



Diversity and Inclusion Style Guide



Government
of South Australia



human
services



Foreword

The Department of Human Services provides support and services to almost every single South Australian, whatever their age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, cultural background or other life circumstance.

Communication is part and parcel of our service delivery and, therefore, the way we share messages and speak to our communities must be respectful and inclusive, reflecting the diversity of our customers and clients.

This new Department of Human Services Diversity and Inclusion Style Guide demonstrates the department's commitment to providing clear and respectful communications to all stakeholders and clients.

Nat Cook MP

Minister for Human Services



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations, and recognise them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.

Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.



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About

The Diversity and Inclusion Style Guide developed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the creation of culturally appropriate and inclusive content for the Government of South Australia and the public sector. Across all Government agencies, we are committed to ensuring that everyone feels respected, represented and seen. One way we exemplify this commitment is through the way we communicate with our communities, clients, and each other.

The scope of this guide encompasses the following diversity focus streams:

- Aboriginal peoples
- Age
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Disability
- Gender, sex, and sexuality
- LGBTIQ+ people.

This guide will help ensure that the content you create and share is inclusive and appropriate.

This guide specifically addresses the appropriate use of language and terminology, requirements for accessibility, and advice for planning inclusive events.

Language evolves over time and while this guide reflects recommended practice at the time of writing, we welcome feedback about the contents of this guide and will continue to revise it as appropriate.

Language and terminology

Inclusive language is free of words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped, or discriminatory views about a group of people. Words matter, and what we say (and how we say it) is important.

Language can be a vehicle for the inadvertent expression of discrimination and prejudice as our cultural values and attitudes are reflected in the structures and meanings of the language we use. This means that language use must be carefully considered.

Using inclusive and appropriate language and terminology when communicating is essential in demonstrating cultural capability and respect.



Aboriginal peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and identities are rich and diverse across Australia.

This guide is by no means comprehensive. In addition to what is outlined below, we recommend seeking advice from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people regarding their preferences and protocols around terminology.

What may have seemed acceptable terminology in the past, can be considered extremely offensive today. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, offensive terms can cause distress, anger and resentment.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' (plural) is a preferred term used at the national/federal level, to refer to the many Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups within Australia. This can also be applied when referring to other topics such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures. By doing so, you are referencing two (or more) cultures rather than a joint 'culture'.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person' is a term used when referring to a person of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' should always be spelt out in full when referring to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. It should not be abbreviated to ATSI.

'First Nations Peoples'

'First Nations' refers to the collective of individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations in Australia and is appropriately used when referring to all or some of the Nations across the country.

'Aboriginal peoples'

As a South Australian government department, there is a preference to use the term 'Aboriginal peoples' in communications as they are a key cohort we are working with to improve life outcomes through policies and services.

In South Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the lands that the Government of South Australia works on and respect their preference to use 'Aboriginal peoples' to acknowledge both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in South Australia in written and spoken language.

Aboriginal peoples (continued)

The word 'Aboriginal' (adjective, capitalised) should always be capitalised and used in conjunction with 'person/peoples, family/families or community/communities, language/s etc.'

'Aboriginal' (noun, capitalised) should never be used as a standalone term.

'We acknowledge the ongoing strength and resilience of Aboriginal peoples in sustaining the world's oldest living culture.'

For example:



Matthew identifies as an Aboriginal person from Kurna land



Matthew is an Aboriginal from Kurna land

'First Peoples'

'First Peoples' is a term broadly used to describe the Indigenous people of nations across the globe. In Australia, 'First Nations Peoples' is an appropriate way to refer to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

'Indigenous'

'Indigenous' should always be capitalised and is to be used only when it is in the name of a title of a service, program or policy or a direct quote, or when referring to First Peoples in an international context. The term 'Indigenous' is not preferred by many South Australian Aboriginal peoples.

Using language respectfully involves using:

- Specific terms, such as the name of a community, before using broader terms
- Plurals when speaking about collectives (peoples, nations, cultures, languages)
- Present tense, unless speaking about a past event
- Empowering, strengths-based language.

