MACQUARIE DICTIONARY
WORD OF THE YEAR 2026

Macquarie Dictionary Word of the Year 2026 Longlist

ARTS

cinnamon roll
noun Colloquial (especially in fiction) a sweet, kind-hearted and well-meaning person.

litRPG
noun a genre of speculative fiction which incorporates elements of role-playing games, such as set quests and game rules, visible game mechanics, progression through levels, etc.
[*lit(erary)* + RPG]

preparator
noun a person who prepares something, especially one who prepares items for display, exhibition or scientific study in a museum, art gallery, etc.

vertical drama
noun a genre of scripted content designed for viewing on a smartphone, typically with episodes of 60 to 120 seconds in duration.

why choose
noun a subgenre of romance in which the main character, usually female, is in a committed relationship with multiple romantic or sexual partners.
[from the rejection of the notion that the traditional two-person relationship is the only acceptable resolution in a work of romance]

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BUSINESS

debt bondage
noun a practice in which an individual pledges their personal services, or the services of someone under their control, as security for a debt, under conditions that make the repayment unachievable. Also, **bonded labour**.

DeFi
noun a financial system which uses blockchain technology to lend, borrow, trade, earn interest, etc., without an intermediary such as a bank or broker.
[DE(CENTRALISED) + FI(NANCE)]

human-in-the-loop
adjective relating to a largely automated system which includes a level of human supervision and decision-making.

wellbeing washing
noun the practice of a company portraying itself as actively supporting the wellbeing and mental health of employees when, in fact, little effort has been made to do so.

workslop
noun Colloquial low-quality content created by generative AI, often containing errors, as used in schools or the workplace.

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COLLOQUIAL

choppelganger
noun Colloquial someone or something considered similar, but inferior, to another person or thing, especially in appearance. [blend of CHOPPED and DOPPELGANGER]

gen Z stare
noun Colloquial an expressionless, unblinking gaze, often in response to a greeting, a question or an attempt to engage in light conversation.

glaze
verb Colloquial to excessively praise or flatter.

lowkenuinely
adverb Colloquial in a manner that is both sincere and understated.
[blend of LOW-KEY + GENUINELY]

unc
noun Colloquial a person, especially a man, who is considered old, or who behaves in a manner thought to be old for their age.

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EATING AND DRINKING

boy kibble
noun Colloquial a low-effort, high-protein meal, such as cooked minced meat and rice, often cooked in large batches, importance being placed on convenience and protein content rather than taste or appearance. [from the resemblance to dry pet food]

dirty soda
noun a drink consisting of plain or flavoured aerated water to which a flavoured syrup, fruit juice, cream or ice cream has been added.

Dubai chocolate
noun a confection made from chocolate filled with a mix of creamed pistachio, chopped pastry, and sometimes tahini.

hot honey
noun honey infused with chilli.

zebra striping
noun Colloquial the practice of alternating between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, especially when drinking socially.

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ENVIRONMENT

brevetoxin
noun a neurotoxin produced by a dinoflagellate found in red tides; a cause of fish kills and severe illness or death in marine mammals and birds.

ecotage
noun the use of actions such as blockades, destruction of equipment, cyber attacks, etc., in order to damage, halt or draw attention to activities considered to be damaging the environment; monkeywrenching. [blend of ECO- and SABOTAGE]

rights of nature
plural noun a theoretical framework in which the earth, with its various ecosystems, species and natural communities, is regarded as having the right to exist and flourish, and to be protected against the ill effects of human activities. Also, **planetary rights**.

terramation
noun a process by which a corpse is placed in a steel container, covered with a mixture of plant material, such as wood chips, hay and sawdust, then heated and aerated over a period of weeks or months until the body and mixture break down into compost, the bones being removed and ground before being returned to the mixture; human composting; natural organic reduction.

tiny forest
noun a dense area of vegetation consisting of closely planted native plants in a very small plot of land, often the size of a tennis court and in an urban area.

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FASHION

bixie
noun a hairstyle in which a short bob is shaped with feathering or layering.
[B(OB) + (P)IXIE]

grwm
noun Colloquial an abbreviation used on social media to indicate that the content of a video comprises a person carrying out a routine in order to prepare for something, such as applying make-up for an event, going through a skincare regimen before bedtime, etc., while providing a commentary offering advice and extra information.
[*g*(*et*) *r*(*eady*) *w*(*ith*) *m*(*e*)]

rib contouring
noun a procedure in which the lower ribs are fractured, bent inwards and repositioned, in order to narrow the waistline. Also, **rib remodelling**.

swag gap
noun Colloquial a perceived discrepancy between two people in a romantic relationship, where one is considered to be more stylish or charismatic than the other, especially of a couple in the public eye.

virtual try-on
noun the use of augmented reality, artificial intelligence or 3D computer graphics to create an avatar and digitally simulate how a garment, an accessory, make-up, etc., would look or fit on one's body. Also, **virtual fitting**.

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GENERAL

doodle
noun any of various dog breeds resulting from crossbreeding a poodle with a dog of another breed. Also, **oodle**.
[(LABRA)D(OR) + (P)OODLE)]

finger heart
noun a gesture in which the thumb and forefinger cross each other at an angle, such that the tips of both fingers appear to form a heart shape.

LARP
verb (*often derogatory*) to act performatively, usually consciously and disingenuously.

