



Australian Government

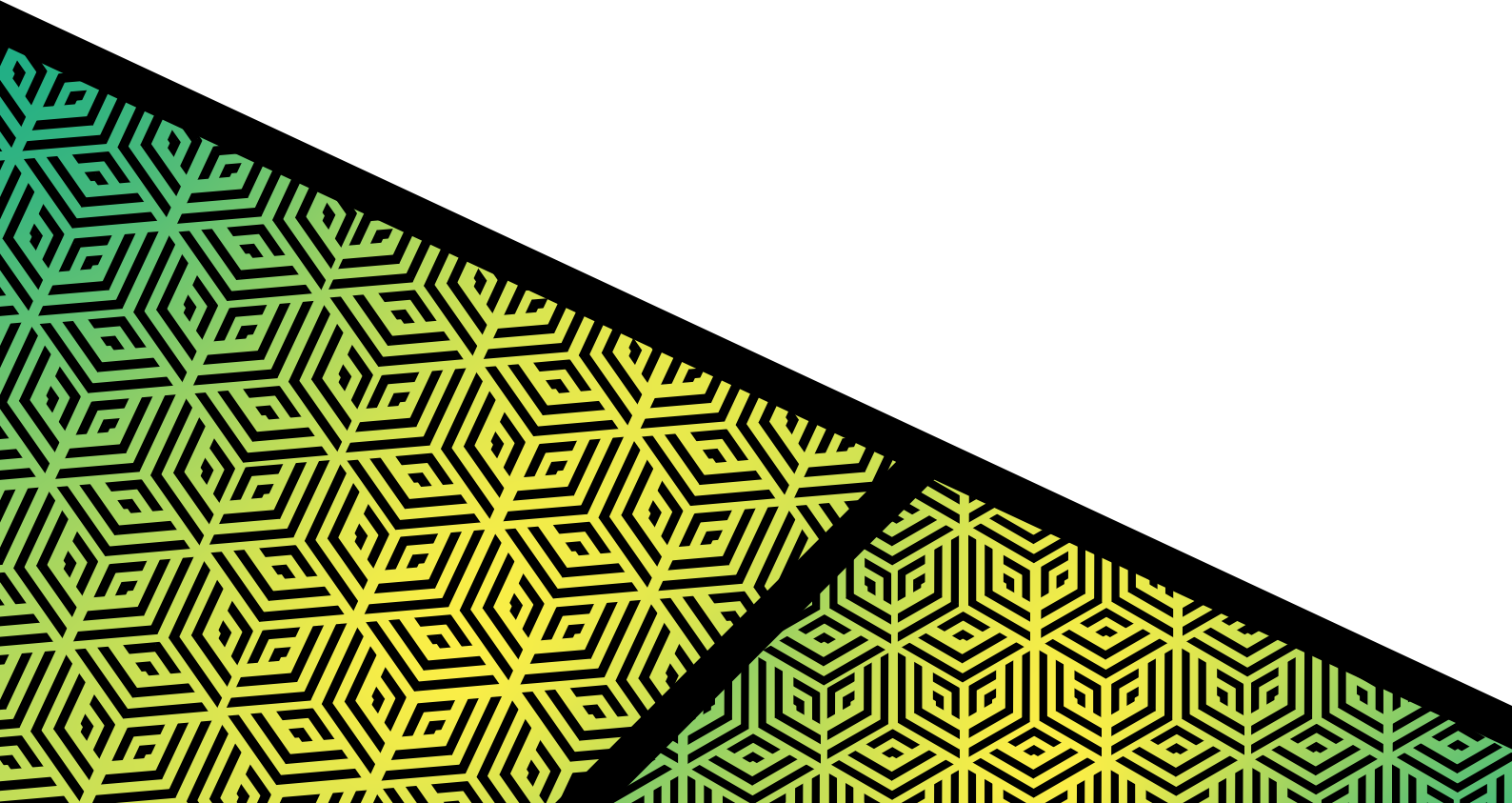
Australian Law Reform Commission

INTERIM REPORT C – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CORPORATIONS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATION

## Selection of OPC Drafting Rules

June 2023



Interim Report C is the third of three Interim Reports to be published as part of the Australian Law Reform Commission's Review of the Legislative Framework for Corporations and Financial Services Regulation. This document is an additional resource, published on the ALRC's website, which provides further detail relevant to particular aspects of Interim Report C.

**[View Interim Report C and the Summary Report](#)**

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) was established on 1 January 1975 and operates in accordance with the *Australian Law Reform Commission Act 1996* (Cth).

