

Writing style guide

2024

Common style points for writing and editing

2024 updates

A new edition of the Australian Government style manual has been released and some other editorial decisions made. Key changes include:

- guidance on inclusive language expanded;
- capitalise key Aboriginal terms including Traditional Owners/Traditional Custodians/Elder/Country/Native Title
- words from Aboriginal languages – not italics;
- new section on the use of hyphens and dashes;
- COVID-19– all caps with a hyphen, coronavirus not preferred;
- Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk – always in full;
- Plan for Our Parks – not italics, cap O;
- program names – not italics;
- Noongar – preferred over Nyoongar etc <https://www.nativetitle.org.au/find/psc>;
- Ministers – references to the Environment and Tourism Ministers have been updated to reflect the appointment of Reece Whitby and Rita Saffioti;
- hike vs walk – hike is now preferred over walk. Similarly, hiking trail over walk trail. This is a change relating to visitor safety.

Acknowledgment

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) acknowledges all Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Owners throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to all members of Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

About the *Writing style guide*

DBCA's *Writing style guide* is for people who write and edit information for departmental publications and electronic media. It contains guidelines for written style to ensure consistency across all forms of communication.

Language is a powerful tool, and it is important to be respectful and accurate, particularly when engaging with Aboriginal peoples. The 2024 update expands on appropriate and respectful language when writing with or about Aboriginal peoples, including acknowledging the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, language groups and cultures.

The guide also outlines DBCA's preferred editorial style, which is guided by the seventh edition of the Australian Government [Style manual: the standard for Australian Government writing and editing](#) and the Australian Macquarie dictionary. For spelling of words not covered here, please use the first reference in the Macquarie dictionary.

This style guide is broken into an [essentials guide](#) for broad style items followed by a detailed [word list](#) arranged alphabetically, and a new appendix that guides [respectful engagement with Aboriginal peoples](#). Queries or suggestions may be emailed to the Public Information and Corporate Affairs branch at communications@dbca.wa.gov.au.

This document is reviewed and updated annually.

Thank you to contributors

The Public Information and Corporate Affairs branch would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Aboriginal Engagement, Planning and Lands Branch (AEPL), Executive Manager Office of the Director General Jan Rayner and Deputy Director General Peter Dans in preparing DBCA's *Writing style guide*.

Drawing on expertise and experience working with Traditional Owners, plus additional research on best practice in this area, the AEPL branch prepared a comprehensive style guide on respectful Aboriginal engagement. Where recommendations were not strictly about language or writing style, this information is included in the new appendix.

General guidance for management plans has also been provided by AEPL branch.

Contents

2023 updates.....	1	E.....	21
About the <i>Writing style guide</i>	2	F.....	21
Contents	3	G.....	22
Essentials guide	4	H.....	23
Referring to the department.....	4	I.....	23
Language and tone	4	J.....	24
Spelling	7	K.....	24
Government	7	L.....	24
Capitalisation.....	7	M.....	25
Inclusive language		N.....	26
Acronyms, abbreviations and shortened forms	8	O.....	26
Photo captions, credits and copyright	8	P.....	27
Species names.....	10	Q.....	28
Numbers, dates, times and measurements	11	R.....	29
Websites and hyperlinks	13	S.....	30
Job titles	14	T.....	31
Campaigns and program names.....	14	U.....	32
Land tenure	14	V.....	32
Bullet points and lists	15	W.....	32
Word list	18	X.....	33
A.....	18	Y.....	33
B.....	18	Z.....	33
C.....	19	Kings Park and Bold Park place names	34
D.....	20	Perth Zoo animal naming	35

Essentials guide

Item	Guidelines for use
Referring to the department	<p data-bbox="514 254 1494 296">Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</p> <p data-bbox="514 310 1494 415">Always use in full when written for the first time, followed by the acronym (DBCA) in brackets. Thereafter, use 'DBCA' or 'the department' (with lower case 'd').</p> <p data-bbox="514 430 1494 472">Use a comma between Biodiversity and Conservation.</p> <p data-bbox="514 487 1494 550">Do not use an ampersand '&' in place of the 'and' in the department's name.</p> <p data-bbox="514 606 1494 648">DBCA</p> <p data-bbox="514 663 1494 726">The accepted acronym for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is DBCA.</p> <p data-bbox="514 741 1494 772">Only use the acronym after writing out the department name in full.</p> <p data-bbox="514 787 1494 819">When using the acronym use 'DBCA', not 'the DBCA'.</p> <p data-bbox="514 833 1494 896">Do not use Dept of BCA, BCA, DoBCA, DBC&A or any other form of abbreviation.</p> <p data-bbox="514 953 1494 995">the department</p> <p data-bbox="514 1010 1494 1073">Lower case 'd' unless used as part of the full department name. For example:</p> <p data-bbox="581 1087 1494 1192" style="padding-left: 40px;">“The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions was formed on 1 July 2017. The department manages more than 31 million hectares of land and waters.”</p> <p data-bbox="514 1207 1494 1239">Exception: the annual report or other Ministerial correspondence.</p> <p data-bbox="514 1253 1494 1285">See the Word list for guidance on referring to the:</p> <ul data-bbox="565 1299 1494 1428" style="list-style-type: none">• Parks and Wildlife Service• Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority• Rottnest Island Authority• Zoological Parks Authority.
Language and tone	<p data-bbox="514 1514 1494 1591">The department's voice should be helpful, succinct, positive and open. Use simple language and be solutions-focused.</p>

Inclusive language

Referencing Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations peoples

- Whilst the use of 'First Nations peoples' is recognised globally, it is DBCA's preference to use 'Aboriginal peoples' in recognition that Aboriginal peoples are the Traditional Owners of Western Australia's land and sea Country.
- This information is primarily about Aboriginal peoples in Western Australia (including Aboriginal peoples who also identify as Torres Strait Islanders). The department respectfully recognises the valuable contributions of Torres Strait Islanders to Western Australia's society, economy, and communities.

Respectful language

It is important to consider the language used when communicating with or referring to Aboriginal peoples. It is important to acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and cultures. The language used may depend on preference of the communities you are engaging with.

- Pluralisation(s) should be used when referencing Aboriginal 'histories, peoples, cultures, perspectives, ways of being and contributions.'
- Use present tense – Aboriginal culture is a living and continuous culture so descriptions of how places are valued and used should not use past tense unless explicitly directed by Traditional Owners.
- Use preferred names of language groups/Native Title claimant groups/Aboriginal corporation names.

Capitalisation

Capitalisation demonstrates respect. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander should always be capitalised, along with the following terms:

- Elder/s
- Traditional Owner/s
- Traditional Custodian/s
- Country (when referring to Aboriginal Country)
- Acknowledgement of Country
- Welcome to Country
- Language group name
- Aboriginal corporation name when written in full
- Indigenous (please note that when referring to plants or animals that are indigenous to an area, lower case is fine)
- The Dreaming (note: Dreamtime indicates that it is over, whereas The Dreaming is continual).
- Native Title

Terms and references that may cause offence

- Disadvantaged (in the context of describing or referring to Aboriginal peoples, as it can perpetuate negative stereotypes).

- Lost or past (language, culture). Avoid talking about Aboriginal culture or language as lost or past. It is still present, adaptive and living today.
- Tribe
- Artefacts
- Mob (Aboriginal peoples may use this term to identify their people or community, but it's not generally acceptable for other Australians to use).
- 'Us and them' language (instead concentrate on promoting mutually respectful and genuine two-way relationships of shared significance).
- Dreamtime (this indicates that it is over, whereas The Dreaming is continual).
- Stakeholder (Aboriginal peoples are not stakeholders they are right holders. The term, 'stakeholder' fails to recognise that DBCA works in partnership with Aboriginal peoples).

Words in Aboriginal languages

When referencing Traditional Owner language, it is important to provide the English interpretation or English term in brackets and use phonetics in speeches where appropriate.

Words in Aboriginal languages are not to be italicised.

Dual naming

Dual naming is the approach whereby geographical places or features are officially recognised by two distinct names, with the Aboriginal name appearing first. Dual naming may be considered as an intermediary step in the transition to an Aboriginal name. For example:

- Danggu (Geikie Gorge) National Park

DBCA staff are encouraged to refer to the Aboriginal name of the park, feature or asset that is dual named, for example using Wadjemup instead of Rottnest Island.

Further supporting information on respectful engagement with Aboriginal peoples can be found in the [appendix](#).

Culture and heritage

Culture and heritage are two distinctly different terms. Legislation-specific and general public documents must refer to culture and heritage as described in the relevant acts and/or regulations, for example under the CALM Act:

“protects and conserves the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons”.

