

Information sheet

Creating accessible documents

Creating documents that can be accessed and read by people of all abilities is just as important as creating accessible web content. Any documents that are stored on a 'gov.au' website need to comply with the same standards that apply to a webpage. The following tips will help make your document accessible and easier for everyone to read.

Formatting

- Avoid excessive formatting – try not to use **bold**, *italics*, underline or CAPITALS.
- Use the DPAC fonts: Gill Sans Light and **Gill Sans**.
- Avoid columns, text boxes and justified text.

Tables

- Only use tables if they are absolutely necessary, and avoid complex tables. Split a table into separate tables if it is very complicated.
- Avoid merging cells.
- Assign **Header Rows** to your table. Click into a **Header Cell** or select the whole **Header Row** at the top of the table. Click the **Layout** tab. In the **Data** group, click **Repeat Header Rows**.
- Header cells should never be empty, especially the top left cell of the table.

Heading styles

- A well thought-out heading structure makes your document easier for everyone to read.
- Always use Styles, no matter how long or short your document.
- Use the inbuilt Word Heading names (eg **Heading 1**, **Heading 2**), not Gov Heading 1, Gov Heading 2.
- Ensure the document's first heading is **Heading 1** (H1).
- Don't jump down a level, ie your headings should read H1, H2 > H3, not H2 > H4 (level H3 is missing).
- You can jump up a level in headings, for example H1 > H2 > H3 > H2 > H2 > H1.

Alternate (alt) text

- Always add alt text to images in your document to explain what the image shows.
- **Right click** the image. Click **Format Image**. Click the **Layout & Properties** icon and choose the **Alt**

Text option on the left-hand menu. Enter the **Title** and **Description**.

Multiple lines and spaces

- Don't use multiple line breaks (returns) by pressing **Enter** to create white space.
- Add spacing before/after a paragraph. Place the cursor in the paragraph you wish to adjust. Click the **Page Layout** tab. In the **Paragraph Group**, adjust space before/after the paragraph.
- Use page breaks (**Ctrl + Enter**).
- Don't add extra spaces by repeatedly pressing the spacebar or Tab.

Metadata – the hidden information

- Add a document title – click the **File** menu in the top left of the screen. Under the **Properties** section on the right, click next to the word **Title** and fill it in.

Create accessible links

- Do not use 'click here' or 'more'.
- Use meaningful words that tell the reader where the link will take them, eg Visit the [DPAC website](#) for more information.
- Describe a link that will download a document, eg Download the [Planning Report](#) (PDF).
- Add the web address (URL) as a footnote if your document will be printed as well read online.

Colour contrast

- Ensure good colour contrast to make your document easier for everyone to read.
- Avoid painful colour combinations.
- Don't use colour as the only way to convey information.
- Don't use watermarks - put 'draft' in the title.

Accessibility checker

- Use the Word accessibility checker – **File > Prepare for sharing > Check Accessibility**.