



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

# **Ministry of Social Development**

## Style Guide

July 2018

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Formats</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Layout .....	7
<i>Page layout</i> .....	7
<i>Margins</i> .....	7
<i>Alignment</i> .....	8
<i>Page numbering</i> .....	8
<i>Numbering sections in documents</i> .....	8
<i>Lists within text</i> .....	8
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	8
<i>Footnotes and endnotes</i> .....	9
<i>Tables and diagrams</i> .....	9
<i>Single spaces after a full stop or colon</i> .....	9
<i>Appendices</i> .....	9
<i>Creative Commons licence</i> .....	9
<i>ISBNs</i> .....	10
Fonts and styles.....	10
<i>Fonts and typefaces</i> .....	10
<i>Footnotes</i> .....	10
<i>Tables and diagrams</i> .....	10
<i>Headings</i> .....	10
<i>Bold text</i> .....	11
<i>Bullets</i> .....	11
<i>Capitals within text</i> .....	12
<i>Italics</i> .....	12
<i>Website addresses</i> .....	12
<i>Numbers</i> .....	13
<i>Decades</i> .....	14

<i>Percentages</i> .....	14
<b>Styles and conventions</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Correspondence .....	15
<i>Addresses</i> .....	15
<i>Forms of address</i> .....	15
<i>Signing off correspondence</i> .....	15
Abbreviations and acronyms .....	16
<i>Commonly used acronyms</i> .....	16
<i>Specifics</i> .....	17
<b>Preferred spelling and terminology</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Spelling .....	18
Lower case terms .....	22
Preferred terminology .....	22
Clip art .....	23
Citations .....	23
<i>References</i> .....	23
<b>Use of Māori and Pacific languages</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Māori language .....	24
<i>Salutations</i> .....	24
<i>Closings</i> .....	24
<i>Macrons</i> .....	25
<i>Names of organisations</i> .....	25
<i>Frequently used Māori words</i> .....	25
<i>Plurals</i> .....	26
Pacific languages .....	26
<b>Branding and publications</b> .....	<b>27</b>
MSD branding and logo guide .....	27
Co-branding .....	27
Publications .....	27
Uview .....	27

<b>Writing tips</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Getting started .....	28
Punctuation .....	28
<i>Apostrophes</i> .....	28
<i>Brackets</i> .....	29
<i>Commas</i> .....	29
<i>Colons</i> .....	30
<i>En-dashes</i> .....	30
<i>Full stops</i> .....	30
<i>Hyphens</i> .....	30
<i>Quotation marks</i> .....	30
<i>Punctuation within quotation marks</i> .....	31
<i>Use single quotation marks</i> .....	31
<i>Semicolon</i> .....	31
<i>Slashes</i> .....	31
<i>Sentence structure</i> .....	31
<i>Problem words</i> .....	32
Inclusive language .....	35
<i>Jargon</i> .....	36
<b>Appendix 1: Writing for the web</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Planning.....	37
<i>Who will be reading your website?</i> .....	37
<i>Structuring your web content</i> .....	37
<i>Meaningful headings</i> .....	38
<i>Guidelines for using headings/subheadings</i> .....	38
<i>Alignment</i> .....	38
<i>White space</i> .....	38
<i>Links</i> .....	38
<i>Numbers</i> .....	38

Web writing specifics .....	39
<i>Use concrete language</i> .....	39
<i>Be concise</i> .....	39
<i>Emphasis</i> .....	39
<i>Content should stand alone</i> .....	39
<b>Appendix 2: Writing letters .....</b>	<b>40</b>
What is tone and demeanour? .....	40
Planning.....	40
<i>Why write a letter?</i> .....	40
<i>Who is your audience?</i> .....	40
<i>What is the purpose?</i> .....	41
<i>Structuring your letter</i> .....	41
Guidelines to writing clearly.....	41
<i>Be concise</i> .....	41
<i>Be positive</i> .....	42
<i>Active and passive voice</i> .....	42
<i>Everyday words</i> .....	43
<i>Avoid clichés</i> .....	44
<i>Talking about the law</i> .....	44
<i>Use strong verbs</i> .....	44
<i>Pronouns: we and us</i> .....	44
Exceptions.....	44
<b>Appendix 3: Word templates .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Ministry Word templates on Doogle .....	46
Ministry templates in Word.....	46
<i>Entering your details</i> .....	47
<i>Adding profiles</i> .....	47
<i>Editing a profile</i> .....	47
<i>Work and Income users</i> .....	48

<i>Family &amp; Community Services users</i> .....	48
<i>Accessing the templates</i> .....	49
The letter templates .....	50
<i>Work and Income</i> .....	51
The memorandum templates .....	53
The facsimile templates .....	55
<i>Classifications in facsimiles</i> .....	55
The coversheet templates .....	56
The cabinet committee paper template .....	60
The report templates .....	61
<b>Appendix 4: PowerPoint presentations</b> .....	<b>63</b>
Ministry PowerPoint template.....	63
PowerPoint templates .....	63
Design elements .....	63
Fonts .....	63
Presentation guidelines .....	63
<i>How many slides do I show?</i> .....	64
<i>Text tips</i> .....	64
<i>Fonts</i> .....	64
<i>Tables</i> .....	65
<i>Images</i> .....	65
<i>Animation/Effects</i> .....	65
<i>Movies</i> .....	65
<i>Graphs</i> .....	66
<i>Colour with graphs</i> .....	67
<i>Travel</i> .....	67
<b>Appendix 5: Communications to holders of honours and titles in New Zealand</b> .....	<b>68</b>

# Introduction

---

This guide sets out the corporate standard for written communications within the Ministry of Social Development, its service lines, business units and offices.

We want everyone to refer to and use the Style Guide, so our documents are professional, consistent and appropriate to their audience.

Not all of our styles and rules are identical to those used in other organisations. Language is dynamic and evolving, and there is often more than one “right way”. There are variations in common usage, spelling and style. When you write for the Ministry of Social Development, the Style Guide is your authority.

The Cabinet Office and Ministers’ offices have guidelines for presenting documents to Cabinet and Ministers. Please refer to those documents when preparing papers for those audiences.

# Formats

---

## Layout

### Page layout

The layout of your document has a huge impact on your reader. A badly laid-out paper may put the reader off before they have a chance to recognise the brilliance of the content.

Use white space to create visual impact, but also use common sense. Don't leave a signature hanging on a page on its own. Don't start a table or chart in the middle of a page if it can fit on one page, but don't cram your content to make it fit on one page. Make sure it fits with the margins and that there is spacing between paragraphs.

Letters that are more than one page should include at least two paragraphs and the ending on the second page. Plain follow-on paper should be used for the second page.

Remember, do not change the margins or layout in templates.

For reports or documents that are likely to be bound, margins should be as follows:

Top	2.54 cm
Bottom	2.54 cm
Left	2.54 cm
Right	2.54 cm

For letters, the standard line spacing between the parts of the letter is:

**Date** - paragraph spacing after: 36pt

**Address** - paragraph spacing after: 36pt

**Salutation** - paragraph spacing after: 24pt

**Body of letter** - paragraph spacing after: 12pt

**Yours sincerely/Nāku noa, nā** - paragraph spacing after: 72pt

### Name

Note: When using window envelopes you will need to position your letter on the page so that the address fits in the window. Use common sense.

It is recommended that you use the **Letterhead Template**, found on the Ministry templates page in doogle: <http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/forms-templates/national-communications/corporate-templates.html>.

## Margins

Margins that are set in templates are not to be edited. This applies particularly to Cabinet papers. For information on the requirements and format of Cabinet papers refer to the Step by Step Guide on the CabGuide website: [www.cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/](http://www.cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/).



## Alignment

Alignment refers to how the text sits on the page. Text should be left aligned (ragged right) and single spaced.

## Page numbering

Pages on letters are not usually numbered, but number the pages of all other documents longer than one page.

Note: The format and placement of page numbers will be determined by the type of document.

For example, a document with a title page would start numbering from page 2. A document with footnotes may have the number on the bottom right of the page. Use your judgement to get a balanced look.

## Numbering sections in documents

Do not number paragraphs in letters.

Number paragraphs for papers to Ministers and Cabinet Submissions. Use the numbering system 1, 2, 3, etc. Use decimal numbering: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 for subsections.

Note: Some documents, such as Cabinet Papers, require paragraphs to be numbered.

## Lists within text

As a general rule, use bullets rather than numbers for lists. They are easy to use and immediately visible to the reader. They do not rank the list – the first item on the list is not necessarily more important than the second or third. Exceptions to this are if you want to rank a list or refer to it later in the text or in a meeting.

If you add a list and the opening sentence is not complete:

- introduce the list with a colon
- begin each line with a lower case letter
- make items parallel in language and structure
- start each item with the same part of speech, for example, a verb, or adverb in the same tense
- use no punctuation other than a full stop after the last item.

Make items parallel in language and structure. When listing phrases, stick to phrases. When listing sentences, stick to sentences.

## Recommendations

The format for listing recommendations is as follows:

lower case, first word in bold, no punctuation until the last recommendation which gets a full stop, for example:

**note** the format for recommendations

**note** that Cabinet Office has been consulted on the format

**agree** on Phase 2 implementation      AGREE / DISAGREE

**note** that a progress report will be provided at the end of Phase 2.

Note:

- a **note** does not get an Agree/Disagree action assigned to it
- the recommendation number is not in bold.

## Footnotes and endnotes

Footnotes go at the bottom of the page with a small reference number in the text. These run in numerical order throughout the document. Footnotes should be used sparingly, but are useful when you need to include information for context or reference. Endnotes go at the end of a chapter or document.

## Tables and diagrams

If you are using a table or diagram in a report:

- ensure it illustrates the information clearly
- give it a heading or title
- place it on one page if possible
- the font should be no smaller than 9pt.

Note: See also the Statistics New Zealand Graphics Guidelines:

<http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/aboutsnz.nsf/092edeb76ed5aa6bcc256afe0081d84e/74248117ed9b4f05cc256c670001b88e?OpenDocument>

## Single spaces after a full stop or colon

Use only a single space following a full stop or a colon. Double spacing introduces unnecessary white space.

## Appendices

When you have Appendices in a document apply Heading 1 style (Georgia/Mercury, bold, 18pt, with rule the width of the page). Appendices are numbered using the following format: Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 etc.

## Creative Commons licence

MSD reports or documents often include a Creative Commons licence, which governs copying and distribution of the content in the modern, digital age. If your document will follow Creative Common, use this boilerplate text on the copyright page:

This work is licensed under the *Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence*. In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms.

To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/nz/>. Please note that no departmental or governmental emblem, logo or Coat of Arms may be used in any way which infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Attribution to the Crown should be in written form and not by reproduction of any such emblem, logo or Coat of Arms.

## ISBNs

Many MSD documents or publications require an ISBN. ISBNs are a publication's fingerprint, a world-wide identifier that helps publishers, suppliers, and libraries locate, order, and track published material. An ISBN is 13 digit unique identifier number assigned to books and other print, electronic, or multimedia publications. It is used for printed books and pamphlets containing more than four pages of text, maps, e-books, pdfs, Braille publications and audio books.

If your document requires an ISBN, please contact National Comms, who will assign both a print and an online ISBN (if your document will also be published online).

## Fonts and styles

### Fonts and typefaces

For **internally produced documents**, including ministerials, briefing papers and reports, Verdana 10pt is the standard font for body text. The font Georgia is recommended for Heading 1 (see below for headings guidance).

For **externally produced documents** (ie by a design agency), National 11pt is the standard font. The font Mercury may be used for Heading 1 (see below for headings guidance).

Exceptions to this font size will depend on the publication and its target audience. For example, the Office for Disability Issues and the Office for Senior Citizens both use a larger body font so that people with vision impairments can read their documents easily.

### Footnotes

The preferred font for footnotes is Verdana 8pt (internally produced), and National 9pt (externally produced).

### Tables and diagrams

The preferred font for tables is Verdana 9pt (internally produced), and National 10pt (externally produced). Diagram text may be 9pt.

### Headings

A document should normally not require more than four levels of headings. For accessibility reasons headings should be in sentence case. Headings must **never** be all caps.

MSD's heading style is as follows:

## Heading 1:

---

Georgia/Mercury 18pt bold, ½ pt bottom border [optional]

## Heading 2:

Verdana/National 14pt bold

### Heading 3:

Verdana/National 12pt bold

### *Heading 4:*

Verdana/National 12pt italic

Do not use full stops at the end of your heading.

Note: For covers of documents and chapter headings, a larger font may be used.

### Bold text

Use for:

- first, second and third level headings
- titles of tables, graphs and illustrations
- emphasis, instead of underlining.

