



OIAD-680

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 12 June 2023 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*I'm writing to make a request for information relating to the Ministry for the Environment's website and printed materials. Specifically, I'd like access to:*

- *the Ministry's technical style guide/stylebook/guidelines for producing online and printed material.*
- *details of what fonts and colours the Ministry uses on their website and in print, including the licenses they're provided under and the cost of those licenses.*

I respond to each element of your request below.

**The Ministry's technical style guide/stylebook/guidelines for producing online and printed material.**

Enclosed are the following two documents.

- *Ministry for the Environment Style Guide*
- *Ministry for the Environment Brand Manual*

**Details of what fonts and colours the Ministry uses on their website and in print, including the licenses they're provided under and the cost of those licenses.**

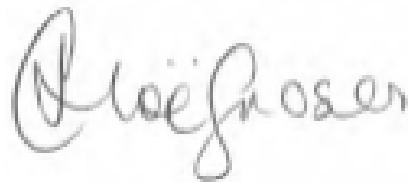
For print, we use the Merriweather and Lato font, which are both available to use via a free, open-source licence and can be used without limitations for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Further information regarding the fonts the Ministry uses can be found in the Ministry's Brand Manual document.

For the Ministry website, we use the Noe Display and Stabil Grotesk and these are licenced fonts. The Ministry purchased a Desktop licence (which covers three computers) and a Web licence, which allows use on websites that have up to 500,000 monthly unique visitors. The one-off cost of these licenses was approximately \$8,600 (NZD).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my response relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Chloe Groser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chloe Groser  
**Director – Partnerships and Public Affairs**

# **Te mahere tikanga tuhituhi a te Manatū mō te Taiao**

## Ministry for the Environment style guide



*Ministry for the*  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Version history

Last updated February 2023.

Changes since previous version:

Section	Change
Capitalisation	Use sentence case for titles
Large numbers	Use a thousand separator for all numbers that have four or more digits
Māori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use of capitals/lowercase in <i>te Tiriti o Waitangi</i></li><li>Use of Aotearoa and New Zealand</li></ul>
Web page reference	Updated style
Appendix B: Common Ministry for the Environment words and terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use of <i>MfE</i> permitted (sparingly)</li><li><i>Underway</i> (one word)</li></ul>

For questions related to this style guide, please contact: [publishing@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:publishing@mfe.govt.nz).

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# Introduction

This *Style Guide* will help Ministry authors, and consultants under contract to the Ministry, produce professional documents. It provides the Ministry's minimum standards for writing and formatting documents, as well as good practice guidance and helpful advice.

The way we write and present information says a lot about our organisation. Regardless of whom you are writing for or to, it's important that your document is appropriate for its intended audience, is clear, accurate and as concise as possible. Following this guide will help you achieve this.

Advice and support on communications and publishing is available from the Communications team and the Publishing team. If your document is going to be distributed to an external audience you will need to work with both teams.

You can also visit the [brand and experience hub](#) on the intranet for publishing templates, tools, and guidance on how to get something published at the Ministry.

## Briefing consultants

When preparing a contract for a consultant, the contract should include a brief which sets out the nature and scope of the document required, its audience, and key messages. The brief should also specify that the consultant writes the report in plain English with minimum jargon, and ensures it is edited and proofed before being submitted. The Publishing team can provide the names of contract writers and editors, if required.

Ensure each consultant has a copy of this *Style Guide*.

At the contract writing stage, discuss and assign authorship of the report, particularly if the report provides national guidance and authorship is assigned to the Ministry. See [Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment](#) for more information.

If the report will be published as a Ministry for the Environment report the consultant should use our report template. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

If the report is going to be published on our website the consultant must supply the report in Microsoft Word and as a PDF.

## Cabinet requirements

This *Style Guide* is compatible with Cabinet Office requirements. Where there is any difference, this has been clearly identified. For a guide to writing Cabinet papers see [CabGuide](#) on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

# Abbreviations

An **abbreviation** is a shortened form of a word or phrase. Usually, but not always, it consists of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase. The following are forms of abbreviations.

**Acronyms** An **acronym** is a form of abbreviation made up of initial letters or syllables which results in another, pronounceable word. An acronym will often be incorporated into common usage as a word in its own right. It may be written with all but the initial letter in lower case unless this would cause confusion.

## Examples

Anzac Unicef

**Initialisms** An **initialism** is similar to an acronym but does not form a pronounceable word. It is a recognisable group of letters.

## Examples

EPA NZ ETS NES

**Contractions** A **contraction** consists of the first and last letters of a word and sometimes other letters in between.

## Examples

Mr Dept St

There are also abbreviations which consist of the first letter of a word and usually some other letters, but not the last letter.

## Examples

Mon Dec Hon tel

## Use of abbreviations

See appendix A for a list of [common Ministry abbreviations and their meanings](#).

Try to avoid abbreviations, except the very common ones. Their use should be appropriate for the audience. Writing aimed at a specialised audience (eg, a technical guide) can contain more abbreviations than that aimed at a general audience (eg, a newsletter).

Spell out the full name of an organisation, body or term the first time you use it in a document. If it has a common abbreviated form, place this in brackets after the name and use this abbreviation in the rest of the chapter or document.

## Examples

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ)

the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

If a document contains many abbreviations, compile a list of them at the front of the document.

If the document has an executive summary or abstract that may be read separately, define all abbreviations there as well as in the body of the document.

‘New Zealand’ should be written in full, except when part of a longer abbreviation, for example, ANZECC. Refer to the [Māori](#) section for information about the use of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Use of a and an before abbreviations

The usage of 'a' and 'an' in front of abbreviated words depends on the pronunciation. If the abbreviation is not pronounced as a single word then we would use 'an' before the abbreviation. If the abbreviation is pronounced as a word you would use 'a' not 'an'.

### Examples

an NES

a Unicef official

## Use of full stops with abbreviations

In Ministry style, full stops are not used after abbreviations unless one is needed to avoid confusion – for example ‘no.’ for ‘number’.

## Latin forms (eg, ie, etc)

Many shortened Latin forms are used regularly in publications. Do not use full stops with these forms.

### Examples

eg    ie    etc    PS [postscript]    am [before noon]    pm [after noon]

## Using eg and ie

Use these abbreviations in brackets, followed by a comma.

### Examples

The aim is to reduce the risk of contaminating sources of human drinking water (eg, rivers and groundwater).

Two-thirds of lakes with sufficient monitoring data to determine trends have stable water quality (ie, are neither deteriorating nor improving).

Try to avoid using ‘eg’ or ‘ie’ in main text. Instead of ‘eg’ use ‘for example’, ‘for instance’, or ‘such as’; and instead of ‘ie’ use ‘that is’.

## Using etc

‘Etc’ means ‘and so on’. It is used to indicate that there are more items than you have mentioned. You don’t need it if you have already used ‘including’ or ‘for example/eg’.

### Example

Generally, most district plans divide a district into activity areas or zones (eg, residential, rural, business).

*or*

Generally, most district plans divide a district into activity areas or zones (residential, rural, business etc).

*Note:* When 'etc' comes at the end of a list of items, do not insert a comma before it.

## Ampersand (&)

Use 'and' instead of an ampersand unless '&' is part of a formal name.

### Examples

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

## Symbols

Symbols and abbreviations for units of measurement (eg, m, km, ha, °C) are the same in the singular and plural. Insert a space between the number and the symbol. Do not use full stops with these abbreviations.

### Example

10 km *not* 10 kms *or* 10 km. *or* 10km

There may be problems with the abbreviation for litre. The lowercase 'l' may be mistaken for the numeral '1'. Either write 'litre' in full, or use an italic 'l'. There is no problem where a prefix is used (eg, ml).

## Exceptions

With some symbols, there is no space between the number and the symbol.

### Examples

10%

28°C

*See also* [Numbers](#).

## Acknowledgements

If they fit, place acknowledgments on the back of the title page of a publication (its technical name is the 'verso title page'). Otherwise place them on a separate page before the contents list.

Acknowledgment can be given:

- to recognise ideas and assistance
- for sources of copyright material (eg, for use of a Crown research institute’s data)
- to external authors who contributed to a first draft or report that has had significant changes to it by the Ministry, and been assigned Ministry for the Environment authorship:

**Example**

Based on a report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by [author, organisation].

- to external authors of reports providing national guidance that have been assigned Ministry for the Environment authorship:

**Example**

Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by [author, organisation].

The external author(s) can then follow this with their own acknowledgements recognising ideas/assistance and any copyright statements, if required.

See also [Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment](#).

## Active and passive verbs

Active sentences are more direct and concise and make your writing more effective. In active sentences, the subject does the action and the object is the thing acted on:

subject	active verb	object
The Ministry	prepared	the regulations.

In passive sentences, the subject receives the action. The actor may be omitted, or may be included after ‘by’:

subject	to be	past participle	[actor]
The regulations	were	prepared	[by the Ministry].

Active sentences encourage us to use more names and pronouns (such as ‘we’ and ‘you’), which makes our writing more personal.

**Compare**

***Passive***

**It was found** that data concerning the stocks of fish **was not obtained**. This action **is needed** so that a determination of re-allocation **is permitted** on a timely basis when populations change. A system **must be established** so that data on fish stocks **may be gathered** on a regular basis.

### **Active**

**We found** that the Ministry for Primary Industries **did not obtain** data about stocks of fish. The Ministry needs this data so that **it can determine** how to re-allocate these resources when populations change. The Chief Executive of the Ministry **must establish** a system so staff **can gather** data of fish stocks regularly.

It is boring to read: *The production of carbon dioxide **was increased*** [passive voice]. *The factory **produced** more carbon dioxide* [active voice] is more vigorous and gives us more information.

## Apostrophes

The use of the apostrophe is essentially simple, but causes problems for many writers.

Use apostrophes to:

- show possession

### **Examples**

the Government's policies (the policies of the Government)

the boy's book (the book of the boy)

the boys' game (the game of the boys)

James's lesson

- show where a letter or letters have been omitted to turn two words into one.

### **Examples**

it's been a long time (it has)

I'll email you later (I will)

she won't be at work tomorrow (she will not)

## When not to use an apostrophe

Don't use an apostrophe to denote a plural.

### **Examples**

a group of MPs accompanied the Prime Minister (*not* MP's)

since the 1990s (*not* the 1990's or the 1990s')

## 'Its' in the possessive

The word 'its' does *not* take an apostrophe when used in the possessive.

### **Examples**

The Court reviewed its decision due to new information.

Its aim is to help the disadvantaged.

## Appendices

Appendices usually consist of material supplementary to the text of a book or report. They may also include matter which is too long to be conveniently set as footnotes, lists or tables and would interrupt the text's flow. An appendix should be referred to in the main body of the publication. If not, it may be irrelevant, so consider if it is needed at all.

As a general rule, appendices should have the same page dimensions as the text and be set in the same typeface. The headings to appendices should be in the same style as the chapter headings.

Begin the first appendix on a new, preferably right-hand page. Other appendices may also begin on new pages, or, if only short, may be run on.

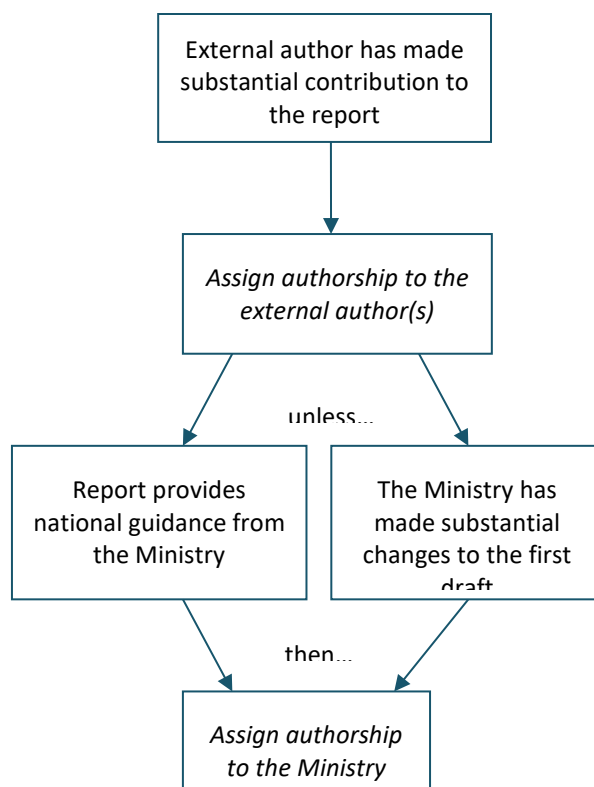
If you use a numbering system for chapters, figures and diagrams in the main body of the publication, then use letters for appendices (eg, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C).

The numbering sequence for any tables or figures presented in an appendix does not continue the numbering from the body of the document, or from a previous appendix. That is, for each appendix, table and figures begin at '1' or 'A' (eg, Table A1.1, Figure A1.1).

In most technical and research reports, the appendices are placed at the end, before the glossary and reference list (bibliography).

# Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment

Figure 1: Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment



## Assigning authorship based on the level of author contribution

The way we acknowledge external authors of Ministry publications depends on the level of their contribution.

1. If the external author has made a substantial contribution to a report (ie, if the Ministry is publishing a document without making substantial changes to it) then the Ministry will assign authorship to the external author and place their name and organisation on the title page.

### Examples

- (a) Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:

Scarsbrook MR. 2006. *State and Trends in the National River Water Quality Network (1989–2005)*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

- (b) Within text citation:

(Scarsbrook, 2006)

2. If the Ministry is publishing a report based on a first draft or report by an external author but has made **substantial** changes to it, then the Ministry is assigned authorship and the external author is recognised in the report's acknowledgements.

#### Examples

- a. Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:

Ministry for the Environment. 2021. *Defining 'natural wetlands' and 'natural inland wetlands'*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

- b. Within text citation:

(Ministry for the Environment, 2021)

- c. Acknowledgements:

Based on a report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by NIWA.

## Assigning authorship for 'national guidance'

If the externally contracted report provides 'national guidance' then authorship will be assigned to the Ministry, and the external author recognised in the acknowledgements and the bibliographic reference.

#### Examples

- a. Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:

Ministry for the Environment. 2004. *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by NIWA, Beca Consultants Ltd, DTec Consultants Ltd and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

- b. Within text citation:

(Ministry for the Environment, 2004)

- c. Acknowledgements:

Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by NIWA, Beca Consultants Ltd, DTec Consultants Ltd and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd.

## Brackets

See [Parentheses and brackets](#).

# Brand

Our brand guides how we approach our work. It embodies who we are and what we stand for, it determines what we look and sound like, how we behave and engage with others, and how we prioritise our work.

Our brand is applied to everything we do – through the way our products look to the language we use.

A strong brand is supported by good design. In addition to our logo, our brand is expressed through a series of visual components including colour, imagery, typography, and weave pattern. Our brand manual sets out how these should be applied so we create a consistent and recognisable look across everything we do.

Read our [brand manual](#).

Contact the Brand and Experience team for further information or advice.

# Briefing notes

See [Ministers](#).

# Bullet points

See [Lists](#).

# Cabinet papers

See [Ministers](#).

# Capitalisation

The Ministry's standard in titles and headings is sentence case – the minimum use of capital letters.

In text, upper case letters are used for:

- the initial letter of the first word of a sentence, or a sentence fragment, or the initial letter of proper nouns – personal names of people, countries, towns, nationalities
- honorifics and titles

### Examples

Mr	Ms	Mrs
Professor	the Hon, the Rt Hon	Sir

- the titles of offices, when they refer to specific office holders, and not the office in general

### Example

The Prime Minister of New Zealand ... *but* Under the Westminster system, the prime minister is the leader of the Government.

- the name of a specific organisation, but not the type of organisation in general

### Example

The Government decided today... *but* The government of New Zealand is elected democratically.

- only the first letter of titles and subtitles

### Example

*Pricing agricultural emissions: Consultation document*

- Acts of Parliament, both in their full names, and subsequently when referring to 'the Act' or 'the Bill'. 'Part' and 'Schedule' are capitalised, but 'section' and 'subsection' are not.

*Note:* Don't use initial capital letters for tables, figures, appendices, sections, chapters, and parts when they occur in the body text, unless they begin a sentence.

### Examples

In figure 12, the Ministry shows...

See appendix B for details of the survey.

## Captions

See [Tables and figures](#).

## Collective nouns

Collective nouns name groups of people or things treated as one entity.

### Examples

team                      Ministry                      Government                      Cabinet committee

Collective nouns are usually treated as singular and take singular verbs.

### Examples

the Government **has** decided

Cabinet **has** discussed

Thus, a government department, council, company or organisation is referred to as 'it', not 'them' – unless you have referred to 'Department of Conservation officials' or 'council staff', in which case a plural verb is used.

The exception is where the individuals in the group are seen to be acting separately.

#### Example

The committee **were** joined by their partners for dinner.

## Quantifying expressions

Where singular quantifying expressions (such as 'a number of', 'a group of', 'the majority of') are used with plural nouns, they take plural verbs.

#### Examples

a number of people **have**

the majority of people **believe**

# Colons and semicolons

## Colons

Colons indicate that something else is following in the sentence.

Use a colon to:

- introduce a list
- introduce a quotation if set off from the text
- connect two parts of a sentence, especially if the second part is an amplification of the first (what follows the colon does not have to be a complete sentence).

The word following the colon will usually begin with a lower case letter, unless it is a proper name.

#### Examples

You will develop a reputation for being responsible and trustworthy if you remember these three rules: fix or replace what you break, return what you borrow, and put away what you take out.

The sign at the campsite left no room for ambiguity: "Absolutely no littering!".

## Semicolons

As with colons, short sentences are preferable to the use of semicolons. However, there are times, especially in technical reports, when semicolons are appropriate. Use them to:

- mark a pause longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop
- separate elements in a complex list when the phrases already have commas
- join two independent clauses with words such as 'however', 'nevertheless' and 'therefore'.

## Examples

Businesses will take part in several ways: some will be required to buy and give up emission units to cover their own emissions obligations; some trade-exposed firms will be given free units to compensate for increase costs, which they can on-sell; and some will facilitate the trading process by acting as brokers, market advisors or developing electronic trading platforms.

New Zealand has more than 50,000 lakes; however, only 40 are larger than 900 hectares.

# Commas

## Serial commas

In a series of three or more items, place a comma after each item *except* the second to last (ie, there is no comma before the final 'and' in a list of more than two items).

### Example

It will minimise waste, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

*Exception:* In more complex sentences, it is sometimes appropriate to use a comma before the last item to clearly separate it and also to avoid confusion. In the below example 'the development and retention of skilled employees' is one item so placing a comma before the 'and' makes this clear.

### Example

The organisational development programme will address staff turnover, lack of the right skills, and the development and retention of skilled employees.

## Parenthetical expressions

Commas should be used to separate words that are not critical to your sentence, but which add to it – known as parenthetical expressions.

### Example

The magpie, although not native to New Zealand, is a common sight in rural areas.

## Introductory clause

A comma should mark off an introductory clause. The best test is to read your writing out loud. If you naturally pause, use a comma.

### Examples

Finally, the long discussion came to an end.

Before you shoot, the gun must be loaded.

*Note:* In the second example above, the comma prevents confusion: 'the gun' is clearly linked to 'must be loaded', not to 'shoot'.

## Use of commas with words such as ‘therefore’ and ‘however’

Use commas surrounding words such as ‘*therefore*’ and ‘*however*’ when they are used as ‘interruptors’ in a sentence.

### Examples

I would, therefore, like a response.

The land areas in surface mines and landfills, however, reduced over this same period.

See *also* the section [Semicolons](#) for the punctuation of words such as ‘therefore’ and ‘however’ when they are used to join two independent clauses.

## Commas can change the meaning of a sentence

The position of commas, or a lack of commas, can completely change the meaning of a sentence. The example below tells us that only motorists who knew about the floods took the other road, and implies that there were other motorists who did not know and who took the flooded road.

### Example

The motorists who knew about the floods took another road.

In the next sentence the use of commas enables us to understand that all the motorists knew about the floods and took the other road.

### Example

The motorists, who knew about the floods, took another road.

## Commas with names of people and their positions

When giving a person’s name and his or her position place commas around the name of the person or their position, depending on the order in the sentence.

### Example

Mary Smith, Chief Finance Officer, spoke at last week’s meeting.

## Commas with quotation marks

Use a comma to separate the speaker from direct speech.

### Example

“No electrical wholesaler in New Zealand has seen anything like it,” he said.

# Common problems

## Its or it's

'Its' is the possessive of 'it' and does **not** have an apostrophe before the 's'.

### Example

The Court reviewed its decision due to new information.

'It's' is the contraction of 'it is' or 'it has'. Only use 'it's' if the words 'it is' or 'it has' can be substituted into the sentence.

### Examples

it's been a long time (it has)

it's raining again (it is)

See also [Apostrophes](#).

## Like or as

Both 'like' and 'as' are used to make a comparison with something else. However, they are often confused.

Use 'like' to make a comparison with a thing or a state of being.

'As' is used to make a comparison with an action, so it is always followed by a verb. 'As if' or 'as though' may also be used in this way.

### Examples

The programme is like last year's. (Describes a thing – the programme resembles last year's in content.)

They attended the same programme as they did last year. (Describes an action – they attended last year's programme.)

It is important to use these correctly because they can alter meaning.

In the following examples, both 'like' and 'as' are used correctly, but the sentences have very different meanings.

### Examples

Like your father, I'm giving you some advice... (I am like your father in that I too am giving you some advice.)

As your father, I'm giving you some advice... (I am your father and I am giving you some advice.)

