>advisor</b> – not adviser.	
<b>affect/effect</b> – the verb affect means to influence something, e.g. 'rainfall affects the environment'. The verb effect means to bring about a result. Effect can also be a noun, e.g. household effects.	
<b>airconditioner</b> – one word, no hyphen	
<b>all right</b> – two words	
<b>alternative</b> – means a choice, be careful not to confuse with 'alternate', which means to follow one another in time or place	
<b>am/pm/noon</b> – numbers should be numerical with no space between the number and unit of measurement, e.g. 8am (and not 8.00am). Do not use 1200, 12am, 2400 or 12pm. Use 12 noon or midday and midnight.	
<b>among</b> – not amongst; <b>amid</b> , not 'amidst'.	
<b>ampersand</b> – do not use the ampersand symbol (&)	

in written text. It can be used in tables, graphs and referencing.	
<b>antenna</b> – antennas (TV), antennae (feelers).	
<b>anticlimax, anticyclone, antitoxin</b> – no hyphens.	
<p><b>apostrophes</b> – Apostrophes are inserted before the possessive 's' of singular common nouns, e.g. the government's priorities; tomorrow's prescribed burns; DEC's program.</p> <p>Nouns whose singular ends in 's' are treated in the same way, e.g. James's investigations, the blue ringed octopus's range. Plural nouns ending in 's' take the apostrophe 's', e.g. the governments' budgets; two years' work.</p> <p>In contrast, plural nouns that do not end in 's' take the apostrophe 's', e.g. the children's appreciation; the men's roles.</p> <p>Plurals of lower-case letters need the apostrophe, e.g. p's and q's; dotting the i's. Apostrophes are not used in place names, e.g. St Georges Tce (see place names).</p> <p>However, the apostrophe is maintained in species names, e.g. Gilbert's potoroos, Russell's toadlet.</p>	
<b>appendix</b> – plural, appendices (books, etc); <b>appendixes</b> – medical.	
<b>approximately</b> – use 'about' and not around or round.	
<b>army</b> – is lower case in general reference, but caps for the specific service, e.g. Australian Regular Army or Army Reserve.	
<b>around not round</b> – use around as in 'run around the oval', or 'roam around the country'. Do not say 'around 400'. Use 'about 400'.	
<b>artefact</b> – not artifact.	
<b>as</b> – do not use for 'because', e.g. 'Because the school was involved in the program, they had a greater appreciation for the environment'.	
<p><b>autopsy</b> – is performed or done, not held.</p> <p>Necropsy refers to an autopsy or post mortem examination of an animal.</p>	
<b>backward, backwards</b> – as an adverb, use either form, as in looking backward(s). As an adjective, use backward: a backward glance.	
<b>barbecue</b> – not barbeque or BBQ.	
<b>barbed</b> – barbed-wire fence, not barb wire.	

<b>barrel</b> – single-barrel or double-barrel gun, not barrelled.	
<b>because of</b> – rather than 'owing to', and usually preferable to 'due to', which relates to money matters.	
<b>before</b> – not 'prior to' or 'previous to'.	
<b>begin</b> or <b>start</b> – not commence.	
<b>benefit, benefited</b> – one 't'.	
<b>beside</b> – at the side of, e.g. beside the reserve; besides means in addition to, e.g. besides air pollution, they were worried about accidents.	
<b>between</b> – can be used for more than two things, e.g. 'the space between three quadrats', 'an agreement between agencies'; 'it is between him and me' (not 'I').	
<b>bi</b> – avoid where possible, as a prefix to words of time such as bi-weekly, bi-monthly. Use two hourly and half-hourly, fortnightly, two monthly, half-yearly. Exception: Bicentenary.	
<b>biannual</b> – twice a year; <b>biennial</b> – every two years.	
<b>big</b> – use instead of large, huge, etc.	
<b>Bill</b> – cap in legislative sense, e.g. Bill of Rights.	
<b>billion</b> – one thousand million is a billion.	
<b>boat, ship</b> – liners, freighters, tankers and warships are ships; tenders, submarines and small craft are boats. 'Craft' and 'vessel' cover boats and ships. Where possible, use 'vessel'.	
<b>boost</b> – use sparingly in headlines. Don't overdo in text where you mean 'increase'.	
<b>bore water</b> – two words, no hyphen	
<b>both</b> – is usually unnecessary, e.g. it is not necessary to say 'both the flora and the fauna were endemic'.	
<b>brackets</b> – use around scientific names, e.g. the slipper orchid ( <i>Cryptostylis ovata</i> ).	
<b>broadscale</b> – one word	
<b>Budget</b> – cap for the Budget when referring to a specific Government Budget. Note budgeting and budgeted have one 't'.	

