



Communication Strategy
2022





Acknowledgement to Country

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Wadandi people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their culture; and to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.



Contents

Executive Summary	4
Key Recommendations	5
Key Documents and Research	5
Situation Analysis	6
Shire snapshot	6
SWOT – External	7
SWOT – Internal	8
Our Vision	9
Our Values	9
Brand Persona	9
Logo	9
The Shire of Capel Brand	9
Key Messages	11
Key Projects and Initiatives	12
People	14
Key Stakeholders	15
Key Partnerships	16
Sponsorships	17
How does the Shire communicate?	19
Strategy Implementation Process	19
Shire of Capel Communications Policy	20
Purpose	20
Scope	20
Definitions	21
Social Media	21
Customer Service	22
Events	22
Employee Relations/Internal Communications	22
Media Relations	23
Legislation	23
Communication Channels	24
Digital/Online	24
Traditional	24
Communications Strategy Recommendations	25
Key External Communications Strategies	25
Key Internal Communications Strategy	26
Marketing & Comms Implementation Plan	26
Addenda	27



Executive Summary

The following Communication Strategy (the Strategy) developed by Market Creations Agency for the Shire of Capel creates a framework to project a positive and professional corporate image and promote the Shire as a future focused and responsive organisation through the application of consistent messages in a wide range of communication channels.

The Strategy focuses on effective communication as a vital element in building a positive identity for the Shire through improved awareness of its services, activities and projects, achievements and resources. By encouraging and promoting multi layered communication, improvements can be achieved via community participation and engagement. Effective communication also aids in information flow (internally) between Councillors, administration, and staff, and (externally) to stakeholders and the broader community.

The Strategy has been developed in line with the Shire's strategic direction, ensuring communication and community engagement is at the forefront and details methods to highlight the Shire's community facilities, services, leadership, and good governance.

The Strategy details key messages, channels, and suggests opportunities for community engagement. This Communication Strategy will act as a valuable reference point for the Shire to ensure all marketing, PR and communications activities are strategic, consistent, and timely.

The Strategy is aligned with the key themes detailed in the Strategic Community Plan (2021 – 2031):

1. Strengthen and enhance the well-being of our community
2. Manage and protect our environment
3. Foster a dynamic, diverse, and strong local economy
4. Deliver good leadership, governance and decision making
5. Provide and maintain suitable infrastructure facilities
6. Effective communication, engagement, and relationship development

Why is this Strategy important?

Effective, timely and regular communications and community engagement will provide the following benefits to the Shire:

- Build trust and goodwill within the community via transparent and honest communications
- Build brand awareness – ensuring all collateral is cohesive in all forms of communications
- Encourage community feedback – create avenues for consistent and effective engagement
- Increase online presence – create a leading practise website, grow social media activity
- Keep material up to date – stay present and relevant in the marke
- Improve understanding - regular exchange of information ensures decisions are understood
- Advocacy - create community support and ownership of decisions
- Improve relationships with key stakeholders and build a positive reputation for the Shire
- The Shire and its representatives are viewed as community leaders
- Improve staff morale, job satisfaction and engagement helping in both recruitment and retention of employees



Key Recommendations

The following points are high level key recommendations that have resulted from the development of this document:

- Development of a new website – the website should be produced to industry leading practise.
- Develop standards and protocols that provide the Shire with ensured quality and consistency, heightened visibility, improved accessibility and meet legislative requirements as per the Local Government Legislation Act 1995, Regulations and subsequent amendments.
- Creation of a rolling content (promotional plan) for all the key projects occurring in the Shire that impact stakeholders internally and externally.
- Internal Communications Strategies, including a staff recognition program.
- Updates and consolidation of the Communications Policy to provide clear direction and processes for employees.
- Newsletter lead by the Shire, digital – accessible and timely.
- Sponsorship strategy and active promotion.

Key Documents and Research

The preparation of the document has been achieved in consultation with Shire representatives and key Shire documents, inclusive of the Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 and Corporate Business Plan 2021-2025, as well as supporting materials including the Shire's Advocacy Prospectus 2021-2022 and capel.wa.gov.au

A workshop was also conducted by Market Creations Agency with Shire of Capel Councillors in February 2022 to understand Council's feedback on communication strategies implemented to date, discuss suggestions for improvement and agree upon key communications goals in the short (<1 year) and longer term (3-5 years).

This Strategy also provides over-arching alignment to the Shire's Community Engagement Framework.

Collectively, both this Strategy and the Community Engagement Framework articulate the Shire's promise to the community and details what the community can expect regarding these initiatives.





Situation Analysis

The Shire of Capel is located in the South West region of WA, located between the cities of Bunbury and Busselton, approximately 200km south of Perth. Known for its stunning natural landscape and accessible but small-town country feel, many are attracted to Capel for the laid-back lifestyle it offers. The Capel region is one of the most bio-diverse areas globally - home to the world's last remaining Tuart forest.

Shire snapshot

Resident Population	18,407
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher • Just over 2% of the Shire's population identify as Indigenous • 21% of the population were born overseas
Area	558 ² km
Number of dwellings	7,314
Number of staff	Full time FTE 76 Part time FTE 15.73 Casual employees 12 Fixed term FTE 9.55
Operating budget (total revenue)	\$20million
Towns and suburbs	Boyanup, Capel, Capel River, Dalyellup, Elgin, Forrest Beach, Gelorup, Gwindinup, Ludlow, North Boyanup, Peppermint Grove Beach, The Plains, Stirling Estate, Stratham.
Major events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire of Capel Australia Day Community Awards – January • Movies in the Park – February • Music in the Park – March • Youth Festival - April • Captivate Capel – October • Carols in the Park - December
Shire owned and operated facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Recreation Facilities • Community Resource Centres • Library • Skate parks • Sports ovals and facilities • Playgrounds
Shire services that support the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal control • Building and planning services • Household bin and waste collections • Road construction and maintenance • Weeding and spraying services • Community events and programs • Youth services
Major industries	The Shire is home to over 1,000 local businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Agriculture & Horticulture • Healthcare • Education • Retail • Minerals & Mining • Arts & Crafts





SWOT – External

An assessment of the Shire of Capel’s external communication (i.e., communication with residents, ratepayers, and key stakeholders) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

External Strengths	External Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing bi-annual Community Satisfaction Survey informs the direction needed for improvements • Recent improvements with relationship with media outlets has resulted in fair, balanced media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that the Shire has not been responsive to the community and has acted in self-interest • Community have felt ill-informed on what is happening in their local area • Council historically has been presented negatively in news media • Website is difficult to navigate and features out of date content • Lack of engagement and reach with youth audience • Perceived lack of community consultation by the Shire
External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New website can improve the accessibility of information for the community and create a positive, professional engaged and active image for the Shire • Frequent/regular newsletters, newly styled with refined content for information sharing of Shire activities. Issued via email or Mailchimp • Use of SMS for other quick Shire reminders • YouTube videos (incl multi-lingual) to engage residents on key projects or Shire activities/changes • Develop visual library of agreed style for the Shire for use in promotions, good news and other marketing collateral • Regular media releases/engage with traditional outlets to tout good news and projects being undertaken • Develop key messages for use across all channels for consistency of voice and content • Develop a local calendar of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If State Government fails to provide adequate funding to support community improvement initiatives • If the Shire’s spokesperson strategy is not followed • If actions and customer service of Shire representatives are not consistent with communications issued • Misinformation being spread by ‘keyboard warriors’ • Population growth and the perceived impact on services and amenities



SWOT – Internal

An assessment of the Shire of Capel's internal communication (i.e., communication staff and Councillors) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly wrap up email keeps staff informed• Regular sharing of information between Councillors• Staff subject matter experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of understanding of spokesperson roles and responsibilities• Insufficient trust and teamwork mentality between Councillors
Internal Opportunities	Internal Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular inter team meetings to improve communication across departments• Regular communication from CEO to staff• Celebrate success• Regular meetings with Councillors, including socially, to build trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If experienced staff leave without good documentation/handover• If internal interactions are not consistent with external communications• If suggestions are not responded to or actioned





The Shire of Capel

Our Vision

A future focused and resilient community that benefits from good governance, responsive services and appropriate facilities to deliver positive social, environmental and economic outcomes for everyone.

Our Values

The Shire values Honesty, Empathy, Accountability, Respect and Teamwork which underpins the way we work with our elected members, the community and each other.

1. Honesty. We are truthful, trustworthy and genuine in all that we say and do.
2. Empathy. We are kind and show understanding of people's circumstances, perspectives and differences.
3. Accountability. We are transparent in all that we do, and stay true to our word by taking responsibility for our actions.
4. Respect. We are respectful in all that we do, and all interactions we have, while being inclusive and mindful of differences.
5. Teamwork. We are cooperative, collaborative and united while working towards common goals of our Shire.

Brand Persona

Applying a brand persona helps to create clear and consistent communication across all channels. If the Shire of Capel were a person, they would be described as:

1. Friendly. We see ourselves as part of the community - sincerity comes naturally.
2. Informative. We are dependable, honest and use evidence to explain decisions.
3. Approachable. We educate our community using supportive, easy language free from jargon and acronyms where possible.
4. Bright. We are different from other local governments - and we like to celebrate it.

Logo



Horizontal
This is our primary logo. Note the horizontal lockup. Use this on all material.



Stacked
When the primary logo doesn't fit your composition, use the stacked lockup. Use this on clothing and badges.



Brandmark
Use the brandmark as a sporting element if it's clear the content is ours. Examples include social media display



Dalzellup





Key Messages

The following key messages relate to the Shire and represent core communication themes that should be referenced in any PR opportunities:

- **Unique, unrivalled urban lifestyle.**
One thing that connects the Shire of Capel is the appreciation of the lifestyle that our environment provides. We have a distinctive character and spirit, ranging from rural villages to coastal laid-back to more urbanised neighbourhoods. We have the best of both worlds, where we can reside in tight knit townships and communities, while having easy access to key services in nearby centres.
- **A beautiful natural environment that should be protected.**
Home to the last Tuart Forest in the world, along with numerous other natural wonders. The Shire of Capel cherishes its natural environment.
- **A community-first approach with a focus on enhancing well-being.**
The Shire of Capel genuinely cares for its residents and actively looks for opportunities to better support their health and well-being.
- **A tourism town with a strong local economy.**
Promotion of the Shire of Capel's natural attractions (pristine coastline, forests and bushland) and tourism appeal (wineries, hospitality).
- **A focus on sustainability.**
Sustainability is key for balancing the needs of environmental protection and adapting to a growing population.
- **Strong leadership that listens and is responsive.**
The Shire of Capel puts the community more than anything else, listening to their needs and concerns and adapting accordingly. With strong leadership comes regular communication and a commitment to implement change and follow through.
- **Excellent places, services and amenities to support a vibrant and active community.**
The Shire of Capel actively invests in services and amenities in each townsite to meet the needs of its growing communities.
- **A hidden gem.**
Located between major regional towns of Busselton and Bunbury, the Shire of Capel offers a quieter rural setting with a rustic charm and laid-back atmosphere which attracts long-term residents.
- **A strong, growing community.**
The Shire of Capel has seen 36.8% population growth since 2009, with people attracted to the quiet, rural setting of our communities.



