

A background graphic on the left side of the cover, featuring a network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a dark blue gradient. The nodes are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with some lines extending outwards.

# DBI Web Publishing Guide

Writing style and tips for  
DBI websites

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INNOVATION



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Enquiries about this manual or its use should be addressed to:

**Deputy Director**

Information Victoria

Department of Business and Innovation

State Government of Victoria

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

On behalf of the Central Web Team for the Department

For further information please email: <mailto:administration@egov.vic.gov.au>

# DBI Web Publishing Guide

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## 1. About This Guide

This guide is a reference document for anyone writing for, or publishing to, any website owned by the Department of Business and Innovation (DBI). DBI's strategy for a best-practice, user-friendly site is best implemented by a holistic approach that ensures style, tone, grammar, spelling and formatting are consistent across all content.

### 1.1. Version history

Version	Author	Description of change	Date
1.0	LK / MZ	Initial release	22/10/2010
1.1	MZ	Changed template to DBI, amended references to DIIRD so they now say DBI	31/1/2011
1.2	MZ, GDS	Minor updates	10/5/2011

### 1.2. Who is it for?

The primary audience for this document is any DBI business owner, stakeholder, staff member, consultant or vendor who is preparing content for changes or additions to a DBI website.

A secondary audience for the document includes business owners, stakeholders, communications personnel or web content team members who check or approve web content before it goes live on a DBI website.

This guide should be used in conjunction with the DBI writing guide. If you are working on web content and you find that the guidance in the two documents differs, always follow the guidance in this document (the DBI web writing guide). There are some areas where the guidance will differ and that is generally because the needs of readers vary from print to screen. There may also be technical constraints that result in different guidance. An example is the use of italics. On the web, italics are known to cause usability issues; italics can be difficult to read. Where the DBI Writing Guide may recommend using italics for emphasis, this web writing guide advises against it.

### 1.3. What does it contain?

The guide's specific focus is web content. It provides some general rules of usage, presentation and spelling. The document references Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) Web Standards.

The guide helps to:

- > establish a basic set of conventions to help keep the language, look, feel and meaning of each page of the site consistent, no matter how many writers are involved in the creation of content
- > set a consistent standard for the presentation of content elements such as headings, text, links and images
- > set a consistent standard for the way content is written
- > set a standard way to write commonly used words or acronyms across the site

- > provide a reference point for resolving inconsistencies or conflicting opinions about spelling or word usage
- > provide guidance on the presentation of content to aid in Search Engine Optimisation of a page
- > ensure WoVG Web Standards are adhered to
- > provide consistency for the lifetime of the site as new writers and editors join and leave the team.

#### 1.4. How is this guide structured?

The Guide is technology- and website-neutral. It is structured so that any web manager, or content author, reviewer or editor can use the body of the guide to check for editorial principles that apply to any DBI website regardless of owner, business goals or divisional differences.

Templates, checklists and appendices for information specific to a website appear at the back of the guide.

#### 1.5. What does this guide not cover

This guide does not cover:

- > design and layout aspects such as placement of design elements, look and feel of templates, size of banner, use and placement of departmental or State logos
- > workflow for approvals
- > minimum requirements for best practice advice for individual types of content (Flash maps, PDFs, newsletters, email addresses etc.)
- > site-specific guidelines, which may contain additional information not included in this general guide. Site-specific guidelines e.g. for Business Victoria, are listed as an appendices or are kept as separate documents. See the BVO guidelines at the end of this document as an example

#### 1.6. Other reference documents

Other reference documents may include:

- > WoVG Web Standards
- > individual website style guides
- > whole-of-department minimum requirements and best practices
- > workflow and approval documents
- > search engine optimisation (SEO) guidelines
- > policy and rules for the use of social media

#### 1.7. Standard dictionaries and style guides

In addition to the specific areas covered in this guide, use the following standard dictionaries and style guides to answer questions about word and language usage and style.

- > DBI Writing and Style Guide (available on the intranet)
- > The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, 3rd Edition, The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, NSW, 1998. The Concise Dictionary is also available online at [macquariedictionary.com.au](http://macquariedictionary.com.au)

## 2. Content Elements – Usage

This section includes information on formatting and usage for a range of web content elements. Content elements appear in alphabetical order, with cross referencing where an element may be known by more than one name, for example 'URL' and 'web address'.

DBI-specific spelling guidance is available at **Spelling** on page 19. Grammatical and editorial questions should be referred to the Style manual for authors, editors and printers (see Standard dictionaries and style guides on page 4).

