Forest Practices Authority style manual

Introduction

The Tasmanian Government applies the Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) style which is detailed in the sixth edition of the style manual (2005). This book contains all the general information you could ever need when writing a document. All staff should be familiar with this style manual, or at least have easy access to a reference copy.

Snooks & Co, 2005, *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.

However, there are some technical terms and specific words used constantly by Forest Practices Authority (FPA) staff which are not detailed in the style manual.

This style manual lists the FPA standard way to write words in common usage. It also provides summarised information from the style manual on the things most commonly written by FPA staff in a different way from the AGPS standard. The page numbers are for the relevant pages in the sixth edition of the style manual (2005).

One rule to bear in mind is the trend towards minimal punctuation, for example the dropping of full stops after abbreviations and the use of single quote marks instead of double ones. If your writing is cluttered with punctuation, you should check the style manual!

Quotation Marks page 112

Single quotation marks ' ' for direct speech, quotations, or other uses (title of an unpublished document, a chapter in a published work, an article in a periodical, an essay, a lecture, a short poem or a song).

Double quotation marks " "are used for quotes within quotes.

Capital letters page 118

Government should be capitalised as part of a formal title or abbreviated specific title, but lower case elsewhere. For example:

The Tasmanian Government

The governments of Tasmania and South Australia

Commonwealth

Australia is known as the Commonwealth of Australia and the parliament as the Commonwealth Parliament. In this context, Commonwealth is always capitalised. In publications for an international readership, the term Commonwealth can be confused with the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly the British Empire) and so the term the Australian Government or Australian Parliament should be used.

Federal

Federal only needs to be capitalised if part of an official title. For example:

The Federal Court of Australia

A federal government initiative

The federal government (a broad, descriptive term for the Commonwealth (or Australian) Government) does not need capitalised.

The states and territories

Use capitals for official or abbreviated specific titles but not for generic or plural references. For example:

The Tasmanian Government initiated the project… The state government will…

The exception is State forest – a hangover from days when the word state was always capitalised.

Parliament

Use capitals for official or abbreviated specific titles but not for generic or plural references. For example:

Parliament House

The debate in parliament continued…

The Senate and the House of Representatives and equivalent bodies in the states are always capitalised. For example:

The proposed revisions will be put to the Senate.

The Legislative Assembly will vote on the matter tomorrow. The Assembly…

The terms bench, front bench, etc do not need capitalised as they are not part of a formal title.

Particular words needing capitals

Some nouns used in connection with government are always capitalised to distinguish them from their generic meaning. For example:

- the Cabinet
- the Treasury
- the Crown
- the House
- the Budget (but not as an adjective or when plural) …budget provisions
- Act(s)
- Ordinance(s)
- Regulations(s)
- Bill(s)

Job titles

Job titles should be capitalised, such as Forest Practices Officer. Note other elements of the forest practices system which are not job titles should not be capitalised, such as forest practices plan – but their shortened form FPP is in capitals.

Government programs and agreements

Use capitals for official or abbreviated specific titles but not for generic or plural references. For example:

The Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement … the agreement

Geographical terms

Official geographical names are capitalised but not unofficial names. For example:

northern Tasmania

Points of a compass

When abbreviated, the points of a compass are always capitalised without full stops. For example:

W SE ENE

When spelt out, they are shown in lower case and hyphenated when combined. For example:

north-east   north-eastern

Generally, terms should be spelt out. For example:

20 degrees south **not** 20 degrees S **or** 20° S

Scientific names for plants and animals

Names of taxonomic groupings down to the genus level should be capitalised. Species names should not be capitalised. Genus and species names are always italicised. For example:

Dicksonia antarctica

When a genus name is repeated, it can be abbreviated to the first letter (capitalised with a full stop) on subsequent mentions. For example:

D. antarctica

Common names for plants and animals

Generic names that have become common names, and English derivatives of generic and other names, are lower case and not in italics, such as eucalyptus. Common names are usually capitalised only if they contain proper names: Norfolk Island pine, Bennett's wallaby. Birders tend to be very fond of capitals for birds common names, but this should be avoided in FPA publications for consistency's sake.

Publications

Titles

Minimal capitalisation – first word of a title and any proper names and nouns should be capitalised. For example:

A town like Alice

When referencing titles, published works should have the title in italics and unpublished works or chapters within published works should be set aside from the text by single quotation marks.