Marrickville pause
noun Colloquial a temporary halt in conversation by people in the inner-west suburbs of Sydney, to await the passing of a loud, low-flying aircraft, after which the conversation continues.
[so called because the suburb *Marrickville* lies directly beneath a flight path, in very close proximity to the international airport]

Wasian
noun Colloquial 1. a person of mixed Caucasian and Asian ancestry.
adjective 2. of or relating to such a person: *growing up in a Wasian household*.

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HEALTH

AI psychosis
noun a psychological condition characterised by delusion and paranoia, caused by excessive interaction with a chatbot, the chatbot being programmed to validate and encourage the user's presumptions and beliefs, regardless of their accuracy.

AuDHD
noun autism occurring with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

CAR T-cell therapy
noun a form of immunotherapy in which T cells are extracted, genetically modified, and re-introduced to the bloodstream, the modified T cells then acting to locate and destroy cancer cells.

digital dementia
noun a supposed condition characterised by short-term memory loss, attention deficit, impaired decision-making, etc., thought to result from an excessive reliance on digital devices and artificial intelligence.

PMOS
noun (*polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome*) a disorder, possibly genetic, leading to irregularities in ovulation and menstruation in women; associated with acne, excess hair growth, insulin resistance, and obesity.
Also, (formerly), **PCOS** (*polycystic ovarian syndrome*).

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INTERNET

agentic
adjective (especially of artificial intelligence) able to act or make decisions independently.

AI;DR
(a term used by a reader to indicate to others that an online item has been created by AI and is not worth reading.)
[AI + *d*(*on't*) or *d*(*idn't*) *r*(*ead*); modelled on TL;DR]

open-weight
adjective (of a trained neural network) having a set of parameters which are publicly available, allowing anyone to run or further adapt the model.

p(doom)
noun Colloquial a probability scale between 0 to 1, or 0% to 100%, used to indicate a person's belief that artificial intelligence will bring about the extinction of humankind.
[*p(robability of) doom*]

quishing
noun a form of phishing in which a malicious link is embedded in a QR code, directing the user to a fraudulent website or installing malware once scanned. [Q(R CODE) + -*u*- + (PH)ISHING]

nudify
verb to digitally manipulate (an image of a person) so that they appear naked or semi-naked, especially through the use of artificial intelligence and without the subject's knowledge or consent.

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POLITICS

creaming
noun the practice of an employment service provider of prioritising a jobseeker whom they deem more likely to find employment, meaning less time and effort is required to successfully place the jobseeker and thus earn the client's commission. Compare **parking**.

donkey vote
noun (in erroneous use) an informal vote in which the voter deliberately marks the ballot paper in such a way as to render the vote invalid, as by drawing a picture, writing a message or leaving it blank.

fixated threat assessment centre
noun a unit in which police work with forensic mental healthcare professionals to assess and manage individuals who have been identified as being fixated on another person, especially a politician or other public figure, and therefore possibly posing a threat of physical harm to that person. *Abbrev*: FTAC

reverse migration
noun the act of migrating back to one's original country, region, or place of abode after having lived and worked elsewhere, often due to an unexpected crisis, improved living conditions, political stability, etc.

widow tax

noun Colloquial a tax law that inadvertently financially penalises a person who inherits assets after the death of their spouse.

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SOCIAL INTEREST

analog bag
noun a bag containing a range of non-digital items, such as tactile games, puzzles, crafts, journals, activity books, etc., designed to replace smartphones, tablets, game consoles, etc., as sources of entertainment, relaxation and distraction. Also, **hobby bag**.

boysober
adjective Colloquial abstaining from dating men, often as a response to negative feelings and experiences with current dating culture.

lifestyle creep
noun the gradual increase in discretionary spending which occurs in line with any increase in income. Also, **lifestyle inflation**.

matrescence
noun the process of becoming a mother.

safe phone
noun a mobile phone with a prepaid service, intended especially for use by victims of domestic violence, the phone being kept secret so the user can call, text, email, etc., without fear of being tracked.

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SPORT

huffy-puffy
Colloquial adjective 1. (of exercise) designed to improve cardiovascular health.
noun 2. physical exercise.

limbs
plural noun Colloquial an overwhelmingly excited reaction to a sports match by an audience, characterised by arms waving in the air.

pump track
noun a circuit for the use of bicycles, skateboards, scooters, etc., designed with mounds and banked turns so that riders can move through the entire circuit using momentum generated from an up-and-down body movement rather than pedalling.

shred
verb Colloquial to deliberately lose body fat, as of a bodybuilder preparing for a competition.

skimo
noun a sport which incorporates ascending and descending snow-covered mountain slopes, using a combination of skiing and mountaineering techniques and equipment. Also, **ski mountaineering**.

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TECHNOLOGY

neuromorphic
adjective of or relating to software, a computer system, an algorithm, etc., designed to mimic the biological structure and neural pathways of the human brain.

pervert glasses
plural noun Colloquial camera glasses. Also, **perv glasses**.
[from the use by some of filming or taking photos of others without their knowledge or consent]

self-healing concrete
noun a form of concrete containing bacteria which activate when water or oxygen is detected to have permeated, indicating a breach of the concrete, the bacteria creating an agent to fill and seal the fracture, preventing further ingress.

shark band
noun a magnetic device worn on the wrist or ankle of a swimmer, diver, surfer, etc., designed to deter sharks, the magnetic field thought to disrupt a shark's electroreceptors.

temporary disaster roaming
noun a system in which a telecommunications company will provide mobile phone and internet service to an individual in a disaster-affected area when their usual mobile network is unavailable, as in a bushfire, flood, severe storm, etc. *Abbrev*: TDR

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