<b>Bushfire vs wildfire</b> – the Minister has requested we use 'bushfire' rather than 'wildfire' (except for fire managers, Directors, etc.).	
<b>business names</b> – no full point after abbreviations used in businesses such as Bros, Co, Corp, Inc, Pty, Ltd.	
<b>but</b> – as a conjunction is often used illogically. It should introduce a contrast, e.g. the resolution was passed, but some participants abstained.	
<b>Cabinet, the</b> – capitalise when referring to government.	
<b>campground</b> – no hyphen, one word.	
<b>camp site</b> – two words.	
<b>campaigns and programs</b> – names of major DEC campaigns are italicised, e.g. <i>Western Shield</i> and <i>CleanRun</i> .	
<b>Carnaby's black cockatoo</b> – no hyphens	
<b>car park</b> – two words	
<b>capital letters</b> – use sparingly unless otherwise stated. Their overuse is perceived as bureaucratic.	
<b>chairman, chairwoman or chairperson</b> – not chair	
<b>cheap</b> – goods may be cheap, not prices.	
<b>children</b> – not juveniles, except juvenile crime. Use 'kids' sparingly and 'students' where appropriate. Use toddler for between one and two years.	
<b>Christian name</b> – use 'first name' or 'given name(s)'.	
<b>circa</b> – abbreviated to [c.]	
<b>clerical titles</b> – must be used correctly. After 'the Rev.' you need first name before surname, e.g. the Rev. John Smith.  'The Rev.' is singular and plural, don't use 'the Revs.'  If a Minister of religion has a doctorate, there is no need to precede title of 'Dr' with the additional titles of Most Rev. or Right Rev.  'The Anglican Bishop of Timbuktu Dr Bill Smith' will do. Give the denomination of clergymen unless it is clear in the context.	
<b>cliches</b> – avoid the overuse of stale phrases such as 'mountainous seas' and 'curious creatures'.	

<p><b>collective nouns</b> – a collective noun denotes one undivided whole and takes a singular verb, e.g. 'DEC has 2000 staff.'</p> <p>Collective words for groups such as committee, crowd, family, government and team can take the singular or plural verb depending on whether the meaning relates to the group as a whole or to the individuals, e.g. 'the committee is made up of four men and four women' and 'the committee [<i>its members</i>] are divided on how the park should be managed'.</p>	
<p><b>colon</b> – use a capital letter after a colon only if it is the start of a quote, e.g. The editor said: "You're fired".</p> <p>Note there is only one full point and it is outside the quote marks.</p>	
<p><b>commas</b> – no comma before a bracket or in phrases such as 'Research Scientist John Smith'.</p>	
<p><b>commenced</b> – avoid. Use begin or start.</p>	
<p><b>common names</b> – common names are always written using lower case letters unless they are a proper noun, i.e. are named after a person, e.g. Gilbert's potoroo, Carnaby's black cockatoo.</p> <p>Common names should always be used when available, followed by the italicised scientific name in brackets. They should be free from hyphens unless grammatically indicated.</p> <p><i>See also 'species names'.</i></p>	<p>Common names fall into the domain of ordinary English grammar and are therefore subject to the rules placed on them by editors using house style (which works in accordance with the rules and emerging trends in English grammar and usage).</p> <p>The publication <i>Western Wildlife</i> is an exception.</p>
<p><b>complement, compliment</b> – complement means a person or thing that completes something; compliment means an expression of praise or a formal greeting.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation Commission of Western Australia</b> – should only be shortened to Conservation Commission. CCWA refers to the Conservation Council of WA.</p>	
<p><b>criteria</b> – use for singular and plural, not criterion.</p>	
<p><b>currently</b> – avoid, it is usually not necessary.</p>	
<p><b>Curtin University of Technology</b></p>	
<p><b>dashes</b> – an 'em' dash—achieved by pressing Alt+Ctrl+Num—is used to signify an abrupt change, introduce an amplification or explanation and set apart elements in a sentence.</p> <p>Sometimes this appears as an 'en' dash – achieved by pressing Ctrl+Num- – with spaces either side.</p>	

