

FACT SHEET

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Guidelines for the determination of place names

The following principles shall apply for all new geographical names in New South Wales

LANGUAGE

- 1 Geographical names shall be written in standard Australian English or a recognised format of an Australian Aboriginal language local to the area of the geographical name.
- 2 Diacritical marks (symbols such as ´ in é, ¸ in ç or : in ö) are not used in Australian English names, and shall be omitted from names drawn from languages that use such marks.
- 3 Geographical names shall be easy to pronounce, spell and write, and preferably not exceed three words (including any designated term) or 25 characters. An exception to this is in the use of Aboriginal names when it is accepted that a traditional name may at first appear to be complex but will, over time, become more familiar and accepted by the community.
- 4 The following types of punctuation as used in Australian English shall not be included as part of a geographical name: period (.), comma (,), colon (:), semi-colon (;), quotation marks (" "), exclamation mark (!), question mark (?), ellipsis (...), hyphen (-), dash (/) and parenthesis (()). For surnames or other names that include a hyphen, the hyphen shall be omitted when used for a geographical name.
- 5 An apostrophe mark shall not be included in geographical names written with a final 's', and the possessive 's shall not be included e.g. Georges River not George's River. Apostrophes forming part of an eponymous name shall be included (e.g. O'Connell Plains).
- 6 A geographical name shall not include a preposition e.g. Avenue of the Allies.
- 7 Geographical names shall not include the definite article (the) as the sole name element of a place name e.g. The Reserve is not acceptable.
- 8 A geographical name shall not be abbreviated or contain an abbreviation, initial or acronym e.g. Point, not Pt except that St shall be used for Saint. An exception may be where an abbreviation may have become widely accepted by the community. Eg CWA for Country Women's Association.
- 9 For the purposes of consistency, names starting with Mc or Mac shall not have a space included between the Mc or Mac and the rest of the name.
- 10 A geographical name shall not include Arabic numerals e.g. 3 or 4th or Roman numerals e.g. IV or X. Where numbers are included in a geographical name they shall be written in full e.g. Fourth Top Ridge, Eleven Mile Creek.
- 11 A geographical name shall not include initials e.g. A F Wyatt Reserve.
- 12 The spelling of geographical names derived from the same source shall be uniform in spelling. e.g. Mount Kosciuszko is now spelt with z to be consistent with original spelling.
- 13 Postnominals and titles shall not be included in geographical names. eg John Smith not John Smith AO. An exception is the use of 'VC'.

FORM AND CHARACTER OF NAMES

- 14 Place names shall be recognisable words or acceptable combinations of words and shall be appropriate to community sensitivities. Discriminatory or derogatory names are not acceptable.
- 15 Commercial and business names shall not be used for geographical names, particularly where the name can be construed to promoting a business. However, business names no longer in use which promote the heritage of an area are acceptable.
- 16 Use of club, society, association or special interest group names is discouraged. Such association may change their focus or for some reason lose community support. Community based associations, particularly those philanthropic associations, may be acceptable (eg Rotary, Lions, Apex).

DUPLICATION OF NAMES

- 17 New place names may be duplicated, provided there is no duplication of the name within the local government area or adjoining local government areas. However, duplication should be avoided wherever possible.

COMMEMORATIVE NAMES

- 18 Commemorative names are those that commemorate a person, event or place. Acts of bravery, community service and exceptional accomplishments are typical grounds for this recognition. The name of persons who gave their lives in service for their country are often used as commemorative names.
- 19 The person commemorated should have contributed significantly to the area around the geographic feature or locality. When such a name is applied, it shall be given posthumously, at least one year after the decease of the person.
- 20 Commemorative names shall not be used to commemorate victims of, or mark the location of, accidents or tragedies. Ownership of land is not in itself grounds for the application of an owner's name. Names of persons holding public office shall not be used.

SELECTION OF NAMES

- 21 Aboriginal names are encouraged as the name to be used for any feature that currently does not have a name recognised by the Board.
- 22 Names acknowledging the multicultural nature of our society, and gender diversity in names, are encouraged
- 23 Names associated with the heritage of an area are encouraged, especially the names of early explorers, settlers, naturalists, events.
- 24 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.
- 25 The multiplication of names for different parts of the same topographical feature such as a stream or mountain range shall be avoided, and the one name applied to a stream or mountain range throughout its entire length. However, an Aboriginal name may apply to a limited section of a feature.

- 26 The naming of forks, arms and branches of a river as North Branch and South Branch is not supported. Unique names shall be assigned to river branches.
- 27 When a choice is offered between two or more names for the same place, locality or feature, all supported by local usage, the Board may adopt one of such names as is considered appropriate in accordance with its principles and policies.
- 28 The use of cardinal points of the compass as a prefix or suffix to an existing name shall not be used.
- 29 The changing of long established placenames is to be avoided except where necessary to avoid ambiguity or duplication.
- 30 The Board 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. Use of first or given names is not to be used as part of a road name.

Disclaimer

This fact sheet must not be relied on as legal advice. For more information about this topic, refer to the appropriate legislation.

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