



CivicTheme



CivicTheme

The open source government design system

Australian Government GOLD Design System Compliance Statements

Version 1.9.0



Version Release Log

Date:	11 Dec 2024
Version:	v1.9.0
Updated by:	Alan Rako
Supersedes:	V1.8.0
Figma Version:	V1.9.0
Updates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fixed an issue with the List background instance on a desktop device where the background would not fill the length of the frame.● Updated the Footer desktop design so the footer displays 4 columns of equal width.● Added a printer Icon.● Added a mail Icon.● Added horizontal navigation links to the Footer for desktop and mobile devices.● Added stroke variants to the Footer descendant mobile menu components.



Context

This document maps the CivicTheme design components to the (former) Australian Government Design System (AGDS), which was initially created by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) for use by Australian government websites.

Used by government websites the AGDS was also adopted temporarily by the GovCMS program, which shipped the AGDS with GovCMS Drupal 7 projects.

The AGDS was officially decommissioned in September 2021, however it provides a substantial best practice foundational design system and a ‘common language’ for government website design.

CivicTheme builds on the AGDS ethos and uplifts components and processes while making the design system open source as well. With updated technology and methods to deliver the same rigorous approach to user-centred design, accessibility and design best practices, components from the original AGDS have been rebuilt for government websites to use again.

CivicTheme is an open source project maintained by [Salsa Digital](#).



Table of Contents

Context	3
Table of Contents	4
Base	7
Colours	8
Background	10
Elevation	12
Fonts	14
Grid	16
Icon	17
Image	19
Item List	20
Layout	21
Spacing	22
Atoms	23
Back to Top	24
Button	25
Calendar (Date Picker)	27
Chip	28
Content Link	29
Form Control	
Checkbox	30
Field Description	32
Field Message	33
Fieldset	34
Label	35
Radio	36
Select	38
Textarea	40
Textfield	42
Heading	44
Link	46
Paragraph	47
Password Strength	49
Popover	50
Quote	51
Table	52
Tag	53



Text List	54
Molecules	55
Accordion	56
Attachment	57
Breadcrumb	58
Callout	59
Event Card	60
Field	62
Figure	64
Group Filter	65
Logo	67
Map	68
Navigation Card	69
Next Step	71
Pagination	72
Progress Indicator	73
Promo Card	74
Publication Card	76
Search	77
Service Card	78
Single Filter	79
Snippet	80
Subject Card	81
Table of Contents	82
Tabs	83
Tag List	84
Tooltip	85
Video Player	86
Organisms	88
Alert	89
Banner	90
Campaign	92
Footer	93
Header	94
List	95
Keyword List	97
Message	98
Mobile Navigation	99
Navigation	100
Promo	102



Side Navigation	103
Skip Link	104
Slider	105
Social Links	106



Base



Colours

This core foundational element has been modelled after the [Colours](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Introduced a colour framework for the light theme that provides the ability to map three brand colours to the entire colour palette of 18 colours.
- Introduced a colour framework for the dark theme that provides the ability to map three brand colours to the entire colour palette of 18 colours.
- Implemented a colour palette of 18 colours for the light theme for typography, background, border, interaction, highlight and status colours.
- Implemented a colour palette of 18 colours for the dark theme for typography, background, border, interaction, highlight and status colours.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Theming a design system for a government brand can be a complex task – and has been on previous projects. Some government brands lack a comprehensive, accessible colour palette, resulting in colour contrast issues for various components (eg. a clear, contrasting colour change between interaction states).
- CivicTheme attempts to solve this by automatically adopting shades of the brand colours within the colour palette, as opposed to only relying on primary and secondary colours for interactions, which may not meet WCAG 2.1 compliance.
- Buttons, links and other elements with interactive states (eg. from resting to hover) now provide a more reliable method of contrast differentiation.



Brand Colours

Brand 1 #00698F	Brand 2 #E6E9EB	Brand 3 #121313
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

Colour Palette

Typography Colours

Heading #002958	Body #35444A
---------------------------	------------------------

Background Colours

Background Light #F2F4F5	Background #E6E9EB	Background Dark #B8BABC
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Border Colours

Border Light #ACAFB0	Border #5C5D5E	Border Dark #171718
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Interaction Colours

Interaction Text #FAFBFB	Interaction Background #00698F	Interaction Hover Text #FAFBFB	Interaction Hover Background #003F56	Interaction Focus #8B5CD7
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Highlight Colour

Highlight #121313

Status Colours

Information #007CBF	Warning #C95100	Error #CE3856	Success #CE3856
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Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Background

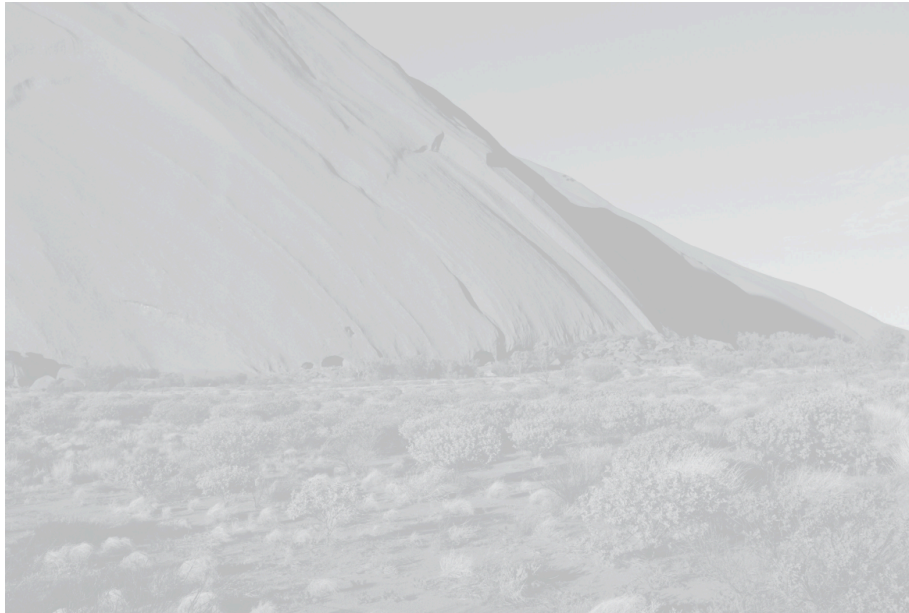
This atomic element has been modelled after [Responsive media](#) from the Australian Design System. More specifically, the [Responsive images](#).

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Used the ADS Responsive image component as a background element to the Banner component
- The background image is allowed to exceed image dimensions when necessary
- Incorporated both a dark and light overlay treatment to work underneath text

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Background images weren't included within the Australian Design System, however, there is strong demand for decorative media in websites to help increase engagement, and more generally improve the branding and tone of voice for the agency's website.
- While CivicTheme does not recommend using low resolution background images, there is still the likelihood that agencies may still use them. For this reason, CivicTheme will stretch any background image to fit within a banner.
- CivicTheme also provides a pre-prepared collection of images to use for banners when an image can't be sourced or is not suitable. All background imagery has been sourced from [Unsplash](#). Unsplash photos are made to be [used freely](#). The people who associated their work with Unsplash have dedicated the work to the public domain by waiving their rights to the work worldwide under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights, to the extent allowed by law.
- If an image from our pre-prepared collection is not suitable, we recommend stock photo sources such as [Unsplash](#) and [Austock Photo](#).
- A transparent colour overlay has been added to the background image (for both light and dark themes) to ensure all text – both headings and subtitles – retains its contrast and meets WCAG 2.1.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Elevation

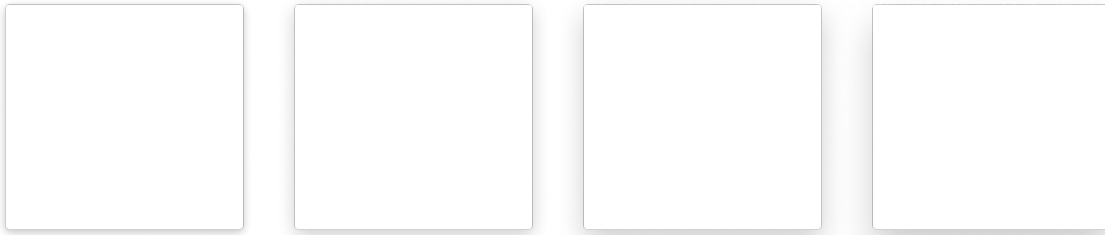
This core foundational element has been modelled after the [Clickable Cards](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the element in the following manner:

- Each elevation value has a specific intent in our design language:
 - None: Items that are on the page and not intended to be interactive, such as text or tables
 - Elevation 1: They are used to show when an elevated component is “pressed” (ie. from a higher elevation)
 - Elevation 2: These items are higher to draw a little more attention to themselves – but not much. They may have some interaction inside, but itself is not entirely interactive. A tooltip or page message are examples of this level.
 - Elevation 3: Components that are intended to be engaged themselves are slightly higher to communicate the affordance of interaction.
 - Elevation 4: A raised elevation intended to indicate that a component is clickable (ie. hover state), sits above a component (eg. main menu dropdown), or is floating (eg. inline “sticky” navigation)

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Elevation provides the users with a visual cue that an object or experience is “elevated” in priority or hierarchy, and indicates when specific components are interactive.
- This approach is used at a basic level on ADS and Victoria’s Ripple design system. Following several rounds of feedback on commercial projects via customer testing, CivicTheme expanded this treatment with the aim to increase visual appeal, and create its own defined and unique look.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Fonts

This core foundational element has been modelled after the [Typography](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- On top of the fallback system fonts, CivicTheme uses the variable font family, Lexend, to create a distinct look and feel with accessibility at the forefront.
- Lexend is available both on Google Fonts and as an open-source download from the [Lexend official website](#).
- System fallback fonts consist of Arial/sans-serif.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For more than 60 years, the US Department of Education has found that nearly 70% of the population experiences some reading difficulty. Reading fluency is one of the defining characteristics of good readers, and a lack of fluency is a common characteristic of poor readers. (Source: [The Reading Teacher](#))
- In 2000, Dr Bonnie Shaver-Troup theorised that reading performance would improve through use of a sans-serif font with expanded scaling to improve potential for character recognition, and reduce cognitive noise.
- This research led to the development of Lexend, specifically designed to create an immediate improvement in reading performance, and comprised of the following:
 - 20 third-graders, eight males and twelve females, read for one minute in five fonts.
 - All text was set at 16pt and the reading materials were two grade levels above the participant's current grade level to ensure the typography was being measured, rather than reading competency.
 - Each student read out loud a passage set in a control of Times New Roman, then four of the Lexend Series — Deca, Exa, Giga and Mega.
 - While the Lexend series was beneficial to a large sample of students, no one setting worked best for all students. Diverse readers call for diverse axis settings just like every individual person requires their own individual eyeglass prescription.
 - Eyeglass prescriptions are not six strict settings. There are more granular settings possible.



- Variable font technology allows for continuous selection of the Lexend Series to find the specific setting for an individual student.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Grid

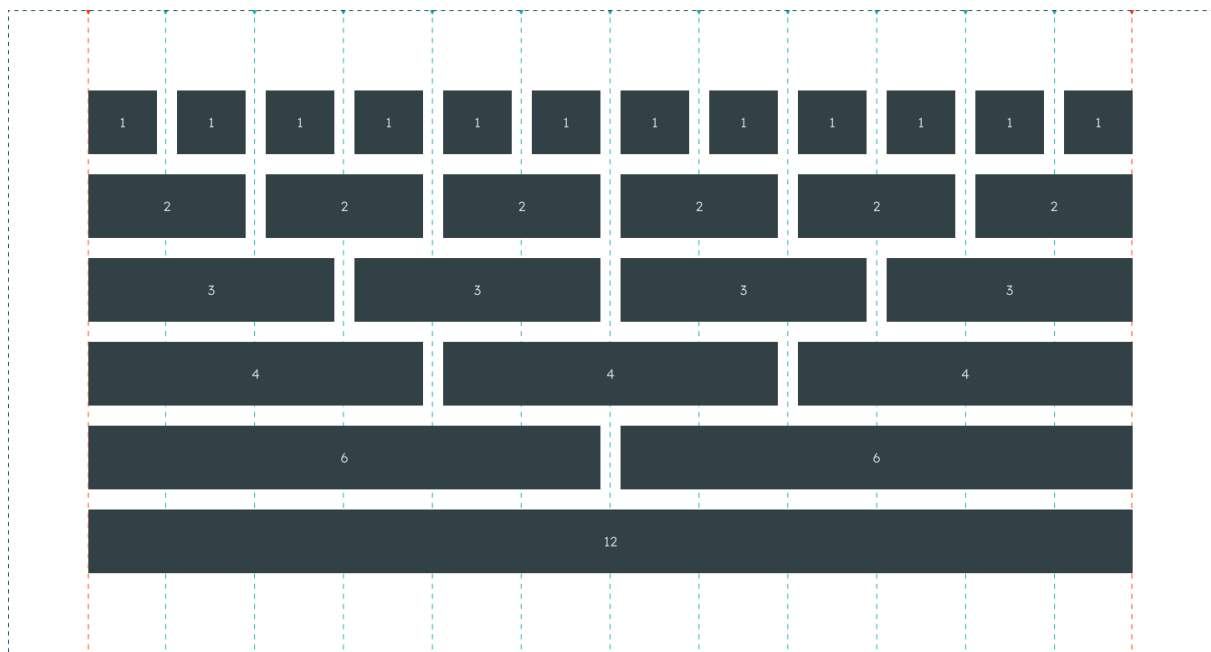
This grid element has been modelled after the [Grid 12](#) (12 column) grid from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme uses the latest grid from Bootstrap because it uses flexbox properties: a flexible grid with percentage-based columns, fixed margins and gutters. The columns are used to adjust the layout, making the best use of the space available.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- [Flexbox](#) now has full browser support.
- Flexbox offers space distribution between items in an interface and powerful alignment capabilities.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Icon