<p>Use an 'en' dash to identify a range, e.g. 10–15 per cent or April–June, and to show an association between words, e.g. a Commonwealth–State agreement.</p> <p>See also 'en and em dashes'</p>	
<p><b>data</b> – for singular and plural use (the use datum is not commonly used).</p>	
<p><b>dates</b> – write all months in full and in order of day, date, month, year, e.g. Saturday 17 March 2007.</p> <p>Years are written as 1980s, the 80s (no apostrophe) and 18th century (no superscript).</p> <p>The style for grouped dates is 1939–45 (using an en dash to denote a span) and 'from 1939 to 1945', <b>not</b> with a forward slash, i.e. 1939/45.</p> <p>Days of the week are spelt out in text.</p> <p>They take a full point when abbreviated in lists or tables, e.g. Thurs. for Thursday.</p>	
<p><b>department</b> – lower case 'd' unless in the full name of a department.</p>	
<p><b>DEC</b> – is the acronym for the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).</p> <p>The department's name should be spelt out in full, followed by the acronym in brackets, and then referred to as 'DEC'.</p> <p>Do not use 'the' before DEC.</p>	
<p><b>distances/speed</b> – use the abbreviations 'km' for kilometres; 'ha' for hectares; 'm' for metres; 'sq' for square; 'kmh' for kilometres per hour.</p> <p>Close up the number and the abbreviation when they appear together, e.g. 8km, 100kmh.</p> <p>The plural is not used for abbreviations, i.e. do not use kms, mms.</p>	<p>It is the preferred style for <i>LANDSCOPE</i>, saleable publications and other corporate publications that abbreviations are avoided. For example, use kilometres and metres. For readability, this rule can be broken for repetitive use or use in technical documents, graphs or tables.</p>
<p><b>divisions/branches</b> – use upper case and lower case for the names of DEC's divisions, branches and sections e.g. Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs, Corporate Communications Branch.</p> <p>Use lower case when referring to the generic divisions, branches or sections e.g. The Natural Resources Branch is one of six branches in DEC's Nature Conservation Division.</p>	
<p><b>Earth and earth</b> – cap 'E' for planet Earth, lower case for dirt.</p>	
<p><b>edition/issue</b> – an edition is an updated version of</p>	

<p>the same document.</p> <p>An issue is a new publication carrying the same title, e.g. magazines and newsletters.</p> <p>In referencing, abbreviate edition to ed. (not edn.), e.g. 5th ed.</p>	
<p><b>e.g.</b> – for example, full stops without spaces.</p>	
<p><b>email</b> – one word, no hyphen, lower case 'e'.</p>	
<p><b>en and em dashes</b></p> <p>an 'em' dash—achieved by pressing Alt+Ctrl+Num— is used to signify an abrupt change, introduce an amplification or explanation and set apart elements in a sentence.</p> <p>Sometimes this appears as an 'en' dash – achieved by pressing Ctrl+Num- – with spaces either side.</p> <p>Use an 'en' dash to identify a range, e.g. 10–15 per cent or April–June, and to show an association between words, e.g. a Commonwealth–State agreement.</p> <p>Shortcuts: two hyphens with no space will automatically create em-dash when you hit the space bar after the following word; two hyphens with spaces will create en-dash.</p>	
<p><b>etc</b> – avoid using, especially at the end of a list that begins with 'for example' or 'including'.</p>	
<p><b>fact</b> – Generally 'the fact' does not have to be used.</p> <p>For example, 'because of the fact they breached their licence' becomes 'because they breached their licence'.</p> <p>In cases where 'the fact' cannot be avoided, use 'because of' not 'owing to', the fact. Use 'though', or 'even though', rather than 'in spite of the fact'. 'He stressed that' not 'he stressed the fact that'.</p>	
<p><b>field work</b> – two words.</p>	
<p><b>figures</b></p>	<p><u>Scientific journals</u>  When <b>illustrations, figures or maps</b> are computer-generated, ensure that the density of any tint is not less than 30 per cent and that there is a significant difference between varying tints. Use the abbreviation 'Fig.' for all references to figures in text. Add labels to figures and maps using a sans serif typeface. Colour can be used but the print copy of CSWA is black and white and most people printing papers from the web version will print to a greyscale printer so contrast should be suitable for this.</p>