Legislation and periodicals

Titles of legislation and of periodicals (journals, magazines and newspapers) are the exception to minimal capitalisation rule and follow maximal capitalisation where all the words in the title are capitalised, except for prepositions and conjunctions. For example:

the Forest Practices Act 1985

Forest Ecology and Management

Forest Practices News

Acts are always referred to in full (with date and in italics) in the first instance and then either without the date and not in italics (if more than one Act is mentioned) or as the Act (if it is the only act mentioned). For example:

the Forest Practices Act.

Regulations and policies

Not in italics but use capitals.

Forest Practices Regulations 2007

Elements within a publication

References to pages when mentioned in running text are in lower case:

This is discussed on pages 20–25.

However, references to elements of a publication other than pages should be capitalised when mentioned in the text:

This is discussed in Chapter 4.

Products

Databases

Not data base (i.e. should be one word)

Where part of full name of database, should be in capitals but not italics as it is a product, not publication. For example Conserve Database, Threatened Fauna Adviser, Biodiversity Database.

Bullets page 142

There is a great section in the style manual on textual contrast, giving ideas on how to make your document easier for the reader to follow (page 136). I've summarised the section on bullets as this is often a problematic area.

Consistent, parallel formats

A bulleted list should always have more than one dot-point. Your bullet points will have consistent, parallel formats if you ensure:

- each series is in a parallel grammatical format

- each dot-point flows logically and grammatically from the introductory or 'lead-in' material

- each dot-point takes a consistent approach to capitalising and punctuating the dot-points.

If the bulleted list takes the form of one long sentence, use lower case for the start of each bullet point. If the bullet points are a complete sentence or sentences, start each bullet point with a capital letter.

Bullets are generally preferable to numbers or letters as they are neater and take up less space. Numbers and letters should be reserved for cases where it necessary to show priority or chronology within the series or where individual items need to be identified for later reference.

Extent of indenting

Indenting should generally be restricted to two levels: a bullet for the first level and an en dash for the second (shortcut key is control+minus sign).

Capitals

Capitalisation for dot-points follows normal sentence rules. If all the dot-points are full sentences, each should start with a capital letter; if each dot point consists of, or begins with, a sentence fragment, no initial capital is used.

Punctuation

A colon (:) should be placed after the lead-in, even if the lead in is a full sentence.

There should be no punctuation at the end of dot-points that are not full sentences – except for the last, which should have a full stop.

Extra sentences

If all the dot-points begin with a sentence fragment, one or more full sentences may be added but the final sentence in the dot-point does not have a full stop unless it is the final dot-point in the series.

For example:

Assistance is available in various forms:

- monetary assistance. Income support and specialist disability allowances fall into this category
- equipment or environmental modifications
  – wheelchairs
  – handrails
- advisory services.

The assessment program assessed 142 FPPs, covering:

- all aspects of forest planning and operational practices, as defined under the *Forest Practices Act 1985*
- the standard of planning undertaken by FPOs who have certified plans during the nominated period. A total of 51 certifying FPOs were assessed during the program
- a representative sample of FPPs undertaken by companies and agencies, and individual forest owners or managers.

Shortened forms

Page 160 contains a guide on when to use shortened forms. Generally, don't use them if it will confuse the reader.

	Shortened words		Shortened phrases		Symbols
	Abbreviations The first letter of the word, usually some other letters but not the last the letter	**Contractions** The first and last letters of the word and sometimes letters in between	**Acronyms** Strings of initial letters (and sometimes other letters) pronounced as a word	**Initialisms** Strings of initial letters (and sometimes other letters) but not pronounced as a word	**Symbols** are internationally recognised representations of units of measurement, words and concepts
Punctuation	Full stop after abbreviation	No full stop	No full stop	No full stop	No full stop
Capitalisation	Same as word	Same as word	Usually all capitals	All capitals	Capitals only if symbol represents a proper name
Examples	Mon. Dec. Tas. tel. fig.	Mr Rd Qld Pty Ltd dept	TAFE Anzac	FPA FPP FPPs PTR	km W (watt) kg (kg for plural, never kgs)

Using 'a' or 'an' before a shortened form

Generally 'a' is used if the shortened form is pronounced as a word and 'an' is used if the shortened form is pronounced as an initialism. For example:

a UNESCO initiative

an FPP

Latin shortened forms

Many Latin shortened forms are used regularly in publications and should be in Roman type. For example:

c. (*circa*, about, approximately)

cf. (*confer*, compare)

e.g. (*exempli gratia*, for example)

et al. (*et alii*, and others)

etc. (*et cetera*, and so on)

i.e. (*id est*, that is)

The full terms 'for example' and 'that is' should be used in preference to e.g. and i.e. Use of 'etc.' is redundant in a list already preceded by such expressions as for example or such as, since these expressions already show that the list is incomplete.