It does not include using:

- Shorthand terms like 'Islanders' or acronyms like 'ATSI'
- Derogatory terms such as 'Aborigines', referring to blood quanta (for example, 'half-caste' or percentage measures) or possessive terms such as 'our', as in 'our Aboriginal peoples'.

Aboriginal peoples (continued)

Naming locations

When referring to locations or regions, it is important to include both the English name and the Aboriginal name where feasible. For example:

Tarntanyangga/Victoria Square.

Referring to both the English name and Aboriginal name is not required when referring to a postal address or office location.

It is important to note that in some regional areas a single postcode can extend across a large amount of territory, and a postcode could include the lands of more than one group of Traditional Owners. For this reason, across much of Australia it is not possible to match postcodes to Traditional Owners.

To find an area's Traditional Place Name, it is recommended you contact your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Council or Cultural Centre.

You can also check out the [Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\) map of Indigenous Australia](#) which shows the general locations of larger groups of people.

Terminology statement

The following statement should be included in documents:

The term 'Aboriginal' has been used throughout this document to reference all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Government of South Australia acknowledges and respects this preference of the South Australian Aboriginal community in written and spoken language.

Age

Refer to age only if it is necessary

Avoid referring to a person's age or an age group if it's not relevant. If relevant and you need to mention age, then follow these conventions:

When the reference to age comes before a noun, punctuate it with hyphens.

For example:

'a 39-year-old man works at the department.'

If the age reference begins a sentence, use numbers written in words. For example:

'Sixty-five-year-old woman, Sabina, now works with our team.'

Age (continued)

Use respectful terms when you write about age

Avoid using age references when it's not strictly relevant.

Standalone words in everyday use, like 'old' and 'young', can carry bias or unintended subtext. Words that carry stereotypes, for example 'elderly', are not acceptable.

When an age or age range is relevant to a fact, you can use the term 'people' with the age reference. For example:

'people aged 15 to 17 years.'

'Older people'

The term 'older people' is acceptable. Do not use the term 'old people'. It is considered disrespectful. Use the following terms that best fit the context:

- Older people
- Retired people or retirees
- Older Australians
- Senior Australians or seniors.

'Young people'

The most neutral term is 'young people'. 'Youth' is a gender-neutral term and is also acceptable.

Be careful using the plural 'youths'. This is often used to refer to male youths only and may carry other connotations. Use the following terms:

- Young people
- Youth.

Depending on the context, you can use:

- Adolescents
- Teenagers
- Children
- Infants
- Babies.

'Kids' can be suitable, depending on the content's voice and tone.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

Speak to the person, not their difference

Australians have different cultural backgrounds and speak many languages. Use inclusive language that respects this diversity.

You can use the general term 'multicultural communities' to write about people from different cultural backgrounds.

The term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) communities is acceptable but avoid using the acronym (CALD) unless you're speaking to a specialist audience familiar with its meaning.

Mention people's cultural affinity or identity only when you need to. It is important to be sensitive to these differences.

Where it is appropriate or necessary to speak about a person's cultural background, be as specific as possible. Referring to a person as 'Asian' or 'African' overlooks the unique languages and cultures of many countries.

Avoid using words such as 'ethnic Australians' or 'ethnic groups'. This can imply that migrant heritage or migrant status is unusual.

Refer to cultural and national identity carefully

The meaning of the word 'Australian' can vary in different contexts. It could mean anyone who lives in Australia. Legally, it could mean only people who are Australian citizens. Depending on the type of content, you might need to explain what you mean by the term. For example, 'Australian staff' could refer to all staff in Australia, including international staff.

Mention heritage, cultural or other national identity only if it's necessary.

When you specify a dual identity or other heritage as an adjective, connect the reference and the term 'Australian' with an en dash. For example:

'The Japanese–Australians within the public sector.'

[An en dash shows equal relationship between two nouns.](#)

When you specify a dual identity or other heritage as a noun phrase write as follows:

'Japanese Australians within the public sector.'

Cultural and linguistic diversity (continued)

To refer to people who have recently arrived in Australia, use the terms:

- Migrants
- Immigrants
- New arrivals.