Key Projects and Initiatives

The Shire of Capel's Advocacy Prospectus (2021 – 2022) details the Shire's current priority projects and initiatives. These projects and initiatives should feature regularly in the Shire's communications as they relate to the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Dalyellup Multipurpose Centre

Innovative library, youth and community focal point that promotes a sense of community and place in Dalyellup; a digital / technology Hub that services all of Capel and the South West.

This will be an important facility to cater for Capel's growing population and will connect the town square, skatepark, pump track and Nature Playground open space. This project will improve community health (mental and physical) and connectedness, provide indoor and outdoor venues for community events and provide local employment opportunities through staffing requirements. Concept design for this building is under development, with construction commencing in the 2022/23 financial year and expected completion in 2024/25.

Bunbury / Capel / Busselton Cycle Link

Critical community and tourism infrastructure making Capel active, healthy and a 'cycle and walk friendly' destination. Connecting major South West communities via active transport. This project was identified as a priority project of Council in March 2021 and will provide much needed local connections between the townsites of Peppermint Grove Beach, Stratham and Dalyellup. The 50km route between Busselton and Bunbury is relatively flat and is anticipated to be a popular tourist route due to being achievable for a wide range of fitness levels.

Kaatijinup Biodiversity Park

The Kaatijinup Biodiversity Park aims to be a centre of excellence for the research in, care of and re-homing of endangered native wildlife and habitat. The project will focus on a native animal hospital and research centre but will also partner with tourism and eco-volunteering elements to offer a unique native wildlife service and visitation attraction. Budget is yet to be confirmed with a feasibility study being conducted in 2022, followed by a business case in 2023.

Bridge Infrastructure

Fit for purpose transport infrastructure that enables safe movement; facilitates residential and tourism development. Includes widening of Mallokup Bridge and Minningup Bridge, as well as the demolition and reconstruction of Bentley Road Bridge. A key project required to improve road safety and activate land for residential development in response to Capel's growing population.

Dalyellup Surf Lifesaving Club and Community Amenities

Community hub combining surf lifesaving, beach safety, public amenities, and coastal recreation facilities. The Dalyellup SLSC will provide facilities such as surf lifesaving club facilities, public toilets and change rooms, a café, community meeting space, recreation research with playgrounds and BBQs and beach access. Design and funding of this project is scheduled for 2024/25 with construction not expected to commence until 2026.



Boyanup Heritage Precinct

Iconic heritage and rail precinct; celebrating the history of Boyanup and developing a tourism and visitor attraction. Includes the Fettle's Park Redevelopment Project which is intended to create a central focus point for the community and generate tourist interest in the townsite. On completion (expected 2030/31) the project will include parking for cars and caravans, a playground modelled upon the area's historical connection to the railway as well as a nature play area.

Future Sporting Fields

The future of Capel's sporting fields and facilities is a priority given the projected population growth in Dalyellup, Boyanup and Capel. The Shire's current sporting field provision is heavily reliant on shared usage with education facilities. The growth in both the school populations and within the urban areas, means that this approach is not sustainable and will not cater for future demand. As such, the Shire is beginning project planning for 'standalone' sporting fields, court sports and associated community amenities. Allowing for participation and achievement in sport and recreation, supports a healthy lifestyle and community wellbeing.



Lifestyle Impacts and Enablers

Improve the management of lifestyle challenges to the community throughout Capel. A key focus for the Shire of Capel currently is the Mosquito Management Plan aimed at reducing mosquito borne disease risk to community (Ross River & Barmah Forrest virus). Mosquito management within the Shire is evidence-based, driven by surveillance of both larval and adult mosquitoes within the environment. A working group has been established and studies are currently underway to find an effective, long-term solution.

Boyanup Saleyards / Agribusiness Precinct

Facilitate the development of an Agribusiness Precinct in the Shire of Capel, that supports the livestock industry of the South West. The Boyanup Cattle Saleyards are a significant strategic asset for the South West livestock industry and the Shire of Capel. The Shire of Capel (January 2022) approved to lease the Boyanup Saleyards to the West Australian Livestock Salesmen's Association (WALSA) until 2032, while seeking to lead a consultative process, involving government, industry and key stakeholders in the identification and development of a long-term location and solution for the Saleyards, within the Shire of Capel and away from the Boyanup townsite.

The Shire of Capel will commence the Site Identification Study in mid-2022 regarding a future long-term location and solution for the Saleyards, aligned to the potential development of an Agribusiness Precinct. This will be followed by a feasibility study and business case.

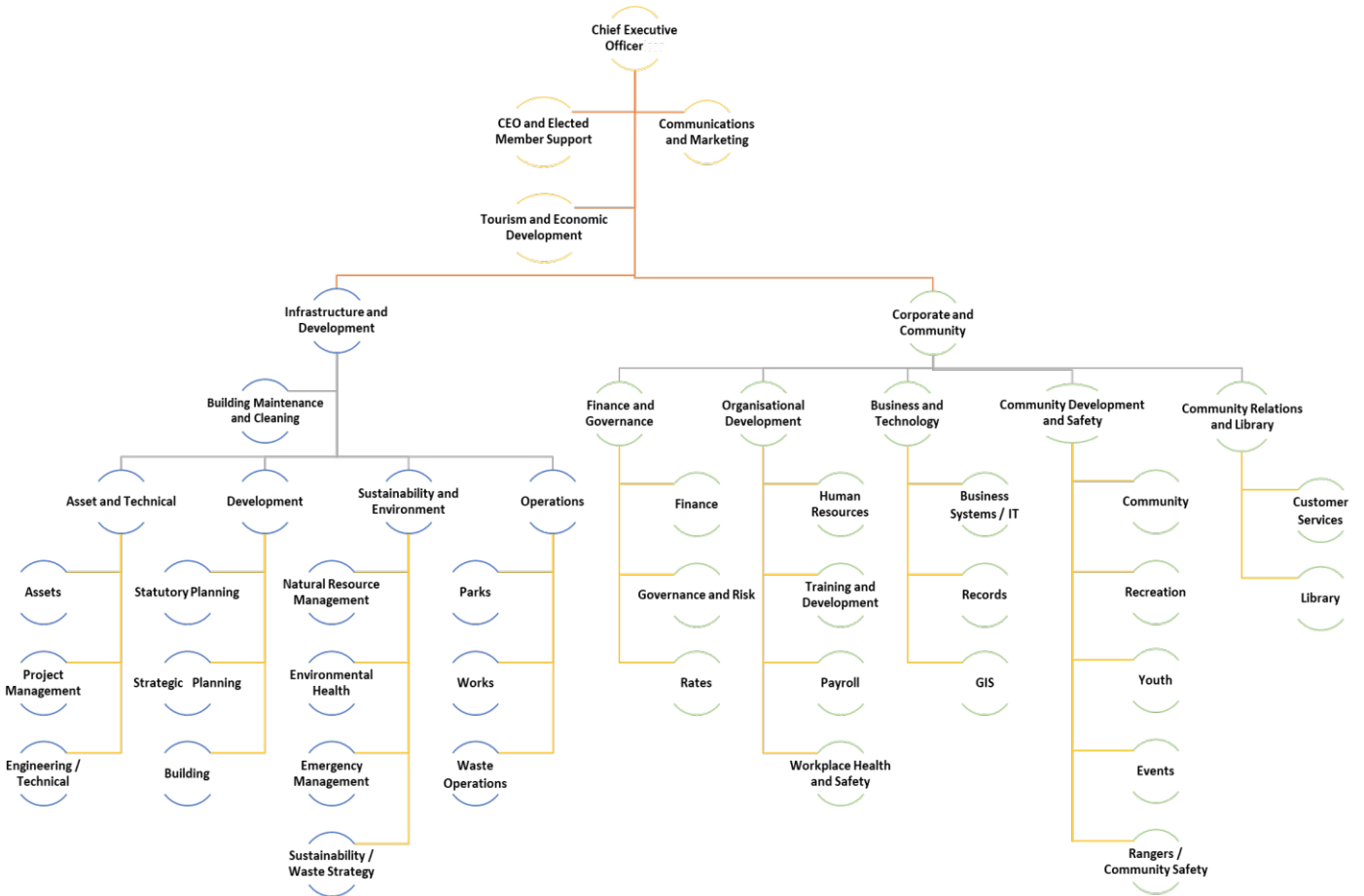
Gelorup Bush Fire Brigade Facility

The original bush fire brigade shed was built in 1991 with minor alterations in 1996. The building is no longer fit for purpose and requires upgrades to improve condition and provide suitable training facilities for community engagement programs. Groundworks and demolition and scheduled for FY2021/22 with building and fit out expected in 2022/23. The Gelorup facility is the top priority, with similar upgrades expected for Capel & Stirling Bush Fire Brigades in FY2024/25 and beyond.





Organisational Chart



Key Stakeholders

The Shire of Capel has a number of key stakeholders, each with distinguishing characteristics, which ought to be considered with all communications material.

Internal

The Shire of Capel has a number of experienced, long-standing staff members. Overall, staff enjoy the work that they do and are eager to provide a high level of service to the constituents.

An internal staff survey revealed that:

- 86% of staff rate the Shire of Capel positively as a place to work.
- However, 53% of staff would not recommend the Shire of Capel as a place to work.
- The highest rated values among staff were honesty, integrity and respect.
- Staff did not feel like the Shire had a clear Vision.
- Staff believed effectiveness of communication could be improved.

Staff can be further supported by improving their awareness of the strategic direction of the Shire of Capel (e.g. through regular staff meetings and internal news updates) and through continuous training via team building exercises. There is an eagerness among staff to continue to learn and develop their skills professionally. The 2019 staff survey also revealed that the Shire should prioritise establishing policies, systems and processes that help guide employees and provide greater structure.

To improve perceptions of respect and appreciation, it is recommended that the Shire of Capel implement a regular staff recognition program which is communicated organisation wide.