<b>firefighter</b> – one word.	
<b>fire crews</b> – two words.	
<b>fish</b> – not fishes.	
<b>FloraBase</b> – DEC’s online herbarium database. Note cap ‘F’ and ‘B’ and no spaces, italics.	
<b>Focus, focusing, focused</b> – single ‘s’	
<b>forward slash</b> – means and/or and should be avoided in written text. Use an ‘en’ dash to express a range, e.g. 2006–07 not 2006/07.	
<b>four-wheel drive</b> – not 4WD or four wheel drive. Four-wheel-drive track. Use four-wheel-drive vehicle	
<b>frontrunner</b> – one word.	
<b>full points</b> – go after an end bracket when the bracketed part is not a complete sentence, e.g. A good man (so he said).  It goes before the end bracket when the brackets enclose a complete sentence, e.g. (A good man, so he said.).  This applies to quotes as well, e.g. “The ecosystem of this area must be protected.”; “In James’s words ‘the ecosystem of this area must be protected’.”  Also see quotation marks.	
<b>further</b> – avoid, use ‘more’, e.g. ‘for more information’.	
<b>Government</b> – cap Government for State Government and Australian Government and when referring to the Government (as in the government of the day, Federal and State) and in governments of other countries.  Do not cap when it is used as an adjective, e.g. government department.  Use lower case when the reference is non-specific (e.g. the role of government; the process of government) and for local government.  Use ‘Barnett Government’, ‘Gillard Government’, ‘State Government’ and ‘Commonwealth Government’, ‘Australian Government’ or ‘Federal Government’.	
<b>grasstrees/balgas</b> – use either, but not blackboys.	
<b>groundwater</b> – one word, no hyphen	
<b>hang-gliding</b> – two words	

<b>hectares</b> – write out in full, not 'ha'.	For readability, use 'ha' in tables, graphs or technical documents.
<b>hot spot</b> – two words, no hyphen	
<p><b>hyphens</b> – use to improve understanding, e.g. compare vice president with vice-president, recover with re-cover; a sweet shop assistant with a sweet-shop assistant.</p> <p>Other uses include a one third share, ninety-nine, pro-government, tail-light, Australian-born, blue-grey hills, five-month sentence, four-wheel drive, multi-million-dollar-deal.</p> <p>Don't hyphenate coordinate, cooperate or Statewide.</p> <p>Use a hyphen after vice in titles (Vice-Admiral and Under-Secretary), but not after acting, assistant, associate or deputy (Deputy Prime Minister).</p> <p>Hyphenate compound adjectives, e.g. slow-growing shrubs, water-resistant skin, unless the adverb ends in 'ly', e.g. a naturally occurring poison.</p>	
<p><b>ideologies</b> – lower case for ideologies, e.g. green, anarchism, communism, liberalism, and for their adherents, e.g. greenie, anarchists, communists, liberals.</p> <p>But cap in a party sense, e.g. the Greens, a Democratic majority, Labor voters, Liberal candidates.</p>	
<b>i.e.</b> – with full stops and no spaces.	
<b>Indigenous</b> – cap 'I' when referring to Indigenous people, e.g. 'Indigenous people use plants that are indigenous to the area'.	
<b>inquiries</b> – not enquiries.	
<b>install, installation</b> – two 'I's, but instalment.	
<b>initials</b> – do not use punctuation, e.g. JW Smith not J.W. Smith.	
<b>internet and intranet</b> – lower case 'i'.	
<b>into</b> – can be one or two words.	
<b>-ise/-isation</b> – not -ize/-ization in suffixes. Make sure the computer dictionary is set to Australian English. If in doubt, consult the Australian Macquarie Dictionary.	
<b>italics</b> – the following foreign language expressions are italicised: <i>in situ</i> , <i>ex situ</i> , <i>en masse</i> , <i>en route</i>	<b>per se</b> – not italicised in scientific publications
<b>it's</b> – prefer 'it is'. Do not confuse with its, the possessive adjective, e.g. 'it's a message' and 'its message was'.	

