

OFFICIAL

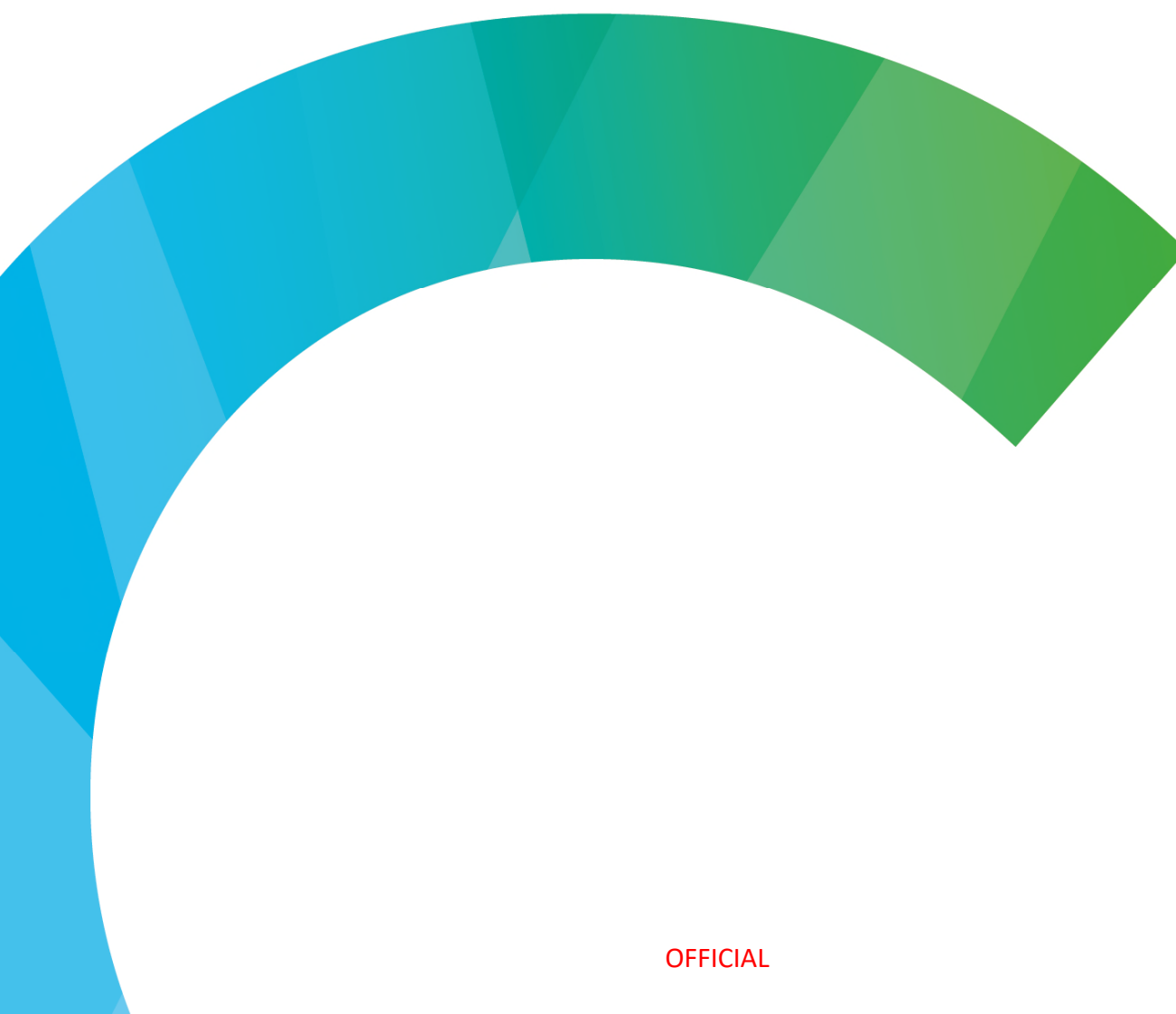


Australian Government
Climate Change Authority

Climate Change Authority

Style Guide

DECEMBER 2024



OFFICIAL

CLASSIFICATION

Contents

Style Guide.....	1
Climate Change Authority	1
Background	3
Climate Change Authority Style Elements	4
Heading 1	4
Heading 2	5
Heading 3	5
Grammar, Punctuation and Conventions.....	7
Writing and Designing Content	10
Accessible and Inclusive Content	11
Web content accessibility guidelines version 2.0 (WCAG2.0) compliance.....	13
How to use Alt-text	13
Referencing.....	14
Glossaries	14\$
Data Visualisation	15