## That or which

Use *that* for a clause that gives essential information and further defines the topic.

Use *which* for a clause that gives non-essential information. If you remove the clause, you might lose interesting details, but the meaning won't be lost.

## Examples

They discussed the freshwater regulations *which* came into force on 1 July.

They discussed the freshwater regulations *that* came into force on 1 July.

The first example indicates that all of the freshwater regulations came into force on 1 July.

The second example refers to a subset of the freshwater regulations – they discussed the ones that came into force on 1 July, but other freshwater regulations also exist.

## Whom vs who

‘Who’ refers to the subject of a sentence; ‘whom’ refers to the object of a verb or preposition.

To check which one you should use, ask yourself whether the word could be replaced or answered by he/she (in which case use ‘who’) or him/her (in which case, use ‘whom’)

### Example

Who would like a piece of cake (can be answered with ‘he/she’)

Whom do you love the most? (can be answered with ‘him/her’)

## While vs whilst

There is no difference in meaning; ‘whilst’ is a predominantly British and outdated version of ‘while’ and should be avoided. The same applies to ‘among’ vs ‘amongst’ – the former should be used.

# Contents list

The table of contents is best prepared using Word’s automatic feature. No more than three levels of heading should be included. If you use the Ministry’s report template the styles for each heading level are automatically generated. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

# Dashes

The dash is not the same as a [hyphen](#). It is a longer line – also called an ‘en’ dash (as it is the width of the letter ‘n’).

To set your computer up to automatically create an en dash: in the Microsoft Word ‘File’ ribbon, select > Options > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options > AutoFormat As You Type, and tick the box and tick the box ‘Hyphens (–) with Dash (–)’.

Or, to insert an en dash manually, ensure the ‘Number’ keypad on the right of your keyboard is turned on (use ‘Num Lock’ to do this). Type Ctrl and numeric minus.

You can also insert a dash by using the ‘Insert – Symbol’ command.

## Use of dashes

Use two dashes to separate text where you are adding something separate and supplementary. *See also* [Dashes as parentheses](#).

### Example

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport – a major contributor to emissions – is likely to drive greater effort to improve fuel efficiency.

Use a single dash to indicate a sudden pause or change in a sentence.

### Example

The size of the engines in the vehicles we drive determines the amount of fuel the vehicles consume – smaller engines generally consume less fuel.

Use a dash to indicate ranges in spans of figures and in expressions relating to time or distance. Note that with figures there is no space either side of the dash.

### Examples

pages 62–66

2008–10

48–57 kg

the shop was open 9 am–5 pm, Mon–Fri

the consultation ran July–October last year

*Note:* Don't use an en dash following the words 'from' or 'between'.

### Examples

the period between 2005 and 2008

the period 1995–2006

## Disclaimers

Some Ministry publications such as guidance will need a disclaimer. Our report template includes the disclaimer wording approved by the Legal team.

For further information or advice on the use of disclaimers contact the Legal team.

## Ellipses

An ellipsis consists of three dots that indicate some text has been left out of a quotation or a sentence has been left unfinished. If the ellipses are at the beginning or end of a phrase, do not leave a gap between the dots and words. If they are in the middle, then leave a gap at each side of the ellipses.

## Examples

...leave no gap between the last dot and the first word.

Don't leave a gap if the ellipsis is at the end...

If it appears in the middle, then ... leave a gap at each end of the ellipsis to indicate that some text has been left out.

# Email etiquette

## 10 rules for good emailing

1. Be clear and concise. Provide recipients with sufficient information to take appropriate action in response but do not make an email longer than it needs to be.
2. Ensure the subject heading is relevant. It should provide key information on the subject, action and timeframe (eg, 'Ministry draft style guide – for review and comment by 30 August')
3. Answer all questions in an email you receive, to avoid multiple emails on a single topic.
4. Limit abbreviations, emojis and capitals. In business emails, particularly, these may lead to misinterpretation.
5. Do not contribute to 'corporate spam'. Use the cc field only for people who need to be kept in the loop.
6. Likewise, only use 'Reply to all' when the information is relevant to all.
7. Do not overuse 'urgent' and 'important' flags.
8. Do not request read or delivery receipts.
9. Never discuss confidential information by email: if you do not want it made public, do not send it.
10. Always read through your email twice before pressing the 'Send' button.

## Email signatures

We have a standard email signature format which all staff must use. The standardised format has been designed to ensure a consistent presentation is used in our emails.

See our [Email signature template step-by-step guide](#).

# E-terminology

When using e-terminology, take care that the language you use is precise and unambiguous.

Generally when an 'e' is inserted before a word to denote 'electronic', also insert a hyphen (eg, e-government, e-business). The exception is 'email'.

Spell the following words as shown (note the use of lower-case initial letters).

## Examples

online	email	website
web page	home page	user ID
the web	the internet	our intranet

Do not underline URLs or email addresses. This obscures the underscore ( \_ ) character that is included in some URLs.

If a sentence finishes with a website address, use a full stop, but keep it out of the link.

# Executive summaries

Any document that is more than 10 pages long should have an executive summary. The length of the executive summary will depend on the length and complexity of the document. For short documents it should be no more than a page long; for longer documents it may be up to three or four pages.

The purpose of the executive summary is to convey the main points of the document as succinctly as possible. The main point should be stated in the first paragraph – in the first sentence if the summary is short.

*Exception:* In a Cabinet paper, an executive summary must be provided if the paper, including appendices, is more than four pages long, or the paper is particularly complex. The executive summary in a Cabinet paper should be a few paragraphs in length and succinctly explain the main issues.

# Fonts

The fonts for externally produced publications are Merriweather and Lato. Internally produced publications use Calibri and Georgia.

More information about our fonts can be found in our [Brand manual](#).

# Footnotes and endnotes

Footnotes appear at the bottom of a page. Endnotes appear at the end of a chapter or a document (before the appendices, glossary and reference list).

Use a footnote or an endnote when you consider it necessary or useful to provide additional information which is not an essential part of the main text.

Use footnotes if the entries are brief (occupying no more than 4 cm of the page) and endnotes if the entries are lengthy. Even so, use footnotes and endnotes sparingly.

Footnotes can't be used in HTML text on our website so don't use them in publications that are going to be published in HTML.

## Formatting footnotes and endnotes

Use superscript numerals and place them in the text after any punctuation mark and outside closing brackets. If the footnote refers to a specific word, place the superscript numeral immediately after the word.

You can insert a footnote or an endnote automatically in Microsoft Word via the 'References' ribbon.

The Ministry's report template pre-sets footnote and endnote styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

When citing references in the body text of Ministry documents, do not use footnotes and superscript numbers. Rather, use the author-date system outlined in the References section of this guide under the heading: [Citations in the text](#).

## Forewords

If a foreword is necessary, the author should draft the foreword for the Minister or Chief Executive as appropriate, and have it signed off by its 'author'. This should then be sent to the Minister's office to insert their signature.

The Ministers are signed off as:

Hon David Parker

Minister for the Environment

Hon Peeni Henare

Associate Minister for the Environment

Hon James Shaw

Associate Minister for the Environment (Biodiversity)

Hon James Shaw

Minister of Climate Change

The Chief Executive is signed off as:

James Palmer

Secretary for the Environment

The foreword should fit on one page, so must be less than 500 words long. It is placed in the document after the contents page.

# Gender-inclusive language

All Ministry documents must be written in gender-inclusive language.

Do not use a singular personal pronoun (he, him, his, she, her, hers), and instead use the 'singular they' (and its derivatives such as 'their', 'them', 'theirs') which is a gender-neutral alternative. ('They' has traditionally been a plural pronoun only in English but is increasingly accepted as gender-neutral singular pronoun).

## Examples

Everyone has a right to their opinion.

Everyone has a right to say what they think about this topic.

Choose alternative words so you avoid personal pronouns altogether.

## Examples

No one should hesitate to offer an opinion.

Everyone has a right to an opinion.

*See also:* [Pronoun use in email signatures](#), [Rainbow inclusive language guide](#) [Public Service Commission website]

# Glossaries

A glossary list explains technical or unfamiliar words and terms used in a publication. It is usually arranged in alphabetical order and placed at the end of a document after the appendices and before the reference list. A short glossary, no more than one page long, can be placed at the beginning of the document.

# Headings

The Ministry's report template pre-sets heading styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

*Note that:*

- headings and subheadings are in 'sentence case' or 'downstyle': only the first word will have a capital letter unless a word in the heading is a proper noun (eg, names of people, organisations). This also applies to titles and subtitles of documents and publications.

If your document requires numbered headings use the decimal style and avoid Roman numerals:

1.

1.1.

1.1.1.

# Hyphens

The main uses of hyphens are to:

- join certain words together (eg, [compound adjectives](#))
- clarify the meaning of certain words (eg, recollected and re-collected)
- join a prefix to a proper noun, number or abbreviation (eg, pre-1990)
- avoid ambiguity in pronunciation.

## Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives are composites of two or more descriptive words. They offer specific descriptive information, yet in concise language.

Compound adjectives should be hyphenated when they appear **before** the noun they qualify, especially if they contain numbers.

### Examples

up-to-date information	three-year-old data	long-term plans
four- to six-month courses	site-specific measurements	an earthquake-prone site
an on-site inspection	a 40-litre container	

Hyphens are often needed when the addition of a prefix brings two vowels together.

### Examples

hydro-electricity, state-owned

Some familiar words in this category, such as ‘cooperate’ and ‘coordinate’ are acceptable without a hyphen. Problems can also arise when the compounding creates combinations such as ‘cell-like’ or ‘un-ionised’ (versus ‘unionised’).

Prefixes should always be followed by a hyphen when they modify a capitalised word.

### Examples

mid-February, non-Newtonian

As shown below, compound adjectives that are hyphenated or become one word before the noun they describe, are separated into two words when they come after the noun.

### Example

land-use regulations, *but* regulations controlling land use.

## When not to use hyphens

Hyphens are not used:

- when the compound adjective comes after the noun

### Examples

The information was up to date.

The site was earthquake prone.

- if one unit of the compound adjective is an adverb ending in *ly*.

### Examples

a severely polluted stream

a previously arranged appointment

## Tips on using hyphens

Do not:

- leave a space before or after a hyphen. Treat a hyphen as though it were another letter within the word. There are some exceptions to this rule, such as ‘four- to six-month courses’. This indicates that four-month and six-month courses are held, as opposed to courses that run over 4–6 months
- insert a hyphen into a longer word to make it sit on two lines of text
- break a word, even into its syllables.

## Jargon

The distinction between technical terms and jargon lies in the intended audience of the publication. Technical terms convey precise meanings to a specialist audience, but the same terms used for a general audience can cause confusion and reduce the precision of the information conveyed. Err on the side of simplicity. Use technical terms only if they are essential and only if your audience will understand them. Create a glossary to clarify the definition for technical terms used within your document.

## Lists

There are two main types of lists: bulleted and numbered. They help break up long sentences and create white space which makes the text easier to read.

### Bulleted lists

Create a bulleted list when:

- you wish to emphasise a number of related items
- there are three or more items to be listed
- the items have no particular ranking.

But – avoid lengthy bulleted lists. If the material is paragraph length you should write a paragraph not a bullet point.

The second to last bullet point does not end with 'and' or 'or' – this should be implicit.

## **When the lead-in statement is not a complete sentence**

With this type of bulleted list:

- end the lead-in statement with a colon
- set the tab space 0.7 cm from the bullet point to the first word of text
- ensure all items in the list have the same grammatical structure (ie, each one begins with either a noun or verb – in the same tense)
- if the first word of every item is the same, place the common first word in the lead-in statement
- begin each item of the list with a lower case letter (unless it is a proper name)
- do not use any punctuation (such as a semicolon) at the end of each item, except after the last item, when a full stop is inserted
- if a bullet point consists of more than one sentence, place a full stop after the first part but not after the second. If your bullet points are becoming this wordy, you may need to rethink whether bullet points are appropriate for the information you want to convey
- place a full stop at the end of the last bullet point.

## **When the lead-in statement is a complete sentence**

When the lead-in statement is a complete sentence, the bullet list becomes a separate entity. Sometimes, instead of a lead-in sentence, there will just be a heading.

- End the lead-in sentence with a full stop.
- Each bulleted item is a complete and grammatically correct sentence.
- Each bulleted item begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

### **Examples**

The following are rules for handling hazardous and toxic substances.

- Hazardous substances should be handled with care.
- Toxic materials should be used only if an antidote is available.
- Radioactive materials must be encapsulated.

Alternatively, the rules could begin with verbs.

- Handle hazardous substances with care.
- Use toxic material only if an antidote is available.
- Encapsulate radioactive materials.

## When independent list items are not complete sentences

The items in these lists are usually brief. There may not be a lead-in statement but if there is it will be a complete sentence. The lead-in statement ends with a colon, each item begins with a lower case letter and punctuation (a full stop) is only added to the final statement.

### Example

Nominations can be made in the following categories:

- protecting our biodiversity
- minimising our waste
- caring for our water.

## For a list within a list

For a second-level bullet list, use a dash aligned with the text of the first level bullet. There is no punctuation at the end of each item.

### Example

The functions of the Ministry as set out in the Act are to:

- advise the Minister on:
  - management policies ...
  - significant environmental impacts ...
  - ensuring that effective provision ...

## Numbered lists

Sometimes it is appropriate to use numbered lists instead of bullet points. Ministry style is to use alphanumeric lists which combine Arabic digits (0–9) with Latin letters (a-to-z).

Create a numbered list when there is a:

- sequence of events (ie, steps to follow, such as in a recipe)
- hierarchy of importance
- need to refer back to particular points.

### Example

1.
  - a.
    - i.

Use a full stop, not a bracket, after the numbers in a list.

*Note:* Don't confuse numbered lists with numbered headings and numbered paragraphs. See the sections [Headings](#) and [Paragraphs](#) for the formatting of these.

# Māori

Māori became an official language of New Zealand under the Māori Language Act 1987. This Act also established the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori to promote the language and encourage correct usage. Māori words and expressions in both English and Māori documents must be written in accordance with guidelines from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori. Maihi Karauna, the Crown’s Māori language strategy, provides guidance on using te reo Māori in an appropriate and consistent way.

- We don’t add an ‘s’ or apostrophes to te reo words to indicate plurals or possession (eg, birds of Aotearoa, not Aotearoa’s birds). Rephrase your sentence to avoid this.
- Don’t capitalise Māori words unless they are proper names (same as for English).
- Remember ‘te’ is an article (the) and should not be capitalised unless it forms part of a person’s name. It is not prefaced by ‘the’.
- We refer to te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) in the first instance; after that you may use te Tiriti.
- In the first instance, write Aotearoa New Zealand, and after that use Aotearoa. Never use Aotearoa/New Zealand or New Zealand Aotearoa.

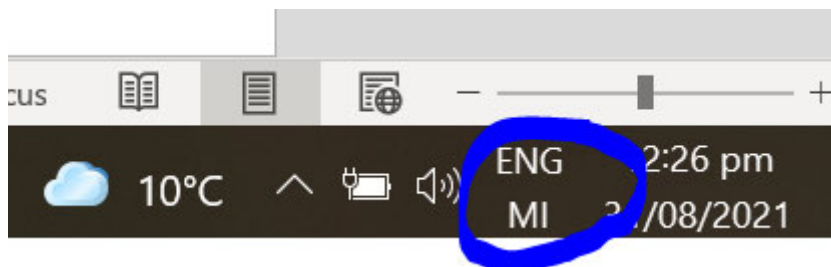
See also: [Māori orthographic conventions](#) (te Taiao), [Te Aka Māori dictionary](#), [Guidelines for Māori Language Orthography](#)

## Macrons

A macron is a line above a vowel to indicate that it should be spoken as a long vowel: ā, ē, ī, ō, ū. Use macrons and not double vowels.

To use macrons:

1. toggle to the English/Māori keyboard using the keyboard input function at the bottom right of your screen. Select the English/Māori keyboard. If it doesn’t appear in the list, add it using the language preferences button



2. type a macron by pressing the backquote/tilde key (`/~) at the top left of the keyboard then the vowel.

For a step-by-step guide, watch the MfE [Tech Talk](#) video.

Common words that contain macrons include:

hapū	wānanga	rūnanga
Māori	ngā	whānau
Ngāti	Pākehā	kaumātua

See also [appendix C: Māori words relevant to Ministry writing](#).

## Te reo greetings

Use te reo greetings as shown:

Tēnā koe	to address one person
Tēnā kōrua	to address two people
Tēnā koutou	to address three or more people
Kia ora	informal address for any number
Mōrena	good morning
Nāku noa, nā	yours sincerely (formal)
Nā māua noa, nā	yours sincerely (two signatures)
Nā mātou noa, nā	yours sincerely (three or more signatures)
Ngā mihi	kind regards or thank you

For more information and resources, visit the [Translating and using te reo Māori](#) page on the intranet or [Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori](#) website.

## Ministers

### Briefing notes, Cabinet papers and ministerials

Specific instructions for [preparing briefing notes](#) are available on the intranet.

Cabinet Office has prepared a [guide on writing Cabinet papers](#).

*Note:* Where the prescribed style for briefing notes and Cabinet papers differs from the Ministry's generic style in this *Style Guide*, the former has precedence and must be followed.

Information on [writing ministerials](#) is available on the intranet.

Templates for briefing notes, Cabinet papers, and ministerials are available in [Te Puna](#). All Ministers have their preferred style and you should check this before you begin writing.

For other useful information about writing ministerials and Cabinet papers, see [Ministerial Services](#) on the intranet or contact the Executive Relations team.

# Numbers

## General

Spell out numbers from one to nine, except when they are:

- followed by a unit (*see also* [Measurements](#))
- part of a numbered section of a document.

Use figures for numbers 10 and over.

### Examples

five dogs	32 sheep	
3 kilograms (kg)	6 per cent or 6%	5° (use a space between the number and the unit except for % or °)
Chapter IV	Section 3 (follow the style of the original document when quoting)	

*Exception:* The exception to spelling out numbers from one to nine is when they are part of a sentence where a figure is also included – it is important to be consistent within a sentence.

### Examples

The man used 3 eye dogs and 2 huntaways to help manage his flock of 2,000 sheep.

This is equivalent to tourism supporting around 1 in every 10 jobs in New Zealand.

Treat ordinal numbers the same as cardinal numbers (first, ninth, 24th, 73rd).

### Example

Climate change is possibly the most significant environmental issue of the 21st century.

Where the number and the unit form a [compound adjective](#), join them with a hyphen.

### Example

a 5-kg dog

Spell out numbers when they begin a sentence, unless the numbers are a calendar date.

### Examples

Twenty-five contaminated gasworks sites have been analysed in the past 15 years.

2002 was an exceptionally bad year for droughts in Australia.

Numbers between twenty-one and ninety-nine should be hyphenated when spelt out.

## Currency

The country abbreviation comes first followed by the currency symbol with no spaces.

### Examples

NZ\$100

AUS\$100

US\$100

## Fractions

Spell out simple fractions with a hyphen.

### Examples

About one-third of those present supported the motion.

The glass is three-quarters full.

Use figures, not words, for any mixed number containing a fraction.

### Example

5¼ hours late

## Using hyphens with numbers

Take care to use hyphens correctly – punctuation can alter meaning.

### Examples

three-quarters (means one amount, three-quarters of a whole)

three quarters (means three amounts, each a quarter of a whole)

three hour intervals or three hourly intervals (both mean three intervals of one hour each)

three-hour intervals (means an unspecified number of intervals, each lasting three hours)

## Large numbers

Use a thousand separator for all numbers that have four or more digits.

### Example

4,200

10,500

20,123,456

Avoid large numbers by using the words ‘thousand’ or ‘million’, for example 20 million instead of 20,000,000. Avoid using ‘billion’ if possible; there is confusion between traditional British and American usage, though the American usage is now more widely accepted. (A British billion is a million million; an American billion is a thousand million.)

In tables, avoid large numbers by using larger units (eg, use tonnes *instead of* kg (1 tonne is 1,000 kilograms)).

Scientific notation can be used if the publication is exclusively for a technical readership.

### Example

1.46 x 10<sup>6</sup> *instead of* 1,460,000

## Measurements

Use numerals for a number when it is followed by a unit of measurement such as kilometre (km), centimetre (cm), kilogram (kg), gram (g), or degree (°).

Spell out the measurements in text but use the abbreviations in tables.

### Examples

the course is 10 kilometres long

60 grams of sugar

9 cm

25°

## Per cent

Use the words 'per cent' in text. Note it is two words. The symbol % is acceptable in tables and graphs.

*Note:* in the Environmental Reporting series we use Stats NZ style for spelling where per cent is spelt as one word: percent.

## Dates and time

The style for dates is: 18 May 2018.

Where early historic dates are used, the form is: AD 440, re1500 BC (*note* small capitals.)

## Days of the week

Do not abbreviate days of the week.

### Examples

Monday 28 March 2016

next Tuesday

## Decades

Do not place an apostrophe before the 's'.

### Example

the 1990s (*not* the 1990's)

## Time

Write am and pm in lower case with no full stops and a space after the figures.

### Example

The office opens at 8.30 am.

## Timespan

Use a slash for a period that spans two years if the two years are within the same century.

Use an **en dash** with no spaces either side to signify a period of more than two years.

Write both dates in full if they are in different centuries.

### Examples

the 2008/09 financial year

the period 1998–2001

## Addresses

### Postal address

Use:

- initial capitals
- no space and no full stops between ‘P’ and ‘O’ in PO Box.

