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Words

An editorial guide for clear CALM writing

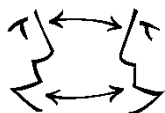
This booklet is for CALM people who write reports, plans, brochures, *Conservation News* stories, *LANDSCOPE* articles and other printed or electronic documents primarily for the public.

Effective communication to the general public should be simple, direct and straightforward. It should carry its message directly. This is particularly important in media releases.

Writing styles differ for different media and you should be aware that there will still be a need to edit your work for a particular audience or medium, especially if it is for use on the web. For example, *LANDSCOPE* style is more sophisticated than writing for the web—the audiences are different. *LANDSCOPE* articles are written as stories with a beginning, middle and end. Information for the web is frequently diluted into easily digestible parts with short paragraphs and lots of headings.

Although we have our own dictionary of particular words and phrases, *The Macquarie Dictionary* is CALM's preferred dictionary, so make sure you have one at hand. We also use the Commonwealth Government's *Style Manual* as a reference.

Happy reading!



Numbers

Numbers from zero to nine are written in full. Numbers from 10 are written in numerical form. If a sentence starts with a number, write that number in full.

A total of three numbats were radio-tracked in the Stirling Range today, part of the 18 that were translocated last year. Fifteen were radio-tracked last week.

Numbers with decimal points are written as numerals.

The 762,866 hectares of conservation estate occupies 8.3 per cent of the bioregion.

Numbers of more than five digits have a comma but no space.

Numbers of four digits do not have a comma (for example 1234).

1000 10,000 100,000 1,000,000

Million is written in full when discussing currency.

A grant of \$3 million was received, bringing the total funding to \$5.9 million.

Don't use *over* or *under* when referring to numbers because they refer to height. Use *more than* or *less than*.

This year's grant of \$3 million was \$2.9 million more than last year's funding.

Distances, speed and currency

Hectares is written in full in the first instance and subsequently as ha, with a space between the number and the word.

The fire burnt 290 hectares. In total more than 1435 ha was burnt.

Metres is written as m, with a space between the figure and the word.

The fire started 100 m from the road.

Kilometres is abbreviated to km with a space between the figure and the word.

The track is 10 km long.

When measurements are abbreviated, the preceding number should not be spelt out and there should be a space between the two. Plural abbreviations (e.g. kms, mms) are not used.

The insect is 18 mm long.

Speed should be listed as 40 km/h.

Square areas should be 200 sq/ha.

A dollar sign is used when referring to currency.

The State Government allocated \$3 million to the 04–05 fire season—a boost of more than \$330,000.

Species names

Most plant and animal species have a common name. Which do you think the public would be most motivated to conserve: the elegant spider orchid or *Caladenia elegans*? Common names should always be used in the first instance, followed by the scientific name in brackets. The scientific name should be in italics.

The malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) is showing signs of successful breeding at Shark Bay.

Care should always be taken to apply the common name that is most used in scientific publications and by community members. If there is no common name available then you should consult with the expert scientist in that field to suggest a common name that suits that particular species, and which encapsulates its distinguishing features.

There will be times, due to the nature of the publications e.g. *Bush Tucker Plants of the South-West*, when it is most appropriate to use the Aboriginal common name of the species, even when this name is not in widespread use. In such cases, the more widely used common name is also mentioned. However, these names should not be italicised.

Common names always begin with a lower case letter unless they contain a proper name or are at the beginning a sentence.

*A survey looking for Gilbert's potoroos (*Potorous gilbertii*) found, instead, a population of quokkas (*Setonix brachyurus*).*

Scientific, or Latin, names are italicised and the first letter of the first word is capitalised. When the species is first mentioned, the scientific name is generally placed in brackets after the common name. There is no need to repeat the scientific name when the species is subsequently mentioned.

Dictionary

acknowledgment	No 'e' after the g
affect	Verb. <i>The Forest Management Plan will affect activities carried out in the forest.</i> Don't confuse with effect. They are often mixed up.
am/pm	8 am, 10 pm (space between number and letters and values should be numerical)
among	Not amongst
Aboriginal	Capital 'A' (Note: The most precise inclusive collective reference for Indigenous Australians preferred by ATSIC is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. Aboriginal is recommended as the prime reference in official documents and can be used in various forms, e.g. 'Aboriginal people(s)' and 'Aboriginal artefacts'.
CALM	Department's abbreviation
Commonwealth Government	Capital C and G. Don't use federal
Commonwealth cooperation	Capital C
coordinator	No hyphen, no space
data	No hyphen, no space
dates	For singular and plural use. The word datum is not in common use
dot points (...)	1 April 2004 <i>not</i> 1st April 2004 or April 1, 2004 dot points consist of three full stops and are primarily used to show the omission of a word or words from quoted material. Other uses indicate an indecision or pause in speech and are appropriate only in certain types of writing. Dot points should appear without a space before them but should have one after them. <i>"The graduates will undoubtedly go on to develop satisfying careers... something to which they all aspire," she said.</i>
Earth and earth	Capital E for planet Earth; lower case e for dirt earth.
effect	Noun. <i>The Forest Management Plan will have an effect on activities carried out in the forest.</i> Don't confuse with affect. They are often mixed up.
e.g.	With full stops after each letter, no spaces
Environment Minister	Not Minister for the Environment
email	Lower case unless starting a sentence
etc.	Single full point at end