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In Interim Report C, the ALRC noted that a more consistent application of legislative drafting conventions could help simplify the structure and framing of financial services legislation.<sup>1</sup> Drafting conventions could also help inform technological tools and processes to identify and simplify more complex legislative design and drafting.<sup>2</sup>

Drafting conventions range from the general, such as ‘maintain consistency when amending existing legislation’ and ‘aim to keep sentences short’, to the more specific, such as how specific words and phrases should be used. The drafting rules outlined in the table below are representative of the range of conventions that guide Commonwealth legislative drafting and that may need to be applied when seeking consistent approaches to legislative design. When applied consistently, drafting conventions can reduced inconsistencies and complex drafting practices, such as outdated phrases and unclear sentence structures.

The table below summarises a selection of more than 140 legislative drafting conventions. In preparing the table, the ALRC analysed various guidance documents published by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth). This process involved separating specific, actionable, instructive statements from the explanatory text in these drafting guidance documents. This list does is not exhaustive, and only a selection of the existing drafting guidance documents identified in Appendix D to Interim Report B were examined.

Drafting convention	Citation
Bills for new principal Acts must contain a simplified outline, unless an exception applies.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [9].
Simplified outlines should be updated as the principal Act is amended; a simplified outline should be added to existing principal Acts as they are amended.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [11], [13].
A new Chapter or Part must include a simplified outline, unless First Parliamentary Counsel agrees it is not required.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [12].
Simplified outlines should allude to exceptions if exceptions to the subject matter exist.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [26].
The term ‘simplified outline’ should be used to label a simplified outline, unless a different term is already being used in the Act; the heading should take the form ‘Simplified outline of this... [Act/Chapter/Part/Division etc]’	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [33], [40].
Avoid using words like ‘object’ and ‘purpose’ in simplified outlines.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.3A, ‘Simplified outlines’ (Document release 1.2, November 2016) [59].
Ensure there is a general definitions section that contains definitions of all expressions defined in the legislation, located near the start of legislation; this is subject to maintaining consistency with structures already in place in existing legislation.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, ‘Definitions’ (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [5], [6], [21].
The heading of the definitions section should be ‘Definitions’ even if there is only one definition in the section.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, ‘Definitions’ (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [7].
Avoid defining a term differently for different parts of legislation, unless an exception applies.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, ‘Definitions’ (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [5], [10]–[11], [15]–[19], [21], part 6.
The general definitions section should generally start with ‘In this [legislation]:’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, ‘Definitions’ (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [12].

<sup>1</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission, *Interim Report C: Financial Services Legislation* (Report No 140, 2023) [7.88]–[7.90].

<sup>2</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission, *Interim Report C: Financial Services Legislation* (Report No 140, 2023) [7.84]–[7.87].

Drafting convention	Citation
'Just in time' definitions: an expression may be defined in the provision to which it is most relevant, however the definition should still apply throughout the legislation, and a signpost definition should be included in the general definitions section.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, 'Definitions' (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [13].
When drafting new legislation, and in general when amending existing legislation, do not qualify definitions with words along the lines of 'unless the contrary intention appears' or 'except so far as the contrary intention appears'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, 'Definitions' (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [27], [29].
Avoid the use of acronyms and initialisms, unless an exception applies.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, 'Definitions' (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [34]–[44].
Signpost definitions can be used to incorporate definitions contained in another piece of legislation, otherwise the practice in existing legislation should be maintained.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, 'Definitions' (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [47]–[48].
Where a definition includes a list, then for an exhaustive definition the form "[X] means..." should use the conjunction "or", whereas for a non-exhaustive definition the form "[X] includes" should the conjunction "and".	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.5, 'Definitions' (Document release 4.0, May 2019) [66].
First Parliamentary Counsel approval must be obtained to use asterisking to identify defined terms in a new principal Act.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.6, 'Asterisking to identify defined terms' (Document release 1.1, September 2020).
Use Arabic numerals when numbering Parts, unless Roman numerals are already in use in the amended legislation.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.7, 'Numbering and lettering' (Document release 2.0, October 2012) pt 1.
When numbering sections, do not use I or O immediately after a digit.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.7, 'Numbering and lettering' (Document release 2.0, October 2012) [4]–[6].
When lettering paragraphs, use all letters in the alphabet including o, i and l.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.7, 'Numbering and lettering' (Document release 2.0, October 2012) [7]–[8].
A short alternative text should be provided in the properties of any images, to assist people relying on screen reading software.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 1.9, 'Alternative text for images in legislation' (Document release 1.1, September 2021).
Distinguish whether liability attaches to the purpose of an action or to the result of an action.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [4]–[13].
Nouns of multitude: if preceded by a definite article, the noun is singular, whereas an indefinite article is usually plural.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [14].
Mentions of he/him should be accompanied by she/her; or pronouns may be avoided by repeating the relevant noun.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [15], [18]–[19].