### Bullets

Bullets should be left aligned.

There are three main kinds of bulleted lists.

1. **The opening sentence is not completed**, has a colon and carries on in the list.  
The bulleted list:
  - starts in lower case
  - has each point reading on from the opening sentence
  - ends with a full stop.
2. The **opening sentence does not continue on in the list**. The list is a series of complete sentences or statements. In this instance, the bullet-pointed list has the following format:
  - The opening sentence ends with a colon.
  - Each bulleted sentence begins with a capital letter.
  - Each bulleted sentence ends with a full stop.
3. There is no opening sentence. The bulleted list is a **series of complete sentences, with each one beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop**. If these are longer than one or two lines, insert a line space between each bullet point.

Some general comments on bulleted lists:

- If you need another list within a bulleted list:
  - use a dash, rather than another bullet point, and indent the second list.
- Don't use semicolons to end bullet points.
- There should be no "and" at the end of the second-to-last bullet point.
- Don't use a bulleted list that has only one item.
- If numbers are mentioned, use numbers and not bullet points.

See [Lists within text](#).

## Capitals within text

Always use a capital letter at the start of a new sentence and in proper nouns such as names, titles and place names.

Use capitals for the name of a specific organisation, but generally not the type of organisation.

For example, the Ministry of Social Development, but government ministries.

Use capitals for the title of a specific job, position or place.

For example, Jenny Smith, Case Manager; Helene Quilter, DCE; Work and Income Service Centre.

Don't use capitals for general use.

For example, "all case managers were involved"; "we will distribute the brochure to service centres".

Using an initial capital letter helps to refer to a particular organisation, not just organisations in general.

For example, the House, the Select Committee.

Use a capital letter for:

- the Budget
- the Government
- the Bill
- the Act
- the Minister.

## Italics

Use italics for:

- third-level headings
- emphasis (**bold** is the first choice for emphasis but *italics* can be used for lesser emphasis)
- indented quotes (where the quote is longer than 40 words)
- titles of books, publications or TV programmes – this applies to standalone things (such as books, newspapers, journals, films, TV programmes and plays) and does not include things within these (such as articles or chapters)
- foreign phrases that aren't commonly used in English, eg not "vice versa" but "du jour"
- names of parties in the citation of law cases, eg "Smith v Ministry of Social Development".

## Website addresses

Website addresses, also known as URLs, starting with **www** usually don't need the protocol <https://> or <http://> included, or any final slashes. Begin references to such website addresses with **www**:

- **Correct:** [www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/](http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/)
- **Correct:** [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz)

- **Correct:** <http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/doogle/index.page> [web address does not begin with **www**, therefore include entire URL]
- **Incorrect:** <http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/>
- **Incorrect:** <http://www.msd.govt.nz/>

## Numbers

### *Cardinal numbers*

In **writing for the web**, use numerals in referencing all numbers, unless they begin a sentence. (See “Appendix 1: Writing for the web” for more information.)

In **printed text**, spell out numbers one to nine in words. Use figures for double digit or larger numbers (eg 12 or 1,000) unless they begin a sentence.

For example, “Eleven of the 27 arrivals were at the station.” [“Eight of the 27...” would also be correct, since it is beginning a sentence]

If spelling a compound number between 21 and 99 in full, hyphenate it.

For example, “Twenty-seven people had taken the train.”

Exceptions include page or section numbers of a document, or numbers that are followed by a unit. These are written as numerals even if they are less than 10.

For example, page 2; section 4; 3 percent; 8kg.

If a sentence begins with a number followed by a unit, write it out in full.

For example, “Three kilometres from home, we stopped.”

When citing a range of numbers use an en-dash [ctrl + Num Lock + -] and no spaces either side.

For example, “people aged 25–34”.

Use a comma in the numbers 1,000 and above.

### *Ordinal numbers*

Follow the same rules as for cardinal numbers – spell out one to nine. Do not superscript the “th” or “rd”. For 10 and above, use numbers.

For example, third not 3rd, 29th not twenty-ninth.

### *Fractions*

Hyphens are to be used when fractions are expressed in words.

For example: one-third; three-quarters.

When expressing fractions in figures, take care to set them out clearly. If this cannot be done in typescript, the figures should be written in words.

For example, to write ½ in Word, select Insert/symbols. When the dialogue box appears, select the fraction you want.

### *Millions, billions*

These can be abbreviated to “m” or “b”.

For example, \$1.4m, \$17b [note no space between the number and letter]

### *Phone numbers*

The format for phone numbers is 09 123 4567, 021 123 4567, 800 123 345. If it's a word number also show the numbers in brackets eg 0508 FAMILY (326 459). Don't use dashes if you are writing for international readers eg +64 4 387 1234.

### *Dates*

Follow these styles:

- Write as 25 June 2014 not 25th of June, June 25 or 25th June.
- Spell out the names of the months and days of the week in full.
- Write mid-2014.
- Do not use a comma between the month and the year.
- Write the year ending 30 June 2014 – if writing before the year ends.
- Write the year ended 30 June 2014 – if writing after the year has ended.
- Always put the year in full, even if you are writing about a split year or a range of years – for example, 2014, not 14, 2001/2002 financial year, 1996–1998.

### **Decades**

When referring to decades, write these as the 1980s or the eighties – not the '80s or the 80's.

### **Percentages**

Write "percent" and "percentage" as one word.

The percentage symbol (%) can be used in tables, graphs, etc where space is an issue.

# Styles and conventions

---

## Correspondence

### Addresses

As a general rule:

- use the person's full name and title
- use one line for each part of the address
- do not use abbreviations, for example, "Adelaide Road" not "Adelaide Rd"
- do not use commas or full stops in an address.

Note: There are some exceptions to this. For example, StudyLink does not use titles, and students applying online may use Rd instead of Road.

As a general rule for envelopes:

- follow the guidelines above
- align the address left
- ensure the address is in the centre of the envelope.

### Forms of address

Use the person's first name where possible.

For example, Dear Mark not Dear Mark Johnson.

Use Dear Mr Johnson where status or formality requires it, or you do not know the person's first name. In these cases, use Ms when writing to a woman, unless you know whether Mrs or Miss is preferred or more appropriate.

Particular attention should be paid to the form of address if you are arranging a bulk mail-out through an external mail house or supplier.

If the person has a title, use the title.

For example, Dear Dame Margaret, not Dear Mrs Bazley or Dear Professor Salmon, not Dear Anne. For further information on using titles, see [Appendix 6](#).

### Signing off correspondence

Use "Yours sincerely" in most formal correspondence.

Use "Yours faithfully" when you do not know the name of the person you are writing to as in the case of generic letters addressed to: The householder, Sir/Madam or the Ratepayer.

Use the following for reports:

- name
- title.

If you are officially acting in a position, write "(Acting)" in front of your title.



If you are signing on someone's behalf, sign your own name and write "pp" in front of the printed name of the person you are signing for.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

Unless they're in everyday speech, it's best to avoid abbreviations and acronyms, because your reader will stumble every time they come across one.

Style tip: if you don't abbreviate it when you talk, don't abbreviate it when you write.

### Commonly used acronyms

APP	Alternatives to Physical Punishment
CAT	Police Child Abuse Team
C&P	care and protection
CE	Chief Executive
CFSS	child and family support service
CGSW	caregiver liaison social worker
CHRIS	Complete Human Resource Information System
CISM	critical incident stress management
CLSW	community liaison social worker
CPRP	care and protection resource panel
CYRAS	Care and protection, Youth justice, Residences, Adoptions System (case management system)
DHB	district health board
DSAC	Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EDC	Everyday Communities
EEO	equal employment opportunities
FGC	family group conference
GM	General Manager
HCN	high and complex needs
HR	human resources
KPI	key performance indicators
L&D	learning and development
LSM	Local Services Mapping
NGO	non-government organisation

NUPE	National Union Public Employees
NZASW	New Zealand Association of Social Workers
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
POI	Privacy and Official Information
PSA	Public Service Association
RDA	rostered duties allowance
RES	risk estimation system
SAT	Police Serious Abuse Team
SW	social worker
TRIM	Tower Records Information Management (records system – national database of client and administration files)
TOIL	time off in lieu
YJ	youth justice
YSS	Youth Services Strategy

## Specifics

The first time anything that might be unfamiliar to readers is mentioned it should be in full, followed by the acronym in brackets eg “equal employment opportunities (EEO)” and from then on “EEO”. If you get a long way away from this first mention, for example, in a new chapter, write it in full the first time it is mentioned again.

Don’t use full stops in acronyms and abbreviations: USA, UK, GST, Mr, Mrs, eg, etc, ie.

The Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 is abbreviated to the CYP&F Act. (Note the comma after “Persons” in the full title of the Act.)

For “The Office for Disability Issues,” it is permissible to use the abbreviation “ODI” after it has been spelt out in full initially. Also acceptable is “the Disability Office” if other offices are referred to in the same document, but not “the Office”. Don’t abbreviate “Work and Income” to “WINZ” or “Winz” or “W&I”. Don’t abbreviate the Office for Seniors. OCVS is an acceptable acronym for the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Don’t spell out the titles of IHC and CCS. These acronyms are now used as the titles of these organisations.

Write New Zealand rather than NZ (except in tables where there isn’t room to spell it out).

Use a slash “/” for “per” only in tables and graphs. Use “no” for “number” only in graphs and tables.

Abbreviations in column headings should be spelt out in text above the table, or footnoted.

# Preferred spelling and terminology

---

## Spelling

The Ministry of Social Development uses the Concise Oxford Dictionary as its standard for spelling, with the exception of “ise” where the Oxford uses “ize”, (eg organise, not organize).

Most people will find it easier to use the computer spell check to correct their writing. It is convenient and usually reliable, provided it is set on the correct form of English. Even if a spellchecker is used, it’s important that a document is proofread by someone other than the person who wrote it.

Here are our preferred spellings for words that may have an alternative spelling:

acknowledgement	advisor
after hours	ageing
antisocial	Arthur’s Pass
at-risk (as in ‘at-risk child’)	
babysit/babysitter	backup
baseline	bicultural
bimonthly	birth parents
broadband	burn-out
caregiver	casework
cash flow	cellphone
checklist	childcare
co-ordinate/co-ordinator	co-operate
counselling	cross-agency
cross-cultural	cross-section
cyber mosque	cyberattack
database	daycare
day-to-day	decision-making

deinstitutionalisation	Director-General
disinhibition	download
driver licence	
e-government	e-strategy
eg (no full stop)	email
enquiry	
fact sheet	feedback
focused/focusing	follow-up
foster care	framework
frontline	fulfil
full-time (except sports full time)	
Hawke's Bay	hapū
health care	helpdesk
helpline	home-based
homeowner	house owner
ie (no full stops)	in-depth
in-house	interagency
interrelated	Internet
Intranet	iwi (unless referring to a specific iwi – then use 'Iwi')
jobseeker	joined-up (as in 'a joined-up approach')
judgement	

lifelong	long service
long-term (as in 'long-term strategy')	low- and medium-income families
Māori	medium-term (as in 'medium-term strategy')
Ministry-wide (eg, 'A Ministry-wide launch')	modelling
multicultural	multidisciplinary
multinational	
nationwide	New Zealand Family and Foster Care Federation
non-government/al	non-verbal
non-referral	no one
offshore	okay (not OK, ok or o.k., except as part of the "It's OK" campaign)
one-off	ongoing
online	organisation
organise	out-of-family
out-turn	
Pākehā	part-time
Pasifika	percent/percentage
play centre	policymaker/policy-making
postgraduate	practice (as in social work practice)
problem solving	programme (except computer program)
Pūao-te-Ata-tū	
realise	realisation

reapply	red-flagging
red-zoned	refit
reoffend	rollout
rōpu	
self-employed	self-esteem
self-image	school-age
short-term (as in 'short-term strategy') but 'in the short term')	sickness-related benefits
sign off (but 'sign-off process')	sole parent (not 'single parent')/ sole-parent families
socio-economic	stand-down
step-parent	stepchildren
stepfather/stepmother/stepson stepdaughter	straightforward
subgroup	subset
subtotal	SuperGold Card
timeframe	timeline
time out	travelled/ travelling
trialled/trialling	
under way	unco-ordinated
upskill	uptake
up to date	
website/web	wellbeing
well known	
whānau	Whanganui

whole of government (unless used as an adjective, ie 'a whole-of-government approach')	workload
workforce	work place
work site	worldwide
World Wide Web (noun), the Web	wraparound
write-off	
youth justice co-ordinator (no caps)	

## Lower case terms

Common terms for which the Ministry of Social Development uses the lower case:

- cabinet committees
- contracting agreements
- equal employment opportunities (EEO)
- family group conference (FGC)
- government department
- ministerial
- parliamentary question
- site
- social worker
- youth justice co-ordinator.

