

# Glossary of designation values in the Geographical Names Register

## **ABORIGINAL RESERVE**

Crown land set aside for Aborigines, where they may continue their traditional lifestyle away from the influence of white Australians and access to which is controlled by federal or state authorities or by Aboriginal Land Councils.

## **AERODROME**

All licensed aerodromes and government aerodromes maintained by the Federal Airports Corporation, other than those designated 'airports'.

## **AIRFIELD**

A landing or taking-off area for aircraft.

## **AIRPORT**

An aerodrome that handles regular schedules of passengers and freight.

## **AMPHITHEATRE**

Basin shaped hollow, particularly one having steep sides. Considerable variation in size.

## **ANABRANCH**

A distributary of an anastomosing river which links up with other distributaries and sometimes with the parent stream.

## **ARM**

A comparatively long, narrow and natural waterway extending from a larger body of water.

## **ARTESIAN BORE**

A hole bored perpendicularly into strata, producing a constant supply of water at the surface without pumping.

## **BACKWATER**

A body of stagnant water connected to a river.

## **BASIN**

1. The tract of country drained by a river and its tributaries, or which drains into a particular lake or area. 2. A circumscribed formation in which the strata dip inward from all sides to the centre; the

stratified deposit, especially of coal, lying in such a depression. 3. An area of water limited in extent and nearly enclosed by structures alongside which vessels can lie. A non-tidal basin is one closed by caisson of gates to shut off from open water, so that a constant level of water can be maintained in it. Also called a 'wet dock'. A tidal basin is one without gates in which the level of the water rises and falls with the tide. Sometimes called an 'Open Basin'.

## **BAY**

A well-marked indentation made by the sea or a lake into a coastline, whose penetration is in such proportion to the width of its mouth as to contain land locked waters and constitutes more than a mere curvature of the coast.

## **BEACH**

The sloping shore along a body of water that is periodically washed by waves or tides and is usually covered with sand or gravel.

## **BIGHT**

A crescent-shaped indentation in the coastline usually of large extent and not more than a 90 degree sector of a circle. See 'Bay' and 'Gulf'.

## **BILLABONG**

An efflux from a stream, usually an old bend in the stream, which has been cut off by erosion and deposition. When the fall of a stream is only a few centimetres per kilometre channel is usually incapable of clearing flood waters, which overflow into this efflux. As the water recede the efflux or billabong becomes a pool or a series of pools, which in dry periods may completely dry up.

## **BLUFF**

A spur or ridge terminating in a steep, rocky face.

## **BORE**

A deep vertical hole of a small diameter drilled to obtain water. Designation includes 'Artesian Bore'.

**BOUNDARY**

That which serves to indicate the limits of a particular area. Various types of boundaries which may be encountered are: 1. UNCLASSIFIED BOUNDARIES; those drawn by the compiler prior to classification to delineate a change in surface characteristics. 2. INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES; those defining the territorial sovereignty of a country. 3. STATE OR TERRITORY BOUNDARIES; those defining the major administrative or political divisions within a country. 4. ADMINISTRATIVE AREA BOUNDARIES; those defining areas of common local or regional administration. 5. PROHIBITED AREA BOUNDARIES; those defining the limits of an area into which entry is prohibited, without prior permission from a controlling authority, for security or safety reasons.

**BREAKWATER**

A natural or artificial structure along a coast capable of checking the force of the waves, thereby reducing beach erosion. The designation includes 'groyne', 'training wall' and 'levee'. The latter two are to restrict rivers to a defined course.

**BROOK**

A small stream or rivulet.

**BUTTE**

A small residual of a mesa. The level top being the upper surface of the hard stratum but little lowered by erosion. The slopes on all sides are escarpments and its maximum horizontal dimension in any one direction is about 400 metres.

**BUTTRESS**

A very steep spur projecting from a hill, mountain, plateau, range etc., having the appearance of supporting it.

**CAMP**

A place where tents, cabins, etc. are erected for the use of military troops, etc.

**CANAL**

A large artificial watercourse used for irrigation or navigation.

**CANYON**

A gorge, relatively narrow but of considerable size, bounded by steep slopes. It has often been formed by a river cutting through the soft rocks of an arid region; the scantiness of the rainfall prevents denudation of the canyon walls, and so maintains their steepness. The walls of a large canyon, however, rarely approach the vertical, and their irregularity of slope is due to inequalities in the hardness of the rock.

**CAPE**

A piece of land jutting into the sea; a projecting headland or promontory.

