

# WORST WORDS

## Media release

21 October 2022

### Join the quest to find Australia's worst word for 2022

Around 44% of Australians struggle to read, but businesses and government agencies don't always choose language that helps these readers. Instead, we are often assaulted with political spin, corporate doublespeak, marketing jargon and bad business buzzwords.

One Australian company pushes back against the worst of this language. For over a decade, Plain English Foundation has championed transparent public language through its training and editing services and yearly Worst Words list.

If you've come across some words worthy of this list, share them with the Foundation for your chance to win \$250. Suggestions should be words or phrases that are:

- deceitful, unclear or just plain ugly
- new or newly prominent during the year.

To enter, comment on the Foundation's social media posts about the worst words of 2022. If the Foundation chooses one of these suggestions as 2022's worst word, it will give the person who submitted it a \$250 EFTPOS voucher.

Foundation spokesperson, Greg Moriarty, says:

"My favourite example of doublespeak is 'injuries incompatible with living'. This is a glaring example of people going out of their way to avoid clearer language."

And it's not the only example of confusing political language. Mr Moriarty notes:

"Last year federal politicians decided to name quarantine centres 'Centres for National Resilience'. Would you have guessed this means a place for people with COVID? The year before that, US politics gave us 'alternative facts' as the ultimate example of Orwellian doublespeak! A reminder – the alternative to a fact is not a fact."

The competition runs online from 21 October to 13 December. Terms and conditions are available on the Worst Words of the Year webpage:

<https://www.plainenglishfoundation.com/worst-words>.

Plain English Foundation posts about its Worst Words list on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

For more information, contact Plain English Foundation spokesperson, Greg Moriarty.

Greg is a published author and expert communicator, who regularly speaks about plain language. His presentations are clear, engaging and humorous.

He is **available for interview** about the Worst Words of the Year 2022.

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# Worst Words of the decade

## Annual winners from 2010 to 2020

<b>Vertical consumption</b>	2020 was the year of COVID-19, and it generated some less than welcome words. South Australia announced it would ease coronavirus restrictions and allow people in bars to drink while standing up. The SA Government dubbed this “vertical consumption”.
<b>Freedom gas</b>	Fossil fuels like natural gas needed an image makeover in 2019, so the US Department of Energy came up with “freedom gas” and “molecules of US freedom” as its linguistic contribution to clean energy.
<b>External career development opportunities</b>	2018 was a poor year for corporate doublespeak. When our national public broadcaster used “external career development opportunities” to discuss firing its staff, it joined a long list of institutions incapable of using simple English to describe something difficult.
<b>Alternative facts</b> <b>Worst of the decade</b>	Political doublespeak dominated our 2017 list with “alternative facts” coming out on top. This outrageous take on dishonesty was our clear winner in a decade that saw democracy decline.
<b>Brangelexit</b>	Frankenword “Brangelexit” topped our 2016 list. Combining Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's celebrity moniker “Brangelina” with the “Brexit” vote, it elevated a celebrity divorce to the level of a major world event.
<b>Possible emissions non-compliance</b>	2015 was a particularly bad year for corporate spin doctoring, and “possible emissions non-compliance” came out on top. Volkswagen’s CEO used this phrase to describe what was actually cheating when regulators tested how much pollution its cars emit.
<b>Conscious uncoupling</b>	“Conscious uncoupling” was our 2014 winner. Gwyneth Paltrow used this phrase to describe her separation from husband Chris Martin.
<b>Demising</b>	HSBC got our 2013 vote when it announced it would be “demising the roles of 942 relationship managers” – or firing nearly 1,000 employees.
<b>Goodification</b>	When KFC chose “Goodification” as the slogan for its marketing campaign, we had to choose it as our Worst Word of 2012.
<b>Fugitive emissions</b>	2011 was a banner year for corporate evasion and euphemistic spin, with “fugitive emissions” (more commonly known as pollution) the worst.
<b>Moving forward</b>	2010 was filled with manglish and gobbledygook, but we couldn't get past “moving forward”. Julia Gillard repeated this slogan more than 20 times when she announced the federal election.