Drafting convention	Citation
Use 'Chair' (instead of 'Chairperson' or 'Chairman') when establishing new offices. Replace references to 'Chairman' with 'Chair' when amending existing legislation.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [16], [20].
When drafting new legislation, avoid words ending in '-man' where it might be seen as importing the masculine gender.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [17].
A final paragraph or subparagraph that is not the end of a section or subsection should be punctuated with a semicolon.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [30].
Comply with spelling in the latest edition of the Macquarie Dictionary or Style Manual (where inconsistent, the Macquarie Dictionary prevails).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [31]–[35].
Do not capitalise 'internet' unless it is at the start of a sentence.	
'Website' is one word ('internet site' should not be used).	
The terms 'lodgement' and 'acknowledgement' should be used, not 'lodgment' or 'acknowledgment'.	
Generally, use the term 'judgement', except when referring to a court's 'judgment'.	
Use the term 'trade mark', and not 'trademark', despite the latter being recommended by the Macquarie Dictionary.	
Capitalise 'Indigenous' when referring to the original inhabitants of Australia in new legislation, only amend existing legislation if lack of capitalisation would lead to glaring inconsistencies. Do not capitalise when referring to the original inhabitants of other countries.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [36]–[40].
Ordinal numbers, up to an including 'tenth', should be expressed as words; above tenth they should be expressed as Arabic numerals (e.g. 12th).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [41]–[43].
The two letters coming after ordinal numbers ('st', 'nd', 'rd', 'th') should not be in superscript.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [44].
Numbers greater than 999 should be expressed using commas rather than spaces (e.g. 1,000 rather than 1 000).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [45].
Percentages should be expressed with the symbol % (not 'per cent').	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [46].
Fractions with a denominator greater than 10 must be expressed using Arabic numerals.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and

Drafting convention	Citation
	gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [47].
A fraction expressed in two words should be joined with a hyphen.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.1, 'English usage, gender-specific and gender-neutral language, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (Document release 4.4, March 2016) [48].
Use the name or symbol prescribed in the <i>National Measurement Regulations 1999</i> for an Australian legal unit of measure (see also <i>National Measurement Guidelines 1999</i> , which deals with combinations).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [3].
Words that are registered trade marks should be avoided.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [4]–[6].
'Reasonably believes' should be used to impute both an objective and subject element, in preference to 'believes on reasonable grounds', 'has reasonable grounds to believe', 'has reason to believe', 'has reasonable grounds for believing', 'has reasonable cause to believe', 'in the reasonable belief', etc. These other phrases may be used where: they are necessary to maintain consistency with existing legislation, where the clear policy position requires only a subjective or objective element, or with approval from the head drafter.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [10]–[15], [17]–[18].
Be aware that 'reasonably suspects' is a lower test than 'reasonably believes' (see Jacob J in <i>Tucs v Manley</i> (1985) 62 ALR 460 [461]).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [16].
To textually repeal a provision, use the phrase 'repeal'. Do not use phrases such as 'revoke', 'rescind', 'expires', 'ceases to have effect', or 'ceases to be in force'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [19]–[20], [24].
To have a provision remain on the statute book but not have any legal effect, use the expression 'ceases to be in force'. Do not use phrases such as 'expires on' or 'ends on'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [21], [24].
When expressing the obligation of representative decision-makers acting on behalf of persons with disabilities, use the model in s 7A of the <i>My Health Records Act 2012</i> (Cth) as a precedent.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [30]–[31].
Use 'given name' (not 'Christian name') in new legislation, but maintain consistency when amending existing legislation.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [32]–[33].
Use the term 'employee' (not 'servant') in new legislation. In general, when amending existing legislation replace all existing references to 'servant'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [34]–[39].
Use the term 'Fax', not 'facsimile'. If possible, bring existing provisions into compliance.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [40]–[41].