For a number which has five or more digits, leave a space (not a hyphen) after the first two (which signify the postal centre at which the box is located)

### Examples

PO Box 332

PO Box 12 345

### Street address

(eg, for hand delivery)

### Example

Ministry for the Environment  
Environment House  
8 Willis Street  
Wellington 6011

## Telephone numbers

### Domestic audience

### International audience

04 917 7400

+64 4 917 7400

021 415 4230

+64 21 415 4230

0800 WDLEVY (0800 935 389)

# Page numbering

The preferred style is to include the page number as a footer at the bottom right (or bottom outside edge of the text if setting up mirror pages).

If you are using the Ministry's report template this will be set for you. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

# Paragraphs

Paragraphs are used to break text into easily assimilated segments, to aid comprehension and make the page of type less visually daunting. Each paragraph should have a single topic which should be stated clearly in the first sentence. Subsequent sentences discuss and develop the topic.

The number of sentences in a paragraph should usually be between three and six. Paragraphs longer than this should be checked to ensure they have not lost their focus.

A single-sentence paragraph is a useful way of emphasising a point.

Certain documents, such as Cabinet papers and some technical reports, will require numbered paragraphs. If you do need to include numbered paragraphs:

- use a decimal style to the third level of numbering
- don't indent the numbers
- set the tab space after the number to 1.5 cm
- if a fourth level is required, use bullets or letters of the alphabet.

## Example

- 1.
- 1.1.
- 1.1.1.

If you need to insert bulleted text in numbered paragraphs, align the bullet points with the indented text.

## Example

7. Other structural and over-arching issues were considered by Cabinet on 29 October, including:
  - Parliamentary Commissioner for Biotechnology
  - biotechnology strategy
  - liability issues.

## Paragraph spacing

Microsoft Word allows you to insert paragraph spacing automatically. In publications, this produces a more professional finish than using the enter key twice between paragraphs. Use Paragraph in the 'Home ribbon' to insert 6 pt of spacing before and after paragraphs.

Use the enter key only once for a new paragraph. To override the automatic spacing (eg, in typing addresses in letters) use shift + enter.

If you are using the Ministry's report template this will be set for you. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

## Parentheses and brackets

A parenthesis (plural 'parentheses') is a word, clause or sentence inserted as an explanation or afterthought into text that is grammatically complete without it. A parenthesis is usually marked off by brackets, dashes or commas, depending on its importance. It is up to you, as the writer, to decide the level of importance you wish to give the parenthetical material.

### Commas as parentheses

Use commas to separate words that are not critical to your sentence, but which add to it. Commas disconnect the material only slightly from the main text and expect the reader to take account of it.

#### Example

The magpie, although not native to New Zealand, is a common sight in rural areas.

### Dashes as parentheses

Use two en dashes to set the parenthesis a little further aside from the main text. The reader is expected to take account of it even though it is not the primary information in the sentence.

#### Example

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport – a major contributor to emissions – is likely to drive greater effort to improve fuel efficiency.

See also [Dashes](#).

### Round brackets as parentheses

Use round brackets to set the additional material even further aside. It expands or clarifies the information in the rest of the sentence but is not essential and the reader can almost ignore it.

#### Example

Fishing methods are damaging to the marine environment and bycatch (when an animal is caught unintentionally in fishing gear) is an ongoing pressure on marine animals.

## Use of a full stop with brackets

If the bracketed material is not a complete sentence, it will not include a full stop. The full stop goes outside the brackets, ending the main sentence.

### Example

The Ministry is required to prepare a regulatory impact statement for all proposed regulations (or changes to regulations).

If the bracketed material is (or ends with) a complete sentence, place the full stop at the end of that sentence (ie, within the brackets).

### Example

The Ministry convened the first Meeting ... with Thailand. (This took place under the Closer Partnership Agreement between New Zealand and Thailand.)

## Square brackets

Use square brackets for inserting editorial comment or clarification into the text – usually into quoted text – and for years in Court cases.

### Examples

He said, “I was born in London [Ontario]”.

*North Shore City Council v Auckland Regional Council* [1997] NZRMA 59

# Photos

Whenever we include imagery in our publications or online, we try to ensure people are featured to help tell our story. We want to show a diverse range of New Zealanders enjoying, interacting with, and caretaking our environment.

## UView

UView is our digital library where you can search for and order photos. Find out more about UView and other stock photo libraries we use on [Te Taiao](#).

See also: [Guidelines for choosing a cover image](#) (link)

# Plain English

Plain English is language that is clear, concise and easy to read. Using common words and everyday language that is natural will mean the widest range of people can understand your information, including those for whom English is not their first language.

How we sound is an important part of our brand. Our writing should be clear and easy to understand, and our tone should be conversational and to the point – but not colloquial or

casual. If you can't imagine yourself saying it out loud, then there is probably a better way to write it.

When we all write this way, our work sounds consistent and part of the same team and our readers can easily understand what we are saying.

## Our shared voice principles

- We always write with our audience in mind. Our subject matter may be technical, but our explanations are not. We get to the point quickly and we're bold with our advice.
- We don't use jargon, and we check our work carefully to make sure it is error-free and of the highest quality.
- We're less formal, but we're not too casual. We use everyday language that is natural so that we sound like a real person.

## Style tips

- Get to the point – our readers don't always have a lot of time.
- Put the most important thing in the most noticeable spot. Make recommendations, decisions and next steps obvious.
- Give the reader just enough information to make decisions confidently.
- Choose conversational language. Use contractions, and sentence-style capitalization.
- Avoid overusing acronyms.
- Simpler is better – use short sentences and paragraphs.

See also [Active and passive verbs](#) and [Jargon](#).

## Keep sentences short

As a general guide, limit your average sentence length to about 15 to 20 words. Try to vary the length of your sentences. A paragraph of long sentences can be difficult to read, particularly if they are poorly constructed. A series of short sentences sounds abrupt and disconnected.

If you use longer sentences, they must be well constructed. A sentence should move from a short, specific subject to a strong verb, after which you can add secondary ideas.

Consider the following:

High light levels and lack of flushing flows in lowland rivers of the North Island lead to excessive growth of periphyton.

**The growth of periphyton** is excessive in lowland rivers of the North Island, because of the high light levels and lack of flushing flows.

**Periphyton** grows excessively in lowland rivers of the North Island, because of the high light levels and lack of flushing flows.

In the first sentence, the inclusion of supplementary information before the verb creates a long, diffuse subject. The shorter subject leading directly to the verb makes the second

sentence crisper. The third sentence has been further improved by replacing the abstract noun 'growth' with an active verb.

If you join several subordinate phrases in a sentence, try to arrange them so that the **longest** is at the end. For example:

Urquhart Castle stands on the banks of Loch Ness, which is long, of unknown depth, **and reputed to hide a mysterious underwater monster.**

## Less is more

Unnecessary words and verbose expressions gum up your prose. A major component of editing is removing words. Some sources of useless words can be classified as follows.

### Redundant pairs

Two words that both mean the same thing. Use one or the other, not both together.

#### Examples

full and complete	true and accurate	each and every
first and foremost	various and sundry	basic and fundamental
questions and problems	true and correct	and so on and so forth

### Redundant modifiers

A 'modifier' is a word, phrase, or clause that limits or qualifies the sense of another word or group of words. In these phrases, the meaning of the modifier [in italics] is already implied in the word it modifies.

#### Examples

<i>completely</i> finish	<i>past</i> memories	<i>forward</i> planning
<i>each</i> individual	<i>basic</i> fundamentals	<i>true</i> facts
<i>important</i> essentials	<i>component</i> part	<i>consensus of</i> opinion
<i>sudden</i> crisis	<i>terrible</i> tragedy	<i>end</i> result
<i>final</i> outcome	<i>initial</i> preparation	<i>past</i> history

### Redundant categories

If specific words imply their general categories, we don't have to state both. The redundant words are italicised.

#### Examples

red <i>in colour</i>	large <i>in size</i>	a period <i>of time</i>
heavy <i>in weight</i>	round <i>in shape</i>	<i>at an early time</i>
research <i>activities</i>	unusual <i>in nature</i>	<i>in a confused state</i>

## Noun strings

Noun strings are groups of nouns (and adjectives) used successively. Technically, this turns all but the last noun into adjectives. Many readers will think they've found the noun when they're still reading adjectives, and will become confused. Limit noun strings to three consecutive nouns.

### Examples

Pest control trainee best practice guidelines manual

*should be rewritten as*

The best practice guidelines for pest control trainees

National air quality environmental reporting research

*should be rewritten as*

Research into environmental reporting on national air quality

## Keep it simple

Replacing formal words with more common ones will reduce wordiness and increase clarity.

### Example

Pursuant to the recent memorandum issued August 9, 1996, because of financial exigencies, it is incumbent upon us all to endeavour to make maximum utilisation of telephonic communication in lieu of personal visitation.

This means:

As the memo of 9 August said, to save the company money, use the telephone as much as you can instead of making personal visits.

Here are examples of unnecessary, formal words and phrases and their plain language alternative.

#### Instead of:

*advert to*

*advise*

*ascertain*

*assist*

*at the end of the day*

*at this point in time*

*cease*

*cognisant of*

*commence*

*contingent upon*

*discontinue*

*endeavour*

*envisage*

#### Use:

mention

inform

find out

help

finally, ultimately

now, currently

stop

aware of, knows about

start

depends on

stop

try

think, regard, see, imagine

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Use:</b>
<i>eventuate</i>	happen
<i>facilitate</i>	help
<i>has the capability of/to</i>	can
<i>implement</i>	start, carry out, begin
<i>in as much as</i>	since, because
<i>in close proximity to</i>	near, close
<i>in order to</i>	to
<i>initiate</i>	begin
<i>lacked the ability to</i>	could not, was unable to
<i>large numbers of</i>	many
<i>notwithstanding the above</i>	nevertheless, all the same
<i>on a regular basis</i>	regularly
<i>owing to the fact that</i>	because
<i>prior to</i>	before
<i>render</i>	make, give
<i>request</i>	ask
<i>subsequent to</i>	after
<i>termination</i>	end
<i>transmit</i>	send
<i>transpire</i>	happen
<i>utilise</i>	use
<i>whether or not</i>	whether
<i>with regard to</i>	about

## A word instead of a phrase

The phrases below can often be replaced by single words, sometimes with a bit of sentence reconstruction.

<b>Replace</b>	<b>With this</b>
<i>the reason for</i>	because, since, why
<i>for the reason that</i>	
<i>due to the fact that</i>	
<i>owing to the fact that</i>	
<i>in light of the fact that</i>	
<i>considering the fact that</i>	
<i>on the grounds that</i>	
<i>this is why</i>	
<i>despite the fact that</i>	although, even though
<i>regardless of the fact that</i>	

<b>Replace</b>	<b>With this</b>
<i>notwithstanding the fact that</i>	
<i>in the event that</i>	when, if
<i>if it should happen/transpire that</i>	
<i>under the circumstances in which</i>	
<i>as regards</i>	These phrases can usually be replaced by 'about'. Sometimes they can be omitted. <i>Plant size increased in terms of dry weight</i> means 'Plant dry weight increased'
<i>in reference to</i>	
<i>with regard to</i>	
<i>in terms of</i>	
<i>concerning the matter of</i>	
<i>where — is concerned</i>	
<i>it is crucial that</i>	must, should
<i>it is necessary that</i>	
<i>there is a need for</i>	
<i>it is important that</i>	
<i>it is incumbent upon</i>	
<i>cannot be avoided</i>	
<i>is able to</i>	can
<i>is in a position to</i>	
<i>has the opportunity to</i>	
<i>has the capacity for</i>	
<i>has the ability to</i>	
<i>it is possible that</i>	may, might, can, could
<i>there is a chance that</i>	
<i>it could happen that</i>	
<i>the possibility exists for</i>	
<i>prior to</i>	before, after, as
<i>in anticipation of</i>	
<i>subsequent to</i>	
<i>following on</i>	
<i>at the same time as</i>	
<i>simultaneously with</i>	

## Hedges and emphatics

### Hedges

Most of us love to hedge. We protect our backs by modifying the most straight-forward statement with words such as:

<i>usually</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>almost</i>
<i>virtually</i>	<i>possibly</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>apparently</i>

<i>seemingly</i>	<i>in some ways</i>	<i>to a certain/unknown extent</i>	<i>more or less</i>
<i>for the most part</i>	<i>in some respects</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>could</i>
<i>considerably</i>	<i>rather</i>	<i>relatively may</i>	<i>might</i>
<i>generally</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>tend</i>	

Some qualification is necessary at times, but these words are often used so extensively they become meaningless.

## Emphatics

On the other hand, there are the emphatics:

<i>as everyone knows</i>	<i>it is generally agreed that</i>	<i>it is quite true that</i>	<i>it is clear that</i>
<i>it is obvious that</i>	<i>it is important to note that</i>	<i>the fact is</i>	<i>essential</i>
<i>literally</i>	<i>clearly</i>	<i>obviously</i>	<i>undoubtedly</i>
<i>certainly</i>	<i>of course</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>inevitably</i>
<i>very</i>	<i>invariably</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>crucial</i>
<i>basic</i>	<i>fundamental</i>	<i>major</i>	<i>principal</i>

These words can be removed without changing the meaning of your sentence – though they will change the tone. They generally mean no more than ‘believe me’ or ‘I think this is a good bit’. Used to excess they will make you seem arrogant, or insecure and defensive. When you read over your writing, see how many of them are really necessary.

## Words to watch

### Chameleon words

Beware of words that change their meaning from audience to audience. The following words all have well defined meanings in technical use, but they also have much more diffuse meanings in general speech.

<i>bug</i>	<i>organic</i>	<i>aromatic</i>	<i>reduction</i>	<i>cell</i>
<i>parameter</i>	<i>variable</i>	<i>integrated</i>	<i>basic</i>	<i>acid</i>
<i>constant</i>	<i>alcohol</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>significant</i>	<i>error</i>

### Other irritants

#### It...

Beginning a sentence with ‘It ...’ is quite acceptable, but often signals a vacuous phrase such as ‘It is considered...’, ‘It should be noted...’, ‘It has been shown...’. Almost always these phrases can be deleted without changing the meaning of the sentence. Ask yourself what noun it refers to and then try, if possible, to use the noun or other words that state your meaning directly.

## **However,**

A weak start to a sentence. 'However' is usually better placed within the sentence. A change to 'though', 'although' or 'but' can also help.

## **Facility**

Hospitals, prisons, schools, laboratories and toilets have all become 'facilities'. Use a term that says what you mean.

## **Complex**

A 'facility' with more than one part. Hospital complex, prison complex, research complex. Say what you mean.

## **Function**

Often used for the vague type of activity you would expect to find in a facility. 'Social function', 'managerial function', 'research function'. Be precise. Be even more precise when you use the word mathematically. Not all relationships are technically 'functions'.

## **Feature**

Some property of a 'facility', 'complex' or 'function'. The word is usually unnecessary. 'A feature of this theory is its simplicity' means 'This theory is simple'.

## **Character, property, nature**

Other words for a 'feature'. 'The nature of these notes is pedantic', if true, would be better written 'These notes are pedantic'.

## **Conditions**

Can (and should) be avoided. Instead of 'Under conditions of severe soil waterlogging' try 'If (or where) the soil is severely waterlogged'.

## **Situation**

Usually unnecessary. 'In a drought (crisis, emergency, shortage) situation' simply means 'in (or during) a drought...'

## **Event**

As with 'situation', usually unnecessary. 'In a storm event...' simply means 'in a storm...'

## **Etc**

Putting 'etc' at the end of a list merely means that you don't know what else to list, or you can't be bothered. Either list the whole lot, or make it clear that what you are doing is giving a few examples, by using 'such as' or 'for example'.

## **Point of view**

Only people have a point of view. Avoid trying to give activities or objects points of view. 'From a pollution control point of view' can be rephrased.

## **Problem**

A word that tends to be overused. If you mean a difficulty or dilemma that needs a solution, use it, but if you can substitute more specific terms such as pest, danger, shortage, do so.

## **And/or**

If you want to write in symbols, become a mathematician. In English, write A or B, *or* 'both'.

## **Case**

Unless you mean a box, be specific. 'In this case' can mean 'In this experiment', '... treatment', '... hypothesis', '...set of circumstances' or practically anything else. It is acceptable only in medical and legal contexts: 'Reported cases of tuberculosis have increased' 'In the case of *Smith v Jones*'.

## **While**

While means 'at the same time'. If you don't mean this, use whereas, and, but, or although. It doesn't make much sense to write: 'Resource consent was granted before the factory was constructed, while emissions were measured when it was operational'.

## **Varying, various**

The first means 'changing'; the second means 'different'. If you apply 'varying' rates of fertiliser, I assume the rates on each treatment changes during the course of the experiment. 'Various' rates are different at the start of the experiment, but remain constant.

**Count the number of** means 'count'.

**Results in an increase** means 'increases'.

## **Quite**

Usually quite unnecessary and possibly confusing.

## Only

Be careful where you put this word. Consider the sentence:

I hit him in the eye yesterday.

You can add *only* at the beginning of the sentence, at the end, or between any two words, but the meaning will be very different.

## Respectively

Sentences for the form 'The values of A, B and C were 54, 15 and 78 respectively' make the reader pause, go back to the beginning of the sentence and match up the pairs. Use 'respectively' rarely, and only if there are no more than three sets of values to match up and the matches are obvious. Misuse can lead to utter incomprehensibility, as in the following real example:

Sulphuric acid mist and sulphur dioxide are trapped separately in isopropanol and three per cent peroxide in the first and second and third train impingers respectively.

# PowerPoint template

We have a PowerPoint template which must be used for all Ministry presentations.

## Accessing the template

The template is available in PowerPoint. Click 'new' and then select the file called 'PowerPoint template'.

The template has pre-designed slides. Slide 2 explains how to insert slides into your presentation.

# Quotation marks and quoted material

There are three main uses of quotation marks.

## 1. To enclose the exact words of a writer or speaker

Use quotation marks ('quotes' or inverted commas) to indicate the beginning and end of a quotation, whether from direct speech or from printed material.

Our style is to use double quotation marks for short quotations. If you have a quotation within a quotation, use single quotation marks. Make sure, particularly when text is brought in from other sources, that the quotation marks are 'curly' (" ") – these are also known as 'smart quotes' rather than straight (" ").

In the following example, as the quoted material is part of a sentence that also contains unquoted material, place the full stop outside the quotes to indicate that it marks the end of the longer sentence.

**Example**

Joanna Blogs said, “The survey showed most New Zealanders believed the New Zealand ‘way of life’ would be lost if the proposal went ahead”.

If the quotation is a complete sentence, place the full stop inside the closing quotation mark.

**Example**

“I’ll keep my tyres inflated to the correct level.”

## **Layout of longer quoted material**

For quoted material more than three lines in length, use the ‘quote’ style from the word template.

**Example**

The Ministry’s preferred style for short quotations is for double quotation marks. If you have a quotation within a quotation, use single quotation marks. Make sure, particularly when text is brought in from other word-processing applications, that the quotation marks are “curly” (“ ” – these are also known as ‘smart quotes’) rather than straight (" ").

## **2. To give emphasis to a word or several words**

Use single quotation marks to indicate words that are new or unusual, or are being used outside their original context. Use them sparingly.

*Note:* generally enclose the word or words in quotes only the first time you use them. If your document is long and you are repeating the word later in the document, use quotes again.

**Example**

We know that population ‘explosions’ of rats and stoats are associated with ‘mast’ events.

Quotation marks draw particular attention to the quoted material. If you use them too freely you may draw the reader’s attention away from your intended meaning by causing them to focus on the quoted material.

## **3. To enclose titles of chapters and articles when they appear in text**

Use single quotation marks for titles of journal, magazine and newspaper articles, and for book chapters and parts when you refer to them within a sentence.

**Example**

see chapter 11, ‘Oceans’ and chapter 12, ‘Biodiversity’

In web writing, use single quotation marks to enclose the title of a publication, rather than italics, as italics can be hard to read on the screen.

See also [Commas with quotation marks](#).

## References

This section lists examples of bibliographic references, with specific guidance for Ministry for the Environment published reports. The Ministry uses the Harvard system of citing references.

The following elements must be included in a reference:

- author's or editor's name (or names)
- publication year
- title of the item
- publication information:
  - for books, give the publisher's name and place of publication and if two or more publisher locations are given, give the location listed first in the book
  - for journals, give volume, issue number and page numbers
  - rather than including the website separately, link the title.

## Citations in the text

When citing references in the text, give the author(s) and year of publication, with a comma between name and year:

Hydrogen sulphide smells (Smith, 2016).

Or, if the author's name is integrated into the text:

Smith (2016) found that hydrogen sulphide smells.

### Two authors

If the reference has two authors, cite both:

Smith and Brown, 2016.

### More than two authors

If there are more than two, use et al. A paper by Smith, Brown and Jones should be cited as:

Smith et al, 2016.

### Two or more publications by the same author(s)

If you cite two or more publications by the same author(s), published in the same year, distinguish between them by a lower case letter after the date:

Smith, 2016a, 2016b.

If you cite, for example, Smith, Jones and Brown, 2016, and Smith, Jones and White, 2016, both will appear in the text as Smith et al, 2016, and will need to be distinguished in the text citation and in the reference list:

Smith et al, 2016a, 2016b.

## List of references

When citing a list of references, separate them with semicolons:

Brown, 2016; Jones, 1999; Smith, 2016b.

## Quotation

When citing a quotation, include page numbers (*note* there is no full stop after the 'p' for page):

Jones, 1999, p 42.

## Several references from one publication

If you are citing several references from a large publication, you may want to include page numbers:

Smith, 2016, p 53.

