

## Report from the Surveyor General

### Geographical Names Board Report

Geographical names form an essential part of our physical and administrative infrastructure helping society to identify individual features across the landscape. They are part of our culture in that they reflect the values, spiritual beliefs, lifestyles and names of people who have inhabited an area.

The terms “geographical names” and “place names” refer to the names of geographical or topographical features within the territories and waters of New South Wales – such as parks, rivers, mountains and towns. They also include administrative districts and suburbs or localities, but not the names of roads, local government areas or electoral districts.

The *Geographical Names Act 1966* was enacted to address the serious inconsistencies in the recording and use of place names that existed at the time. The Geographical Names Board (the Board) was constituted to administer this Act.

### Membership

The Board is chaired by the Surveyor General of New South Wales (NSW) and has members representing the Royal Australian Historical Society, the Local Government and Shires Association, the State Library of NSW, the Community Relations Commission, the Geographical Society of NSW, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources.

Members of the Board for the current year are.

Mr Warwick Watkins  
AMP:ISMP (Harv), MNatRes  
DipScAgr,HDA (Hons), JP  
Surveyor General

Mr Paul Harcombe  
B Surv (UNSW), M Geom  
Chief Surveyor

Ms Cheryl Evans  
Nominee of the State Librarian

Mr Paul Hartley  
Nominee of the Executive Director,  
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural  
Resources

Cr Peter Woods  
OAM,CMC,JP,BA,MLitt,TTC,MACE  
Councillor of City of Canada Bay  
Immediate Past President of the Local Government  
Association of NSW, nominee of the Local Government  
and Shires Association of New South Wales

Mr Alan Ventress  
BA DIPLIB  
Nominee of the governing body of the Royal Australian  
Historical Society

Mr Jack Devery  
BSc,MTCP  
Nominee of the governing body of the Geographical  
Society of New South Wales

Cr Les Trindall  
Nominee of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council

Mr Michael Marx AM / Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM  
Nominee of the Community Relations Commission

Councillors to the Board are:

Dr Peter Orlovich  
PhD,MA,MLib,DipEd

### Attendance at Meetings

The Board met formally on five occasions during the year. Five members form a quorum. The person presiding at the meeting has a deliberative vote and casting vote. The list below shows the number of meetings attended by each Board Member and Counsellor.

Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission replaced Mr Michael Marx AM as a nominee of the Commission in March 2004.

Board Member / Counsellor	Meetings Attended
Mr Watkins	5
Mr Harcombe	5
Ms Evans	5
Mr Hartley	3
Cr Woods	4
Mr Ventress	5
Mr Devery	5
Mr Marx -(Mr Kerkyasharian)	2
Mr Trindall	0
Dr Orlovich	5

## Assigning, Altering and Discontinuing Names

The Geographical Names Act gives the Board the power to alter, discontinue or assign names of geographical features. A total of 650 names were officially gazetted during the reporting year.

### Determination of Address Localities

One important program of the Board is the formalisation of the names and extents of address localities, in urban areas known as suburbs. Having a unique, definitive address is fundamental to the efficient delivery of services and vital to sending emergency services to the correct location.

With the increasing use of call centres for emergency and other services, confusion about an address can lead to increased property damage and potentially loss of life in an emergency situation.

To date, the Board has consulted many local councils and communities and assigned address localities to over 120 Local Government areas. These officially defined address localities are then adopted into Local and State Government databases and records, street directories and Emergency Service Systems – ensuring a safer, more ordered system of property and locality identification.

### Commemorative Naming

The Board also acknowledges the important role of everyday Australians through its commemorative naming policy. For every named reserve, hill, mountain or creek in New South Wales there is a substantial number of un-named features. The Board can and does name these types of features after everyday Australians whose contribution to the local community is deemed to be outstanding.

### Naming of Roads, Schools and National Parks

Section 12 of the Act empowers the Board with a concurrence role for all geographical names that fall outside the Act. In fulfilling this requirement, the Board has developed several procedures and policies to deal with this concurrence role. During the reporting year, the Board used these procedures and policies to concur with 19 proposals to name Schools and National Parks and deal with 7 separate objections to various road names within New South Wales.

## Index of Place Names in New South Wales

The Act states that the Board should publish a gazetteer of geographical names. All geographical names are recorded in the Geographical Names Register, available at [www.gnb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au). The Register is an important reference tool for cartographers, researchers, publishers, government authorities and the public.

### Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia

The Geographical Names Board of New South Wales is a member of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia (CGNA). The Board has been involved in the Committee's production of a national gazetteer, "The Gazetteer of Australia" which is available at: [www.auslig.gov.au/mapping/names/names.htm](http://www.auslig.gov.au/mapping/names/names.htm) and includes some 240,000 geographical names covering Australia's land and offshore areas.

### Dual Naming

All Australians share a relationship to land and the names we give to places convey their significance, sense of history, and identity. The NSW Government is committed to recognising our indigenous cultural heritage by registering original place names given by indigenous people so that they sit side by side with existing European names. Since June 2001, the government has supported a dual naming policy for geographical features and cultural sites. This community-driven system acknowledges the significance of indigenous Australian culture and, in doing so, represents a meaningful contribution to the process of reconciliation in NSW.

### The Sydney Dual Naming Workshop

The Sydney dual naming workshop – co-ordinated by the Australian National Placenames Survey and hosted by the NSW Aboriginal Languages Research and Resources Centre at Tranby Aboriginal College in Sydney on Friday 31st October 2003 – was a great success. As Dr Jaky Troy (ALRRC Director) noted during the workshop, the gathering at Tranby was unique in that it involved community members and representatives from all over the Sydney basin and beyond, including Darug, Tharawal, Yuin and Guringai people, as well as people from communities all over NSW who have, for many years now, called Sydney home.

The two main aims of the workshop were for the Board to raise awareness amongst Aboriginal communities of its Dual Naming Policy and to consult with members of Aboriginal communities regarding a case study set of Sydney Harbour dual name proposals. The workshop

involved leaders and members of Aboriginal communities determining which Aboriginal placenames in the case study are best made available for public use and how these placenames are to be pronounced and spelt in the present-day situation.

In the lead up to, and during, the workshop, much research and sorting through the evidence was required in order to propose the case study set of dual names in Sydney Harbour.

Workshop participants then weighed the evidence, considered the process of historical and linguistic reconstruction and decided which names had the strongest evidence. They determined the best way to spell these names, by considering and selecting from a set of spellings proposed by David Blair and designed to elicit from speakers of Australian English today the best pronunciation possible to honor the original names.

The workshop participants stated strongly that there is more to Aboriginal placenames than pronunciation and spelling. The cultural meanings of placenames, and the ways in which these connect land and language, are important elements to include in dual naming in NSW. Workshop participants and organisers are keen to see the current set of dual naming proposals as a springboard. Knowledge of places and meanings of placenames in the Sydney case study, and also across NSW, need to be collected and preserved wherever possible. Restoration of and research into placenames and their meanings can contribute to the language and culture revitalisation movement which has been gaining momentum in recent years in NSW.

### Aboriginal Placename Workshops

As a direct result of the success of the Sydney Aboriginal Placename Workshop, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Major Grants Program has funded a further set of workshops for Aboriginal communities across NSW. These workshops will be held in each of the six ATSI regions within NSW. Each workshop will be widely publicised, and the participation of Elders and community members from as many language groups as possible within each region will be sought. The workshops are intended to train members of the communities in the processes of recording Aboriginal placenames and researching their linguistic and cultural background.

### The Tri-State Placenames Forum

The Board met with the Victorian Names Registrar and the Australian Capital Territory's Names Committee in Canberra on the morning of 12 December 2003. This group discussed issues pertaining to cross border-naming policy, progress reports on cross border naming proposals,

policies and strategies dealing with Indigenous names within each jurisdiction and each jurisdiction's legislation, policies and procedures to ascertain best practice.

Among other outcomes, the group developed the following commitment statement for dealing with cross-jurisdictional Aboriginal place naming matters:

*“Recognising that Aboriginal Tribal Areas of influence cross jurisdictional borders – consultation on naming issues should not be constrained by such borders.”*

### Goals for 2004/2005

- To expedite the determination of suburb and locality boundaries for those Local Council Areas yet to complete this program.
- To enhance the Board's community profile through the provision of more decentralised meetings.
- To improve the data quality of the Geographical Names Register of NSW through continued data audits.
- To recognise Aboriginal issues relating to geographical names within New South Wales through the Dual Naming policy and the Aboriginal Geographical Naming Strategy by the engagement of key stakeholders.
- To establish policies and procedures ensuring consistency with other agencies with naming responsibilities.
- To continue support for the implementation of policies and initiatives that protects geographical names as second level domain names for community use.
- To gazette in excess of 700 geographical names in the next reporting year.
- To improve the efficiency of naming procedures through streamlined legislation and procedures.
- To encourage the standardisation and promotion of geographical names on a State, National and International basis.