Version Control			
Document owner:		GM Strategy	
Due date for 12-monthly review:		September 2025	
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0	N/A	September 2024	Initial version referenced in head document

CLASSIFICATION

Background

The Climate Change Authority Style Guide helps you write clear and concise reports and documents as an assistant to the Commonwealth Style manual (<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au>). Please ensure you are familiar with the Commonwealth Style manual first. The Authority's Style Guide aims to only provide supplementary information specific to the Authority's work or where the Style manual is not completely prescriptive (such as referencing).

The Style Guide should not contradict the Style Manual. The Style Manual and Style Guide together should be your bible when producing reports, charts, spreadsheets and other documents and you should be intimately familiar with their content.

The Style Guide does not address every possible issue you may encounter. Please consult the Commonwealth Style manual in the first instance. The Style Guide is an evolving document. If you have suggested changes or additions for the next iteration, please contact the style guide's current author.

- [Document templates](#)
- Governance, version control (including update timeline and person responsible)
- Link to [glossary spreadsheet](#) per
- Training available
- Contacts

Green call out box

Minimum standards, accessibility, legal requirements.

Blue call out box

Examples and tips.

Version control:

Date updated	Person responsible	Version
May 2023	Rebecca Berryman	Draft
June 2023	Claudia Papandrea	Approved v1
July 2023	Claudia Papandrea	Update v1.1
August 2023	Claudia Papandrea	Update v1.2
September 2023	Claudia Papandrea	Update v1.3
October 2023	Claudia Papandrea	Update v1.4

CLASSIFICATION

Climate Change Authority Style Elements

Colours

The Authority's colour palette has been developed containing seven colours. These are the only colours (as well as black and white) that can be used on Climate Change Authority collateral. Full colour images (photos) can also be used. Please note, to ensure compliance with WCAG, white text is **ONLY** to be used on colours from Mid Blue to Dark Grey and black text is **ONLY** to be used on colours Light Green to Mid Blue.

CCA Light Green	CCA Mid Green	CCA Light Blue	CCA Mid Blue	CCA Dark Blue	CCA Deep Blue	CCA Dark Grey
C46 M1 Y89 K0	C66 M1 Y73 K0	C68 M1 Y4 K0	C100 M33 Y0 K28	C88 M46 Y20 K1	C94 M69 Y45 K36	C0 M0 Y0 K90
R150 G199 B81	R88 G186 B117	R16 G191 B232	R0 G123 B183	R7 G119 B163	R20 G63 B85	R65 G64 B66
#96C751	#58BA75	#10BFE8	#007BB7	#0777A3	#143F55	#414042



Contrast Ratio

Ensuring that a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 exists between text (and images of text) and background behind the text. Use a [colour contrast tool](#) to calculate if you are meeting minimum standards.

For example:

- Background colour: #007BB7 (CCA Mid Blue)
- Foreground colour: #fff (white) **OR** #000 (black)
- The contrast ratio is 4.52:1 and passes accessibility minimum.

Typography

External typeface: HELVETICA NEUE

The primary typeface used for Climate Change Authority is Helvetica Neue. It is available in a range of weights including: Light, Light Italic, Regular, Italic, Bold and Bold Italic.

Report typeface: ARIAL

HEADER: Arial Bold and Arial Bold Italic.

BODY TEXT: Arial Regular and Arial Regular Italic.

Internal typeface: ARIAL/CALIBRI

HEADER: Arial Bold and Arial Bold Italic.

BODY TEXT: Calibri Regular, Calibri Italic, Calibri Bold and Calibri Bold Italic.