If you are citing a large publication only once, include the page number in the reference list, not in the text.

## No author for cited work

Where no author is given, cite by the corporate author (eg, Ministry for the Environment) or the publication's title:

According to *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2008)...

## Personal communication

Cite personal communication in the text, not in the reference list. Note that the initial precedes the surname. Details of the organisation that the person represents may also be included:

Without measurement, households often assume that they produce minimal volumes of waste (Marshall, personal communication, 22 August 2022).

## Cabinet minute

When citing earlier decisions Cabinet has made, always quote the most relevant Cabinet or committee minute reference.

## Example

[CAB Min (08) 26/10]

Where the Cabinet minute confirms decisions made by a Cabinet committee, quote the appropriate Cabinet committee minute reference of the decision.

#### Example

[EDC Min (08) 24/8]

## Legal citations in text

(Note that 'judgment' in legal usage is spelt without an 'e'.)

A full law case reference for a reported judgment has the following parts:

- the *names of the parties* (case name) (in italics)
- the year of publication (in square brackets)
- volume number (if applicable)
- the initials of the report series
- a page reference (the page number where the case starts).

#### Example

*Jones v Alabaster* [1998] 3 NZLR 424

The parties' surnames are Jones and Alabaster. The case is reported in volume 3 of the 1998 cases, in the *New Zealand Law Reports* (NZLR) series, starting at page 424.

## The reference list or bibliography

A **reference list** is a list of publications cited in the text of your document. These references may be to work presented in books – or specific chapters of books, articles in journals or newspapers, government reports, theses, proceedings from conferences, material from the internet and so on.

A **bibliography** includes, as well as the works that have been specifically referred to, other works that were consulted in the writing of the document. Bibliographies have the same format as reference lists and include relevant items that have not been cited.

The reference list or bibliography is usually at the back of the document, after the appendices and glossary. Only use separate reference lists at the ends of chapters in very large documents.

Always keep the original spelling of the title. If the book is American and the title uses American spelling, don't change it.

References are listed in alphabetical order for all authors, and then in order of date of publication. Use initials only for the author's first names and don't use full stops, except after the last initial before the date of publication:

Brown AB. 2011.

Brown AB. 2016a.

Brown AB. 2016b.

Brown AB, Jones CD. 1987.

Brown AB, Smith EF, Jones CD. 2008.

## **Book or report**

Darwin CR. 1859. *The Origin of Species*. London: Somepress.

Statistics New Zealand. 2015. *Statement of Strategic Intentions for Statistics New Zealand: 2015–19*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

## **Edited book**

Note that editor (ed.) has a full stop but editors (eds) does not.

Keller L. (ed.) 1999. *Levels of Selection in Evolution*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Soons JM, Selby MJ. (eds) 1992. *Landforms of New Zealand*. Auckland: Longman Paul.

## **Book chapter**

Note that the editors' initials precede their surnames (unlike the previous example).

Jeanne RL. 1991. Polyethism. In: KG Ross, RW Matthews (eds) *The Social Biology of Wasps*. New York: Cornell University Press. pp 389–425.

## **Ministry for the Environment published report written by Ministry staff**

Ministry for the Environment. 2007. *Environment New Zealand 2007*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

## **Ministry for the Environment published report written by an external consultant**

Include 'Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment' after the report's title, and if relevant also acknowledge the external consultant's organisation.

Snelder T, Mason C, Woods R, Robb C. 2001. *Application of the River Ecosystem Management Framework to Water Allocation Management*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

## **Ministry for the Environment published report written by an external consultant that provides national guidance**

The Ministry for the Environment is assigned authorship of reports written by consultants that provide national guidance. Acknowledge the external consultant(s) and their organisation(s), if relevant, after the report's title.

Ministry for the Environment. 2004. *Climate Change Effects and Impacts Assessment: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, MWH New Zealand Ltd and Earthwise Consulting. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

## Journal article

Include author(s), year of publication, title of article, title of publication (in full), volume and number of first and last page of the article. Include the issue number only if the page number starts from 1 in each issue (most scientific journals continue page numbering throughout a volume). If the publication has no volume or issue numbers, identify the issue by the month(s) of publication.

Carswell FE, Burrows LE, Hall GMJ, Mason NWH, Allen RB. 2012. Carbon and plant diversity gain during 200 years of woody succession in lowland New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 36(2): 191–202.

## Magazine article

Henry WA. 1990. Making the grade in today's schools. *Time* 135: 28–31.

## Newspaper article

Tobler K, Kerin J. 2002. Hormone alert for cancer. *The Australian* 10 July. p 1.

If the newspaper article does not have an author:

*The Australian*. 2002. Hormone alert for cancer. 10 July. p 1.

## Web page reference

Department of Conservation. *Biodiversity*. Retrieved 13 February 2023.

## Conference proceeding

Harris W. 1993. Effects of quantity and pattern of herbage removal on botanical composition of a temperate pasture. In: *Proceedings of the XVII International Grassland Congress*. Wellington: SIR Publishing. pp 322–326.

## Unpublished document

Use this format for items that have not been, and are not intended to be, published. (See appendix F for the process a work goes through to be published; see also 'In press' below.)

Ministry for the Environment. Unpublished. The Ministry's Plans for Published Regular Environmental Reporting and Monitoring of Key Environmental Programmes. Background paper submitted for Cabinet meeting EXG (06) 30.

## In press document

Use this format for items that have been accepted for publication. Once published, the 'In press' is replaced by the year of publication, and all else stays the same.

Scarsbrook M, Mittinty M, Wadhwa S. In press. *An Assessment of Regional Council Water Quality Data (1996–2002) in Support of National State of Environment Reporting*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

## Unknown author

If no author is given, the title is used as the first element of a citation. Alphabetise the entry by the first main word of the title in the bibliography. In the example given here, the work would be listed under 'C'.

*The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. 2008. 11th ed. Revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Cabinet minute

New Zealand Cabinet. 2006. *Plans for Published Regular Environmental Reporting and Monitoring of Key Environmental Programmes*. Cabinet Committee on Government Expenditure and Administration Minute of Decision EXG Min (06) 3/9. Wellington: Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## Cabinet paper

Minister for the Environment. 2007. *Towards a Sustainable New Zealand: Next Steps*. Cabinet Paper CAB (07) 15. Wellington: Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

# Scientific names

Scientific names of genera, species, subspecies and varieties of organisms are italicised.

Generic names have an initial capital; names of species and subspecies do not.

Abbreviations are:

sp (species – singular)	spp (species – plural)	ssp (subspecies)
var (variety)	cv (cultivar)	

The above abbreviations, and abbreviations for names of authorities, are not italicised.

Names of cultivars (varieties bred or selected) are not italicised, but are enclosed in single inverted commas.

### Examples

*Grevillia robusta*

*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*

*Triticum aestivum* L cv 'Gabo'

*Trifolium* sp

*Lolium* spp

Names of taxa higher than species are not italicised, but have initial capitals, for example, Mollusca, Gymnospermae, Mammalia, Insecta.

# Sentences and spacing

## Sentence length

Keep your average sentence length about 15 to 20 words, and your longest sentences under 30 words. *See also* [Keep sentences short](#). If writing for the web aim for sentences about 12 words long. Vary sentence length. A paragraph of long sentences can be difficult to read, particularly if they are poorly constructed. A series of short sentences sounds abrupt and disconnected.

If you use longer sentences, they must be well constructed. A sentence should move from a short, specific subject, to a strong verb, after which you can add secondary ideas.

## Non-breaking spaces

When Word calculates line width and wraps text to the next line, it tries to break the line at either a space or a hyphen. Sometimes, however, you may not want Word to break a line at a certain space. For instance, you may want to make sure that two adjacent words appear on the same line as each other. The answer is to use non-breaking spaces. To do this, hold down the **ctrl** and **shift** keys as you press the **spacebar**. The non-breaking space which appears on the screen as a ° between the two items ensures they stay together on the same line.

### Examples

500 kg                      60 km  
20 July 2008  
New Zealand

When you have finished writing your document, look over it carefully to check that elements that should be kept together are not broken over two lines.

## Spacing between sentences

Use one space only after a full stop, colon or semicolon.

# Spelling

The Ministry uses New Zealand English spelling, which is based on British English.

Set your computer default to 'English – New Zealand'. In the Microsoft Word 'File' ribbon, select > Options > Language > Set the Office language preferences.

Use American spelling only to preserve the correct spelling of book titles, official names (eg, World Health Organization) and so on.

## Key differences between American and New Zealand spelling

'-ise' or '-ize'?	Use '-ise'	organise summarise emphasise
'-yse' or '-yze'?	Use '-yse'	analyse
learnt or learned?	Use the -t ending for 'learnt' and similar words when they are used in the past tense.	learnt smelt burnt spoilt
'ae' or 'e'?	Keep the 'a' in 'ae' clusters (American spelling uses just 'e').	anaesthetic paediatrician
ageing or aging?	Use 'ageing' which is the British English form.	
triated or trialed?	Use the '-ll' form for words like this.	triated travelled cancelled equalled signalled propelled
judgement or judgment?	Retain the 'e' in 'dge' when it is used in 'judgement' and similar words.  <i>Note:</i> For a legal 'judgment', the word is spelt without an 'e'.	judgement abridgement acknowledgement
colour or color?	Retain the 'ou' in words ending in 'our'	colour honour labour behaviour
focused or focussed?	'Focused' is the correct spelling in New Zealand.	
'-ice' or '-ise'?	New Zealand spelling is practice (noun) practise (verb) licence (noun) license (verb) advice (noun) advise (verb)	

See also [appendix D: Commonly confused words](#) and [appendix E: Commonly misspelt words](#).

## Split infinitives

A split infinitive is formed when an adverb is placed between *to* and the other element of the infinitive of a verb, for example *to sometimes go*.

A good rule is to try to avoid splitting an infinitive and only do it when good sense and the natural flow of words require it.

### Example

We expect the advantages to more than compensate for the cost.

Probably the most famous split infinitive comes in the opening sequence to *Star Trek*:

'to boldly go where no man has gone before'

The grammatically correct version, which clearly lacks the impact of the original, would be:

‘to go boldly where no man has gone before’

In some cases, the effort to avoid splitting the infinitive alters the meaning of the sentence. Compare the following examples.

He failed completely to follow the instructions.

[He didn’t follow the instructions at all]

He failed to completely follow the instructions.

[He partially followed the instructions]

## Stacked modifiers

Stacked modifiers are strings of words used as adjectives to modify a noun.

### Examples

innovative policy implementation recommendations

recreational shellfish gathering

water quality guidelines

improvement initiative.

These can often lead to confusion. For example, is an ‘automatic cow identification device’ a ‘device for identifying automatic cows’?

To improve clarity, move one or more of the modifiers behind the noun, and turn abstract nouns into verbs.

### Examples

innovative recommendations for implementing policy

an automatic device for identifying cows.

## Tables and figures

Our report template pre-sets our table and caption styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

## Captions

Place captions above tables, figures, graphs, diagrams and below photographs.

Tables and figures should be identified by number followed by a colon before the rest of the caption.

### Example

**Figure 6: The change in native forest cover in the past 200 years**

*Note:* When referring to tables or figures in the body text don't use an initial capital letter.

### Examples

figure 6; table 2.

Depending on the publication, photographs may be numbered as figures, or may be independent.

## Text style

Our report template pre-sets our body text styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

*Note:* The prescribed style for briefing notes, Cabinet papers and Ministerials may differ from the Ministry's generic style in this *Style Guide*, including the required font type and size. If so, the external style has precedence and must be followed.

See *also* the section [Ministers](#).

## Bold

Bold typefaces are best restricted to headings and subheadings. Bold can also be used, very sparingly, to emphasise words or phrases (*see also* [Italics](#) and [Underline](#)).

Limit the use of bold to make particular words stand out from the main body of the text. If used too freely such highlighting loses its force and becomes unattractive. However, there are occasions when emphasising words is necessary.

## Italics

Italics can be difficult to read online, so use it sparingly.

Only use *italics* for:

- words given a special meaning, especially if new to the subject under discussion, the first time they appear
- titles of books, bulletins, newspapers, journals, university theses
- foreign words and phrases not yet accepted as English words, but not Māori or Pacific Island words
- the names of parties in the citation of law cases
- see and see also when used for cross references
- scientific names of genera, species, subspecies and varieties of animals and plants, such as *Apteryx owenii*. See also [Scientific names](#).

Use single quotation marks instead of italics for:

- articles in magazines, journals and newspapers
- chapters and sections of books (*see also* [Bold](#) and [Underline](#)).

Limit the use of italics to make particular words stand out from the main body of the text. If used too freely such highlighting loses its force and becomes unattractive. However, there are occasions when emphasising words is necessary.

## Underline

Underlining can be very confusing to read online; do not underline any words (including URLs or email addresses). To add emphasis you can use italics or bold, sparingly.

## Using the Ministry's logo

You can request the Ministry's logo, through [UView](#). The logo should not be given to external people to use on their documents or web pages without approval from the Brand and Experience team, even if you are working with them on something.

## Writing for the web

The Ministry's websites and intranet provide information in a completely different medium from printed publications. People read information on a computer screen differently from how they read a printed document.

While the basic rules of writing simply, clearly and concisely are universal, web-based information is often presented differently from printed material. This includes the order pages are structured in (called their 'architecture') and the way information on each page is

structured and formatted – headings are used to break up information within a page, italics and underlining are not used online, and short paragraphs are preferred.

There are also special devices available when writing online information, such as hyperlinks.

Web writing is the opposite of formal writing. The tone of all online content should be friendly, straightforward and credible. The level of formality or chattiness may differ depending on the intended audience.

## Who needs to be involved

If you are preparing content for the web, the Digital and Insights team and your communications advisor need to be involved from the beginning to help decide the best structure (architecture) and help you write your content.

## Accessibility

From 1 July 2019, all government websites and all the content on them must fully comply with the [Government Web Standards](#) for accessibility.

Accessible online content makes it easy for users with disabilities – such as blindness, low vision and mobility impairment – to read, listen to, and interact with the content, with or without the aid of assistive technologies like screen readers.

Making content accessible to people with permanent or temporary disabilities, makes the content better for all users.

For more information see the [NZ Government web standards](#).

## Tips and guidelines

### **Write for the reader – think about:**

- What is the purpose of the page?
- Who is your audience?
- What do they want from this page?
- What words would your target audience use?

### **Say it as concisely as possible**

- Don't waste a word. Ask always: what am I **really** trying to say, what do my readers **really** need to know?
- Focus on essential messages only — ones that meet the purpose of the page and the readers' needs. Ask: is this content relevant, do readers really need to know this, would they be interested?

## **Introduce each page with a short summary**

- Introduce each page with a short summary about the purpose of the page and what information it will provide the reader. Place this summary at the top of the page, below the title.
- Aim to give the most important information in the first 10 words, and keep the entire summary within about 25 words.

## **Use plain English**

- Structure content for your intended reader, with the most important messages first (both within the page and under each heading).
- Use frequent, concise, informative headings that describe content that follows.
- Use simple, familiar words.
- Speak directly to the reader by using personal pronouns where possible (eg, 'you'). This will also help you focus on the reader as you write.
- Keep sentences short – aim for a maximum of 20 words – and one idea per sentence.
- Keep paragraphs short – maximum of six lines of text.
- Use the active voice where possible. For example, instead of: "The report was written by the Ministry", write: "The Ministry wrote the report".
- Use positive language – try to say what people should do, not what they shouldn't.
- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations when first used in a page.

## **Create white space around your text**

- Chunk text under regular headings to break up walls of text.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Use lists to grab attention, but keep them short (two–five items). If a list needs to be longer, group items under informative sub-headings.

## **Link well and match menu text with page titles**

- Avoid 'link splatter' where your links are splattered throughout your content. Keep links separate from paragraph text, to prevent readers being confused about whether to read text or leave the page via the link now.
- Write informative link text that describes where the link will take the reader. Never write 'click here'.
- Make sure link names match destination page titles.

## **Create accessible graphs, images and tables**

- Provide a text description for graphs and images that describes what information the graph or image is conveying.
- Limit the size of tables — try to make them short and narrow enough to fit on most screens.

## Write correctly, format text for web readers

- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid using italics, which are hard to read online. Try using single quote marks or brackets around text instead.
- Don't underline words, as this formatting can make text look like a hyperlink.
- Use bold for emphasis but sparingly.
- Don't use all capitals — which 'shout' online.
- Follow our Style Guide.

# Word template for Ministry documents

Use the Ministry's publication and information sheet templates to prepare your publications.

## Accessing the template

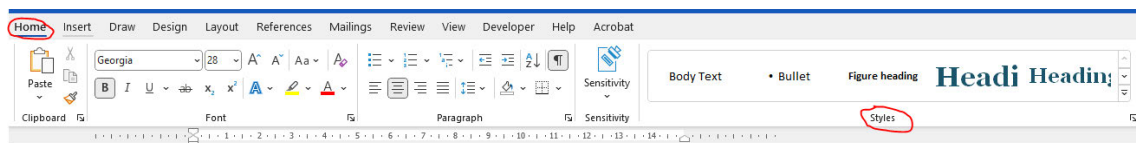
The templates are available in Microsoft Word by selecting File > New > and choosing a template.

The template has pre-populated content illustrating the styles. You may find it easier to keep this content in the document for your reference until you have finished writing your text. We advise not to delete the title page, imprint page (inside cover), and contents page.

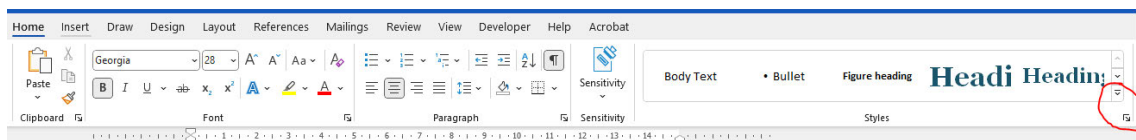
## Styles

The template has built-in styles, and these should not be changed. If you need formatting that isn't available from the pre-set styles, please talk to the Band and Experience team.

The most commonly used styles are displayed in the 'Home' ribbon under 'Styles'.

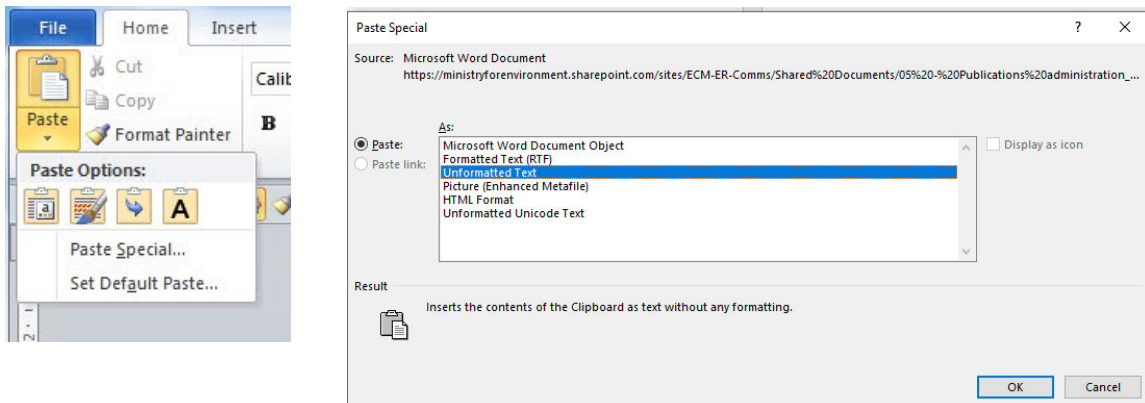


Use the drop-down or the pop-out button to access all the available styles in the template.



## Inserting text from another document

Always use Paste Special [unformatted text] when pasting text into the template from another document. (The keyboard shortcut for this is: Alt + CTRL + V.)



## Inserting pre-formatted tables, case study and shaded boxes

Insert formatted tables, blue and green boxes by copying them from the template.

## Further help

If you need further help using the template, please contact the Publishing team.

