

# Camden Council's Writing Style Guide



NUMBERS, DATES, TIMES AND MEASUREMENTS	
Numbers less than 10	<p>Numbers 'one' to 'nine' should be written out in words.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are two prizes available for best dressed at the event.</li> <li>2. This is the first time Camden Council will be running a competition for best dressed at the event.</li> </ol> <p>The only exceptions to this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing times (see 'Time'); and</li> <li>• Indicating figures in a table or graph (usually designed by the Graphic Design Team).</li> </ul>
Numbers more than 10	<p>Should be numeric, unless they are at the beginning of sentences.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council will be planting 200 new trees in Camden.</li> <li>2. Two thousand people attended the inaugural Boots n' Beats event last weekend.</li> </ol>
Thousands	<p>Express as '1,000', '10,000' and '100,000' (comma kicks in after four digits)</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council has welcomed 1,238 new citizens across its four citizenship ceremonies this year.</li> </ol>
Millions and billions	<p>Written out in a combination of numbers and words throughout the body of any text.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council received over \$1.1 million in State Government funding to deliver the project.</li> <li>2. There were more than one million entries to Council's biggest Facebook competition to date.</li> </ol>

<p>Decimal points</p>	<p>Don't go beyond two decimal points.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Triathletes will have to swim 400 metres, bike 3.2 metres and then run another kilometre.</li> <li>2. The Federal Government has committed \$5.23 million to help deliver these key projects over the next five year.</li> </ol>
<p>Date formats</p>	<p>For financial years, use a slash, as this is common 'financial speak', with no spacing gap.</p> <p>For general usage, such as plans, strategies and periods of time in copy, use a hyphen, again with no spacing gap.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There were 50 projects completed in the 2018/19 financial year.</li> <li>2. The Communications and Community Engagement 2022-24 Strategy is now endorsed.</li> </ol>
<p>Date</p>	<p>Day, date, month and then year only if needed (if referring to a year that is not the current one).</p> <p>Do not use any commas or 'st', 'nd', 'rd', 'th'.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The event will be held on Tuesday 3 January.</li> <li>2. Construction on the state-of-the-art leisure centre will begin on Monday 1 July and will be complete, weather permitting, in mid-December 2024.</li> </ol>

Time	<p>Always use the 12-hour system of time.</p> <p>Use a full-stop to separate hours from minutes (not a colon).</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The workshop will begin at 9.15am.</li></ol> <p>The zeros to indicate a round hour are redundant, so do not include them.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. The event will conclude at 9pm.</li></ol> <p>Use the terms 'noon' and 'midnight' instead of 12pm or 12am</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Tuesday 12 January, noon-4.30pm.</li><li>4. Entries to the competition will be open from midnight tonight.</li></ol> <p>Don't double up when indicating whether something is AM or PM.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Tuesday 12 January, <b>9-11am</b>. OR Tuesday 12 January, <b>1-4.30pm</b>. <i>(both are either AM or PM, so this only needs to be written once)</i></li><li>2. The event will be held on Saturday 20 January, <b>9am-5pm</b>. <i>(this event spans across both morning and night, so both AM and PM are included).</i></li></ol>
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Measurement	<p>Always spell out all metric units.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The new walking track spans 74 kilometres.</li><li>2. The athletes will tackle a 12-kilometre obstacle course.</li><li>3. Council will start constructing the five-metre fence on Monday 1 July.</li><li>4. Council has diverted 30 kilograms from landfill.</li><li>5. Residents dropped off approximately 25 tonnes of hazardous waste at Council's annual Chemical Cleanout on the weekend.</li></ol>
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## ACRONYMS AND APOSTROPHES

Always try to avoid unnecessary acronyms where possible.

When referencing a long name or title of something a few times throughout a document, always use the full name with the acronym in brackets in the first instance and then continue using the acronym.

For example:

1. The Camden Local Environment Plan (Camden LEP) will be on public exhibition until Friday 1 December.

If you would like to have your say on the Camden LEP, visit Council's website.