Do not use 'cultural heritage'. Use lower case.

Referencing people with disability

Focus on the person, not the disability, by using person-first language. For full details, see the *Australian Government style manual* section on [People with disability](#).

Spelling

Spelling should follow the Australian Macquarie dictionary. Set your default language in MS Word to English (Australia). For example:

- organise not organize
- colour not color
- centre not center

Government

State Government or where appropriate
Cook Government

Government of Western Australia is also correct, but State Government is preferred in general communications.

Cook Government can be used when referring to election commitments, and Ministerial speeches and communications where required.

Non-specific references to local, state and Commonwealth government agencies should be lower case. For example:

“The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions liaises with local government agencies, such as the City of Armadale.”

“The role of government is to...”

Commonwealth Government

Use lower case when you mention more than one government. For example:

“The State and Commonwealth governments today announced...”

Capitalisation

Minimal capitalisation

Use minimal capitalisation, including sentence case for headings and publication titles. Sentence case means only capitalising the first word and proper nouns.

Proper names/place names

Proper names of people, places and organisations should begin with a capital letter.

When shortening proper nouns like national park names, use lower case. For example:

“The Pinnacles Desert is located in Nambung National Park. Entry to the national park is off Indian Ocean Drive, south of Cervantes.”

“Kings Park and Botanic Garden is located in West Perth, a short distance from Perth CBD. Parking is free for park visitors and public transport is readily available.”

Exceptions: [Perth] Zoo, [Swan Canning] Riverpark.

For example:

“Perth Zoo’s native species breeding program has seen the release of more than 4000 Zoo-bred animals released into the wild.”

Do not refer to it as ‘**the** Perth Zoo’.

See the [Word list](#) for capitalisation of specific words.

Capitalisation of plant and animal species common names

See [Species names](#) below.

Capitalisation of Aboriginal names and references

See [Inclusive language](#) above.

Acronyms, abbreviations and shortened forms

Acronyms, abbreviations and shortened forms must be written out in full in the first instance, followed by the acronym in brackets. Thereafter, just the acronym can be used. For example:

“The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has released a new resource for people with disability, their families and carers that highlights the accessibility improvements in Western Australia’s national parks and reserves. The new publication comprises a collection of articles from DBCA’s quarterly magazine, *LANDSCOPE*.”

Only describe an acronym if you will be referring to it again soon after in the same document. If the acronym is used quite sparingly, consider whether it’s easier on the reader to write the name in full each time.

Do not include full points in between each letter of a shortened form.

- BGPA not B.G.P.A.

Use ‘DBCA’ rather than ‘**the** DBCA’.

Do not use PWS publicly as an abbreviation for the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Use Western Australia instead of WA where possible. In online material, WA can be confused with Washington, United States. It can also be pronounced by screen reading software as ‘wah’.

Do not use e.g., i.e., etc. and nb.

Photo captions, credits and copyright

General information

It is vital to provide credit for photos to avoid copyright infringement. Do not use images from Google searches or other sources without tracing the origin of the photo and obtaining written permission from the copyright owner.

Where a photo is uncredited in a departmental publication, this generally indicates DBCA owns copyright but please confirm before reproducing the image elsewhere.

It is good practice to include photographer credits in the metadata or filename when saving an image in shared drives or photo libraries to avoid future copyright infringement.

Staff photos and videos

Copyright for photos/video taken by staff during work time or as part of a work project is the property of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The department may, but is not obliged to, include the individual staff member's name in the credit, for example:

Carnaby's cockatoos flying in to roost. *Photo – Joe Bloggs/DBCA*
Carnaby's cockatoo flying in to roost. *Photo – DBCA*

Caption style

Captions should be formatted as follows:

Carnaby's cockatoos flying in to roost. *Photo – Joe Bloggs/DBCA*

Note: if captions are grouped and/or not next to the photograph, words indicating which picture the caption refers to should precede the caption and be in bold. For example:

Above Spider orchid. *Photo – Jack O'Neill/DBCA*

Photos taken by external parties or paid photographers

Photo credits are necessary when images are bought or donated. These photos should be credited in a manner consistent with the arrangement made when permission for use of the photo was given.

Karri forest. *Photo – Julie Smith*

Volunteer John Lowe at the release site. *Photo – Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group*

Rainbow bee-eater. *Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/DBCA*

Alt text

Alt text is used to help people who are unable to see an image. People with a vision impairment often use screen readers to listen to electronic content aloud. When a screen reader comes across a photo or graph, it will read the alt text for that image aloud. Alt text also helps people who are viewing a webpage without the images.



Alt text should describe the key information that a photo or graph shows. It should not be a repetition of a caption. The image above could have the following caption and alt text:

Caption: The osprey is the second most widely distributed raptor species in the world, after the peregrine falcon.

Alt text: Osprey with wings outstretched in flight against a blue sky.

In Word, right click an image to add alt text to it.

Alt text should also be used to describe key elements of a chart or graph so that someone who cannot see an image doesn't miss any context.

Species names

Use of common or scientific names

Text for the general public should use common names in lower case (see below).

Technical or scientific publications should use scientific names.

Consider your audience when deciding whether to use common or scientific names, or both.

When both common and scientific are used, write the common name first followed by the scientific name in italics in brackets for first usage, and thereafter just the common name.

- For example: “The noisy scrub-bird (*Atrichornis clamosus*) is endangered and confined to one natural population on Mount Gardner and several translocated populations east of Albany, Western Australia. Survival of the noisy scrub-bird may be increasingly dependent on....”

Note: the brackets themselves should not be italicised.

Capitalisation of common names

Write common names using lower case letters unless they are named after a person or place, for example ‘Gilbert’s potoroo’, ‘Carnaby’s cockatoo’, but ‘chuditch’ or ‘black-flanked rock wallaby’.

This follows the recommendation of the Australian Government *Style manual: the standard for Australian Government writing and editing* and the [IUCN style manual](#).

Exceptions: in line with existing signage and branding for Perth Zoo, Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Bold Park, and Rottnest Island, use initial capitals for common names for marketing and general communication at these sites. See the full [Perth Zoo animal naming list](#) below.

Capitalisation and italicisation of scientific names

Genus and species names are written in italics.

- *Acacia drummondii*

Subspecies, variety, subvariety, form and subform, are also written in italics, but should be identified in normal font:

- *Acacia drummondii* subsp. *elegans* Maslin

- *Acacia stereophylla* var. *stereophylla*

Family, order, class and division names (if used) are unitalicised.

When two scientific names with the same genus are written in close proximity the second can be abbreviated, for example *Acacia drummondii*, *A. stereophylla*.

Note: When referring to the organism *Phytophthora* and the full species name *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and other *Phytophthora* species, italics should be applied. When referring to the disease 'Phytophthora dieback', the word *Phytophthora* is not italicised.

Aboriginal names for species

Include Aboriginal names of plants and animals where possible. Use the name appropriate to the relevant region's Traditional Owner group.

Consider your audience and be consistent within a document or suite of products.

Do not use italics for Aboriginal names.

There are various options for formatting a sentence when common name, species name and/or Aboriginal name are used.

Examples:

- koomal, also known as brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*)
- koomal (brushtail possum)

DBCA does not yet have a standard approach to the incorporation of Aboriginal names for places, plant and animal species. The key thing is to consult with the relevant Traditional Owners and refer to the Aboriginal Reference Guide when preparing a document.

Numbers, dates, times and measurements

One to nine, 10+

Numbers one to nine are written in full. Number 10 and above are written as numerals, except when a sentence starts with a number. Then it is written in full. For example:

“The anthology, published in 1913, presented works by 218 Australian poets. Sixteen of these were born in Austria, 92 in New Zealand and 110 in Australia.”

Ranges/years

When two numbers appear together as a range, all numbers are expressed as figures. Use an 'en' dash '–' to denote a span. Do not use spaces either side of an en dash. For example:

“The rhinoceros grows 7–10kg a month.”

“The work will be completed during the 2021–22 financial year.”

(Note, do not use 2021–2022. The second year takes its first two digits from the first year, so 2021–22 is correct, but for 1999–2000 use four digits for both years.)

Do not use an apostrophe for a decade:

- 1980s not 1980's

Commas

Commas are used in numbers with five digits or more:

- 1000
- 10,000

Million

Spell out million, billion, trillion. Ensure both elements (digit and the word million, billion) are not split over two lines if a sentence runs over more than one line (use a non-breaking space – control+shift+space). Numbers nine and below are written out, 10 and above are written as numerals. For example:

- More than five million people...
- About 15 million people...
- At a cost of \$35 million... also At a cost of \$5 million...
- Ten million dollars has been allocated ...