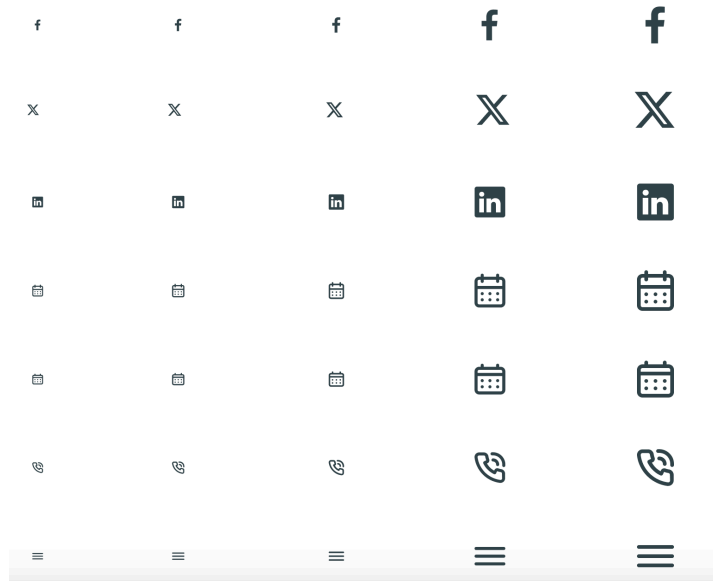
This atomic element has been modelled after [all components that use iconography](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme uses the comprehensive, commercial-free, and pixel-perfect icon library [Unicons by Iconscout](#) (line versions).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Icons illustrate actions, communicate status, indicate an interaction and draw attention to important information.
- Icons are fast to recognise at a glance (if well designed) — particularly true for standard icons that people have seen and used before. (Source: [Nielsen Norman Group: Icon Usability](#))
- Furthermore, icons can be visually pleasing and enhance the aesthetic appeal of a design.
- Icons make good targets: they are typically sized large enough to be easily touched in a finger-operated UI, but also work well with a mouse cursor (in contrast to words, which can suffer from read–tap asymmetry on touch screens). Yet they save space: icons can be compact enough to allow toolbars, palettes, and so on to display many icons in a relatively small space.
- There is no need to translate icons for international users, provided that the icons are mindful of cultural differences (for example, mailboxes look very different in various countries whereas envelopes look the same, therefore an envelope is a more international icon for an email program than a mailbox).
- *Unicons* consist of 1100+ commercial-free icons, which cover 27 different categories and are suitable for almost any application or service. They support the notion of a product family or suite when the same icons and style are used in several places.
- It is recommended to use icons within components or paired with text. It was concluded during previous rounds of customer testing (on other design systems) that standalone icons may be interpreted differently by different users.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Image

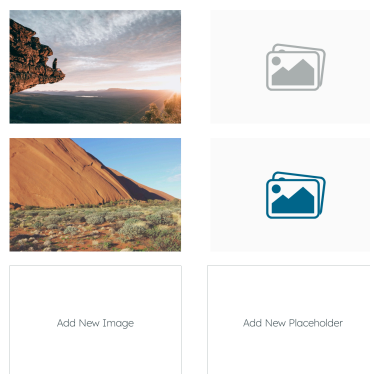
This atomic element has been modelled after [Responsive media](#) from the Australian Design System. More specifically, [Responsive images](#).

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The image is allowed to exceed image dimensions when necessary
- Provided the ability to insert custom images and placeholders

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Images weren't included within the Australian Design System, however, there is strong demand for decorative media in websites to help increase engagement, and more generally improve the branding and tone of voice for an agency's website.
- CivicTheme also provides a pre-prepared collection of images to use when an image can't be sourced or is not suitable. All background imagery has been sourced from [Unsplash](#). Unsplash photos are made to be [used freely](#). The people who associated their work with Unsplash have dedicated the work to the public domain by waiving their rights to the work worldwide under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights, to the extent allowed by law.
- If an image from our pre-prepared collection is not suitable, we recommend stock photo sources such as [Unsplash](#) and [Austock Photo](#).
- If an image from our pre-prepared collection is not suitable, CivicTheme also provides a pre-prepared collection of placeholder images.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Item List

The item list is a list of vertical or horizontal components used to order information for users on both desktop and mobile devices. The Item List is a simple way for designers to logically sort content in a way to make it easy to read.

Content can be sorted in the following ways:

- Alphabetically
- Numerically
- Chronologically
- By user preference

While the Item List is not modelled after a specific component, it has been influenced by the [Link List](#) in the Australian Design System.

CivicTheme's Item List component has been used across the entire design system, most notably in the following components:

- **Pagination:** Page numbers are listed numerically and are evenly spaced inside the component. This allows the page numbers to be easily scannable and provides the development team with clear and set boundaries.
- **Popover:** Checkboxes are listed by user preference and are evenly spaced throughout. As per the pagination component, the checkboxes are easily scannable, which makes for an intuitive experience.

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Swap or hide this component

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Layout

CivicTheme's layout component allows the user to insert content and components that fit within the boundaries of a page.

Unlike the other components in CivicTheme that have been modelled after or influenced by a specific component in the Australian Design System, the layout component has not.

The layout component provides two layout options:

- Edge-to-edge: This is the primary layout type where content and components can be displayed to fit edge-to-edge, the entire width of the page.
- Contained: This layout type allows content and components to be displayed within a contained section on a page. For example when displaying the pagination component within a list component — the contained layout considers page padding.
- Right Rail: This layout type allows content and components to be displayed in two columns, main body and right rail. The right rail column whilst susceptible to right rail blindness can be used for bullet lists, tags and buttons.
- Left Rail: This layout type allows content and components to be displayed in two columns, main body and left rail. The left rail column is a common approach that can be used for menu navigation and table of contents.
- Left and Right Rail: This layout type allows content and components to be displayed in three columns, left rail, main body and right rail. Not a common approach and works only for layouts with large screens.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Spacing

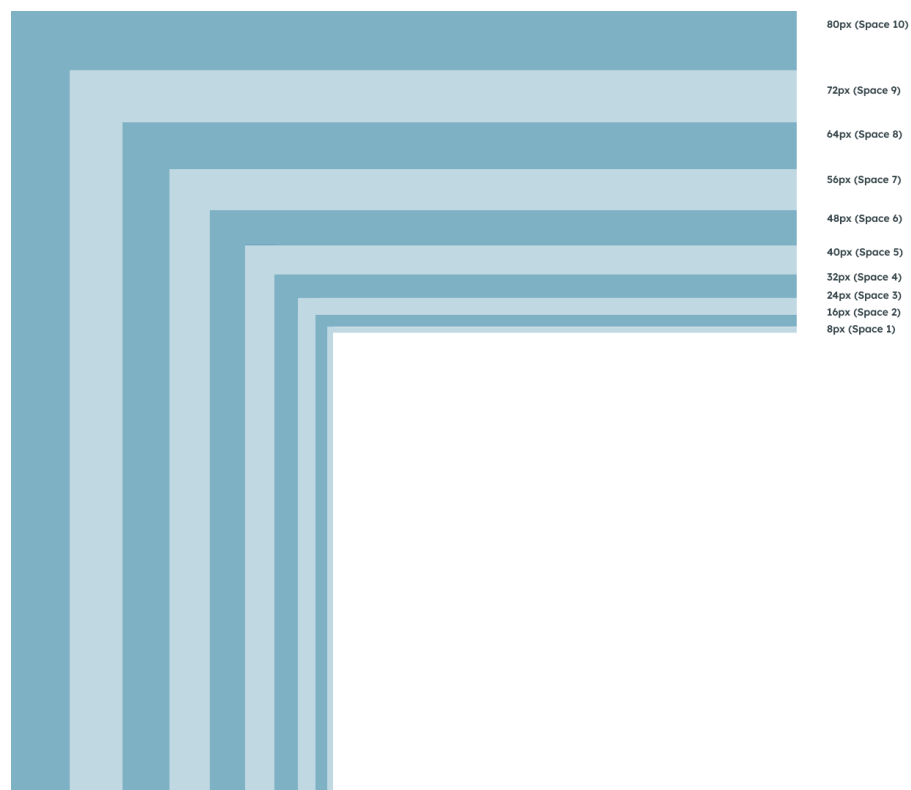
This core foundational element has been modelled after the [Spacing](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Sub-spacing of 0.5 rem (8px on older browsers) has been included for smaller, incremental spacing between smaller elements (eg. mobile components).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- 8px increments scale perfectly within the majority of today’s screen displays (including Android’s @0.75 and @1.5). This provides the ability to create consistent spacing relationships across various breakpoints — from large monitors and laptops, to tablets and mobile.
- From a mobile-first perspective, smaller-spaced increments also provide more flexibility when designing for phones, where screen real estate is limited.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Atoms



Back To Top

This component has been modelled after the [‘Default’ Button](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme has leveraged the style and treatment of ADS’s button component for its Back To Top button component.
- The component is only used (or enabled) on pages longer than four screens tall.
- Its appearance is delayed until the reader has scrolled appropriately 1500px down the page.
- The button then remains fixed in the bottom-right corner of the viewport, floating over the top of any content (on both desktop and mobile pages alike).
- The Back to Top button is slightly smaller than the standard ADS button component.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Requirements for early CivicTheme-based projects called for a component that allowed its readers to easily – and quickly – navigate back to the top of a page, when the page itself was longer than four screens.
- It is not intended to appear on short screen: this was perceived as overkill. (Source: [Back-to-Top Button Design Guidelines](#))
- The button has been kept small so it doesn’t cover important page elements. For mobile and touch screens, however, it remains big enough so readers can tap it.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Button

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Buttons](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- All CivicTheme buttons come in large, regular and small options. The regular-sized buttons are based on GOLD Design System size guidelines and are intended to be the most commonly used format. For pages that have only one primary goal (eg. a campaign landing page), the larger-sized button has been included to accommodate these user journeys.
- Each variant of CivicTheme’s call to actions include the option to add appropriate iconography, based on their functionality, eg. where they direct the reader to. This iconography includes, but is not limited to:

- Left or right arrows, ie. the action will navigate the reader from the current page



- External link icon, ie. the action will navigate the reader away from the current site



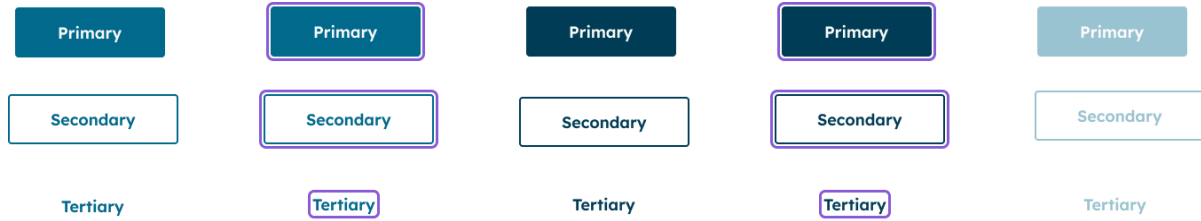
- Download icon, ie. the action will download the relevant file/document

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Government agencies currently using CivicTheme found the incorporation of a larger button size helpful, which helped draw greater attention to the primary user journey.
- By including the option to add iconography within a button, the agency has the ability to visually communicate the actions (or process) of the button more quickly. Icons illustrate actions, communicate status, indicate an interaction and draw attention to important information. CivicTheme also takes its direction from other government design systems, including Ripple and NSW.Digital.
- The existing *disabled* states of the Australian Design System’s button did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. Although CivicTheme’s *disabled state* button appears visually closer to a regular button (compared its ADS



counterpart), its visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing primary and secondary active buttons, while remaining legible for readers with poor vision.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Calendar (Date Picker)

This component has been modelled after the [Select \(Default\)](#) and [Tags \(without links\)](#) components in the Australian Design System. It is a part of the Forms library.

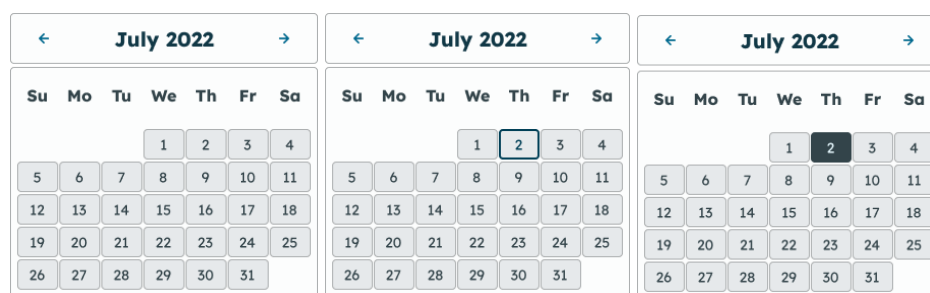
We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The Calendar (Date Picker) is a Molecular component built on several atomic elements compliant with the Australian Design System.
- The CivicTheme Calendar component uses iconography as individual interactive elements that allow the user to cycle through past, present and future months of the year.
- The CivicTheme Calendar component does not use the browser's native Calendar selector.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- We wanted to take a more visual approach to the Calendar component that provides reference to the days of week.
- Date range selection capabilities were also a requirement, which could not be achieved through a browser's native date picker select tool.

Note: The Calendar (Date Picker) component is not currently available in Figma v1.7.0. Due to development time constraints, the decision was made to include the component in future design releases.