<b>jail</b> – not gaol.	
<b>jarrah</b> – lower case ‘j’ unless starting a sentence.	
<b>job titles</b> – capitalise titles when they are specifically referred to with a person’s name, e.g. Research Scientist Joe Bloggs but lower case when it is: Joe Bloggs has been a research scientist for 10 years.	
<b>judgment</b> – not judgement	
<b>kerb</b> – for the edge of a footpath. To curb is to restrain.	
<b>kilometres</b> – it is the preferred style for kilometres to be in full (as with square kilometres), however readability is most important.	Therefore it may be abbreviated depending on context, such as for science, land tenure, air quality or other documents in a technical style.
<b>land-holder</b> – two words, hyphenated, not ‘land holder’ or ‘landholder’	
<b>landowner</b> – one word, no hyphen.	
<b>LANDSCOPE</b> – italics and capital letters.	
<b>life cycle</b> – two words, no hyphen	
<b>last</b> – refers to the end. Do not interchange with past, e.g. for the past five years.	
<b>licence, license</b> – licence is the noun, license is the verb.	
<b>lightning</b> – not lightening	
<b>likely</b> – this is an adjective, not an adverb (use probably for adverb)	
<b>local government and shires</b> – cap the names of local governing bodies at first mention, e.g. the City of Perth, the Shire of Corrigin and thereafter refer to them as the council, shire, city or town.  Use a lower case when referring to councils generally, e.g. a council publication.	
<b>long words</b> – where possible use short words, which are handy and vigorous, rather than long words, which are often pretentious, e.g. ‘acceded to’ use granted; ‘acquired’ use bought; ‘appropriate’ use apt, fitting, right; ‘assistance’ use help; assisted or rendered assistance use helped; ‘require’ use need; and ‘attempted’ use tried.	
<b>meet</b> – NOT meet with	
<b>Minister’s title</b> – should be written as ‘Environment Minister’ or ‘Minister for Environment’.	

<p><b>metre</b> – it is the preferred style for metres to be in full (as with square metres), however readability is most important.</p>	<p>Therefore it may be abbreviated depending on context, such as for science, land tenure, air quality or other documents in a technical style.</p>
<p><b>moon</b> – lower case ‘m’.</p>	
<p><b>more than</b> – 1,000 people not <b>over</b> 1,000 people. Use over when referring to height e.g. over 1,000 metres.</p>	
<p><b>names</b> – always check the spelling of names.</p>	
<p><b>national park</b> – lower case except when using the full name of the national park, e.g. Shannon National Park. Rule applies to other DEC-managed lands and waters.</p> <p>Use lower case when referring to several national parks i.e. Shannon and D’Entrecasteaux national parks.</p>	
<p><b>no one</b> – two words, no hyphen.</p>	
<p><b>numbers</b> – spell out figures from one to nine, except dates, dimensions and statistics, groups of figures, streets, ratios and times, and where followed by fractions or decimals, e.g. 4½ years, 3¾ hours.</p> <p>Ages also take numerals, except compounds, e.g. a five-year-old boy.</p> <p>Always spell out numbers at the start of a sentence.</p> <p>Numbers 10 and above should be in numerical form.</p> <p>Commas are used in numbers with four or more digits, e.g. 1,000, 10,000, 100,000. Use \$15 million not 15M or 15 million dollars.</p> <p>Insert a space when spelling out million, e.g. \$5 million, but close when it’s abbreviated, e.g. \$5m.</p> <p>Use \$500,000 not half a million dollars. Spell out and hyphenate fractions, e.g. four-fifths, unless they’re preceded by an ‘a’ or an ‘an’ e.g. ‘he took a two thirds share’.</p> <p>Hyphens are used to connect numbers when they are spelt out, e.g. Thirty-five kangaroos were in the block.</p>	<p><b>SI</b> units are used for exact physical quantities and measurements, except where a non-SI Australian legal unit of measurement is appropriate, e.g. 5ha not 50,000m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p><b>Public Affairs media statements</b> Commas are used only in numbers of five digits or more.</p>
<p><b>Nyoongar/Noongar</b> – both spellings are accepted and correct.</p>	
<p><b>native title</b> – lower case ‘n’ and ‘t’ but <b>National Native Title Tribunal</b>.</p>	
<p><b>NatureBase</b> – the former CALM website. This is NO LONGER IN USE. Refer instead to relevant pages on DEC website.</p>	