WEB: typefaces on the website should be consistent with the treatment for internal documents.

Header typeface is Arial Bold and Bold Italic.

Body text typeface used for Climate Change Authority is Calibri Regular, Calibri Italic, Calibri Bold and Calibri Bold Italic.

Heading 1

Heading 1 should be used consistently for the top-level headings within your document. Applying the Heading 1 style using the Styles function will ensure all heading one text will be consistent throughout and makes it easy to amend levels if the structure needs to change.

CLASSIFICATION

Please use the Normal style - Arial font apt size 10 at 1.08 spacing.

Heading 2

A Heading 2 should always be a sub-heading to a heading 1.

You don't need to format the text to create a heading look – use the Styles to apply the pre-defined styles. This gives you consistency throughout.

Heading 3

A heading 3 will sit below a heading 2.

Lists

- List Paragraph items can be bullets
 - With sub-bullet points
- 1. Or they can be numbered

Quote text – for when you need a pull-out quote style to use.

Intense Quote – for shaded text and call-out boxes

Hyperlinks

www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au

Hyperlinks will automatically set the style when a URL or bookmark is put behind text. If your document is designed for print use the full URL. For online documents use descriptive text. This helps assistive technology users to differentiate each URL. Do not use “click here”, “available here” or “available on the website”.

Call out box Heading

Use this box style to highlight or emphasise a **short amount of text without bullets**. A longer amount of text should not be boxed. For example, put case studies in body text with heading hierarchy.

Images

When you use images in a word document, you need to ensure:

- You add alt text for accessibility. Right click the image and select Format Picture. Fill in the alt text description (mandatory) and title (optional). This allows assistive technology users to understand the picture.
- Images can have captions. Right click the image and select Insert Caption. Use this field to include the image credit.

You can change the alignment position of the image. Click the image to display the **Picture Tools Format** ribbon, then choose **Position**. Any image that does not have text wrapped around it should be set **In-line with text**. This makes it accessible.

CLASSIFICATION



Photo 1 Townsville skyline.
Credit: Posnov/Getty Images

Tables

Choose **Insert > Table**. Click the table and choose one of the table styles under **Table tools > Design > Layout**.

For accessibility you must:

1. **Add alt text** to the table. Select the table and right click to access **Table Properties**. Fill in the **alt text description** (mandatory) and **title** (optional). This allows assistive technology users to understand broadly what's in the table and how to navigate it. You don't have to repeat the table contents.
2. Ensure your header row is defined and it is set to **repeat**. Click in the header row. Under the **Table Tools ribbon** choose **Layout > Repeat header row**. This enables tables to extend across pages and is required for accessibility.

Figure 1: Use style sheet 'Figure Title'

Table Heading
text
text

Figure 2: Example style sheet 'Figure Title'

Heading 6	Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Total
Text	100%	100%	100%	100%
Text	100%	100%	100%	100%
Text	100%	100%	100%	100%
Text	100%	100%	100%	100%

CLASSIFICATION

Grammar, Punctuation and Conventions

For Australian Government style compliance refer to the grammar and punctuation section of the [Style Manual](#).

General rules to obey:

- Keep the [functions of words](#) in mind to write clear content. Grammar and sentence structure help people understand meaning.
- A [sentence](#) is a group of words that makes sense on its own. Structure the parts of a sentence so meaning is easy to understand.
- Use [punctuation](#) correctly to help readability and comprehension. Don't overuse punctuation marks. The Authority follows the principles of minimal punctuation and capitalisation.
- [Spelling](#) errors detract from readability. Follow one dictionary for consistency and use it to check variable spellings.
- Use [shortened forms](#) if they help the user understand quicker. Make sure everyone understands them.
- Styles for [numbers and measurements](#) supports accessibility and readability for users.
- [Italic type](#) contrasts with roman type. It draws people's attention to convey meaning. Use italic type sparingly as it can affect readability.
- Check official sources for correct [names and terms](#). Use consistent capitalisation and punctuation.
- Use correct [titles and capitalisation](#) for academics, diplomats, judges, government officials, royalty, and the members of the armed forces.