Personal names

Initials should be unpunctuated and unspaced. For example:

CA Grove

Awards and honours

Awards and honours should be unpunctuated and unspaced. For example:

BSc (Bachelor of Science)

PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)

Abbreviations

Word or phrase	Shortened form for subsequent use if close in document and used frequently
Acts *e.g.Forest Practices Act 1985*	Forest Practices Act (not italics and no date) or the Act (if no other act mentioned)
Forest Practices Authority	FPA (not the Authority or the authority)
Forest Practices Code	the code (not the FPC or the Code)
forest practices plan (lower case)	FPP (an FPP not a FPP)
Forest Practices Officer	FPO(an FPO not a FPO)

forest practices system (lower case)	forest practices system (no initialism and lower case)
The Board of the Forest Practices Authority	the board (not capitalised)
Compass points	Use shortened form in tables and figures: W SE ENE (caps, no full stops) But in text, compass points should be spelt out, in lower case and hyphenated when combined. For example: west south-east east-north-east

Numbers and measurement

Numbers at the start of sentences

When opening a sentence, a number should always be expressed in words. For example:

Fifty-seven people completed the questionnaire…

Sixty per cent of possums…

It could be better to rearrange the sentence. For example:

Six hundred and twenty-one complaints were received by the board.

The board received 621 complaints.

Words and numerals

Use numerals for numbers over nine. For example:

Two possums out of the 32…

Large numbers

Numbers over 1 000 000 should be written with a combination of words and numerals. For example:

2.5 million not 2 500 000 or two million, five hundred thousand

In numbers with more than four numerals, a space should be used to separate groups of three digits rather than a comma. This is especially true for documents with an international readership as the comma is used as a decimal point in Europe. For example:

6400 not 6,400 or 6 400

6 400 000 not 6,400,000

Percentages

The symbol % should only be used with numerals.

Per cent can be used with numerals or words. In text, it is generally better to use per cent but in documents where numbers are represented with numerals and are common, the % symbol is acceptable.

The spaced form 'per cent' is the most commonly used in Australia and is closer to the original Latin for *per centum*. However, the unspaced form 'percent' is the dominant form in the USA and is increasingly common in the UK. 'Percentage' is written without a space in the middle.

Dates

Dates should be written with the day (numeral), month (in full) and year (numeral and in full). No punctuation is necessary. For example:

29 January 2008

Spans of years should be separated with an en rule (control+minus) and not a / (this means 'or'). The second year listed in the span can be contracted if it is in the same decade as the first. For example:

2004–06 not 2004–6

But if it is in a different decade, the years must be written in full numerals. For example:

1999–2001 not 1999–01

Australian spelling

Use the Australian version of spelling words rather than the American. Make sure your computer's dictionary is set to Australian English. For example:

Specialisation **not** specialization

Methods of citation page 187

The author–date system, also known as the name–year system or the Harvard system, is recommended. Many details are outlined in the AGPS style manual but I have just summarised the basics here. Please check the AGPS manual for other forms of citation.

In-text citations

The author and the date should be cited at the end of the sentence in parenthesis. Where the author's name is part of the sentence, the date is placed in parenthesis immediately after the author's name. For example:

This approach (Munks 2001; Duncan 2002)…

References

The references are an alphabetically ordered list (letter by letter and not word by word) of the authors' names. For example, for journal articles:

Authors' surname – comma – authors' initials (no punctuation) – date of publication – comma – title of article (in single quotation marks) – comma –title of periodical (in italics) – comma – issue details – comma – page reference – full stop.

Wapstra, M, Munks, SA and Brown, B 2007, 'A design for a lightweight, collapsible and inexpensive sampling frame for ecological research and monitoring', *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 8 (1), pp. 71–72.

Spacing between words

Text which will go to the printers should only have one space between words and not two, even between sentences.

The DIER style manual

DIER has a style manual on the website which provides clear advice on writing documents.

http://dierlink.dier.tas.gov.au/ca/standards__and__templates/style_manual

Please let me know if you would like anything added to this style manual.

Chris Grove, Publications Officer, Forest Practices Authority.