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<p>Do not include a full stop at the end of abbreviations.</p> <p>Contractions always include the last letter or a word and are also written without a full stop: e.g. Dept, Mr, Ms, Dr</p> <p>Use full stops (as shown) for:</p> <p>p. (page)</p> <p>e.g. and i.e.</p> <p>When necessary abbreviate days of the week as: Sun Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat (see Dates for formatting rules)</p> <p>When necessary abbreviate months as Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sept Oct [note that months May, June and July, whose names have four letters or less, are not abbreviated]. See Dates for formatting rules.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The Macquarie Concise Dictionary includes a list of commonly used abbreviations as an appendix.</p>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<p>Acronyms are words formed by the initial letters of a string of words for example DBI, ANZAC and TAFE.</p> <p>Do not use full stops when writing an acronym.</p> <p>The first mention of an acronym in the main web area (sometimes called the content well) must provide the full name followed by the shortened form in brackets. After spelling out initially in this way, you can use the short form on its own, for example State Library of Victoria (SLV).</p> <p>The exception to this is the use of the DBI acronym on the DBI Corporate site. The full name of the department appears on every page of the site in banners, footers etc. so there is no need to spell it out in site content.</p> <p>Although the acronym 'DBI' should technically be prefaced by 'the' (as in 'the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development'), it is usually unnecessary.</p> <p>To reduce character count you can leave abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms in menu items, headings and publication titles and spell out the acronym in either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first paragraph following the title or heading (if the title or heading appears in the content well)</li> <li>• The description that accompanies a title or heading (for containers, publications etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>See also:</b> Abbreviations</p>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Acts</b>	<p>At the first mention on a web page, the name of an Act should be written out in full and italicised, e.g. <i>Labour and Industry Act 1958 (Vic)</i>. Italicise the entire name and the date.</p> <p>Because in Australia there is state and territory legislation as well as commonwealth, you will need to indicate the jurisdiction in abbreviated form (without italics and in parentheses) following the date. <b>Example:</b> Victorian businesses are covered by the <i>Fair Trading Act 1999 (Vic)</i> and the <i>Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cwlth)</i> when operating across state borders and conducting national publicity campaigns.</p> <p>In subsequent mentions of the Act, use the descriptive title in roman, without the date or jurisdiction, e.g. Fair Trading Act.</p> <p>When referring to an Act there is no need to italicise 'Act' but it should have an initial capital, e.g. The Act defines public bodies and public officers broadly.</p> <p>Sections within an Act should be written with 'single quotes'.</p>
<b>Address</b>	<p>See Addresses and contact information on page 16 for detailed instructions on street and postal address formatting.</p> <p>See also: <b>Email addresses</b> for how to present email addresses in web content or <b>URL</b> for how to present web addresses.</p>
<b>Ampersands</b>	<p>Avoid using ampersands. Use 'and' where possible.</p> <p>The exception is when convention expects it ('R&amp;B' or 'B&amp;B') or it is part of a proper noun ('Cutler &amp; Co').</p> <p>You may also use ampersands in headings and left hand navigation to reduce heading length, where there are space constraints and the heading is too long.</p>
<b>Apostrophes (possessive)</b>	<p><b>Possessive Apostrophe in Proper Nouns ending in 's'</b></p> <p>Proper Nouns ending in 's' do not take an extra 's' after possessive apostrophe, for example Gavin Jennings' travel business rather than Gavin Jennings's travel business.</p> <p>Plural nouns ending in 's' do not take an extra 's', for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shop specialised in ladies' shoes.</li> <li>• At the top of the agenda is a range of womens' issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Bold</b>	<b>See:</b> emphasis

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Bullet lists and numbered lists</b>	<p>Use <b>bullets</b> for lists when the order of items is not important.</p> <p>Use <b>numbered</b> lists for sequential items or a step-through process.</p> <p>Generally you would use bulleted lists when there are four more items in a list.</p> <p>Don't overuse bullet lists as they can lose their effectiveness.</p> <p>Bullet style will be dictated by the style sheet in the website's Content Management System (CMS). Never insert images or icons to represent bullets.</p> <p>Use parallel phrasing for each list item. This means that all items should start with the same part of speech, e.g. verb, noun, adjective. All items should complete the lead-in sentence.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Your accountant can provide you with sound advice on a number of business issues, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping you develop a solid business plan</li> <li>• assisting in structuring your business</li> <li>• developing strategies to grow your business.</li> </ul> <p><b>Punctuation and capitalisation</b></p> <p>Bullet and numbered lists should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• start each item with lower case (as in this list)</li> <li>• not use semi colons at the end of each list item</li> <li>• not have an 'and' at the end of the second last item</li> <li>• have a full stop at the end of the last item.</li> </ul>
<b>Campaign names</b>	See Program and campaign names
<b>Capitalisation</b>	For guidance on capitalisation, see the usage instructions for the particular content element in this table, for example <b>Headings and sub-headings, Bullet lists, Publications, Government, Government programs and Titles.</b>
<b>Commas (in a series)</b>	<p>With a list of simple items do not add a comma before the 'and', e.g. oranges, grapes and lemons.</p> <p>With a list where the items are more complex, you may need to use a comma before the 'and' for clarity, e.g. small businesses, government, and community and industry groups.</p>
<b>Dates</b>	<p>Format dates as dd mmmm yyyy, for example 20 December 2008. If you have limited space use dd mmm yyyy or 01 Feb 2002.</p> <p>If including a day of the week, format as: Monday 20 December 2008 or again, Thurs 11 Feb 2010, if you have limited space.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> whichever of the above options you choose, you must remain consistent throughout the page.</p> <p>If providing a date range, use a hyphen, e.g. 20-25 December 2005</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Times</p> <p>For abbreviations of dates and days of the week, see <b>Abbreviations</b></p>
<b>Dot points</b>	See <b>Bullet lists</b>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>e as prefix</b>	<p>As a general rule, where something is denoted as being electronic by the addition of the prefix 'e', the 'e' should be lower case, followed by the noun with an initial capital. There should be no space or hyphen between the 'e' and the noun as shown in the examples below.</p> <p>Try to avoid using words with the 'e' prefix at the beginning of a sentence. If possible, restructure the sentence so that the word does not fall at the beginning.</p> <p>The exception is 'email'. Use 'Email' at the beginning of sentence or as a field title.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> eBusiness, eGovernment, eCommerce</p>
<b>Em and en dashes</b>	<p>Avoid using em and en dashes for online content. Use a hyphen instead.</p>
<b>Email addresses</b>	<p>For DBI departments and divisions, email addresses are never presented as a personal name but as a departmental address:</p> <p><b>Incorrect Example:</b> firstname.lastname@dbi.vic.gov.au</p> <p><b>Correct Example:</b> enquiries@dbi.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Other Victorian government departments may not have a generic email so it may be necessary to include a personal name. Where practicable, contact the relevant department and check to see if a generic email address exists and use this if available.</p> <p>Always present the email address as the link. Never make plain text, for example a person's name, an email address link.</p>
<b>Emphasis</b>	<p>Bold can be used as emphasis but should be used sparingly to avoid diluting the effect.</p> <p>Avoid using centred or justified (straight left and right margin) alignments to emphasise headings of sentences or paragraphs.</p> <p>Do not use indents to emphasise text. See <b>Indenting</b> for guidance on when to indent.</p> <p>Do not use italics for emphasis. There are useability issues associated with the use of italics.</p>
<b>Enquire or inquire / inquiry</b>	<p>Enquire relates to asking or seeking information in an informal sense; 'She enquired after his health' or 'Call Business Victoria on 13 22 15 to make an enquiry.'</p> <p>Inquire is used in the context of seeking information in a formal setting: 'The police are holding their own inquiry.'</p>