# Appendix A: Common Ministry for the Environment abbreviations and their meanings

AEE	assessment of environmental effects
ANZECC	Australia and New Zealand Environment Committee Council
CBC	Cabinet Business Committee
CCP–NZ	Communities for Climate Protection – New Zealand
CCRA	Climate Change Response Act 2002
CEF	Community Environment Fund
CEEF	Chief Executives’ Environment Forum
COP	Conference to the Parties (to a convention)
CRI	Crown research institute
CSRf	Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund
DOC	Department of Conservation
EECA	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ELA	Environmental Legal Assistance Fund
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas
GMO	genetically modified organism
HAIL	Hazardous Activities and Industries List
HAPINZ	Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LAWF	Land and Water Forum
LGA	Local Government Act 2002
LINZ	Land Information New Zealand
LTCCP	long-term council community plan
LUCAS	Land Use and Carbon Analysis System
LULUCF	land use, land-use change and forestry sector
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MEC	Marine Environments Classification
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NES	national environmental standard

NDC	nationally determined contribution
NGAs	negotiated greenhouse agreements
NGO/NGOs	non-government organisation(s)
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NOF	National Objectives Framework (for freshwater)
NPS	national policy statement
NPS-FM	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
NRS	Natural Resources Sector
NZ ETS	New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme
NZU	New Zealand Unit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
POP	persistent organic pollutant
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
QMS	quota management system
RIS	regulatory impact statement
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RONZ	Recycling Operators of New Zealand
TSP	total suspended particulate
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VOC	volatile organic compound
WMF	Waste Minimisation Fund
WCO	water conservation order
WHO	World Health Organization

# Appendix B: Common Ministry for the Environment words and terms

See also [appendix C: Māori words and terms relevant to Ministry writing](#), [Place names of New Zealand](#) (Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand), the [New Zealand Gazetteer](#)

## A

Act (of parliament)  
acknowledgement  
AD (eg, 1000 AD)  
afforestation  
ageing (with an e)  
airborne (note the e)  
air conditioning (noun); air-conditioning (adj)  
air quality standard  
airshed  
ammoniacal  
at risk

## B

backyard (one word)  
baseline  
bathing-water (hyphen only when adj, as in bathing-water quality)  
benzene  
Bill (parliamentary)  
billion (= one thousand million)  
biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>)  
bioeconomy  
biofouling  
biogas  
biogeographical  
biomass  
Biosecurity Act 1993  
biosolids  
bio-accumulate

bottom trawl, bottom-trawling

broadleaved

Building Code

buy-back

bycatch

by-product

bylaw

## C

CO<sub>2</sub> not CO2

CO<sub>2</sub>e

Cabinet (as in 'Cabinet paper') always has a capital 'C'

call in (noun); call-in (adj)

*Campylobacter*

century (19th, 20th)

chlorophyll-a (chl-a)

clause, clauses (in a Schedule to an Act)

'clean and green' or 'clean, green' (New Zealand's international branding)

Clean Car Discount, Clean Car Standard, Clean Car package

cleanfill(s)

Climate Change Response Act 2002

co-exist

coliform

compared with (*not* compared to)

comprise (*not* comprise of)

Conservation Act 1987

continental shelf

coordinate

cooperate  
cost-effective  
council (initial caps only for a particular one, eg, Nelson City Council)  
COVID-19  
crop lands  
Crown entity  
Crown research institutes  
Cultural Health Index

**D**

data are (always plural)  
dataset  
daytime  
decision-makers  
decision-making  
de-couple  
deepwater (adj)  
degrees Celsius  
Department of Conservation (DOC *not* DoC)  
discernible  
dispersion (of air pollution)  
Dobson units (DU)  
Douglas-fir  
downstream  
drinking water standards  
drinking water supply  
dry stock (noun); dry-stock (adj)

**E**

Earth (not the Earth)  
east coast (South Island)  
eco-labelling  
eco-toxic  
ecosystem  
eliminated from *not* eliminated in  
El Niño  
email  
emissions reduction plan (lower case, never ERP)

end-of-life (eg, 'end-of-life oil')  
end user  
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000  
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority  
enterococci  
Environment Act 1986  
Environmental Protection Authority Act 2011  
equivalent to *or* the equivalent of (as appropriate)  
erosion-prone (adj)  
*Escherichia coli*  
*E. coli*  
et al (not italics and no full stops)  
exceedances  
Exclusive Economic Zone (use initial caps)  
Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012

**F**

fact sheet (not factsheet)  
farmland  
Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Management Act 2005  
firewood (one word)  
floodplains  
floodwater  
freshwater (always one word)  
freshwater bodies  
focused, focusing  
framework

**G**

gasfield  
gazetted airshed  
Government (a specific government; 'the Government')  
gram *not* gramme  
grassland

greenhouse gas emissions

gross domestic product

ground-level ozone

groundwater

groundwater take

## H

halon

Hawke's Bay

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996

high-temperature (hyphenated before noun)

high-water mark

hill-country (adj)

home heating (noun); home-heating (adj)

homeowners (one word)

home page (two words)

human-made (*not* man-made)

hydro-electricity

## I

in-depth knowledge

increased – 'increased 5 per cent' not 'increased by 5 per cent'

inshore

in-stream (adj)

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

inter-governmental

internet (lower case i)

intranet (lower case i)

## J

judgement [but note: 'judgment' in a legal context]

## K

kilogram *not* kilogramme

kilometre, kilometres (in full; not km) (not kilometer) but use km<sup>2</sup> for square kilometres

kiwi (lower case k for bird, but capital K for Kiwi person)

Kyoto Protocol

## L

land-base species

land-base (adj)

land-care

landcare group

Landcare Trust

land cover

land-cover classes

Land Cover Database (LCDB) / national Land Cover Database

Land Cover Database series 1 (LCDB 1)

Land Cover Database series 2 (LCDB 2)

Land Environments of New Zealand

landholder

land owners

land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector

land-use map

landfill

La Niña

levelling-off (adj)

licence (n)

licensing

life-cycle (adj) / life cycle (noun)

life force

lifetime

light-absorbing gases

liquid petroleum gas

litre in full or /

long-term council community plan (lower case)

long-term plan

low-lying (adj)

low-emissions (adj)

## M

macroalgae (no hyphen)  
macroinvertebrates  
Marine Environment Classification  
marine protected areas (initial caps only for a particular one, eg, Tapuae Marine Protected Area)  
marine reserve (initial caps only for a particular one, eg, Akaroa Marine Reserve)  
Marsden Point oil refinery  
Māui dolphin  
Maui gasfield  
megawatts  
memorandum of understanding (singular), memoranda of understanding (plural)  
metre, metres (in full in text)  
MfE (use sparingly eg, alongside other Ministry acronyms; use 'Ministry for the Environment' or 'the Ministry')  
microgram  
micrograms per cubic metre ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  used in tables)  
micro-organism  
mid-1990s (hyphenated, no apostrophe)  
mid-latitudes  
mid-point  
milligrams per cubic metre ( $\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$  used in tables)  
millilitres (ml in tables)  
millimetre, millimetres (in full rather than mm in main text)  
Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry, *not* MfE)  
monofill (not monofil)  
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1987  
more than not 'over' (eg, ~~over~~ more than 10 per cent of pests)  
Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e

## N

national environmental standard(s) (initial caps only for a particular one)

National Exotic Forest Description  
National Grid  
National Pest Management Strategy  
national policy statement (initial caps only for a particular one)  
nationally endangered  
nationwide  
net-zero (adj, eg, a net-zero economy, but 'until we reach net zero')  
New Zealand (use [non-breaking space](#) so does not break over line)  
New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2000  
*New Zealand Gazette* (italics)  
New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement  
New Zealand Land Cover Database  
New Zealand Threat Classification lists  
New Zealand Units (NZUs)  
night time  
nitrogen-fixing crops  
NO<sub>x</sub> (oxides of nitrogen, nitrous oxides) – use subscript 'x' in this expression  
non-consumptive  
non-ferrous  
non-fossil  
non-government organisations  
non-point-source  
non-threatening  
North and South islands  
northern hemisphere  
north-east / north-easterly  
noticeable  
a number of (be specific or use 'several')  
NZ\$218 million

## O

ocean-going  
offshore  
on-site inspection *but* on site (noun)  
one-third

ongoing  
online  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
outfall (one word)  
override  
ozone-depleting (hyphenated before noun)  
Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996  
Ozone Layer Protection Regulations 1996

## P

Parliament  
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (the commissioner)  
Parliamentary Counsel (*Note*: Counsel not Council)  
particulate matter  
parts per million (ppm)  
parts per billion (ppb)  
per cent (two words) but % can be used in tables and graphs) (*Note*: an increase from 57 per cent to 61 per cent is a 4 percentage point increase, not a 4 per cent increase)  
perfluorocarbons (PFCs)  
Permanent Forest Sink Initiative  
Permitted activity rules [council regional plans]  
persistent organic pollutants (POPs)  
persistent organochlorines  
pest populations  
petrochemical (one word)  
petrol-fuelled vehicles  
photochemical  
point-source  
policy-maker  
policy-making  
PM<sub>10</sub> – also PM<sub>2.5</sub>  
premature (*not* hyphenated)  
pre-human  
pre-industrial

primary energy supply  
primary production sector  
prior to – use ‘before’  
Projects to Reduce Emissions programme  
protocols

## Q

Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (QEII Trust)

## R

Radiata pine  
rainfall  
rainfall depth  
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971)  
Regulations (spelt with an initial capital)  
reinvansion  
remediated  
Reserves Act 1977  
resource efficiency  
resource intensity  
Resource Management Act 1991  
reuse  
risk of *not* risk due to  
riverbed  
river water  
River Environment Classification  
road user charges (RUCs)  
rohe (area)  
run-off (noun)  
rush hour (no hyphen)

## S

saltmarsh  
saltwater  
sand spit  
sandstone  
Schedule (to an Act)  
sea floor  
seabed

seabed trenches  
seabird  
seafloor  
sea-level (hyphenate as adj)  
seamounts  
seaports  
seawater (adj and noun)  
section, sections (of an Act)  
set net fishing  
soilforms  
shelterbelts  
shorebird  
shoreline  
shrubland  
single-source discharges  
slowdown (*not* hyphenated)  
smoky  
snowmelt  
SO<sub>x</sub> (oxides of sulphur) – use subscript ‘x’ in this expression  
socio-economic  
Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941  
solid fuel burner  
songbird  
southernmost  
Southern Hemisphere  
southeast  
southwest  
species names (non-scientific common names): no caps unless they contain proper nouns (eg, Hector’s dolphin)  
spinoff  
springtime (one word)  
square kilometres – can be abbreviated to km<sup>2</sup> in text  
stabilisation  
standard-scale topographic map  
state-owned

Stats NZ (not Statistics New Zealand)  
stopbanks  
stormwater  
stream-bank planting  
streambed  
subdivision  
sulphur (*not* sulfur)  
sulphur dioxide concentrations  
sub-alpine  
subantarctic  
subcategory  
subspecies  
subtropical  
subsurface  
sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)  
summertime (one word)  
sundown (one word)  
swampland

## T

Tb (tuberculosis)  
territorial sea/waters  
three-and-a-half  
timeframe  
time lag (*not* hyphenated)  
timescale  
time series  
topsoil  
tonne, tonnes (in full)  
total allowable catch  
Treaty of Waitangi (the Treaty)  
tree line  
Trophic Level Index  
two-thirds

## U

ultramafic (soils)  
ultraviolet (one word)

up-to-date information *but* the information is up to date

unflued

under-represented

underway (always one word)

unitary authorities

un-shaded

upstream

uptake

useable

## **V**

vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)

volatile organic compounds

Volcanic Plateau

## **W**

waste-to-energy projects

waste flow

waste hierarchy

Waste Minimisation Act 2008

waste stream

wastewater

water body

water conservation orders (initial caps only for a particular one, eg, Buller Water Conservation Order)

water cycle

water flow

waterfront

waterway (one word)

web page (two words)

website (one word)

wellbeing

well-developed (ie, 'well-developed systems', but 'the systems are well developed')

widespread

wintertime (one word)

wood burner

workstream

World Health Organization (note American spelling)

## **Z**

Zero Carbon Framework

zero-emission vehicle

# Appendix C: Māori words relevant to Ministry writing

The following is a list of Māori kupu that are relevant to Ministry writing. It shows which words require a macron. *See also:* [Maori](#)

## A

awa

## H

Hakatere River

hāngi

hapū

harakeke

Hau Nui

Heretaunga

hihi

hoki

Horowhenua

Hōte

huia

Hūnua

## I

iwi

## K

Kaikōura

kaimoana

Kaitāia

Kaitiaki

kaitiakitanga

kākā

kākāpō

Kākāriki

Kakaunui River

kānuka

Karori

Kā Tiritiri o te Moana (Southern Alps)

kaumātua

kauri

Kawarau

kea

kererū

kiwi (lower case 'k' for bird, but capital 'K' for Kiwi person)

kōkako

Kopuatai

kōrero

korimako

koura

kūmara

## M

mahinga kai

Mahurangi

mana

mana whenua

Manapōuri

Manawatū

Mangawai

Mangawhero River

mānuka

Māori

matagouri

mātaimai

Mātakitaki

Mataura River

mātauranga Māori

Māui dolphin

maunga

mauri  
moa  
moana  
Mōhaka  
mōhua  
Monowai River

## **N**

Ngā  
Ngā Kaihautū Tikanga Taiao  
Ngā Whenua Rāhui  
Ngāi  
Ngāi Tahu  
Ngāti  
Ngāti Kahungunu  
Ngāti Konohi  
Ngāti Tūwharetoa  
ngutu pare

## **O**

Ōhau (Lake)  
Ōhau River  
Okakari (Point Marine Reserve)  
Ōkarito  
Ōmāpere  
Ōmārama  
oneharuru  
Onetea  
Ōpihi  
Ōpōtiki  
Orēti  
Ōtaki  
Ōtago

## **P**

Pākehā  
Papatipu Rūnanga  
Papatūānuku (Earth mother)  
Paru  
pāua

pekapeka  
pepeketua  
Piako  
Pōhara  
pōhutakawa  
pōpokatea  
pounamu  
pua o te reinga  
Pūkaki (Lake)  
Pūkaki River  
Punakāiki

## **R**

Rāhui  
Rangaitata  
Ranginui (Sky father)  
Rangitaikī  
Rangitīkei  
rangatiratanga  
Rēinga  
rohe  
Rotoiti  
Rotorua  
rowi  
Ruamāhanga  
Rūnanga

## **T**

Tāhunanui  
taiāpure  
Taieri River  
Takapuna  
takiwā  
tangata whenua  
taonga  
tapu  
tarakihi  
Taranaki  
Tararua

Tatapouri Heads  
Taupō  
Tauranga  
tauranga waka  
Tawharanui  
te ao Māori  
Te Aroha  
Te Heuheu Tūkino IV  
Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura  
Te Kūiti  
Te mana o te wai  
Te Moana o Atawhenua  
Te Puke  
Te Puni Kōkiri  
Te Pūrengi  
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu  
Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve  
Te Tiriti o Waitangi  
Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa  
Te Whanganui a Hei Marine Reserve  
Tekapō (Lake)  
tī kouka  
tīeke  
tikanga Māori  
Tīmaru  
tio  
tītī  
tohu  
Tongariro  
tōtara  
tuatara  
tūi  
Tukituki River  
tupuna (singular); tūpuna (plural)  
Tūtoko

## **U**

urupā

## **W**

wāhi tapu  
wāhi taonga  
Waihou  
Waikare  
Waimakariri  
Waipā  
Waipaoa River  
Waipoa  
Wairākei  
Wairarapa  
Waitakere Ranges  
Waitangi  
Waitara River  
Waitomo  
Waituna  
Wānaka  
Wanganui  
weka  
wētā  
Whakanewha  
whakapapa  
Whakatāne  
whānau  
Whangamarino  
Whanganui River  
Whangarā  
Whangārei  
whio

# Appendix D: Commonly confused words

Words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings can cause writers trouble. Some of the more common ones are listed below.

Word	Meaning	Example
<b>advice</b>	(noun) Words offered or given as an opinion or recommendation.	The Ministry for the Environment provides advice, information and leadership on New Zealand's environment.
<b>advise</b>	(verb) To give advice, recommend or inform.	I advise you to do nothing about this until you've discussed it with your lawyer.
<b>affect</b>	(verb) To attack or touch the feelings of, or produce an effect on something.	Tree growth is affected by wasp populations.
<b>effect</b>	(noun) The result of an action.  (verb) To bring about or to accomplish.	The effects of transport pollution include irritated eyes, throat and lungs.  He effected a quick retreat.
<b>alternate</b>	(adj) Every other.	She was asked to report on alternate Saturdays.
<b>alternative</b>	(adj) Available as a choice.	Alternative arrangements will be made if necessary.
<b>amount</b>	(noun) Use only for quantities that cannot be counted.	A large amount of paper work.
<b>number</b>	(noun) Use for quantities that can be counted, followed by a plural.	A number of suggestions.
<b>biannually</b>	(adv) This term is ambiguous with some dictionaries giving twice-yearly as the meaning and others giving 'every two years'. To avoid confusion, it's safer to use an expression such as 'twice annually' or 'twice a year'.	The newsletter is published twice annually (or twice a year) – in May and December.
<b>biennially</b>	(adv) Every two years.	An international art exhibition is held biennially in Venice, hence its name the Venice Biennale.

Word	Meaning	Example
<b>complement/ complementary</b>	(verb/adj) Suggests the addition of something to make it whole or complete.	Her skills complemented those of the other team members.  Her skills were complementary.
<b>compliment/ complimentary</b>	(verb/noun/adj) Refers to an expression of praise or admiration.	The teacher complimented the pupil on her piano playing.  The teacher was complimentary about the pupil's piano playing.
<b>confidant (fem: confidante)</b>	(noun) A person you trust with private information.	She was confident (sure, trusting) that her confidant (the person she had shared secrets with) would not reveal what she had said.
<b>confident</b>	(adj) Trusting, fully assured.	[see example above]
<b>council</b>	(noun) A body/assembly of people meeting for discussion and consultation.	It is a free service provided by councils so householders can safely dispose of their hazardous waste.
<b>counsel</b>	(noun/verb) Advice/or to give advice.	They said he always gave wise counsel.  The lawyer counselled me not to give evidence.  <i>Note:</i> Parliamentary Counsel (not Council).
<b>dependant</b>	(noun) Someone who relies on another person for support (often financial).	She has four dependants.
<b>dependent</b>	(adj) Reliant, usually followed by 'on'.	Many of New Zealand's economic activities are dependent on the sea.
<b>discreet</b>	(adj) Prudent, circumspect.	I'm too discreet to mention who confused these two words.
<b>discrete</b>	(adj) Separate, distinct.	The atmosphere is layered into a series of discrete zones where gases of different densities tend to cluster.
<b>disinterested</b>	(adj) Free from personal bias.	Since the judge stands to profit from the sale of the company, she cannot be considered a disinterested party in the dispute.
<b>uninterested</b>	(adj) Caring nothing for the matter in question.	She sat there looking bored and uninterested in the discussion.

Word	Meaning	Example
<b>fewer</b>	(adj) Refers to a number or something that can be counted.	There were fewer than 50 people at the meeting.
<b>less</b>	(adj) Refers to an amount that cannot be counted.	He did less work than the others.
<b>method</b>	(noun) One method.	
<b>methodology</b>	(noun) Methodology is <i>about</i> the methods of doing something; it is often incorrectly used to mean 'method'.	Most sciences have their own specific methods, which are supported by methodologies (ie, the rationales that support the method's validity).
<b>forward</b>	(adv) Toward or at a place, point, or time in advance.  (adj) Describes something that is in front or advanced.	Let's move forward to get a better view.  The forward part of a ship.
<b>foreword</b>	(noun) A short introductory statement in a published work, as a book, especially when written by someone other than the author.	The report began with a foreword by the Minister.
<b>formally</b>	(adv) In a formal manner.	Formerly the smallest planet in the solar system, Pluto is now formally known as a dwarf planet.
<b>formerly</b>	(adv) At an earlier period or age.	(see above).
<b>imply</b>	(verb) To suggest or hint at something.	His tone implied a reluctance to talk about the event.
<b>infer</b>	(verb) To deduce or to pick up a hint.	From his tone she inferred he might have something to hide.
<b>lead</b>	(verb) The same spelling is used for present and future; always sounds like 'ee'.	She leads the race.  The proposal will lead to significant developments.
<b>lead</b>	(noun) A metal substance. Pronounced 'led'.	Hazardous substances in products include lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium.
<b>led</b>	(verb) The simple past tense and past participle of the verb 'to lead'.	Two committee members led the inquiry.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>licence</b>	(noun) A printed form giving permission to do something.	Her driver's licence would not expire for a further two years.
<b>license</b>	(verb) To grant authoritative permission to do something.	He is not licensed to drive that vehicle.
<b>loose</b>	(adj) Not held by any bond or restraint.	She likes to wear her hair loose.
<b>lose</b>	(verb) To cease to have, or to be unable to find something.	Leave the key at Reception in case you lose it.
<b>passed</b>	(verb) The simple past tense and the past participle of the verb 'to pass'.	He passed his final examination.
<b>past</b>	(adj) Usually refers to a former time.  As a preposition, means beyond in time or place.	She is the past president.  She walked past the officer.
<b>personal</b>	(adj) Of, or pertaining to, a particular person.	Personal cleanliness; one's personal life.
<b>personnel</b>	(noun) A body of employees as in 'personnel division or department'.	
<b>practice</b>	(noun) A habit, a custom or a repeated exercise.	The guidelines illustrate and promote best practice in soil analysis.
<b>practise</b>	(verb) To perform habitually; to carry out in action.	He practises law.
<b>principal</b>	(adj) First in rank or importance.	My principal objection is the cost of the project.
<b>principal</b>	(noun) A head or ruler; head of a school.	Teachers are hitting out at school principals who strike up corporate-style pay deals.
<b>principle</b>	(noun) A fundamental truth or standard.  'In principle' means 'in theory'.  'On principle' means 'because of the principle'.	The Act incorporates sustainability as its underlying principle.  The two nations agreed in principle to the ceasefire terms with the details still to be worked through.  I won't buy Australian wine on principle (they beat us at the last World Cup).

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>sort</b>	(verb) To arrange something systematically or according to type, class and so on.	He sorted the books according to author.
<b>sought</b>	Past participle of the verb 'to seek'.	She sought advice from her supervisor.
<b>substantial</b>	(adj) Of considerable size or importance.	A substantial reduction in her workload meant she could work three instead of five days a week.
<b>substantive</b>	(adj) Real, firm or meaningful.	There were substantive issues under discussion.
<b>stationary</b>	(adj) Remaining in one place, not moving.	House prices have remained stationary for a while.
<b>stationery</b>	(noun) Writing materials.	See if there are any staplers in the stationery cupboard.
<b>their</b>	(pronoun)	What time is their departure for Rome?
<b>there</b>	(adv)	When do they arrive there?
<b>they're</b>	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	They're still waiting for the aircraft to depart.
<b>who's</b>	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	Who's [who has] left their book on the table?
<b>whose</b>	(pronoun)	Whose book is on the table?
<b>your</b>	(pronoun)	It's going to rain. Take your umbrella with you.
<b>you're</b>	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	You're going to get wet if you don't take your umbrella with you.