**CATCHMENT AREA**

The region which drains all the rain water that falls on it, apart from that removed by evaporation, into a river or stream, which then carries the water into the sea or a lake; it may thus coincide with the 'River Basin'. Its boundary is defined by the ridge beyond which water flows in the opposite direction - away from the basin.

**CAUSEWAY**

A raised roadway of solid structure built across low or wet ground or across a stretch of water.

**CAVE**

A hollowed-out chamber in the earth, especially a natural cavity with an opening to the surface.

**CEMETERY**

A place or area for burying the dead.

**CHANNEL**

1. An artificial watercourse used for drainage or irrigation purposes. 2. A comparatively deep and narrow waterway affording a passage for vessels. The waterway may be natural or dredged and can occur in a river, harbour or sea.

**CHASM**

A particularly narrow portion of a gorge or ravine where the width is notably exceeded by the depth and the sides are vertical or nearly so.

**CITY**

A centre of population, commerce and culture with all essential services; a town of significant size and importance, generally accorded the legal right to call itself a city under, either, the Local Government Act, the Crown Lands Act or other instruments put in place by government.

**CLEARING**

An area of ground within a forest, where less than 15% of the ground is covered by trees or scrub. Clearings within areas of dense vegetation may be manmade or naturally occurring.

**CLIFF**

A perpendicular or steep face of rock considerable in height, either inland or along the coast.

**COLLEGE**

An establishment for technical or vocational education usually post secondary.

**COMMON**

A tract of land which belongs to the local community as a whole, and is open to common use.

**COUNTY**

Territorial division of the state for administrative purposes.

**COVE**

A small indentation in a coast, usually sheltered.

**COWAL**

A small lake or dam.

**CRATER**

A bowl shaped cavity, in particular, at the summit or on the side of a volcano. And from which smoke and steam may emanate if the volcano is active. Craters of extinct volcanoes may contain crater lakes. The word crater is applied to other depressions especially those caused by the fall of large meteorites onto the earth's surface. Volcanic craters are sometimes called calders.

**CREEK**

A natural watercourse that is usually a tributary of a river or another creek. It may be perennial or non-perennial and in some areas its course may become indefinite or even peter out.

**CROSSING**

A place where a street, railway, stream, etc., may be crossed.

**CUTTING**

An open excavation through high ground, generally for a transportation system.

**DAM**

1. A barrier built across a stream to impound its water for any purpose. 2. An earthen structure built to contain water for stock purposes.

**DEPRESSION**

A depressed or sunken place.

**DESERT**

An almost barren tract of land in which precipitation is so scanty or spasmodic that it will not adequately support vegetation.

**DIP**

A place for controlling ticks on cattle.

**DISTRICT**

1. Territory marked off for special administrative purposes. 2. A tract of country, up to about 1600 sq. kms in area, distinguished by certain common characteristics, natural or cultural.

**DOCK**

An artificial structure in which ships are built or repaired.

**DRAIN**

A channel, man made or natural, by which liquid is drained or gradually carried away.

**DUNES**

Mounds or ridges of sand formed, either in a desert or along the sea coast, through transportation by the wind.

**ESCARPMENT**

A more or less continuous line of cliffs or steep slopes terminating any generally level upland surface, and is due to erosion or faulting.

**ESTUARY**

The tidal mouth of a river, where the tide meets the current of fresh water; more commonly, an arm of the sea at the lower end of a river.

**FALLS**

A sudden, more or less perpendicular, descent of water over a natural step in the bed of a river or stream.

**FAULT**

A fracture in the earth's crust along which movement has taken place, and where the rock strata on the two sides therefore do not match.

**FLAT**

A relatively level piece of ground within an area of greater relief; a tract of country without hills and smaller than a plain. In river valleys they may be Valley or River Flats, along the foreshores and subject to tidal action they are Tidal Flats and according to the nature of the surface they may be Mud, Stony or Sandy Flats.

**FLORA RESERVE**

Crown land set aside for the protection of flora, and access to which is controlled by federal or state authorities.

**FORD**

The shallow part of a stream or other body of water, where it may be crossed by vehicle or by wading. The crossing may be natural or improved, but not by bridging.

**FOREST**

An area of land proclaimed to be a forest under a Forest Act.

**GAOL**

A place for the confinement of persons convicted and sentenced to imprisonment or of persons awaiting trial.

**GAP**

A low point or opening between hills or mountains or in a ridge or mountain range.

**GLEN**

A narrow, wooded valley with a stream flowing at its bottom. Its sides being generally steep.

**GOLF COURSE**

An area of ground laid out for the playing of golf.

**GORGE**

A valley deep in proportion to its width, usually with precipitous or very steep sides. Generally a feature of some magnitude, relative to the surrounding base.