Local Community

- The total population is 18,407
- Overall population numbers have been steadily increasing (36.8% growth since 2009)
- The median age is 38
- Median age of Shire residents has been steadily increasing
- 55% of the population work full-time
- 15% of adult population hold a bachelor's degree or higher
- 75% of the population own their own home outright or with a mortgage
- Over 10% of households speak a language other than English, mostly Afrikaans
- 2.5% of the Shire's population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Local Community stakeholders include:

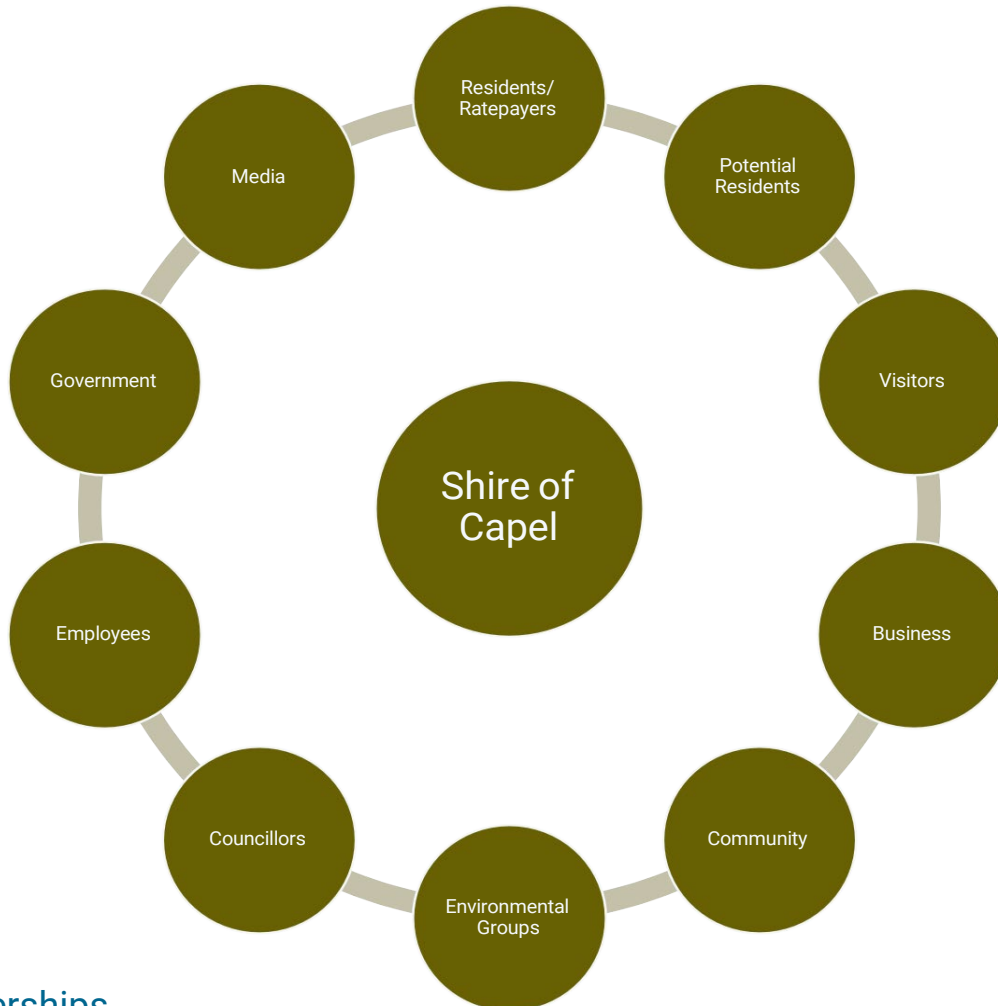
- Boyanup Lions
- Boyanup Playgroup
- Bunbury Catholic Church
- Bunbury Reformed Evangelical Church
- Capel OSHC
- CWA CapelDalyellup Collective
- Capel Playgroup
- Dalyellup Playgroup
- Dalyellup Senior Association
- Gelorup Community Inc.
- Peppermint Beach Grove Community Association
- John Calvin School
- Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School

Broader Community

The Shire has proactively established working relationships with several larger scale businesses operating in the area, to work collaborative to support and deliver long term economic and community benefits to the Shire of Capel. Refer to Partnerships for further details.

Stakeholder Group Matrix

The below matrix identifies the broad range of stakeholders involved with or affected by the Shire.



Key Partnerships

The Shire of Capel has formed a number of strategic partnerships with both community and corporate organisations in order to collaborate and deliver positive outcomes for their constituents. A summary of key partnerships at the time this report was written is captured below.

Community Partnerships

- Education: Dalyellup College
- Commercial: Satterley's (Dalyellup)
- BunGeo Tourism Partnership
- Capel Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Development Commission

Corporate Partnerships



- Iluka
- WALSA (Boyanup Saleyards)
- Tronox (Dalyellup old rubbish tip site)

Sponsorships

The Shire of Capel actively supports community events and other initiatives through its Community Grants Scheme. The grants aim to support projects that increase community participation and wellbeing with a focus on:

- Sports and recreation – supporting healthy lifestyle through physical activity
- Youth development – empowering youth through positive experiences
- Arts and culture – supporting the arts, culture and creative industry in our region
- Minor projects – helping community groups get the tools they need to engage the community

Community groups and clubs eligible for the grants could receive up to half of the total project cost if the projected figure is under \$2,000 and one-third of the total cost if it's between \$2,000 and \$10,000.

2021/22 Community Grant Scheme Recipients included:

In addition to the Community Grant Scheme, the Shire of Capel sponsors key community events such

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • Boyanup Bowling Club | • Dalyellup Playgroup |
| • Boyanup Foundation Inc | • Dalyellup Diamonds Teeball/Softball Club |
| • Ironstone Adventure Riding Club | • Milligan Community Learning & Resource Centre |
| • Capel Campdraft | • Swan River Horse Trials |
| • Capel Country Club | • Boyanup Blacksmiths |
| • Capel Horse & Pony Club | • Boyanup Hall Advisory Committee |
| • Capel Men's Shed | • Ironstone Adventure Riding Club |
| • Capel Regional Equestrian Park | • Dalyellup Community Garden |
| • Capel RSL | |

as:

- Capel Bowls Club - Competition Events
- Boyanup Playgroup - Intergenerational Morning Tea
- Capel Horse & Pony Club - Capel CCN's 2022
- Boyanup Lions Club - 2022 Australia Day Breakfast
- Gelorup Community Inc - Gelorup Food Truck Sundowner
- Barefoot Events - Dinner at Dusk Series
- Boyanup Memorial Park Committee - 2022 ANZAC Day Service
- Ironstone Adventure Riding Club - Capel 200 Trail Bike Rally
- Dalyellup Collective - Community Events in Dalyellup

Sponsorships should be actively promoted by the Shire of Capel, with sponsored bodies also required to promote funding provided by the Shire. This will help position the Shire as community focused, empathetic, and collaborative.



Photo Credit: Terri Sharp





Strategy Implementation Process

How does the Shire communicate?

The Shire's spokesperson

- The Shire of Capel President (or on occasion, a delegated authority) is the spokesperson for the Shire. This helps take the Shire from a faceless entity to a responsive, human, initiative-taking community leader.
- When speaking to operational matters for the Shire of Capel, it is recommended that the Shire President delegate spokesperson authority to the CEO.
- The spokesperson should be as honest and upfront as possible in all communications.
- They will be quoted in media releases.
- They will be positioned as the expert in major Shire activities.
 - A technical expert (delegated authority) may be required in cases where more detailed responses are needed, or where it would benefit the community to hear from a registered professional. This may include Project Officers within the Shire.
- The Spokesperson must be familiar with crisis and emergency response communication.
- The Spokesperson must play a role in developing the key messages in order to deliver them well.

Diverse voices and faces

- One of the Shire of Capel's strengths is their diverse and inclusive community. It is important that the Shire of Capel reflects this diversity in their communications - encouraging different voices and faces to feature in news updates and at community events.
- Councillors and staff are encouraged to engage with Shire projects and initiatives they are committed to and become advocates for the Shire through their personal networks.
- While Councillors and staff are unable to make comments on behalf of the Shire (that is the role of the spokesperson only), they can actively share Shire updates through appropriate communication channels and via attendance at community events.
- When highlighting different voices and faces in Shire communications, it is imperative that the same key messages are used to ensure consistency in message. The Shire's position should be understood by Councillors and staff, and solidarity on Council matters is expected and essential.
- Individual views and positions on particular items are important to the democratic process and informed debate. However, once a decision has been made by Council, it is the expectation that Elected Members provide a united view.
- Refer to Addenda 4 – Protocols for Community Requests & Communications for further information

Speak from approved speaking notes

- Have a list of key messages when responding to interviews and attending community events.
- Speak in a conversational tone, support key messages with anecdotes and examples.
- Restate your key messages, bring the conversation back to your key messages.

Create consistency in voice and language

- Be enthusiastic, paint the Shire as an energetic, initiative-taking, and enthusiastic entity. For this to be achieved the spokesperson must similarly be energetic, initiative-taking, and enthusiastic about whatever they are saying.

Review channels vs message type

- Select the right platform for your messages and tailor content to suit.

Media training

- Any individual who may be responsible to communicate with the media, approached by the media or act in such a capacity in the absence of the main spokesperson shall be media trained.



Shire of Capel Communications Policy

As part of the Strategy, it is recommended that the Shire of Capel's current policies be reviewed to allow for diverse faces and voices to be heard. The following is a sample/recommended Policy that the Shire can adopt encompassing all communications.

Purpose

The Shire of Capel Communications Policy details the framework for communication between the Shire and its internal and external stakeholders. The ability to provide information and community engagement opportunities actively and effectively is vital to building and promoting a positive identity and reputation for the Shire. Proactively creating awareness of the services, projects, achievements and other activities of the Shire will present the Shire as a community participant and leader.

To achieve effective communications the Shire must regularly consult with the community, distribute regular and consistent messages and must be open and honest in all matters.

Scope

This policy applies to councillors, employees, contractors, consultants and any other persons including volunteers who undertake activities for the Shire of Capel.

Communications Stakeholders include:

- Ratepayers and residents
- Potential residents of the Shire of Capel
- Shire Councillors
- Employees and volunteers of the Shire
- Visitors to the region
- Investors, developers and individuals with business interests within the Shire
- Customers who seek products or services or information from Council
- Community and government organisations
- Local, regional and national media.

Definitions

Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium between a representative of the Shire and its stakeholders.

Community includes all people who live, work, study or conduct business in, or who visit, use and enjoy the services, facilities and public places of the Shire of Capel.

Consultation is the provision of timely information and engagement by the Shire with its community and stakeholders (internal and external) that provides them the opportunity to respond with any concerns, queries or issues that can be considered or actioned before a final decision is made or implemented.

Via this policy, the Shire aims to ensure its communications methods will:

- Be regular and consistent, with the Shire communicating in a timely manner on projects and activities to all stakeholder.
- Create a positive and professional image for the Shire
- Increase awareness of the Shire's activities, major projects and achievements
- Foster a meaningful community consultation process
- Implement timely, regular and consistent internal communication
- Effectively manage negative messaging
- Effectively manage unexpected crisis/disaster issues or events
- Comply with required legislation and codes of conduct
- Use a variety of methods to communicate and to provide information in formats that accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.

Social Media

The Shire proactively uses social media platforms to communicate information regarding its services, activities/events, achievements, and projects to external stakeholders. Current Shire social media channels include:

- Facebook
 - Shire of Capel
 - Shire of Capel Libraries
 - Shire of Capel Youth Services
- Instagram
 - Shire of Capel
 - Capel Youth
- LinkedIn
 - Shire of Capel

Customer Service

The way the Shire is perceived by Stakeholders is impacted by all communications received from Shire Officials. This includes the way representatives of the Shire answer and respond to phone calls, letters and any electronic communications as well as face to face contact with stakeholders whether that be one on one or at events or community forums.