Chip

The Chip atomic element has been modelled after the [Tags](#) component in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme uses several styles of tags based on where they are on the website. Chips, specifically, can be seen within the Filter component, as a method to narrow down the results of an article's categories.
- CivicTheme's Chips are fully-rounded in their appearance and ignore the use of text underlines in replace of a button appearance.
- Their interactive states change in both border and background colours.
- An 'X' (remove) icon appears alongside an active Chip to remove the active filter attribute.
- Currently, the tag component does not include headings.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Similar to Victoria's Ripple design system, CivicTheme presents Chips with fully-rounded styling to clearly distinguish and separate their appearance from regular buttons and their interactions. This included the necessity to display the text-underline treatment.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Content Link

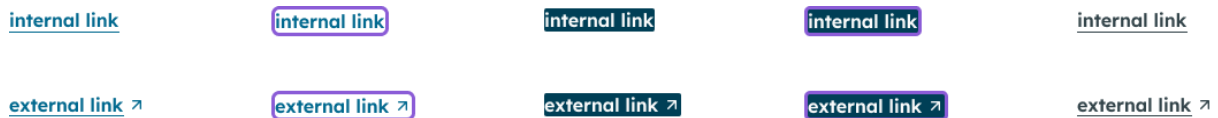
This atomic element has been modelled after the [Direction Links](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme has used the [Gold ADS Directions Link](#) component as its primary reference for all content-based links in its design system. That is, any links – such as general inline links and in-page navigational elements – that appear within the body of the website share the same treatment as the Direction Links.
- Content links use a SemiBold text weight.
- Content links includes an ‘external link’ variant, created for situations where the link directs the user to an external website and/or opens a new tab or window.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The SemiBold text weight of a Content Link helps provide greater contrast and visual clarity within what may be a text-heavy page.
- It was important to set users’ expectations quickly by clearly labelling any external link with an icon. That is, if a link opens to another website (outside of the current site), then it’s important that the user knows about this before they click on it. (Source: [Opening Links in New Browser Windows and Tabs](#))



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Checkbox

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Control input](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- [Checkboxes](#) include an interaction for the hover state.
- Checkbox control inputs are currently only supplied as [Small Inputs](#)
- The [Disabled](#) control input states are set back in opacity.
- The [Checkbox Block](#) component includes the addition of a title description, in a similar format to the [Text Input](#) field.
- Included checked and unchecked states.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Displaying a hover effect when users move their mouse over a checkbox can create a stronger and more intuitive affordance for users. The hover effect visually tells users that the label is a clickable target. When they see the hover effect, it prepares them to click the label. (Source: [Why You Should Add Hover Effects to Your Checkboxes](#))
- For its updated validation colours, CivicTheme uses a colour variant optimised for both light and dark themes, ensuring they provide the maximum amount of contrast in any state, and across as many custom colour themes as possible.
- The existing disabled states of the Australian Design System's button did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. Although CivicTheme's disabled state button appears visually closer to a regular button (compared to its ADS counterpart), it's visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing primary and secondary active buttons, while remaining eligible for readers with poor vision.
- For the general look and behaviour of its Control Inputs, such as the addition of title descriptions, CivicTheme takes its cues from modern government design systems such as NSW.Digital and Victoria's Ripple, which have been heavily tested and successfully delivered for numerous government agencies.



Unchecked disabled

Unchecked default

Unchecked hover

Unchecked focus

Unchecked hov + foc

Unchecked invalid

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Field Description

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Hint Text](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- This is an optional component that can appear directly in the [Field Label](#) component.
- Two sizes are available for the Field Description used across various Form components.
- Field descriptions retain the same colour as body copy, rather than a lighter shade.
- Descriptions remain in place when there is an error message.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Field Descriptions are an optional component and will not be required if/when the Field Label is either very clear or when vertical space is limited.
- For consistency, CivicTheme uses the same weight and style of its Form Descriptions across all form components, rather than relying on standard body copy formats. This gives the component greater contrast against the rest of the page content, and clearer typographic hierarchy.
- Since Field Descriptions may appear over grey backgrounds, CivicTheme opts for keeping the Hint Text colour darker for contrast, and consistent with the body copy colour. The contrast of the Field Description remains strong by using a SemiBold style for adjacent Field Label.
- CivicTheme's Field Descriptions do not compete alongside error messages, and remain in place to provide additional context even when a field message appears alongside the input field.

We will only use this to respond to your question.

We will only use this to respond to your question.

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Field Message

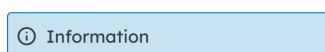
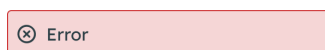
This atomic element has been modelled after the [Error Message](#) and [Page Alerts](#) components from the Australian Design System. It is a part of CivicTheme’s forms.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Field Messages appear as their own block, rather than simply coloured text.
- Field Messages come in four key message variants: ‘Error’, ‘Warning’, ‘Success/Validation’, and general ‘Information’ messages.
- Field Messages use iconography.
- The Field Message appears directly underneath the Text Input Field, as opposed to above the input field.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Each Field Message has its own unique colour and iconography to effectively (and more quickly) communicate its urgency. For example, the ‘Warning’ message uses an exclamation mark icon and a colour background, while ‘Success’ uses a checkmark icon and a green background.
- A block message has been validated to be more visually distinctive.
- The Field Message appears below the input field to avoid competing with the Field Label or Description (Hint Text), which in some scenarios may get text-heavy.
- By appearing above the input field, the Field Message also doesn’t push the (potentially active) input field down while the user is focusing on it. This movement could result in a jarring experience for the user.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Fieldset

This component has been modelled after [Form Groups](#) – a component of [Forms](#) – from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Provided configuration options to include [hint text](#) under each Fieldset [label](#)

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Hint text can be used to provide more context that will help the user successfully complete the form field.
- Having the ability to display hint text within Form Groups also negates the need to use placeholder text within the input field. (Source: [Placeholders in Form Fields Are Harmful](#))

Fieldset legend

We will only use this to respond to your question.

Nested fieldset legend

We will only use this to respond to your question.

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Label

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Form Label](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Labels use a SemiBold text style as opposed to a Regular weight.
- Three sizes are available for Field Labels, which are used within various Form components such as the [Calendar](#) and [Password Strength Indicator](#).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- When used, the SemiBold weight helps strengthen its contrast against the Field Description, and also clearly distinguishes it from regular body copy.
- For consistency, CivicTheme uses the same weight and style of its labels across all form components, rather than relying on standard body copy formats. This gives the component greater contrast against the rest of the page content and clearer typographic hierarchy.

Form field label

Form field label

Form field label

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Radio

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Control input](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- [Radios](#) include an interaction for the hover state, using the same approach as the [Checkbox](#).
- Radio control inputs are currently only supplied as [Small Inputs](#).
- The [Disabled](#) control input states are set back in opacity.
- The [Radio Block](#) component also includes the addition of a title description, in a similar format to the [Text Input](#) field.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Displaying a hover effect when users move their mouse over a checkbox or radio button can create a stronger and more intuitive affordance for users. The hover effect visually tells users that the label is a clickable target. When they see the hover effect, it prepares them to click the label. (Source: [Why You Should Add Hover Effects to Your Checkboxes](#))
- For its updated validation colours, CivicTheme uses two colour variants optimised for both light and dark themes, ensuring they provide the maximum amount of contrast in any state, and across as many custom colour themes as possible.
- The existing disabled states of the Australian Design System's button did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. Although CivicTheme's disabled state button appears visually closer to a regular button (compared its ADS counterpart), it's visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing primary and secondary active buttons, while remaining legible for readers with poor vision.
- For the general look and behaviour of its Control Inputs, such as the addition of title descriptions, CivicTheme takes its cues from modern government design systems such as NSW.Digital and Victoria's Ripple, which have been heavily tested and successfully delivered for numerous government agencies.



- Unchecked default
- Unchecked invalid
- Unchecked disabled
- Unchecked Hov + foc
- Unchecked hover
- Unchecked focus

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Select

This component has been modelled after the [Select](#) input in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme's [Default](#) select input – in its resting state – is presented with a thinner, 1px border for a cleaner (but still accessible) look, with a white background colour to separate its appearance from the [Text inputs](#).
- The default Select input displays an additional interactive hover state, which displays a 2px border around the component (similar to ADS' [default](#) style Select input).
- CivicTheme's [Block Select](#) input follows the same design pattern as the Default input field.
- The [Invalid](#) Select inputs use four new shades/hues for validation: a darker red when displayed with white text, and a lighter red when displayed with black text.
- The [Disabled](#) Select inputs are set back in opacity.
- Select widths can be configured as per the ADS guidelines
- Select inputs can be configured to include search inputs within the dropdown list.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The design of the select box is intended to match the text inputs and buttons used in the system. This way form elements can be combined inline.
- CivicTheme also takes its behavioural cues from modern government design systems such as NSW.Digital and Victoria's Ripple, which have been heavily tested and successfully delivered for numerous state government agencies.
- For its updated validation colours, CivicTheme uses two colour variants optimised for both light and dark themes, ensuring they provide the maximum amount of contrast in any state, and across as many custom colour themes as possible.
- The existing disabled states of the Australian Design System's Select input did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. CivicTheme's *Disabled* appearance is closer to a Default input field (compared to its ADS counterpart), however its visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing Default/Active state Select inputs, while remaining eligible for readers with poor vision.



Default | ⇅

Hover | ⇅

Focus | ⇅

Invalid | ⇅

Disabled | ⇅

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Textarea

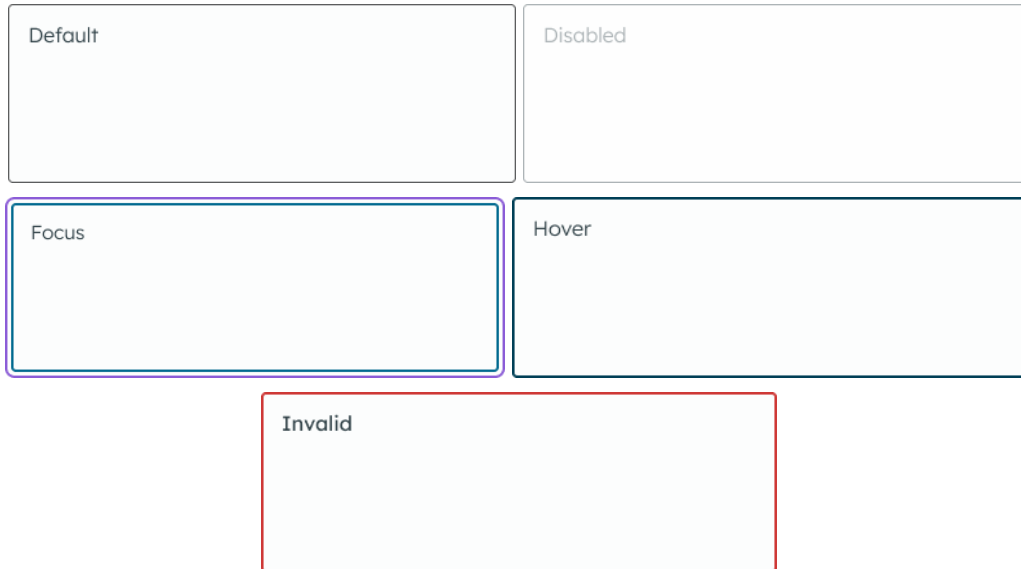
This component has been modelled after the [Text input](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme's [Text Area](#) (aka Multi-line) input field – in its resting state – is presented with a thinner, 1px border for a cleaner (but still accessible) look, with darker background colour (compared to the body background colour) to balance its thinner border and separate its appearance from the body.
- The [Text Area](#) displays an additional, interactive hover state, which presents the default ADS appearance of a 2px border.
- The handles, which allow the user to resize the input, are also more prominent.
- The [Invalid inputs](#) use four new shades/hues for validation: a darker red when displayed with white text, and a lighter red when displayed with black text.
- The [Disabled text inputs](#) are set back in opacity.
- [Input widths](#) can be configured as per the ADS guidelines.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For the general look and behaviour of its text inputs, CivicTheme takes its cues from modern government design systems such as NSW.Digital and Victoria's Ripple, which have been heavily tested and successfully delivered for numerous government agencies.
- For its updated validation colours, CivicTheme uses two colour variants optimised for both light and dark themes, ensuring they provide the maximum amount of contrast in any state, and across as many custom colour themes as possible.
- The existing disabled states of the Australian Design System's *Text Input* did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. Although CivicTheme's disabled state input appears visually closer to a regular input field (compared to its ADS counterpart), its visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing *Default/Active* state text inputs, while remaining legible for readers with poor vision.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Textfield

This component has been modelled after [Text input](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme's [default](#) input text field – in its resting state – is presented with a thinner, 1px border for a cleaner (but still accessible) look, with darker background colour (compared to the body background colour) to balance its thinner border and separate its appearance from the body.
- The [default input text field](#) displays an additional, interactive hover state, which presents the default ADS appearance of a 2px border.
- CivicTheme's [Block text input](#) follows the same design pattern as the default input field.
- The [Invalid inputs](#) use four new shades/hues for validation: a darker red when displayed with white text, and a lighter red when displayed with black text.
- The [Disabled text inputs](#) are set back in opacity.
- [Input widths](#) can be configured as per the ADS guidelines.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For the general look and behaviour of its text inputs, CivicTheme takes its cues from modern government design systems such as NSW.Digital and Victoria's Ripple, which have been heavily tested and successfully delivered for numerous government agencies.
- For its updated validation colours, CivicTheme uses two colour variants optimised for both light and dark themes, ensuring they provide the maximum amount of contrast in any state, and across as many custom colour themes as possible.
- The existing disabled states of the Australian Design System's *Text Input* did not provide the necessary contrast required for WCAG 2.1 standards. Although CivicTheme's disabled state input appears visually closer to a regular input field (compared to its ADS counterpart), its visual hierarchy still remains much lower than the competing *Default/Active* state text inputs, while remaining legible for readers with poor vision.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Heading

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Headings](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- All headings use the commercial-free Lexend font family as the primary web font.
- CivicTheme headings support H1 to H6.
- CivicTheme Headings are available in two states, default (without link) and link (with link) — previous versions of the design system included a default, hover and underline state.
- Removal of the headings underline state.
- Removal of text style Display Headings.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The sans-serif Lexend font family is designed with variable, extended scaling aimed to improve reading fluency and character recognition. (Source: [Lexend.com](https://lexend.com))
- Previous versions of the Australian Design System styled headings in the same way as H4, which caused confusion. CivicTheme approaches its heading application from a more familiar H1-H6 perspective, designed with search engine optimisation (SEO) and developers in mind.
- Previous CivicTheme Headings indicated that the interaction states could be better represented by embedding the Link component inside the Heading. This reduces the number of Heading states and automatically applies the Link interaction states to the Heading.
- Early CivicTheme prototypes indicated that adding underlines to headings broke Figma's *Text Styles*, requiring the designer/editor to manually update the font. As a result, the underline was removed and new states were created based on the Link component. These states can be seen in the interactive states of banners and other heading related links.