## Preferred terminology

There are some words and spellings that the Ministry uses in preference to others. This helps to create consistency:

- Pacific people, or Pacific peoples – not Pacific Islanders or Pacific Island people
- older people – not the elderly or elderly people
- New Zealand – should be written in full
- client/student or other appropriate term (such as mental health consumer) – not customer
- disabled people – not the disabled or handicapped.

The term “disabled people” is consistent with the definition of disability in the New Zealand Disability Strategy. It can be used interchangeably with “people with impairments” or “people who experience disability” but some people in the disability sector prefer the term “people with disabilities”.

It is important to use the word disabled as an adjective and not a noun.

For example, “the disabled community” – not “the disabled”

Do not use stigmatising words such as handicapped, crippled, unemployable, no-hoper, retarded and defective.

## Clip art

Clip art can distract people from what you are trying to say whether it’s a publication, report or PowerPoint presentation, and should not be used in formal Ministry communication.

## Citations

### References

#### *Within text*

Publications are normally referred to in text by their author’s name in one of two ways:

For example, “This theory was first introduced in 1988 (Smithson 1989)” or “Smithson (1989) first introduced the theory in 1988.”

#### *In the references section*

When listing a publication in the references section, the author’s name comes first (surname then initials), then date of publication, followed by the publication title in italics, then the publication source (publisher and city of publication). The author’s initials have no full stops, but spaces.

For example, Clifton, N C (1990). *New Zealand Timbers*. Ministry of Forestry, Wellington.

When listing articles in a publication, the publication name is in italics, and the issue number and pages of the article are given. Publication source details are not required.

For example, Lansdown, G (2000). Children’s rights and domestic violence. *Child Abuse Review*, 9(6), 416–426.

#### *Legislation*

When citing a specific piece of legislation the year the legislation was enacted should always be included.

For example, “Land Transport Act 1993” or “the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989”.

#### *APA Style Guide*

Where a comprehensive reference is required, you may use the APA reference style guide. The important thing is to keep the style consistent by not mixing different referencing styles.

For more information and to access the APA referencing style guide, go to the MSD Style Guide webpage and look under the heading ‘Referencing’ for a link to the APA style document.



# Use of Māori and Pacific languages

---

## Māori language

Under the Māori Language Act 1987, Māori became an official language of New Zealand. This Act also established the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori to promote the language and encourage correct usage. Māori words and expressions in both English and Māori documents must be written in accordance with guidelines from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

[He Puna Kupu Māori / the Māori Wordnet](#) is a database available through the National Library of New Zealand. It contains subjects, terms and concepts, is a standard for spelling conventions and also has a section of place names and geographical features.

Māori/English, English/Māori language dictionaries:

Williams, H W (1992) *A Dictionary of Māori Language*, W Williams, GP Publications.

Māori Language Commission (1996) *Te Matatiki, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori – Contemporary Māori Words*, Oxford University Press, Auckland.

Ngata, H M (1993) *English-Māori Dictionary*, Learning Media Ltd, Wellington.

Ngata [www.learningmedia.co.nz/ngata/](http://www.learningmedia.co.nz/ngata/)

The Māori Language Commission's booklet, *Māori for the Office*, is a useful reference. It is available from the Information Centre.

## Salutations

If someone writes to you using Māori salutations be sure to respond in the same manner. When writing to Māori organisations, it is acceptable to use Māori salutations. The following should be used when appropriate:

Tēnā koe/Tēnā kōrua/Tēnā koutou are formal salutations used in place of Dear Sir/Dear Madam/Dear Mr x.

For example, "Tēnā koe, Mr Mohi"

Note: Tēnā koe is used to address one person. Tēnā kōrua is used to address two people. Tēnā koutou is used to address three or more people.

Kia ora is a less formal greeting than the series beginning tēnā koe can be used to address any number of people.

## Closings

The following should be used when appropriate:

- Nāku noa, nā – yours faithfully or yours sincerely.
- Kāti ake nei – enough said or goodbye for now.

## Macrons

Macrons are the little marks above a vowel in a Māori word and are used to help with pronunciation. Use where appropriate in Māori words.

Note: To insert a macron above a letter (or other special characters) in Word: Position the cursor where you want to insert the character. Select Insert menu, then click Symbol. When the dialogue box comes up, choose the required macron from the display and click Insert.

## Names of organisations

Some organisations prefer to be known by their Māori name, such as Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

Te Puni Kōkiri	Ministry of Māori Development
Te Tari Taake	Inland Revenue Department
Minitatanga Mō Ngā Wahine	Ministry of Women's Affairs
Te Tari Tatau	Statistics New Zealand
Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori	The Māori Language Commission
Te Komiti Ārai Take Manaaki	Child, Youth and Family Māori Advisory Group

## Frequently used Māori words

Aotearoa	New Zealand
hapū	subtribe
iwi	tribe
rohe, takiwa	area/district
kaumatua	old man/elder/old people
kaunihera	council
kōhanga reo	kindergarten
kuia	female elder
kura kaupapa	school
mokopuna	grandchild
tamariki	children
tari	department
waka	canoe
whānau	family

Note:

“Te” is the singular definite article (Te Puni Kōkiri), and replaces “the”.

“Ngā” is the plural definite article, eg ngā tamariki – the children

Always check the spelling.

## Plurals

Never use “s” to denote a plural following a Māori word. Māori words are both singular and plural.

### Right way:

There were groups of Māori from several different iwi in Ruatahuna.

### Wrong way:

There were groups of Māoris from several different iwis in Ruatahuna.

## Pacific languages

Greetings used by Pacific peoples include:

Malo e lelei	(Tongan)
Fakaalofa lahi atu	(Niuean)
Kia orana	(Cook Islands)
Ni sa bula	(Fijian)
Talofa lava	(Samoan)
Malo ni	(Tokelauan)

# Branding and publications

---

## MSD branding and logo guide

Please refer to the following three pages that describe how to use the MSD logo. If you have questions about branding, please contact the Publishing Solutions Team, which maintains comprehensive guidelines on all aspects of the Ministry of Social Development brand.

## Co-branding

Co-branding is when our logo and the logo of another organisation appear together. Our logo should appear on the front of a publication alongside the logo(s) of the other organisation(s) and be of equal size. If you have any questions about which logo should appear first, check with Publishing Solutions Team.

## Publications

All corporate documents and external publications should be referred to the Publishing Solutions team for production. These include the publications from the different service lines such as StudyLink, Work and Income, Office for Disability Issues and Office for Senior Citizens.

## Uview

MSD logos and other digital assets (such as photos and files) are held by [Uview](#), our digital asset manager. Before you access the site to request the assets you require, you'll need to have a login created.

To request a Uview login, please email Roslyn Bullas ([Roslyn.Bullas007@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Roslyn.Bullas007@msd.govt.nz)) or Michael Johnson ([Michael.Johnson034@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Michael.Johnson034@msd.govt.nz)) in Publishing Solutions.

Once you have a login, you'll be able to view all the images and logo files, and create a "shopping cart" with the files you'd like to download. Your file request will be administered by Publishing Solutions, and when approved, you'll be sent a link to download the files.

# Writing tips

---

## Getting started

The following tips apply to all written documents (except cabinet papers). The style we use needs to be formal, but a lot less formal than some may think. The language should be appropriate to the audience, not too academic, wordy or general. If your material is for release to the Minister, check the correct process for this.

Before starting, identify the audience and the most appropriate medium to communicate with them, establish the budget and do a plan providing adequate time for all stages, which will include a timeline, distribution (review if necessary for ongoing publications) and evaluation. Do a draft, get input from your colleagues and get sign off as required.

Don't polish, just write – fix it up once you have something to work with. Use familiar words, simple language, short sentences and short paragraphs.

Write in the active voice and get to the point quickly, selecting only important, relevant information your reader will want or need to know.

Don't blind the reader with science or jargon. Write for a reasonably intelligent layperson, using technical terms only when nothing else will do. Use abbreviations sparingly, unless you are certain the reader knows what they mean.

Check your tenses, are they consistent in each sentence? For example: "He saw his face in the mirror and did his hair", not "He saw his face in the mirror and does his hair."

Keep it short. Replace phrases or large words with simple words. Make one major point per paragraph and don't jump from idea to idea. Link chapters, sections and paragraphs with transition words to avoid confusion. Keep titles short and make sure they cover the main subject or message.

## Punctuation

Use punctuation for meaning and emphasis, not purely for formality.

### Apostrophes

Apostrophes are placed after plural owners, such as, the analysts' hats. Don't put an apostrophe in with the possessive pronouns ours, yours, theirs, his and hers, or when talking about decades, such as the 1990s, or in made-up words, such as ifs and buts.

Style tip: for plurals add an "s" after an apostrophe only if you would say it. For example "the pupils' teacher" rather than "the pupils's teacher". If your word ends in an "s", put another "s" after the apostrophe – Angus's book.

Apostrophes have two main uses:

- To indicate a missing letter or letters, such as, I'll, you're. Only put an apostrophe in it's if you mean it is.
- To indicate ownership where a preceding noun is possessive. For example, John's desk.

Examples include:

- social worker's: belonging to one social worker
- social workers': belonging to two or more social workers
- one month's worth
- four weeks' notice.

Use an apostrophe for the following benefits:

- Widow's Benefit
- Veteran's Pension
- Invalid's Benefit
- Orphan's Benefit
- Unsupported Child's Benefit
- carer's benefits.

Don't use an apostrophe to show:

- plural abbreviations, such as, SOEs, or decades (ie 1980's)
- ownership when you're using possessive pronouns, such as his, hers, theirs or its. For example, the dog returned to its cage.

## Brackets

Use brackets to enclose additional, non-essential information.

The full stop goes outside the brackets if the text in the brackets is not a full sentence.

For example, "They represent a diverse range of schooling alternatives, including Activity Centres (off-site units under the jurisdiction of a mainstream secondary school)."

The full stop goes inside the brackets if the text in the brackets is a full sentence.

For example, "The Pacific peoples' unemployment rate for the June quarter was 15 percent. (This compared unfavourably with 13.7 percent in June 1996.)"

## Commas

Commas should be used when a significant pause is intended, but not where the use of a comma would interrupt the flow of a sentence. Do not use the Oxford (or serial) comma, except in cases where greater clarity is needed (see below).

Commas are used to separate items listed in the text. For example, "The dog ran, chased, barked, leapt and jumped up at the bouncing ball". If the last or second to last item in a list also has an "and" you'll need to use a comma. "There were several things missing from the table: butter, bread, and salt and pepper". You may also need a comma after an "and" to make the meaning clear, for example, "The things he hates most are warm beer, hot curries, black socks, and cats." Without the comma it could mean he hates black cats, which may or may not be true.

Commas are used to separate extra, non-essential text. For example, "She gave me a refund, which wasn't what I wanted."

Use a comma to follow introductory words or phrases. For example, "However, a number of factors must be taken into account." "Despite their stated reservations, the young people concerned have agreed to participate."

Commas enclose non-restrictive phrases and clauses. For example, “Many young people suggested that school rules, such as those concerning smoking, should fit in with the country’s laws.”

Note: A non-restrictive phrase or clause adds more information to a sentence, but could be removed from the sentence without altering the sentence’s meaning.

## Colons

Use a colon to:

- introduce a list
- explain or define close related thoughts. For example, “Social assistance must be designed to encourage people to help themselves: taking part in paid work underpins economic independence.”
- separate hours from minutes. For example, 4:10pm.

## En-dashes

An en-dash is used like a comma to indicate a break in thought – it is slightly longer than a hyphen. To insert an en-dash, hold ctrl + NumLock + -. For example, “A random test determined the winner who could – and did – swap the book for a voucher.”

Use en-dashes to:

- highlight important information
- to indicate a range of numbers (eg 12–15)
- link introductory or concluding thoughts to the rest of the sentence.

## Full stops

Full stops are at the end of a sentence. If you have a whole sentence inside a bracket, the full stop is also inside the bracket.

For further guidelines on where to place a full stop when using quotations see [Quotation marks](#).

## Hyphens

Use a hyphen for:

- compound adjectives when they appear before the noun they modify. For example, age-specific diseases; four-year-old children; part-time work
- joining words to avoid ambiguity. For example, “The proposed committee will meet at three-monthly intervals”
- written fractions, such as two-thirds
- points of the compass, such as north-east
- separating “pre” and “re” from words beginning with “e”, and “co” from words beginning with “o”. For example, pre-empt, re-enter, co-opt and co-ordination.