Symbols and measurements

Use symbols for units of measurement, except hectares, which should be spelled out in full unless used in a table.

Always use numerals for numbers that are accompanied by a symbol or abbreviation. For example:

- 8°C
- 3km
- Exception:
• \$15

Phone numbers

Phone numbers can be written in different styles depending on their application:

- 9474 0444 – for use in material that will only be viewed within Western Australia, eg small distribution flyers.
- (08) 9474 0444 – for use in material that may be viewed nationally, for example park brochures.
- (+61 8) 9474 0444 – for use in material that may be viewed internationally, e.g. high-profile tourist attraction web pages.

Dates

Write dates in the format **dd month yyyy**. Do not abbreviate months unless space constrained. Do not use 24th. For example:

- 24 March 2017

Ensure dates are not split over two lines if a sentence runs over more than one line. All elements of the date (**dd month** and **yyyy**) should appear on

the same line (use a non-breaking space to achieve this – control+shift+space).

Do not use 24-hour time.

Times

Numbers should be numerical with no space between the number and ‘am’ or ‘pm’. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes.

Use 12 noon and 12 midnight instead of 12pm or 12am to avoid confusion.

For example:

- 8am
- 8:45am

Websites and hyperlinks

Departmental websites

dbca.wa.gov.au should be the main entry point for the department’s web presence.

For promotion of attractions and services to the general public, continue to use established URLs as follows:

- bgpa.wa.gov.au
- perthzoo.com.au
- rotnestisland.com
- exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au

Formatting hyperlinks

Omit the http:// and www. part of URLs where possible. Be sure to hyperlink the text correctly. This means still using http:// or www. in the ‘back end’ of the document so that it still works as a functional hyperlink.

Do not use an underline for general purposes: it should **only** be used to represent a hyperlink.

Where a hyperlink ends a sentence, use a full stop.

Useful text for hyperlinks

Hyperlinks should always be understandable when read out of context. This allows users to scan the page and helps users with assistive technology such as screen readers. For example:

Avoid using click here for hyperlinks. Hyperlinks should tell the user what they will find when they click. For example:

“Find out more about [Perth Zoo’s conservation programs](#).”
instead of...

“[Click here](#) to find out more about Perth Zoo’s conservation programs.”

Do not repeat links in text on a page unless they go to the same place. For example if you have a hyperlink called [Perth Zoo’s conservation programs](#) more than once on a page then you should expect them to all link to perthzoo.wa.gov.au/savingwildlife.

If they don't, you need to change the text to be unique. For example:
“Find out more about [Perth Zoo's conservation programs](#), including its award-winning [native species breeding program](#).”

Phasing out dpaw in URLs

There is a redirect in place for dpaw.wa.gov.au pages. If you use dbca instead of dpaw in a URL you will go to the dpaw page where the content is located. For example:

- [dpaw.wa.gov.au](#) should be linked as [dbca.wa.gov.au](#)
- [dpaw.wa.gov.au/news/newsletters](#) as [dbca.wa.gov.au/news/newsletters](#)
- [parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au](#) as [exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au](#)

Please check URLs have 'dbca' before publishing.

Job titles

Job titles should be capitalised only when immediately preceding a specific person's name, but lower case otherwise. For example:

“DBCA Research Scientist Jacqui Smith studies bilby genetics.”

“Biodiversity and Conservation Science Executive Director Margaret Byrne congratulated Dr Smith on her research.”

“Jacqui Smith is a research scientist.”

“All regional managers were invited to the meeting, which was also attended by several executive directors.”

Exception: Media statements should use lower case to suit newspaper style.

Campaigns and program names

Names of major departmental campaigns and programs are no longer italicised, for example Western Shield, Nearer to Nature and River Guardians. Check the [Word list](#) for confirmation.

State Government programs are also not italicised, for example, Aboriginal Ranger Program and Plan for Our Parks.

Land tenure

department-managed land

DBCA is responsible for managing more than 31 million hectares of lands and waters across Western Australia. This includes national parks, marine parks, nature reserves, State forest and more.

Legislation-specific documents must refer to land tenure as described in the relevant acts and/or regulations, for example 'CALM Act land' for land managed under the provisions of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

For the general public, use one of the following phrases:

- 'Parks and Wildlife Service-managed land and waters' (preferred)
- 'department-managed land and/or waters'
- 'DBCA-managed land and/or waters'

It is important not to refer to State-**owned** land. The Government of Western Australia **manages** land on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

Bullet points and lists

Full sentences

If each of the dot points is a full sentence, each one should start with a capital letter and finish with a full stop. For example:

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 priority projects.

Sentence fragments

If each bullet point completes the preceding sentence, no initial capital letter is used and only the last dot point has a full stop. For example:

Research is conducted using several techniques including:

- surveying tracks;
- fitting radio collars; and
- collecting scats.

Stand-alone lists

Stand-alone lists are often used in display material, brochures and technical documentation. The content often does not lend itself to integration with body text. Therefore items can appear with a heading, without full points, and with or without dot points. For example:

Celebrate NAIDOC Week at Yanchep National Park!

- Free park entry
- Tool-making activity for kids
- Guided bush tucker walk
- Cave tours
- Camping on Henry White Oval

Hyphens and dashes

hyphens

hyphens serve to link the two (or more) parts of a compound adjective, as in:

- all-embracing
 - mother-in-law
 - owner-operator
 - two-year-old child
 - thirty-five million (only at the start of a sentence, in a sentence it would be 35 million ...)
-

- two-thirds

Some exceptions: coordinate, cooperate or statewide.

Hyphenate compound adjectives, for example:

- four-wheel drive
- water-resistant skin
- whole-of-government

... unless the adverb ends in 'ly', for example 'a naturally occurring poison'.

dashes

En-dashes (–) can be used for a span of numbers or years. Do not use spaces either side of an en dash. For example:

- “The rhinoceros grows 7–10kg a month.”
- “Over the financial year 2021–22...”
- “His tenure was between 1995–2001.”

In Word, create an en-dash by holding 'alt' then typing the numbers 0150.

Em dashes (—) are for separating information where there is a change in direction of a sentence, or for separating information in place of a colon, semi-colon or to avoid double brackets.

- ‘Wear sun smart clothes and carry plenty of water—no less than one litre per hour of walking per person.’
- ‘environmental DNA—or eDNA (as its more commonly referred to)—can indicate the presence of...’

In Word, create an em-dash by holding 'alt' then typing the numbers 0151.

Management plans

All style in management plans must be consistent with this style guide.

A wide range of stakeholders read management plans. Avoid use of words that are technical in nature and not in common use. Examples of words to avoid (with preferred alternative terms in brackets) include, but are not limited, to:

- avifauna (birds)
- benthic (sea floor)
- cetaceans (whales and dolphins)
- fauna (wildlife)
- flora (plants or wildflowers)
- lithic (stone)
- macroalgae (seaweeds)
- pelagic (open ocean)
- pinnipeds (seals and sea lions)
- revetment (sea wall)
- sandy substrate (sandy sea floor)
- sessile (attached to the seabed)
- substrate (underwater surfaces)
- subterranean (underground)

See the section 'Aboriginal names for species' for style for use of common names.

When it comes to references, more is not always better. In general, avoid using references that are more than 10 years old, particularly in relation to wildlife surveys, which can go out of date relatively quickly.

Word list

A

ablution block – avoid, use ‘toilet block’ unless you are certain there are showers in the facility.

Aboriginal Australians or Aboriginal peoples – capitalise the ‘A’ for Aboriginal peoples and communities. ‘Aboriginal’ is preferred over ‘Indigenous’. If using ‘Indigenous’ to refer to people, capitalise the ‘I’. If a plant or animal is indigenous to an area, ‘indigenous’ is written in lower case.

Aboriginal Ranger Program – is the Cook Government’s \$20 million, five-year program to create jobs and training for Aboriginal peoples. It should be capitalised but not italicised.

Act – 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, for example *Environmental Protection Act 1986* or *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act). Thereafter, refer to the abbreviated act or ‘the Act’. Subsidiary legislation such as regulations is capitalised but not italicised, for example Environmental Protection Regulations 1987. Thereafter, just ‘the Regulations’. Sections of an act should be written with a lower case ‘s’ followed by the number: ‘Under section 14 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*’.

adviser – not advisor.

advisory committee – not advisory committee.

aerial ignition – not firebombing.

affect/effect – the verb ‘affect’ means to influence something, for example ‘rainfall affects the environment’. The verb ‘effect’ means to bring about or accomplish a result, ‘to effect a change’.

‘The training had an effect on performance. The training has started to affect the team’s performance.’