# Appendix E: Publishing steps

If you are producing a publication you'll need to work with the Publishing team. They'll provide advice and guidance and manage the production process for you.

The steps include:

- planning
- drafting
- editing and proofreading
- design and formatting
- web publishing and printing.

See: [Creating a publication](#) on Te Taiao for more information.



**Ministry for the  
Environment  
Brand Manual**

## Our why

A flourishing environment  
for every generation.

**He taiao tōnui mō ngā  
reanga katoa.**

Manatū Mō Te Taiao | Ministry for the Environment  
Poutūterangi March 2021

© Poutūterangi March 2021 Ministry for the Environment

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mfe.govt.nz

# Brand manual information and management plan

This brand manual is created for staff members, designers, advertising agencies, contractors, consultants, and anyone using the Ministry for the Environment brand.

## Purpose

This manual management plan outlines the updating procedures and contact points for the Ministry for the Environment brand manual.

## Manual name

Ministry for the Environment Brand Manual

## Availability

This manual is held in electronic form by the Ministry for the Environment Brand and Experience team ([brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz)) and is available on the intranet (Te Taiao).

## Manual owner

Manager, Brand and Experience  
Ministry for the Environment

## Amendments and review strategy

All corrective action/improvement requests suggesting changes will be acknowledged by the manual owner.

## Amendments (of a minor nature)

Updates will be incorporated immediately as they occur. If you have any suggestions of amendments, please contact [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

## Review (major changes)

Amendments to the manual will be incorporated as soon as practicable. Frequency will be in line with system upgrades and will occur as necessary.

## Amendment history

Version 1.0 | Poutūterangi March 2021

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# Introduction

# Introduction

Our brand represents our organisation and is a valuable asset. Our task is to maintain a strong, consistent brand that will continue to support our strategic direction and outcomes.

This brand manual for the Ministry for the Environment has been developed to help staff, partners and suppliers maintain a consistent, high-quality brand in all applications internally and externally. Along with the logo, typography, colour palette, and other graphic elements, specific directions are included to help you manage visual communication material.

## Our brand should:

- embody who we are and what we stand for
- determine what we look and sound like
- guide how we behave and engage with others.

## Our brand is much more than just a logo – and it happens planned or not. It is:

- our purpose: the reason we're here, the way we are perceived, our reputation
- how we demonstrate our behaviour
- the way we look – like our websites and publications
- the language we use and the way we write
- every interaction anyone has with us: it's the entire experience of us.

By accurately and consistently following these guidelines, you protect and enhance the Ministry brand.

## A.1 Approvals and queries

Any use of our brand, graphic elements, templates, and design resources, including in internal documents, must be approved by the Brand and Experience team.

We have tried to allow for every eventuality, but inevitably unique situations will arise.

For approvals or any questions about the brand and its application, please contact the Brand and Experience team by emailing: [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

### Using UView

UView is the Ministry's digital asset management system. It allows us to:

- easily search for images by keywords
- know which images are licensed
- track model releases
- ensure images are not overused
- report on logo and other brand requests
- send large image/brand files to external suppliers (eg, designers).

The Brand and Experience team are the administrators for UView. Ministry staff have access through the Single Sign On to browse through the library and order an image or logo.

To get access for external suppliers who need access to UView, contact the Brand and Experience team by emailing [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

#### BRAND RULE ALERT

When you see this, it means a brand rule alert.

These rules are non-negotiable and must be followed in all instances. Failure to follow these basic brand application rules will result in your communication being rejected for publication or distribution.

#### FILES AVAILABLE

When you see this, it means there are template, image or vector files available.

These formats are suitable for print- and screen-based applications. These are available from the Brand and Experience team or UView.

## A.2 Our name

Our full name is:  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao.

Refer to us as Ministry for the Environment when you first mention our organisation. If your communication is for an internal audience only, you can use either the Ministry or MfE.

Our preferred style is to use personal pronouns when referring to the Ministry – so *we* or *us*.

The organisation is a single entity and so takes singular verb, for example *the Ministry for the Environment is part of the Crown*, not *Ministry for the Environment are part of the Crown*.

## A.3 What we do

When explaining what the Ministry does, there are four main points to emphasise:

- we lead across the environmental system
- we put the environment at the heart of decision-making
- we ground our work in data and evidence
- we bring the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori into our work every day.

### FILES AVAILABLE

A separate style guide which sets out our minimum standards for writing and formatting documents is available on Te Taiao or by emailing [publications@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:publications@mfe.govt.nz).

#### 45 WORDS

The Ministry for the Environment, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, is creating a flourishing environment for every generation. We work to improve urban environments, climate, natural resource and land use, sustainability, food production, and waste. We connect people and communities with the environment, for their wellbeing.

#### 100 WORDS

The Ministry for the Environment, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, is creating a flourishing environment for every generation. We lead transformation across New Zealand's environmental management systems, accelerating delivery on the ground.

We improve urban environments, climate, natural resource and land use, sustainability, food production, and waste. We connect people and communities with Te Taiao, the environment, for their wellbeing.

We bring the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori into environmental decision-making, and into our work every day.

We bring the environment to the heart of decision making, and our advice and actions are grounded in science and evidence.

#### 150 WORDS

The Ministry for the Environment, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, is the Government's primary adviser on environmental matters. There are unique challenges in protecting our environment and we strive to work with everyone to enable meaningful and impactful change and create a flourishing environment for every generation.

We lead transformation across New Zealand's environmental management systems, accelerating delivery on the ground.

We improve the quality of New Zealand's urban environments and how our natural resources are allocated. We are building a sustainable and resilient land and food system and transitioning New Zealand to a climate-resilient, low emission future. We connect people and communities with Te Taiao, the environment, for their wellbeing.

We bring the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori into environmental decision-making, and into our work every day.

The environment is at the heart of our decision-making, and our advice and actions are grounded in science and evidence.



**Our logo**



## **Our logo is a valuable brand asset.**

It is like a trademark and must create an immediate and lasting impression on our behalf. Incorrect use of our logo destroys the value that has been carefully considered in its creation.

Our logo must be used on all internal and external material we develop.

## B.1 Our logo

Our logo should always be reproduced in its entirety and without alteration.



### THE ANATOMY OF OUR LOGO

Throughout this guide, you'll see us reference different parts of the logo. For clarity, we've outlined what these terms mean below:



### A HISTORY OF OUR LOGO

A year after the Ministry began in 1986, Wellington graphic artist Barbara Gibb was commissioned to design a logo to symbolise the central role the new Ministry would play in New Zealand's environmental management.

Her design reflects the letters MFE in a conceptual manner and incorporates the elements of earth, water and air. The logo is set within a circle to indicate that the New Zealand environment must be seen within a global context.

To represent the Ministry's responsibility to balance the interests of development and preservation, the designer based the logo on the traditional Chinese yin-yang symbol – ie, a circle divided in half by an 's', often with black on one side of the 's' and white on the other. The yin-yang symbol is central to Taoist philosophy which believes there are two fundamental and opposing forces affecting

all phenomena. The yin, or passive principle in nature, is balanced by the yang, or active principle.

The designer also incorporated the Māori kowhaiwhai pattern in the design to signify birth and growth – appropriate for the new Ministry and also to reflect our statutory responsibilities to ensure Māori values are taken into account in environmental decision-making.

When Denise Church became CEO in 1996, she reviewed the logo. The colours were changed to blue and red, the outer circle was made stronger and slight adjustments made to give the logo more symmetry (as on the right). The typography was also changed and the Māori translation added. The logo has not changed since.

In 2021, we expanded the guidelines to allow for wider uses, especially in digital formats.

## B.2 Accepted logo formats

There are two accepted formats for the logo, with others available at the discretion of the Brand and Experience team.

### Accepted formats

- one colour (black or PMS black 6C), reversed (white).

### With permission from Brand and Experience:

- two colour (only used with permission from the Brand and Experience team)
- logo icon (only for social media use).

Specific logos for funds administered by the Ministry (like the Waste Minimisation Fund) can be accessed via UView or by emailing the Brand and Experience Team: [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

### Standard logos for regular use

#### ONE COLOUR (BLACK OR PMS BLACK 6C)



#### REVERSED (WHITE)



### Logos that can only be used with permission of the Brand and Experience team

#### TWO COLOUR



#### SOCIAL MEDIA EXCEPTION

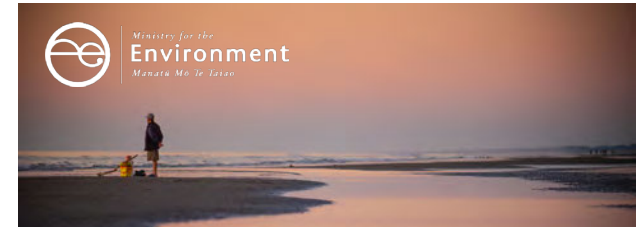


#### FILES AVAILABLE

All logo files are available for approved design agencies, contractors and consultants. To gain access, email [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz) or visit the Brand and Experience Hub on Te Taiao.

### Examples

Here are some examples of our logo on different coloured backgrounds. If you are applying the logo to a photographic background, please ensure there is sufficient contrast for the logo to be easily visible.



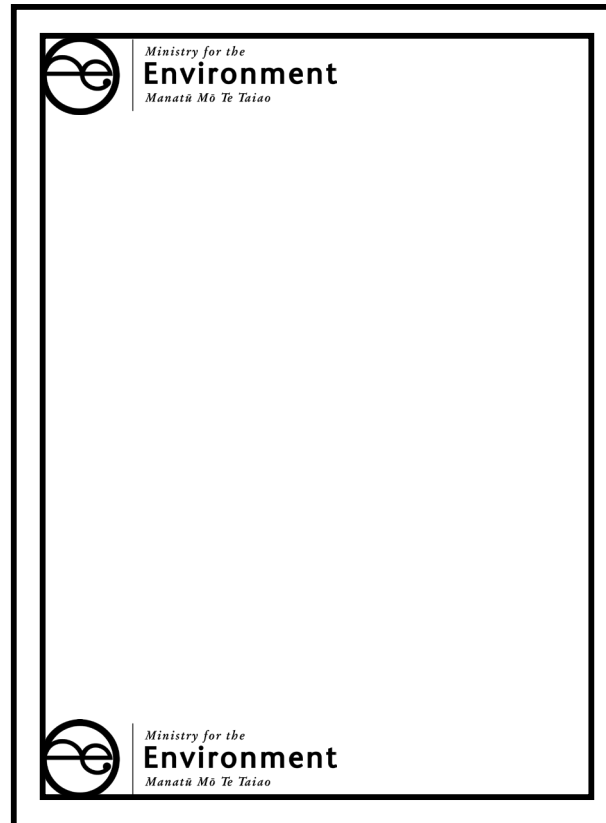
## B.3 Logo placement

Consistent logo positioning gives our communications unity and cohesion, which in turn makes them more recognisable and familiar to people.

In most cases, our logo should be positioned at the bottom or top left of the layout. The diagram opposite shows the minimum distance the logo must be from the page edges. Never place the logo closer to the page edge than indicated.

The only acceptable departure from this would be if the logo is being used in conjunction with a number of other logos in a co-branding or endorsement situation.

A4 PAGE LOGO PLACEMENT



On an A4 document, the logo should be placed a minimum of 15mm from the left hand side of the page, and either 15mm from the top or bottom of the page.

OTHER PAGE TYPES – MINIMUM LOGO POSITIONING



Use the icon 'e' to correctly position the logo in relation to the page edges.

## B.4 Minimum size

The minimum size that the logo should be reproduced is 50mm wide.

This is the smallest size allowable for the logo to appear. However, there may be times when the minimum size is not small enough (eg, on our social media profile pictures). In this situation, please contact the Brand and Experience team for advice.

Depending on the size of the publication, the logo size will also change. Please take care to apply the logo at an appropriate size to ensure it is legible and has impact on the page.

MINIMUM SIZE

**50mm**



## B.5 Clear space requirements

These clear space requirements ensure the logo is clearly recognised.

The minimum clear space around the logo when used by itself is determined by the height of the icon 'e' element in the logo. Electronically supplied files of the logo already have this minimum clear space.

Please ensure no text, imagery (other than background imagery) or other graphics sit inside the clear space zone. This ensures the logo always appears uncluttered, retaining its impact and visibility.

CLEAR SPACE



## B.6 What not to do

Never alter or modify the logo or its individual elements in any way. Never create new logos to represent the Ministry for the Environment or its teams, groups and projects.

There might be unique situations when special rules for logo application need to be developed and applied. Please contact the Brand and Experience team to discuss options.

Sub-brands, (eg, Jobs for Nature), co-branding, special format logos, and unusual logo reproduction requirements (such as extreme logo sizing, embroidery, and screen printing applications) will need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In these instances, always contact the Brand and Experience team for advice and recommendations.

**DO NOT** separate the text elements of the logo. Only use the logo in its entirety.



**DO NOT** recolour the logo. See page 14 for single colour application guidelines.



**DO NOT** create new or additional elements.



**DO NOT** separate the symbol element of the logo. Only use the logo in its entirety.



**DO NOT** stretch, distort or change any of the preset proportions of the logo in any way.



**DO NOT** create alternative logos.



**DO NOT** reconfigure the logo in any way. Only use approved electronic files.



**DO NOT** rotate, tilt or slant the logo on any axis. It must remain horizontal in all applications.



**DO NOT** apply the logo onto busy graphics or textured backgrounds.



### BRAND RULE ALERT

These rules are non-negotiable and must be followed in all instances. Failure to follow these basic brand application rules will result in your communication being rejected for publication or distribution.

## B.7 Logo file formats

An electronic library of the Ministry logo in different formats can be accessed on the Brand and Experience hub on Te Taiao or [UView](#).

### AI/EPS

AI and EPS files are the most versatile formats available. Logos provided in this format are suitable for offset printing. They are vector based, so can be scaled up or down without loss of quality. They can also be placed on different coloured backgrounds.

### JPEG/PNG

JPEG and PNG files are for use in applications like Word and PowerPoint as well as for screen use. Logos provided in this format can be scaled down, but not up in size.

PNG files have transparent backgrounds for use over correct colour backgrounds (see [page 14](#)). Only positive versions of the logo are available as JPEG files. These should only be used on a white background.

**FILES AVAILABLE**  
Only staff members, approved design agencies, contractors and consultants will get access to these logo files. To gain access, email [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz) or visit [Uview](#).

**Use of our  
logo with the all-  
of-government  
brand**





## Use of our logo with the all-of-government brand.

The New Zealand Government has an all-of-government brand identity for use by government agencies. This brand was developed to make government services more visible and identifiable for New Zealanders. It has been designed to be used in conjunction with existing government branding.

The all-of-government brand needs to be used on advertising campaigns, external publications, project-related signage, and websites. Use on stationery is optional. It does not need to be used on building signs, small classified advertising, uniforms, or vehicles. This section outlines how to use the all-of-government brand on Ministry for the Environment communications.

For specific directions on using the all-of-government brand, please refer to the all-of-government brand policy and guidelines at [www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/govt-brand](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/govt-brand).

## C.1 All-of-government logo formats

The all-of-government logo is available in several versions. It is best to take the all-of-government logo from the [government brand website](#). Instructions on when and how to use these logos in the [all-of-government brand guidelines](#).

### New Zealand Government

#### USE THIS VERSION ON:

- corporate documents and presentations, for example annual report, statement of intent, PowerPoint presentations
- brochures, mailouts, pamphlets and publications
- regional/project newsletters
- media releases
- websites.

### Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

#### USE THIS VERSION ON:

- te reo Māori communications
- other communications targeted at Māori audiences (eg, a newsletter that is distributed to a predominantly Māori audience should have this logo on it).

**FILES AVAILABLE**  
All logo files are available for approved design agencies, contractors and consultants. To gain access, email [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz) or visit the Brand and Experience Hub on Te Taiao.

## C.2 Minimum size of the all-of-government logo

There are some simple rules for applying the all-of-government logo.

The minimum size of the all-of-government logo is determined by the minimum size of the Ministry logo. The New Zealand Government logo should never be reproduced any smaller than the minimum sizes shown opposite.

### 'New Zealand Government' logo:

Minimum size is: 25mm x 2.6mm.

### 'Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa' te reo Māori logo:

Minimum size is: 29mm x 2.6mm.

These minimum sizes will apply in particular when the logos are to appear on small communication pieces. On larger material – A1 posters or billboards for example – the logos should appear so they can be easily seen and read.

#### MINIMUM SIZE

**25mm wide**  
**2.6mm high**



New Zealand Government

**29mm wide**  
**2.6mm high**



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

## C.3 Colour of the all-of-government logo

There are some simple rules for applying the all-of-government logo.

The preferred colour for reproducing the New Zealand Government logos are black, grey (60% black), or reversed out white. Other colours may be used where it is desired that the brand should appear integrated with the look and feel of a particular campaign or communication piece.

The preferred color for the all-of-government logo is black. Avoid applying the all-of-government logo in any other colour wherever possible.

When the Ministry logo is one colour (eg, black or white), the all-of-government logo must be the same colour.

### LOGO COLOUR

New Zealand Government

New Zealand Government

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

New Zealand Government

## C.4 Relationship between the Ministry logo and the all-of-government logo

There are some simple rules for applying the all-of-government logo.

The all of government logo size should be the same size as the 'e' in our logo's icon.

The examples opposite show the preferred logo relationship. The all-of-government logo is always secondary to our own and should be aligned to the centre of the Ministry logo.

### SPACE BETWEEN



**FILES AVAILABLE**  
Pre-made lock ups of the Ministry logo and all-of-government logo are available on request. Access these by emailing [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz) or visit [UView](#).



**Use of our  
logo with  
other brands**



## **Use of our logo with other brands**

We work closely with other agencies to ensure the environment is at the heart of decision-making.

On cross-agency and partner communications, it is sometimes necessary to apply two or more brands or 'co-brand' to clearly and visibly identify the project owners.

A series of logo lock ups have been designed to cater for a range of situations where the Ministry for the Environment logo needs to fit together with other brands.

If a specific situation exists that these options will not cover, please contact the Brand and Experience team for advice.

## D.1 Logo lock up

When a Ministry initiative is undertaken with or in partnership with other organisations.

When a Ministry initiative is undertaken in partnership with other organisations keep the logos in similar proportions to each other and align their centres vertically with even spacing between each logo.

### ONE COLOUR (BLACK)



### REVERSED (WHITE)



### FULL COLOUR – ONLY WITH APPROVAL FROM THE BRAND AND EXPERIENCE TEAM



#### BRAND RULE ALERT

Any use of the Ministry logo with other organisations must be signed off by the Manager, Brand and Experience.



**Brand  
colours**



## **Our colour palette comprises three primary brand colours, three secondary colours, and a range of tertiary colours.**

It is vital that we use colour consistently so that we can build trust and credibility in our brand.

These colours have been carefully chosen to allow for a variety of applications, in both print and digital media. Care must be taken to correctly apply the colours based on the specifications on the following pages.

If you need help deciding what colours to use, please contact the Brand and Experience team.

### **BRAND RULE ALERT**

These colour specifications are non-negotiable and must be followed in all instances. Failure to follow these basic brand application rules will result in your communication being rejected for publication or distribution.

## E.1 Our colours

### PRIMARY COLOURS



### SECONDARY COLOURS



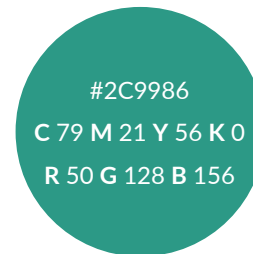
### TERTIARY COLOURS



## E.2 Digital colours

These colours are best suited to digital and social media contexts. Prioritise their use when creating digital or social media materials.

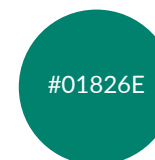
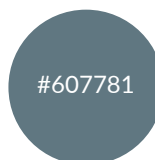
### PRIMARY COLOURS



### SECONDARY COLOURS



### WEBSITE COLOURS (DO NOT USE WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE BRAND AND EXPERIENCE TEAM)



## E.3 How to use the colours

### GENERAL

#### Primary colours

Our primary colours help make sure our work is quickly identifiable and are the core colours of our brand. These colours can be used in a variety of ways in print and digital.

- Use the green (#2C99B6) as an accent colour only.
- Use the blues (#32809C and #1B556B) for headings, bubbles and lead copy.
- Use one or two primary colours in a document, alongside black and white.

#### Secondary colours

- Use them as block colours behind white or black text to draw attention to copy.
- Don't use these colours for text.

#### Tertiary colours

Our tertiary colours are specifically designed for charts, maps and graphs. They should only be used in these circumstances.

- Any text on the yellow colour should be black for legibility.

### PRINT COLOURS

All of the primary and secondary colours are set up to be print-friendly and accessible to readers. Prioritise their use in printed publications or materials.

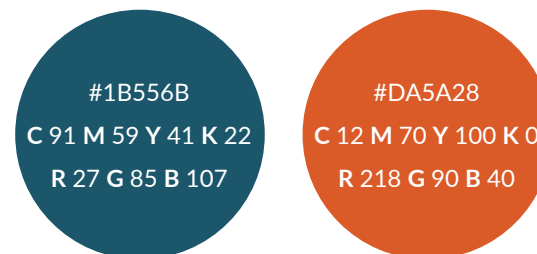
- The CMYK black is designed for use in professionally printed documents and will result in a rich black colour.
- If possible, we prefer the blue (#1B556B) as the primary colour.
- Be careful about how many colours you use in a publication. We recommend only using one or two accent colours (alongside black and white).