## Quotation marks

Use double quotation marks to indicate the beginning and end of a quotation, and for direct speech and fragments of speech. For example, One young person said that she

felt as if she had been “left behind by the system – it doesn’t treat me like a real person”.

Use an ellipsis (three full stops) ... to indicate missing text if you are inserting only part of a quotation.

When quoting a large block of text, put the quotation in italics, indent the quote and don’t use quotation marks.

## Punctuation within quotation marks

The full stop is placed outside the second quotation mark when the quotation is part of a sentence, as in: She said she felt “free from care and anxiety”. The full stop (or comma) is placed inside the second quotation mark when the quotation finishes at the end of sentence.

## Use single quotation marks

When referring to speech within quotes, as in: “The report quotes the Minister as saying that: ‘It was an excellent idea.’”

To indicate that a something is being employed in an exemplary or qualified sense, as in: The Ministry of Social Development style uses an ‘e’ for ‘enquire’ not an ‘i’.

## Semicolon

A semicolon is similar to a full stop; it separates two clauses that could stand alone as sentences. The pause is shorter for a semicolon than a full stop.

Use a semicolon to link closely related ideas in a sentence. For example, most young people identified issues around mutual respect; many had stories of being picked on, blamed and not listened to.

A semicolon is also used between items in a series or list, where commas would not be enough to separate the components. For example, Participants at the conference were the Chief Executive, Mrs Jo Whyte; the Treasurer, Mr Ed Thomas; and several others.

## Slashes

When using a forward slash leave no spaces either side, such as “and/or”.

## Sentence structure

Your job is to make yourself clear to your reader. Let nothing get in the way of clarity, and use short, concise sentences rather than long, wordy ones.

### Wrong way

The conference and its related themes have the potential to be useful tools in assessing policy both now and in the future, and the Chief Executive’s presentation, which is designed to encourage discussion and debate, will be an important part of the day-long conference, taking place at 12.30pm. (**Too many ideas, clauses, vague words and surplus words.**)



## Right way

The day-long conference will provide useful tools for assessing policy. An important part of the conference will be the Chief Executive's address, followed by discussion and debate. This address will take place at 12.30pm. **(One main idea per sentence, precise words, no surplus words.)**

Try to use the active, not the passive voice. To ensure you are using the active voice, give the action an actor, and put the actor at the front of the sentence.

For example:

The Ministry of Social Development is finalising policy advice in this area. **(active, actor at front of sentence)**

Policy advice in this area is being finalised. **(passive, no actor)**

Policy advice in this area is being finalised by the Ministry of Social Development. **(passive, actor tacked on at end of sentence)**

Make sure your document fits with corporate standards (National Communications will be able to help here). Can it be improved? Rearrange sections so that ideas are grouped logically and presented in the order most useful to the reader. Try headings or subheadings to help organise information and highlight key points. Use lists to break up text, avoid long sentences and make it easier for the reader to follow.

Ask yourself:

- Are all illustrations/tables necessary?
- Could information be better explained using illustrations and/or tables?
- Should a table be rearranged to present data more clearly?
- Check that figures, tables and captions are correct. Is the quality of images adequate?

For large documents, a summary may be useful as this lets the reader quickly grasp the main ideas. Large documents may also need an index, a contents list and a glossary if words are used that readers may be unfamiliar with.

## Problem words

Here are some words that are commonly misspelt or misused:

**Accept** and **except** – accept means receive; except means excluding.

**Accommodation** – don't forget that extra "m".

**Acknowledgement** – don't forget that pesky "d".

**Advise** and **advice**:

- advise is a verb and means to offer counsel as in: "The Department advised the Minister of the problems that might arise if the new legislation were passed unchanged."
- advice is a noun as in: "The Minister agreed that the Department had provided him with sound advice."

**Affect** and **effect**:

- affect is the verb meaning to change or influence
- effect is primarily used as a noun meaning result or outcome. It can also be used as a verb meaning to bring about.

**Aggravate and irritate:**

- aggravate means to make an already troublesome matter or condition worse
- irritate means to make it troublesome in the first place.

**All ready and already:**

- all ready means completely prepared
- already means beforehand.

**Can and may:**

- "I can" means "I am able"
- "I may" means "I am permitted".

**Compare to and compare with:**

- to compare to is to point out similarities between dissimilar objects
- to compare with is to point out differences between related objects.

**Comprise and include:**

- comprise requires you to list all of the objects that make up the whole.
- include allows for the possibility that there may be others you haven't listed.

Do not use "of" after comprise/comprises. Correct usage is as follows:

"The package comprises five bottles of red and five bottles of white wine" **not**  
 "...comprises of five bottles...."

**Continual and continuous:**

- continual means recurring frequently
- continuous means without interruption.

**Counsel and council:**

- counsel means to advise and can function either as a verb or a noun, as in:
  - "The lawyer counselled the client expertly."
  - "They all agreed that Robert gave good counsel."
- council refers to a governing group or organisation.

**Disinterested and uninterested:**

- disinterested means impartial
- uninterested means not interested.

**Farther and further:**

- farther is used for physical distance
- further is used when physical measure is not relevant, as in: "The detective resolved to look further into the case."

**Following and after:**

- following implies movement or relationship
- after relates to time.

**Full-time and full time** - use "full-time" in all cases except when referring to "full time" when referring to a sports event.

**Government and government:**

- use a capital G when employing Government as a noun, as in: "The Government quickly put in place new social programmes." However, use local government.
- use lower case when used as an adjective, as in: "The new government social programmes were contentious."
- use lower case when used in the plural, as in: "The general rule is that governments don't act soon enough."

**Imply and infer:**

- to imply is to suggest
- to infer is to deduce from the evidence.

**Its and it's:**

- its without an apostrophe designates a possessive ("The Ministry takes its Style Guide very seriously.")
- it's with an apostrophe designates a contraction ("It's a fine day in the capital.")

**Less and fewer:**

- less refers to a quantity where individual items cannot be counted, eg "less rain", "less food"; it also refers to numbers, and expressions of measurement and time
- fewer refers to items that can be counted, eg "fewer children", "fewer social workers"

**License and licence:**

- license is a verb as in: "You need to license that car before you drive it."
- licence is a noun as in: "You need to buy a licence to do that."

**Like and as:**

- like means similar to
- as means in the same way or manner.

**Non and un:**

"non" usually implies other than, as in: non-compliant

"un" implies the opposite of, as in: unrewarding.

**Out-of-date** and **out of date** - use hyphens when placed before a noun but not when placed after.

**Practise and practice:**

- Practise is a verb as in: "The doctor found it easy to practise in New Zealand."
- Practice is a noun as in: "Social work practice is a demanding profession."

**Presently and at present:**

- presently means soon
- at present means now.

**Unique** – unique means without like or equal. There are no degrees of uniqueness so nothing should be described as nearly or almost unique.

**Use and utilise** – don't use utilise unless you mean makes the full possible use of.

**Sign off and sign-off:**

- "sign off" functions as a noun as in: "We've got sign off"

- “sign-off” functions as adjective in: “sign-off process”.

**Up-to-date and up to date:**

- “up-to-date” functions as an adjective as in: “The accountant keeps up-to-date files.”
- “up to date” refers to an action as in: “The accountant is bringing the books up to date.”

**Verbal** and **oral** – strictly speaking verbal means transmitted in words (which could be written down) and oral means transmitted in speech (by mouth).

**Who and whom:**

A tricky one and current newspaper practice is to use “who” in all cases. However, it’s nice to be able to make the distinction so use:

- who as a substitute for he, she or they
- whom as a substitute for him, her or them.

## Inclusive language

Words that are gender-specific should be avoided – for example, staff the phones rather than man the phones, workforce rather than workmen, layperson rather than layman (note that plural here should be laypeople not laypersons). Use culturally appropriate language, and non-sectarian and non-sexist language – for example, refer to women rather than ladies, and when talking generically, don’t assume you should use “he” or “his”. You can get into a tangle if you try too hard to avoid saying he/she etc, so often the simplest thing to do is to make it plural – they are working on it rather than she/he is working on it.

As in this Style Manual, MSD does allow the use of “their” as a possessive pronoun for plurals where the object is singular (“explain to a client that their income support has started”), to avoid awkward phrasing such as his/her or when plurals can’t be used. Be aware that this usage is still considered incorrect by many for formal usages; in those cases, try to find a workaround first.

## **Jargon**

Avoid jargon wherever possible, and explain specialised terms when not writing for a professional audience. As a general rule, avoid:

- using unnecessarily complex or technical words or words that are difficult to understand for people outside your organisation or profession
- words that are difficult to understand for people outside the Ministry or your profession
- acronyms, abbreviations or terms that are likely to be unfamiliar to the reader.

# Appendix 1: Writing for the web

---

As a general rule, people find it more difficult to read text on a screen than on paper. They scan, and are often quickly looking for specific information. Web content must be as accessible as possible.

To ensure your content is accessible, you need to plan, structure and write bearing in mind the differences between reading from a screen and reading from a printed page.

## Planning

Planning your web content can take less than five minutes, but it might save you hours of rewriting.

### Who will be reading your website?

This is the most important question you can ask when planning your web content. Be as specific as possible – an audience of “everyone” is not specific enough.

Other questions that will help you plan your content include the following:

- Why does your audience need to see your content?
- What are your key messages?
- Where is the best place for your content within the website?
- How do you want your audience to respond?
- Determining who your audience is will help you in answer these questions.

## Structuring your web content

Effective web content is well-structured, short, clear and able to be easily scanned. Ways to achieve this are outlined below.

The inverted pyramid structure: this is a way of structuring information on a page. The most important information goes first and the least important information goes last.

Frontloading: is a way of structuring sentences and paragraphs. It’s like using the inverted pyramid structure, but on a smaller scale. The most important part of a sentence goes at the start of the sentence. The most important sentence within a paragraph is first.

Bulleted lists: where possible, structure your web content in bulleted lists. Lists are far easier to read on screen than a long paragraph. See [Bullets](#) and [Lists within text](#) for further guidelines on how to write lists. With writing for web, bulleted lists can be a little longer than usual (up to seven items long); if you need to include more, consider breaking the list into two.

## Meaningful headings

Meaningful headings summarise the information below. They will:

- tell people they're at the right place straight away.
- Help people scan content without losing the logic flow
- make reading text online more digestible.

## Guidelines for using headings/subheadings

Use page headings written in straightforward language that clearly identifies what the page is about.

Avoid clever headings, such as puns, because they may not be understood.

Avoid meaningless generic page headings, such as "Introduction" or "Overview". (These headings work only if they can be read in context, as in this Style Guide.)

Use subheadings that break up content meaningfully and effectively.

## Alignment

Alignment refers to how the text sits on the page. The choices include left aligned, right aligned, centred and justified.

Left align your web content. This is because justifying the right margin alters the spacing in between the individual letters, and this makes the screen content harder to read.

## White space

Structure your content so that there is lots of space without any text or images. This is called "white space". This makes your web content more accessible, and easier to scan.

Following the structure guidelines above should help create white space.

## Links

Use links to take readers to information on other pages so you don't duplicate information that's already available elsewhere, or clutter your page.

Ensure your link names are short and descriptive for meaningful scanning, such "Read the Annual Report online," not "Click here".

If you're linking to a document, let your readers know the file format and size. That way they know if there's a big download coming, or if they need a certain program to view it (eg Adobe for PDFs).

## Numbers

There is evidence that using numerals on the web makes the numbers stand out more. When writing for the web, use numerals for all numbers in sentences and tables, except when beginning a sentence with a number.

## Web writing specifics

In general, the same rules apply to web writing as apply to other forms of business writing. These include:

- use short sentences
- use short paragraphs
- use everyday language
- write in an active voice
- use correct spelling, punctuation, grammar.

All of these points are detailed elsewhere in this Style Guide. With web writing, however, there are some guidelines to pay particular attention to. These are detailed below.

### Use concrete language

Specific and concrete words are more vivid than general and abstract ones.

**Concrete:** It rained every day for a month.

**General:** A period of adverse weather set in.

### Be concise

Leave out any unnecessary words.

### Emphasis

As indicated elsewhere in the Style Guide, use bold to emphasise text. As a general rule, though, avoid emphasis. It interferes with the flow of your text on screen, and can be distracting. The meaning of your sentence should be clear without it.

Don't use underlining for emphasis on a web page. The standard format for links on the internet is underlined coloured text (usually blue). Underlining anywhere else in the text can be confusing, particularly to those with visual impairments.

Avoid using italics as this makes the text very hard to read, especially for those with visual impairments.

If you must emphasise something, consider structuring your content so that the word or phrase you want to emphasise is a heading.