Refer to the Authority's [glossary](#) for commonly used key terms, definitions, and abbreviations.

Punctuation and Capitalisation

Punctuation and capitalisation have rules for correct use. Use minimal punctuation and capitalisation to make content more readable. Too much punctuation makes text crowded and difficult to read. If a sentence has a lot of punctuation marks, it might be a sign that the sentence is too long or complex. Try to rewrite into [shorter, clearer sentences](#).

To use minimal punctuation:

- Don't add full stops to the ends of headings, page headers, footers or captions.
- Don't use a semicolon at the end of each item in a bullet list.
- Unless each item is a full sentence or the last item in a list, don't use a full stop for [items in bullet lists](#).
- Don't use full stops between letters in an [acronym or initialism](#).
- Don't use a full stop at the end of most [abbreviations](#).
- Restrict the use of the [Oxford comma](#)¹.
- Use the [percentage sign](#) next to a numeral in text. Don't use a space between the number and the percentage sign.

¹ If the last item combines two words or phrases with the word 'and', use a comma before that final item. This use of the comma is known as the 'Oxford comma' or 'serial comma' <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/grammar-punctuation-and-conventions/punctuation/commas>. The Oxford comma can prevent ambiguity in complex sentence lists. For example, use the Oxford comma before the last item if you're using a defining phrase applicable only to that final item. A defining phrase is essential to the meaning of the sentence. The following examples show how the Oxford comma can affect meaning, using the defining phrase 'for stockfeed'.

CLASSIFICATION

Minimal punctuation helps all users to understand content.

Follow conventions for using capitals for [titles, honours and forms of address](#). Use capitals when an official title precedes the name of the office holder. This includes titles for executives specified in legislation.

Follow the rules of [capitalisation for government terms](#). Click [here](#) to use the correct term and follow the rules for capitalising government terms. People find it easier to understand content that has a consistent style. Below are examples of common uses.

Government

- refer to the national government of Australia as the ‘Australian Government’. Use an initial capital for both words only when they occur together.
- use an initial capital for the word ‘government’ if it is part of a formal name. Use lower case everywhere else.

Example – Australian Government

The **Australian Government** coordinates emergency management with the states.

Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water

The advertised grants are funded by the **Australian Government**. The **government** recently extended the closing date for applications.

Example – general

- the **Victorian Government**
- the Australian and New Zealand **governments**
- the **governments** of South Australia and Tasmania
- Road maintenance is a local **government** responsibility

Departments and agencies

Use initial capital letters only for the formal names of government departments and agencies. Check the names of departments and agencies in the [government online directory](#).

Don't use capital letters for generic mentions. For example, use:

- ‘the agency’ instead of ‘the Agency’
- ‘the authority’ instead of ‘the Authority’
- ‘the commission’ instead of ‘the Commission’
- ‘the department’ instead of ‘the Department’.

Write this:

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

The **Australian Communications and Media Authority** has responsibility. The **authority** was recently tasked with the report.

Not this:

The Department of Finance owns the policy. The **Department** has been working on it for months.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority has responsibility. The **Authority** was recently tasked with the report.

Referring to the Climate Change Authority

CLASSIFICATION

Our name must be written in full for the first reference in each section of a document and when being listed as a source for a figure or table. Subsequently referred to as 'the authority' in public documents, never CCA.

We only refer to the authority using personal pronouns, 'we' or 'our' in external communications products.

Please do not write 'Climate Change Authority (the Authority)' except in legal documents.

Percentages

Use the percentage sign next to a numeral in text.

- Don't use a space between the number and the percentage sign.
- 'Per cent' and 'percentage' aren't the same. The term 'per cent' is an adverb. The noun form is 'percentage'.
- 'Per cent' is written as 2 words in Australia. 'Percent' is not Australian spelling.
- Avoid using percentages to describe changes. Tell people what the actual increase or decrease is.
- When you use many percentages in running text, put the figures in brackets (parentheses) or use a list to simplify the text.

Examples - percentages

Use the percentage sign next to a numeral in text. Don't use a space between the number and the percentage sign.