Drafting convention	Citation
Use the term 'email', not 'e-mail' or 'electronic mail'. If possible, bring existing provisions into compliance	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [42]–[43].
Use the phrase 'Standards Australia', not 'Standards Australia Limited (ACN 087 326 690)', as per the definition contained in the <i>Acts Interpretation Act 1901</i> (Cth).	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [44]–[45].
When referring to Australian Standards, use the words 'Australian Standard' followed by 'AS' and the reference number, and consistently with the following example: 'Australian Standard AS 3786:2014, <i>Smoke Alarms using scattered light, transmitted light or ionization, as in force...</i> '	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [46]–[47].
When referring to joint Australian and New Zealand standards, use the words 'Australian/New Zealand Standards', followed by 'AS/NZS' followed by the reference number, and a reference to 'published jointly by, or on behalf of, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [48]–[49].
Use the phrase 'notice published in the Gazette', not 'notice published in writing in the Gazette'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [50].
Use the term 'day', instead of 'date', whenever appropriate.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [51].
Use the term 'oral' instead of 'verbal' to mean spoken.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [52].
Use the term 'money' instead of 'moneys'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [53].
Use the phrase 'index reference period' instead of 'reference base' when referring to ABS indexes relying on this concept. Amend existing mentions of 'references bases' where possible.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [54]–[56].
Use the phrase 'for the purposes of' instead of 'for', including when referring to a head of power. Only amend existing uses of 'for' if it would be convenient to do so.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [57]–[58].
Generally, use the term 'minerals' to mean 'minerals in any form, whether solid, liquid or gaseous and whether organic or inorganic'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [60]–[61].
'insolvent under administration' should generally have the same meaning as in the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> .	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [62]–[63].
The definitions of 'Aboriginal person' and 'Torres Strait Islander' should be those found in the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005</i> (Cth). 'Indigenous Person' should generally be defined to mean a person who is (a) a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia; or (b) a descendant of an Indigenous inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [64]–[65].

Drafting convention	Citation
Generally, use 'spouse' rather than 'husband' or 'wife'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [72].
Generally, use 'surviving spouse', rather than 'widow' or 'widower'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [72], [91].
To include a definition of a de facto partner, adopt the definition in the <i>Act Interpretation Act 1901</i> .	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [75]–[77].
To include a definition of 'child', 'stepchild', 'parent', or 'step-parent', include the definitions included in this drafting direction. To include relationships traced through these definitions, include the expression included in this drafting direction.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [75]–[90].
In scoping provisions, use 'applies' rather than 'applies only' or 'only applies'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) pt 4.
Observe the rules relating to terminology when referring to public employment.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [100]–[130].
Generally, do not distinguish different kinds of authorised deposit-taking institutions (ADIs), and the definition of an ADI from the <i>Banking Act 1959</i> should be used.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), Drafting Direction 2.2, 'Use of various expressions in draft legislation' (Document release 5.7, August 2019) [137]–[138].
Use positive expressions rather than negative expressions.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [52].
Avoid double and triple negatives.	
Use active rather than passive voice.	
Avoid complicated or unusual grammatical constructions, eg don't put long phrases in parentheses in the middle of sentences.	
Put adverbial phrases after the verb when there is no ambiguity.	
Use paragraphs to separate lists from the body of the sentence.	
Keep the subject close to the verb.	
Keep auxiliary verbs close to the main verbs.	
Keep modifiers close to the words they modify.	
Use parallel structures to express similar ideas e.g. don't mix conditions and exceptions, or 'if' and 'unless' clauses in the same sentence.	
Avoid noun strings (nouns strung together as adjectives).	
Avoid the false subject 'there is' or 'there are'.	
Don't use the sentence form 'such ... as' when unnecessary, e.g. say 'take appropriate steps' instead of 'take such steps as are appropriate'.	
Don't use demonstrative adjectives if unnecessary, e.g. say 'the company' not 'that company'.	
Don't use 'being' and 'not being' to join relative clauses.	