### Content should stand alone

People find web pages through a variety of ways so content has to make sense in isolation – a reader without prior knowledge of the topic shouldn't have to refer elsewhere to understand the content.



## Appendix 2: Writing letters

---

Our letters are an important part of the service that we provide, and it's essential that they are friendly, informative and easy to understand. Tone and demeanour are important.

### What is tone and demeanour?

When we write, it's particularly important that we communicate in a way that is friendly, informative and easy to understand. We often refer to tone and demeanour when we are talking about communicating with clients, yet tone and demeanour is relevant to all our written communications.

Tone is how the voice expresses a mood or feeling. The tone can determine whether a communication, such as a letter, is friendly, condescending, reassuring or dismissive. Our goal is to use a tone that encourages the reader to feel positive about the Ministry.

Demeanour is about behaviour. The Ministry wants to be recognised for its work in building partnerships and being service-oriented, client-focused and open. Our communication needs to reinforce this.

While some questions about style, tone and demeanour have no right or wrong answers, this Style Guide provides a set of standards and choices that belong to the Ministry as an organisation, and reflect the image we wish to portray.

### Planning

Before you start to write your letter, think about why you are writing a letter, who you are writing to, the purpose of the letter and the information you need to provide. You might find it useful to quickly write down a structure for your document – that way you're more likely to achieve a logical flow of information.

### Why write a letter?

Is a letter the best way to communicate your message? Sometimes the telephone, a meeting or an email is more effective.

You must write a letter if it is to:

- explain to a client that their income support has started, will change or end
- explain to a client that they are not able to get a particular programme or service
- answer a query or a request for information.

### Who is your audience?

Think about the person you are writing to. This will help you to write in an appropriate way.

- Are they young or old?
- Is English their first language?
- How will they feel when they receive your letter?
- Have they received any other information about the subject?
- What else will they need to know?

## **What is the purpose?**

Think about what you want to achieve. What is the letter for? Is it to ask the client to do something, to provide the client with new information, to apologise for a mistake, or is there another reason?

If you're asking the client to do something, have you made it easy for the client? Have you included the information and materials they need if they are to respond by mail (such as booklets, forms or a pre-paid envelope)?

*What information do you need to include?*

Think about the questions the client may have, and make sure these are answered in your letter. If it's complex, then including a brochure, fact sheet or form with the letter may be appropriate.

## **Structuring your letter**

All letters have a beginning, middle and an end. Sometimes it's worthwhile just jotting down the information in this order – that way you're more likely to have a letter that is logical.

The beginning: this is where you clearly outline the purpose of the letter and what's happened.

The middle: is where you provide the facts and information that the client needs.

The end: here you tell the client what action they need to take and when. Always finish with information about how they can get help or more information.

## **Guidelines to writing clearly**

### **Be concise**

Get your message across as concisely as possible. Do this by:

- using short sentences – aim for less than 16–20 words in each sentence
- sticking to one idea for each sentence
- keeping paragraphs to no more than five lines.

## Be positive

Positive sentences are shorter and easier to understand than negative sentences. Try to avoid negative language, even if the information is negative.

Try this:	Instead of this:
For more information, please call me on 04 123 4567.	Do not hesitate to call me on 04 123 4567 if you need any further information.
We can process your application as soon as we receive two forms of identification.	We cannot process your application until you have sent us two forms of identification.

## Active and passive voice

Generally, use the active rather than the passive voice. The active voice is the most straightforward way to write and is much easier to understand.

Active	Passive
We will pay you on 11 June 2013.	A payment will be made on 11 June 2013.
We will pay your benefit from 11 May 2012.	It won't be possible to start your benefit payment before 11 May 2012.

While the active voice is preferred, there are some occasions when the passive voice is more appropriate. These situations are usually sensitive situations where the information is not necessarily good news for the reader. For example:

Passive (preferred in sensitive situations)	Active
Your benefit has been stopped.	We have stopped your benefit.
Your application has not been granted.	We have turned down your application.

## Everyday words

Use everyday language. Don't use jargon or official language – it's difficult to understand. Don't use more words if one will do.

Try this:	Instead of this:
able to get	eligible
about	concerning
ask	request
because	as a consequence
before	prior
despite	despite the fact that
estimated at	estimated at about
follow	follow after
get	access
getting	in receipt of
give	supply
happen	occur
help	assist/aid
if	in the event of
is the sum of	is calculated as the sum of
later	at a later date
now	without further delay/at this point in time
regarding	with reference to
send	despatch/forward
show	demonstrate
so that/to make sure	to ensure
soon	in the near future
start	proceed/commence
stop	discontinue/terminate
tell	advise
thank you for your letter	we refer to your letter dated
use	utilise
we're unable to	we're not in a position to

we're sorry that	we regret to advise
we will pay you	you have been granted
when	until such time as
with	in conjunction with

## Avoid clichés

Avoid clichés. For example, “an uphill battle”, “explore every avenue” and “as a rough estimate”. While clichés are often used in spoken English, they can make your exact meaning difficult to understand.

## Talking about the law

Quoting legislation is intimidating. Take a helpful approach instead and use everyday language to explain what the legislation means to the reader.

Try this:	Instead of this:
<p>We will continue your payments for the first 26 weeks you're away, providing that:</p> <p>you still qualify for the Veteran's Pension,</p> <p>you're away for less than 30 weeks.</p>	<p>(2) New Zealand Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension which would otherwise be payable to a person should be payable in respect of the first 26 weeks of any absence from New Zealand if –</p> <p>(a) The person's absence does not exceed 30 weeks.</p>

## Use strong verbs

Base your sentences around the verbs rather than nouns. This will show that you are sure of what you're doing, rather than trying to sound important.

Use this:	Instead of this:
<p>You can apply</p> <p>We will inform you</p>	<p>You can make an application</p> <p>We will provide you with appropriate information</p>

## Pronouns: we and us

Always use “we” and “us”. Don't use “the organisation” or “it”. You're representing the Ministry of Social Development, so always use “we” and “us” instead of “I” and “me”.

## Exceptions

When you are writing to older people, such as superannuitants, there are some exceptions to the Style Guide. These are:

<b>The rule</b>	<b>The exception (for writing to older people)</b>
<p><i>Openings</i></p> <p>Use the first name, for example, Dear Mary.</p> <p><i>Contractions</i></p> <p>Use these to make a sentence conversational, for example, hasn't, you've, you'll.</p> <p><i>Language</i></p> <p>Use everyday, conversational words.</p> <p><i>Font</i></p> <p>The standard font for body text is 11pt Verdana/National (internally/externally produced).</p>	<p>Use a title and the surname, for example, Mrs Green.</p> <p>Avoid contractions where possible. Use all words in full, for example, has not, you have, you will.</p> <p>Use slightly more formal words (but be careful to avoid jargon and legalese). For example, you can use words like "advise" rather than "tell you", and "request" rather than "ask for".</p> <p>Use 12pt Verdana/National.</p>

## Appendix 3: Word templates

---

### Ministry Word templates on Doogle

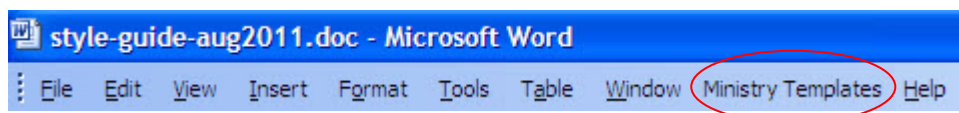
You can find MSD-Word templates on Doogle, in the following location:  
<http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/forms-templates/national-communications/corporate-templates.html>

There you will find updated versions of the built-in MSD templates in Word, plus Legal Memo templates, a 3 panel, 2-colour tri-fold brochure template, and an updated report template. These templates use the official MSD fonts and branding.

### Ministry templates in Word

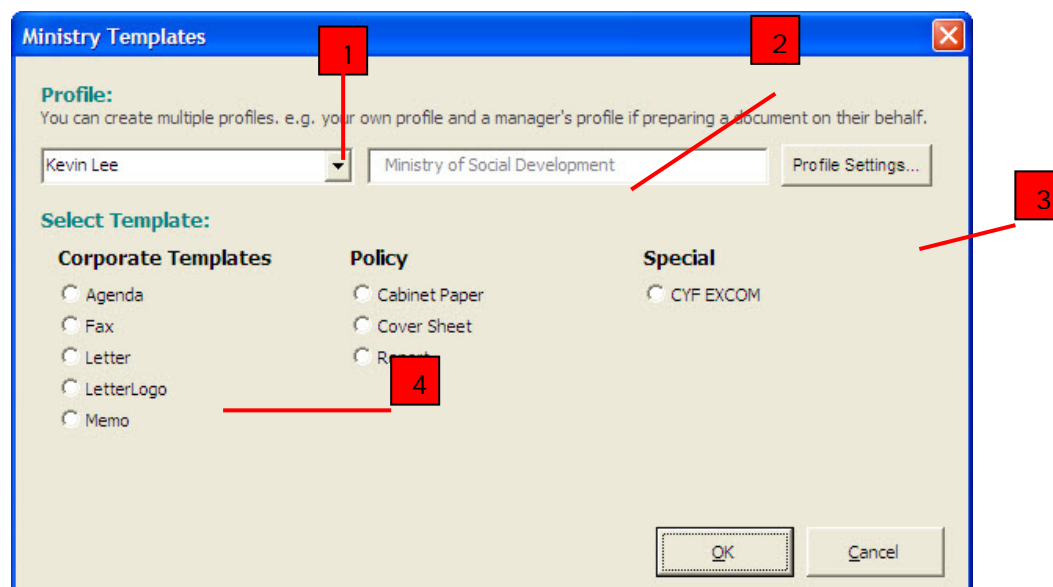
Please note that currently the Word templates built into the MSD versions of MSD Word do not use the preferred font, Verdana (although they do have MSD branding). When you use these templates, please change the body font to Verdana 10pt., as specified on page 12.

To use the standard Ministry templates in Microsoft Word, click on 'Ministry Templates' tab in the Word menu: File, Edit, View...



If you have not entered your profile details you will be asked to enter your Profile information and Business information. ([see the entering your details section](#))

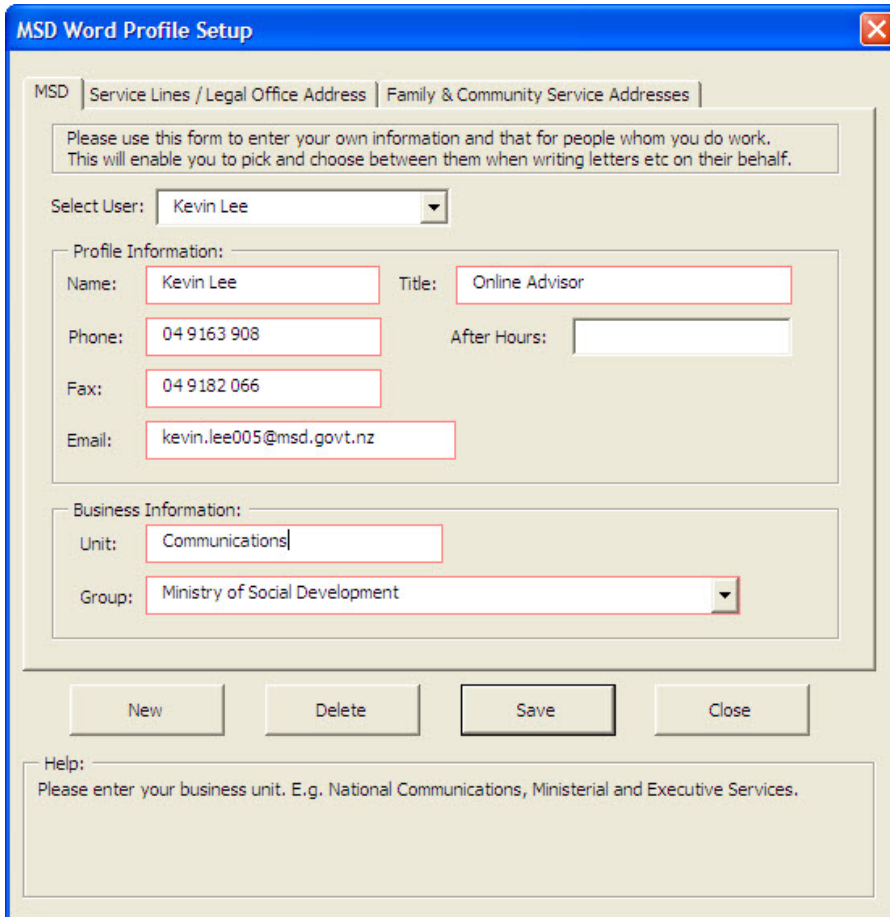
When you start you will see the following window.