When speaking about Camden Council, use 'Camden Council' in the first reference and then use 'Council' thereafter.

For example:

1. Camden Council is pleased to announce Shannon Noll will be headlining Boots n' Beats for the second year in a row.

Council is encouraging local businesses to get involved in the upcoming event by registering to be a stallholder.

<b>WORDS, PHRASES AND THINGS TO AVOID</b>	<b>WORDS TO USE INSTEAD</b>										
LGA	<p>Referencing the 'LGA' doesn't mean much to residents.</p> <p>Use 'the Camden area' instead.</p> <div data-bbox="531 465 1347 595" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entries from across the Camden area are encouraged.</li> </ol> </div>										
About	<p>Use 'approximately' instead.</p> <div data-bbox="531 651 1347 781" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The new walkway will be approximately four kilometres in length.</li> </ol> </div>										
Whilst	Use 'while' instead.										
Over – when indicating numerals or amounts	<p>Use 'more than' or 'less than' instead</p> <div data-bbox="531 887 1347 1137" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. More than 2,000 people attended the event over the weekend.</li> <li>3. There is less than a week left to enter Council's biggest giveaway to date.</li> </ol> </div>										
Per annum	Use 'a year' or 'per year' instead.										
'Currently' or 'presently'	<p>These words are almost always redundant.</p> <p>If immediacy needs to be indicated, use 'now'.</p> <div data-bbox="531 1323 1347 1453" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stallholder applications are now being accepted for the event.</li> </ol> </div>										
Unnecessary foreign words	<p>Common ones we suggest include:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="531 1518 1347 1738"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="531 1518 938 1563"><b>USE</b></th> <th data-bbox="938 1518 1347 1563"><b>DON'T USE</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1563 938 1608">Outdoor</td> <td data-bbox="938 1563 1347 1608">Al fresco</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1608 938 1653">Use</td> <td data-bbox="938 1608 1347 1653">Utilise</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1653 938 1697">While</td> <td data-bbox="938 1653 1347 1697">Whilst</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1697 938 1742">Among</td> <td data-bbox="938 1697 1347 1742">Amongst</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>USE</b>	<b>DON'T USE</b>	Outdoor	Al fresco	Use	Utilise	While	Whilst	Among	Amongst
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# CHEAT SHEET

<p>Avoid adjectives before a described, measure-specific noun</p>	<p>Instead, choose one.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; background-color: #f9e79f; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>For example:</p> <p>1. The <b>large site</b> will be home to the Camden area’s third water play space.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>The <b>150-hectare site</b> will be home to the Camden area’s third water play space.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOT</p> <p>The <b>large, 150-hectare site</b> will be home to the Camden area’s third water play space.</p> </div>																								
<p>Symbols and characters</p>	<p>Always write out full words instead of using symbols, such as ‘and’ instead of ‘&amp;’ and ‘per cent’ instead of “%”.</p>																								
<p>American spelling</p>	<p>Common ones we encounter include:</p> <p>1. -ize, -izi and -iza words:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white;"> <th style="padding: 5px;">USE</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">DON'T USE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organise</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organize</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organising</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organizing</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organisation</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Organization</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Analyse</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Analyze</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2. OR versus OUR</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white;"> <th style="padding: 5px;">USE</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">DON'T USE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Colour</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Color</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Labour (except when referencing the Australian Labor Party!)</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Labor</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Favour/favourite</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Favor/favorite</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3. Other common misspellings</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white;"> <th style="padding: 5px;">USE</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">DON'T USE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Barbecue</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Barbeque or BBQ</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Levelled</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Leveled</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	USE	DON'T USE	Organise	Organize	Organising	Organizing	Organisation	Organization	Analyse	Analyze	USE	DON'T USE	Colour	Color	Labour (except when referencing the Australian Labor Party!)	Labor	Favour/favourite	Favor/favorite	USE	DON'T USE	Barbecue	Barbeque or BBQ	Levelled	Leveled
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## COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Compliment – to praise

Complement – to complete or enhance

Dependant – someone reliant on you

Dependent – reliant upon

Formerly – at an earlier time

Formally - in a formal way

Affect – to have an influence on

Effect – the result brought about

Stationary – not moving

Stationery – writing materials

## COUNCIL WRITING STYLE

To remain consistent across all our communications, there are a few common writing styling tips we aim to stick to.