**GRADIENT**

A noteworthy gradient inclination or slope of the surface of the ground on the side or end of an elevated relief feature.

**GRAVEYARD**

A place for graves; a burial ground, esp. a small one or one in a churchyard.

**GULF**

Large valleys in mountain ranges OR an area of sea partly enclosed by land; usually of larger extent, and greater relative penetration than a bay, that is, Gulf of Carpentaria.

**GULLY**

A natural watercourse formed in the earth's surface, especially a hillside, by the action of water. It only carries water after rain and its sides are generally steep. Usually one of the smallest branches of a drainage system, and often associated with erosive action.

**HARBOUR**

A natural or artificially improved stretch of water where vessels can anchor or secure to buoys or alongside wharves etc and obtain protection from sea and swell. The protection may be afforded by natural features or by artificial works. The place may be provided with terminal and transfer facilities for loading and discharging cargo or passengers.

**HEAD**

A comparatively high promontory of land projecting into the sea with a steep face. An un-named head is usually described as a 'Headland' when a specific name is assigned, it becomes a 'Head'.

**HEADLAND**

A narrow area of land jutting out into a sea, lake, etc.

**HILL**

A small portion of the earth's surface elevated above its surroundings, of lower altitude than a mountain. Generally its altitude is less than 300 metres above the surrounding country but this can change in areas of low relief.

**HILLOCK**

A small hill or mound.

**HISTORIC AREA**

An area or precinct containing no or minimum present activity, but which at one time was an area of recognised name and purpose.

**HISTORIC SITE**

A specific place or site which has at one time been the site of an event or purpose.

**HISTORICAL LOCALITY**

An area or precinct containing no or minimum present activity, but which at one time was an area of recognised name and purpose.

**HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION**

An area or precinct which at one time was an area of recognised name and purpose and has now been redeveloped to recognise its past.

**HOLE**

An area hollowed out in or an opening in the ground.

**HOMESTEAD**

House with outbuildings, especially a farm or station.

**INLET**

A narrow indentation in the coastline or in the lake or river by which the water penetrates into the land.

**ISLAND**

A piece of land usually completely surrounded by water.

**ISLET**

A comparatively small insular landmass. Smaller than an Island but larger than a Cay.

**KNOB**

Rounded projection from a surface.

**KNOLL**

A small rounded Hill.

**LAGOON**

An enclosed area of water separated from the open sea or from a stream by some more or less effective, but not complete, obstacle such as low sandbanks.

**LAKE**

An extensive sheet of fresh or saltwater, natural or artificial, enclosed or nearly enclosed by land. It may or may not have in and out-flowing water, and in dry areas may even dry up at times.

**LAKE BED**

The area of a lake which is under water or once was under water.

**LANDING PLACE**

The act of coming to land. A place of disembarkation.

**LANDMARK**

A prominent or well known object in or feature of a particular landscape. A boundary marker. A large continuous area of land, as opposed to seas or islands.

**LANDSCAPE FEATURE**

This designation is used for a feature of the landscape, whether natural or cultural, which does not fit comfortably in any other designation and the number (actual and expected) of such places in NSW does not warrant a specific separate designation.

**LIGHTHOUSE**

A distinctive structure on or off the Coast, exhibiting a major light designed to serve as an aid to navigation.

**LOCALITY**

A bounded area within the landscape that has a 'Rural' Character

**LOCK**

A section of a canal or river that may be closed off by gates to control the water level and the raising and lowering of vessels that pass through it.

**LOOKOUT**

A natural scenic viewpoint on elevated ground. Works or structures within the immediate vicinity of the view point improving the safety, amenities or view may be evident.

**LOOP**

A railway branch line which leaves the main line and rejoins it after a short distance.

**MARINA**

A docking facility for yachts and other pleasure boats accessible for private patrons only.

**MARSHES**

Low poorly drained land that is sometimes flooded and often lies at the edge of lakes etc.

**MESA**

A flat table-like upland, which falls away steeply on all sides (escarpments). It is larger in area than a 'butte' but smaller than a 'plateau'.

**MONOLITHS**

Large block of stone or anything that resembles one in appearance, intractability, etc. A statue, obelisk, column, etc, cut from one block of stone, A large hollow foundation piece sunk as a caisson and filled with concrete.

**MOOR**

A tract of unenclosed ground, usually covered with heather, coarse grass, bracken, and moss.

**MOUNT**

A natural elevation of the earth's surface rising more or less abruptly from the surrounding level, and attaining an altitude which, relative to adjacent elevations, is impressive or notable. In general the elevation of a mountain is more than 300 metres from foot to summit, but this distinction is arbitrary. For reasons of euphony and local usage 'Mount' is usually used when the generic term precedes the specific term and 'Mountain' when it succeeds it.