- **Correct: 15%**
- **Incorrect: 15 %**

As for any number, avoid starting a sentence with the percentage. Reword the sentence if possible or write the percentage out in words. You can use everyday words if a precise amount is not needed.

Write this:

- Fifty-five per cent of the council's revenue came from rates.
- Rates accounted for 55% of revenue.

Not this:

- 55% of the council's revenue came from rates.

Don't use percentages to describe change.

Write this:

- The application fee is now \$70. This is a \$20 increase from 1 January 2020.

Not this:

- The application fee increased by 40% from \$50 to \$70 on 1 January 2020.

Be concise when writing about percentages.

Write this:

- In 2019, population size increased in New South Wales (32%), Queensland (20%) and Victoria (19%).

Not this:

- In 2019, the largest sources of population growth were New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. New South Wales accounted for 32% of the population growth, Queensland 20%, and Victoria 19%.

CLASSIFICATION

Writing and Designing Content

Accessibility considerations

User needs:

For a better understanding of user needs and accessibility, refer to the [overview on accessibility](#).

You must make all government content accessible to people with disability.

This is part of Australian law under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#).

All Authority style elements are built into the document templates. Refer to the [Style Manual](#) before you draft content and contact the Outreach and Engagement Team for external documents.

Top tips for drafting content:

- Only create content that meets a need. Find out about [users and their needs](#) through user research.
- Use [plain language](#). Write short and simple sentences in active voice.
- Write and design content that is easy for the user to [find with a search engine](#).
- [Editing and proofreading](#) help ensure consistency, so content meets user needs and expectations.
- Use [protective marking for government information](#). Follow the Authority's procedures to add them.

Content Types

Use the format that helps meet the user's need. This could be a form, blog, image, report, or another format. Refer to the [Style Manual](#) for content types and ask Outreach and Engagement for advice on the best way to reach your audience.

Structuring Content

Design content with a [structure](#) that helps the user navigate and understand. This is important when drafting briefs for Members, Ministers, Executive, and the public.

Refer to the [Style Manual](#) for how to structure your document:

- [Types of structure](#)
- [Headings](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Lists](#)
- [Paragraphs](#)
- [Tables](#)
- [Text boxes and callouts](#)

Accessibility considerations

User needs:

Fundamental requirement: use lists to make it easier for users to skim content and navigate pages.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines success criterion: [1.3.1 Info and relationships – level A](#).

CLASSIFICATION

Lists

The Lists are series of items. All lists have a 'lead-in' (a phrase or sentence) or heading to introduce the list.

Use lists to:

- help users skim information
- group related information
- help users understand how items relate to each other
- show an order of steps
- arrange information by importance.

Lists can be ordered or numbered (the order is important) or unordered (the order is not critical).

- A bullet list can be ordered or unordered.
- A numbered list is always ordered.

Punctuate lists according to style

- Unnecessary punctuation makes your list look cluttered.
 - Use minimal punctuation.
- In a bullet or numbered list, don't use:
 - semicolons (;) or commas (,) at the end of list items
 - 'and' or 'or' after list items.

Punctuate lead-ins and headings consistently:

- Phrase lead-ins always end in a colon (:).
- Sentence lead-ins can end in a colon or a full stop. Choose one punctuation mark and use it for all sentence lead-ins in your document. If in doubt, choose a colon; it is used more commonly.

Refer to the [Style Manual](#) for more guidance.

Accessible and Inclusive Content

People can experience ongoing, temporary or situational barriers to access information they need. Help them by designing accessible and inclusive content.

Accessibility is a [mandatory standard](#) for government agencies.

Make content [accessible](#) - accessibility is about inclusion.

Reading levels in Australia

'Reading level' is the level of education someone needs to be able to read text. It is one way to measure literacy.

In Australia:

- about 44% of adults read at literacy level 1 to 2 (a low level)
- 38% of adults read at level 3
- about 15% read at level 4 to 5 (the highest level).

People at a reading level 1 read at a primary school equivalent level. They can understand short sentences.

CLASSIFICATION

Regardless of literacy levels, all users want to be able to interact with government easily. Respect their time by writing in [plain language](#). Check that your content is a reading level 2 (Australian year 7 equivalent). This level also helps users with higher literacy.