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FloraBase	Capital F and B
fulfil	
Goldfields	Capital G
i.e.	With full stops, no spaces
Indigenous	Capital I when referring to the original inhabitants of Australia, otherwise lower case
Internet	Capital I as this is a proper name
intranet	Lower case
into	Not <i>in to</i>
-ise	Not <i>ize</i> in suffixes i.e. categorise, prioritise. Ensure your MS Words dictionary is set to Australian English
-isation	Not <i>ization</i> i.e. categorisation, prioritisation.
jarrah	lower case unless starting sentence (see 'Scientific and common names' above).
Labor	Labor Party
Labour	Verb
LANDSCOPE	Italics and capital letters
last	Last refers to the end so use the word past when talking about what has happened <i>in the past five years</i> .
license	Verb <i>He is licensed to cull kangaroos.</i>
Licence	Noun <i>He has a CALM paper licence that authorises him to cull kangaroos.</i>
local government	Lower case
Midwest Region	CALM region
midnight	Not 12 am or 12 pm
midday	Not 12 am or 12 pm
national estate	
national park	Lower case unless the name of a national park e.g. Shannon National Park.
no one	Two words, no hyphen
noon, 12 noon	Not 12 am or 12 pm
Nyoongar	This is the preferred spelling used by the WA Museum's Department of Anthropology.
NatureBase	(when referring to CALM's website it should be 'CALM's NatureBase website at www.naturebase.net ')
old-growth	Hyphenated
on-line	
onto	One word and not two
per cent	Two words in text, not % or percent
%	In tables and graphs
percentage	One word

<i>Project Eden</i>	Italicised, as with <i>Western Shield</i> and other programs.
South-West	Upper case and hyphenated when referring to the geographical region of southern Western Australia
South West Region	CALM's South West Region. Upper case with no hyphen
south-west State	Lower case and hyphenated, for direction Capitalised when referring to a specific State, lower case when referring to the states and territories in a general way
State Government That/which	Capital S and G Use <i>that</i> rather than <i>which</i> with passive verb. I.e. <i>A car that overturned was written off</i>
Wheatbelt	Upper case W
Western Australia	In full in first instance, followed by WA
<i>Western Shield</i>	Italicised
<i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i>	followed by <i>the Act</i> or <i>WCA</i> in subsequent references (when written in full, legislation should be italicised)
while	not whilst

Adjectives to avoid or minimise

very	
nice	
good	
beautiful	Use sparingly
current	
unique	Unique means the only one of its kind. There is no such thing as <i>almost unique</i> (or <i>almost extinct!</i>)

Avoid...

&	Use <i>and</i>
/	Means and/or and should not be used for expressing a range. Use an en dash instead, e.g. <i>1990–91</i>
currently	A verbal filler. Use <i>now</i> .
less than	When referring to quantity try <i>fewer than</i>
commenced	Use <i>began</i>
if/then	This sentence construction should be used only in mathematical/scientific logic statements—a simple comma is sufficient <i>If you walk to close to the edge, you will fall.</i>
Edition or issue?	An edition is an updated version of the same document. An issue is a new publication carrying the same title. For example, <i>LANDSCOPE</i> and <i>Conservation News</i> have a number of issues published each year while <i>Family Walks in Perth Outdoors</i> has had two editions.

Correct use of prepositions

Follow the simple rules:

- Compare *with*
- Liken *to*
- Differ *from*
- Derive *from*

General

Start a document with a word other than 'the.'

Make sure tenses are correct and consistent throughout any piece of writing, and always within a sentence.

Job titles in *Conservation News* and other staff newsletters, with the exception of the Executive Director and other Directors, are in lower case. Apart from the Executive Director and Minister, staff are quoted by their first names.

CALM senior research scientists Fiona Jones and Peter Smith were kept busy during the summer fire season, working long hours in remote locations to research fire patterns. Fiona and Peter said it became a dedicated lifestyle.

In publications for the general public, staff members are referred to by their title, first name and surname, and subsequently by their title and

CALM senior research scientists Drs Fiona Jones and Peter Smith were kept busy during the summer fire season, working long hours in remote locations to research fire patterns. Drs Jones and Smith said it became a dedicated lifestyle.

If drafting a Conservation News story, try to keep your first paragraph to one sentence with a maximum of 21 words. Fewer words is fine.

Full points should be followed by a single space. The double space is a style used by typists, not printers.

Paragraphs should be short and succinct.

Use double quote marks to quote direct speech. Single quotes are for highlighting quotes taken from another publication, or colloquialisms. *"People want to work for CALM, which has earned the title 'preferred employer'. CALM should be proud of earning that title," Executive Director Keiran McNamara said.*

Acronyms

Organisations should be referred to by their full name in the first instance, with the acronym in parenthesis, followed by the acronym only in subsequent use.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management is subsequently referred to as CALM or the department.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) is a training ground for a new breed of research scientists. CALM's new approach is being copied by several other organisations.

The Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) is making several environmental recommendations. It will table its recommendations in an MPRA report.

The Conservation Commission of Western Australia should be referred to as the Conservation Commission in its short form. The abbreviation CCWA refers to the Conservation Council of Western Australia.

Headings and subheadings

Headings are written in upper and lower case. The first word, proper names and titles are capitalised, but other words are lower case. *First stage of Gngangara Park nearly complete*

Dashes

There are two main types of dashes: the em rule (—) and the shorter en rule. CALM uses an em rule in its publications. An em rule has three main uses:

- to signify an abrupt change,
- to introduce an amplification or explanation, or
- to set apart elements within a sentence.

There should be no spaces between the rule and words. An em rule is achieved on a standard keyboard by pressing Ctrl, Alt and the subtraction key on the number pad to the right.

An en rule has four main uses, the most common of which is to identify a range e.g. 10–15 per cent, or April–June. In this use, there are no spaces around the rule. Refer to Commonwealth Government Style Manual for other uses.