1. This is used to select any number of different profiles.
2. Group display window. Displays the Group associated with the selected profile.
3. Profile Settings button. This lets you edit your profile details.

4. Select Template. The templates are grouped by category (Corporate Templates, Policy and Special).
5. Select the template you need by clicking on the relevant template and click the [OK] button.

## Entering your details



## Adding profiles

You may add more profiles if you type correspondence on behalf of other people. This is a useful function for executive assistants.

- When you have completed the first profile, click **Save**.
- To enter in additional profiles, click **New** and complete the details.
- To delete a profile, click **Delete**.
- When you have entered and saved one or more profiles there is a drop down box at the top of the form to pick and choose profiles.

## Editing a profile

- From the Word Menu Bar click on MSD Templates.
- Choose User Setup.





## Work and Income users

Information is required about the office address, phone and facsimile information for these offices. This information will be used for letters.

MSD Word User Setup

MSD Service Lines / Legal Office Address Family & Community Service Addresses

Address One

Address Two

Address Three

Town/City

Postal Address

Phone

Facsimile

Note - Only Child, Youth and Family, Work and Income and MSD Legal users need to fill in these details. These details will form your office address in the top of your correspondence and where appropriate. For Family & Community Services please select the Family & Community Tab.

Save Close

Help:  
Please enter the main phone number for your office.

- Click on the Service Lines/Legal Office Address Tab.
- Enter in the address information, phone and facsimile information. Note: the office information will determine the amount of information you need to complete.
- Check the entry and click the **Save** button.
- When you have finished click the **Close** button.

## Family & Community Services users

Information is required about the office address, phone and facsimile information for these offices. This information will be used for letters.

MSD Word User Setup

MSD | Service Lines / Legal Office Address | **Family & Community Service Addresses**

Site: Bay of Plenty Regional Office

Address: 2nd Floor, 1207 Pukuatua Street, Rotorua

Phone: 07 9210 967

Fax: 04 9163 908

Note - Only Family & Community Services users need to fill in these details. These details will form your office address in the bottom of your correspondence and where appropriate. For Work & Income and Legal Offices please select the Work & Income and Legal Office Tab.

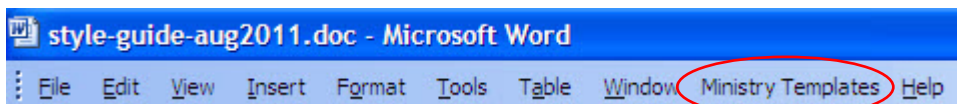
Save Close

Help:

- Click on the Family & Community Service Addresses Tab.
- Enter in the address information, phone and facsimile information. Note: the office information will determine the amount of information you need to complete.
- Check the entry and click the **Save** button.
- When you have finished click the Close button.

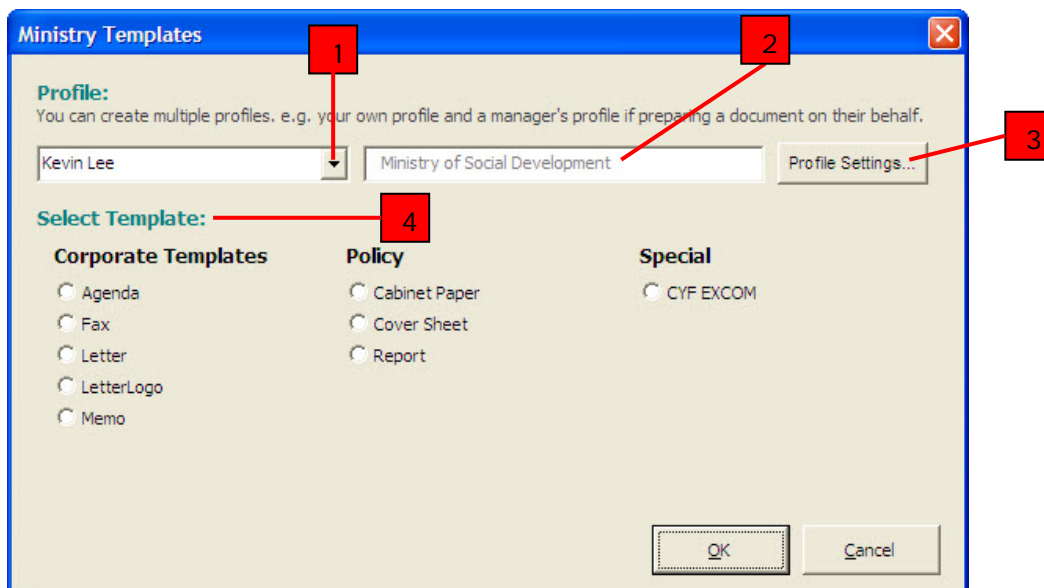
## Accessing the templates

From the Menu Bar in Word choose **MSD Templates**



Choose the Ministry service appropriate to your work, for example, MSD, Work and Income, StudyLink, Office for Disability Issues or Office for Senior Citizens.

Choose the template required from the menu.



1. This is so used to select any number of different profiles.
2. Group display window. Displays the Group associated with the selected profile.
3. Profile Settings button. This lets you edit your profile details.
4. Select Template. The templates are grouped by category (Corporate Templates, Policy and Special). Select the template you need by clicking on the relevant template and click the [OK] button.

Note: in Word you can still choose **File, New**:

- General Templates
- locate the tab for your templates: eg MSD Approved
- choose the template and click **OK** or double click on it.

The following template folders are located in the **More tab**:

- OSC Templates
- Work and Income Templates
- ODI Templates
- StudyLink Templates
- MYD Templates.

## The letter templates

There are two letter templates in each case:

1. Letter.dot: Prints on letterhead.
2. Letterlogo.dot: Prints on normal printer paper but prints with the logo.

This option is selected when you click “Enable this when using electronic letterhead”.

There are also options for the user to include the Copy, Enclosures and File reference.

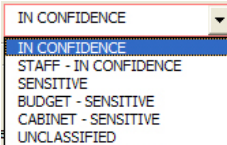

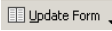
## **Work and Income**

The Work and Income letters do not have pre-printed addresses (whether on letterhead or not).

If the Work and Income user has not completed this information when setting up the profile, you will be prompted to fill this in when creating a Work and Income letter.

## The user form

## Features

<p>Security</p>	<p>There are six classifications: IN CONFIDENCE, STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE, SENSITIVE, BUDGET - SENSITIVE, CABINET-SENSITIVE and UNCLASSIFIED. If UNCLASSIFIED is chosen, no security will be displayed in the letter. You are not able to enter in other security classifications.</p> 
<p>Printing envelopes</p>	<p>Although this feature is available through the Tools menu, the envelope button has also been placed on the special toolbar. </p>
<p>Refreshing the user form</p>	<p>After completing the body of the letter, you may refresh the user form by clicking on this button on the special toolbar. </p>

### Formatting Toolbar

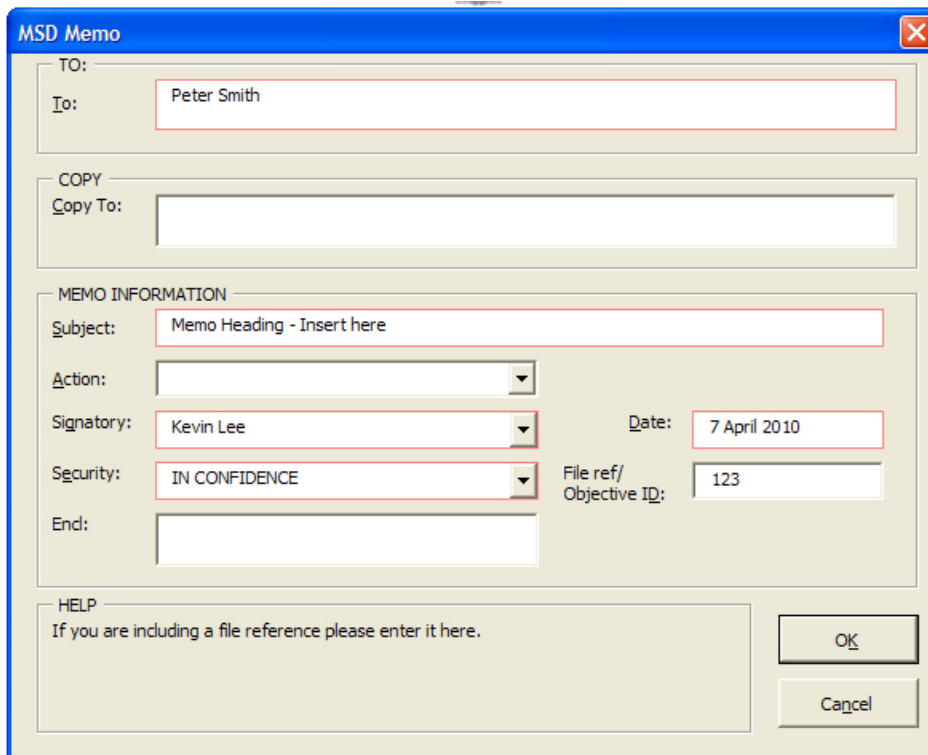
Use the template formatting toolbar for body text, bullets, recommendation numbering style, etc. – not the formatting buttons in Word. This applies especially to bullets and numbered paragraphs.



There are also options for the user to include the Enclosures, File and Objective reference

## The memorandum templates

### The user form



**MSD Memo**

TO:  
To: Peter Smith

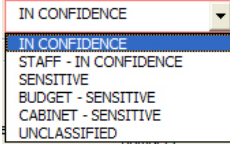

COPY  
Copy To:

MEMO INFORMATION  
Subject: Memo Heading - Insert here  
Action:   
Signatory: Kevin Lee  
Date: 7 April 2010  
Security: IN CONFIDENCE  
File ref/  
Objective ID: 123  
End:

HELP  
If you are including a file reference please enter it here.

OK  
Cancel

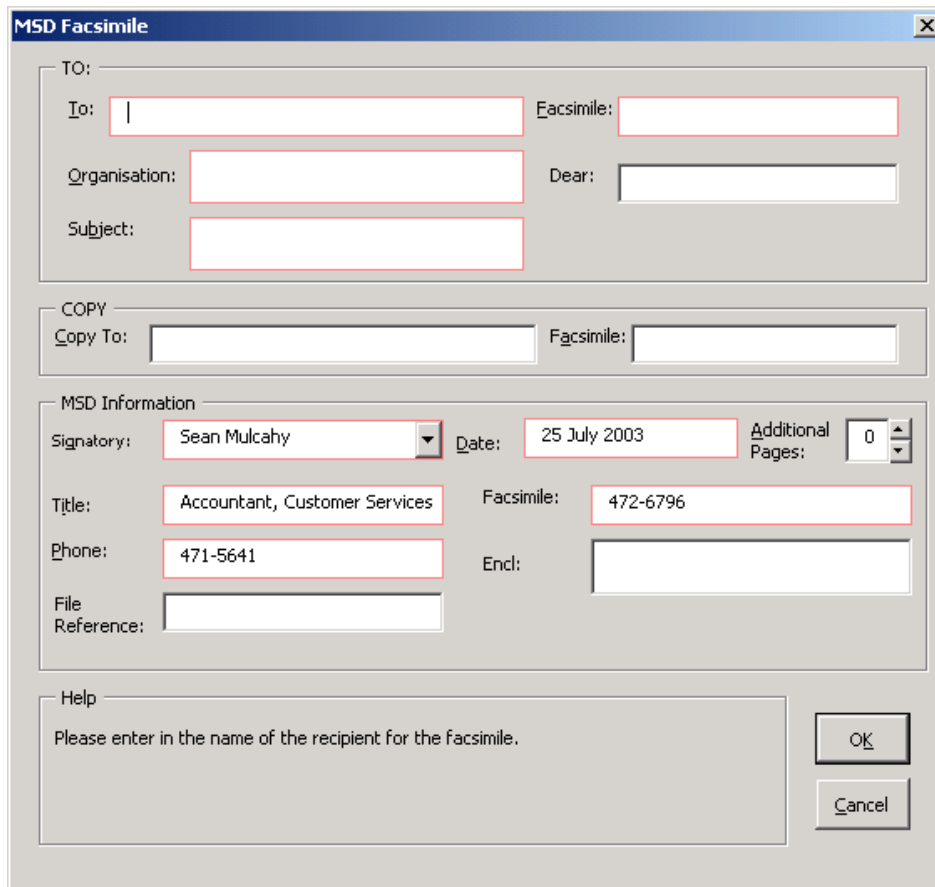
## Features

Action	<p>There are four actions to choose from: For approval; Response required; Distribution to staff and For Information. The first two require a date to be entered.</p> <p>If you choose For approval or Response required, you will also be prompted to enter in the person from whom approval is sought or a response is required.</p>
Security	<p>There are six classifications: IN CONFIDENCE, STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE, SENSITIVE, BUDGET - SENSITIVE, CABINET- SENSITIVE and UNCLASSIFIED. If UNCLASSIFIED is chosen, no security will be displayed in the letter. You are not able to enter in other security classifications.</p> 
Formatting Toolbar	<p>Use the template formatting toolbar for body text, bullets, recommendation numbering style, etc. – not the formatting buttons in Word. This applies especially to bullets and numbered paragraphs.</p> 

There are also options for the user to include the Enclosures, File and Objective reference.