Any representative of the Shire including Elected Members must ensure correct, effective, efficient and customer orientated responses are created and provided to develop and maintain a positive reputation for Council.

It is recommended that a telephone etiquette/email etiquette be produced internally detailing scripts for messages on hold and voice messaging services.

Events

Shire events shall be planned in accordance with an event toolkit/procedure/policy in order to

ensure all checks and balances are followed when developing an event. (Toolkit to be developed, see Strategy recommendations).

Events play an important role in community life creating a sense of belonging, engagement and are a way to entertain and create social interaction. Events help to instill a sense of place and pride in a locality. Shire events are commonly staged to celebrate important historical dates, recognise community achievements and/or can be developed as a means to promote a specific key message, activity, project or interest.

This avenue allows for the establishment of mutually beneficial partnerships between the Shire and the community which assist to raise the profile and improve the reputation of the Shire.

Such events need to be tracked and measured against success indicators which are established through the implementation of an event toolkit.

Employee Relations/Internal Communications

Elected representatives and employees are the Shire's public relations and communications ambassadors. It is vital that all employees and elected representatives receive timely, relevant, consistent and user-friendly information to ensure that they are adequately informed on the Shire's services, activities/events, achievements, and projects to minimise and instances of misinformation in the community.

Effective internal communication also encourages participation in change management, increases morale in the workplace and develops more effective communication between employees across department and management levels.



Media Relations

The local media, including newspapers, radio, television, and digital media are important channels for sharing Shire information with the community. There are times when regional, state and national media interest, across platforms, is generated or occurs due to external conditions.

The Shire is committed to good media relations which also requires a commitment to good governance, responsiveness, honesty and regular media contact.

Legislation

The Shire is committed to fulfilling the responsibilities as set out in the Local Government Act 1995 and the Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019. All statements by Councillors and Officers are to comply with the Shire of Capel Code of Conduct and are subject to the Local Government





Communication Channels

Digital/Online

- Website
- Social Media – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube
- Email marketing
- Google advertising
- Facebook advertising
- Video Production for example, project updates/project case studies, council decision updates
- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- SMS marketing

Traditional

- Publications – Annual Reports, Strategic Documents
Case Studies - projects (can also be digital/video productions)
Innovations in projects
New project developments
- Forms and policy documents
- Media:
 - Print – South Western Times, Bunbury Mail, Bunbury Herald, The West Australian (7West Media), The Sunday Times (7West Media)
 - Digital - PerthNow, ABC South West
 - TV (local) – ABC, Nine, SBS, GWN7 (7West Media)
 - Radio (local) – ABC South West, Triple M Southwest, Hit FM Southwest, SEN Spirit
 - Community Newsletters - The Capel Courier, The Gelorup – Stratham – Dalyellup Gazette, The Boyanup Post, Peppy Beach Bulletin
- Banners and Billboards
- Signage
- Entry Statements
- Flyers/brochures
- Stationery (Business cards, Letterheads)
- Uniforms





Communications Strategy Recommendations

Recommendations are listed in order of priority.

Key External Communications Strategies

- Development of a new website – the website will be produced to industry best practice standards and provide the Shire with heightened visibility, improved accessibility and meet legislative requirements as per the Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019.
- Creation of a rolling communications plan for all the key legislative requirements, projects and initiatives occurring in the Shire that impact stakeholders internally and externally. This will help ensure the Shire's communications are initiative-taking, consistent and easy to replicate year on year irrespective of changes in staffing.
- Shire run digital newsletter to community members, monthly via Mailchimp, using a new template. This will enable the Shire to control the narrative and correct misinformation. E-newsletters allow the Shire to communicate latest updates, news and information related to activities, projects and events, within the Shire as well as any major external influences that could affect the way of life in the Shire.
- Sponsorship strategy and promotion, to illustrate how active the Shire is in the community and the positive relationships being formed with local community stakeholders.
- The creation of a community engagement checklist, a methodical approach to ensure the community is consulted and informed on major projects (to be progressed as part of the Community Engagement Framework).
- Public Relations/positive community news, being on the front foot with good news stories and sharing these everywhere.
- Create an event toolkit for both Shire organised and externally organised events that will help the Shire ensure consistency in event delivery, strategy and message. The toolkit will also help ensure promotional opportunities for events are leveraged and maximised to help build a positive community image for the Shire.
- Regular attendance at appropriate community events by Elected Members and Shire staff, especially those sponsored by the Shire or with deep importance to the local community.
- Call for Feedback/Have your say on the website to improve community engagement.
- What is happening this month – a concerted focus on promoting community events and positive news updates for the month ahead.
- Active promotion of Capel's key assets to both a local and wider audience – lifestyle, diverse opportunities, strong local economy, tourism.
- Elected member profiles, so community members can relate to and better understand their elected representatives.

Key Internal Communications Strategy

- Communications Policy refinement, to provide staff with guidance on correct process and procedure. The Shire of Capel's Policy 1.1 Media Contact and 1.12 Communications & Social Media should be reviewed and updated.
- Implement a staff awards/recognition program to build respect and recognition for colleagues, reinforcing the Shire's value of 'teamwork.'
- Implement an intranet that provides staff with regular updates on projects and initiatives, with content championed by all areas of the business. An intranet will help the Shire to create a more efficient workplace where Shire staff are able to be more collaborative, (helping to remove silos) and informed.
- Reinforce the Style Guide, to ensure the Shire's brand and reputation is protected. Make brand assets easily accessible for staff and develop required stationery templates for ease of use.
- Training and upskilling staff and Elected Members on how to respond to PR/Media queries, including the procedure on how to forward enquiries to the Shire President.
- Profile staff members and Councillors internally, to build rapport, trust and understanding.

Marketing & Communications Implementation Plan

The below image displays a sample of the Shire of Capel Marketing & Communications Implementation Plan. It is recommended this plan is followed and used as a tool to implement the strategies detailed in this document and that the plan should be regularly reviewed and updated by the Shire's Communications Officer. Three tiers of communications have been included:

1. Legislative requirements – items which must be communicated by law.
2. Program and project indicatives – includes key campaigns that reoccur each year such as bush fires and waste.
3. Opportunistic communications and good news stories – ad-hoc storytelling, sharing the positive community news happening in the Shire of Capel.

Shire of Capel Marketing & Communications Plan

2022																															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Jan	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo
Feb	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th
Mar	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th
Apr	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
May	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu
Jun	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
Jul	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Aug	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We
Sep	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Oct	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo
Nov	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th
Dec	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa

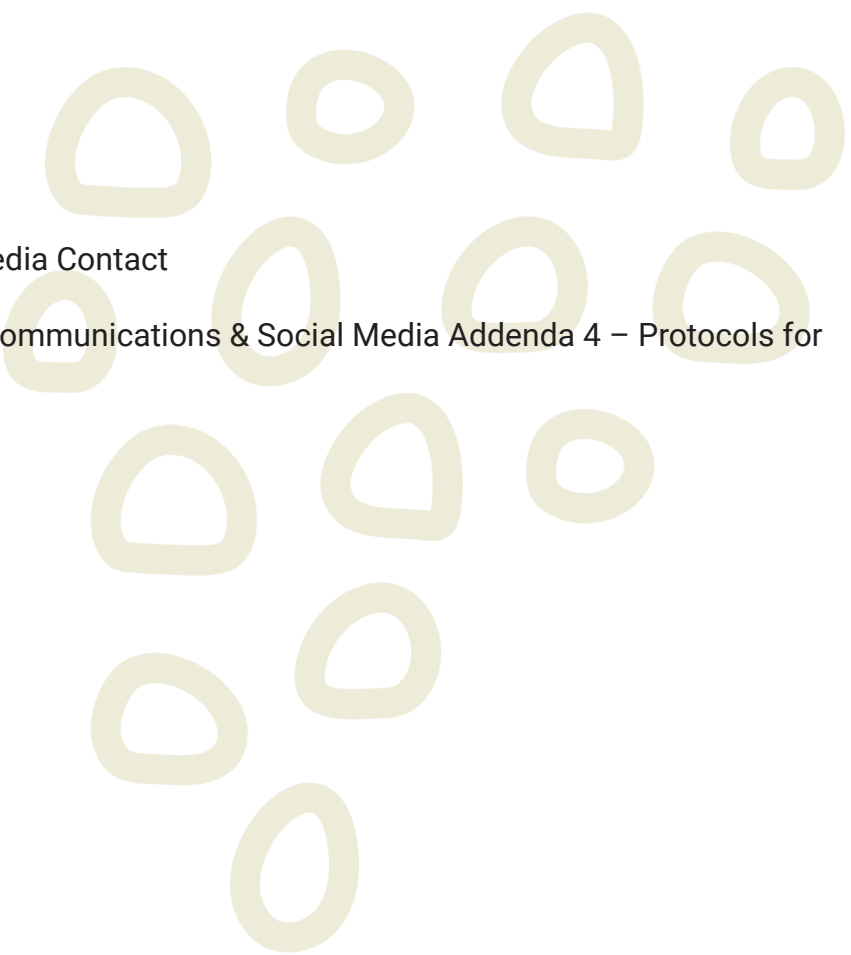


Addenda

Addenda 1 – Shire of Capel Style Guide

Addenda 2 – Shire of Capel Policy 1.1 Media Contact

Addenda 3 – Shire of Capel Policy 1.12 Communications & Social Media Addenda 4 – Protocols for Community Requests & Communications





Adpoted by Council July OCM 2022

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SHIRE *of*
CAPEL



Style manual

Contents

Style manual	1
Contents	2
Brand persona	3
Logo	5
Colour palette	9
Typeface	11
Imagery	15
Editorial style guide	19

Brand persona

Welcome to the Shire of Capel - we're happy you're here.

Our brand manual is at the centre of our design. You can apply it to graphics, photography, copy and more.

This manual should bring us together and encourage consistency across all channels. We've tried to cut through the chaos to create a document for everyday use.

At the core is our brand persona. If the Shire of Capel was a person - how would you describe them? Friendly, informative, approachable and bright.



Bright

We're different from other local governments - and we like to celebrate it.



Friendly

We see ourselves as part of the community - sincerity comes naturally.



Informative

We're reliable, honest and use evidence to explain decisions.



Approachable

We educate our community using supportive language free from jargon.



Section 1 Logo

Variations

People can spot us immediately when you use our logo correctly.

It reflects the industrial and regional foundations and the lifestyle on offer today.



Horizontal
This is our primary logo. Note the horizontal lockup. Use this on all material.