Effect can also be a noun, for example ‘household effects’.

air conditioner – two words.

among – rather than amongst.

ampersand (&) – avoid use of ampersands (&) where possible. Use only when space is limited.

amid – rather than amidst.

Anzac – use Anzac when referring to Anzac Day, the Anzac spirit and the Anzac Centenary. When referring to the actual soldiers, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, it is ANZAC.

apostrophes – use an apostrophe to denote ownership or to signify a contraction. Apostrophes should not be used in place names, for example St Georges Terrace, or Martins Tank Campground, not Martin’s. Common mistake: its vs it’s – it’s means it is, its’ signifies possession.

B

back-burning – means using fire along the inner edge of containment lines to consume fuel in the path of a bushfire during fire suppression. Prescribed burning is not the same as back burning.

barbecue – preferred over barbeque or BBQ.

Baudin’s cockatoo – not Baudin’s black cockatoo.

benefit, benefited – one ‘t’.

BHP – not BHP Billiton.

Bill – capital in legislative sense, for example Bill of Rights.

Birdlife – one word

BirdLife Australia

Birdwatching – one word

Birdwatcher – one word

Bore water – two words

Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority – for communications covering both Kings Park and Bold Park. Used for internal, official and political purposes.

BGPA – acceptable acronym for the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority. Be sure to spell out in full with the acronym in brackets prior to using this acronym.

Botanic Garden – (in relation to the Western Australian Botanic Garden located in Kings Park): ‘Western Australian Botanic Garden’ or ‘WA Botanic Garden’ is preferred. ‘State Botanic Garden’ or ‘the Botanic Garden’ can be used sparingly. Do not use WABG externally as an acronym.

both – reconsider using this word; it is usually unnecessary.

Broadscale – one word

Budget – capital for a specific government budget, lower case for general use. Budgeting or budgeted, one ‘t’.

burnt – preferred over burned.

burnover – one word.

bushfire – not wildfire.

Bush Rangers – for DBCA youth education program.

Bush Ranger cadet – for student enrolled in the DBCA youth education program.

bushwalk, bushwalking

C

Cabinet – cap for government, lower case for furniture

campground – one word, refers to a group of individual campsites at one location

campground names – capitalised when used in a full name, for example ‘Osprey Bay Campground’ otherwise ‘There is a great campground at Osprey Bay.’

campsite – one word, refers to an individual space for a tent, caravan or group of tents, for example ‘There are 22 campsites with the campground.’

campfire – one word.

campout – one word as a noun, two words as a verb.

camp shelter, barbecue shelter or shelter – depends on the facilities, do not use ‘camp kitchen’.

Campground Host (program) – program name, capitalised, not italicised.

campground host – a person who volunteers under the department’s Campground Host program.

capital letters – use minimal capitalisation. Sentence case is preferred: this means only using capital letters for the first word in a sentence and proper nouns. See also: [Essentials guide](#).

captions –

‘**Left** Aerial view of The Gap, Torndirrup National Park. *Photo – David Clarkson/DBCA*’

No full stop required at the end of the photo credit. Directional marker ‘left/above/top/right’ should only be used where necessary; when used it should be bolded. See also: [Essentials guide](#).

carpark – one word

Carnaby’s cockatoo – lower case ‘c’ for cockatoo. (Exception: material for Perth Zoo, Rottnest Island, capitalise Carnaby’s Cockatoo)

children – preferred over ‘kids’ or ‘juveniles’.

Class A Reserve – not A class reserve, for example ‘Rottnest Island is a Class A Reserve.’

clean-up/clean up – the noun or adjective is hyphenated, the verb is two words, for example ‘Staff took part in a clean-up’ and ‘They asked people to clean up after the event.’

collective nouns – a collective noun refers to one undivided whole and takes a singular verb, for example “The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions **has** many offices around the State”, **not** “The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions **have** many offices around the State”.

commas – no comma before a bracket or in phrases such as ‘Technical Officer Trudy Kickett’.

comma (Oxford, or serial comma) – avoid use of the Oxford comma unless it would cause confusion to omit it.

Commonwealth Government – use upper case for ‘Commonwealth Government’. ‘Commonwealth Government’ is preferred over ‘Federal Government’ and ‘Australian Government’.

Conservation and Land Management – This may refer to the former Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) or the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. If referring to the former department, use “the then Department of Conservation and Land Management” or “DBCA’s predecessor” or similar. Certain areas of land managed by DBCA are still correctly called ‘CALM Act land’.

Conservation and Parks Commission (CPC) – a State Government organisation formed on 7 May 2016 by the amalgamation of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and the Conservation Commission of Western Australia. The preference is to use the name ‘Conservation and Parks Commission’ in full, but if you must abbreviate, use ‘CPC’.

containment line – (in relation to fire) a natural or constructed barrier that limits the spread of fire during fire suppression or prescribed burning.

controlled – (in relation to fire) when the complete perimeter of a bushfire is secured and no breakaway fire is expected.

Cook Government – only use this when referring to election commitments or in a Ministerial context. ‘State Government’ is preferred to refer to the current Government of Western Australia.

cooperation – not hyphenated.

coordinate – not hyphenated.

could have – not ‘could of’ (similarly, ‘would have’ or ‘would’ve’ not ‘would of’).

Country – capitalised when referring to Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with land and waters.

COVID-19 – capitalised, hyphenated. Preferred over ‘coronavirus’. Generally, avoid dramatic language. Be succinct and straightforward. If unsure, contact PICA branch or the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Crown – upper case when referring to government.

crown fire – lower case. A fire that advances from top to top of trees or shrubs.

currently – avoid, it is usually not necessary.

D

Dambeemangarddee – a Traditional Owner group in the West Kimberley. Note: this group changed the spelling from Dambimangari to Dambeemangarddee in 2020, to better reflect the pronunciation. The official name of their corporation is currently still Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation.

Danggu (Geikie Gorge) – Aboriginal name comes first, former English name in brackets. Note the underlined letters in Danggu.

dates – use **dd month yyyy**. 1980s not 1980's. For more information see [Essentials guide](#).

DBCA – acronym for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. See [Essentials guide](#) for more information.

department – lower case except for the annual report and Ministerial correspondence. See [Essentials guide](#) for more information.

DEC – acronym for the former Department of Environment and Conservation (2006–13). If necessary, consider using 'the then Department of the Environment and Conservation', otherwise, use 'the department's predecessor' or just 'the State Government'.

DER – acronym for the former Department of Environment Regulation, now the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

Deputy Director General – no hyphen, capitalise if followed by a name.

Development Control Area – always capitalise, after the first reference DCA can be used.

DFES – Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Dimalurru (Tunnel Creek) – Aboriginal name comes first, former English name in brackets.

Director General – no hyphen, capitalised if followed by a name. For example: 'Director General Stuart Smith addressed staff' not 'Director General, Stuart Smith, addressed staff'.

Dolphin Watch – a DBCA project run under the River Guardians banner. Two words capitalised and not italicised.

DWER – acronym for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

E

e-book

ecotourism

edition vs issue – an edition is an updated version of the same document. An issue is a new publication carrying the same title, for example magazines and newsletters.

e.g. – avoid. Use 'for example' instead.

Elder – capitalised

etc – avoid using, especially at the end of a list that begins with 'for example' or 'including'.

European – use in reference to time periods, can also use 'colonial', '20th century', 'contemporary'. Note: immigrants to or settlers in Australia were not always European (so avoid 'Aboriginal and European heritage' ... 'Aboriginal and other Australian heritage' is preferable).

ethanase – ethanase is preferred over euthanise, however both spellings are correct. Also, **euthanasia**, **euthanasing**.

Executive Director – not 'Director' in DBCA, capitalise if followed by a name.

Explore Parks WA – should be promoted as the website for park visitors.

F

firefighter – one word.

firefighting – one word.

fire crew – two words.

fire front – the front of the fire mass. It is generally the most intense part of the fire driven by wind speed and direction and the leading edge of the fire perimeter. Commonly referred to as the ‘head fire’.

fire frequency – a general term referring to the recurrence of fire in a given area over time.

fireground

fire intensity – the rate of heat energy released per metre of fire front usually expressed in kilowatts per metre (Kw/m). Intensity depends on the amount of fuel available and how fast the fire travels.

fire interval – the average number of years between fires at one location.

fire regime – the history of fire and proposed future use of fire in a particular vegetation type or area including the frequency, intensity and season of burning.

flank fire – the fire edge, sides of the fire shape. Generally flames are not as intense as the head fire.

fire suppression – activities connected with restricting the spread of a fire following its detection and before making it safe.

fuel – (in relation to fire) any combustible material such as wood, grass, leaf litter and vegetation.

fuel load – (in relation to fire) the oven dry weight of fuel per unit area. Commonly expressed as tonnes per hectare.

further information – avoid this term, use ‘more information’ instead.

floodwater – one word.