## Publications

The following publications are available from the Board's website or from the Secretariat.

- Geographical Names Board – Preserving the history, culture and identity of New South Wales
- Determining Suburbs and Localities in NSW
- Dual Naming – Supporting cultural recognition
- Road Naming in NSW
- Commemorative Naming
- Glossary of Status Values in the Geographical Names Register
- Guidelines for the Determination of Placenames
- Naming Proposal Package
- Determination of Locality/Suburb Names and Boundaries
- Introduction of New Suburb Names
- Suburb and Locality Boundaries
- Proposed Geographical Name Commemorating a Person
- Guidelines for the Naming of Roads

## Electronic Service Delivery

The Board offers a full range of service on its website, including an online gazetteer of placenames, maps showing address locality boundaries within NSW and a full range of related information. The Board's site can be viewed at [www.gnb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au).

The Board is committed to the ongoing development of this site with planned improvements for the upcoming year.

## Committees

In the reporting year, the Board continued its Technical and Scientific sub-committee to investigate issues pertaining to linguistic consistency for regional dual name proposals; the development and implementation of the Aboriginal Geographical Naming Strategy and the investigation of other issues affecting Indigenous geographical names.

The sub committee consists of experts in the areas of archival research, linguistics, history and toponymy and was also constituted as the State Executive Committee of the Australian National Placename Survey.

## Contact

Geographical Names Board  
Panorama Avenue  
PO Box 143  
Bathurst NSW 2795

T: 61 2 6332 8214  
F: 61 2 6332 8217  
E: [gnb@lands.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gnb@lands.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.gnb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au)

## Facts and Figures

Naming and boundary determinations by category completed during the reporting year.

Designation	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Airfield	0	0	0	22
Amphitheatre	0	1	0	0
Anabranch	0	0	0	0
Bay	0	4	0	0
Beach	2	4	2	5
Bluff	0	0	0	0
Breakwater	0	1	0	2
Canyon	0	0	0	1
Cave	0	0	0	0
Butte	0	0	1	0
Cemetery	0	1	0	3
Channel	0	3	1	4
Chasm	0	0	0	1
Clearing	0	1	0	0
College	0	0	0	1
County	0	0	0	0
Cove	0	5	0	2
Creek	2	9	10	4
Crossing	0	0	0	0
Dam	0	2	0	2
Dock	1	0	0	0
Falls	0	0	2	1
Flat	0	0	0	2
Ford	1	1	0	1
Forest	0	9	0	1
Gap	0	0	0	1
Gradient	0	0	0	1
Gully	0	1	6	1
Head	0	2	0	2
Headland	1	1	0	1
Hill	6	5	1	2
Historic Area	17	62	29	0
Historic Locality	34	1	1	2
Historic Site	6	33	29	1
Inlet	0	2	1	0
Islet	1	0	0	0
Island	0	3	0	1

Lagoon	0	0	0	0
Lake	1	4	1	1
Locality	133	150	268	84
Lookout	0	0	2	1
Mountain	2	3	2	1
Parish	0	0	0	0
Pass	0	0	0	1
Peak	0	0	10	0
Peninsula	2	0	0	0
Point	0	14	1	2
Post Office	0	0	0	1
Railway Station	0	4	0	2
Ramp	1	0	1	0
Range	0	4	0	1
Region	0	0	0	2
Reef	0	0	1	0
Reserve	107	88	176	224
Reservoir	0	0	0	0
Ridge	0	3	1	0
River	0	0	0	1
River Bend	0	1	1	0
Rock	1	0	1	0
Rural Place	93	74	89	2
Saddle	0	0	0	0
School	1	20	1	20
Spring	0	0	0	0
State	0	1	0	0
Stream	0	0	0	0
Suburb	45	70	25	46
Swamp	0	2	1	1
Town	1	6	9	0
Track	1	0	1	1
Trig. Station	5	61	122	38
Urban Locality	0	0	0	0
Urban Place	18	0	8	4
Valley	0	0	0	0
Village	24	13	47	10
Walking Track	0	0	0	0
Waterfall	0	0	1	1
Water Feature	0	32	0	0
Waterhole	0	1	0	6
Weir	0	5	0	0
Wharf	0	3	1	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>533</b>

---

<b>Dual Names</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Assigned</b>				

Survey Services  
Level 2, 1 Prince Albert Road  
Queens Square  
Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 15  
Sydney NSW 2001

T: 61 2 8258 7500  
F: 61 2 8258 7555

Business Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Mon to Fri.



Warwick Watkins  
Surveyor General