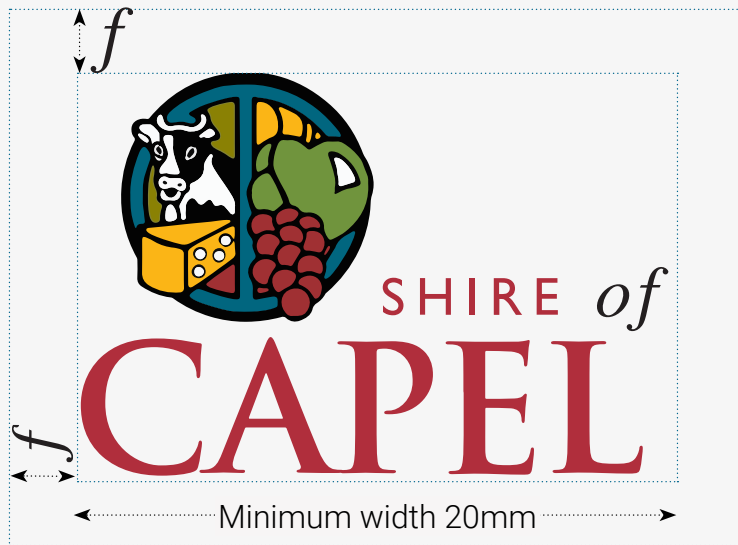
Stacked
When the primary logo doesn't fit your composition, use the stacked lockup. Use this on clothing and badges.



Brandmark
Use the brandmark as a sporting element if it's clear the content is ours. Examples include social media display

Breathing

Our logo should always have space to breathe - we call this the clearance zone. Please don't put stuff in it. Make sure the logo width is 20mm or larger.



Colour

It's important to use the correct logo variations.



Use full colour logo on light backgrounds



Use our single colour dark logo when printing in black and white



Use full colour logo with white text on dark backgrounds



Use single colour light logo when printing on dark backgrounds

Don'ts

Consistency helps us reinforce our brand position across all communication. It's important that our logo is never tampered with or altered.



Use the brand mark without context



Rotate the logo



Stretch or squeeze the logo



Crop the logo



Use a low contrast background



Change logo colours



Change logo font



Section 2

Colour

Colour palette

Our brand colours help us build trust in the community and support brand recognition. The palette includes supporting tints and shades.

Colour usage recommendation (approximate ratio):



<p>Capel teal</p> <p>RGB 0, 102, 142</p> <p>HSV 197, 100, 56</p> <p>CMYK 100, 28, 0, 44</p> <p>LAB 40, -10, -29</p> <p>HEX #00668E</p>	<p>Capel red</p> <p>RGB 176, 46, 60</p> <p>HSV 354, 74, 69</p> <p>CMYK 0, 74, 66, 31</p> <p>LAB 40, 53, 24</p> <p>HEX #B02E3C</p>	<p>Capel green olive</p> <p>RGB 131, 168, 45</p> <p>HSV 78, 73, 66</p> <p>CMYK 22, 0, 73, 34</p> <p>LAB 64, -30, 56</p> <p>HEX #83A82D</p>	<p>Capel olive</p> <p>RGB 138, 129, 4</p> <p>HSV 56, 97, 54</p> <p>CMYK 0, 7, 97, 46</p> <p>LAB 53, -9, 57</p> <p>HEX #8A8104</p>	<p>Capel gold</p> <p>RGB 255, 194, 38</p> <p>HSV 43, 85, 100</p> <p>CMYK 0, 24, 85, 0</p> <p>LAB 82, 9, 78</p> <p>HEX #FFC226</p>
<p>Capel black</p> <p>RGB 24, 27, 37</p> <p>HSV 226, 35, 15</p> <p>CMYK 35, 27, 0, 85</p> <p>LAB 10, 2, -7</p> <p>HEX #181B25</p>	<p>Capel slate</p> <p>RGB 0, 48, 66</p> <p>HSV 196, 100, 26</p> <p>CMYK 100, 27, 0, 74</p> <p>LAB 18, -7, -16</p> <p>HEX #003042</p>	<p>Capel grey</p> <p>RGB 245, 248, 251</p> <p>HSV 210, 2, 98</p> <p>CMYK 2, 1, 0, 2</p> <p>LAB 97, 0, -2</p> <p>HEX #F5F8FB</p>	<p>Capel white</p> <p>RGB 252, 252, 252</p> <p>HSV 0, 0, 99</p> <p>CMYK 0, 0, 0, 1</p> <p>LAB 99, 0, 0</p> <p>HEX #FCFCFC</p>	



Section 3

Typeface

Primary

Our primary typeface is Roboto - use it on all publications.

Roboto has a dual nature. It has a mechanical skeleton and geometric style. At the same time, the font features friendly and open curves.

When you use Roboto the letters settle into their natural width making for a more natural reading rhythm.

Roboto light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

Roboto regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

Roboto bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

Secondary

Arial narrow

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

Arial regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

Arial bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#\$%&*!?

You can use Arial if Roboto is not available.

Similar to Roboto, Arial is industrial with soft curves.

Arial is an extremely versatile typeface that can be used for text setting in reports, presentations, and display use in newspapers, advertising and promotions.

Typeface sample

You might have noticed this typeface on services like YouTube or Google Maps.

The typeface is clean, modern and direct. It will help you clearly convey a message to the end user.

You can use the typeface in a variety of ways. There are several options in the family - from light to black.

Roboto is a
sans-serif font.
It's minimal,
clean and
direct.



Section 4

Imagery

People

Use a balance of people-focussed and nature-based photography. Our brand images should be natural and fit with our brand identity using colours, tone, props, sets and more.



Place and space based





Section 5

Editorial

Style Guide

Contents

Content 101

Accessibility and inclusion

Inclusive language	21
Gender, sex and sexuality	21
Cultural and linguistic diversity	21
Aboriginal and Torres Strait	22
Islander Peoples	
Disability and accessibility	22
Digital accessibility	22
Handy links	22

Writing style

Know your audience	23
Plain English	23
Active voice	23
Personal pronouns	23
Discrimination free	23
Gender and device neutral	24
Device neutral	24
Everyday language	24
Jargon	24
Table of simple terms	25

Structure and formatting

Bold	26
Italics	26
Headings and subheadings	26
Lists	26
Paragraphs	27

Underline	27
-----------	----

Tone

Our brand	28
Everyday tone	28
Community tone	28
Official tone	28

Grammar and punctuation

Apostrophes	30
Ampersands (&)	30
At symbol (@)	31
Brackets (parentheses)	31
Capitalisation	31
Commas	31
Contractions	32
Dashes	32
Ellipsis (...)	33
Exclamation marks	33
Full Stops	33
Hyphens	33
He, she, they	34
-ings (Gerunds)	34
Plurals	34
Quotations	34

Terms and spelling

Australian English	35
Abbreviations	35
Acronyms and initialisms	35
Addresses	35

Brand names	36
Council	36
Digital terms	36
Initials (people)	37
Job titles and departments	37
Old fashioned words	37
That v which	37
Handy cheat sheet	38

Dates, numbers and times

Numbers	39
Age	39
Measurements	40
Money	40
Percentages	40
Phone numbers	40
Dates	41
Times	41
Date periods	41
Temperature	41

Microcopy

Messages	42
Labels	42
Buttons	42
Form labels	42
Help text or tooltips	42
Instructions	43
Links	43
Email addresses	43
PDFs	44

Web addresses	44
---------------	----

Documents and content types

Making Documents Accessible	45
Exporting PDF from Word	45
PDFs	45
Microsoft Word	46
Rich text format (RTF)	46
Excel	46
PowerPoint	46
EPUB	47
Fact sheets	47
FAQs	47
Forms	47
Surveys and questionnaires	48
Images	48
Video	48
Tables	48

About the editorial style guide

The way you approach writing impacts the usability and credibility of your information.

This style manual will show you how to write user-centred and accessible content for all content channels – from emails and social media to traditional publications.

You'll learn how to create content that is easy for everyone to understand, regardless of their ability, location and experience.

Content 101

Here are seven tips to ensure you ensure your content is user-centric.

1. Know your audience

Writing should target a specific audience. You should:

- consider who your audience is and what they want to know
- create content with purpose
- only include essential information.

2. Keep it simple

Use plain English and clear wording to improve readability and comprehension.

Don't use jargon or terms that a user may not understand. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- one idea per paragraph
- maximum of around 20 words per sentence
- avoid acronyms where possible

- use simple and short words– for example, 'use' not 'utilise'.

3. Get to the point

You have one sentence to capture your audience. A user will scan the first sentence and subheadings to decide if they'll read on. Make sure you:

- summarise the content in one short sentence
- avoid background and repeated information
- add extra details at the end if you must
- link to other pages with relevant information.

4. Make it scannable

Break text up into readable chunks. Subheadings and bulleted lists will help:

- explain the key points – you don't need to cover everything
- only include important information
- use the shortest word, phrase or sentence possible
- limit paragraphs to two or three sentences
- use short to medium size sentences.

Remember, less is more.

5. Make it clear

Lists and subheadings will help users absorb detail. Headings should be clear and follow a logical hierarchy.

- use correct heading levels in documents
- start with a heading level 1 (H1)
- use heading level 2 (H2) after introductory text followed by H3, H4 and so on - this should be built into your document heading settings.

Bulleted lists will break up a page and help your audience scan information. Use a maximum of 5 to 7 list items.

6. Use an active voice

Active voice helps your audience engage with your content. It explains who needs to do what and when - try for 80%.

Active We've received your application.

Passive Your application has been received

7. Cut down on capital letters

Use capitals sparingly and appropriately. Use them for proper nouns, official titles, organisations, programs and publications.

Use sentence case for headings. The first letter is capital followed by lower case, except for proper nouns.

Write this Council report

Not this Council report

Use sentence case for abbreviated or generic titles and job titles when not referring to a person.

Accessibility and inclusion

Our shire is culturally diverse - so you should write for people from all backgrounds. You must meet accessibility guidelines and design content for equal access.

Inclusive language

Inclusive language is respectful, accurate and relevant to all.

Avoid discriminatory language that treats some people differently from others. Always focus on the person rather than the demographic or group.

Write this	Not this
Worker	Workman
Business manager	businessman/woman
Chairperson	chairman/woman
People with disability	People with a disability, disabled or handicapped people
People with intellectual disability	Intellectually disabled
People who are deaf or have a hearing impairment	Unable to hear
People who are blind or have a vision impairment	not unable to see

Write this	Not this
Older people or seniors	not pensioners, old-age pensioners or the aged
First Nations Peoples or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (note the plural)	Not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), Aborigines or Aboriginals

Remember, if in doubt – just ask.

Gender, sex and sexuality

Avoid gendered pronouns – like he or she. Use ‘they’ instead.

Write this	Not this
Them, their, their’s, they’re, police officer, chair	him, her, his, hers, he, she, policeman, policewoman chairman, chairwoman

Keep content gender neutral – this way it’s relevant to everyone.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

Your content should be culturally sensitive and understood by someone who has English as a second language.

Generally, you shouldn’t need to reference someone’s cultural background or faith. If you need to speak about a person’s cultural background, try to be as specific as possible.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia is many different and distinct groups, each with its own culture, customs, language and law.

An inclusive collective term for Indigenous Australians is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. Always write the entirety - never abbreviate (e.g. 'ATSI').

If you are speaking to or of an individual, it is respectful to be as specific as possible about their cultural identity and or language group.

Always ask for guidance and consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Shire of Capel

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians - the Wardandi people. Alternate spelling includes Wadandi.