Desktop Heading 1

Desktop Heading 1

Desktop Heading 2

Desktop Heading 2

Desktop Heading 3

Desktop Heading 3

Desktop Heading 4

Desktop Heading 4

Desktop Heading 5

Desktop Heading 5

Desktop Heading 6

Desktop Heading 6

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Link

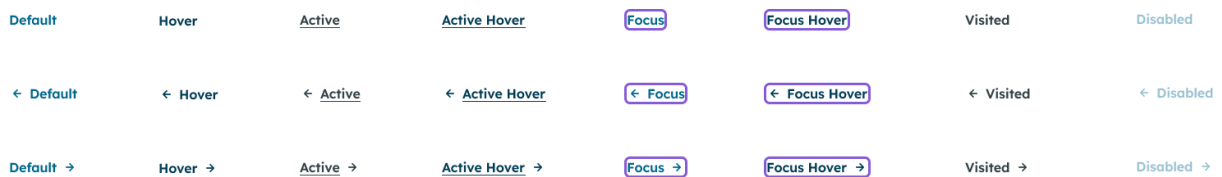
This atomic element has been modelled after the [Main Nav](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme has used the [Gold ADS Main Nav](#) component as its primary reference for all non-content links in its design system. That is, any links that appear outside the body of the website; such as main menu links.
- Non-content links use a SemiBold text weight.
- Non-content links include additional left and right icon variants.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Some link types benefit from alternative interactive states beyond the traditional text-underline style for visual prominence. This includes the links within the main navigation, which showcase a unique link style to work with the (optional) dropdown menu.
- The SemiBold weight style of the main navigation links clearly indicate what the primary navigation items are, and also help reinforce the hierarchy of information.
- The left/right icon variants have been created for situations where the link needs to quickly and clearly communicate a unique action that may occur when activated, such as opening a dropdown menu or opening/downloading a document.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Paragraph

This collection of text styles has been modelled after the [Body](#) in the Australian Design System. Those styles include:

- Basic typography
- Lists
- Mathematics and code
- Content management

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- All typography uses the commercially free Lexend font family as the primary web font.
- Body copy is restricted to 12-15 words per line, inline with the *The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* recommendation of 80 characters (or less) per line.
- CivicTheme uses an additional display heading for H1 elements positioned within the hero component. These are larger variants to the H1 used on areas of the design system that do not use the hero component.
- Paragraph breaks (the space between each paragraph) have been refined, and span 1.5x the height of a traditional line break.
- Anchored links `<a>` use a background colour on hover state, rather than a standard underline or colour change.
- The majority of other styles and elements remain almost identical to the ADS recommendations and rationale.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The sans-serif Lexend font family is designed with variable, extended scaling aimed to improve reading fluency and character recognition. (Source: [Lexend.com](https://lexend.com))
- Due to the wider space allocated for hero content, both headings and paragraph styles benefitted from a larger font size, which resulted in several new styles including *display headings* (large H1) and *lead copy* (large paragraph). This opportunity was identified during early iterations of the CivicTheme design system.
- Early prototyping of CivicTheme indicated that the same proportional margins for paragraph spacing resulted in too much white space between paragraphs. When a smaller margin is used, the two paragraphs of text are perceived as a single visual group.



- Early “theming” of CivicTheme indicated that hover states could not rely on secondary colours alone. Instead, (anchored) hyperlinks rely on the same primary colour as a background fill. In a nutshell, if text and background colours are swapped, the contrast ratio remains the same.

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Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Password Strength

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Page Alerts](#) component from the Australian Design System.

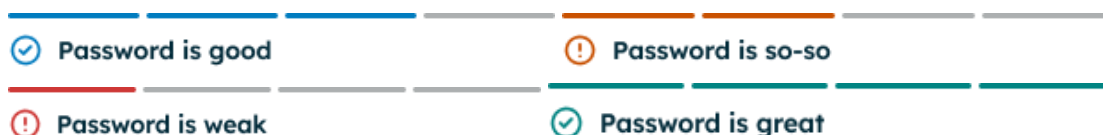
We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Password strength meters weren't included within the Australian Design System, however, password indicators that display a progress bar are visually helpful.
- CivicTheme takes its visual direction from the ADS Page Alerts, such as the use of colours, iconography and labelling.
- Rather than one contained box – as seen on the Page Alerts – CivicTheme's password strength meter uses a series of four bars to represent the password's overall strength.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Since requirements for what constitutes a solid password vary widely from site to site, it is helpful to have the progress bar reflect how well users are doing. A study by Egelman et al. (2013) found that strength meters motivated users to create stronger passwords. Visually representing the strength of the user's password, and showing that there is room for improvement, changes the motivation. The benefit is getting a secure password, instead of just complying with a system's arbitrary command. (Source: [Password Creation: 3 Ways To Make It Easier](#))
- For government applications, a password strength meter was an important feature that would benefit both public and private sectors. According to [passwordresearch.com](#), 80% of data breaches are traced to weak or reused login credentials, 61% of people use the same password for multiple accounts, and only 44% of users change passwords at least once per year.
- For individuals using screen readers, a progress bar alone was not helpful. Even colours can vary widely in meaning and may have cultural significance. For this reason, the password meter has also been clearly labelled.

Note: The password strength component is not currently available in Figma v1.7.0. Due to development time constraints, the decision was made to include the component in future design releases.





Popover

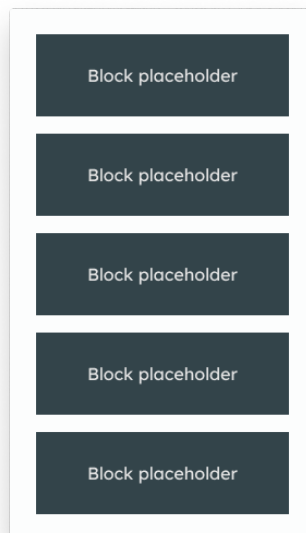
This component has been modelled after [Fieldset](#) – a component of Forms – from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Applied a popover behaviour to the Fieldset component, which can be used in various areas across the CivicTheme design system, such as the [Group Filter](#) dropdown
- Provided configuration options to switch between radio blocks, checkbox blocks, and text input blocks

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The browser’s native dropdown lacked the tools to show multiple form elements. For example, it was not possible to display both an input field (for filtering) and a long list of attributes within the same native dropdown. This required a more robust solution in the form of an accessible design that CivicTheme could holistically control.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Quote

This component has been modelled after [Default Callout](#), a [Callout](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme leverages the style and treatment of the Callout component to present any quotes that creators may want to highlight and showcase within the content (or body) of the page.
- Rather than present a heading and body copy as the foundations of the component, our Quote component uses larger body copy (for the quote) and smaller citation copy (used to cite the source of the quote).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- By allowing the creator to highlight key pieces of information, a dedicated quote component helps to separate large amounts of text into smaller, readable blocks.
- This approach is called “chunking”: a concept that originates from the field of cognitive psychology. (Source: [How Chunking Helps Content Processing](#))

Quote copy lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

- Mr. John Civic

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Table

This component has been modelled after the [Table](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The striped variant of the CivicTheme table is enabled by default.
- All tables include an optional caption field.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The majority of CivicTheme’s table usage (to date) has been for larger, more complex table structure. For this reason, the alternative striped variant has been enabled by default.
- The caption field is a useful addition to help describe the information presented within the table, and is also featured in other government design systems, including Victoria’s Ripple and NSW.Digital.

Table caption

Unique title ID	Description	Date
Unique title ID	Description summary on odd row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description summary on even row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description summary on odd row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description summary on even row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description summary on odd row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description summary on even row	1 Jul 2020
Unique title ID	Description	Date

Table caption

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Tag

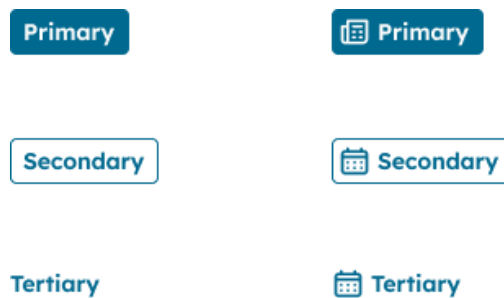
This atomic element has been modelled after [Tags](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme uses several styles of tags based on where they are on the website. They can be seen in the following locations:
 - Within the [Card component](#), featured in the agency's primary colour. The number of tags featured here are limited
 - Within the [Body](#) of the website, positioned at the end of the information.
- CivicTheme's Tags use rounded corners in their appearance, and ignore the use of text underlines in replace of a button appearance.
- CivicTheme's Tags also feature optional icons to visually distinguish the tag between an event or topic.
- Their interactive states change in both border and background colours.
- Currently, the Tag component does not include headings.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Similar to Victoria's Ripple design system, CivicTheme presents tags with fully-rounded styling to clearly distinguish, and separate their appearance from regular buttons and their interactions. This included the necessity to display the text-underline treatment.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Text List

This atomic element has been modelled after the [Lists](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Both Ordered List and Unordered List offer three levels (indentations) of list styles.
- The Unordered List features larger bullets.
- Greater spacing exists between each bullet item.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- CivicTheme showcases lists within lists (ie. multi-level hierarchical lists) by styling each bullet level differently. This makes the embedded list much easier to follow. (Source: [7 Tips for Presenting Bulleted Lists in Digital Content](#))
- Merriam Webster defines bullet points as, “an item in a list that has a large dot in front of it to signify its importance.” For this reason CivicTheme uses bullet points slightly larger than the native offering, which helps to support information hierarchy.
- CivicTheme adds greater spacing between each bullet point, which is 1.5 times larger than the body copy’s line height. This helps to clearly separate each bullet point and ensure the list item is easier to scan.

Body copy lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

- Unordered list lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
- Unordered list lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
- Unordered list lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Body copy lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Molecules



Accordion

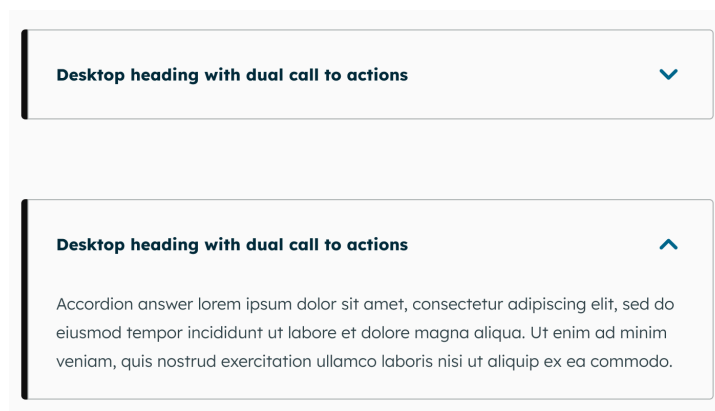
This layout component has been modelled after the [Accordion](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Just like card components, the accordion uses rounded corners, keeping in-line with the “touch-friendly” theme of CivicTheme.
- Highlight colours have been applied to the left edge of the accordion.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- During customer testing on several commercial projects, rounded corners tested easier on our users’ eyes. When we aligned accordions in a row, it was easier to count the total number of accordions when they had rounded corners. The distinguishable edges on the corners of accordions guided our users’ eyes to recognise the visual differences. Conversely, accordions with sharp corners appeared identical and unified from each other, which were less likely to attract attention.
- The inclusion of a coloured accent to the left of the accordion helped draw more attention to it, established alignment, and made the component more distinguishable from static, non-clickable elements.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Attachment

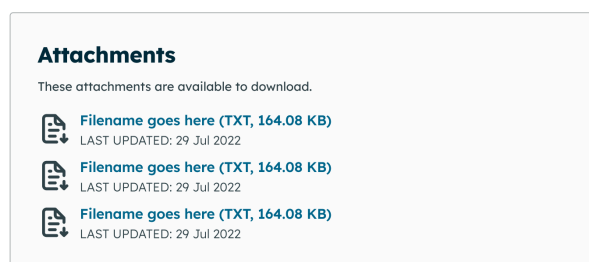
This component has been modelled after the [Basic Card](#) and [Default Link List](#) components from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Combined the design of both the Basic Card and Link components to form a content card that presents a list of downloadable files/documents
- Added additional labelling (ie. file specifications) below each link item
- Added iconography alongside each link list item
- Provided additional spacing between each link to more clearly separate each downloadable asset

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Requirements for early CivicTheme-based projects called for a component that allowed its readers to download assets that may have been directly (or indirectly) related to the preceding article, such as brochures, application forms, fact sheets, etc.
- An “Attachment” card was created based on the foundations of its most relevant ADS counterparts: a Card component, but also a component that presented links within a vertical list, ie. Link List component.
- The additional subtitle labelling for each list item allows its creators to include details of the downloadable assets, such as a compatible file type. This was particularly helpful for screen readers.
- The use of additional iconography allows for a fast way to communicate the function and output of clicking the link.
- Additionally, adding more vertical spacing between each link meant that they were visually more distinguishable when the file names ran for several lines.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Breadcrumb

Breadcrumbs are an important navigational element that support wayfinding — making users aware of their current location within the hierarchical structure of a website. Breadcrumbs are a list of links representing the current page and its “ancestors” (parent page, grandparent page, and so on), typically going all the way back to the site homepage.