FloraBase – capital ‘F’ and ‘B’, one word, italics.

focus, focusing, focused – single ‘s’.

forward slash – means ‘and/or’ and should be avoided in written text. Use ‘to’ or an ‘en’ dash to express a range, for example 2006 to 2007 or 2006–07 not 2006/07. Exception: park names that have an Aboriginal and an English name, for example Lalang-gaddam / Camden Sound Marine Park (use a space either side in this case).

four-wheel drive – not 4WD or four wheel drive. Four-wheel drive is a compound adjective. 4WD is acceptable in places where space is limited.

freshwater – one word.

G

Gabbi Karniny Bidi – walk trail on Rottnest Island.

Geikie Gorge – now referred to by its Aboriginal name—Danggu—first and followed by its former English name in brackets; Danggu (Geikie Gorge).

government – lower case unless part of a proper noun, for example State Government or Cook Government. State Government is preferred in communication with the general public; Cook Government can be used if referring to an election commitment or in a Ministerial context. For example: “The State Government is responsible for...”. See also [Essentials guide](#).

Commonwealth Government – use upper case for ‘Commonwealth Government’.

Use lower case when you mention more than one government. For example: “The State and Commonwealth governments today announced...”.

Do not cap ‘government’ when it is used as an adjective, for example ‘government department’.

Use lower case when the reference is non-specific (for example the role of government; the process of government) and for local government.

Use upper case for governments of other countries (United States Government).

Governor – His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM, Governor of Western Australia

grasstree/balga – use either, one word if using grasstree.

Great Western Woodlands – a distinct region in Western Australia. Capitalised. Used without ‘Great Western’, ‘the woodlands’ should be lower case.

groundbreaking

groundwater

H

head fire – the part of a fire where the rate of spread, flame height and intensity are greatest, usually when burning downwind or upslope. Also referred to as the ‘fire front’.

hectares – spell out in full unless space is limited, for example in tables. The abbreviation ‘ha’ is not as well-known and could be pronounced by screen reading technology as ‘hah!’ which can cause confusion.

hike/hike trail – preferred terms to walk/walk trail.

Hon – do not use a full stop when abbreviating the title Honourable for Ministers or members of Parliament.

horseriding

hotspot

House – upper case for government

hyphens – hyphens serve to link the two (or more) parts of a compound adjective, as in:

- all-embracing
- mother-in-law
- owner-operator
- two-year-old child
- thirty-five million (only at the start of a sentence, in a sentence it would be 35 million ...)
- two-thirds

Don’t hyphenate coordinate, cooperate or statewide.

Hyphenate compound adjectives, for example:

- four-wheel drive
- water-resistant skin
- whole-of-government

... unless the adverb ends in ‘ly’, for example ‘a naturally occurring poison’.

The same elements may appear with and without a hyphen, depending on the part they play in the grammar of the sentence. Hyphens are regularly used in compound adjectives, but the same words are not hyphenated when used as part of the verb phrase. Compare:

- Their well-executed routine drew applause.
- The routine was well executed and drew applause.

I

Indigenous – cap ‘I’ when referring to Indigenous peoples, but lower case for plants and animals, for example “Indigenous people use plants that are indigenous to the area”. ‘Aboriginal’ is preferred over ‘Indigenous’.

i.e. and that is – avoid. Rewrite and restructure your content instead. Similarly, avoid e.g. or etc.

Inf0Base – capital ‘I’, capital ‘B’, numerical ‘0’.

initials – do not use punctuation, for example JW Smith not J.W. Smith.

interpretive signage and **interpretative signage** – both correct, 'interpretive' is preferred.

interstate

interagency

italics – italics should be kept to a minimum. It decreases legibility and makes it more difficult for people with vision or reading impairments to read.

Major departmental programs are generally italicised (*Western Shield, Nearer to Nature*); broader government programs generally are not, such as the Aboriginal Ranger Program.

Other appropriate uses for italics include scientific names, names of boats or ships, names of legislative acts and publication titles.

“The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation administers the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the Environmental Protection Regulations 1987.”

its vs it's – 'it's' means 'it is'. 'Its' signifies possession.

J

job titles – job titles should be capitalised only when immediately preceding a specific person's name, but lower case otherwise. For example:

“DBCA Research Scientist Jacqui Smith studies bilby genetics.”

“Biodiversity and Conservation Science Executive Director Margaret Byrne congratulated Dr Smith on her research.”

“Jacqui Smith is a research scientist.”

Exception: Media statements should use lower case to suit newspaper style.

K

Karlinyah Bidi – walk trail on Rottnest Island.

Kimberley – not 'Kimberly' or 'the Kimberleys'. Capitalised.

Kings Park, the park – lower case 'p'. 'Kings Park' should be used to refer to the place itself, not as an organisation name.

Kings Park and Botanic Garden – Should be used to refer to the place itself. Preferred over 'Kings Park' for more formal communications.

Kings Park Bushland – formal name for bushland areas of Kings Park. It describes a discrete/official precinct. For more Kings Park-specific place names, see [Kings Park and Bold Park place names](#).

km/kilometres – the abbreviated form 'km' is preferred when used with a number, for example '5km', vs 'The team travelled many kilometres'. Exception: *LANDSCOPE* magazine.

kg/kilogram – the abbreviated form 'kg' is preferred when used with a number, for example '81kg'. Explain in full first, and in subsequent uses use 'kg'.

L

Lalang-gaddam – previously spelt Lalang-garram, this Aboriginal phrase means 'sea Country', and the spelling was changed in 2020 to better reflect the true pronunciation.

Land for Wildlife – DBCA program, not italicised.

landcare

landholder

landowner

LANDSCOPE – magazine, capitalised and italicised

leschenaultia – common name has an ‘s’; scientific name is spelled *Lechenaultia*.

Legislation – use ‘Act’ with a capital ‘A’ in a legislative sense. Italicise the name of an act only when it is written in full with the year at the end, for example *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act). Thereafter, refer to ‘the Act’. Subsidiary legislation such as regulations is capitalised but not italicised, for example Environmental Protection Regulations 1987. Thereafter, just ‘the Regulations’. Sections of an act should be written with a lower case ‘s’ followed by the number: ‘Under section 14 of the CALM Act’.

licence, license – licence is the noun, license is the verb.

licensee – not licensee.

life cycle – two words.

lightning – not lightening.

local government and shires – capitalise the names of local governing bodies at first mention, for example the City of Perth, the Shire of Corrigin and thereafter refer to them as ‘the council’, ‘the shire’, ‘the city’ or ‘the town’ with lower case. For local governments generally, use lower case, ‘The department works with local government authorities to enforce the regulations.’

M

Martins Tank – no apostrophe

metre/m – use ‘m’ when giving a specific measurement, but spell out in full when used descriptively. For example: “The 4x5m campsite is just metres from the water’s edge”. Exception: *LANDSCOPE* magazine always uses ‘metres’ spelt out.

Midwest – when referring to the DBCA-named region, use capital ‘M’, one word, no hyphen. When not referring to DBCA region use lower case ‘m’.

Millstream Chichester National Park – no hyphen.

Ministerial title – should be written as ‘Environment Minister’ or ‘Minister for Environment’ and ‘Tourism Minister’ or ‘Minister for Tourism’.

‘Environment Minister Reece Whitby’ and Minister for Environment, Hon Reece Whitby MLA are preferred over ‘Minister for Environment Reece Whitby’, but both are acceptable. After referencing the Minister once, thereafter use ‘Minister Whitby’ or ‘the Minister said’. Similarly, ‘Tourism Minister Roger Cook’ is preferred.

When abbreviating Honourable, do not place full stop after Hon: ‘the Hon Reece Whitby MLA’ and ‘the Hon Roger Cook MLA’.

Where a Minister has multiple portfolios, it is not necessary to include all portfolios in their title unless relevant, for example Minister Whitby may attend an event relevant to more than one of his portfolios such as a climate change event at Ningaloo Marine Park, in which case use ‘Minister for Environment; Climate Action Reece Whitby’.

Miriuwung-Gajerrong – hyphen for the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people and their Country.

Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation – no hyphen for corporation name.

more than – use this instead of ‘over’: ‘more than 100 birds’. However for height use ‘over’: ‘the cliff is over 1,000m high’.

mosaic – (in relation to fire) the spatial arrangement of burnt and unburnt fuels at either a local or a landscape scale.