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Element	Instructions and examples
<b>External websites</b>	<p>Links to external websites should generally only appear in a designated 'External Links' container.</p> <p>However, the most important 'actionable links' can be included in the main text section of the web page (also called the content well) by applying the link to a short piece of descriptive text.</p> <p>Do not use 'Click here' as the link text. For useability and also to assist with</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Leaving Australia – lodging a tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)</a></p> <p>Or if space is limited: <a href="#">Leaving Australia – lodging a tax return</a></p> <p>Do not use the base domain (e.g. <a href="#">ato.gov.au</a>) as the link text. Descriptive text is clearer for the reader and also allows the use of search keywords.</p> <p>All links to external websites should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The fact that it is an external link</li><li>• The base domain of the target website. Note that website base domains should be presented without the <a href="#">http://www</a> e.g. <a href="#">ato.gov.au</a></li></ul> <p><b>References to external sites in the content well</b></p> <p>When making reference to other websites in the content well, always include the full website name, for example the Australian Securities and Investments Commission website.</p> <p>If you are unsure of the correct title of the website, always visit the site to confirm the name before making reference to it.</p>
<b>Full stops</b>	<p>Never use a full stop at the end of any of the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• acronyms and abbreviations (except where indicated in <b>Abbreviations</b>)</li><li>• items in a bulleted list, except for the last bullet point. Note, this applies even if the list contains complete sentences</li><li>• captions</li><li>• dates</li><li>• headings or sub-headings</li><li>• internal links, external links or download links</li><li>• items in a contact list</li><li>• symbols for units of measurement</li></ul> <p><b>Full stops and quotes</b></p> <p>If a quotation consists of a whole sentence or sentences the quotation mark should go outside the full stop.</p> <p>Example: 'DBI is a leading government department.'</p> <p>If only part of the sentence has quotation marks then the full stop should go inside the full stop.</p> <p>Example: Pete told Jane, 'you had better take the rubbish out'.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Abbreviations and acronyms</p>

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Element	Instructions and examples
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p>Avoid language that discriminates on the basis of gender. Common problems arise when using gender-specific pronouns such as he, she, his, her, him. Try re-writing in the plural, removing the subject or using 'you' or 'their' as the pronoun.</p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p>Instead of 'The applicant should fill in the form using his own handwriting.', try one of these instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants should fill in the form using their own handwriting.</li> <li>• The form should be filled in by hand.</li> <li>• You should fill in the form using your own handwriting.</li> </ul> <p>Words that should be gender neutral include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chairperson (not chairman or chairwoman)</li> <li>• police officers (not policeman or policewoman)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Government</b></p>	<p>Use initial capitals when referring to a particular government, for example Commonwealth Government offices, the State Government of Victoria.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Use lower case when referring to government in a general way or in subsequent references, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government is committed to listening to the needs of regional and rural people.</li> <li>• The ministers will discuss many issues when they meet today.</li> <li>• The department employs more than 1500 people.</li> <li>• Many protestors are expected to turn up to the premier's speech today</li> <li>• The secretary will meet with staff this afternoon.</li> </ul> <p>Government should also be lower case when used adjectivally, for example: government offices, government initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Government Programs</b></p>	<p>Government programs, plans etc. within DBI can be capitalised when described in full. However, lower case applies in all other cases, for example:</p> <p>The Regional Business Investment Ready Program came into being in 2006. The program is helping many small to medium-sized business.</p> <p>The 10-Year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy is an exciting new venture. The strategy has four key points.</p> <p>...the 2007-08 State Budget (Note, no initial capital when used as an adjective or when plural, e.g. budget surplus, state budgets)</p>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Headings and sub-headings</b>	<p>Use clear headings that concisely summarise the information that follows. Ensure your headings include keywords on the page. Use keywords in your headings that comply with DBI's SEO strategy. The content team can help with this.</p> <p>The rules about whether to apply sentence or title case to different heading levels may vary from website to website. Check the appropriate appendix for guidance.</p> <p>Where no site-specific rules apply use Title case for Home pages and landing pages, and sentence case for content pages.</p> <p><b>Sentence case</b> capitalises only the first letter of the first word or proper nouns and titles, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital grants</li> <li>• Visit Melbourne</li> <li>• The future direction of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Title case</b> gives all words except conjunctions (and, but) and articles (a, an, the) an initial capital</p>
<b>Honourifics, titles and honours</b>	<p>Honourifics, titles and honours do not require full stops, e.g. Ms, Dame, Dr</p> <p>An exception to this is Hon. which should always end with a full stop.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Titles</p>
<b>Hyphens</b>	<p>Often the use or non-use of a hyphen within words depends on the immediate context.</p> <p>In general, try to minimise the use of hyphens in complex words (words that have two or more components). It is preferable to join the word groups to form one word, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordinate</li> <li>• online</li> <li>• email</li> <li>• eBusiness</li> <li>• website</li> <li>• onsite</li> </ul> <p>An exception to this rule is where you include a hyphen between words to form adjective compounds, for example three-stage process, a one-third share, home-based business.</p> <p>If you are working with content that was originally formatted for print, ensure you replace any em and en dashes with hyphens.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Spelling on page 20</p>
<b>Indenting</b>	<p>Indenting should be used infrequently. Generally web page content should be chunked and separated by using headings.</p>
<b>Italics</b>	<p>Avoid use of italics if possible. Italics on web pages can raise useability issues.</p> <p>See individual sections such as Publications and Emphasis for specific guidance.</p>
<b>law, legislation</b>	<p>The words legislation and law should be lower case.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Acts</p>