This component has been modelled after [Breadcrumbs](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Shortened breadcrumb trail on mobile. The breadcrumb component on mobile only displays its parent page link, similar to a “back” button.
- CivicTheme’s breadcrumb component is nested within the hero component.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- According to the Nielsen Norman Group, breadcrumbs are represented as “a trail of links at the top of the page, usually just below the global navigation.” For this reason, CivicTheme’s breadcrumb component has been nested **within** the hero component, allowing it to sit in a familiar location for its readers, ie. directly below the primary navigation.
- Unfortunately, on mobile, the use of breadcrumbs quickly overwhelmed the benefits. For this reason, CivicTheme uses shorter, one-level, breadcrumbs to avoid wrapping multiple lines and taking up important space. This research has also been backed by the Nielsen Norman Group. (See: [Breadcrumbs: 11 Design Guidelines for Desktop and Mobile](#))

[Level 1](#) > [Level 2](#) > [Level 3](#) > [Level 4](#) > [Active](#)

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Callout

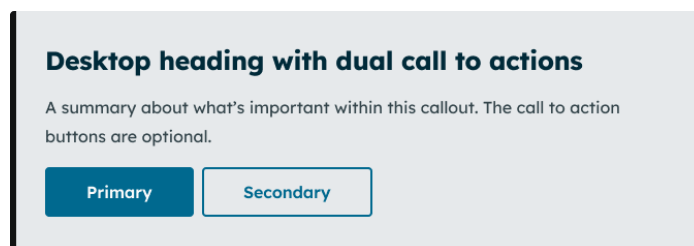
This component has been modelled after [Callout](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The Callout component includes the option to add both a primary and secondary call to action under the description.
- Additional content-related components have also been modelled after the Callout component in CivicTheme, including Attachments, Publications and Next Steps.
- CivicTheme styles its Quote element after the default Callout component. The Quote component also includes citation.
- Accent line uses the highlight colour, as opposed to the default neutral colour.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Agencies that had implemented early iterations of CivicTheme requested the ability to add call to actions within the Callout component.
- Agencies that had implemented early iterations of CivicTheme also requested the ability to call-out other important information that required more than just a heading and description. This included:
 - Imagery (eg. Publication component)
 - File name(s) and dates (eg. Attachments component)
 - Iconography (eg. Next Steps component)
- A stronger emphasis on the accent line was used to draw greater attention to the call-out component, as tested in early customer testing sessions for several agencies.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Event Card

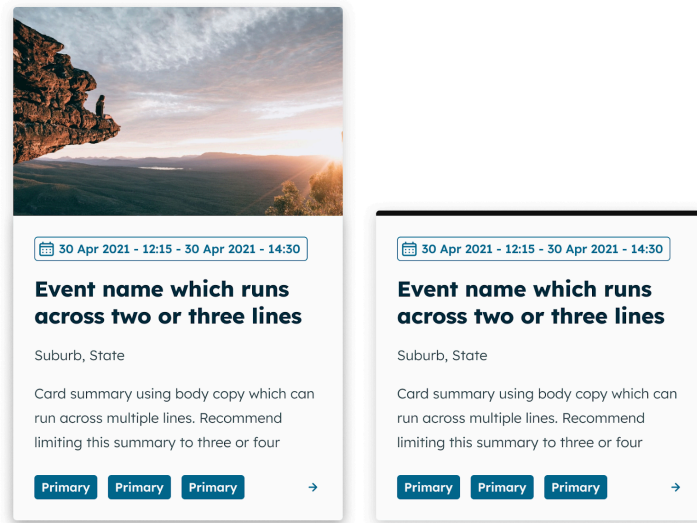
The Event Card component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Includes additional event attributes, such as dates and event tags
- The ability to include a relevant image within the card
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions
- The addition of a right-arrow icon (with link state) to provide a visual cue that the card will navigate the reader to a new page, and away from the current page.
- Replaced Tag component with Tag List component to allow multiple tags in one row
- Updated interactive states to Link and Without Link
- Updated the heading size from 5 to 4, to make it visually larger and more accessible.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, that also effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Field

This component has been modelled after [Form](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The [Labels](#) element is styled using Lexend’s “SemiBold” font type.
- The [Hint Text](#) element, which sits below the Label, is featured in a smaller font size – in a lighter shade.
- The [Error message](#) element is featured below the [text input](#) field within a prominent background colour and at the same, smaller size as the hint text.
- The [Form groups](#) element (aka Nested forms) has not been uplifted and follows the same guidelines as the ADS.
- The [Fieldset](#) element has expanded on in CivicTheme to show/display additional variations of fieldsets, including examples with text inputs, multi-line inputs, select dropdowns and radio buttons.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The Nielsen Norman Group identified that 79% of users will scan new content first, and [elements that enhance scanning include headings](#). CivicTheme takes this philosophy and uses hierarchy by boldening its form [labels](#), helping to draw attention to them over the input field.
- CivicTheme takes a similar approach to its [Hint Text](#) element as Victoria’s Ripple and NSW.Digital’s design systems, with the Hint text taking less visual dominance as the form label. This is in-part due to the secondary nature of the hint text’s purpose.
- CivicTheme also follows a similar approach as NSW.Digital’s [Error message](#), positioned underneath the input field to help reduce (and separate) the amount of information placed above the input field. The error message has also been designed to draw the eye’s attention much faster, with a solid/filled background colour rather than coloured text.
- It was identified that there were no benefits in uplifting the look or functionality of the [Form groups](#), as this element is not commonly used. Scenarios may include password confirmation, or secondary information (eg. other contact email addresses).
- CivicTheme has not uplifted the ADS fieldset element in any way, aside from using its own treatment to form fonts, labels, and their inputs. The layout and format remain



the same. CivicTheme does, however, expand on the [Fieldset](#) example provided by the ADS, and presents 10 new scenarios on how a fieldset may be used.

Form field label *

Description content sample with long text that spans on the multiple lines

Two examples of form field labels. The first is a white rectangular box with a thin grey border containing the text "Default". The second is a light teal rectangular box with a thin teal border, containing a teal checkmark icon followed by the text "Success".

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Figure

The Figure component has been modelled after [Responsive media](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Figures can be enlarged to maximise their screen real estate.
- Similar to the Table component, it provides the ability to add a caption (alongside a “photo” icon).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For various government agencies, responsive media has requirements in multiple formats, including images (figures), video, and maps.
- Responsive media, in its default location in the body, was limited to the width that the body content allowed (eg. approximately 670px in length for desktop), and had the following limitations:
 - The restricted space, overall, made the media less immersive for the viewer
 - It proved more difficult to view (and understand) the finer details of the media’s content. For example; watching a video tutorial on how to use an application, and not clearly viewing a label.
- When the reader clicked to enlarge a media component, it was identified that the content became their primary focus. For this reason, CivicTheme showcases the media by placing it front-and-centre of the experience within a separate modal that hides other potential distractions.



 Image caption

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Group Filter

Too much information often causes problems in online services, whether on ecommerce sites, news sites, social media, or any big corporation’s website. One way to help users navigate through many options (products, locations, content, etc.) is to allow them to narrow down the list of items to a manageable number that satisfies their specified criteria.

This component has been modelled after the [Inline Link List](#), [Tags](#), and the majority of Form components – primarily the [Select](#) box – from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme combines all of the atomic and molecular components to form a larger Filter organism that stretches horizontally across the page, with robust functionality.
- Filter links are not presented with underlines by default (similar to button behaviour). Instead, links display chevron icons to indicate dropdown functionality.
- Unlike the ADS Inline Link List component, CivicTheme displays the last link item (Sort by) at the other end of the component, due to its non-relationship with the other link items.
- Clicking on a filter attribute will automatically display the attribute’s “applied” filter. This tag also displays a “remove” (X) icon to visually indicate its functionality within a limited space, in a minimal approach.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The Baymard Institute published an article titled, [“A Horizontal Toolbar Can Outperform the Traditional Sidebar”](#). It concluded that the horizontal filtering and toolbar can increase both the discovery and the use of a site’s filters, significantly outperforming the left-sided filter in terms of convenience and efficiency, solving the following key problems:
 - a. Users overlook or ignore the filtering sidebar entirely (this is the most common scenario).
 - b. Users sometimes mistake the site’s sorting tool for the site’s filtering tools, thinking they are the only ones available.
- Furthermore, a horizontal filter opens up the possibility of removing the traditional sidebar altogether, which frees up horizontal screen real estate and thus can be used for displaying either an additional product per row or larger product thumbnails.
- Again, according to the Baymard Institute, 32% of sites in their benchmark of 60 top e-commerce sites don’t display an overview of applied filters, resulting in the following problems:



- a. No obvious and immediate confirmation that filters have been applied
- b. Not having a quick way to remove filters
- c. Not having a context for the product list
- CivicTheme solves this problem by presenting its applied filters as “active” tags, which can be easily removed by clicking on the selected tag again (as indicated by a “remove” icon).

Filter results by: [Topic](#) ▾ [Applies to](#) ▾ [Date range](#) ▾ [Keyword](#) ▾ [Sort by](#) ▾

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Logo

This layout component has been modelled after the [Header](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme provides three layout configurations for the logo:
 - Default: Agency logo/wordmark only
 - Inline: Agency logo/wordmark paired inline with the nation's identity, such as the Australian Coat of Arms
 - Stacked: Agency logo/wordmark stacked underneath the nation's identity, such as the Australian Coat of Arms

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Not all government agencies are alike, and some may have different brand requirements informed or mandated by the state.
- CivicTheme approaches its design layout similar to the Australian Government's Digital Transformation Agency, helping to ensure all agencies have common branding and display a logo that fits and responds appropriately within all screen sizes.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Map

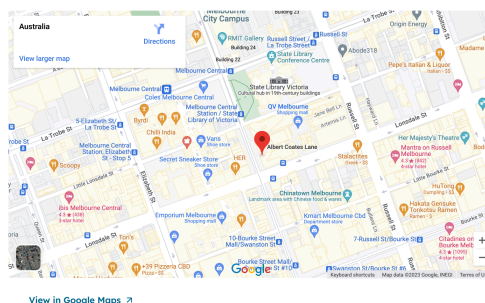
The Embedded Map component has been modelled after [Responsive media](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- All variants can be enlarged to maximise their screen real estate.
- The embedded map provides the ability to view and open the map in its original source, i.e. Google Maps.
- The embedded map also provides the ability to use native Google Map features such as: directions, zoom in and out, view larger map, and toggle between satellite, terrain and public transport layers.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For various government agencies, responsive media has requirements in multiple formats, including images, video and maps.
- Responsive media, in its default location in the body, was limited to the width that the body content allowed (e.g. approximately 670px in length for desktop) and had the following limitations:
 - The restricted space, overall, made the media less immersive for the viewer.
 - It proved more difficult to view (and understand) the finer details of the media's content.
 - By opening an embedded map within its native application, it expands the features and capabilities (including accessibility) that the website may not be able to provide. For example, using turn-by-turn directions to find a customer service office.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Navigation Card

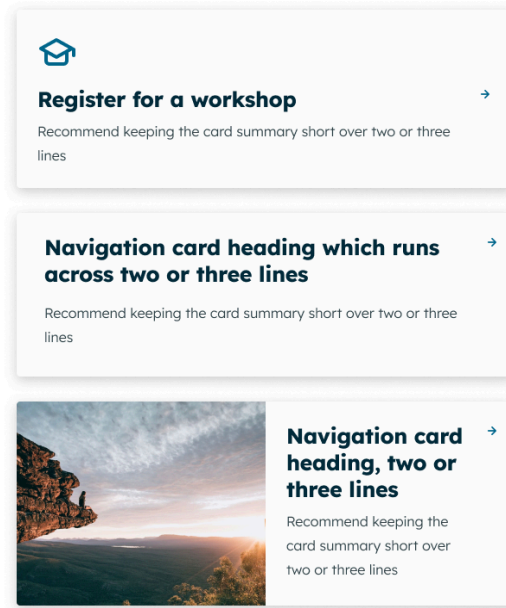
The Navigation Card component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The ability to include a relevant image or icon within the card
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions
- The addition of a right-arrow icon (with link state) to provide a visual cue that the card will navigate the reader to a new page and away from the current page.
- Updated the heading size from 5 to 4, to make it visually larger and more accessible
- Updated interactive states to Link and Without Link
- Removal of the card title's default link underline

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, and effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Next Step

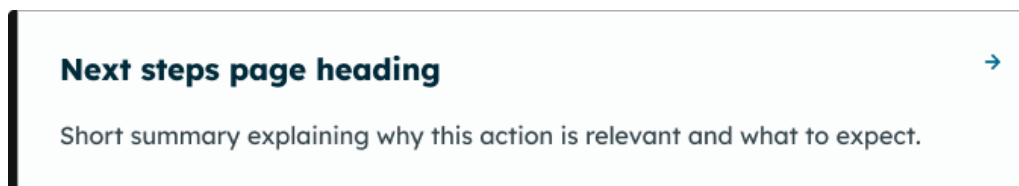
This component has been modelled after the [Default Callout](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- As it is a unique component, CivicTheme has leveraged the style and layout of the Default Callout component for its Next Steps component.
- The Next Step callout includes a right arrow icon that helps to visually communicate the intended action of the callout – that the user will be taken to a new page.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Early CivicTheme projects demanded the need for a component that guided the reader through a process such as an application or set of instructions. For this reason we chose the ADS Callout component as the basis for a new “Next steps” design that caught the attention of the reader and provided clear and meaningful directions.
- Including iconography allowed the component’s function to be faster to recognise at a glance, particularly when users had seen the right arrow icon before.
- Icons can also be visually pleasing and enhance the aesthetic appeal of a design. (Source: [Nielsen Norman Group: Icon Usability](#))



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Pagination

This component has been modelled after the [Direction Links](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The links remain in the brand's primary colours
- Underline and more visually-prominent *active* states

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- It was discovered during early rapid prototyping that, occasionally, direction links may appear near/alongside links and buttons that are of greater priority to the reader's journey. For this reason, CivicTheme reserves the primary and secondary colour palette for those key activities to help reduce the number of coloured elements competing for the user's attention.
- To reduce the chance of click-error on mobile interfaces, the Direction Links were implemented with two options, previous and next options only.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Progress Indicator

This component has been modelled after the [Progress indicator](#) component in the Australian Design System.

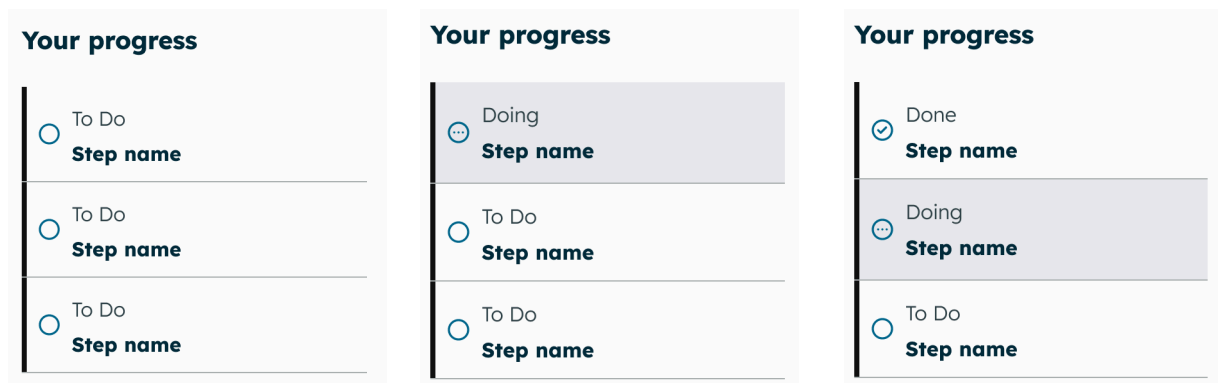
We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Overall, no major uplifts have been made to this component and interactions mirror the ADS guidelines.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For an aesthetic that aligns with CivicTheme’s clean visual appearance, CivicTheme uses a lighter shade of border-line that separates each progress step. Based on earlier customer testing sessions, this change does not appear to impact the user experience, however will be monitored during future releases.