N

national park – lower case except when using the full name of the national park, for example Shannon National Park. Rule applies to other department-managed lands and waters. When referring to ‘the park’ or ‘the national park’, lower case is best.

Also use lower case when referring to several national parks, for example, Shannon and D’Entrecasteaux national parks.

Note ‘the’ is not required before the name of a national or marine park or nature reserve. For example, use ‘Ngari Capes Marine Park’ rather than ‘... the Ngari Capes Marine Park’.

Exception: for proposed national parks. ‘The proposed South Coast Marine Park stretches from Bremer Bay eastward to the South Australian border.’

Native Title – capitalised

National Native Title Tribunal

natural resource management – lower case for generic use

Natural Resource Management (NRM) program – for referring to the State program.

NatureMap – this web-based biodiversity mapping application is a collaborative project between DBCA’s Biodiversity and Conservation Science division and the Western Australian Museum. Capital ‘N’, capital ‘M’, one word, no italics.

Naturescape – use Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park.

Naturescapers – staff who work at Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park.

Ngank Wen Bidi – trail on Rottnest Island

Ngank Yira Bidi – trail on Rottnest Island

Nearer to Nature – DBCA education program

the Ningaloo Coast – ‘the’ Ningaloo Coast when referring to the World Heritage area, capital ‘N’ and ‘C’.

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area – upper case for proper name (area is lower case ‘a’ ‘World Heritage area’ when you don’t use the full name)

Ningaloo Reef

noisy scrub-bird

numbers – spell out to nine. Use numerals for 10 and above, except at the start of a sentence. Use commas for five figures or more: ‘415’, ‘4150’ and ‘41,500’.

Noongar – there are a number of spellings of Noongar in use including Nyoongar, Noongah, Nyungar and Nyoongah. ‘Noongar’ is preferred, in line with guidance from the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. If unsure, consult with the Traditional Owners you are working with.

O

Office of the EPA (OEPA) – until 1 July 2017, this was the agency that supported the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). This function is now performed by the Department of Water and Environment Regulation.

off-road vehicle

off-road-vehicle track

old-growth forest

open-cut – when used as an adjective referring to mines is two words, hyphenated.

over – means ‘above’. Not to be used for ‘about’ as in ‘angry over a decision’. Avoid using ‘over’ when you mean ‘more than’ except when referring to height.

P

Parks and Wildlife Service

In public communications, the Parks and Wildlife Service is to be used as the visitor-facing brand for on-ground management and promotion of Western Australia’s national and marine parks and reserves.

For example, *Nearer to Nature* is delivered by the Corporate and Business Services division but promotes the Parks and Wildlife Service brand, because the educational programs are conducted outdoors where the visitor-facing brand will be visible.

Consult PICA for advice on whether your project or research should be identified using the Parks and Wildlife Service brand.

Acceptable forms of usage for Parks and Wildlife Service

- **the Parks and Wildlife Service at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

This is used to help the public understand that the Parks and Wildlife Service is part of DBCA. When using this form, use ‘at the’ as a joining phrase rather than ‘within the’ or ‘of the’.

- **the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions’ Parks and Wildlife Service**

When using this form, use a possessive apostrophe after the ‘s’ in Attractions. Do not add an extra ‘s’ such as Attractions’s.

- **DBCA’s Parks and Wildlife Service**

Use this only after the DBCA acronym has been established earlier in the text. Use a possessive apostrophe. Note: do not use PWS as an acronym for the Parks and Wildlife Service.

- **the Parks and Wildlife Service**

Use this only when the context of the document or publication makes it clear the Parks and Wildlife Service is a part of the wider department.

Employees that fall within the Parks and Wildlife Service can be described as ‘Parks and Wildlife Service rangers’, ‘Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters’ and so on. This is not specific to the organisational structure, and can be used flexibly depending on the topic and audience.

- Parks and Wildlife Service rangers
- Parks and Wildlife Service staff
- Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters.

Note: do not use PWS as an acronym for the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Park Finder WA – capital ‘P’ and ‘F’, two words, not italicised.

Park Stay – capitals, two words.

Parliament

part-time / full-time – one word, hyphenated.

per cent – two words. Only use the symbol in tables.

Perth Hills, the hills

Perth Hills District – the Parks and Wildlife Service district is capitalised; Perth Hills District.

Perth Hills Discovery Centre – not Perth Hills National Park Centre, Perth Hills Centre or Hills Forest Discovery Centre

Pilbara

Phytophthora – when referring to the organism *Phytophthora* and the full species name *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and other *Phytophthora* species, italics should be applied. When referring to the disease 'Phytophthora dieback', the word *Phytophthora* is not italicised.

place names – see also [Essentials guide](#). Check spellings of place names in GIS, ga.gov.au/placename or on the [intranet](#).

Plan for Our Parks – capitalised except for 'for', not italicised.

politicians – 'Minister for Environment, Hon Reece Whitby MLA' and/or 'Minister for Tourism Hon Rita Saffioti MLA', should be used in formal written correspondence, invitations to events and so on. For social media posts and less formal references the form 'Tourism Minister Rita Saffioti' can be used for Ministers. Check with PICA if you are unsure of the correct way to reference the Minister.

See also '[Ministerial title](#)'

possums – brushtail possum, ringtail possum

practice is the noun, **practise** is the verb

prescribed burning – the controlled application of fire under specified environmental conditions to a predetermined area at the time, intensity, and rate of spread required to attain planned resource management objectives. It is undertaken in specified environmental conditions. Sometimes called planned or controlled burning, though the department preference is always to use prescribed burning.

phone numbers – see [Essentials guide](#)

Phytophthora – is the correct spelling for this genus.

Phytophthora dieback – use '*Phytophthora dieback*' in full first. Thereafter, use 'dieback'.

Prawn Watch – a citizen science project run under the *River Guardians* banner. Two words, capitalised and italicised.

Priority – when referring to priority species this should be in capitalised, including in cases where their ranking is given (for example Priority 1, Priority 2).

program – not programme.

proposed parks – use as follows: 'The public review period is now open for the proposed South Coast Marine Park.'

publication titles – use sentence case and italics, only the first word and proper nouns are capitalised, for example *Geology and landforms of the Kimberley*, not *Geology and Landforms Of The Kimberley*.

Q

quotation marks – use double quotation marks for direct quotes. Single quotation marks should be used for quotes within quotes and when a technical term is first referred to, or for colloquial words or nicknames. For example: dieback is a 'biological bulldozer'; they called him Steve 'toad buster' Jones. When quoting people, use 'Mandy said' not 'said Mandy'.

Only use 'said'. Do not use 'exclaimed', 'shouted', 'whispered' or similar to describe speech.

A comma or full stop goes inside the closing quotation marks, for example “The whale disentanglement was successful.” not “The whale disentanglement was successful”.

R

radio collar – as a noun, two words.

radiocollared – as a verb, one word.

rainwater

rangelands

recordkeeping

references (citations) – use the referencing format prescribed by the journal or publication you are writing for. If you are writing for a departmental publication, the author-date system as outlined in the Australian Government [Style manual](#) is recommended. The author-date system is summarised below:

In-text citation: author surname, year published; for example Merry, 1997

Reference list entry [for a book]:

Merry, G 1997, *Food poisoning prevention*, 2nd edn, Macmillan Education Australia, Melbourne.

Consult the *Style manual* or contact PICA for full details. Whichever method is chosen, consistency within a document is most important.

regions – The Parks and Wildlife Service has nine management regions across the State (Kimberley, Pilbara, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Swan, South West, Warren, South Coast and Goldfields) with districts within these. Region names and district names should be capitalised. When using the full title, ‘Region’ should also be capitalised, for example, ‘Swan Region’.

Note: Midwest is one word.

Note: South West is two words with capitals when referring to the Parks and Wildlife Service-named region, but not the general south-west area of the State.

DBCA also makes use of Tourism WA-named regions when promoting its parks to visitors, e.g. ‘Matuwa (Lorna Glen former pastoral station) lies within the Parks and Wildlife Service Goldfields Region, but would be externally promoted to visitors as being in the Tourism WA-named Golden Outback region’.

Regulations – subsidiary legislation such as regulations is capitalised but not italicised, for example Environmental Protection Regulations 1987. Thereafter, just ‘the Regulations’.

reignite

ringbark

Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park

River Guardians – not italicised

Riverbank

Rivercare – Community Rivercare Program, can be abbreviated as Rivercare, different to Riverbank.

Riverpark – shortened version of Swan Canning Riverpark. The ‘R’ is capitalised in all instances.

RiverWise

rivers – upper case for the name of a single river, for example Swan River, but lower case when referring to several rivers in one sentence, for example the Swan, Helena and Canning rivers.