<b>noisy scrub-bird</b>	
<b>off-road vehicle</b> <b>off-road-vehicle track</b>	
<b>Office of the EPA (OEPA)</b> – this is the agency that supports the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).	
<b>old-growth forest</b> – hyphenated.	
<b>online</b> – one word, no space.	
<b>on to</b> – two words. Sometimes 'to' is superfluous.	
<b>ongoing</b> – one word.	
<b>over</b> – means 'above'. Not to be used for 'about' as in 'angry over a decision'.	
<b>overused words</b> – look out for overused words, e.g. unique, spectacular.	
<b>Parliament</b> – capitalise when referring to a specific parliament, e.g. State Parliament, Federal Parliament or when it stands alone and the meaning is clear.  Capitalise for Upper and Lower Houses, Ministry, Cabinet, the State Budget, a White Paper, Act, Bill, Opposition.	
<b>part-time / full-time</b> – hyphenated	
<b>per annum</b> – better to use 'each year'	
<b>per cent</b> – two words, spelt out in text. The percentage symbol (%) can be used in tables and graphs.	For ease of reading, a per cent sign (%) may be used in technical journals or those with multiple uses. It should immediately follow the number, e.g.25%.
<b>place names</b> – place names do not have apostrophes, e.g. Kings Park, Mounts Bay Rd, St Georges Tce, St Johns Brook Conservation Park.  Check the spelling of WA place names, including DEC-managed lands and waters, on the website of Landgate's State Nomenclature Advisory Committee ( <a href="http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au">www.landgate.wa.gov.au</a> ).  Its Index of Localities includes remote stations.  Other sources include phone books and post code lists.	
<b>plurals</b> – follow the rule that the main word takes the plural form, e.g. aides-de-camp, attorneys-general, solicitors-general, except with lord mayors, detective-sergeants, judge-advocates.	

<p><b>politicians</b> – it is not necessary to include all of a Minister’s portfolios in their title, e.g. Environment Minister Donna Faragher.</p> <p>Deputy is capped when part of a title, as in Deputy Leader of the Opposition.</p> <p>When it is necessary to distinguish between Federal and State, say Federal Opposition Leader (not the Federal Leader of the Opposition).</p> <p>Use a lower case ‘l’ for leader in Liberal leader.</p> <p>Do not use ‘shadow ministers’. Refer to the opposition person who has portfolio responsibilities as the opposition spokesman or woman. Also, use ‘Kimberley MLA’, instead of ‘Member for Kimberley’, and North Metropolitan MLC Peter Collier instead of the Member for the North Metropolitan Region, Peter Collier.</p>	
<p><b>practice</b> is the noun, <b>practise</b> is the verb.</p>	
<p><b>prepositions</b> – compare <i>with</i>; liken <i>to</i>; differ <i>from</i>; derive <i>from</i>.</p>	
<p><b>program</b> – not programme.</p>	
<p><b>publications</b> – titles of publications are italicised, e.g. <i>Geology and Landforms of the Kimberley</i>.</p>	
<p><b>quantities</b> – weights and measures, though in bulk, are singular, e.g. ‘10 millimetres of rain was recorded’, ‘10 kilometres is a long way to walk’.</p> <p>But ‘eight tonnes of toothpicks were imported’.</p> <p>The verb takes its number from the substance, not the quantity.</p>	
<p><b>quotation marks</b> – a comma or full stop goes inside end quotes if the quote is a full sentence, e.g. “The whale disentanglement was very successful.”</p> <p>But not if the quote is within a sentence, e.g. He said: “We were pleased with the outcome”. “But, I heard the fisher say, ‘the whale was caught in crayfish nets’,” he said.</p> <p>Double quotation marks should be used for direct quoting only.</p> <p>Single quotation marks should be used for quotes within quotes and when a technical term is first referred to, e.g. some of these ‘non-nutrient contaminants’ can result; when a word or phrase has been coined, e.g. dieback is a ‘biological bulldozer’; for ironic emphasis, e.g. the ‘policy was never approved and certainly never implemented’; and for colloquial words, nicknames, slang or humorous words and phrases, e.g. they called him Mark ‘toad buster’ Jones.</p>	
<p><b>Radiello</b> – a brand name of a passive air sampling</p>	