Note: The progress indicator component is not currently available in Figma v1.7.0. Due to development time constraints, the decision was made to include the component in future design releases.





Promo Card

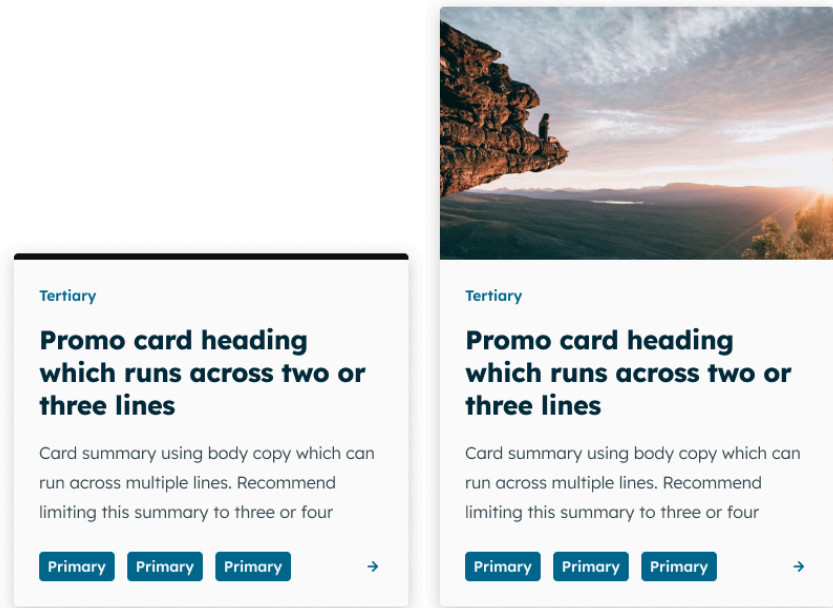
The Promo Card component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Includes additional event attributes, such as date and topic tags
- The ability to include a relevant image within the card
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions
- The addition of a right-arrow icon (with link state) to provide a visual cue that the card will navigate the reader to a new page and away from the current page.
- Replaced Tag component with Tag List component to allow multiple tags in one row
- Updated interactive states to Link and Without Link
- Updated the heading size from 5 to 4, to make it visually larger and more accessible
- Removal of the card title's default link underline

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, that also effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags, and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Publication Card

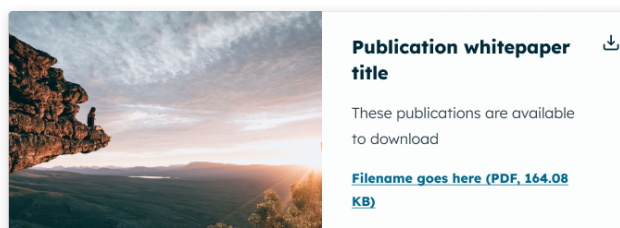
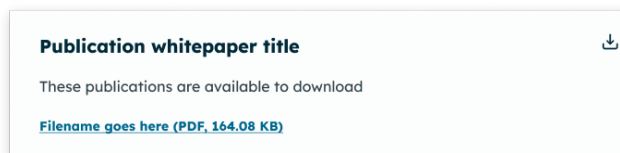
The Publication Card component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Includes additional publication attributes, such as file name and file size
- The ability to include a relevant image with the card
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions
- The addition of a download icon to provide a visual cue that the card will download the publication on click/tap
- Removal of the card title's default link underline
- Removal of Hover and Pressed states
- Updated the heading size from 5 to 4, to make it visually larger and more accessible

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, that also effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags, and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Search

This component has been modelled after the [Search box](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The search component is activated when the user clicks on the magnifying glass icon within the header/main navigation. By default, the search box is not presented due to its size.
- In the search resting position (ie. default state), the search button remains in a default state until a search query has begun within the input field. The minimum requirement for enabling the search button is three characters.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- CivicTheme tested several design options of the search bar – both visible and minimised within the header – and the majority of agencies using early versions of CivicTheme opted for the minimised approach, which placed greater emphasis on the navigation, and presented an overall cleaner layout with greater appeal.
- CivicTheme plans to release the header configuration that exposes search box, however the current implementation was prioritised for CivicTheme’s initial launch.
- By disabling the search button before the user has entered a valid search query, it ensures they won’t be taken to a search results page with either too many results, or no results at all. This unfavourable scenario was identified in previous commercial projects prior to the development of CivicTheme.

I'm looking for... Search

Form field label
I'm looking for...
Search

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Service Card

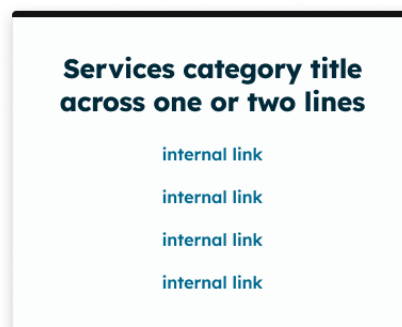
The Service Card component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The Service Card component features a link list to display relevant services or offerings
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions
- The card block is not clickable nor interactive, in favour of the link list interacting with its user
- Removal of the card title's default link underline

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, that also effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags, and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Single Filter

This component has been modelled after the [Default Radio](#) control input and [Tag](#) components from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The filter behaves in an On/Off manner, similar to radio inputs, ie. only one filter attribute can be selected at a time. When a new filter attribute is selected, the other filter is automatically deselected.
- Rather than present this inline list of controls as radio inputs, the attributes are presented using Chip components.
- Added the text “Filter results by” above the filter to provide clarity on filter functionality.
- Added the buttons “Apply” and “Clear all” to the right side of the filter.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The Baymard Institute published an article titled, “[A Horizontal Toolbar Can Outperform the Traditional Sidebar](#)”. It concluded that the horizontal filtering and toolbar can increase both the discovery and the use of a site’s filters, significantly outperforming the left-sided filter in terms of convenience and efficiency, solving the following key problems:
 - a. Users overlook or ignore the filtering sidebar entirely (this is the most common scenario).
 - b. Users sometimes mistake the site’s sorting tool for the site’s filtering tools, thinking they are the only ones available.
- Furthermore, a horizontal filter opens up the possibility of removing the traditional sidebar altogether, which frees up horizontal screen real estate and thus can be used for displaying either an additional product per row or larger product thumbnails.

Filter results by:



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Snippet

The Snippet component is a flexible content container that organises images, headings, content, links or tags into a group. Similar to a card component, the Snippet uses cards to group similar content and links together providing a recognisable format of grouped items to scan or select from.

The Snippet component has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Incorporated the [headings](#) component within the Snippet, which sits above the text and tag components.
- Incorporated the [tag list](#) component with the snippet and provided the ability to toggle the [tags](#) component on or off.
- Incorporated the [paragraph](#) component within the Snippet, which sits beneath the headings component.
- Ability to choose between dark and light theme

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Requirements from CivicTheme-based projects called for a page that allowed its readers to easily – and quickly – scan the results of their keyword search. Previous versions of the design system did not provide a component that presented content in this way.

Page title which runs across one line

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum....

Primary Primary Primary

Page title which runs across one line

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum....

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Subject Card

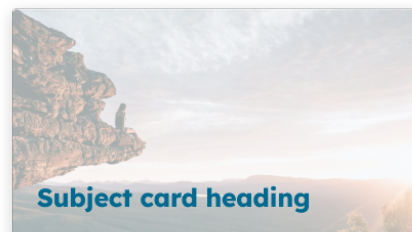
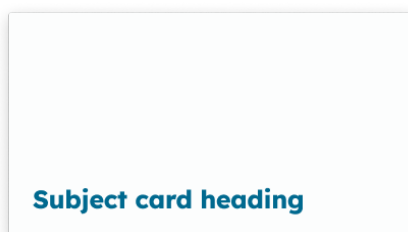
The Subject Card component (eg. popular topics) has been modelled after the [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Subject Cards can be themed with background imagery.
- Elevation shadows have been more prominently used to emphasise hierarchy and encourage interactions.
- Updated interactive states to Link and Without Link
- Updated the heading size from 5 to 4, to make it visually larger and more accessible.
- The card title's default link underline has been removed.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Feedback from several agencies determined the need for a broader range of card types that more appropriately fit their industry and unique requirements, that also effectively communicate their information at-a-glance, including icons, tags, and/or imagery.
- Customer testing on several (commercial) CivicTheme projects validated the hypothesis that hyperlinks within cards did not require the traditional underline treatment when presented in a format that included iconography, elevation shadows, and rounded corners. These attributes helped to communicate interaction, as they are familiar qualities seen within other modern applications, including iOS and Android.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Table of Contents

This component has been modelled after [Inpage nav](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Created a stronger contrast/distinction between resting and hover states of the chapter links
- Used smaller text sizes for the chapter links

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- CivicTheme follows the same approach as Victoria’s Ripple design system and uses a smaller text size for chapter links. Although useful, the in-page navigation does not share the same hierarchy of importance as the page’s content, with users (during previous testing sessions) opting to scan the page’s headings over everything else.
- The hover states use a consistent interactive treatment seen on navigation links, aimed to encourage interactivity.

Desktop Heading

Default First Level
Default First Level
Default First Level

Desktop Heading

Hover First Level
Default First Level
Default First Level

Desktop Heading

Active First Level
Default First Level
Default First Level

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Tabs

Tabbed Navigation is essentially a set of buttons most often set horizontally. Tabs generally follow numerous different styling guidelines.

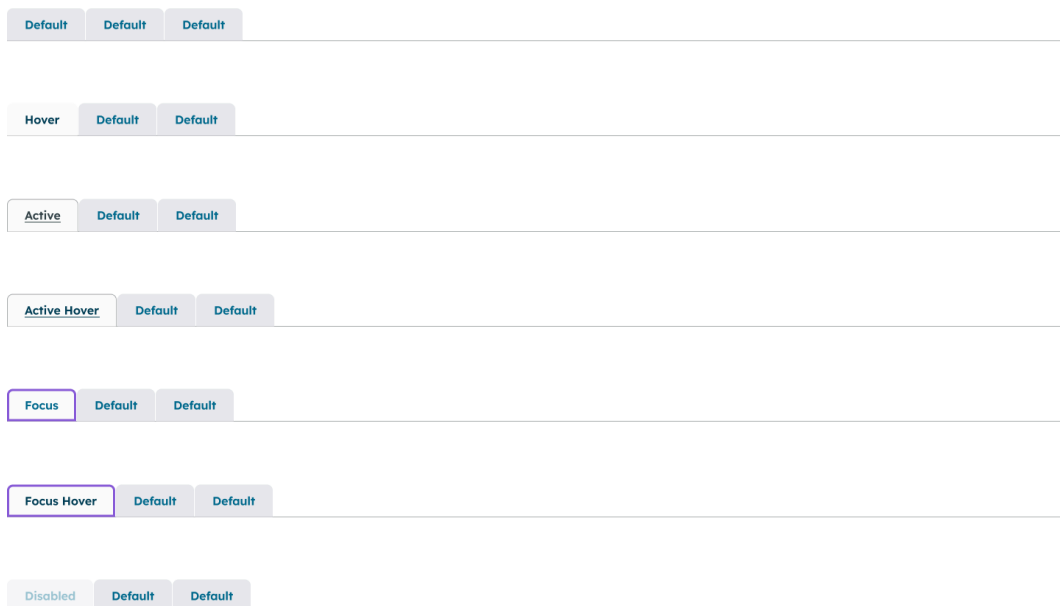
This component has been modelled after the [Main Nav](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Presented the menu in a series of “tabs”, used to alternate between views within the same context, and not to navigate to different areas.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Staying in place while alternating views is the reason why CivicTheme has built this component.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Tag List

The Tag List is a list of horizontal Tag components that can be used on both desktop and mobile devices. The Tag List is a simple way for designers to sort multiple Tags to help users search for and find related content quickly and easily.

While the Tag List is not modelled after a specific component, it has been influenced by the [Link List](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the Tag List component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme features Tag Lists as an element within other components, such as the Slider and Campaign components, allowing users to assign multiple topic tags to each slide.
- Other variations of the Tag List component exist in areas such as content pages.
- For visual consistency the Tags are sorted using the [Item List](#) component.
- CivicTheme features the Tag List for desktop and mobile with light and dark theme options.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For the layout of the Tag List, no uplifts have been made from the ADS Link List except for visual uplifts.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)

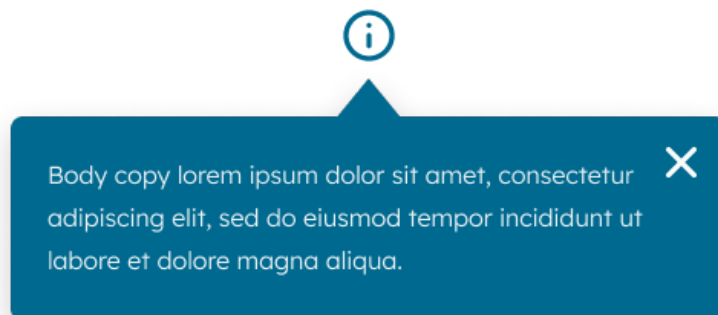


Tooltip

Tooltips are small, user-triggered popups that explain UI elements when the user points to something. They are useful but are not intended for critical information. Tooltips can be attached to any active element (icons, text links, buttons, etc.) on a page. They provide descriptions or explanations for their paired elements. Thus, tooltips are highly contextual and specific and don't explain the bigger picture or entire task flow.