**Dates and time** were discussed above.

When **structuring dot points**, we use a combination of **semi-colons**, **full-stops** and the word **'and'** when we list items in this format.

And **ages** need to be followed by the word **'years'** to give context.

For example:

1. The event will be held on **Tuesday 15 September, 3-7pm**, and is open to residents aged between **six and 12 years**.

It promises to have something for everyone, including:

- Live entertainment on the main stage;
- Food and drink stalls;
- Face painting;
- A petting zoo; **and**
- Garden games for children.

**TO CAPITALISE OR NOT TO CAPITALISE?****1. Council, councillors and ministers**

Use capitals when referring specifically to an organisation, title or person.

For example:

1. Residents are encouraged to visit Council's website to view the recently adopted plan.
2. Five organisations, including Camden Council, will come together to raise money for the worthy cause.
3. Mayor of Camden, Cr Therese Fedeli, along with Councillor Russell Zammit will be attending the event on Tuesday.
4. Residents will have a chance to meet Minister Kean, who will also be attending the event.

Do not use capitals for general references.

For example:

1. Five councils across Sydney, including Camden Council, will be involved in the program.
2. Staff should be aware all councillors will be present at the event.
3. The two ministers will be attending the event together.

**2. Levels of government**

Use capitals when referring to the State/NSW Government, Federal/Australian Government or the names of other councils.

For example:

1. Council would like to thank the NSW Government for the funding needed to complete this project.
2. This project saw collaboration between both the State and Federal Government.
3. Camden Council will be delivering the project in partnership with Liverpool Council.

Do not use capitals when referencing local government generally.

For example:

1. The new general manager has worked in local government for five years, coming to Camden Council from Sutherland Shire Council.

### **3. Nouns**

Only use capitals for common nouns if they're the title of something, at the start of a sentence or the common noun is being used as an acronym.

For example:

1. Council's Communications and Community Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) are now on public exhibition.

Residents are encouraged to have their say on the Strategy by visiting Council's website.

Common nouns should not be capitalised for headings.

For example:

1. The heading should simply be "What is the process?" with no capitalisation except for the first letter.

### **4. Departments, teams and job titles**

Use capitals when specifically referencing a department, team or job title.

For example:

1. For more information, call Council's Communications Advisor on 4645 7777.
2. For more information, call Council's Community Planning and Development Team on 4645 7777.

## **GENERAL TIPS AND TRICKS**

### **1. That**

Use of 'that' in sentences can often be redundant.

A good trick to determine whether it's needed is to read the sentence allowed without 'that' and see if it still makes sense.

For example:

1. It's been decided the event will move indoors if it rains.

NOT

It's been decided **that** the event will move indoors if it rains.

## HYPHENS

Hyphenate when two or more words form an adjective.

For example:

1. Council has diverted **30 kilograms** from landfill.
2. This wall is load bearing, so it's recommended you don't take it down when renovating.
3. The event, which will be dog friendly, promises to have something for everyone.
  
4. To celebrate the **30-kilogram diversion** from landfill, Council will be holding another Chemical CleanOut event next month.
5. It's recommended you don't take down any **load-bearing walls** when renovating.
6. The **dog-friendly event** will be held on Monday 28 September, 10am-2pm.

*In the first group of examples, there's no hyphen required because the two words are just regular nouns.*

*However, in the second group of examples, the hyphen is used to create an adjective, and these adjectives are describing the words in **green**.*