The same rule applies to streets, roads and national parks.

River Rangers – program name.

River Rangers cadet – student taking part in program.

roadside

Rottnest Island, the Island Rottnest Island Authority (RIA)

S

school terms – Term 1, Term 2.

school years – Year 1, and Years 3 and 4.

scientific names – *Acacia drummondii*, *Acacia drummondii* subsp. *elegans* Maslin. See also [Essentials guide](#).

scuba diving – lowercase ‘scuba’ not ‘SCUBA’.

sea lion

sea water

seagrass

seasons – lower case: ‘spring’, ‘winter’. They are only capitalised when used as a specific proper noun with a year, for example: ‘Spring 2018’. Noongar seasons are capitalised, for example: ‘Djeran’.

ships, boats – names of sea vessels are italicised and capitalised.

should have – not ‘should of’. The correct shortened form is ‘should’ve’.

sign and signage – ‘sign’ is an object while ‘signage’ is a broader concept that includes physical signs as well as design, placement and content of signs.

silviculture – the growing, care and cultivation of forests.

spot fires – isolated fires started ahead of the main fire by sparks, embers or other ignited material, sometimes at a distance of several kilometres.

spotting – (in relation to fire) behaviour of a fire producing sparks or embers that are carried by the wind to start new fires beyond the main fire.

smartphone – one word.

smoke bush

snapshot

South Coast – use cap ‘S’ and ‘C’ when referring to the official Parks and Wildlife Service region name. Lower case when referring to the generic direction and feature (‘the south coast of the island’).

South West/south-west – the capital letters refer to the Parks and Wildlife Service-named region as a proper noun. When referring to compass points or general areas defined by compass direction the lower case hyphenated version should be used. This will be determined by context.

species names – see [Essentials guide](#).

State – use an upper case ‘S’ for State when the reference is to Western Australia, for example ‘the State’s environment was in a good state’.

Use upper case for ‘State Government’ when specifically referring to the Government of Western Australia.

State of Emergency – capitalised

statewide – one word, lower case s

State forest – capitalise specific areas of State forest, but lower case generally: ‘Boranup State Forest is designated as area of State forest’.

stormwater

subregion

Swan Canning Catchment

Swan Canning Estuary

Swan Canning Riverpark – three words, all capitalised but not italicised. Refers to the 72.1km² of river reserve and adjoining public lands managed by DBCA. When abbreviated, Riverpark is capitalised.

Swan Catchment or **Canning Catchment**

Swan River or **Canning River**

Swan and Canning rivers

Swan River Trust – refers to the advisory body that provides planning and other advice to the Minister for Environment and to the Director General of DBCA. Prior to 1 July 2015 this also referred to the State Government organisation that managed the Swan Canning Riverpark – this was amalgamated with the former Department of Parks and Wildlife.

T

targeted – one ‘t’.

temperature – use °C for degrees Celsius.

thank you – two words.

***The West Australian* (newspaper)** – capitalise the ‘T’, it is part of the publication title and italics.

Threatened Ecological Community and **Priority Ecological Community** – capitalised. If referred to more than once in a document, provide the acronym (‘TEC’ or ‘PEC’) after the first usage, then the acronym only thereafter.

When referring to a particular TEC or PEC, capitalise the first letter of the first word and use single inverted commas, for example ‘Coastal dune soft spinifex grassland’.

times – 8am, 8:45am, 12 noon, 1pm

titles (job titles, honorifics) – job titles should be capitalised only when immediately preceding a specific person’s name, but lower case otherwise. For example:

“DBCA Research Scientist Jacqui Smith studies bilby genetics.”

“Biodiversity and Conservation Science Executive Director Margaret Byrne congratulated Dr Smith on her research.”

“Jacqui Smith is a research scientist.”

Exception: Media statements should use lower case to suit newspaper style.

Write a person’s title before their name, for example: “Director General John Smith said reporting could now be done online”, not “John Smith, the Director General, said...”

Avoid using ‘Acting’ except for Executive Directors.

Abbreviate ‘Dr’ ‘Prof’ ‘Mr’ ‘Ms’ ‘Hon’, but do not use a full stop.

titles (of publications) – titles of publications are italicised, for example *Geology and landforms of the Kimberley*. Publication titles should be sentence case in text, on the front cover and in references.

tonne

town site – two words.

Track – capital ‘T’ when referring to the Bibbulmun Track in documents produced for, or in conjunction with, the Bibbulmun Track Foundation.

Traditional Custodians – capitalised

Traditional Owners – capitalised

trailhead – one word.

training courses – department-run training courses should be written in capitals, lower case for ‘program’ or ‘training’, for example, ‘Aspiring Leaders program’, ‘Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training’, ‘Health and Safety induction’.

travelled, travelling – two ‘l’s.

trialled – two ‘l’s.

Treasury– upper case ‘T’.

Tunnel Creek – now referred to by its Aboriginal name—Dimalurru—first and followed by its former English name in brackets; Dimalurru (Tunnel Creek).

U

underlining – do not underline text unless part of a URL. It decreases legibility.

Upper Swan Estuary, Middle Swan Estuary – capitalised when referring to a specific ecological management zone.

upper Swan Estuary/upper Swan River – lower case when referring to a general area of the system.

URLs – omit the www. and https://. For example, use dbca.wa.gov.au not www.dbca.wa.gov.au or <https://dbca.wa.gov.au>. This looks cleaner. Provided you make sure the text is hyperlinked correctly, it will still work as a URL. See also: [Essentials guide](#).

V

Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk – in full.

W

Wadjemup Bidi – a walk trail on Rottnest Island.

WA Naturally – the saleable publication arm of DBCA, italicised.

walk trails – ‘hike trails’ is preferred for visitor safety. For trails with ‘walk trail’ in the title, the whole name is capitalised, for example Woodlands Walk Trail.

Walpole Wilderness Discovery Centre – the forested areas near Walpole containing the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk. The ‘Walpole Wilderness Discovery Centre’ name is no longer used.

waterbird

waterskiing, waterski

Wattern Nara Bidi – walk trail on Rottnest Island.

Western Australia – use Western Australia instead of WA where possible. In online material, WA can be confused with Washington, United States. It can also be pronounced by screen reading software as ‘wah’. Use ‘Western Australians’ for people who live in WA, not ‘West Australians’.

Western Australian Botanic Garden – official name for a distinct area in Kings Park, on the south-eastern area above Mounts Bay Road. Can also use State Botanic Garden (sparingly), WA Botanic Garden, the Botanic Garden. Do not use WABG externally as an acronym.

Whadjuk – preferred over Wadjuk, although both are correct. As always, consult with relevant Traditional Owner group where possible

whale watching

Wheatbelt – cap ‘W’ for Parks and Wildlife Service region and when referring to geographical area.

while – not whilst

white-water rafting

wifi

World Heritage

World Heritage area – lower case ‘a’ **except** when used as part of the full title, for example:
“Conservation staff work hard to ensure the protection of the World Heritage area at Shark Bay.”
“Shark Bay World Heritage Area is home to...”

World Heritage List

World Heritage-listed

World Heritage nomination

worldwide

X

No entries

Y

No entries

Z

zoo keeper

Zoological Parks Authority – acronym is ZPA.

Kings Park and Bold Park place names

Aboriginal Art Gallery
Aspects of Kings Park gallery shop
Banksia woodlands
Biodiversity Conservation Centre
Boodja Gnarning Walk Trail
Botanic Terraces and Botanic Pavilion
Botanical Cafe
Bushland
Carpark (for example Eucalyptus Carpark)
Court of Contemplation
DNA Tower
Forrest Drive
Fraser Avenue
Fraser Circle
Fraser Avenue tourism precinct
Fraser's Restaurant
Friends of Bold Park Bushland
Friends of Kings Park
Kings Park Administration Building
Kings Park Visitor Information Centre
Kings Park Volunteer Master Gardeners
Gija Jumulu
Honour Avenues Group
Illyarrie Shelter
Ivey Watson Playground
Kaarla Yarning
Kaarta Gar-up
Kings Park, the park
Kings Park and Botanic Garden
Kings Park Education centre
Kings Park Education, Kings Park Education programs
Kings Park Festival, the Festival
Kings Park Volunteer Guides
Lotterywest Family Area
Lotterywest Federation Walkway
Lovekin Drive
Kulunga Katitjin Festival
Law Walk
Lord Forrest Roundabout
Lotterywest Bush Base
Marlee Pavilion
May Drive
May Drive Parkland
Noongar Boodja
Naturescapers (staff)
Old Tea Pavilion
Pioneer Women's Memorial
Poole Avenue
Reabold Hill (Bold Park)
Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park
Roe Gardens
State Reception Centre
State War Memorial
Stickybeaks Playground Cafe
Saw Avenue Picnic Area
Pilbara
Pines Picnic Area
Tamala Room (Bold Park)
The Lodge
The Spring
The Tangle
Toilets (for example Jarrah Toilets)
Variety Place
Vietnam Memorial Pavilion
WA Ecology Centre (Bold Park)
Wadjuk Way/Wadjuk Carpark
Yorkas Nyinning building
Zamia Café

Perth Zoo animal naming

The common names of species are generally capitalised. In hyphenated names only the first part of the compound word is capitalised, for example: Spinifex Hopping-mouse, Black-winged Stilt, Asian Small-clawed Otter.