Unlike all other components in CivicTheme that have been modelled after, or influenced by, a specific component in the Australian Design System, the tooltip has not.

CivicTheme's tooltip component is simply a fail-safe option designed for users when they can't understand a feature. Many of today's use cases for tooltips could be omitted if designers/creators followed other design guidelines (for example, labelling icons) and applied less minimalism. However, important information should always be on the page, therefore tooltips are available for tasks that users need to accomplish on your site.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Video Player

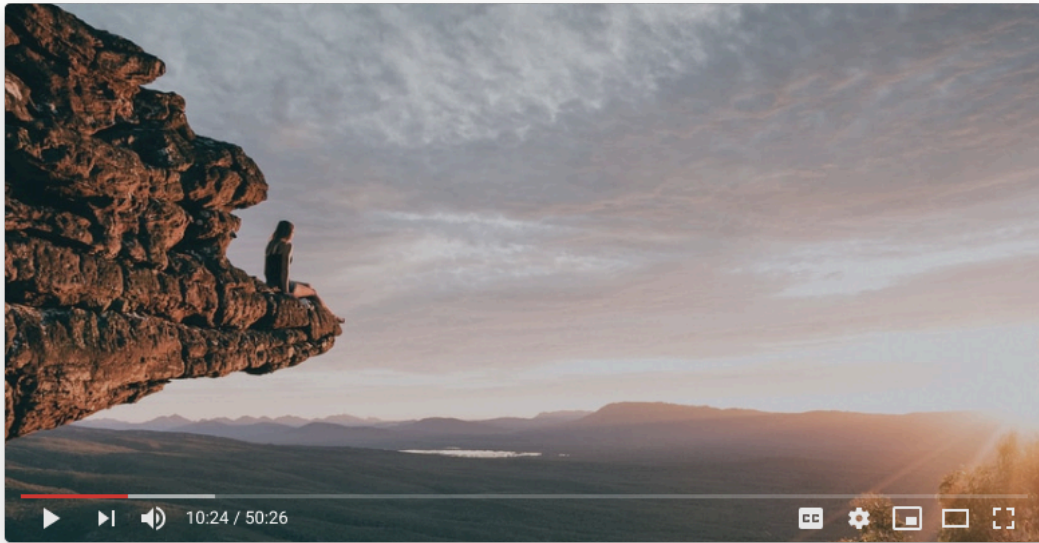
The Video component has been modelled after [Responsive media](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Videos can be enlarged to maximise their screen real estate.
- The Video and Embedded map variants provide the ability to share via third-party sources, eg. email, direct message or social media.
- The Video variant provides the ability to view the video's transcript.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- For various government agencies, responsive media has requirements in multiple formats, including images, video and maps.
- Responsive media, in its default location in the body, was limited to the width that the body content allowed (eg. approximately 670px in length for desktop), and had the following limitations:
 - The restricted space, overall, made the media less immersive for the viewer.
 - It proved more difficult to view (and understand) the finer details of the media's content. For example, watching a video tutorial on how to use an application and not clearly viewing a label.
- When the reader clicked to enlarge a Video component, it was identified that the content became their primary focus. For this reason, CivicTheme showcases the media by placing it front-and-centre of the experience within a separate modal that hides other potential distractions.
- Captions provide content to people who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing, and are needed to understand the content. (Source: [W3C.org](#))
- Some media players are not accessible to people with disabilities. YouTube, Vimeo, and other platforms do support captions, but an agency may also opt to include a separate transcript to view or download. Creating a transcript or captions for a short video can be less costly than defending an inaccessible file. (Source: [CivicDesign.org](#))



[View transcript](#)

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Organisms



Alert

This component has been modelled after [Page Alerts](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The Page Alerts component has been implemented as two key alert types:
 - A global-level page alert, which appears at the top of the page, above the header
 - A body-level page alert, which can appear anywhere within the body content of the page.
- Each alert type comes in four different variants. Listed below is a general guideline:
 - Red = Error, eg. when there's a problem
 - Orange = Warning, eg. something to be aware of
 - Green = Success, eg. positive news
 - Blue = General information, eg. latest updates
- Page alerts use background colours for greater prominence on the page.
- Page alert colours have been updated to meet WCAG 2.1 when sitting under white text.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- During early prototyping, it was identified that global, site-wide alerts needed their own visual treatment to separate themselves from the in-page alerts. Based on their hierarchy, these global alerts required greater attention, and therefore leverage the entire alert colour to stand out above all other components.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Banner

This component has been modelled after [Hero](#), a component of [Header](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Incorporated the [breadcrumbs](#) component within the Hero, which sits directly above the hero's text
- Provided both a primary and secondary [button](#) within the hero component, which sits directly below the hero's text
- Provided the ability to include a [Responsive Image](#) adjacent to the Hero's text
- Provided the ability to include a transparent [Background](#) image within the Hero component

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- According to Nielsen Norman Group, breadcrumbs are represented as, “a trail of links at the top of the page, usually [just below the global navigation](#).” For this reason, CivicTheme's breadcrumb component has been nested **within** the hero component, allowing it to sit in a familiar location for its readers, ie. directly below the primary navigation.
- According to Nielsen Norman Group research, users spent about [57% of their page-viewing time above the fold](#). For this reason it was especially important to include a button (or call to action) above the fold and within the hero, sitting contextually alongside the copy to support the site's goal or purpose.
- As the old saying goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words”. CivicTheme uses imagery within its Hero component for both attention and emotional appeal. Most people perceive and decode images much faster than words, and it provides a quick visual message about the content. According to UX Planet, hero images are also a well-proven way to transfer the needed emotions via images, shapes and colours, and set the needed atmosphere from the first seconds of interaction. (See: [Unsung Heroes of UI: Look at Hero Images in Web Design](#))
- There have been the occasional requests for Hero features such as a carousel to meet the demands of multiple departments. While this, understandably, may seem the right way to go, there have been multiple research studies concluding that carousels are typically ignored by users, don't engage users, and frustrate users. (Source: [Yale University: Usability & Web Accessibility for Hero Carousels](#))




[Level 1](#) > [Level 2](#) > [Level 3](#) > [Level 4](#) > **Active**

Providing visually engaging digital experiences

Government grade set of high quality design themes that are accessible, inclusive and provide a consistent digital experience for your citizen.

Primary **Secondary**



[Level 1](#) > [Level 2](#) > [Level 3](#) > [Level 4](#) > **Active**

Section name

Providing visually engaging digital experiences

Suburb, State - 16:00 - 17:00 | Last updated: 26 Oct 2022

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four lines summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four lines.

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Campaign

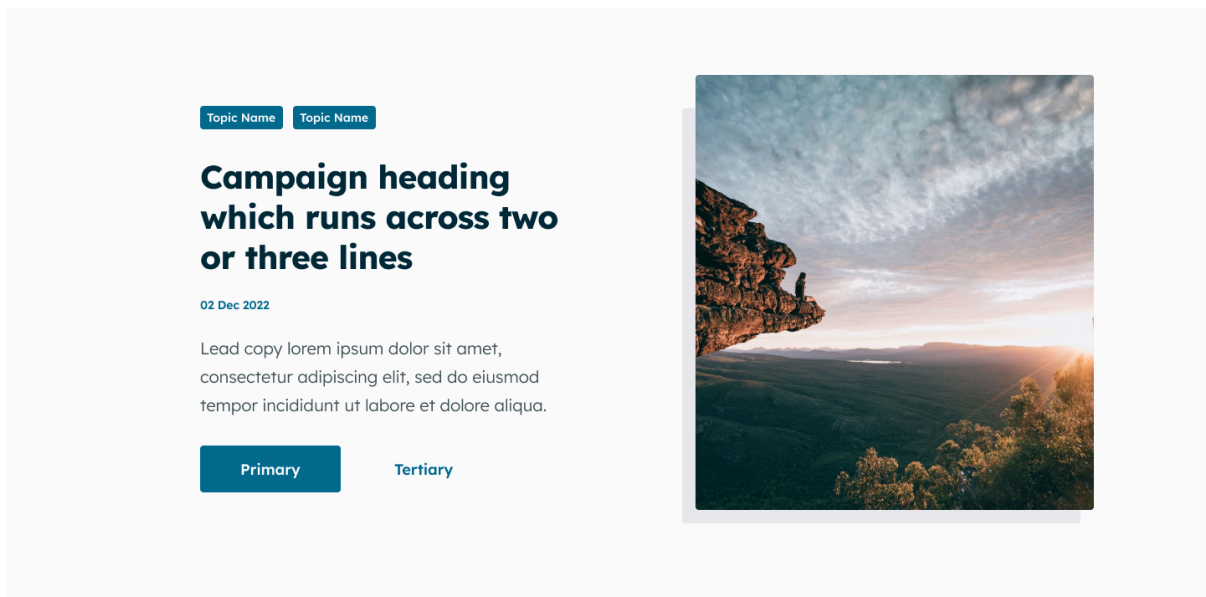
This component has been modelled after [Clickable Cards](#) and [Feature Headers](#), components of the [Card](#) component in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The card(s) are presented as one large feature, spanning the width of the site's body.
- The card(s) can be configured to show both a primary and tertiary call to action.
- Additional attributes such as topic and date can also be enabled to cater to content for [Events](#) and [Publications](#).
- Due to the size of the card on desktop screens, the imagery sits inline with the description rather than stacked. The resulting layout is similar to a hero.
- Replaced Tag component with Tag List component to allow multiple tags in one row
- Positioned the date below the Heading component to allow multiple tags in one row

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- This component has proved beneficial to the requirements of previous CivicTheme projects where the content needed greater prominence but couldn't use the space of a hero banner. For example, a trending article that was shared on social media. This allowed for a specific article to be easily located from the home/landing page.
- Including topic and date attributes allowed greater flexibility for the content creator.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Footer

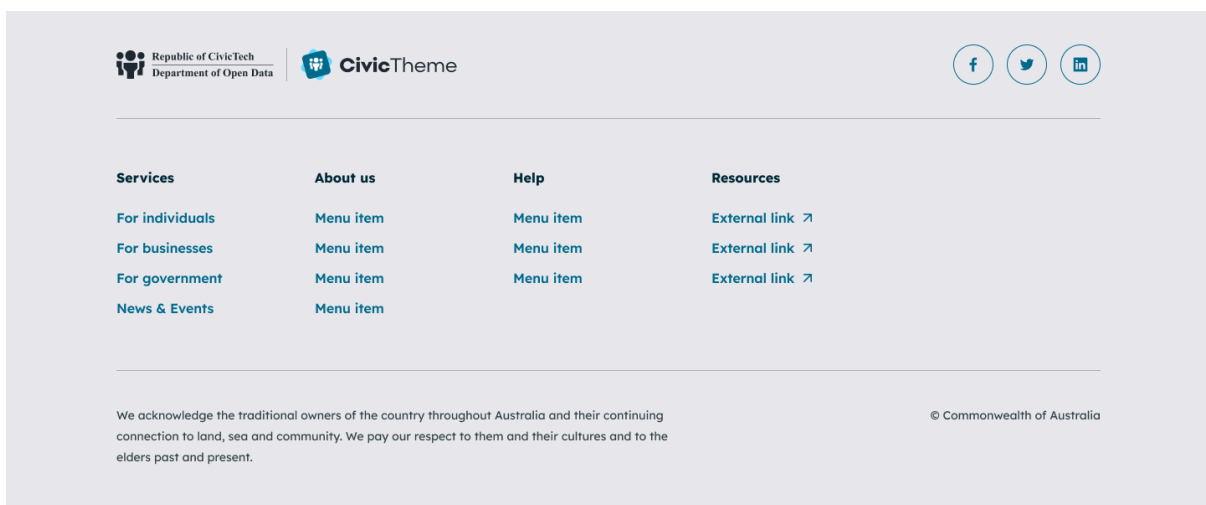
This layout component has been modelled after the [Footer](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme uses contrasting background colours to support ADS’s “visual loudness” practice, as opposed to the original thick line to separate footer from content
- The logo sits above the sitemap rather than below
- The ability to include social media channel links
- The addition of a Welcome to Country statement
- An optional *newsletter subscription* component that sits above the footer’s sitemap

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Both CivicTheme customers, and customers of other government design systems, have required additional communication channels for their users to access and stay up to date, either via social media or regular newsletters. These components help to effectively reach out to their networks and communities.
- Based on customer feedback during CivicTheme’s A/B user testing, using contrasting background colours to separate content from footer appeared – overall – less cluttered and more visually pleasing to the reader’s eye.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Header

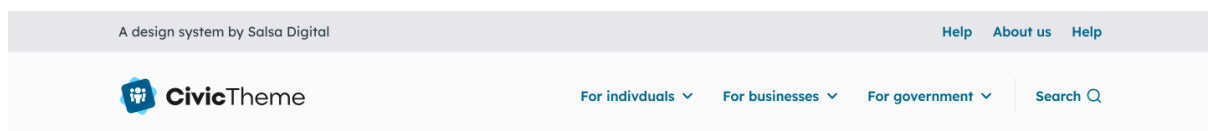
This layout component has been modelled after the [Header](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Header logo now sits inline with the main navigation component
- The optional, text-based “site title” now sits above the logo within the new utility navigation
- Mobile Menu icon sits to the right side of the screen, consistent with the desktop layout

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- To date, the majority of CivicTheme customers have opted for a header that consolidates the logo and main navigation across one row. This inline approach helps to optimise vertical screen real estate and also caters to the reader’s natural eye movement of Z-pattern scanning (for blocks of information).
- Screen readers will now read the site title first, if the agency opts to include the name of their website above the logo in the utility navigation.
- The vast majority of government brands opted for logo marks only, meaning the site title did not require such visual dominance.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



List

This component has been modelled after the [Card Lists](#), a [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Added a dark theme
- Provided two shade variants for both light and dark themes
- Expanded the List functionality to present other compatible components in a list, such as:
 - Group [heading](#)
 - [Body](#) copy
 - Secondary [button](#) (eg. View all)
 - Filtering and sorting ([Group](#) or [Single](#))
 - [Pagination](#)
- List Container can display any type of content card and configuration: [promo](#), [publications](#), [events](#), [service](#) cards, etc.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- CivicTheme has been designed to benefit a broad range of agencies and organisations with a variety of requirements. Simply designing this component to showcase a “basic” card was not enough, nor did it reflect the scope of early CivicTheme projects produced.
- The additional shade and theme configurations allow for additional personalisation, which may help to better reflect the brand.
- The ability to include a group heading, body copy and button was a key requirement to all past CivicTheme projects, and helped to not only provide further contents to the listing, but also provide a secondary pathway to relevant content for the reader.
- Filtering and sorting has been included in case the listing is long or spans several pages.
- Pagination was included in case the listing is long and pagination is required to keep each page short. This was especially helpful for long lists on mobile, where every result was stacked.