The Shire of Capel sits over two regions - the Gnaala Karla Booja region and South West Boojarah group.

- **Gnaala Karla Booja** | noongar.org.au/gkb
- **South West Boojarah** | noongar.org.au/swb

Contact South West Land and Sea Council for more information.

Disability and accessibility

People can experience ongoing, temporary or situational barriers to access information.

Use person-centred language and avoid language that frames

disability as a limitation.

Here are some common examples:

- suffers from - live with or has
- disabled toilets – accessible toilet (avoid ambulant)
- Make sure you:
 - focus on the person, not the disability
 - avoid language that implies people with disabilities are victims
 - consider if referring to a person's disability is relevant (in most cases, it isn't).

Digital accessibility

Inclusive communication is not just about language – it's how we present information and ensure access.

You should make text is a reasonable size and there is a high contrast between text and background.

Vision Australia has developed a free accessibility toolbar to help you create accessible documents.

Handy links

Here are some handy links to help:

- [Australian Network on Disability](#)
- [Diversity Council Australia](#)
- [People with Disability Australia](#)
- [South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council](#)
- [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#)
- [Vision Australia](#)

Writing style

This section provides guidance on our written style.

Know your audience

Your writing will be most effective if you understand your target audience. For multiple audiences, make your writing is easy to read and accessible to everyone.

Plain English

Local government content needs to communicate meaning in a way that most people understand. Here are some tips:

- keep it conversational - but not too casual
- avoid formal or technical words
- use simple and direct language
- avoid jargon – users should understand the content the first time they read it
- use active voice
- reduce punctuation - use several short sentences.

Active voice

Use an active voice rather than the passive voice. This explains how the subject of the sentence acts as the verb.

Write this

We've received your application.

The council proposed new regulations.

You must include the following information in your application.

Not this

Your application has been received.

New regulations were proposed by the council.

The following information must be included in your application.

Use passive voice when the law is the actor - when one action follows another as a matter of law.

Personal pronouns

Make your content approachable - use personal pronouns if it suits the tone.

Use first-person plural ('we' and 'our') and second-person singular ('you').

Write this

Call us if you're having trouble.

Not this

Applicants experiencing difficulties should call the Shire of Capel.

Discrimination free

Use language free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudice, stereotypes or discriminatory views.

Only talk about someone's characteristics if it directly relates to the content.

Carefully consider language about gender, sexual orientation, marital status, language, culture, race, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status or personal appearance.

Gender neutral

Keep content gender neutral – this way, it's relevant to everyone.

Write this Them, their, their's, they're, police officer, chair

Not this him, her, his, hers, he, she, policeman, policewoman
chairman, chairwoman

Device neutral

People access content from different devices. Your content should apply to all devices. Use verbs that apply to all devices.

Write this Select the 'next' button.

Not this Click the 'next' button

The 'click' action only applies to desktop users

Everyday language

Use words that all users recognise. This makes content engaging.

Write this Send your submission to Acting CEO at info@capel.wa.gov.au or PO Box 369, Capel WA 6271

Not this Submissions can be lodged in writing to the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Capel, PO Box 369, Capel WA 6271 or by email to info@capel.wa.gov.au

If you're not sure, read the sentence out loud. If you would phrase it that way in a conversation – then you've got it right.

Jargon

Don't use jargon or idioms.

Write this Room capacity is limited to 20 people to comply with COVID-19 restrictions.

Not this Due to current COVID19 restrictions, members of the public gallery will be limited to a maximum of 20 persons.

'Members of the public gallery' is local government jargon.

Table of simple terms

Swap this	For this
acquire	buy, get
additional	more, extra
adequate number of	enough
address the issue	solve the problem, answer the question
advising in relation to	advising on, advising about
amongst	among
a number of	some, many, few or the exact amount
approximately	about
as a consequence of	because
ascertain	find out
assist	help, support, guide
at a later date	later, soon (or the exact timeframe)
at this point in time	now
attempt (verb)	try
cease	stop, end
cognisant of	aware of, know
collaborate with	work with
commence	start, begin
concerning	about
consequently	so
create a dialogue	speak, discuss, talk

Swap this	For this
deliver, drive	say what you're actually doing
desire	want
despite the fact that	although (or break the sentence up)
disburse	pay
discontinue	stop, end
dispatch	send
due to the fact that	because
exit (verb)	leave
give consideration to	consider
impact, impact on (verb)	affect
implement	apply, install, do, start
in order to	to
in receipt of	get, have, receive
in relation to, regards to, respect of	about, on
in the event that	if, when
inquire	ask
is unable to	can't, cannot
it is requested that you declare	declare
leverage	use, build on
make an application	apply

Swap this	For this
make a complaint	complain
manner	way
methodology	method
notwithstanding	even though, though, even if, despite
obtain	get, have
presently	now
prior to	before
primary	main
provide a response to	respond to
provide assistance with	help, support
pursuant to	under
purchase	buy
reach or make a decision	decide
require	need, must
subsequently	after
table (verb)	address, discuss, release
thereafter	then, afterwards
until such time as	until
upon	on
utilise	use
whilst	while

Structure and formatting

Bold

Avoid bold text. It's hard to read.

Italics

Don't use italics. For acts and publications use title case and link to the source if possible.

Write this Local Government Act 1995

Not this *Local Government Act 1995*

Headings and subheadings

The user should be able to get an understanding of the content by scanning the headings.

Headings are the first words users read to check the relevance of content before they commit to reading it.

Headings should be short and succinct enough to stand alone when read out of context.

Use only 1 top-level (H1) heading. See typeface for more information.

Document titles

Titles should be short and concise. Write a clear title and lead summary that tells the user about the page.

Lists

Lists are handy and break content into readable chunks. You can use:

- bulleted lists to list items or points
- numbered lists when the sequence is important
- nested lists for extra information.

Use a colon (not a full stop) if there is a lead-in phrase.

Bulleted list

Bulleted list items can be complete sentences or fragments.

When the list items are complete sentences, we capitalise the first word and end each item with a full stop.

When the list items are fragments, we:

- start with a lead-in phrase that is common to all the list items
- start each item with a lowercase letter
- check that each item makes a full sentence when read with the lead-in phrase
- don't use a comma or semicolon after each list item
- don't use 'and' after the second-to-last item
- use a full stop on the last list item.

If there's a choice between 2 items, follow the first fragment with ', or'

We'll need to see some ID. We'll accept:

- Example**
- your driver's licence, or
 - your birth certificate.

If there are more than 2 items:

Let us know if any of the following apply:

Example

- you've changed your address within the last 14 days
- you no longer live in the region
- your contact details have changed.

Never use a semicolon or comma at the end of a fragment.

We need the following identification to process your application:

Example

- driver's licence;
- passport;
- birth certificate.

Numbered lists

Use numbered lists for a stepped process. Start each sentence with a lower case and close the final item with a full stop.

How to apply:

Example

1. check if you're eligible
2. visit our website
3. complete the online application.

Nested lists

Use nested lists to clearly describe an item within an item or step.

Use a bulleted list within a bulleted list, or a bulleted list within a numbered list.

Don't use a numbered list within a bulleted list.

Paragraphs

Use short, simple paragraphs. Limit paragraphs to 2 or 3 sentences containing 1 idea. Or break text up into bullet point lists.

Allow for lots of white space.

Underline

Don't underline text. It makes it look like a link.

Tone

The tone you use will change depending on who you're talking to and what channel you're using.

About our tone

Tone is not what you say, but how you say it. Using the appropriate tone helps to:

- communicate respectfully and clearly
- influence your audience
- build trust with your community
- reinforce our brand.

Our brand

A brand persona will help you clearly communicate.

By applying our brand persona, you will establish clear and consistent communication across all channels. Our brand persona is:

- Approachable - educate our community using supportive language free from jargon.
- Informative - reliable, honest and use evidence to explain decisions.
- Friendly - part of the community - sincerity comes naturally.
- Bright - different from other local governments - and we like to celebrate it.

Everyday tone

Clear, simple, informative and inclusive - used for most online

communications, content and publications.

Our everyday tone connects us with our audience by being supportive and knowledgeable.

Sentences should be short and sharp - but still flow. Use personal pronouns, first-person plural ('we' and 'our') and second-person singular ('you').

Use active voice and contractions where appropriate and avoid acronyms, buzzwords and clichés.

Always apply correct grammar and punctuation.

Community tone

Use the community tone for informal communications with a large audience - like social media, newsletters and blogs.

Language should be clear and inclusive to establish an emotional connection that inspires engagement.

Use short, sharp sentences and one-liners to create an impact.

Uses personal pronouns, active voice and contractions - like you're instead of you are.

Use colloquial expressions when appropriate and avoid jargon, buzzwords and clichés.

Apply correct grammar and use microcopy where applicable.

Official tone

Our official tone provides the essential details using simple, straightforward language.

Language should be authoritative without being condescending and evidence-based.

Information should be factual rather than emotional with one idea or concept per sentence.

Use a combination of first-person plural ('we' and 'our') and second-person singular ('you') for a call to action if the audience is clear.

Use third-person ('the department', 'elected members', 'staff') in policies.

Use passive voice sparingly for legal information or clarity.

Avoid using contractions, colloquial expressions, acronyms, buzzwords or clichés.

Grammar and punctuation

Grammar and punctuation are the building blocks for content. Learn how to achieve a consistent tone.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes can be tricky. They're used to show possession or form a contraction

Contractions

Use apostrophes in contractions.

Possession

Use apostrophes to show possession.

Write this The director's desk is next to the CEO's office.

Not this The directors desk is next to the CEOs office.

When something belongs to more than one person or thing and the word ends in 's'.

Write this We're pleased with the group's feedback. (the feedback of the group).

Not this We're pleased with the groups feedback.

Use 's' where a person's name ends in 's' to show possession.

Write this That is Chris' computer.

Not this That is Chris's computer

Plurals

Don't use apostrophes in plural abbreviations or decades.

Write this T&Cs apply
1990s

Not this T's & C's apply
990's.

Punctuation

An apostrophe is part of the word it belongs to, so it should not be separated from the word by full stops (periods), commas, question marks, or any other punctuation mark.

Time

Apostrophes are used in time expressions.

Write this one week's notice
three years' work
30 days' credit.

Ampersands (&)

Don't use an ampersand in a sentence unless it is part of an organisation's name.

At symbol (@)

Only use '@' in email addresses and social media handles.

Brackets (parentheses)

Use rounded brackets in a sentence to add comments and definitions. Don't use brackets inside brackets.

Punctuation

Long sentences – punctuation goes on the outside (like this).

Whole sentence (within the brackets) – punctuation goes on the inside. (Like this.)

If you're not sure, get rid of them. If there's stray punctuation, you've got it wrong.

Curly brackets

Don't use them.

Square brackets

Avoid using them. Use them to interrupt a quotation to clarify something.

Write this George is a [client] consultant.

Capitalisation

See spelling and terms for more information. Keep capitals to a minimum. Use them for proper nouns acronyms and initialisms.

Use sentence case for most things (capitalise the first word).

Headings and titles

Use sentence case – capitalise the first word and proper nouns.