## The facsimile templates

The user form



The screenshot shows a Windows-style dialog box titled "MSD Facsimile". It contains several sections for data entry:

- TO:** A group box containing fields for "To:" (with a cursor), "Facsimile:", "Organisation:", "Dear:", and "Subject:".
- COPY:** A group box containing fields for "Copy To:" and "Facsimile:".
- MSD Information:** A group box containing:
  - "Signatory:" with a dropdown menu showing "Sean Mulcahy".
  - "Date:" with a text field containing "25 July 2003".
  - "Additional Pages:" with a spinner box set to "0".
  - "Title:" with a text field containing "Accountant, Customer Services".
  - "Facsimile:" with a text field containing "472-6796".
  - "Phone:" with a text field containing "471-5641".
  - "Encl:" with an empty text field.
  - "File Reference:" with an empty text field.
- Help:** A text area containing the instruction "Please enter in the name of the recipient for the facsimile." and two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

There are also options for the user to include the Enclosures and File reference.

## Classifications in facsimiles

There is no classification option in the facsimile user form. This is covered by the Ministry confidentiality statement on the bottom of the first page of the facsimile.



## The coversheet templates

There are two types of coversheets:

1. Report coversheet
2. Cabinet/Cabinet Committee Paper coversheet.

There are similarities in the coversheets so they have been placed in one template with a different user form for each type.

### The report coversheet user form

**Cover Sheet - Report Cover Sheet**

Cover Sheet Type

Report Cover Sheet  Cabinet/Cabinet Committee Paper

Paper Information:

Title:

Date:  Security Level:

Priority:  Report Number:

MSD Ministers | Other Ministers

Minister's Name	Action	Deadline
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Contact Information:

Name:  Title:  Work Phone:  A/h Phone:  1st Contact:

Report prepared by: Name:  Title:

Other Departments

Other Departments Consulted:

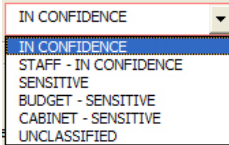
Help:

Please enter the title of the cover sheet.

OK

Cancel

## Features

<p>Security level</p>	<p>There are six classifications: IN CONFIDENCE, STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE, SENSITIVE, BUDGET - SENSITIVE, CABINET-SENSITIVE and UNCLASSIFIED. If UNCLASSIFIED is chosen, no security will be displayed in the letter. You are not able to enter in other security classifications.</p> 
<p>Priority</p>	<p>There are three priorities: Medium (default), High and Urgent.</p>
<p>Report number</p>	<p>The number for the report.</p>
<p>MSD Ministers' name</p>	<p>The name and portfolio of the Minister. Some Ministers have a choice of portfolios. Note: you can enter up to four Ministers. In the Office for Senior Citizens and the Office for Disability Issues, there is only the choice of one Minister.</p>
<p>Other Ministers</p>	<p>In Joint Submissions, please choose the Other Minister's tab and enter the name of the joint Minister and other information.</p>

## The cabinet/cabinet committee paper user form

**Cover Sheet - Cabinet Cover Sheet** ✖

Cover Sheet Type:  Report Cover Sheet  Cabinet/Cabinet Committee Paper

**Paper Information:**

Title:  Date: 7 April 2010

Security Level:  Report Number:  Priority:

For consideration by Cabinet/Cabinet Committee on:  Committee Code:

Stage:  Action Sought:  Deadline:

MSD Ministers | Other Ministers |

Minister's Name	Action	Deadline
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Contact Information:**

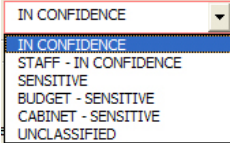
Name:  Title:  Work Phone:  A/h Phone:  1st Contact:

Report prepared by: Name:  Title:

Other Departments Consulted:

**Help:**  
Please enter the title of the cover sheet.


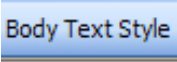


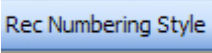
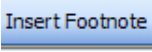
## Features

Cabinet/cabinet committee paper option	The option to choose if you are creating a Cabinet/Cabinet Committee Paper Cover Sheet.
Security level	<p>There are six classifications: IN CONFIDENCE, STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE, SENSITIVE, BUDGET - SENSITIVE, CABINET-SENSITIVE and UNCLASSIFIED. If UNCLASSIFIED is chosen, no security will be displayed in the letter. You are not able to enter in other security classifications.</p> 
Code	The Committee Code.
Paper stage	The stage of the paper, you can choose from the drop-down or enter your own.
MSD Ministers' name	The name and portfolio of the Minister. Some Ministers have a choice of portfolios. Note: you can enter up to four Ministers. In the Office for Senior Citizens and the Office for Disability Issues, there is only the choice of one Minister.
Other Ministers	In Joint Submissions, please choose this tab and enter the name of the joint Minister and other information.

# The cabinet committee paper template

## The cabinet committee paper user form

### Features

Minister	Select from the drop down list the Minister and Portfolio.
Additional toolbar	<p>A special toolbar has been added as an aid to the users.</p> <p> For Heading 1, 2 and 3 Styles, as per the Style Guide.</p> <p> To revert to the numbered paragraph in the Body text, there are three levels of numbering.</p> <p> To increase or decrease the numbering – for Body text and Recommendations.</p> <p> To do bulleted lists, 1B and 2B format bullets at successive indents.</p> <p> To revert to the numbered style for the Recommendations, there are three levels of numbering.</p> <p> Insert a footnote.</p>

### The recommendations

There are four numbered recommendations for you to enter text:

To add recommendations, place your cursor at the end of a recommendation and press **Enter**.

To do sub-numbered recommendations, use the button on the toolbar as detailed above.

Keyboard shortcut: You can also modify a numbered paragraph into a sub-numbered paragraph by pressing the **Tab** key prior to typing the text for the paragraph.

## The report templates

### The report user form

The report template can also be used for reports to people other than the prescribed list of Ministers. This can be achieved by placing a tick in the check box Other Person or Minister. You will be prompted to enter in the person's name and title.

MSD - Report Paper

Report

Title:

Date:  Security:

Main Minister List:

Other Person or Minister

Report prepared by:

Name:  Title:  Business Unit:

File Ref/Objective ID:

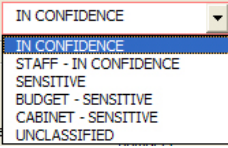


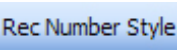
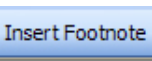

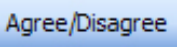
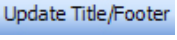
Help

Please enter in the title of the report.

OK

Cancel

### Features

Security level	<p>There are six classifications: IN CONFIDENCE, STAFF - IN CONFIDENCE, SENSITIVE, BUDGET - SENSITIVE, CABINET-SENSITIVE and UNCLASSIFIED. If UNCLASSIFIED is chosen, no security will be displayed in the letter. You are not able to enter in other security classifications.</p> 
Minister or addressee	<p>Select from the drop down list the Minister and Portfolio or enter in the addressee and their title.</p>
Additional toolbar	<p>A special toolbar has been added as an aid to the users.</p>  <p>For Heading 1, 2 and 3 Styles, as per the Style Guide.</p>  <p>To increase or decrease the numbering – in all sections of the report.</p>  <p>The formatting for the Recommendations, there are three levels of numbering.</p>  <p>Insert a footnote.</p>
	 <p>To do bulleted lists, 1B and 2B format bullets at successive indents.</p>  <p>To add the AGREE/NOT AGREE clause below a recommendation.</p>  <p>To update the Report name on the front of the report and in the footer.</p>

Keyboard shortcut: You can modify a numbered paragraph into a sub-numbered paragraph by pressing the **Tab** key prior to typing the text for the paragraph.

# Appendix 4: PowerPoint presentations

---

## Ministry PowerPoint template

You can find an MSD-branded PowerPoint presentation on Doogle, in the following location: <http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/forms-templates/national-communications/corporate-templates.html>

## PowerPoint templates

There are standard Microsoft templates for PowerPoint presentations built into PowerPoint. In PowerPoint, select new document. When the new presentation dialogue box appears, select **new** from template/general templates then choose the template you need.

## Design elements

Don't go overboard with design elements – any decoration that does not add to your meaning should be eliminated.

Avoid overly complex diagrams.

Have two or three words per bullet point – definitely not more than six. Use key words and phrases only – never write full sentences.

Have no more than four bullet points per slide.

Don't centre the text or graphics – lead the eye from the top left hand corner to the bottom right corner.

## Fonts

Fonts should be clear and concise and large enough for the audience to read.

Avoid using all upper case; lower case is easier to read.

Create a flow-on effect by using:

- the same background colour for each slide
- the same colour for headings and lettering
- the same graphic to link related slides.

## Presentation guidelines

1. Title slide: Title of talk (two lines max), presenter's name, organisation, date and location of presentation.
2. Body slides: Depends on content (text, images, graphs). Use same typeface and colour scheme.



3. Summary slide: Use one or two slides to sum up your central message.
4. Finish slides: Use one or two slides for “thank you for your attention” or “staff acknowledgements”. This creates closure, professionalism.

### **How many slides do I show?**

- Rule of thumb: number of minutes – 10 percent, then round down. For example, a 15-minute presentation – 10 percent = 15 – 1.5 = 13.5, or 13 slides.
- Give more time for data, less for text. One to two minutes per slide.

Text slides are good for:

- making bullet statements of central message or summary points
- stating hypotheses or test predictions
- outlining highlights or research protocol
- summarizing methods of data collection
- citing seminal works or quotes.

### **Text tips**

- use bullet statements or an outline
- use five lines with five words per line
- choose light text on a dark background
- avoid red type
- choose an easy-to-read font: Times, Verdana, Courier
- use a font as large as slide will allow
- avoid capitals – they are harder to read
- use 1.5 line spacing
- check all spelling – better yet, have someone else proofread the slides.

### **Fonts**

Use common fonts and not the fancy, unusual fonts. If you use one machine to develop your presentation but have to use another to show it, you may run into problems. The other computer will try to approximate the font and may be inaccurate.

Some of the most common fonts are:

- Verdana (preferred)
- Tahoma
- Courier

- Times/Times New Roman.

## Tables

- these are good for showing specific data values
- don't show a table of tiny words and numbers
- condense the data to what is relevant
- use no more than four columns and three lines
- simplify column headings.

## Images

Make sure images are of acceptable file size. Images should be processed so they are of the smallest file size possible while still retaining acceptable quality for viewing and printouts (if applicable).

- The easiest way to reduce file size in PowerPoint is by selecting "Compress pictures" in the File menu.
- For better image control, use an image editing program (such as Photoshop, or a free image editor) to reduce the resolution and the physical size of images before you place them in PowerPoint.

Use common image formats that are cross platform compatible such as JPG, GIF, and BMP.

## Animation/Effects

Try to avoid using every special effect you can pack into your presentation. Too many special effects will take away from the impact of your work. It is good to use them only if they enhance or promote the point you are trying to make.

## Movies

QuickTime is not native to Windows computers. PowerPoint only supports QuickTime movies up to version 2.5. To ensure the best chance of success, create your movies as AVI files, as these have the best chance of success on a Windows machine. You can also convert your movies to the MPG format in QuickTime Pro.

- Embedded video can cause serious problems in PowerPoint presentations because the file size of video is extremely large, in comparison to text and graphics files. Please be aware of the size of your video files. In most cases, lower resolution video files are very effective. To reduce the chance of difficulties:
- keep video clips short – 30 seconds or less
- keep video clips small – 320 x 240 pixels or smaller
- keep frame rates low – 12 frames per second (fps) recommended as a good compromise between quality and playability.

## Note about DVDs

If you plan to play a DVD as part of your presentation, be sure to test the DVD for compatibility. It is important to test your presentation on a Windows PC.

