

Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communication

Purpose

“When you design for marginalised groups of people, you design for everyone”.

Creating and delivering accessible communication benefits all audience members, not just those with a disability. The purpose of this document is to outline a checklist of areas to consider when you’re creating and delivering presentations or sending emails to colleagues and/or other stakeholders.

Objective

To support Centre members when they’re creating and delivering presentations or writing emails.

Creating Presentations

- Am I using the recommended font size and style?** You should aim for a minimum font size of 24 points and use a clear font style such as Palatino, Calibri, Georgia, Verdana, Tahoma, and Arial.
- Do I have the best resolution for my image?** The ideal size of images uses the pixel aspect ratio 16:9, common resolutions in this ratio are 1920 x 1080 pixels and 1280 x 720 pixels.
- Does my text colour contrast well with my background colour?** You need to think about your text and background colour contrast. By using the colour contrast check tool, you’ll be able to see how clear the text is. NOTE: People who are colourblind often have trouble seeing the colours green and red.
- Is my background colour too bright?** A white background can be too bright and cause discomfort for some people, a good alternative is light grey. Graphs should also make use of patterns, labels and shading instead of colours.
- Do I have too much text on my slides?** Having too much text on one slide can be overwhelming for some audience members, a good rule to follow is no more than six words per line and no more than six bullet points per slide.
- Have I avoided culture-jargon?** Using culture-jargon is easily done when you’re creating presentations for your industry, however, external audience members may not understand what these words or acronyms mean.
- Is my text in plain English?** Can you make your text more simple? Complicated expressions aren’t always necessary and can cause more confusion than understanding.
- Have I avoided busy or flashing animations?** Flashing or busy animations can cause distress for some people, making them feel nauseous and dizzy. If possible, use a picture instead.

- Are my videos and images captioned?** Alt text and image descriptions provide visual details for people who are visually impaired. Screen readers will pick up on this text and provide further context.
- Are my links short?** There are two reasons you should keep your links short. The first is that long URLs are hard to read and take up space on the page. Secondly, you should be able to say the URL out loud for people who can't see the screen, there is more room for error with longer links.
- Is there anywhere I can use an image instead of text?** Text heavy slides are difficult to read, so think about adding an image and using your presenter notes (and Alt text) instead.
- Do your images of people show diversity?** It's important to think about the diversity of people you use in your images. It's good to represent the diverse society we live in, having a diverse range of people will allow more people to connect with your message.

Presenting

- Have I emailed my presentation digitally prior to speaking?** Where possible (excluding confidential or commercially sensitive information) Give your audience members your digital material in advance - avoiding PDF or protected word documents - then they can adapt the presentation to meet their needs.
- Is there sufficient lighting in the room?** Test the lighting in the room before you present to ensure there is sufficient light for viewing your slides, this is also a good time to check the colour contrast on your slides.
- Have I completed an Acknowledgement of Country?** If you're presenting on Australian land, it's common practice to do an Acknowledgement of Country. There are many variations of an Acknowledge of Country and until you find your own rhythm, Reconciliation Australia suggest the following wording:

"I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present."
- Have I verbally described myself as the speaker?** To be more visually inclusive, you can describe how you look when introducing yourself. Some things to mention include hairstyle and colour, race/ethnicity, clothing description and any other distinctive accessories e.g., glasses.
- Have I stated my pronouns?** When introducing yourself, it's good practice to state your pronouns and encourage anyone who speaks to do the same.
- Has background noise been eliminated?** Minimise or eliminate background noise to the best of your ability so that the audience can hear you clearly. This can include asking the audience to turn their phones on silent or asking anyone dialled in to mute themselves.
- Can I add real-time subtitles to what I'm saying?** This can help accommodate individuals in the audience who are deaf or hard of hearing. Subtitles may also help with audience members who are more familiar with another language. Most programs allow you to change the size and colour to further help individuals tailor the content for readability.

- Am I speaking loud enough, can I use a microphone?** Be aware that some audience members may find it hard to hear you. Use a microphone if possible (even if you're presenting virtually) and ask the audience before you begin if everyone can hear you.
- Am I managing my pace and pausing where necessary?** Make sure to speak clearly and manage your pace, with pauses where necessary, this will also allow your audience to read your slides while they listen.
- Am I describing all the images, charts, and videos?** Provide context for your images, charts, and videos as they may not be clear to everyone in the room.

Emailing

- What font size and style have I used?** You should aim for a minimum font size of 14 points and use a clear font style such as Palatino, Georgia, Verdana, Tahoma, Arial, and Helvetica
- Have I double checked the spelling of people's names I'm addressing or referring to?**
- Have I used culture-jargon?** Using culture-jargon is very easily done when you're emailing within industry, however, external audience members or people new to the industry may not understand what these words or acronyms mean. If you're unsure, take time to explain your phrases or acronyms.
- Have I checked my message for tone?** There can be many misunderstandings from not checking the tone of your email. You want your tone to be polite and professional. If there is a chance your email could be taken in the wrong way, consider a phone call or meeting instead
- Is my text in plain English?** Can you make your text more simple, complicated expressions aren't always necessary and can cause more confusion than understanding.
- Have I used gender neutral terms?** When you're referring to someone in an email and you're unsure of their gender, it's best to use gender neutral terms, such as "They/Them/Their" instead of "He/She".
- Have you highlighted my required response time?** It can feel overwhelming to have multiple emails in your inbox, if your email isn't urgent, you can specify this, thus allowing the receiver to manage their workload (and stress levels)
- Is my email structured for accessibility?** A clear structure is essential for accessible emails. Begin with the most important information at the top, followed by detailed content.
- Have I used bold text to highlight important info?** You can use bold text and larger font sizes to create a visual hierarchy. This can help guide readers through the content and emphasise key points.
- Have I used the correct line and paragraph spacing?** Increasing line spacing enhances readability, especially for people who are blind or experience eye fatigue. Line height should be at least 1.5 times the font size, with paragraph spacing set to twice the font size. This approach allows for easier eye tracking and reduces strain.

- Have I used text instead of image-based flyers?** A common issue in email design is relying on images that contain text, such as flyers or posters. These can be problematic for people using screen readers. To avoid this, include the text content from any image within the email body.
- Is your email signature inclusive?** Email signatures tell the receiver your name, contact details and where you're emailing from. Increasingly, they're being used to provide further detail about yourself and the way you work. Extra things you can add include your pronouns, the phonetic translation of your name and your working hours.

Useful Resources

- [Colour Blindness Simulator tool to see how your images appear to colour blind people](#)
- [Colour Contrast Checker](#)
- [How to add alternative text to pictures](#)
- [Use this gender decoder to find bias in your text](#) or use this [ChatGPT plugin](#)
- [How to write helpful Alt text](#)
- [How to Acknowledge Country](#)

Document Versions

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