These terms are neutral and don't say anything about a person's culture or language. Don't use these words once people have settled and become Australian citizens. They suggest a temporary or marginal status.

Personal names

When you ask people their name, don't ask for 'Christian name', 'first name', 'forename' or 'surname'. Instead, ask for their:

- Given name
- Family name.

Some people state a preferred name instead of their given name. This could be different from their legal name, so be clear about which you need.



Disability

Focus on the person, not the disability

Disability does not define people. Use inclusive language that respects diversity.

Mention disability only when it's relevant to the content.

Avoid the word 'special' when referring to people with disability or their needs.

When you are writing about people with disability, focus on the person. Use person-first language, rather than identity-first language unless otherwise instructed.

For example:



People with disability
[Person-first language]



Disabled person
[Identity-first language]

Report it Right – Media Guidelines

The media can play an important role in shifting the narrative around disability and support meaningful change in how the general public view and interact with people with disability. [Inclusive media guidelines are available on the Inclusive SA website.](#)

The guidelines contain:

- Tips on words to use and avoid
- Advice on interviewing people with disability
- Pointers on image selection to support stories.

Include diverse representations of people with disability

- Do not present stereotypical representations of people with disability. For example: complex/diseased/disordered/dependent.
- Do not solely focus on a person's impairments and disability.
- Recognise that many people with disability do not have a visible disability.
- Avoid exclusive representations of people with disability as clients, customers or service recipients (unless directly relevant to the context). People with disability are business owners, professionals and service providers too.
- If content is to feature imagery, include visual representations of people with disability in the community and within their natural networks.

Disability (continued)

- Recognise the impact of barriers for people with disability. These can be physical, attitudinal or systemic. Barriers can stem from the way society is organised or common perceptions and attitudes to disability.

Use respectful language

Respectful language acknowledges people's preferences to identify with a particular community or characteristic.

Terms should not identify people without an understanding of personal preference. For example, some people who are deaf or hard of hearing may identify as 'Deaf' —a cultural group with a distinct language.

Avoid using the disability as an adjective that defines the person, unless that is their preference.

Use person–first language when you don't understand individual or community preferences. Describe the person and then the characteristic.

Use the following terms:

- Person with disability
- Person who is deaf or hard of hearing (unless the person identifies as Deaf)
- Person who is blind or has low vision
- Person living with disability
- Person with mental illness, person with psychosocial disability, person with a psychiatric condition
- Person with intellectual disability, person with developmental disability
- Person with learning disability
- Person with cognitive disability
- Person who uses a wheelchair or mobility device

- Person with reduced mobility
- Person with physical disability
- Accessible parking, accessible toilet, access cab.

You can cause offence when you do not use respectful language, even if it is well intentioned.

- Don't say a person is inspirational only because of their disability
- Don't write about people as if they are heroes or victims
- Don't use euphemisms and made-up terms, such as 'differently abled' and 'handicapable'.

People with disability could consider these types of terms condescending.

Disability (continued)

When you are making comparisons, write:

- ‘Person with no disability’ – rather than ‘able-bodied’
- ‘Sighted person’ for someone who is not blind
- ‘Hearing person’ for someone who is not deaf
- ‘Neurotypical’ for someone who is not living with autism, dyslexia, etc
- ‘typical development’ rather than ‘normal development’ when discussing children.

People who are blind or have low vision

The terms ‘blind’ and ‘low vision’ include people with no sight and people who have some sight.

Acceptable terms include ‘person who is blind’ and ‘person who has low vision.’ Don’t write ‘the blind’ or ‘person without sight’.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing

The terms ‘deaf’ and ‘hard of hearing’ include people with no hearing or limited hearing.

Refer to someone with hearing loss as a ‘person who is deaf or hard of hearing’.

Some people who are deaf or hard of hearing use the Australian sign language, Auslan. Auslan may be their first or only language, or they may have English as a second language.

Some people who are deaf or hard of hearing view themselves as members of a distinct community and language group. This community calls itself the Deaf community and encourages others to do the same. The Deaf community uses the term with a capital letter ‘D’ as a mark of its identity.

People with cognitive disability

People with cognitive disability include people with:

- Intellectual disability
- Acquired brain injury
- Dementia.