January 2008

Updated July 2010

FPA style sheet

Topic	Words	How to write them
Quotation marks	Quotation marks	Single quotation marks '' except for quotes within quotes when double quotation marks ""are used
Capitals General rule is minimal capitalisation. Generally use capitals for full official or abbreviated specific titles but not for generic or plural references.	governments	The Tasmanian Government The governments of Tasmania and South Australia
	federal	The Federal Court of Australia A federal government initiative
	state	The state government will…
	State forest	Capital S – a hangover from days when state was capitalised
	parliament	Parliament House The debate in parliament continued
	Senate and House of Representatives	Always capitalised The proposed revisions will be put to the Senate. The Legislative Assembly will vote on the matter tomorrow. The Assembly…
	Some nouns used in connection with government are always capitalised to distinguish them from their generic meaning.	- the Cabinet - the Treasury - the Crown - the House - the Budget (but not as an adjective or when plural) …budget provisions - Act(s) - Ordinance(s) - Regulations(s) - Bill(s)
	Job titles	Capitalised Forest Practices Officer
	Elements of forest practices system	not capitalised forest practices plan FPP– but their shortened form is in capitals

Topic	Words	How to write them
	Government programs and agreements	The Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement … the agreement
	Geographical terms	Official geographical names are capitalised but not unofficial names. For example: North America, northern Tasmania
	Points of a compass	W SE ENE west south-east east-north-east
	Scientific names for plants and animals	*Dicksonia antarctica* Repeat instance *D. antarctica*
	Common names for plants and animals	Common names are usually capitalised only if they contain proper names
Publications and products	Titles	Minimal capitalisation – first word of a title and any proper names and nouns should be capitalised. E.g. *A town like Alice*
	Journal and newsletter titles	Titles of legislation and of periodicals (journals, magazines and newspapers) are the exception to minimal capitalisation rule and follow maximal capitalisation where all the words in the title are capitalised and in italics when written in full, except for prepositions and conjunctions. For example: *the Forest Practices Act 1985* *Forest Ecology and Management* *Forest Practices News*
	Referencing titles	published works should have the title in italics unpublished works or chapters within published works should be in single quotation marks
	Acts	Write in full (including date) and in italics the first time you use it See shortened forms for repeat use
	Regulations and policies	Not in italics but use capitals
	Database	Not data base (i.e. should be one word) Capitals but not italics when using full name Conserve Database, Threatened Fauna Adviser, Biodiversity Database
Bullets	Bulleted lists should: - have a parallel grammatical format - use lower case for the start of each bullet point and no full stop if the bulleted list takes the form of one long sentence - start each bullet point with a capital letter and end with a full stop if the bullet points	

Topic	Words	How to write them
		are a complete sentence or sentences.
Shortened forms (used for second and repeated use in same document) See table in FPA Style manual for more information	Acts of parliament	Forest Practices Act (not italics and no date) or the Act (if no other act mentioned)
	Forest Practices Authority	FPA (not the Authority or the authority)
	Forest Practices Code	the code (not the FPC or the Code) in italics when written in full as it is a publication
	forest practices plan (lower case)	FPP (an FPP not a FPP)
	Forest Practices Officer	FPO(an FPO not a FPO)
	forest practices system (lower case)	forest practices system (no initialism and lower case)
	The Board of the Forest Practices Authority	the board (not capitalised)
	Compass points	Use shortened form in tables and figures: W SE ENE (caps, no full stops) But in text, compass points should be spelt out, in lower case and hyphenated when combined. For example: west south-east east-north-east
	Shortened words – abbreviations	Mon. (full stop)
	Shortened words – contractions	Mr (no full stop)
	Symbols	km (no full stop) and a space after the number and before km
	Latin shortened forms	Roman type and full stop e.g.
	Personal names	CA Grove (no full stops or spaces between initials)
	Awards and honours	BSc (no full stops or spaces between letters)
Numbers and measurement	Words and numerals	Use numerals for numbers over nine. Two possums out of the 32…
	Large numbers	Numbers over 1 000 000 should be written with a combination of words and numerals. 2.5 million not 2 500 000 five hundred thousand

Topic	Words	How to write them
	Comma or space	In numbers with more than four numerals, a space should be used to separate groups of three digits rather than a comma. 6400 not 6,400 or 6 400 6 400 000 not 6,400,000
	Percentages	% only used with numerals Per cent not percent Percentage not per centage
	Dates	29 January 2008
	Spans of years	Spans of years should be separated with an en rule (control+minus) and not a / (this means 'or') 2004–06 not 2004–6

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1.1	July 2010	Chris Grove	Minor edit.
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Stages required for release outside FPA

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Stages	**Required/not required**	**Completed (date)**
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Line Manager	Not required	
Peer/FPO/stakeholder review	Not required	
CFPO	Not required	
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