Note: this is in line with other regional and international zoo styles as well as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

African Lion	Cape Porcupine	Great Egret
African Painted Dog	Carnaby's Cockatoo	Green Tree Frog
Asian Elephant	Carpet Python	Greeny Pygmy Goose
Asian Small-clawed Otter	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Hairy Marron
Australasian Shoveler	Chuditch	Hamadryas Baboon
Australian Pelican	Corn Snake	Helmeted Guinea Fowl
Axolotl	Cotton-top Tamarin	Javan Gibbon
Barramundi	Dampier Peninsula Monitor	Jungle Python
Baudin's Cockatoo	Dibbler	Knobtail Gecko
Bell's Hingeback Tortoise	Dugite	Koala
Bilby	Electus Parrot	Koi
Binturong	Elegant Parrot	Komodo Dragon
Black Marsh Turtle	Emperor Tamarin	Lancelin Island Skink
Black Swan	Emu	Laughing Kookaburra
Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur	Estuarine Crocodile	Leaf-tailed Gecko
Black-capped Capuchin	Fat-tailed Dunnart	Little Penguin
Black-headed Python	Feathertail Glider	Little Pied Cormorant
Black-necked Stork	Fennec Fox	Long-nosed Potoroo
Black-winged Stilt	Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo	Madagascar Tree Boa
Blue-billed Duck	Freshwater Crocodile	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo
Boa Constrictor	Frilled Dragon	Mandarin Duck
Bolivian Squirrel Monkey	Galapagos Tortoise	Mertens Water Monitor
Boobook Owl	Ghost Bat	Mitchell's Water Monitor
Bridled Tern	Giant Burrowing Cockroach	Nepalese Red Panda
Brolga	Gilbert's Potoroo	Northern Quoll
Brush Bronzewing	Glossy Ibis	Numbat
Brushtail Possum	Golden Lion Tamarin	Olive Python
Bush Stone-curlew	Golden Pheasant	Orange-bellied Frog
Cane Toad	Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo	Owlet-nightjar
		Perentie

Pied Heron	Short-beaked Echidna	Tasmanian Devil
Pig-nosed Turtle	Short-eared Rock-wallaby	Tawny Frogmouth
Pilbara Death Adder	Silver Perch	Tiger Snake
Pink-eared Turtle	Slender-tailed Meerkat	Veiled Chameleon
Plains Zebra	Slow Loris	Water Python
Plumed Whistling Duck	South American Coati	Water Rat
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Southern Brown Bandicoot	Western Archerfish
Pygmy Marmoset	Southern Cassowary	Western Blue-tongue Skink
Pygmy Python	Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat	Western Brush-wallaby
Quenda	Southern White Rhinoceros	Western Grey Kangaroo
Quokka	South-west Carpet Python	Western Ground Parrot
Radiated Tortoise	Spinifex Hopping-mouse	Western Pygmy Perch
Radjah Shelduck	Spiny-tailed Skink	Western Ringtail Possum
Reckled Duck	Splendid Fairy Wren	Western Swamp Tortoise
Red Kangaroo	Splendid Tree Frog	White-bellied Frog
Red-capped Parrot	Spotted Hyaena	White-cheeked Gibbon
Red-eared Slider	Squirrel Glider	White-lipped Tree Frog
Red-tailed Phascogale	Sumatran Orangutan	Woma
Reticulated Python	Sumatran Tiger	Wonga Pigeon
Ring-tailed Lemur	Sun Bear	Woylie
Rough-scaled Python	Sun Conure	Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Royal Spoonbill	Sunset Frog	
Rufous Whistler	Tammar Wallaby	
Satin Bowerbird		

Aboriginal reference guide

Promoting respectful engagement with Aboriginal peoples

Terminology related to Aboriginal engagement

Preferences in terminology will vary across Australia for individuals, communities, and agencies. It is important to be mindful that these preferences may change over time. If in doubt, seek advice from Aboriginal peoples, organisations, or communities.

For information on terminology and definitions, please refer to DBCA's [Terminology related to Aboriginal engagement](#).

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country demonstrates an awareness of and respect for Aboriginal peoples whose land we live and work on. All DBCA staff are encouraged to give an Acknowledgement of Country, you do not have to be an Aboriginal person. Acknowledgments can be done verbally at events or meetings, written in emails and websites and displayed publicly. See the [Acknowledgement of Country email signatures](#) document.

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony to welcome visitors onto the land on which an event is taking place. Only a Traditional Owner who speaks for that land can perform a Welcome to Country. It can advise visitors (Aboriginal, other Australian's and international) of any responsibilities while on Country and offers a safe passage. Generally, providing a Welcome to Country is a paid service.

- Please refer to DBCA's [Welcome to Country](#) protocols.
- Please refer to DBCA's [Acknowledgement of Country email signatures](#) to incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country in your email signature and/or DBCA publications.

Use of discriminatory and offensive language

Acknowledging past wrongs and using positive words

While acknowledging the injustices that stem from our shared history, it is also important to acknowledge the strength of Aboriginal peoples whose culture thrives today. Always aim to use empowering language where applicable, and emphasise ongoing connections to community, culture, and Country.

Terms and references that will cause offence

- Native
- Full blood
- Part-Aboriginal (which part?)
- How much Aboriginal are you?
- Half-cast
- Quarter-cast
- Octoroon
- Aborigines
- ATSI abbreviation

- Them/those/you people (involving them/those people or you people in policy making decision vs involving members of the Aboriginal community in policy making decision).

Positive reinforcement language

Positive language that is free from prejudice is important when referencing Aboriginal peoples as it promotes respectful communication and avoids generalisations and stereotypes.

Make sure to:

- use empowering, strengths-based language
- tell positive stories
- emphasise ongoing connections to community, culture and Country
- avoid using words that may have a negative connotation, for example 'issue'. This indicates there is a problem whereas a positive word such as 'opportunity' could be used to convey the same information.

Use of plain English, acronyms, abbreviations, jargon, and spelling

- Knowing your audience will help to figure out what content and messages are appropriate.
- Be mindful that for many Aboriginal peoples, English may be a second or third language. In some cases, the use of Kriol (Aboriginal English) language may be used.
- If using an acronym or abbreviation, describe it in the first instance. For example, the abbreviation of Traditional Owner (TO) is commonly used in the department and by Aboriginal peoples.
- Jargon is the use of special words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand. The use of plain English is preferred so that it is easily understood.
- Plain English is about using the simplest and clearest way of writing something. Avoid long words and complicated expressions. Use active voice instead of passive voice.
- Language groups may include numerous dialects, including the spelling of the same word.
 - For example, there are a number of spellings for Noongar (the name for the 'original inhabitants of the south-west of Western Australia) which may include, Nyoongar, Noongah, Nyungar and Nyoongah.
 - Best practice is to refer to the Aboriginal corporation or Traditional Owner group for advice on the spelling.

Referring to deceased person/s

In some Aboriginal communities, hearing recordings, viewing images or the names of deceased persons may cause sadness or distress and may deeply offend.

In some cases, the family may give formal permission to continue using the name, image, or voice of the deceased person. A substitute name may also be used instead of the deceased person's name, for cultural reasons. It is important to remember that different communities have different protocols.

Always ask permission, and if you are unsure, don't include it. It is respectful to have a disclaimer on content that may contain the image, voice or name of an Aboriginal person who has passed away and enable viewers to choose whether they access or view the material. For example:

WARNING: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the following program may contain images and voices of deceased persons.*

Please refer to DBCA's [Talent release form](#) to publish photos and videos of children and adults.

Intellectual property

It is important that DBCA staff protect and manage Indigenous knowledge in accordance with Traditional Owner aspirations. Indigenous knowledge refers to traditional cultural expression (languages, music, visual art, songlines, dance, symbols), and traditional knowledge (practices, skills, intellect). Permissions must always be obtained before capturing or using Indigenous knowledge.

Please refer to DBCA's [Advice on how to protect Indigenous knowledge](#).