‘Cognitive disability’ is a broad term that covers a range of conditions. Genes, illnesses, injury, physical factors or environmental factors may cause cognitive disability.

Disability (continued)

People with learning disability

People with 'learning disability' might have difficulty planning and difficulty processing new information. This may be related to a neurological condition.

Examples of learning disabilities are:

- Dyslexia (reading)
- Dyscalculia (mathematics)
- Various auditory processing disorders (sound and verbal instructions).

Having a learning disability is not related to intelligence.

Learning disability is not the same as a 'learning difficulty', which can be overcome with intensive teaching or training. Learning difficulties are not generally considered to be a disability.

People with mental illness

'Mental illness' is a broad term that covers many different conditions that influence the way people act, think, feel or see the world.

The term 'psychosocial disability' is specific to some people with severe mental health conditions. It covers both psychological and social factors. It focuses on restrictions on participating in society. Not every mental illness involves a psychosocial disability.

Some ways of talking about mental illness can cause offence. Use people-first language when you refer to a person with mental illness. For example:

'People with mental illness'.

Describe the person as 'having' mental illness, just as you would for any other illness or injury. Don't describe the person as 'being' a disease. For instance:

- Malik 'has schizophrenia' rather than Malik 'is a schizophrenic'
- Alice 'has depression' rather than Alice 'is a depressive'
- Liu 'has bipolar disorder' rather than Liu 'is bipolar'.

Neurodiversity and Neurodivergence

Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the idea that everyone's brain works differently as a part of the natural variation in human brains. We all have different ways of thinking, processing, feeling and functioning.

Neurodivergence refers to a wide range of neurological variations from the dominant societal norm (neurotypical) including autism, ADHD, dyslexia and a range of brain differences.

Not all neurodivergence is a disability and societal barriers are often the main factor disabling neurodivergent people - individuals whose brains operate in ways that differ from the dominant societal norm.

Gender

Use gender–neutral language

Gender–neutral language conveys gender equality and is more inclusive. Making job titles gender-neutral helps to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender.

Always respect a person's gender identity, such as by using the correct pronouns and personal titles when referring to them.

Pronouns

Learn a person's pronouns. If it's not clear and you can't ask them, choose gender–neutral pronouns. The singular 'they' is gender neutral. It avoids specifying a person's gender.

You can use 'they' or 'them' when you would otherwise use a singular personal pronoun such as:

- He
- She
- Him
- Her.

You can also use 'themselves' or 'themselves' instead of 'himself' or 'herself'. 'Themselves' is an extension of using 'they' for a single person.

The use of gender–neutral pronouns to refer to a person of unknown gender has a long history.

The use of 'they' or 'them' as a singular pronoun is grammatically correct and acceptable. This usage now covers people who either:

- Don't wish to identify as a particular gender.
- Identify as non–binary or gender-fluid.

There are many ways to avoid using gender–specific pronouns as seen in the following examples:

- You must provide copies of the application to your referees [use the second–person pronouns ('you' and 'your') with direct tone and active voice].
- Candidates must provide copies of the application to their referees [use a plural pronoun. The pronoun 'their' relates to a plural subject 'candidates'].
- Every candidate must provide copies of the application to referees [leave the pronoun out altogether].

Gender (continued)

Avoid gender-specific job titles

Avoid using job titles that end in ‘-man’ or ‘-woman.’

Write the following for example:

- ‘Police officer’ rather than ‘Policeman’
- ‘Minister of religion’ rather than ‘Clergyman’
- ‘Firefighter’ rather than ‘Fireman’
- ‘Supervisor’ rather than ‘Foreman’.

You should also avoid job terms that specify women.

Write the following for example:

- ‘Actor’ rather than ‘Actress’
- ‘Host’ rather than ‘Hostess’
- ‘Waiter’ rather than ‘Waitress’
- ‘Flight attendant’ rather than ‘Stewardess’.

Gender is not relevant to a person’s profession or title in general. Use gender-specific adjectives only when gender is relevant. For example, an economic analysis of ‘female-dominated’ or ‘male-dominated’ industries.