<b>Element</b>	<b>Instructions and examples</b>
<b>licence or license</b>	<p>Licence is a noun: You need a licence to drive a car;</p> <p>License is a verb: Victoria's Business Licensing Authority (the BLA) is responsible for all licensing and registration related functions for a number of occupations.</p>
<b>Lists (bulleted and numbered)</b>	See Bullet lists and Numbers
<b>Measurements</b>	<p>Spell out measurements in body text and use abbreviated measurements for tables and graphs.</p> <p>Units of measurements do not need full stops and in abbreviated form are never plural.</p> <p>Use a space between a numeral or measurement. Also note that units of measurement may be either upper or lower case, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• millimetres - 20 mm</li> <li>• centimetres - 5 cm</li> <li>• metre - 7 m</li> <li>• kilometre - 17 km</li> <li>• millilitres - 10 mL</li> <li>• kilograms - 20 kg</li> <li>• hectare - 46 ha</li> <li>• watts - 60 W</li> </ul> <p>The exception to the spacing rule applies when measuring degrees and per cents. For example:</p> <p>20°C or 20°Celsius (both are acceptable)</p> <p>10% (see also per cent)</p>
<b>Numbers (numbers or words?)</b>	<p><b>Numbers or words?</b></p> <p>Spell out zero through to nine. Use numerals for 10 and above, for example three contracts, 1000, 11 words, 250 employees.</p> <p>For round numbers of one million or more, use a numeral plus a word, for example 10 million.</p> <p>Spell out all numbers at the beginning of a sentence regardless of magnitude.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Five hundred people attended the conference.</p>
<b>Numbers (punctuation)</b>	<p>For numbers less than 10,000 do not use a comma. Use a comma between each group of three digits after 9999.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <p>25</p> <p>146</p> <p>2678</p> <p>10,256</p>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Organisation names</b>	<p>The full name of organisations, institutions and events take an initial capital, for example the University of Melbourne, the State Library of Victoria, the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, the Department of Education.</p> <p>Note: Use the lower case in subsequent references when only part of the title is used. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Justice is on high alert. The department is expecting thousands of enquiries about the incident.</li> <li>• The State Library of Victoria is heritage-listed. The library is an impressive building.</li> <li>• The Melbourne International Arts Festival is one of Melbourne's most important events. The festival attracts both overseas and national acts.</li> </ul> <p><b>See also:</b> Capitalisation and proper nouns</p>
<b>Per cent</b>	<p>Use per cent, spelled out (two words) in text</p> <p>Where necessary (e.g. where there are space constraints), you can use the symbol (%) in the column and row headers of tables and graphs, or in navigation elements such as menu items and headings.</p>
<b>Period</b>	See <b>Full stops</b>
<b>Postnominals</b>	<p>Postnominals are the rank, qualifications or status of a person, placed after their name.</p> <p>The higher the honour the nearer it is placed to the name. Postnominals do not need full stops but commas are used to separate them, e.g. Jennifer Citizen, MBE, OAM or Julian Citizen, GC</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Titles</p> <p>For a full discussion of capitalisation use see Wiley and Sons, listed in Other reference documents on page 4.</p>
<b>Practice or practise</b>	<p>Practice is noun: The doctor's practice was small but busy.</p> <p>Practise is a verb: Accountants who tell their clients to keep records should practise what they preach.</p>
<b>Program and campaign names</b>	<p>When referencing titles of items that are not publications, e.g. a government program or campaign, use the following styles:</p> <p>Write title in Title Case, e.g. Skills Victoria</p> <p>Do not use italics</p> <p>Do not use quotation marks</p> <p>Examples of items that may fall into the non-publication category include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programs</li> <li>• grants</li> <li>• campaigns</li> <li>• agenda</li> <li>• case studies</li> </ul>
<b>Proper nouns</b>	<p>Proper nouns include personal names, nationalities, organisations and official geographical names. They take an initial capital.</p> <p>Examples: Fred Nurk, Chinese, Australian, The State Library of Victoria and Uluru.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Organisation names and Capitalisation</p>