Government services and products need to be available to everyone. This means creating inclusive content.

[Inclusive content](#) recognises:

- Australia's diversity
- the diversity of technology Australians use to engage online.

Use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of Australia's peoples:

- [cultural and linguistic diversity](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#)
- [people with disability](#)
- [gender and sexual diversity](#)
- [age diversity](#)

Inclusivity – it's the law

Use respectful and inclusive language that talks to the person, not their difference. In Australia, it's the law.

Commonwealth laws include:

- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Public Service Act 1999](#).

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person under the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#). This discrimination relates to their:

- sex
- marital or relationship status
- actual or potential pregnancy
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- intersex status.

You must make all government content accessible to people with disability.

Use respectful and inclusive language that talks to the person – not their difference.

Commonwealth laws include:

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)

Inclusive language can be found in the glossary.

CLASSIFICATION

Web content accessibility guidelines version 2.0 (WCAG2.0) compliance

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Australian Government agencies are required to ensure information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory accessible manner.

WCAG 2.0 is a technical standard developed under the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

- The WCAG 2.0 guidance includes the ensuring the following:
- Give all users access to the same information
- Add alt text to all images
- Include captions for all images that are not decorative
- Write alt text and captions to support the image's purpose
- Use consistent formatting and punctuation for captions and titles
- Number titles in long documents

For web content that includes the use of alternative text (Alt-text).

Alternative text explains is descriptive text which conveys the meaning and context of a visual item in a digital setting, such as on an app or web page.

People hear words objectively but understand them subjectively.

How to use Alt-text

Images and pictures

Make sure to convey the content and the purpose of an image in a concise and unambiguous manner. The alt text shouldn't be longer than a sentence or two—most of the time a few thoughtfully selected words will do. Consider what is important about an image. For example, important context might be the setting, the emotions on people's faces, the colours, or the relative sizes.

Do not repeat the surrounding textual content as alt text or use phrases referring to images, such as, "a graphic of" or "an image of." In the example below, the alt text is referring to the image and does not describe the content of the image sufficiently.

Alt Text ▼ ×

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?

- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Two phones on a table. The phone on the right has a wider screen, while the phone on the left has a higher quality camera.

Generate alt text for me

Mark as decorative ⓘ

Alt Text ▼ ×

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?

- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

A photo of two phones.