<b>Drafting convention</b>	<b>Citation</b>
If the main clause is simple, and the conditional clauses are long and/or numerous, put the main clause first.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [53]–[54].
Generally, keep sentences short, including by separating qualifying clauses from the main position, avoiding listing alternative words, avoiding adding descriptions to operative provisions, and avoiding making verbs into nouns.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [55]–[57].
Provide a definition for each acronym.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [65].
Only use technical language if it would be generally understood by most of the users of the law, or if suitable simple alternatives do not exist.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [66].
Avoid the expression ‘despite anything to the contrary contained in’, instead eg say ‘despite anything else in’ or ‘despite the XYZ Act’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [70].
Don’t state that a power or decision shall not be ‘called in question’, since this is unenforceable. Consider the alternative ‘is not invalid because’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [71].
Avoid using the phrase ‘case’ to refer to an alternative, eg ‘in the case of’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [72]–[73].
Don’t distinguish between ‘contravene’ and ‘fail to comply’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [74]–[75].
Use gender neutral language. Where a pronoun cannot be avoided, consider using ‘who’ or ‘that’, ‘it’, ‘them’, ‘they’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [76], [81].
Do not use the word ‘period’ if the existence of a period of time is already implied.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [78].
Use the short-form possessive when appropriate, e.g. don’t say ‘of the Minister’, say ‘the Minister’s’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [79].
Avoiding using the delayed relative structure, i.e. in relation to an inanimate object, avoid using the phrase ‘of which’ rather than simply ‘whose’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [80].
Avoid using the phrase ‘[under/subject to] the provision of’ to refer to other provisions.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [82].
Use ‘must’ instead of ‘shall’ when imposing an obligation. When a gentler form is needed, say ‘is to’ or ‘is not to’. Do not use ‘shall’ in declaratory provisions.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [83]–[84].
Avoid the phrases ‘subject to this Act’ and ‘subject to this section’.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [85].
Generally, use ‘if’ instead of ‘where’ to introduce a set of facts.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [86].
When limiting a statutory appointment to people under the age of 65, use the phrase ‘A person who is 65 or over cannot hold ...’	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [87].
Avoid back-references to earlier subsections.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [88].
Avoid referring to a ‘[body/entity] to which this section applies’ when other phrases are more succinct.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [91].

<b>Drafting convention</b>	<b>Citation</b>
Do not distinguish between a class and its members, and therefore do not use the phrase 'a 'specified person or a person included in a specified class of persons'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [92].
Avoid duplicating adjectives to express both the singular and plural version of the noun, e.g. instead of using the phrase 'another application or other applications', use 'any other application or applications'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [93].
Avoid duplicating nouns, e.g. don't say 'a person who is a person to whom section 5 applies'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [94].
Avoid duplicating verbs when referring to both the singular and plural noun, instead use the verb that accords with the nearer of the subjects. E.g. don't say 'the corporation has, or corporations have,' say 'the corporation or corporations have'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [95].
Prefer participles to relative clauses, e.g. instead of saying 'that has', 'that was issued', say 'having', or 'issued'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [96]–[98].
When describing complex proportions, use a formula instead.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [99].
Order of provisions: arrange the Bill so the relationship between provisions is as clear as possible. Consider grouping together provisions with common subject-matter, arranging provisions in a time sequence, using similar structures to express similar ideas, and putting general or important provisions before particular or less important provisions.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [102]–[103].
Use headings to introduce the topic of the provision.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [105]–[107].
Generally, keep slabs of text under 5 lines in length.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [108].
In each section or subsection, avoid using more than three sentences without a very good reason.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [109].
Generally, have at least 2 section headings on each page.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [112]–[113].
Subsection headings should be in italics, not bolded, and not enclosed in brackets. When amending a section, ensure use of subsection headings is consistent by adding additional subsection headings as necessary.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [115]–[116].
Avoid 'shredding' paragraphs, by dividing ideas into such short paragraphs that the paragraphs become unnecessary.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [121].
Try to avoid subparagraphs, and especially to avoid sub-subparagraphs.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [122].
To show whether paragraphs are cumulative or alternative, put 'and' or 'or' at the end of each paragraph, but do not mix 'and' and 'or' in the same string of paragraphs.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [127].
Do not use 'and' or 'or' at the end of paragraphs that are preceded by the introductory words 'of the following:'	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [128].

Drafting convention	Citation
When writing out algebraic formulae, express the variables in words rather than symbols, with the variable in bold and the first letter of each word capitalised. Where letters are used for variables, include the definition of each variable immediately after, with the relevant words in parentheses.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [132]–[136].
If you have lots of definitions, consider using an index of defined terms.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [140].
If definitions are in separate, use signposts to indicate their location.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [143].
The 'labels' of all defined terms should be printed in bold type when first defined, but not where it is only a cross-reference.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [144]–[146].
Consider alerting the reader to important definitions by putting notes under the relevant provisions.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [147].
If a whole section is devoted to defining a single term, consider including the word 'definition' in the section heading.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [149].
When adding a definition mid-sentence, do not use the phrase '(in this section referred to as 'X')', rather just '(X)'.	Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Cth), <i>Plain English Manual</i> (December 2013) [150].