<b>Element</b>	<b>Instructions and examples</b>
<b>Publications</b>	<p>Do not write publication titles in italics. Publications include books, brochures, newspapers, films, videos, CDs etc.</p> <p>Follow the capitalisation used in the publication itself, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Slap by Christos Tsiolkas</li> <li>• Growing Victoria Together</li> <li>• Herald Sun</li> </ul> <p><b>Quotation marks</b></p> <p>Do not use quotation marks for publication names.</p> <p>If you need to refer to a section or chapter of a publication, put this text in single quotes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the 'Personal Action Plan' section in the workbook for the Your Business – Selling Closing, Moving On? seminar.</li> </ul>
<b>Punctuation</b>	<p>Find punctuation rules for individual content elements by looking for the relevant element in this table, for example Numbers (punctuation), Bullet lists, Abbreviations, Full stops etc.</p>
<b>Quotation marks</b>	<p>If using quotation marks – when quoting direct speech or for citations or referencing – always use single quotes, e.g. 'quotation'.</p> <p>Double quotes should only be used on the rare occasion where an individual being quoted, also quotes someone else, for example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">'I found the mentoring sessions particularly valuable,' said small business owner Frederika Nurk. 'The mentor was very knowledgeable and encouraging, with comments like "You're on the right track".'</p>
<b>State</b>	<p>When referring to the state as a legal entity, it should take an initial capital for example 'The premier is negotiating on behalf of the State'.</p>
<b>Times</b>	<p>When presenting times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't add a space between the numeral and 'am' or 'pm', e.g. 9am, 7pm</li> <li>• don't use zeros for times that are on the hour, e.g. 9am, 7pm, 9.30am, 7.45pm</li> <li>• when presenting a range of times, use a hyphen but with no spaces, e.g. 9am-7pm, 9.30am-7.45pm, 8.30-9am</li> </ul> <p><b>See also:</b> Dates</p>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Titles</b>	<p>Official and formal titles take an initial capital. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minister for Industrial Relations, Martin Pakula</li><li>• Premier John Brumby</li><li>• the Secretary Howard Ronaldson</li><li>• the Hon. Jacinta Allan</li><li>• the Queen</li><li>• the Prime Minister of Australia</li><li>• the Treasurer</li><li>• the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce</li><li>• foreign heads of state, e.g. 'The President of Indonesia is holding meetings with regional leaders today. The President is expected to meet the Prime Minister of Australia for a private talk tomorrow.'</li></ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Use lower case when speaking in a general way or in subsequent references, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ministers will discuss many issues when they meet today</li><li>• Many protestors are expected to turn up to the premier's speech today</li><li>• The secretary will meet with staff this afternoon</li><li>• The state premiers met last week in Melbourne.</li></ul> <p><b>See also:</b> Postnominals</p>
<b>Twitter names</b>	Twitter names always include the @ in front of the name, with no space e.g. @businessvic
<b>URL</b>	<p>URLs (web addresses) should be presented without 'http://www'</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <a href="http://business.vic.gov.au">business.vic.gov.au</a></p> <p>See External websites and External Links (right hand side container) for information on referencing and linking to websites</p>
<b>Web addresses</b>	See <b>URL</b>

## 3. Addresses and contact information

### 3.1. Australian street address and telephone numbers

When formatting lists of addresses and contact information in the content well, the main points to consider are:

- > 'Contact' title should be a nested heading
- > Name of division or unit should be a nested heading
- > Information packages should be presented on different lines (e.g. street name and number + suburb, state + postal code, telephone, fax, email)
- > Level, Floor or Storey should be spelt out
- > Building names (if required) come before the actual address
- > Web addresses should be formatted as a non www address. 2.3.5 (doc link)
- > Web addresses should be hyperlinked
- > Email addresses should not be personal email (see. 2.3.4 doc link)
- > State name should be abbreviated and capitals
- > Format telephone and fax numbers with (+ [country code] [area code without '0'] ) then the telephone number with digits in groups of four e.g. (+61 3) 9651 9999 This ensures they are useful for overseas as well as local enquirers.

#### 3.1.1. Address contact example

##### Contact

##### Office of Small Business

Nauru House

Level 20, 80 Collins Street, Melbourne

VIC, 3000, AUS [note abbrev and caps for State "VIC" & Country "AUS"]

**Tel:** (+61 3) 9651 4300

**Fax:** (+61 3) 9651 4324

**Web:** [business.vic.gov.au](http://business.vic.gov.au)

**Email:** [info@company.com.au](mailto:info@company.com.au)

### 3.2. Street and postal addresses

Use the following table to help you determine which addresses are required on the website:

<b>If you are listing...</b>	<b>then...</b>
only a street address	do not include a title
only a postal address	include the label Postal Address
both street and postal address	label both addresses clearly, as shown below

##### Street Address

Department Business and Innovation

121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

VIC, 3000, AUS

**Tel:** (+61 3) 9999 9999

**Fax:** (+61 3) 9999 9999

**Postal Address**

Department Business and Innovation  
GPO Box 4509RR  
Melbourne, VIC, 3001

### 3.2.1. Australian postal address format

**Postal Address**

Department Business and Innovation  
GPO Box 4509RR  
Melbourne, VIC, 3000

For postal addresses note that:

- 'Postal Address' title should be a nested heading
- Name of Division or Unit should be a nested heading
- GPO has no full stops
- Suburb, state and postal code as per Street Address.

### 3.3. International street addresses and telephone numbers

When formatting international contact details, apply the same general principles as for Australian address formatting but consider country-specific idiosyncrasies. Standardisation, the first general rule of editing, should apply: A rule of formatting can be made for any instance as long as that same formatting decision is applied to all like instances.