### DIGITAL COLOURS

The colour palette for digital printing differs slightly to ensure colours are readable in digital formats.

- If possible, we prefer the blue (#1B556B) as the primary colour.
- The green (#2C9986) is our preferred accent colour.

#### PRINT SUGGESTED PAIRING



ACCENT COLOUR

#### DIGITAL SUGGESTED PAIRING



ACCENT COLOUR



# Typography



**Our font families have been carefully selected for their legibility, flexibility and versatility.**

The choice of font will depend on the communications channel and audience. Please read through the following pages to ensure you are using the correct font.

Our heading sizes have been developed specifically to meet government accessibility standards. Using them correctly ensures all New Zealanders can easily access our information.

## F.1 External communications and advertising

All communications produced by the Ministry for external audiences should use Merriweather and Lato. This includes notices, letters, project newsletters, manuals, brochures, flyers, corporate reports, and posters.

All recruitment, display, public notice, tender notice, and other advertising should be set in Merriweather and Lato. If a publication requires a different style, please check with the Brand and Experience team before publishing.

Merriweather is available in a broad range of weights with accompanying italics and small caps to allow for a comprehensive heading and sub-heading hierarchy: light, book, medium, semibold, bold, and black.

Both fonts also support macrons. This is standard practice for all New Zealand government publications and is mandatory for all Ministry communications.

Do not use different fonts, unconventional sizing, or other styles in our typography. Our communications are meant to be easily read and understood. There is plenty of scope to be creative in other ways. Please note that our Word and PowerPoint templates use Georgia and Calibri for accessibility across organisations.

## F.2 Styles for print

These headings and paragraph styles are intended for print publication and external use.

- You can use these styles in black or one of the primary colours. For legibility, we recommend using either the dark blue (#1B556B) or the dark green (#2C9986).
- Use lead copy and block quotes to break up paragraphs and give visual flair.
- Paragraphs should be set in Black or White depending on the publication's background.

# Heading 1

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 42pt font size/48pt leading, 15pt space after

---

## Heading 2

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 28pt font size/36pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Heading 3

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 20pt font size/24pt leading, 6pt space after

---

#### Heading 4

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 12pt font size/12pt leading, 6pt space after

---

#### Heading 5

Lato, 12pt font size/12pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Lead copy for introductions

MERRIWEATHER LIGHT 16pt font size/18pt leading, 6pt space after

---

This is a paragraph of body copy in the Ministry for the Environment's required body copy font: Lato. It maintains a balance of legibility and appealing font size for publications.

LATO REGULAR 12pt font size/14pt leading, 6pt space after

---

#### Block quotes for emphasis

LATO BOLD 12pt font size/18pt leading, 6pt space before/12pt space after

---

Footnotes are available for citation

LATO REGULAR 8pt font size/12pt leading/1pt space after

---

## F.3 Styles for digital

These heading and paragraph styles are intended for digital materials outside of the website. These styles are different from print publications because digital contexts often require larger text to remain legible compared to publications.

- You can use these styles in black or one of the primary colours. For legibility, we recommend using either the dark blue (#1B556B) or the dark green (#2C9986).
- Use lead copy and block quotes to break up paragraphs and give visual flair.
- Paragraphs should be set in Black or White depending on the publication's background.

# Heading 1

MERRIWEATHER REGULAR 42pt font size/48pt leading, 6pt space after

---

## Heading 2

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 28pt font size/36pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Heading 3

MERRIWEATHER BLACK 20pt font size/24pt leading, 6pt space after

---

#### Heading 4

LATO BOLD 16pt font size/20pt leading, 6pt space after

---

#### Heading 5

Lato, 12pt/12pt leading 12pt font size/12pt leading, 3pt space after

---

### Lead copy for introductions

MERRIWEATHER LIGHT 18pt font size/24pt leading, 12pt space after

---

This is a paragraph of body copy in the Ministry for the Environment's required body copy font: Lato. It maintains strong legibility and accessibility within a digital context.

LATO REGULAR 14pt font size/16pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Block quotes for emphasis

LATO BOLD 18pt font size/24pt leading, 6pt space before/12pt space after

---

## F.4 Styles for internal documents

These paragraph styles are designed for internal use. They are made to be legible and accessible across devices which do not have our brand's standard typefaces.

- You can use these styles in black or one of the primary colours. For legibility, we recommend using either the dark blue (#1B556B) or the dark green (#2C9986).
- Use lead copy and block quotes to break up paragraphs and give visual flair.
- Paragraphs should be set in Black or White depending on the publication's background.

### Heading 1

GEORGIA REGULAR 32pt font size/38pt leading,  
6pt space after

---

### Heading 2

GEORGIA BLACK 22pt font size/30pt leading,  
6pt space after

---

### Heading 3

GEORGIA BLACK 14pt font size/18pt leading,  
6pt space after

---

### Heading 4

CALIBRI BOLD 14pt font size/18pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Heading 5

CALIBRI BOLD 12pt font size/18pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Lead copy for introductions

GEORGIA LIGHT 16pt font size/22pt leading,  
12pt space after

---

This is a paragraph of body copy in the Ministry for the Environment's fallback typeface option. It maintains strong legibility and accessibility for internal documents and between agencies.

CALIBRI REGULAR 12pt font size/16pt leading, 6pt space after

---

### Block quotes for emphasis

CALIBRI BOLD 18pt font size/16pt leading,  
6pt space before/10pt space after

---

Footnotes are available for citation

CALIBRI REGULAR 10pt font size/12pt leading

---

## F.5 Typography examples

USE FOR WEBSITE ONLY

**Stabil Grotesk** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.

**Noe Display** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.

USE FOR ALL OTHER DIGITAL

**Lato** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.

**Merriweather** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.

WORD/POWERPOINT AND FALL BACK OPTIONS

**Calibri** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.

**Georgia** typeface looks like this. Stay up to date, get involved and play along. Find out everything you can do. Mōrena whānau.



**Graphic language  
and imagery**



**We have a graphic language that extends and supports our brand. These elements form the basis of a flexible and extendable visual expression that make our communications recognisable.**

These elements can be used either boldly and distinctively or more low-key and supportive to give expression to our communications, particularly where the use of other imagery is restricted in production or budget.

## G.1 Photography

Images are critical to connect effectively with New Zealanders. They tell stories with more clarity than words.

Our photography should encourage people to connect to our unique environment. We have three main photographic styles:

- people enjoying the environment
- wildlife enjoying the environment and textures
- urban environments.

More information on these styles can be found on following pages.

### Best practice guidelines

- Feature people in images. Our environment covers everything – show a diverse range of New Zealanders, enjoying, interacting, and taking care of it.
- Images are relatable to the audience. Viewers should identify with the people in our photos and think of moments when they have enjoyed engaging with our environment.
- Wide or close-up images are used to show expanse as well as detail.
- Respect te ao Māori, don't crop foreheads or cover faces with text.
- Choose images based on platform norms: Facebook is better suited to bright, lively colours, and Instagram light colours, texture and white space thoughtfully used.
- Consider scale: a single focal point is easier for people to engage with on phones.
- Consider continuity: ensure the style and tone of the image fits with all other Ministry images.

Use photos that connect readers and viewers to Aotearoa's environment.

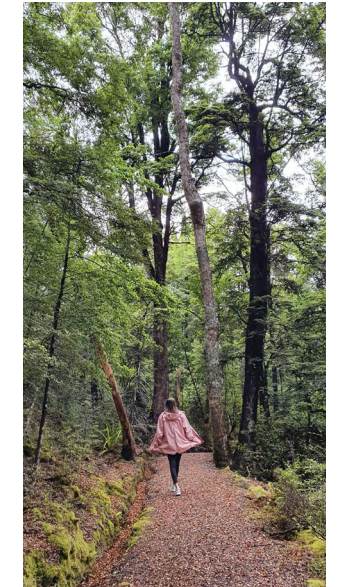
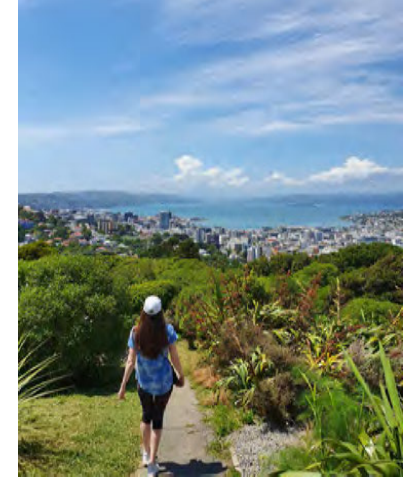
## G.1 Photography - people enjoying the environment

Whenever we use imagery we try to feature people to help tell our story. We show a diverse range of New Zealanders enjoying, interacting with, and taking care of our environment.

These images make a feature of our environment and natural resources, while including people as a part of that story.

### Best practice guidelines

- Aotearoa is a diverse country – the Ministry needs to show this diversity. Think about things like ethnicity, gender, age, location (we protect both natural and built environments), different weather scenarios.
- Respect te ao Māori, don't crop foreheads or cover faces with text.
- Show genuine emotion and activity.

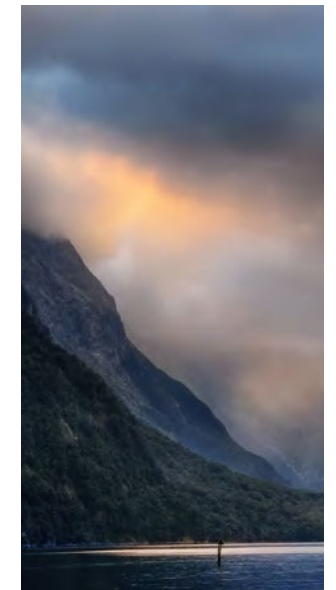
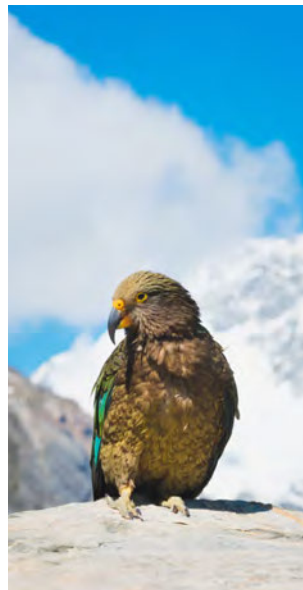
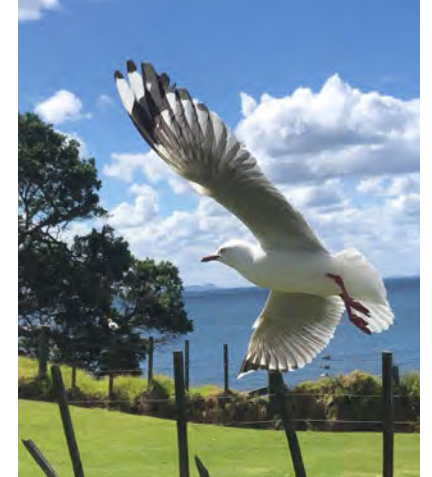
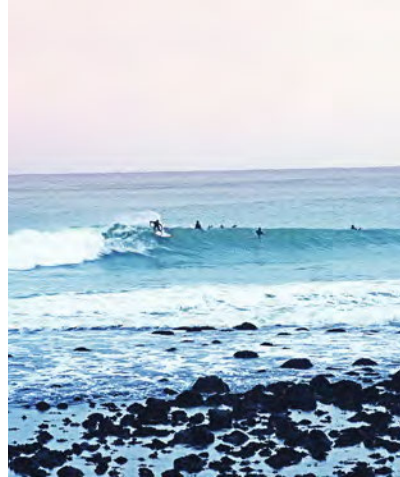


## G.1 Photography - wildlife in the environment and textures

Sometimes it is appropriate to use images of animals or environmental textures in our work.

### Best practice guidelines

- We use textural imagery to add depth and subtle tone to our collateral. These images can be used behind content, or to focus on specific topics such as land, water and air. These images need to be of low contrast so that any text placed over them is easily legible.

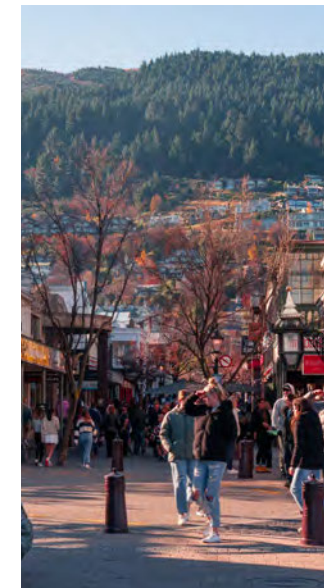
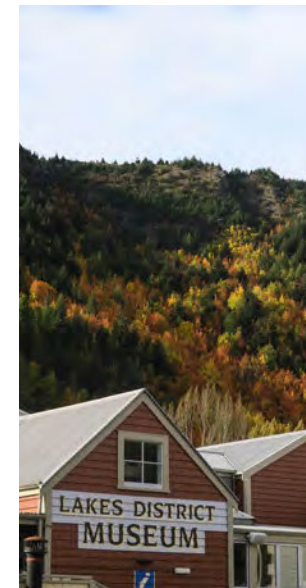


## G.1 Photography - urban environments

Urban environments are an important part of the Ministry's work programme.

### Best practice guidelines

- Use images from a variety of places in New Zealand - we want to represent everyone from Cape Reinga to the Chatham Islands.
- Try to find images that show the interaction between the natural and built environments.



## G.2 The bubble

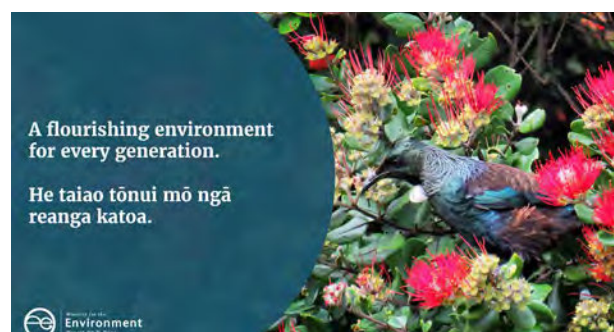
The bubble is a key graphic element for external Ministry communications.

Using the bubble element well across our digital and social communications will ensure everything we create for our audience strengthens our brand recognition.

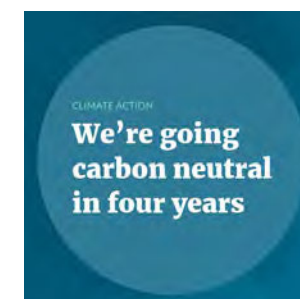
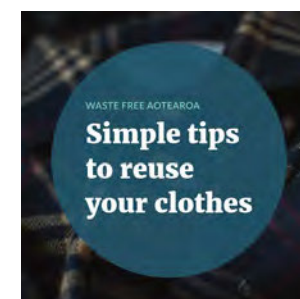
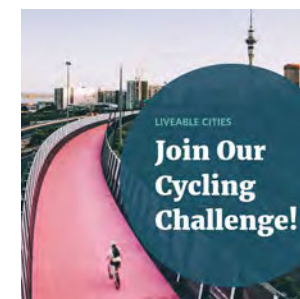
- Social posts use a colour bubble multiplied/ overlaid on images, with a 3-to-5 word headline, sometimes supported by small pre- or post-header text.
- Depending on content, bubbles can be placed centred, or cropped off.
- The bubble overlay can also be used without an image – by simply placing the Ministry weave pattern in the background.
- Tightly cropped images can be used as a background for the bubble to sit over the top.
- Preheader text uses lato bold in light green. Primary text uses Merriweather black in white.



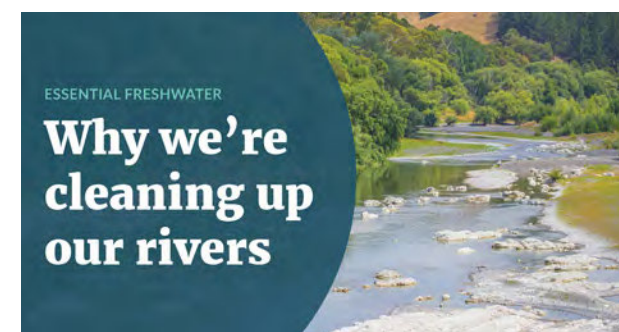
### POWERPOINT EXAMPLE



### SOCIAL MEDIA



### EMAIL HEADERS



## G.3 The weave

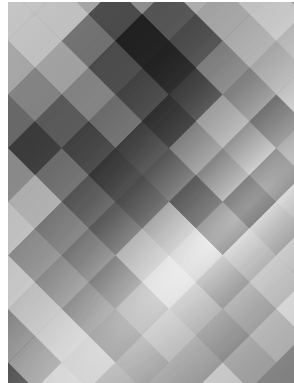
The weave is a key graphical element for the Ministry's communications.

It represents the coming together of people and the environment. In Māori culture the diamond or two triangles represent pātiki (flounder) which signifies strength, moving forward, abundance, and prosperity.

### Weave rules

- The weave should only be used with supplied templates only or by professional designers, to ensure the transparencies are appropriate for the surface chosen.
- The weave cannot be changed or used in isolation.
- It should be used as as an overlay to an image or one of the Ministry-approved colours.
- The weave pattern works best over a photo which contains a large amount of sky area. Avoid using over photos with a lot of detail.

WEAVE OVERLAY



USE THE WEAVE SUBTLY OVER SOLID COLOUR TO AVOID OVERPOWERING



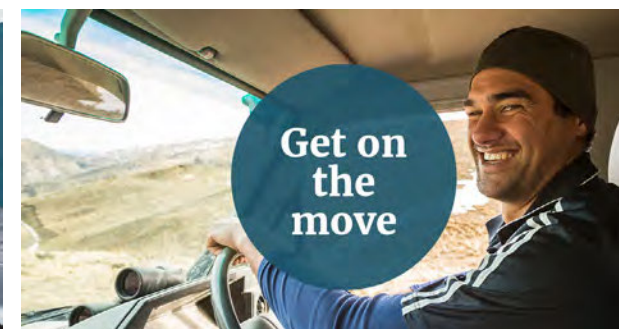
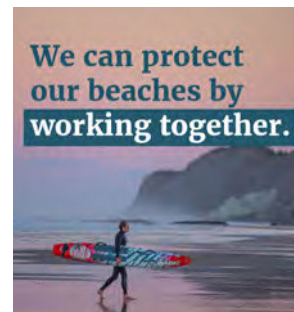
THE WEAVE WORKS BEST OVER SKIES

## G.4 Social media

Social posts for daily communications, Facebook and Instagram stories, and events are on brand through colours and use of graphic imagery.

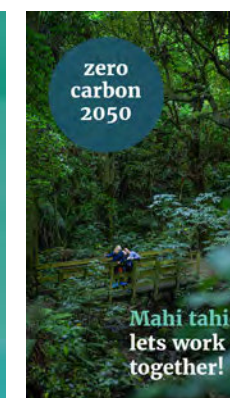
### Best practice guidelines

- Depending on content, bubbles can be placed centred, or cropped off.
- The primary dark blue and light green is used for the bubbles, with white as an additional text colour. Text should usually be left aligned, with text only ever being centered when the bubble is not cropped.
- The bubble overlay can also be used without an image – by simply placing the Ministry weave pattern in the background.
- The Ministry weave pattern and bubble can be used on their own to partially overlay images when there is no text or headline to add. This is a subtle way to brand content, without having to use words/text.
- Typefaces: Lato in capitals for small pre- and post- header text and Merriweather bold for main headline.



### Things to avoid

- Do not use multiple bubbles or headings on a post.
- Do not cover faces, unless they're part of background textures.
- Do not use right aligned text.
- Do not crop bubble unevenly.
- Do not use different colours across multiple lines of text. Use the light green colour to highlight one line only.



## G.5 Video treatment

### INTRO TITLES



**Low contrast image:**  
Text/logo directly overlaid.

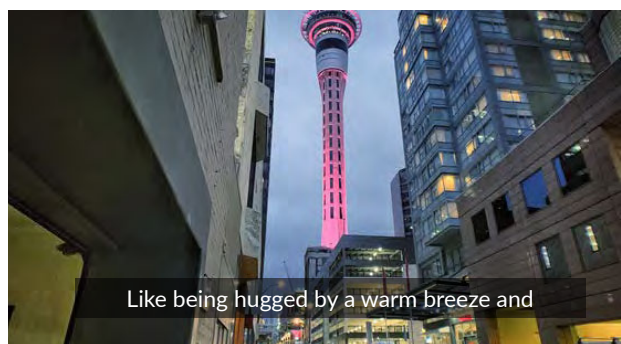


**High contrast image/texture:**  
use bubble for text and logo



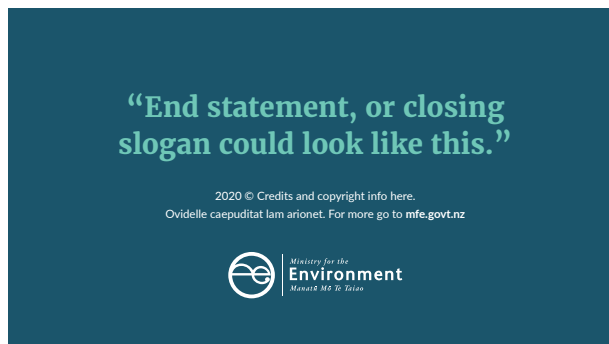
**Large amount of text:**  
use bubble for text and logo

### SUBTITLES



When creating subtitles, ensure text is at least 36pt Lato in HD video with a black background that is 90% opaque. The opacity of the background and size of the text can be adjusted if text is not easily legible.

