

Policy writing

There are many forms a policy document can take. This may include letters, policy briefs and position statements, submissions or election platforms.

Before you begin writing you always take the time to consider these points:

- **Your voice** – what you bring to what you are writing.
- **Your audience** – who you are writing for.
- **Your purpose** – why you are writing in the first place.
- **Your take away** – what is it that you want to make clear to be considered by your audience.
- **Your medium** – how you write and present your information and message.

Avoiding auto pilot

We are creatures of habit – we do what we always do when we are familiar with the process of policy writing. We take information, we dump it on a page, we format it, then we are done.

We fall into autopilot mode when we go straight to doing – without allowing for some thought and creativity to plan the best approach.

Some common mistakes in policy writing include:

Before you begin writing, take the time to consider these common mistakes:

- **Burying your lead.** Don't lose your key message/takeaway in lots of words - don't bury it 6 pages in.
- **Being too wordy.** Don't use lots of words if you don't need to.
- **Using pointless sentences.** Don't use sentences that don't add value.
- **Doing a fact stocktake.** Don't use facts or data that doesn't clearly support your message.
- **Using their language.** Don't use their language – use yours.
- **Using too much jargon.** Don't use too much jargon.

More information

Policy writing is a key part of the work of not-for-profit individuals and organisations.

The [Policy writing Online Course](#) explores how to prepare, approach and develop policy documents.

The course includes tips, tricks, tools and templates to use to simplify the writing process to get the best outcome for you and your organisation.