Add specific international address formats to the Business Victoria appendix as they arise, and as a decision is made on which version to accept

#### 3.3.1. International contact examples

**Japan**

**Contact**

Tokyo Central Post Office  
1-5-3 Yaesu, Chuo-ku  
Tokyo 100-8994  
**Tel:** (+81 3) 3375 3211  
**Web:** [housingjapan.com](http://housingjapan.com)

In this address, Tokyo is the prefecture; Chuo-ku is one of the special wards; Yaesu 1-Chome is the name of the city district; and 5-3 is the city block and building number. In practice it is common for the chōme to be prefixed although there may be addresses that are formatted as:

**Contact**

Tokyo Central Post Office  
5-3, Yaesu 1-Chome  
Chuo-ku, Tokyo 100-8994  
Tel: (+81 3) 3375 3211  
Web: [housingjapan.com](http://housingjapan.com)

**United Kingdom**

**Contact**

**Agent-General for Victoria**

Victoria House, Melbourne Place, Strand  
London, WC2B 4LG, United Kingdom

**Tel:** (+44 40) 7836 2656

**Fax:** (+44 20) 7240 6025

**Email:** london@iird.vic.gov.au

### 3.4. Email addresses

See **Email address** in the Content Element Table at 2.1 for guidance on how they are used in DBI web content.

### 3.5. Web addresses

See **URL** in the Content Element table at 2.1 for information on web addresses.

## 4. Metadata

### 4.1. Standard Metadata sets

Standard metadata should be implemented on every page. Best Practice for metadata and search engine optimisation suggests these standard fields should be a combination of Standard AGLS Metadata set and two fields optimised for search engine indexing (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc).

The two fields optimised for search engine indexing are Keyword and Description, described below.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Keyword</b>     | Keywords should be between 25 and 30 words and include semantically important words. Derivatives of previously included words can be used if they offer a different and relevant semantic meaning but overuse of derivatives can lead to the Keywords being misrecognised as spam.                  |
| <b>Description</b> | The Description field is more important than the Keywords as it will come up in search results. The description needs to include high priority keywords, be descriptive, engaging and accurate, and as a general rule be around 160 characters long as this is the length of Google search returns. |

## 5. Spelling

DBI websites use standard Australian spellings as outlined in the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*. The following list provides a quick reference for commonly used words, phrases and abbreviations on DBI websites.

Preferred spelling	Explanation/rationale
Aboriginal (noun and adjective)	Capitalise when referring to Indigenous people of Australia. Lower case when used as a generic term for indigenous people from anywhere in the world.
adviser	Not advisor
aerostructure	No hyphen, single word
affect	
afield	No hyphen, single word
agribusiness	No hyphen, single word
a lot	Not alot
aquaculture	No hyphen, single word
Australian Synchrotron	In any usage of this term, never use just 'synchrotron' or 'the synchrotron'. Always use 'Australian Synchrotron'. This has come as a request from the content owners.
BA, PhD, DipEd	Shortened forms of qualifications appear without a full stop See Postnominals in Standard dictionaries and style guides on page 4.
behaviour	Not behavior
benefited	Not benefitted
breakeven	no hyphen, single word
Budget	(State or Commonwealth) is capitalised
cafe	Do not use an acute 'e' when writing 'cafe'
cash flow	Write as two words
chairperson	Gender neutral. Not chairman or chairwoman
colour	not color
Commendee/s	As in a noun. Plural or singular
cooperate cooperation	No hyphen, single word
coordination	No hyphen, single word
collocation	No hyphen, single word
cost-effective	Hyphenated
cutbacks	No hyphen, single word
decision-making process (adjective)	Hyphen used when a compound adjective e.g. 'decision-making process'

<b>Preferred spelling</b>	<b>Explanation/rationale</b>
distributorship	
e.g.	Means 'for example'. Only use with a capital 'E' if using at the start of a sentence (which should be avoided by re-writing the sentence). All other instances use the lower case 'e', as in e.g. Must include full stops as shown. See Abbreviations in Content Elements – Usage on page 5.
email	Single word, no hyphenation, never capitalised except at the start of a sentence
eBusiness	
entrepreneurship	
etc	No full stops
ergonomically	
first-hand	With a hyphen; as in first-hand information
flavour	not flavor
flexographic	
focuses	Single s, not double ss. Examples: focuses, focused.
franchisor	
Freecall	No hyphen. One word. Always initial capital
fulfil fulfilled	Single 'l' without a suffix. Takes double 'll' with a suffix, for example fulfilled, fulfilling.
full time vs full-time	Use 'full-time'
government, Australian Government	See Government in Content Elements – Usage on page 5.
Helpline	No hyphen, single word
home-based	A compound adjective. Use a hyphen.
in-depth	one hyphenated
innovatively	
interest bearing	No hyphen
Internet vs internet	Use a lower case 'i' in all instances of the word 'internet', e.g. internet service provider, accessing the internet
interstate	No hyphen
intranet	
interoperability	Technical 'web' term