Titles

‘Ms’ is preferred by some people as it does not disclose marital status unlike ‘Mrs’ or ‘Miss’.

‘Mx’ refers to non-binary people and those who do not wish to be referred to by their gender. Use ‘Mx’ when a person indicates this is what they prefer, but not otherwise.

Forms and surveys can ask for people to specify gender. Don’t ask for a title or gender identity unless it is necessary for appropriate service delivery. For example, a form can ask for a person’s given and family name. It does not need to ask for their preferred title.

When referring to or writing correspondence to a person whose gender identity is unknown, consider referring to them by their name without using a gendered title. This avoids the risk of potentially misgendering them.

For example, writing ‘Dear Alex Smith’ instead of ‘Dear Mr Smith’ would be more appropriate if Alex’s gender is unknown.

LGBTIQA+ people

The term LGBT arose in the 1990s to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The term has now expanded to recognise other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as intersex people. LGBTIQ+ or LGBTIQA+ are now recommended as best practice unless otherwise specified.

The 'Q' refers to the queer community or to people questioning their gender identity. The 'A' refers to asexual people. The use of '+' represents other sexual orientations and gender identities, such as pansexual and non-binary people.

The term 'LGBTI' or 'LGBTI+' is preferred when referring to older people, due to 'queer' being a commonly used homophobic slur when they were younger.

Some younger people will specifically use the term 'queer community' instead of LGBTIQA+. This terminology should generally only be used when the audience is known to identify with this language.

Terms like 'rainbow communities' or 'rainbow families' will sometimes be used to refer to LGBTIQA+ communities. While they can be broad, inclusive terms, some caution should also be taken as not everyone will identify with this language.

The terms 'sistergirl' and 'brotherboy' are often used to refer to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander transgender women and men, respectively. Not all trans Aboriginal people will self-identify in this way though.

Remember that different people will use different terms to describe who they are, and language about sexual orientation, gender identity and variations of sex characteristics is continuing to evolve.

The terminology someone uses to describe themselves should always be respected.

Regularly check for changes in language use. Follow the rule that people have the right to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity as they choose. The discussion is still evolving about words for other aspects of gender and sexual diversity.

Terms – sexual orientation, gender and sex characteristics

There are a number of terms that can be used to describe sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.

These are not the only ways to use these words. The definitions highlight some of the main points and distinctions.

The glossary of terms is not exhaustive but provides a summary of the definitions included in this guide.

For more definitions and information about terms, visit:

[Supporting LGBTIQ+ in the SA public sector website](#)

[Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

[TransHub](#).

Ally

An ally is someone who supports, encourages, and stands up for the people around them. In this context, it refers to heterosexual and/or cisgender people who actively speak up and show support for LGBTIQ+ people and communities.

Asexual

A person who does not experience sexual attraction but may experience romantic attraction. Related terms include 'agender' (someone who does not have a gender identity) and 'aromantic' (someone who does not experience romantic attraction).

Binary

Something that is binary consists of two things or can refer to one of a pair of things. When talking about genders, binary genders are male and female.

Bisexual

A person who is attracted to more than one gender. A related term is 'pansexual' (attracted to all genders).

Cisgender

Cisgender is a term that describes people whose gender aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender/gender identity

A person's gender identity is their internal sense of who they are. This may include identifying as a man, woman, genderqueer, agender, as non-binary, or in other ways. It's important to note that gender and sex mean different things.

Terms – sexual orientation, gender, and sex characteristics (continued)

Gender expression

The way a person outwardly expresses their gender. This can include behaviour and appearance.

Gender queer

People who don't identify as either male or female. They may identify as both or neither. 'Gender fluid' refers to people whose gender identity shifts or changes over time.

Intersex

Intersex people have innate sex characteristics that don't fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies. This can include anatomical, chromosomal and hormonal characteristics. These characteristics exist since birth, but may not be identified until later in life.

LGBTIQA+

Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual (LGBTIQA+).

Non-binary

An umbrella term that describes someone whose gender identity exists beyond the binary of male and female. They may identify as both, neither, or in a variety of other ways. This can include being gender fluid, genderqueer, bigender, or something else.