**MOUNTAIN**

A large natural elevation of the earth's surface.

**MOUNTAIN LAKES**

A lake created by an extinct volcanic crater.

**MOUNTAIN PEAK**

A prominent point of a hill or mountain. The separately named summits on a range of hills or mountains.

**MOUNTAIN RANGE**

A series or line of mountain or hill ridges with or without peaks, in which the crests are relatively narrow. Its minimum length is about 16 kilometres.

**NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT**

An institution, pier or building specially designed and equipped for use by the Navy.

**NECK**

A narrow strip of land; peninsula or isthmus.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD**

The immediate environment; surroundings. A district where people live. The people in a particular area. Living or situated in and serving the needs of a local area.

**OBSERVATORY**

An institution or building specially designed and equipped for observing meteorological and astronomical phenomena. Any building or structure providing an extensive view of its surroundings.

**OCEAN**

A very large stretch of sea. The vast body of water on the surface of the globe that surrounds the land.

**PARISH**

Territorial division of the state for administrative purposes.

**PASS**

A depression or gap in a range of mountains or hills permitting easier passage from one side to the other.

**PASSAGE**

A comparatively deep and narrow waterway affording a passage for a vessel.

**PEAK**

A prominent point of a hill or mountain. The separately named summits on a range of hills or mountains.

**PENINSULA**

A piece of land almost surrounded by water, especially one connected with the mainland by only a narrow neck of land or isthmus.

**PICNIC AREA**

A location to which people bring food to be eaten in the open air.

**PINNACLE**

The highest point. A towering peak, as of a mountain.

**PIT**

A large usually deep opening in the ground.

**PLAIN**

A tract of country the general surface of which is comparatively flat or slightly undulating. In extent generally not less than 2,500 hectares and sparsely, if at all timbered.

**PLATEAU**

An elevated tract of comparatively flat or level land, having a large part of its total surface at or near the summit level. Its local relief may be very great in cases where it is cut by gorges, or it may have a small local relief like a plain in cases where erosion has not been severe. Its minimum horizontal dimension in any direction generally exceeds 1.6km.

**POINT**

A location, spot, or position. Point of land. A small promontory,

**POND**

A pool of still water, often artificially created.

**POOL**

A small body of still water, usually fresh. A deep part of a stream or river where the water runs very slowly.

**PORT**

A town or place alongside navigable water with facilities for the loading and unloading of ships.

**POST OFFICE**

A local office for receiving, distributing and transmitting mail, providing telecommunication services etc.

**POWER STATION**

An electrical generating station.

**PRISON**

A place to which persons are legally committed, either while awaiting trial or for punishment.

**PUBLIC WATERING PLACE**

An artificial waterhole.

**RACECOURSE**

A place which has been licensed by government for the holding of horse races.

**RAILWAY**

A permanent track composed of a line of parallel metal rails fixed to sleepers for transport of passengers and goods in trains.

**RAILWAY CUTTING**

An excavation in a piece of high land for a railway.

**RAILWAY LOOP**

A short branch off a railway track, often connected at both ends to the main track where trains can pass on a single line stretch of railway. In some cases freight may be handled at these sidings. This designation includes 'Railway Siding'.

**RAILWAY SIDING**

A short branch off a railway track, often connected at both ends to the main track where trains can pass on a single line stretch of railway. In some cases freight may be handled at these sidings. This designation includes 'Railway Loop'.

**RAILWAY STATION**

A structure beside a railway line with facilities for passengers and freight.

**RAMP**

An area set aside for the launching of small water craft, usually paved.

**RANGE**

A series or line of mountain or hill ridges with or without peaks, in which the crests are relatively narrow. Its minimum length is about 16 kilometres.

**RAPIDS**

Portions of a stream with accelerated current where it descends rapidly without a break in the slope of the bed sufficient to form a waterfall.

**RAVINE**

A deep narrow steep sided valley.

**REACH**

A comparatively straight part of a river or channel between two bends.

**REEF**

A ridge of rocks or coral lying near the surface of the sea, which may be visible at low tide, but is usually covered by water.

**REGION**

A region is a relatively large tract of land distinguished by certain common characteristics, natural or cultural. Natural unifying features could include same drainage basin, similar landforms, or climatic conditions, a special flora or fauna,

or the like. Cultural determining features could include boundaries proclaimed for administrative purposes, common land use patterns etc.