Government departments

Use capitals when referring to a specific government.

Write this Shire of Capel
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)

Not this shire of capel
department of local government, sport and cultural industries

Use lowercase in generic instances

Write this the shire
the department

Not this the Shire
the Department

Commas

Use commas sparingly. If there are too many in a sentence, make it shorter or consider a bulleted list.

Oxford commas

The Oxford (or serial) comma is the final comma in a list of things.

Don't use them.

Write this

The shire uses four channels to share information - newspapers, website, social media and posters.

Not this

The shire uses four channels to share information - newspapers, website, social media, and posters.

Splice

You can use a comma to splice two independent clauses. Try to use a semicolon, dash or conjunction instead.

Colons

Use colons to introduce an element that illustrates or amplifies the information that preceded the colon.

Lists

We require the following identification to process your application:

Example

- driver's licence
- passport
- birth certificate.

Clarification

Example

We have two options here: stay and fight, or run like the wind.

Separating independent clauses

A colon can be used to separate two independent clauses when:

The second clause is directly related to the first cause

Emphasis is on the second clause.

Example

A jelly fish is not a fish: it's an invertebrate

Contractions

Use contractions for informal copy – it'll help you connect with your audience. Please make sure the context is appropriate – don't overuse them in publications and formal content.

Common contractions

- they're is short for 'they are'
- there's means 'there is'
- who's means 'who is' or 'who has'
- you're is short for 'you are'
- it's is short for 'it is' or 'it has'

The only time 'it's' needs an apostrophe is when you mean 'it is' or 'it has'.

Don't use complex or confusing contractions. Avoid negative contractions like can't and don't.

Dashes

Em dash

Em dashes are used to set off parenthetical (related) information. You can use an em dash instead of brackets. This puts the focus on

the information between the em dashes.

Use up to 2 in a sentence. Be careful the sentence does not become too long.

En dash

En dash are often used to indicate ranges. Don't use en dashes (–) use 'to' instead.

Write this We're open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

Not this Not this, We're open Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm

Ellipsis (...)

If an ellipsis is at the end of a sentence don't include a full stop.

Exclamation marks

Don't use them. They make you sound like you're shouting! Or you're really angry!!!

Full Stops

Don't use full stops after an email address at the end of a sentence.

Write this Thanks for your enquiry. Please forward it to info@capel.wa.gov.au

Not this Thanks for your enquiry. Please forward it to info@capel.wa.gov.au.

Use a full stop for other links that end sentences. The link text should form part of the sentence.

Write this Human resources manage the [new employee form](#).

Not this Human resources manage the [new employee form](#)

Don't use full stops for, contractions (Mr, Dr or Mrs), abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms.

Hyphens

You should avoid hyphens where possible. If you're in doubt, take it out.

Use hyphens when two or more words form an adjective.

Example A first-class experience.

Don't use a hyphen if a word ends in-ly

Write this highly intelligent

Not this highly-intelligent

Hyphens can change the meaning of a verb.

Example She re-covered the sofa – she put a new cover on the sofa.

She recovered the sofa – from where?

Example

A man-eating tiger – a tiger that eats humans.
A man eating tiger – a man who's eating tiger meat.

Don't hyphenate online, login, sign in or other well know words.

Write this

Email, hyperlink, live stream, log in, online and sign in

Not this

E-mail, hyper-link, live-stream, log-in, on-line and sign-in

He, she, they

Use 'they' if you're not sure of a pronoun.

-ings (Gerunds)

Avoid using gerunds (-ings) where possible. Your writing should be concise and to the point.

Write this

We'll contact you by email.

Not this

We'll contact you using email.

Plurals

Use brackets 's' to refer to something that could be either singular or plural. Rephrase if possible.

Example

Email your completed document(s) to info@capel.wa.gov.au

Quotations

Use single quotation marks, not double quotation marks.

Punctuation

When a quote is part of a longer sentence, the full stop (or any other punctuation) goes on the outside.

Terms and spelling

Australian English

You should always use Australian English.

Words ending with 'ise' or '-yse' '-our' '-re'

Write this organise, analyse, colour, favourite, centre, litre

Not this organize, analyze, color, favorite, center, liter

There are some exceptions. Refer to the Macquarie dictionary.

Abbreviations

Don't use Latin abbreviations eg, ie, etc (et cetera) and nb.

Only use abbreviations if the abbreviation is the clearer and more common form.

Honours and awards

Write this PhD, MBA

Not this Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Business Administration

Acronyms and initialisms

Acronyms are terms that are comprised of initial letters that can be pronounced as a word.

Example QANTAS, ANZAC, TAFE and EFTPOS

Initialisms are terms comprised of initial letters that are pronounced individually.

Example ABC, GST and FAQ

Only use an acronym or initialism when:

- you need to refer to a term more than once
- it will make content easier to understand

Writing an acronym or initialism

Write out the word or phrase on first mention, followed by the shortened form in brackets. Use the shortened form for following mentions.

Write this The complaint was reviewed by the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT).

Not this The complaint was reviewed by SAT.

Don't spell out well known acronyms or initialisms.

Example Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Addresses

Addresses should be stacked.

Don't use punctuation at the end of each line.

Don't abbreviate street types.

Write this	Shire of Capel 31 Forrest Road Capel WA 6271
Not this	Shire of Capel, 31 Forrest Rd, Capel, WA, 627

Brand names

Brand names must always be spelt correctly. Make sure you write the name the way they do. For example MINI, or Band-Aid.

Write this	Shire of Capel
Not this	Capel Shire, shire of capel

Council

Use councillor or council member for singular, councillor's as a group and the council as a whole.

Digital terms

Digital terms are always changing – here's what you should use...

Write this	Not this
Email	E-mail E Mail

Write this	Not this
e-learning	E-Learning online learning
HTML	html
hyperlink	hyper link hyper-link
Internet	The internet
Intranet	The intranet
live stream	live-stream livestream
Log in	Log-in login
Online	On-line
PDF	pdf or personal document file
Sign in	Signin Sign-in
text message	SMS
URL	weblink url
web	the web, World Wide Web
webcam	web-cam web cam

Write this	Not this
web page	internet page, webpage, page on website
website	web site
Wi-Fi or wireless internet	wifi, WiFi or Wi-fi
YouTube	YouTube

Initials (people)

Don't use periods between initials

Write this	Joe G Bloggs or JG Bloggs
Not this	J.G. Bloggs.

Job titles and departments

Job titles are nouns – but they don't need to be capitalised.

Write this	Get in touch with the manager of human resources.
Not this	Get in touch with the Manager or Human Resources.

Capitalise job titles when associated with a specific name.

Write this	Robert Stewart is the Acting Chief Executive Officer
Not this	Robert Stewart is the acting chief executive officer

Legislation and acts

Use title case for legislation and acts (do not use italics).

Write this	We operate under the Local Government Act 1995.
Not this	We operate under the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> .

Old fashioned words

There's no need for old-fashioned words. Change these dated words for their modern alternatives:

- whilst becomes while
- upon becomes on
- thus/therefore becomes so.

That v which

'That' defines. 'Which' gives extra information, often in a clause with commas round it.

As a rule of thumb, if you've got commas in a sentence, go with 'which'.

Handy cheat sheet

Word	Handy notes
adviser	not advisor
acknowledgement	not acknowledgment
any more	always two words
anytime	anytime - Jo said the meeting can be scheduled anytime
any time	any time is an adjective to modify a noun – Jo won't have any time until Thursday.
biannual	means twice a year
biennial	once every two years
dependent or dependant	a dependant is someone who's dependent on someone else
effect or affect	'Effect' is a generally a noun. 'Affect' is a verb Most of the time you use affect as a verb and effect as a noun
email	one word with no hyphen
every day	two words except when it's an adjective
focusing and focused	not focussing or focussed
has and have	Have is for first person singular (I, we), second person singular (you) and third person plural (they). Has is for third person singular - he, she it.
in to or into	into tells us about movement and usually answers the question 'Where?' the 'to' of in to is short for 'in order to', so we leave a space.

Word	Handy notes
judgement	not judgment - except in legal terms: a judge makes a judgment.
learnt or learned	These days they're actually pretty interchangeable. Learnt is British – so use that.
licence	licence is the noun, license is the verb
moneys	not monies
okay	never OK or O.K.
online	one word, no hyphen
PowerPoint	one word, capital P in the middle
practice	practice is the noun, practise is the verb
Program	not programme
stationary	means standing still
Stationery	is pens and pencils
straight away	not straightaway
web page	two words
website	one word

Dates, numbers and times

Numbers

Use numerals instead of words for numbers, except at the beginning of a sentence or in a formal document.

Commas

Add a comma between the third and fourth digit from the right, for numbers 10,000 and above.

Approximates

For approximate numbers over 999,999 use the word million/billion instead of digits.

Span

Use 'to' for a span of numbers.

Ordinals

For ordinal numbers spell out 'first' to 'ninth'. Higher ordinals use numerals

Write this	Not this
1 day	One day
5 to 200 customers	5 - 200 customers
5000 to 10,000 homes	5000 to 10000 homes
3 million citizens	3m citizens

Write this

Not this

First, second, third

1st 2nd 3rd

10th, 21st (not for dates)

Tenth, twenty-first

Abbreviate thousand, million, billion and trillion online, in headings, tables and graphics.

Example

1k (one thousand)

2m (2 million)

3bn (3 billion)

Age

Use numerals to write an age. Use 'to' for a span of ages. Use hyphens when the phrase describes the subject.

Write this

Not this

You must be over 16 to participate

You must be over sixteen to participate

For youth aged 10 to 17

For youth aged 10 - 17

On your 21st birthday

On your twenty-first birthday

The 15-year-old boy

The 15 year old boy

Measurements

Make sure there's no space between the number and measure - so it should be 10kg not 10 kg.

Always use numerals.

Never spell a weight measurement.

Example

6cm
6kg6kj
6km/h – not 6kph
6kW

Abbreviate measures in headings, tables and graphics, with or without a number.

Money

Only use decimal places when cents are specified.

Spell out cents, millions and billions and leave a space after the numeral.

Use a comma in dollar amounts \$10,000 and above.

Write this	Not this
Hire fee is \$20	Hire fee is \$20.00
\$10 million	\$10,000,000
\$20,000.42	\$20000.42

Percentages

Use the % symbol

Write this

30% of shire residents have English as a second language.

Not this

30 percent of shire residents have English as a second language.

Phone numbers

Link phone numbers where possible. Only include the area code if the content is for interstate people.

Ten-digit numbers should have a space after the first four digits, then the second three.

Tell the user to 'call' rather than 'phone'.

Write this

Call us on 0412 345 678
9727 0222 (local)
(08) 9727 0222 (interstate)
+61 8 9727 0222 (if calling from overseas)
Call Triple Zero (000) if this is an emergency.

Not this

Call us on 0412345678
Phone us on (08)9727022
Phone 000 if this is an emergency

Dates

Write dates in order of day (numeral), month, year with no punctuation.

Write this 3 March 2021

Not this 3rd March 2021 or Third of March 2021

Use 'to' for a span of date.