Queer

An umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. The term 'questioning' is also sometimes used if someone is still exploring or questioning their gender or sexual orientation.

Pronoun

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun (eg. I, me, he, she, herself, you, it, that, they, each, few, many, who, whoever, whose, someone, everybody, etc.).

Sex

A classification made based on anatomical sex characteristics.

Sex characteristics

Physical features relating to sex, including chromosomes, genitals, hormones and reproductive anatomy, as well as secondary sex characteristics that emerge during puberty.

Sexual orientation/sexuality

A term that describes a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others. This can include being heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, as well as numerous other terms.

Transgender

An umbrella term that describes people whose gender is different to the gender presumed at birth. The terms 'trans' or 'trans and gender diverse' are also common.

The trans umbrella includes trans women (presumed male at birth), trans men (presumed female at birth), and other gender diverse people, such as non-binary people.



Accessibility for content – documents and online

Content must follow accessibility design and legibility standards

Documents only

- Have generous margins. Do not cram the page.
- Align text to the left and avoid indenting paragraphs.
- Use a minimum 12pt font size.
- Avoid watermarks or other patterns behind your text.
- Include page numbers (12pt minimum).
- Complete the metadata in your documents. This information shows up in searches. In MS Word, go to File/Info and complete the Properties pane.
- Use styles in your documents. These provide structure for people using technology to read the document. For tips on this, see [Creating Accessible Microsoft Word 2016 Documents \(Windows\)](#) and [Apply Styles \(Microsoft Support\)](#).
- Documents with single continuous columns of text are easier to make accessible than documents with a complex layout.
- Run the accessibility checker before you finalise your document. Go to File/Info/ Check for issues/Check Accessibility and follow the prompts.

More information on accessible documents can be accessed at the [SA Government Online Accessibility Toolkit](#).

Accessibility for content – documents and online (continued)

Documents and online content

- Give the content a meaningful title.
- Use italic and bold sparingly. Avoid all–capitals.
- Only underline text or headings if they are hyperlinks.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Only use tables for data. Keep tables simple: avoid splitting or merging cells.
- Write your hyperlink text so that it makes sense out of context. For example, 'view tutorials on how to improve document accessibility.' Do not use 'click here.'
- Written content must communicate in a way that most people understand. The best way to do this is by using common words, or plain language. Writing in plain language means using simpler and more direct language.
- It does not mean 'dumbing down' information. Plain language helps people make decisions, comply with obligations and builds trust. It is quicker to read, easier to understand and easier to translate.
- You must have enough contrast between the background and text for people to be able to read your content. This applies to print documents and online information. The minimum acceptable contrast for normal text is 4.5 to 1. For large text, 3 to 1 is acceptable. A free contrast analyser tool is available to download on [Vision Australia's website](#). For a quick fix, try the website [Are My Colours Accessible?](#)
- Decorative elements do not need to meet contrast requirements. National flags and company logos are also exempt.
- You must have enough contrast between the background and meaningful graphics for people to be able to see your content. Meaningful graphics are charts, diagrams, flowcharts, infographics, maps, anything that people need to read and understand. The minimum acceptable contrast for normal text is 4.5 to 1. For large text, 3 to 1 is acceptable.
- Non-text content needs a text alternative. Images, graphics, flowcharts, maps, graphs, infographics, photos, flags, logos... anything that is not text, must be described in text. This covers situations where the non–text content may be missing, corrupted or unavailable to the reader for any reason. For tips on this, see [Creating Accessible Microsoft Word 2016 Documents \(Windows\)](#).

Inclusive events and calendar

All diversity focus streams have useful website resources to help plan and host events of significance relevant to each, including:

- [NAIDOC Week](#)
- [National Reconciliation Week](#)
- [International Day of People With Disability](#)
- [Wear it Purple Day](#)
- [Harmony Week](#)
- [International Day of Older Persons](#)

Please use these online resources when preparing to organise a staff event.

A calendar that promotes community events held or celebrated within South Australia that support and showcase our state's cultural diversity and inclusivity is available on the [Department of the Premier and Cabinet \(DPC\) website](#).