Generate alt text for me

Mark as decorative ⓘ

Example of Alt-text for images and pictures

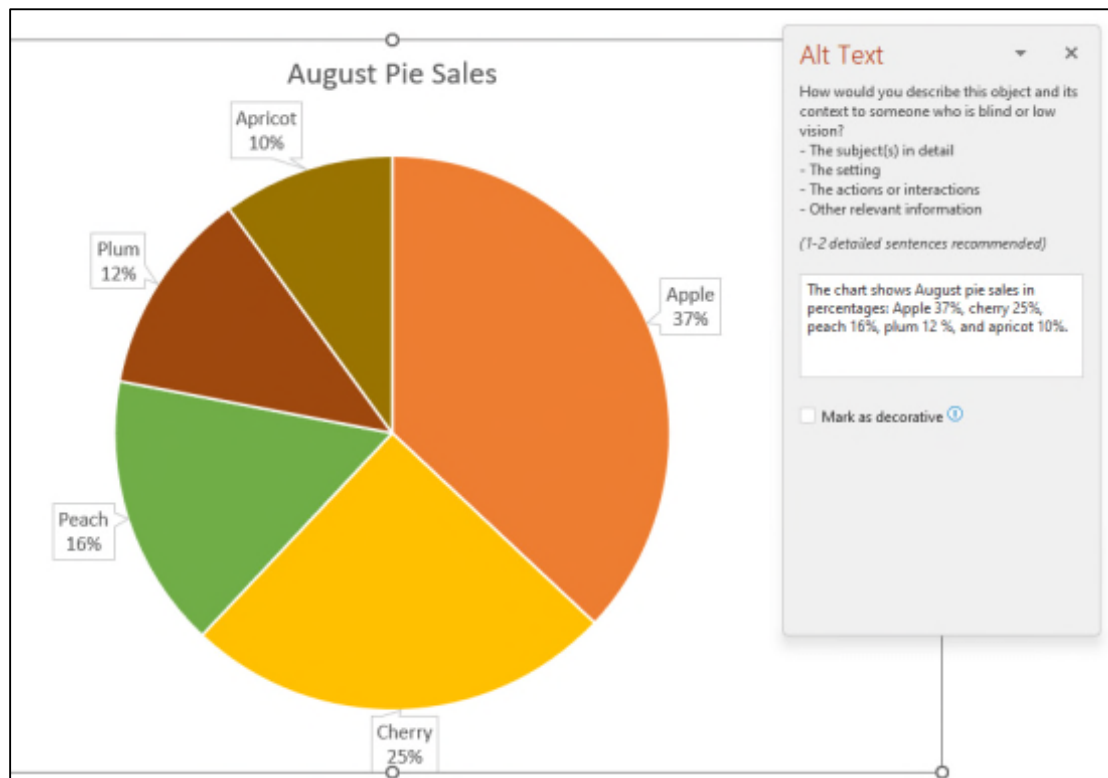
CLASSIFICATION

Diagrams, flowcharts, and infographics

When dealing with objects that give detailed information, such as an infographic, use alt text to provide the information conveyed in the object. Describing a chart as 'A bar chart showing sales over time,' for example, would not be useful to a blind person.

Try to convey the insight; for example, 'A bar chart showing sales over time. In July, sales for brand A surpassed sales for brand B and kept increasing throughout the year.' Alt text should also clearly describe the beginning point, progress, and conclusion of flow charts.

Example of Alt-text for diagrams, flowcharts and infographics



Please see this section of the [Commonwealth Style Guide](#) for further information on use of Alt-text.

Referencing

Copyright requirements

You must properly attribute copyright material you cite or reference. This includes text, images, video and sounds.

Include all the details required by open access licences (read how to [attribute Creative Commons](#)).

Read the government copyright rules in the [Australian Government intellectual property manual](#).

Please refer to the Authority's [Referencing Guide](#).

Glossaries

Key terms should be included in a glossary. The Authority's glossary is available [here](#).

The following guidelines should be used in drafting a glossary for a report or other publication:

- Define words that may be unfamiliar to the reader:
 - If the term is technical or has a meaning different to common use it should be included in the glossary, even if it is used only rarely and defined in the text. For

CLASSIFICATION

example, the Report 3 glossary defined ‘tax interaction effect’ even though it was used only in one location in the report and clearly defined.

- If the term is specific to climate policy, but simple and used rarely, then it should be defined in the chapter but not included in the glossary. For example, the Report 3 glossary did not define ‘covered emissions’.

Definitions should only explain the meaning of the term. They should not include further discussion of why a particular concept is important—this should be left to the chapter. Definitions should be simple and stand-alone. The reader should understand the term from reading the definition, and as such, the definition should not use jargon. If the definition includes technical terms that are themselves defined elsewhere in the glossary, they should cross reference to the definition for the term.

Data Visualisation

Figures and infographics are a great way to present information in an easily digestible visual format. There are some key questions to consider when creating an infographic such as:

- What information are you trying to present e.g. a process, data report, comparison, timeline, list, general information?
- Who is your audience?
- How do you think this information could be most easily conveyed?
- Should all this information be in one infographic or multiple? i.e. are you overcomplicating it by trying to put too much information in one?

Now that you have thought about the type of information and how you might want to present it, it’s time to look for inspiration and existing templates.

- CCA’s existing [template](#)
- CCA’s existing [reports](#) including [corporate documents](#)
- External reports from:
 - Government e.g. DCCEE, DISR, ARENA, CSIRO, CEFC
 - Consultants e.g. EY
- Google images with key search terms e.g. “timeline infographic”

Software to use:

- Powerpoint
- Power BI for plotting data
- Excel if Power BI does not work
- Photoshop (need to request access to switch our subscriptions around)