Container title

Secondary →

Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Donec velit neque, auctor sit amet aliquam vel, ullamcorper sit amet ligula. Curabitur non nulla sit amet nisl tempus convallis quis ac lectus. Quisque velit nisi, pretium ut lacinia in, elementum id enim. Curabitur non nulla sit amet nisl tempus convallis quis ac lectus. Cras ultricies ligula sed magna dictum porta. Nulla porttitor accumsan tincidunt.

Filter results by: Topic ▾ Applies to ▾ Date range ▾ Keyword ▾ Sort by ▾



Tertiary

Promo card heading which runs across two or three lines

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four

Primary Primary Primary →



Tertiary

Promo card heading which runs across two or three lines

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four

Primary Primary Primary →



Tertiary

Promo card heading which runs across two or three lines

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four

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Promo card heading which runs across two or three lines

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four

Primary Primary Primary →



Tertiary

Promo card heading which runs across two or three lines

Card summary using body copy which can run across multiple lines. Recommend limiting this summary to three or four

Primary Primary Primary →

Secondary →

Items per page 20 ▾

← Prev 1 2 3 ... 12 Next →

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Keyword List

This component has been modelled after the [Keyword List](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme features “Keyword List” as an element within other components, such as the hero component. The smaller subtitle, which sits above the larger title, is styled using the H5 element. The larger title is styled in the Display H1 element.
- Other variations of the Keyword List component exist in areas such as the Card component and Progress Indicator.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- To date, there has been no demand to implement or display the ADS Keyword List as a standalone component.
- In regards to the layout of the Keyword List, no uplifts have been made from the ADS, aside from the [font change](#).

Note: The Keyword List component is not currently available in Figma v1.7.0. Due to design and development time constraints, the decision was made to include the component in future design releases.



Message

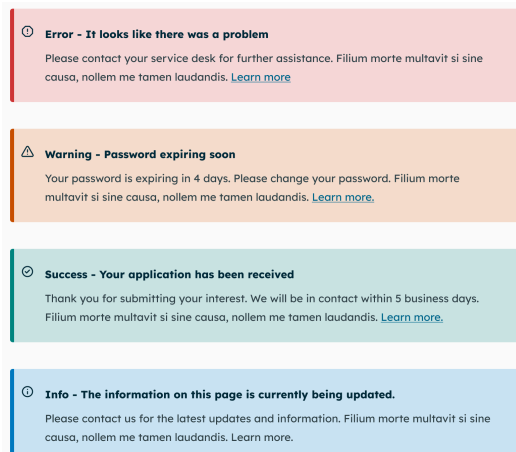
This component has been modelled after [Page Alerts](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Moved the iconography to the top left of the message
- Used a background colour relevant to the urgency of the alert/message, rather than a white background
- Added the ability to include links within the alert
- Included an alternative dark theme option, which fills the entire message with the appropriate colour, inverting the text colour

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- CivicTheme moves its iconography to the top left of the message so that it caters to the eye's natural movement. Eye tracking research shows that people scan web pages and phone screens in various patterns, one of them being the shape of the letter F, where readers will typically start reading from the top left.
- The additional background colour was added for greater attention and emotional reaction. Most people perceive and decode colours faster than words, and it provides a quick visual message about the content. According to UX Planet, the use of colours is a well-proven way to set the needed atmosphere from the first seconds of interaction. (See: [Unsung Heroes of UI: Look at Hero Images in Web Design](#))
- Messages should be typically concise and descriptive, and so the ability to add links within the message allows the designer/creator to direct the reader to additional information that may be relevant (or provide more context) to the subject matter.
- An alternative darker theme colour was added to ensure it had enough contrast to stand out on a dark background, and capture the attention of the reader.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Mobile Navigation

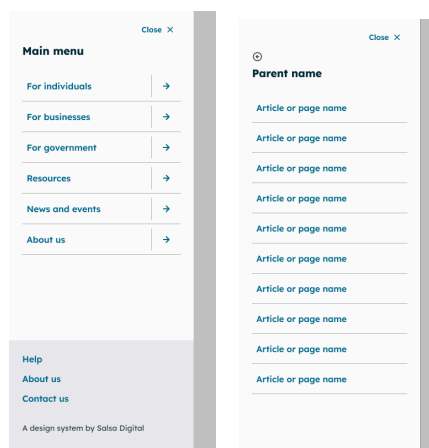
This component has been modelled after the [Main Nav](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- Included a heading above each navigation menu, ie. “Main Menu” or the category name
- Moved the Close button to the top right of the mobile navigation
- A secondary “utility” navigation (also seen on desktop) sits fixed at the bottom of the nav to accommodate secondary information, which may not be the customer’s primary focus (eg. business-related pages such as *About* or *Help*)
- A right arrow icon will appear by default for menu items that have child pages
- For deeper-level navigation, a “back arrow” icon appears to allow the user to navigate back one category

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- The heading was added above each menu page to provide greater context on what menu/category the user had just clicked earlier.
- As a secondary function, the Close button was moved to the right to reduce the visual noise on the left side of the navigation.
- The addition of the right arrow icons communicate to the user that they will be navigated to the next level down. When no icon is presented the user cannot visually understand each step of a process and cannot facilitate the visual separation of the elements they contain. (See: [The importance of icons in your website design](#)).



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Navigation

This component has been modelled after the [Main Nav](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The main navigation of CivicTheme has been brought up and in-line with the header's logo, to help optimise vertical screen real-estate.
- A secondary “utility” navigation sits above the header and main navigation to accommodate secondary information that may not be the customer's primary focus (eg. business-related pages such as *About*).
- The search bar has also been merged into the main navigation as a primary navigation choice.
- The main navigation includes the ability to add multi-column dropdown navigation items (ie. mega menus) to allow the content author greater control on content-rich websites.
- The “light-theme” mega menu will appear under a dark theme header by default.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Early rapid prototyping sessions showed that the combined default Australia Design System components (ie. header and main navigation) took up a considerable amount of vertical screen real estate – between 220-270px – and pushed important hero and page content further down the fold.
- The final decision to bring the main navigation inline with the header came from several A/B testing sessions with customers across several government agencies.
- Research indicated that while on desktop devices, customers were primarily focused on the task at hand and often uninterested in company-related information. A decision was later made to include an optional, smaller utility navigation at the top of the page to accommodate secondary links. The agency's contact page, however, was deemed important to quickly access on mobile devices, as customers could be on “on the move” when looking for an agency's address.
- Mega menus using the lighter theme tested more positively, as the menu's text-heavy content was easier to read on the lighter background. Based on this feedback, the light theme was made the default solution for the header's dropdown menu.

NB: A stacked main navigation is also currently in development as an alternative configuration.



Help About us Help

For individuals ▾ For businesses ▾ For government ▾ Resources ▾ News and Events ▾ About us ▾

Category	Category	Category	Category
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item
Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item	Single line menu item

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Promo

This component has been modelled after [Feature Footers](#), a [Card](#) component from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme’s Promo component is presented in full-width above the footer, rather than a card, to better distinguish it from the content that sits above it.
- Since the component has wider screen real estate to fill, CivicTheme’s Promo uses a button rather than a link block.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- Early CivicTheme projects demanded the need for a campaign/subscription component with a prominent call to action near the end of the page.
- CivicTheme has taken its design cues from the Ripple design system, and the full-width “feature footer” that lends itself to greater breathing room, providing the content the space and hierarchy it deserves (similar to that of a small hero component in the footer).



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Side Navigation

This component has been modelled after the [Side Nav](#) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- CivicTheme limits the side navigation’s content by only showing the next two levels of the parent level.
- The side navigation is collapsed by default, within an accordion-like menu expanding down to display the two child levels.
- CivicTheme incorporates iconography to visually indicate dropdown functionality.
- The side navigation’s heading also functions as a way to navigate back to the parent (landing) page.
- The component uses more distinct accents on the side of the menu.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- By limiting the number of side-navigation menu levels, CivicTheme solves several problems:
 - It reduces cognitive overload for the reader, displaying only the links relevant to the reader’s **current** journey.
 - It reduces the chance of needing to scroll down/up the page to navigate the side navigation.
 - It eliminates the chance of excess text-wrapping for third/fourth level page names that are indented heavily.
 - By limiting the amount of content in the side navigation, CivicTheme keeps more of the focus on the primary page content.
- The use of icons helped illustrate actions, communicate status, and indicated an interaction.
- A working example of this component can be found on the [e-Safety Commissioner](#) website.

Heading	Heading	Heading
Level 1 Parent (Hover) ▾	Level 1 Parent ▾	Level 1 Parent (Active) ▲
Level 1 Parent ▾	Level 1 Parent ▾	Level 2 Child
Level 1 Parent ▾	Level 1 Parent ▾	Level 1 Parent ▾
		Level 1 Parent ▾

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Skip Link

This component has been modelled after the [Skip Link](#) component in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The Skip Link component is featured as a block element at the top of the page, rather than a smaller, contained element that floats over the page.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- By placing the Skip Link component at the very top of the page, as a full-width block element, the component more easily draws the user's attention to the link. This approach is also favoured by the NSW.Digital design system.

Note: The former GOLD AU Design System refers to this component as a Molecule, we refer to it as an Organism.

[Skip to main content](#)

Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Slider

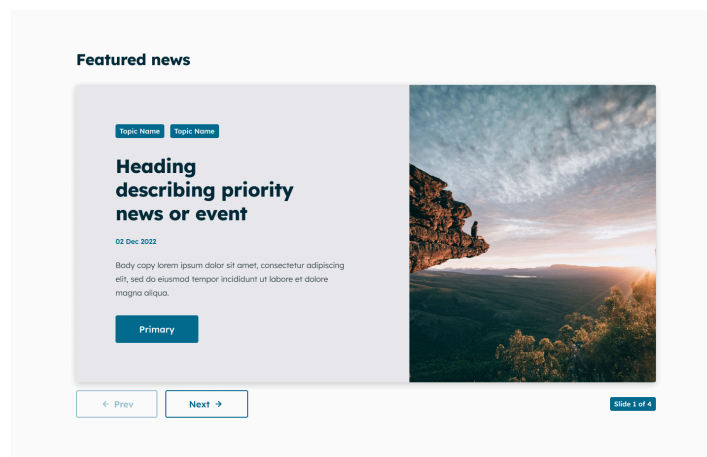
This component has been modelled after the [Clickable Cards](#) and [Feature Headers](#) (components of the [Card](#)) in the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- The card(s) are presented as one large feature, spanning the width of the site's body.
- The card(s) show a primary call to action.
- Multiple cards can be presented within a slider, and individually viewed via its navigation buttons.
- Additional attributes such as topic and date can also be enabled to cater to content for [Events](#) and [Publications](#).
- Due to the size of the card on desktop screens, the imagery sits inline with the description, rather than stacked. The resulting layout is similar to a hero.
- Positioned the date Tag below the Heading component to allow multiple tags in one row.
- Replaced Tag component with Tag List component to allow multiple tags in one row.

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- While hero carousels have been known to negatively impact conversion or dilute a brand's message (see: [3 Reasons why sliders are bad for your website's health](#)), a slider component may be a useful and accessible solution to present content of equal value and weight (think Netflix catalogues).
- This component has proved beneficial to the requirements of previous CivicTheme projects where the content needed greater prominence but couldn't use the space of a hero banner. For example, a trending article that was shared on social media. This allowed for a specific article to be easily located from the home/landing page.
- Including topic and date attributes allowed greater flexibility for the content creator.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)



Social Links

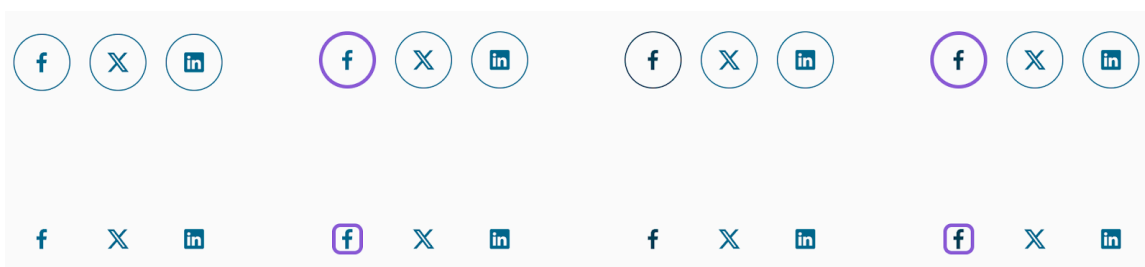
This atomic element has been modelled after [Secondary Buttons](#), a component of [Buttons](#) from the Australian Design System.

We have uplifted the component in the following manner:

- An icon-only button has been created for social media.
- This has been included for agencies that require links to their social media channels, commonly seen within the [footer](#).

These uplifts are based on the following user research findings:

- As a general rule, CivicTheme recommends against the use of buttons without descriptive labels. However, in the case of social media where there may be brand familiarity, icon-only buttons can be used. (Source: [Do Icons Need Labels? by Steve McCarthy](#))
- Icons are fast to recognise at a glance (if well-designed) — particularly true for standard icons that people have seen and used before. (Source: [Nielsen Norman Group: Icon Usability](#))
- There's no need to translate social media brand icons for international users.
- Social links leverage the style and behaviour of the secondary button component, since they are not perceived as a primary pathway, nor did we not want the primary colours distracting the reader from (potentially) important information.



Source: [CivicTheme Design System v1.9.0](#)