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony that can only be given by a Traditional Owner or community member from the local region or land in which the ceremony takes place.

It is an important cultural protocol that can happen in many different forms such as language, storytelling, song, or dance and is a way of inviting visitors to be mindful of and pay respects to the land/Country which they are on.

Traditionally, a 'Welcome' ceremony was conducted as a means of granting safe passage through and on to Country from one language group/community to another as an invitation and/or approval to be on someone else's 'Country'. These were done as a sign of good faith and partnership and done within the context of cultural practices, trade, seasonal necessity and songlines.

A Welcome to Country should be arranged for significant meetings, events and launches.

Inclusive events and calendar (continued)

Acknowledgement of Country

If a Traditional Owner/Custodian is not available to do a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country should be delivered before formally commencing an event or meeting.

It can be spoken or written and undertaken by anyone (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to acknowledge and show respect for the ongoing connection Traditional Owners / Custodians have with the land on which the meeting or event is taking place.

An Acknowledgment is also used as a respectful way of acknowledging dispossession, forceful removal and attempted erasure of Aboriginal cultures and is often used as a sign of recognition of these histories and the ongoing effects experienced by Aboriginal peoples.

It should be delivered at all meetings either in written or spoken form as a sign of respect for the land we live and work on.



Inclusive events and calendar (continued)

Specific Acknowledgement of Country

This should be used where there are no disputes and you know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered.

If only people is appropriate:

'I begin today by acknowledging the <insert name of people here (for example, Kaurna)> people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are <gathering/meeting on> today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples present here today.'

If people and place is appropriate:

'I begin today by acknowledging the <insert name of people here (for example, Ngarrindjeri)> people of the <insert name of Nation here (for example, of the Lower River Murray, Lakes and Coorong region)> the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are <gathering/meeting on> today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples present here today.'

Inclusive events and calendar (continued)

General Acknowledgement of Country

This should be used if you don't know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered, or if there are disputes about the land (multiple Aboriginal peoples identify as Traditional Custodians for that area).

The words are:

'I begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are <gathering/meeting on> today and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I also extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples present here today.'

South Australia-wide, webinar, online content, documents

'We, the <insert organisation here> acknowledge and respect Aboriginal peoples as South Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and occupants of the lands and waters of South Australia. We respect and celebrate the varied cultural and spiritual identities of all Aboriginal communities.'

Australia-wide, webinar, online content, documents

'In the spirit of reconciliation, <insert organisation here> acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

Links to guide resources

Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) map of Indigenous Australia
aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia

Are My Colours Accessible?
aremycolorsaccessible.com

Australian Government Style Manual: Punctuation – Dashes
stylemanual.gov.au/grammar-punctuation-and-conventions/punctuation/dashes

Australian Institute of Family Studies
aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/lgbtiqa-glossary-common-terms

Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) – Multicultural Events Calendar
dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/multicultural-affairs/events/multicultural-events-calendar

Harmony Week
harmony.gov.au

Inclusive SA: Inclusive Media Guidelines
inclusive.sa.gov.au/resources

International Day of Older Persons
un.org/en/observances/older-persons-day

International Day of People With Disability
idpwd.com.au

Microsoft Support: Apply Styles
support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/apply-styles-f8b96097-4d25-4fac-8200-6139c8093109

NAIDOC Week
naidoc.org.au

National Reconciliation Week
reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week

Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Supporting LGBTIQ+ in the SA public sector
publicsector.sa.gov.au/Employment/diversity/supporting-lgbtiqa-in-the-sa-public-sector

SA Government Online Accessibility Toolkit
accessibility.sa.gov.au

The National Center on Disability and Access to Education: Creating Accessible Microsoft Word 2016 Documents (Windows)
ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/word2016.php

TransHub
transhub.org.au/language

Vision Australia: Colour Contrast
Analyser tool
[visionaustralia.org/business-
consulting/digital-access/resources/
colour-contrast-analyser](https://visionaustralia.org/business-consulting/digital-access/resources/colour-contrast-analyser)

Wear it Purple Day
wearitpurple.org





Government of
South Australia



human
services