Example Monday to Friday, 16 August to 18 September 2021

Use a hyphen with 'mid' prefix.

Example mid-August

Use a 3-letter month abbreviation if there's limited space.

Example 2 Jun 2021

Times

Use the 12-hour clock with a full stop, not a colon. Don't include minutes with whole hour time.

Use figures and 'am' and 'pm' (without full stops). No space between the number and the letters.

Write noon and midnight instead of 12pm or 12am to avoid confusion.

Write this

9.30am

Not this

9.30 a.m or 9.30 AM

5pm

5 PM 5.00pm

Use 'to' in a time span

Write this The survey will take 10 to 15 minutes

Not this The survey will take 10 - 15 minutes

Date periods

If you're talking about a decade, don't put an apostrophe in it (1960s). Use numbers for date periods.

Write this 21st Century

Not this Twenty first century.

Temperature

For temperatures use °C not the written 'degrees Celsius'

Write this The high pressure system will bring temperatures of 40°C

Not this The high pressure system will bring temperatures of 40 degrees.

Microcopy

Microcopy is short, contextual text that guides users throughout a digital product.

This includes messages, button labels, field labels, and help text.

Microcopy tells users what to do and explains anything that could be confusing.

Messages

Types of messages could include important information, warning and errors, field validation, success or loading information.

These messages should be polite, logical and easy to understand. The tone should be friend and informal.

Guidelines for writing messages:

- Don't use redundant words or words that add no value to the message.
- Don't over-use 'please'. Aim to be direct and concise.
- Use contractions to sound more conversational.
- Avoid passive voice. Passive voice can sound robotic.
- Take responsibility when something goes wrong. 'We couldn't...' rather than 'You failed...'

Error messages should tell users what's wrong and how to fix it (if appropriate).

Write this We need to verify your information.

Not this The shire of capel needs to verify your information.
You need to verify your information.

Labels

Use clear labels on buttons and forms.

Labels should be short and concise without compromising clarity.

Use sentence case for labels.

Buttons

Button labels should explain what will happen next. The text should not wrap over more than one line.

Write this Tell me more, read more, find out more, sign me up

Not this Click here

Form labels

Form labels define what information a user needs to provide, or what they need to select, for radio buttons or check boxes.

Be brief and specific.

Write this [First name] [Last name]

Not this Please enter your name
My name is

Help text or tooltips

Help text must be informative and useful. It should help the user reduce the number of errors.

Make sure you don't:

add help text where something is obvious.

repeat what is already on the screen.

Use help text if data must be entered in a specific format.

Example Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY)

Instructions

Instruction text tells a user to perform an action. The text explains what the user should do next.

Users don't want to read long instructions on how to complete a single task.

Example Check your details are correct before you submit your application.

Links

Make the destination of the link clear. Use natural linking.

Think about the user and their context when reading the information.

Don't use meaningless terms such as 'click here', 'read more' or 'useful links'.

Don't make the link text too long. Only link the keywords.

[Renew dog registration.](#)

Write this

Your dog's registration will expire on 31 October 2021

You can [renew the registration online.](#)

[Click here](#) to renew your dog's registration.

Not this

Your dog's registration will expire on 31 October 2021, [visit capel.wa.gov.au to renew the registration.](#)

Place links carefully

Add links wherever they are most useful to the user. Embed links in paragraphs to help the user scan for the information they need.

Grouping links together at the bottom of a page can disrupt readability too. Users may skip the text and just read the links.

Calls to action (CTAs)

Make CTAs accurate and prominent. Use keywords the user will understand that accurately describe the action.

Email addresses

Use the email address as the link and hyperlink all email addresses.

Use mailto: prefix in the URL but not in the link text.

Don't add a full stop if the email address is at the end of a sentence.

Write this [Email us at info@capel.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@capel.wa.gov.au)

Not this [Email us at info@capel.wa.gov.au.](mailto:info@capel.wa.gov.au)

PDFs

Use the exact name of the document as the text link, including capitalisation.

Add document type and size at the end in brackets.

Hyperlink the whole text.

Use a bulleted list if there's multiple files.

Write this [Event application \(PDF XYKB\)](#)

Not this Event application - [Download now](#)

[Download the event application](#)

Web addresses

Make sure there's no 'http://' or 'www' at the start of a web address.

Write this capel.wa.gov.au

Not this www.capel.wa.gov.au

https://www.capel.wa.gov.au

Documents and content types

Making Documents Accessible

Vision Australia has created an excellent Document Accessibility Toolbar (DAT) for Microsoft Word that makes creating accessible PDFs easy.

Use headings

HTML - add heading tags, e.g. <h1> - <h6>.

Word - use styles, e.g. Heading 1, Heading 2, Normal.

Use lists

HTML - add bulleted and numbered lists, e.g. , , .

Word - add bullets and numbering.

Present information in a linear format

HTML – use <div> tags and CSS to position elements on the page.

Word – use columns.

Table headings

Use table headings. In HTML this means adding <th> tags.

Alt text

Provide alt text for all images, tables and decorative content. If the image is purely decorative use "".

Colour contrast

Make sure the contrast is level AA compliant.

WCAG 2.0 level AA requires a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for

normal text and 3:1 for large text.

WCAG 2.1 requires a contrast ratio of at least 3:1 for graphics and user interface components (such as form input borders).

WCAG Level AAA requires a contrast ratio of at least 7:1 for normal text and 4.5:1 for large text.

Exporting PDF from Word

Here's how to export accessible documents from word:

Make sure you've used the correct headings throughout the word document:

1. select file - save as - then select PDF.
2. select more options - then select options
3. select create bookmarks using headings
4. update document meta including author, description and title
5. save document.

PDFs

Only publish a PDF if there is a strong user need.

PDFs are not accessible to users on mobile devices.

If a PDF is required try to also publish in HTML. Publish the non-HTML format as a secondary source of the information.

Sometimes it may not be appropriate to publish in HTML, for example some types of specialist reports.

If you don't publish an HTML version, be sure to publish an HTML summary on a landing page – and provide contact details for users who are unable to access the PDF.

When creating PDFs make sure you::

- create a logical structure with chapters, headings, paragraphs and sections
- use bookmarks to help users locate content in long documents
- use PDF authoring tools that offer accessibility support (adobe acrobat pro)
- update PDF metadata to include a title and description
- use Adobe Acrobat Pro and other tools to check and improve accessibility of PDF files

The W3C has a set of PDF Techniques for WCAG 2.0 which are a useful guide for PDF creators.

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word formats (.doc and .docx) do not comply with WCAG 2.1.

They are difficult to view on mobile devices.

Don't publish Word documents online. If you do - you'll need to provide the information on an HTML page.

You can also create an accessible PDF and publish both non-HTML formats from a landing page that summarises the document.

Make Word documents accessible to everyone even if you are emailing them internally. This includes people who rely on assistive technologies such as screen readers.

When creating Word documents you should:

- use outline view to manage structure and headings
- use accessibility checker to find issues
- use alternative text with visuals and tables
- make sure that you don't convey information through colour coding (example using red and green lines on a map)

- use high contrast for text and background
- use built-in headings and styles.

Rich text format (RTF)

You should avoid RTF as a publishing format. RTF can't carry the same level of semantic information or accessibility that the .docx format can.

Excel

Only publish an Excel document if there is a strong user need. They can be extremely difficult to view on mobile devices.

Sometimes it may not be appropriate to publish in HTML, for example when documents contain a large amount of data.

Make sure you:

- include alternative text with all visuals and tables
- add meaningful hyperlink text
- give sheet tabs unique names
- remove blank sheets
- use a simple table structure
- use the accessibility checker to find issues.

PowerPoint

Only publish a PowerPoint document if there is a strong user need.

Screen reading programs often interpret items on a PowerPoint slide in reverse order. This can confuse users with a vision or reading disability.

PowerPoint has tools to help screen readers see slides in the way

the author intended.

You should:

- use pre-existing slide template
- don't delete or rearrange default slide elements
- set the reading order in the selection pane.
- use alternative text for pictures, charts, and other visual objects
- use accessible templates
- use the grey scale feature to check colour blind accessibility
- don't use colour coding to convey information
- use brief animation that don't distract from content
- use high contrast for text and backgrounds.

EPUB

EPUB publications should include appropriate meta data.

WCAG Level AA conformance is recommended for EPUB publications.

Fact sheets

Publish fact sheets in HTML. This improves accessibility and allows for printing.

You must make the PDF Accessible if there is a user need to access the information as a PDF.

FAQs

Avoid using FAQs - they date easily and suggest content does not meet a user's need.

Write answers to important questions in the places where the user will expect to find them.

If FAQs are essential, make sure they are useful, well-edited and link directly to the places the user needs to go next.

Group FAQs under topics for quick reference and regularly update them using feedback loops.

Forms

Think about the user's needs and what they need to do.

Check the form is usable.

Write forms in plain English, test for usability and accessibility.

If the user needs to print, scan or email the form, provide a contact support phone number.

Make sure the title is clear and explains the task.

Include a short description in the meta details:

- Title: Environmental officer application.
- Brief description: Job application for environmental officer at the Shire of Capel.
- List supporting documents needed.

If extra documents are required to complete the form, list them with a subheading.

To complete this form you need:

- driver's license, or
- passport.

Explain why you need personal information.

Surveys and questionnaires

Make surveys accessible. Keep them short and relevant.

Always tell the user how long they will take to complete.

A few things to keep in mind:

- make the title of the survey clear
- use headings to remind the user what they are being asked about
- write clear and simple questions
- provide a short explanation of why you're asking each question
- if you need to ask open-ended questions - consider how you will report the data
- test your survey before you send it.

Surveys are quick and convenient - but it's easy to accidentally collect misleading data.

Images

Use images minimally and with purpose.

Make the images accessible and add appropriate meta descriptions.

If you use images to enhance written information use real people and locations.

Decorative images are typically ignored by most users.

Video

Videos can be a useful way to deliver short snippets of information. Videos can make complex written information easier to understand.

A few things to keep in mind:

- video should be complementary and enhance written information.
- provided a script
- make the user's needs your main focus
- get to the point early on
- check the voice and tone
- avoid humour - it might not age well
- show, don't tell. Use imagery that describes what you're trying to say instead of adding a lengthy narrative.

Tables

Use simple tables to organise and compare certain kinds of information.

Create tables to help the user make a decision.

Consider if a table is really necessary

If a cell has more than 1 sentence there may be a better format for the information.

Some kinds of data may not be right for a table. It may be better to publish technical data from a spreadsheet as a dataset.

Use the right structure

Create tables with structural mark-up:

- use row and column headers
- write brief title and include it in the table element
- organise data in a sequential order.

Structured tables help all users, not only those using a screen reader.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has guidance on how to structure tables.

Enhance structure with design

Use borders and shading to make tables easier to scan (for example, zebra stripes). Only use design to enhance a table.

Introduce the table in the text

Talk about the table in the content near it. Reference the table in one of the following ways.

More people liked trains than buses, as shown in Table 2.