### END SCREENS

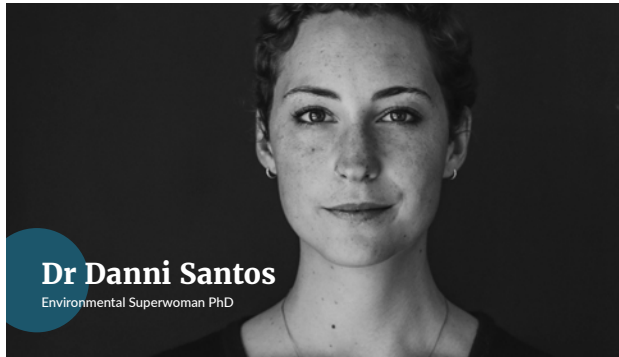


**Dark finish with statement**



**Weave finish with co-branding**

## G.5 Video treatment



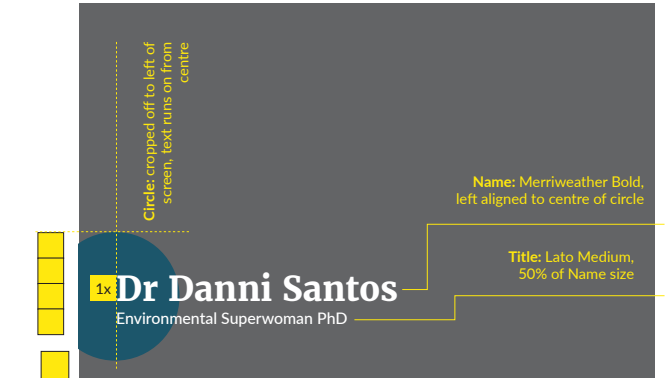
### Option 1

Merriweather and Lato text combo, anchored by a small bubble. Good for when the background behind text is high contrast with white text.



### Option 3

'Long bubble' outline only, anchored on the left hand side. Best used when contrast isn't a problem, but there is a lot of text that needs to be shown.



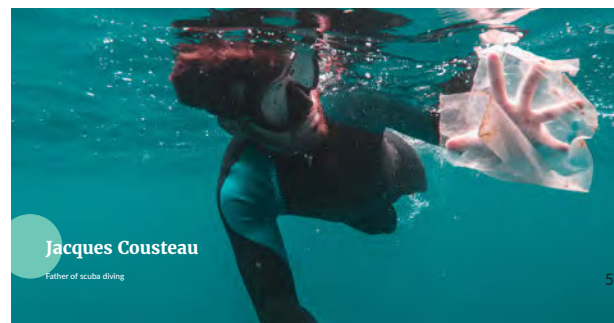
### Lower thirds – options 1+4

Merriweather and Lato text combo, anchored by a colour bubble.



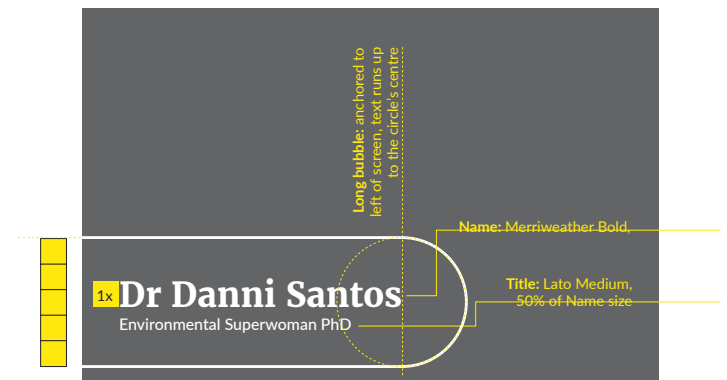
### Option 2

'Long bubble' anchored on the left hand side. Good for video which has unsuitable colour contrast.



### Option 4

Light green alternative to option one. Best when dark blue doesn't work with the background image.

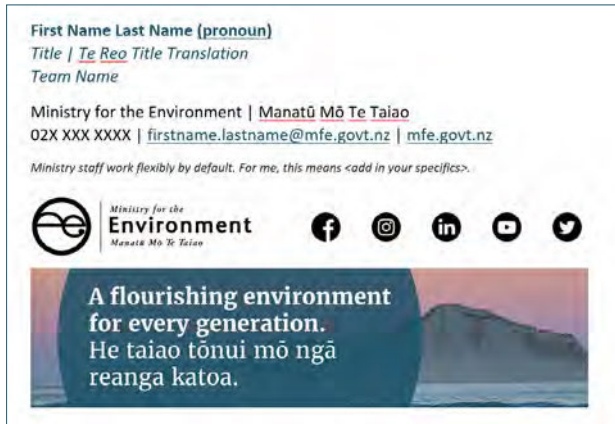


### Lower thirds – options 2+3

'Long bubble' anchored on the left hand side, in colour or outline option.

# G.6 Digital templates

## EMAIL SIGNATURES



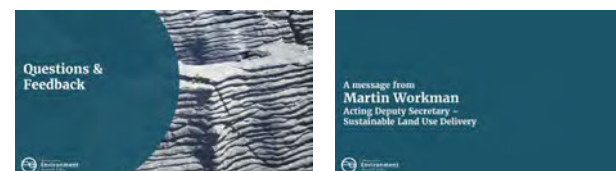
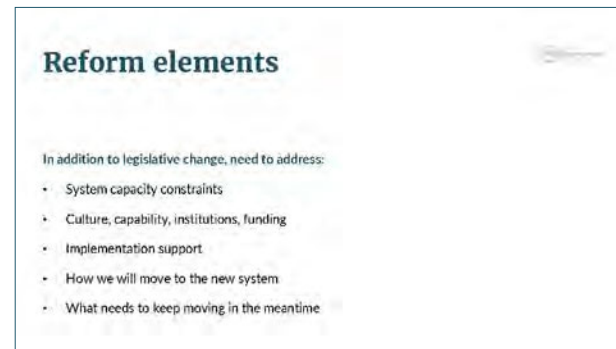
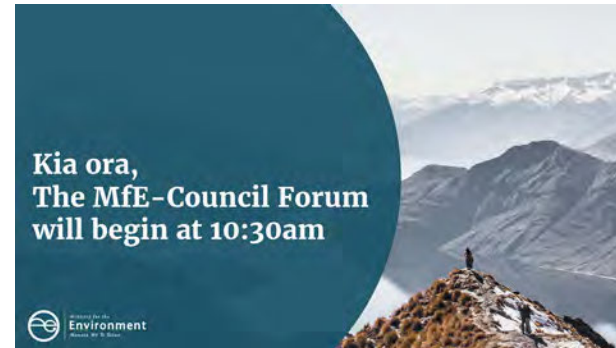
## EMAIL NEWSLETTER HEADER IMAGES



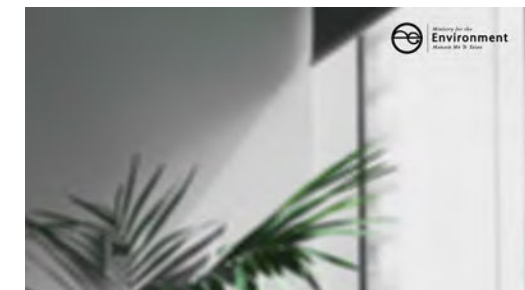
## INTERNAL NEWSLETTER HEADER IMAGES



## POWERPOINTS



## VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS



## G.7 Illustrations and maps

Illustrations are a core part of how we visually inform New Zealanders about our science, work programme, and knowledge.

Our detailed infographics are clear and simple. High contrast and detailed illustration style conveys our authority and expertise on the state of our environment.

### Best practice guidelines

- Use minimal colours so that we don't overwhelm the eye.
- Consider accessibility.
- Ensure there is clear space in the infographic.
- Respect te ao Māori – don't crop foreheads, illustrate blank faces, or cover them with text.
- If you are considering commissioning illustrations, storyboards or infographics for your work, get in touch with the Brand and Experience team who can guide you.

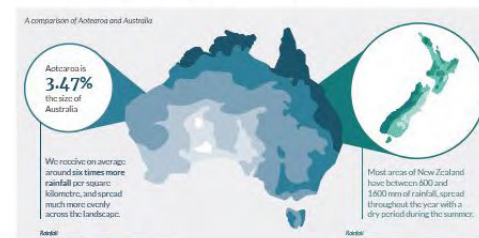
All illustrations should be developed with the Brand and Experience team.

### IMAGE-BASED INFOGRAPHIC



### MAP-BASED INFOGRAPHIC

#### We have had a history of abundance



Our maps can vary greatly in their level of detail depending on the information required to be communicated.

When creating a map, ensure the level of detail suits the message and audience it is required for. Consider the audience's needs and what channel the map is for. Choose the most simple map possible for the information to be conveyed. Avoid overwhelming the audience with unnecessary or complex information if it is not specifically required.

In all instances, consider the best practice of maintaining accessibility of colour and text.

If you have any questions or need further information or guidance, contact [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

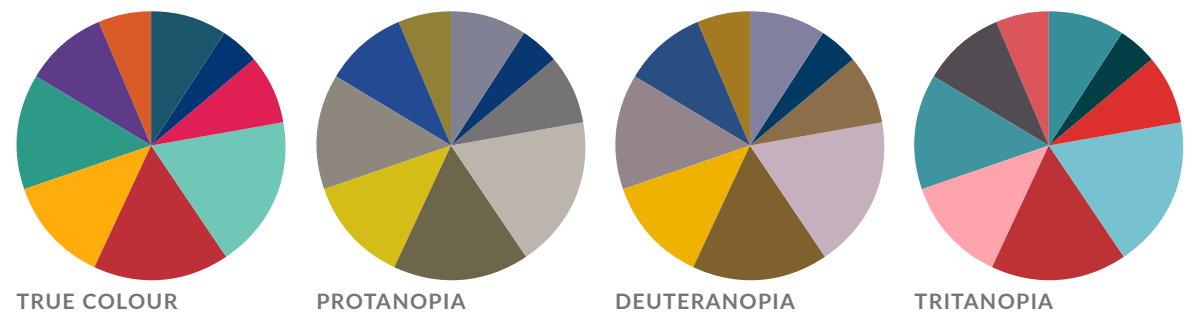
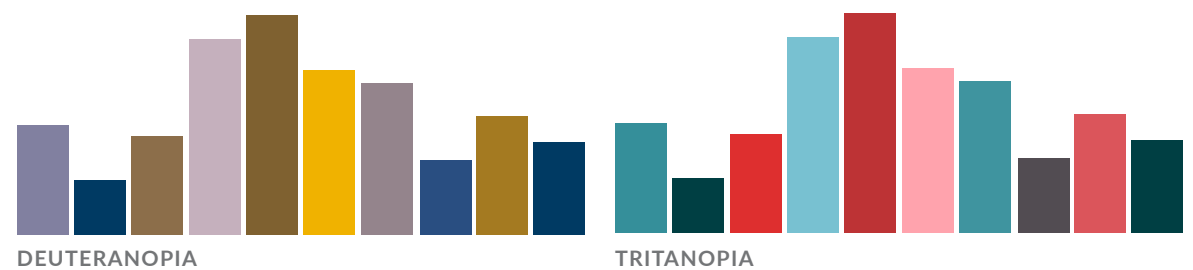
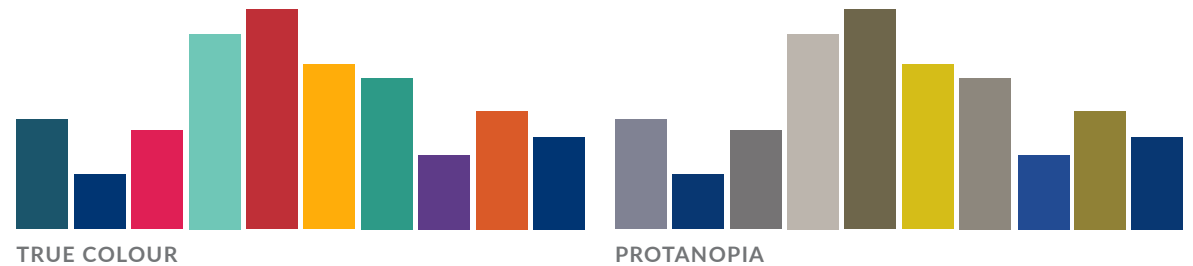
## G.8 Colour treatment - data

Our colour order for infographics and graphs is designed for legibility and accessibility.

Our recommended colour order (left to right) is designed to create contrast between adjacent colours across the vision spectrum. Common forms of colour blindness like protanopia, tritanopia and deuteranopia colour blindness has been accounted for by separating similarly toned blues and greens from each other.

When creating visualisations of data, tables, graphs and charts, maintain this colouring order to keep the Ministry's information easily accessible to everyone.

The CMYK, RGB and HEX codes for each colour can be found on page 31.





# H. Publication examples



**The logo, colours, fonts, imagery and supporting graphics are used to create a unified but flexible visual expression for our communications.**

This section shows a variety of applications and communications that demonstrate how our brand assets come together. You can choose from a range of pre-designed templates to best suit your communications requirement.

**FILES AVAILABLE**

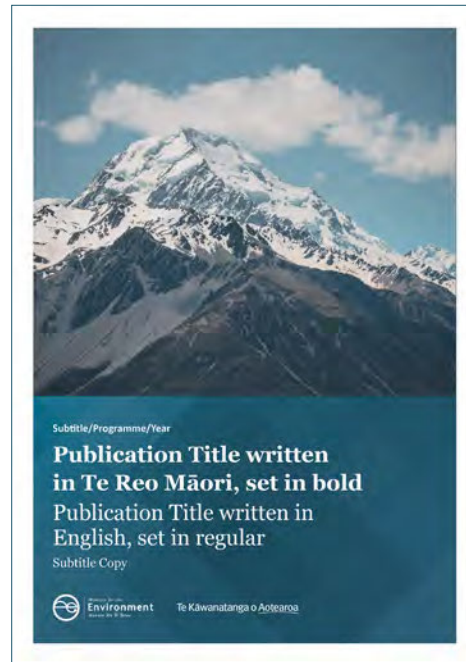
To access Word templates, please see the Brand Hub on Te Taiao.

To access InDesign templates, please talk to the Brand and Experience team by emailing [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz).

# H.1 Cover options



FULL BLEED COVER WITH IMAGE – PROFESSIONAL PRINTING



NO BLEED COVER WITH IMAGE – IN-HOUSE PRINTING



FULL BLEED COVER WITHOUT IMAGE – PROFESSIONAL PRINTING



NO BLEED COVER WITHOUT IMAGE – IN-HOUSE PRINTING



# H.3 Common templates

## FACTSHEETS

**Name of the fact sheet (Heading 1)**

This is part of a series of seven fact sheets that give an overview of recent changes to National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

**Issue (Heading 2)**  
Lead Copy

**Heading 3**  
Body text.

**Heading 4**  
Body text.  
Quote quote quote  
bullet  
sub-list.1

<sup>1</sup> Footnote style.

## POSTERS

**A flourishing environment for every generation.**  
**He taiao tōnui mō ngā reanga katoa.**

Ministry for the Environment  
Māhara He Te Taiao

## INTERNALLY DESIGNED PRODUCTS

**Published by** [Ministry for the Environment] [Ministry for the Environment] [Ministry for the Environment]  
**ISBN** [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9]  
**ISSN** [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9]  
**Publication number** [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9]  
**© Crown copyright** New Zealand [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9]

This document is available on the Ministry for the Environment website: [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz).

**Acknowledgements**  
[0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9]

This document may be cited as: Ministry for the Environment, [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] [0-909-909-909-9] Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

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**References**  
Author. Date. Title of publication. Place of publication: Name of publisher.  
Ministry for the Environment, 2007. Document New Zealand 2007. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

**Table 1: Sample table layout**

Table text text	Table

**Blue box heading**  
Blue box text.  
Blue box bullet.  
Blue box sub-bullet.  
Blue box text.

**Green heading – case study**  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study  
Green text – case study

**Figure 1: Insert graph or chart here**

# H.3 Common templates

## MEMO

Memo

**To:** \_\_\_\_\_ **File ref:** \_\_\_\_\_

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Re:** WMAF/CEF [delete one] funding deed variation – [project code and Recipient name]

**Purpose**

1. To recommend you agree to vary the funding deed between the Ministry and [Recipient] (Deed number [insert]) for [insert appropriate description – e.g. of the WMAF/CEF funding arrangement for ...] (insert into on [insert date of agreement]).

**Background**

2. Under the above funding deed the Ministry agreed to fund the [description of project]. The recipient has now requested the following variations to it/its deed:

- a. [list specific variations to deed – variation 1]
- b. [variation 2]

**Conclusions**

3. After consideration of the recipient's request I recommend the Ministry agrees to these variations for the following reasons:

- a. [detailed justifications on why it is in the Ministry's interests to vary as requested]
- b. [reason 2]

**Recommendations / Actions**

4. I recommend that you:

- a. Agree to vary to Deed of Funding for [project name] to [list variations] **Agree / Disagree**

Manager – Funds Management Team Date: / /

PO Box 10142, Wellington 6142 | Freephone 0800 499 702 | www.mfe.govt.nz

## LETTERHEAD

Environment

<<FirstName>> <<Surname>>  
 <<Address1>>  
 <<Address2>>  
 <<Address3>> <<PostCode>>

Tēnā koe,  
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Obisqui remporro optaquis seque doluptatur?

Ngā mihi.

**Firstname Surname**  
 Position | Te Reo Translation  
 Ministry for the Environment | Mānātū mō te Taiao

PO Box 10142, Wellington 6142 | Freephone 0800 499 702 | www.mfe.govt.nz

#mfe #environment | 
 mfe | 
 mfe | 
 mfe | 
 mfe

The Brand and Experience team is happy to work with you to update your templates so they fit the Ministry's brand guidelines. We can also work with you to develop templates that meet your team's specific needs.



**Our style guide**

## I.1 Our style guide

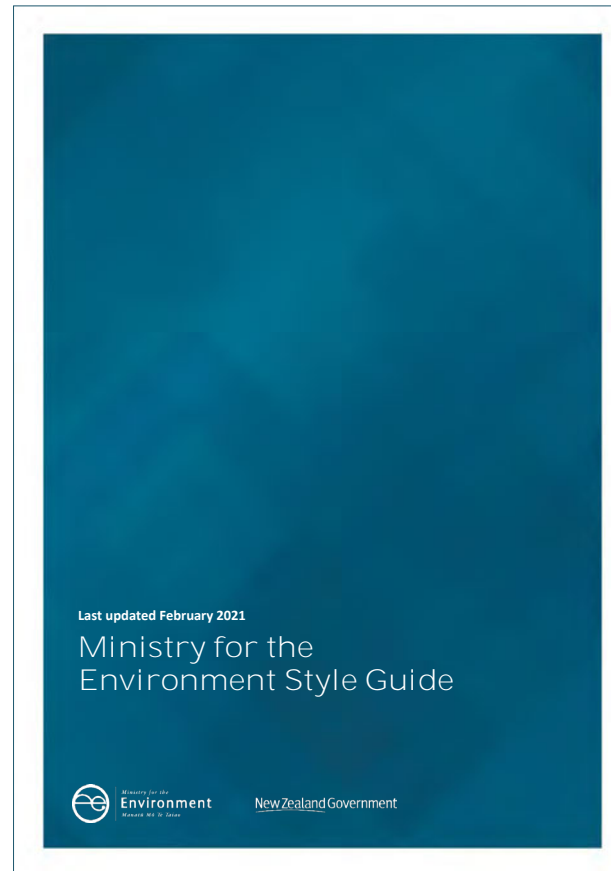
Our Style Guide helps Ministry authors, and consultants under contract to the Ministry, produce professional documents.

It provides the Ministry's minimum standards for writing and formatting documents, as well as good practice guidance and helpful advice.

The way we write and present information says a lot about our organisation.

Regardless of whom you are writing for or to, it's important that your document is appropriate for its intended audience, is clear, accurate and as concise as possible. Following this guide will help you achieve this.

### OUR STYLE GUIDE



**FILES AVAILABLE**  
Our comprehensive style guide is available for whenever you need to write on behalf of the Ministry. It is available from the Brand and Experience hub on Te Taiao.

## I.2 How we sound

Our shared voice is clear and easy to understand. Our tone is conversational and to the point but not colloquial or casual. If you can't imagine yourself saying it out loud, there is probably a better way to write it. When we all write this way, our work sounds consistent and part of the same team.

### Our shared voice principles:

- We always write with our audience in mind. Our subject matter may be technical, but our explanations are not.
- We get to the point quickly and we're bold with our advice.
- We don't use jargon, and we check our work carefully to make sure it is error free and of the highest quality.
- We're not formal, but we're not casual. We use everyday language that is natural so that we sound like real people.
- We can be fun when it's time to celebrate.

### Style tips

- Get to the point – our readers don't always have a lot of time.
- Put the most important thing in the most noticeable spot.
- Make recommendations, decisions and next steps obvious.
- Give the reader just enough information to make decisions confidently.
- Choose conversational language.
- Use contractions and sentence-style capitalisation.
- Avoid overusing acronyms.
- Simpler is better – use short sentences and paragraphs.

## **Thank you.**

For any support or questions about our Brand Manual, contact the Brand and Experience Team by emailing [brand@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:brand@mfe.govt.nz). We are happy to help.

Special thanks to the Ministry staff whose images of a flourishing environment are featured throughout our Brand Manual.