system – capitalised	
<b>radio collar</b> – two words.	
<b>rangelands</b> – one word, no capital	
<b>reported speech</b> – uses past tense, e.g. The Minister said he supported the biodiversity strategy that would lead future environmental management.	
<b>regions</b> – DEC has nine regions (Kimberley, Pilbara, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Swan, South West, Warren, South Coast and Goldfields) with districts within these. They should be capitalised. Note Midwest is one word.	
<b>ringbark</b> – one word, no hyphen, 'ringbark' not 'ring-bark' or 'ring bark'	
<b>rivers</b> – Upper case for the name of a single river, e.g. Swan River, but lower case when referring to several rivers in one sentence i.e. the Swan, Helena and Canning rivers. The same rule applies to streets and roads.	
<b>roadside</b> – one word, not 'road side' or 'road-side'	
<b>school years</b> – capitalise 'Y' and use the number for the level (e.g. Year 1 and Years 3 and 4).	
<b>scuba diving</b> – lowercase 'scuba' not 'SCUBA'	
<b>sea lion</b> – two words.	
<b>sea water</b> – two words, no hyphen	
<b>seagrasses</b> – one word	
<b>smoke bush</b> – two words	
<b>South Coast</b> – use cap 's' and 'c' when referring to DEC region. Lower case when referring to the generic direction and feature ('the south coast of the island')	
<b>South West/south-west</b> – the capital letters refer to the DEC and / or Tourism WA named regions as proper nouns. When referring to compass points or general areas defined by compass direction the lower case hyphenated version should be used. This will be determined somewhat by context. Similarly, North West for the area in WA but refer to the north-west of WA.	
<b>species names</b> – common names should always be used when available, followed by the italicised scientific name in brackets.	Common names fall into the domain of ordinary English grammar and are therefore subject to the rules placed on them by editors using house style

<p>Common names are always written using lower case letters unless they are a proper noun, i.e. are named after a person, e.g. Gilbert's potoroo, Carnaby's black cockatoo.</p> <p>The first letter of the scientific name is capped, e.g. <i>Acacia drummondii</i>.</p> <p>When two scientific names with the same species name are written one after another the second can be abbreviated, e.g. <i>Acacia drummondii</i>, <i>A. pulchella</i>.</p> <p>Refer to 'species of bird', not 'species of birds'.</p> <p>See also 'common names'.</p>	<p>(which works in accordance with the rules and emerging trends in English grammar and usage).</p> <p>Common names should be free from hyphens unless grammatically indicated.</p> <p>The publication <i>Western Wildlife</i> is an exception.</p>
<p><b>state</b> – use a lowercase 's' for state when the reference is to one of the states of Australia, e.g. the state's environment.</p> <p>'The species is found <b>statewide</b>.' (adverb)</p> <p>'There was a <b>state-wide</b> audit.' (adjective)</p>	
<p><b>sulfate</b> – not sulphate</p>	
<p><b>superfluous words</b> – omit unnecessary words, e.g. 'a total of 42', 'a distance of 35m', 'they both shared', 'first began', 'funeral of the late Tom Citizen', 'have got', 'he possibly may do it', 'matinee performance', 'the original source', 'throughout the whole State', 'together with'.</p> <p>Also avoid verbosity, e.g. acts of a hostile nature, use hostile acts; 'the unremunerative nature of the work', use 'the work does not pay'.</p>	
<p><b>Swan River Trust</b> – refer to the 'Swan River Trust' in full, or SRT where appropriate</p>	
<p><b>targeted</b> – one 't'.</p>	
<p><b>temperature</b> – write 'degrees Celsius' in full, with cap 'C', e.g. 30 degrees Celsius or 30C.</p>	<p>For ease of reading, technical and scientific journals and those with many repetitions may abbreviate, e.g. 27°C.</p>
<p><b>territory</b> – capital 'T' when referring to Northern Territory e.g. the Territory</p>	
<p><b>thank you</b> – two words.</p>	
<p><b>titles</b> – write a person's title before the name, e.g. Director General Keiran McNamara said litter reporting could now be done online.</p> <p>Commas are only used when 'the' proceeds the title, e.g. The Director General, Keiran McNamara, said the changes would increase the number of reports.</p> <p>Avoid using 'Acting' except for Directors.</p>	
<p><b>The University of Western Australia (UWA)</b> – cap</p>	



