

Guidelines for the determination of placenames



These guidelines were endorsed by the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales (GNB) on 17 October 1996.

1. A name suggested for any place that owes its origin to the peculiarity of the topographic feature designated such as shape, vegetation, animal life etc., may be accepted but, in doing so, care should be exercised in avoiding duplication of names already used for other features.

The GNB prefers to avoid the repetition of commonly used names. Sugar Loaf, Sandy Back, Bald, Deep, Long, Kangaroo, Reedy, Rocky, Spring and Stony are examples of such names.

2. Easily pronounced names should, as far as possible, be used.
3. Names of Aboriginal origin or with a historical background are preferred.
4. Names acknowledging the multicultural nature of our society are encouraged.
5. The changing of long established placenames is generally not preferred, except where necessary to avoid ambiguity or duplication.
6. If considered appropriate, placenames may perpetuate the names of eminent persons, particularly those of early explorers, settlers and naturalists.
7. Names of persons should normally only be given posthumously but the GNB, at its discretion, may approve a feature name which honours a living person. Such a person's contribution to the local community should have been of outstanding benefit to the community. Ownership of the land is not sufficient reason for the application of the owner's name to a geographical feature. The GNB will not approve the naming of a feature after a person still holding public office.
8. The GNB may approve a first or given name as part of a geographical name only where it is necessary to

appropriately honour the person referred to or where it is necessary to avoid ambiguity.

9. Long and clumsily constructed names and named composed of two or more words should be avoided.
10. The multiplication of names for different parts of the same topographical feature such as a stream or mountain range will be avoided whenever possible and the one name applied to a stream or mountain range throughout its entire length.
11. The naming of forks, arms and branches of a river as North Branch and South Branch is not favoured. Generally, it is preferable to assign independent names to river branches.
12. The use of cardinal points of the compass as a prefix or suffix to an existing name is not favoured. However, well-established names which carry such a prefix or suffix may be approved.
13. Where names have been changed or corrupted by long established local usage, it is not usually advisable to attempt to restore the original form; that spelling which is sanctioned by general usage should be adopted.
14. When a choice is offered between two or more names for the same place, locality or feature, all sanctioned by local usage, the GNB may adopt one of such names as is considered appropriate in accordance with the rules outlined above.
15. The possessive form should be avoided whenever possible without destroying the sound of the name or changing its descriptive application e.g. Howes Valley should be written without the apostrophe.
16. The use of hyphens in connecting parts of names should, as far as possible be avoided.
17. Names considered offensive or likely to give offence will not be approved.



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