## Graphs

1. Effective graphs will clarify your findings at a glance.
2. Poor graphs will leave your audience confused.
3. Limit the amount of information in each graph.
4. Decide what type of graph is best for the type of data presented.
5. Flow charts: Summarize how several variables interact, good for methods section.
6. Schematic diagrams: Good for showing piece equipment.
7. Bar graphs: Compare two or three subjects for two or three variables. A "stacked" bar-graph is good for expressing proportions of a whole.
8. Line graphs: Display change over time, and three lines (data series) is the limit for one graph.
9. Pie charts: These are better for presenting proportions of the whole. Two together allow comparison (like stacked bar graphs), but are better than stacked bar graphs when there are more than two series. Present no more than two per slide.

## **Colour with graphs**

- use bold, clear colours
- use colours consistently
- light on dark is better than dark on light
- colour is easier to follow than symbol markers on line graphs.

## **Travel**

When creating your media for transfer, copy the entire folder to the portable disk. To ensure success of your presentation, create a backup copy presentation on a separate portable disk and transport it in a separate piece of luggage. Give yourself plenty of time to test your presentation. Waiting until the last minute only adds to your stress and could jeopardise your presentation.

## **Appendix 5: Communications to holders of honours and titles in New Zealand**

---

This is not a comprehensive list of all titles and forms of address. Titles and forms of address do also change from time to time. If there is a title or form of address you use regularly that is not on the list, or you know of a change, please contact the National Office Communications team so that we can update this list.

### **Ambassador**

Spoken            Your Excellency or Ambassador

(By name if well known)

Written            His (Her) Excellency (title, initials, or forenames and surname) or by designation, eg His Excellency the Ambassador of ...

Letters begin: Your Excellency or Dear Ambassador (by name if well known to writer)

Charge d’Affaires, Consular, and other diplomatic representatives are addressed and styled in accordance with personal status and rank.

### **Archbishop**

Spoken            Your Grace, Archbishop, or Archbishop (surname)

Written            The Most Reverend (initials and surname), The Archbishop of ... or The Most Reverend Archbishop of ...

Letters begin: Dear Archbishop (this may be followed by surname)

### **Archdeacon**

Spoken            Archdeacon

Written            The Venerable Archdeacon (initials and surname) or The Archdeacon of ...

Letters begin: Dear Archdeacon or Dear Sir

### **Armed forces (officer)**

Spoken            (By rank or by rank and surname)

Written            (Rank, initials, surname, decorations, unit)

Letters begin: Dear (rank) or Dear (rank and surname)

Vice Admiral and Rear Admiral spoken to as Admiral. Air-Chief Marshal, Air Marshal and Air Vice-Marshal spoken to as Air Marshal. Lieutenant-General and major-General spoken to as General. Lieutenant-Colonel spoken to as Colonel.

## **Baronet**

Spoken Sir (forename) or Sir (forename and surname)

Written Sir (forename and surname), Bt

Letters begin: Dear Sir or Dear Sir (forename).

The letters "Bt" should always be shown after the name in written form

## **Baronet's wife**

Spoken Lady (forename) or Madam

Written Lady

Letters begin: Dear Lady or Dear Madam

## **Bishop (Anglican)**

Spoken Bishop or My Lord

Written Right Reverend (initials and surname), Bishop of ... or The Right Reverent Bishop of ...

Letters begin: Dear Bishop or Dear Bishop (surname)

## **Bishop (Roman Catholic) – as for Anglican, except in written form**

Written Most Reverend (initials and surname), Bishop of ...

## **Canon**

Spoken Canon

Written The Reverend Canon (initials and surname)

Letters begin: Dear Sir, Dear Canon, or by name

## **Cardinal**

Spoken Your Eminence

Written His Eminence Cardinal ...

Letters begin: Your eminence or Dear Cardinal (surname)

## **Chief justice**

Spoken Chief Justice or Dame or Sir (forename and surname)

On bench Your Honour

Written The Right Honourable The Chief Justice or The Right Honourable Sir or The Right Honourable Dame (forename and surname)

Letters begin: Dear Chief Justice, Dear Dame, or Dear Sir ... eg The Right Honourable Dame Sian Elias

## **Clergyman**

Spoken (By styles or titles held) eg Mr ... or Dr ...

Written The Reverend (initials and surname)

Letters begin: Dear Sir, or Dear Mr ...

The style "Reverend" is not used in spoken address.

## **Dame**

Spoken Dame (forename) or Dame (forename and surname)

Written Dame (forename and surname) followed by appropriate post-nominal letters

Letters begin: Dear Dame (forename) or Dear Madam

The husband of a Dame is not accorded any courtesy title and should be addressed and styled in accordance with titles and ranks held in his own right.

## **Dean**

Spoken Dean (surname)

Written The Very Reverend (initials and surname), The Dean of ... or The Dean of

Letters begin: Dear Dean or Dear Dean (surname)

## **District court judge**

Spoken Sir or Ma'am

On bench Your Honour

Written Dear Judge (surname)

Letters begin: Dear Judge (surname)

## **Governor-General and former Governors-General (and Officer Administrating the Government)**

Spoken Your Excellency, then subsequently Sir or Dame (forename)

Written His/Her Excellency The Governor-General or His/Her Excellency Sir/Dame (forename and surname, followed by abbreviations indicating Honours held)

Letters begin: Your Excellency

Apart from purely personal letters, correspondence should be addressed to the Official Secretary to the Governor-General asking that the subject of the letter be placed before His/Her Excellency.

The Officer Administering the Government in the absence of the Governor-General (usually the Chief Justice) is addressed in the same manner as the Governor-General and in accordance with personal styles and titles held.

## **High Commissioner**

Spoken            Your Excellency or High Commissioner

(By name if well known)

Written            His (Her) Excellency (title, initials or forenames and surname) or by designation, eg His Excellency The High Commissioner for ...

Letters begin: (By name if well known to writer)

Charge d'Affaires, Consular, and diplomatic representatives are addressed and styled in accordance with personal status and rank.

## **Honours**

Spoken            Only honours involving titles (Dame/Sir) are used when speaking.

Written            The following letters may be used after a recipient's name:

- Order of New Zealand (ONZ)
- Queen's Service Order (QSO)
- Queen's Service Medal (QSM)



## New Zealand Order of Merit designations:

Current designations, 2000 onwards	Former designations, 1996-2000
1. Principal Companions (PCNZM)	1. Knights and Dames Grand Companion (GNZM)
2. Distinguished Companions (DCNZM)	2. Knights and Dames Companion (KNZM/DNZM)
3. Companions (CNZM)	3. Companions (CNZM)
4. Officers (ONZM)	4. Officers (ONZM)
5. Members (MNZM)	5. Members (MNZM)

- The Victoria Cross for New Zealand (VC)
- The New Zealand Gallantry Star (NZGS)
- The New Zealand Gallantry Decoration (NZGD)
- The New Zealand Gallantry Medal (NZGM)

## Judge of the High Court or Court of Appeal

Spoken Justice (surname)

On bench Your Honour

Written The Honourable Justice (surname or forename depending on personal preference)

Letters begin: Dear Judge (surname or forename)

## Judge of the Supreme Court (Same as Judge of the High Court or Court of Appeal)

The Chief Justice and Judges who previously served on the Privy Council are “The Right Honourable” eg The Right Honourable Dame Sian Elias or The Right Honourable Justice Blanchard.

## Judge of Industrial Court, Compensation Court, and Māori Land Court

Spoken Judge, or Judge (surname)

On bench Your Honour

Written Judge (initials and surname)

Letters begin: Dear Judge or Dear Sir

The Chief Judge of the Maori Land Court is styled and addressed as “Chief Judge”.

## **Knight Bachelor**

Spoken Sir (forename and surname) or Sir (forename)

Written Sir (forename and surname)

## **Knight's wife**

Spoken Lady (surname) or Madam

Written Lady (surname)

Letters begin: Dear Lady (surname) or Dear Madam

## **Knight of an order of chivalry**

Styled and addressed in the same manner as Knight Bachelor, except letters indicating the type and level of Knighthood are shown after the name.

## **Magistrate**

Spoken Lady (By styles and title held), eg Mr....

On bench Your Worship

Written Mr (Ms, Miss or Mrs) (initials and surname), S.M

Letters begin: Dear Sir (Madam) or by name

## **The Māori King Te Arikinui**

Spoken Sir, or Te Arikinui

Written Te Arikinui King Tuheitia

Letters begin: Sir, or Te Arikinui

The styles "Your Majesty", Highness, Excellency or similar are not to be used to address the Māori King

## **Mayor**

Spoken Your Worship, Mr (or Madam) Mayor, or by name

Written [His (Her) Worship] The Mayor of ..., or by name.

Letters begin: Dear Mayor or by name

The styles "Your Worship" and "His Worship" are considered archaic and individual Mayors usually make it known how they wish to be styled.

## **Members of parliament**

Styled and addressed in accordance with ranks and titles held. The letters "MP" should always be shown after the name in written form.

Mr Joe Bloggs MP

Member of Parliament for Wellington Central

Hon Joe Bloggs MP

Member of Parliament for Wellington Central

Hon Dr Joe Bloggs MP

Member of Parliament for Wellington Central

## **Minister of the Crown**

Spoken Minister or Minister (forename, surname)

Written Hon (forename and surname), MP, Minister of ...

Letters begin: Dear Minister

As a Minister of the Crown must be a Member of Parliament use of the letters "MP" after the name is optional.

## **Minister of overseas government**

Styled and addressed as same as New Zealand Minister of the Crown.

## **Mother Superior and Reverend Mother**

Spoken Mother (surname or religious name)

Written The Reverend Mother (Superior) (surname or religious name)

Letters begin: Dear Reverend Mother (Superior)

## **Moderator of Presbyterian Church**

Spoken Moderator or by styles and titles held

Written The Right Reverend

Letters begin: Dear Moderator or Dear (name)

## **Monsignor**

Spoken Monsignor or Monsignor (surname)

Written Right Reverend Monsignor (initials and surname)

Letters begin: Dear Monsignor or Dear Monsignor (surname)

## **Peer (Baron)**

Spoken My Lord or Lord (name)

Written The Right Honourable the Lord .... Or The Lord

Letters begin: My Lord or Dear Lord....

## **Peer's children**

The sons and daughters of Peers (Barons) may use the courtesy title "The Honourable" before their name during their life-time.

## **Police officer**

Spoken (By rank and/or by name)

Written (Rank, initials, and surname)

Letters begin: Dear (rank) or Dear (rank and surname)

Ranks of New Zealand Police in descending order are: Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Chief Superintendent, Superintendent, Chief Inspector, Inspector, Senior Sergeant, Sergeant, Constable, Cadet.

Retired Officers of the N.Z. Police are not entitled to retain and use their rank. They may, however, with permission of the Commissioner of Police, wear their uniform on appropriate occasions, eg Police functions, formal investitures at Government House.

## **Priest (Roman Catholic)**

Spoken Father or Father (surname or religious name)

Written The Reverend Father (initials, surname, or religious name, followed where appropriate by abbreviation denoting membership of religious order).

Letters begin: Dear Father or Dear Father (surname).

## **Prime Minister**

Spoken Prime Minister

Written Rt Hon (forename/surname), Prime Minister

Letters begin: Dear Prime Minister

As the Prime Minister must be a Member of Parliament, use of the letters "M.P." after the name is optional.

## **Privy Councillor**

Spoken The Rt Honourable (forename, surname)

Written Rt Hon (forename and surname)

Letters begin: The Rt Hon (forename, surname)

## **Prince and princess who are HRH**

Spoken        Your Royal Highness, then subsequently Sir or Ma'am

Written        His (Her) Royal Highness The Prince (Princess) ...

Correspondence for a Member of the Royal Family should be sent to the Private Secretary to the Member concerned or to the Official Secretary, Government House, for forwarding to the appropriate Household.

## **The Queen**

Spoken        Your Majesty, then subsequently Ma'am

Written        Her Majesty The Queen

It is not customary to write directly to The Queen. Communications should be directed to the Private Secretary to The Queen or in case of New Zealand residents, to the Official Secretary, Government House, for forwarding to the appropriate officer within the Royal Household.

## **Queen's Counsel**

Styled and addressed in accordance with titles and ranks held. The name is always followed by letters "QC".

## **Rabbi and Chief Rabbi**

Spoken        (Chief) Rabbi (may be followed by surname)

Written        (Chief) Rabbi (initials and surname)

Letters begin: Dear (Chief) Rabbi (surname)

## **Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Spoken        Madam Speaker/Mr Speaker

Written        Hon (forename, surname), Speaker of the House of Representatives

Letters begin: Dear Madam Speaker/Mr Speaker

## **Surgeon**

Styled and addressed in accordance with titles and ranks held. The style "Dr" is not used in written form.