'T'.	
<b>tonne</b> – not ton.	
<b>Track</b> – capital 'T' when referring to the Bibbulmun Track in documents produced for, or in conjunction with, the Bibbulmun Track Foundation.	
<b>traditional owners</b> – lower case	
<b>travelled, travelling</b> – two 'l's.	
<b>under-age</b> (adjective) under age (noun), <b>underrate, undervalue.</b>	
<b>under way</b> – two words, not underway. Ships get under way, jobs, races, etc start or begin.	
<b>until</b> – not till, do not use 'up until' or 'up until now'. Make it 'so far'.	
<b>very</b> – avoid.	
<b>wait</b> – waiting for a decision not awaiting on a decision.	
<b>Walk trails</b> – two words, no hyphen.	
<b>waterbird</b> – one word	
<b>watertable</b> – one word, no hyphen	
<b>web page</b> – two words.	
<b>website</b> – one word.	
<b>Western Australia(n)</b> – use 'Western Australia' in full at first mention and WA subsequently. Use 'Western Australian' for those who live in WA, not 'West Australian'.	
<b>Wheatbelt</b> – cap 'W' for DEC region only, lowercase when referring to geographical area.	
<b>when</b> – is sometimes carelessly written when 'after' is meant, e.g. 'the company was fined when it did not comply with the legislation' is wrong.	
<b>while</b> – not whilst.	
<b>white-water rafting</b>	
<b>with regard to</b> – not 'with regards to'	
<b>worth while</b> – a worthwhile job is worth while. It is worth doing (NOT worth while doing).	
<b>World War II</b> – not World War Two	

<b>worldwide</b> – one word, not ‘world wide’ or ‘world-wide’	
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## OTHER

**spacing** – full points should be followed by a single space, not double, before the next sentence.

**headings and subheadings** – headings in DEC publications are written in upper and lower case, not all capital letters. Use a capital only for the first word, proper names and titles.

**bullet points and lists** – different writers and editors take different views on punctuation for dot-point series. Too much punctuation can make documents look cluttered. Too little can cause confusion. The following examples provide clarity while still conforming with the modern style of using less punctuation.

Use a sentence or part of one to introduce dot points and enable the series to be properly integrated into the text flow.

Use normal sentence rules to determine if dot points in a series need capital letters. If the dot points are full sentences, each sentence should start with a capital letter and finish with a full point. If each dot point consists of, or begins with, a sentence fragment, no initial capital letter is used and only the last dot point has a full point attached.

### *Examples of dot points*

#### **1. Full sentences**

The committee came to three important conclusions:

- Officers from the department should investigate the reports of a breach of licence.
- A policy should be put in place.
- Extra resources should be allocated to the priority projects.

#### **2. Two levels of indentation**

These features can be summarised as:

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

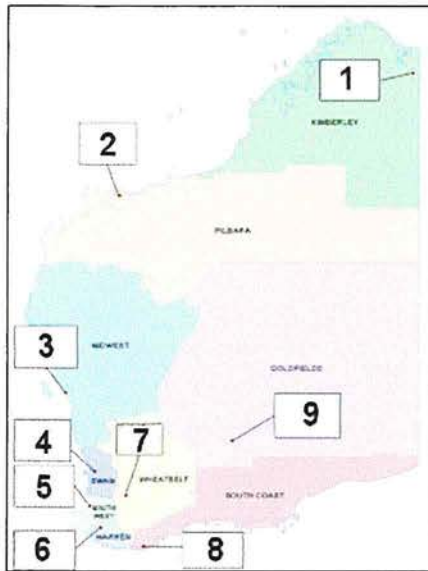
#### **3. Sentence fragments**

Research is conducted using several techniques including:

- surveying tracks
- fitting radio collars
- collecting scats.

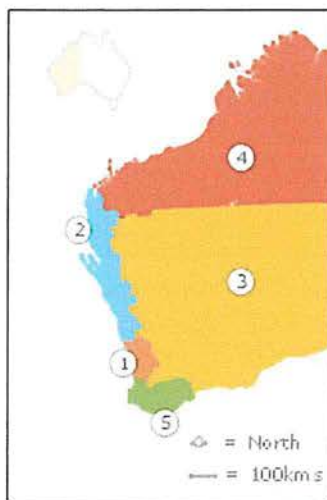
# Appendix 1 – Regions

## DEC regions



1. Kimberley
2. Pilbara
3. Midwest
4. Swan
5. South West
6. Warren
7. Wheatbelt
8. South Coast
9. Goldfields

## WA Tourism regions (DEC usage)



1. Perth
2. Coral Coast
3. Golden Outback
4. North West
5. South West