<b>Preferred spelling</b>	<b>Explanation/rationale</b>
km, cm, hr	Shortened forms of times and measures appear without a full stop For more discussion on measurements, see Measurements in Content Elements – Usage on page 5.
labour	Not labor except when referring to the Australian Labor Party
'licence' versus 'license'	'Licence' is a noun, whereas 'license' is a verb.
life span	Two words
liveability	
long-term (adjective compound)	With hyphen - as in long-term memory, long-term export
long term	'In the long term, the investment will pay dividends'
marketplace	No hyphen, single word
microsystems	No hyphen, single word
motivator	As in the noun
Mr, Ms, Mrs, Dr	Shortened forms of titles appear without a full stop See Abbreviations in Content Elements – Usage on page 5.
multidisciplinary	Single word. No hyphen
multiskilling	Single word. No hyphen
multicultural	Single word. No hyphen
nationwide	Single word
neighbour	not neighbor
non-member	Non-member takes hyphen as per Macquarie Concise Dictionary
non-payment	Non-payment takes hyphen. Reference: similar words in Macquarie Concise Dictionary + Frequency of this format Google
neuroscience	Scientific term. Noun
ongoing	Single word, no hyphenation
online	Single word, no hyphenation
onsite	Single word, no hyphenation
organisation	not organization
outgoings	No hyphen, single word
overpayment	No hyphen, single word
overtake	Single word, no hyphenation
part-time versus part time	As per the Macquarie Concise Dictionary, we use part-time rather than part time
payroll	As per Macquarie Dictionary – no hyphen, not two words

<b>Preferred spelling</b>	<b>Explanation/rationale</b>
per cent	Write as two words
p.	Shortened form of the word 'page'. Include a full stop
Photonics	Scientific term. Noun
precommercial	One word. No hyphen
premise or premises	Use 'premises' for both singular and plural when referring to property (land or a building): I have a business premises in South Melbourne. Use 'premise' when referring to something assumed or taken as given in making an argument: Her central premise was that ...
Prime Minister	Capitalised
proactively	No hyphen, single word
pro rata vs prorata	As per the Macquarie Concise Dictionary, we are using 'pro rata' – 'prorata' is actually incorrect
recognise	not 'recognize'
resourcing	One word. No hyphen
rethink	One word. No Hyphen
rezoned	No hyphen, single word
Shortlisted	One word.
short-term or short term	With hyphen when used as a compound adjective: 'He outlined the short-term goals.' Without a hyphen: 'In the short term, the team needed more goals.'
site map	Two words. No hyphen
skilling	One word. No hyphen
stakeholders	No hyphen, single word
statewide	No hyphen, single word
subsector	No hyphen, single word
sustainability	
'thank you' (two words)	Not 'thankyou'
Twenty-first century or 21st century	Use 21st century except at the start of a sentence, when you would spell it out as Twenty-first century
under way	Two words
underpins	One word. No hyphen
unreticulated	One word. No hyphen
untreatable	One word. No hyphen

<b>Preferred spelling</b>	<b>Explanation/rationale</b>
up-to-date (adjective) up to date (used as predicate)	Hyphens used when used as a compound adjective: 'The website provided up-to-date information.' No hyphens when its in its predicative form: 'After you are up to date with task 1, please start task 2.'
valuing vs valueing	Use valuing. Both Macquarie Concise and Small Business Victoria Fact Sheets use this spelling
the Web	Always capitalised when used as a proper noun in reference to the World Wide Web
website webpage	Words starting with 'web' are presented as one word, never capitalised except at the start of a sentence. Where 'web' is used as a compound adjective use the lowercase form, e.g. web content, web publishing
well-known or well known	Hyphen when used as a compound adjective: 'He was a well-known public figure.' When 'well's an adverb modifying 'known' do not use the hyphen: 'It is well known that he was a Labor supporter'.
Whole of Victorian Government	No hyphens. On the first use on a page, follow with (WoVG)
workplace	No hyphen, single word

## 6. Appendix 1: Checklists

### 6.1. Web page checklist


Use this checklist if you are drafting content for a web page. The checklist can be used by content authors and web teams. If you are a content author, some of these checklist items may not be relevant. If you have questions ask your web content team account manager.

Element	Checklist Description	✓
<b>Headings</b>	Have you nested your headings correctly? e.g. h1, h2, h3 Have you included important keywords in the headings?	
<b>Metadata</b>	Have you included 25-30 keyword-rich terms in the keyword field? Have you included a succinct but highly descriptive 160 character-long description field?	
<b>Images</b>	Have you included a descriptive alt tag? Should the image also have a title attribute? Has this been added and is it different to the alt tag? Does the image need a long descriptor? If so has this been implemented?	
<b>List lengths</b>	Do bullet lists contain no more than seven items? (If not, it should be possible to split them into two more targeted lists)	
<b>Links</b>	Do all hypertext links make sense when removed from context (this is important for accessibility) Do all external links open in a new window?	
<b>Content</b>	Are the keywords included on the page somewhere? Are they at 3-4% density? (recommended) How long is the page? If it requires scrolling to get to through the content, have you considered breaking the content into more than one page? Has the content been broken into chunks suitable for web reading (scanning and skimming)? Does the structure of the content follow the 'pyramid' style with correct cascade of headings and material? Has the content been checked for spelling?  Has the content been proofed for grammatical and editorial mistakes?	

## 6.2. PDF Checklist

The checklist below lists attributes that PDFs on all DBI websites should have. Always consider whether the PDF would be better displayed as a web pages. Victorian Government accessibility standards state that all PDFs should have an html alternative.

Element	Checklist Description	✓
PDFs	<p>Have you assessed whether it is viable for the content in the PDF to be presented as a web page. Web pages are always preferable to a PDF because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDFs are difficult for assistive technologies to read correctly</li> <li>• web pages are more discoverable by Google</li> <li>• web pages allow the reader to scan content more directly</li> </ul>	
	<p>Has you checked whether the PDF is correctly structured in the original document with all necessary headings, bullets, numbered lists and active links?</p> <p>See egov website section '<a href="http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html">Preparing the Word document</a>' for guidance.</p> <p><a href="http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html">http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html</a></p>	
	Do all images in the PDF have an alt tag?	
	Have all links in the PDF been made active, either through original structuring or through linking process?	
	<p>Have you checked that maps, images and other non-textual elements in the PDF are Accessible and do not convey information by reference to colour only?</p> <p>Eg a map with text that says "Areas in red are at high risk" will be inaccessible to users of Accessible technologies and to users who are colour blind</p>	
	<p>Have you used the correct conversion settings? See the egov website '<a href="http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html">Creating the PDF document</a>' for guidance</p> <p><a href="http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html">http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/website-practice/usability/pdf-usability-and-accessibility/making-a-pdf-accessible.html</a></p> <p>(Do not use 'Print PDF' to generate - formatting elements will be lost)</p>	
	<p>Have you checked that all necessary metadata has been embedded in the document?</p> <p>(Fields should be opened using Adobe Acrobat, selecting Properties and filling in all fields)</p>	
	<p>Has the correct (any) default language been selected?</p> <p>Open in Adobe Acrobat. Go to File &gt; Properties &gt; Advanced. See drop-down menu under Reading Options &gt; Language. Select the correct language from the drop-down list. For PDFs in English, choose English UK.</p>	
	<p>Has the size of the PDF been checked?</p> <p>(DBI Min Requirements and Best Practice Guidelines suggests an upper limit of 2MB for a PDF. Large PDFs should be broken down into smaller file sizes)</p>	

Element	Checklist Description	✓
	Has the file been named correctly? PDFs should be structured with no spaces, e.g. MarketingBrochure.pdf	
	When the PDF is uploaded, is the file type extension or icon and the file size appended to the linked title?  <a href="#">Victorian Government Submission to the Automotive Review, 2008 (PDF 573.0 kb)</a>	
	Is there a linked Adobe icon, or other link, to the Adobe site for downloading Reader?	

### 6.3. Case study checklist

This checklist is for a business audience but should be used as general guidance for any case study.

Element	Checklist Description	✓
<b>Title</b>	Descriptive of what problem is being solved.	
<b>Solution</b>	The case study gives tips/advice on how to solve a business problem.	
<b>Examples</b>	There are concrete examples of what the business did which another business owner could also do	
<b>Image</b>	There should be a picture of the business owners and it should have alt text.	
<b>Details</b>	Is the case study clear on the industry, location, timeframe (how long did it take to do) and cost (was it free, low cost)?	
<b>Links</b>	Is there at least one link to a 'next step' e.g. program or template to assist.	

## 7. Appendix 2: Business Victoria Customised Elements

### 7.1. Headings

Element	Style to apply	Text styles
Left Hand Navigation	N/A	Title Case. Applied automatically Left hand navigation titles are changed by editing the Short Description text in Page Properties
Main page heading	Heading 1	Sentence case Main page heading titles are changed by editing the Long Description text in Page Properties
First sub heading (and links for Level 1 & 2 entry pages)	Heading 2	Use sentence case
Second sub heading	Heading 3	Use sentence case
Third sub heading	Heading 4	Use sentence case

### 7.2. Content elements – BVO-specific Usage

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>Containers (right hand side)</b>	<p>The order for presenting Right Hand Containers on pages is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quick Links</li> <li>2. Related Content</li> <li>3. External Links</li> <li>4. Publications/Reports</li> <li>5. Who Can Help?</li> <li>6. News</li> </ol> <p>Note: Not all pages will display all available Right Hand Containers. For usage, see also: Related Content (right hand side container) and External Links (right hand side container)</p>
<b>Related Content (right hand side container)</b>	<p>Internal links represent an important part of the Business Vic website strategy, which is to promote other pages on the website through numerous cross linkages.</p> <p>Generally, internal links should only be placed in the right-hand 'Related Content' container on any page.</p> <p>A link in the Related Content container should include a descriptor (generally the target page name or a shortened version) and a short descriptive summary of the page content.</p> <p>On the rare occasions where a link to internal content is placed in the content well, ensure the link text is the name of the internal page.</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Containers (right hand side) for the order in which containers should appear.</p>

Element	Instructions and examples
<b>External Links (right hand side container)</b>	<p>A link in the External Links container should include a linked descriptor (generally a shortened version of the target page or website), the base domain name (unlinked) and a short descriptive summary of the page content.</p> <p>The base domain name should be presented without the <a href="http://www">http://www</a> e.g. ato.gov.au</p> <p><b>See also:</b> Containers (right hand side) for the order in which containers should appear. Generally, internal links should only be placed in the right-hand 'Related Content' container on any page.</p>

## 7.3. Language and tone

### 7.3.1. General language style and tone

Adopt a general, frank tone appropriate for a predominantly adult, business-focused audience (people who run their own businesses, employees in larger businesses and people starting a business).

Write content in active voice, using plain English.

Avoid government, industry-specific or technical terms or acronyms. If unavoidable, ensure that the term, when introduced, is explained clearly and simply.

Avoid slang or colloquial terms.

Choose a style appropriate to the subject of your page. For example:

- > for subjects that outline processes, use an instructional style that helps the user take action by structuring the page as a step-through process
- > for subjects that are information-centred, write in a discursive style

Look for opportunities to aid reading and scanning on screen through use of:

- > summaries, where appropriate
- > descriptive headings to introduce key sections of the page

Do not place key information below the fold (where users can't see it without scrolling) unless you provide other information or visual cues to flag the existence of that information e.g. include a summary or use anchor links to jump users to the information below the fold. When you have a large amount of content, try and spread the content over a number of pages, providing visibility to the content in the site's navigation.

## 7.4. Application screen elements

Refer to the Business Victoria Online design standards for standard word usage for screen elements.