**REGULATOR**

Any of various mechanisms or devices such as a governor valve, for controlling fluid flow, pressure, temperature, etc.

**RESEARCH STATION**

An institution, farm or building specially designed and equipped for carrying out agricultural research.

**RESERVE**

An area proclaimed to be a public reserve by government legislation.

**RESERVOIR**

An artificial lake or structure storing water for domestic or other uses.

**RIDGE**

A long and narrow stretch of elevated ground. It generally has a length less than 16 kilometres.

**RIFLE RANGE**

An area used for target practice with rifles.

**RIVER**

A major natural stream in a large catchment basin, carrying water to another river, a lake or the sea. Usually perennial, but not necessarily so in arid areas.

**RIVER BEND**

A curve in the course of a stream. This designation includes 'meander'.

**RIVER CROSSING**

A place where a river may be crossed.

**RIVER FLAT**

A relatively level piece of ground within an area of greater relief; a tract of country without hills and smaller than a plain, caused by the laying down of sediment by a river.

**RIVER MOUTH**

The area at which a river makes contact with the sea.

**RIVULET**

A small stream.

**ROAD BEND**

A bend in a road.

**ROADS**

An open way, usually surfaced with tarmac or concrete, providing passage from one place to another.

**ROADSTEAD**

An open anchorage for ships, which may be sufficiently sheltered to give protection from seas, usually by reefs, sandbanks, or islands.

**ROCK**

A prominent or isolated out crop of rock, or even a single large stone. This designation includes 'boulder' 'crag' 'needle' 'pillar' and 'tor'.

**ROCK FACE**

An area of exposed rock, generally in a vertical position.

**RURAL PLACE**

A place, site or precinct in a rural landscape, generally of small extent, the name of which is in current use.

**SADDLE**

A col or pass or any land form recalling in shape a saddle.

**SANDBANK**

A bank of sand in a sea or river that may be exposed at low tide.

**SANDBAR**

A ridge of sand in a river or sea, built up by the action of tides, currents, etc, and often exposed at low tide.

**SANDHILL**

A mound, ridge or hill of drifted sand either in a desert or along a sea coast, formed by the action of wind.

**SANDRIDGE**

Sand drifts in long ridges tending parallel to and elongating in the direction of the prevailing winds.

**SCHOOL**

An establishment for primary or secondary education created by the Education Act.

**SCRUB**

A vegetation consisting of stunted trees, bushes, and other plants growing in an arid area. An area of arid land covered with such vegetation.

**SEA**

One of the divisions of the oceans, especially if partly enclosed by land.

**SHOAL**

A ridge of sand or of rocks just below the surface of the sea or of a river and therefore dangerous to navigation.

**SPORTSGROUND**

A reserve used for sporting fixtures.

**SPRING**

A flow of water issuing naturally out of the ground, either continuously or intermittently.

**SPUR**

A minor linear projection off a range, ridge, mountain, tableland, hill or plateau being generally not more than 2 kilometres in length and decreasing in altitude from the parent feature.

**STATE**

A major administrative or political division within a country.

**STATION**

A structure beside a railway line with facilities for passengers and freight.

**STEEPS**

The very steep and deep sides of a mountain or high plateau.

**STRAIT**

A comparatively narrow passage connecting two seas or two large bodies of water.

**STREAM**

Small river, brook. Any steady flow of water or other fluid.

**SUBURB**

A bounded area within the landscape that has an 'Urban' Character.

**SURF BREAK**

A permanent obstruction such as a reef, bombora, rock or sandbar which causes waves to break thus making conditions conducive to surfing.

**SWAMP**

A tract of land normally saturated with water, having little or no drainage and characterised by a growth of grass or reeds. This designation includes 'marsh'.

**SYPHON**

A tube/pipe placed with one end at a certain level in a body of water and the other in a body of water below this level.

**TABLELAND**

An elevated tract of land with a generally level surface of considerable extent, generally with a minimum area of 2,500 hectares.

**TANK**

An artificial waterhole forming a reservoir for rainwater and adjacent run-off.

**TERMINAL**

A reception or departure building at the terminus of a bus, sea or air transport route.

**TERRACE**

A level or nearly level strip of land, usually narrow and bordering the sea, a lake or river, lying between a slope upwards to hills on one side and a slope, often abrupt, downwards on the other.

**TOPS**

The top of a hill

**TOWER**

A tall usually square or circular structure, sometimes part of a larger building and usually built for a specific purpose.

**TOWN**

A commercial nucleus offering a wide range of services and a large number of shops, often several of the same type. Depending on size, the residential area can be relatively compact or (in addition) dispersed in clusters on the periphery.

**TRACK**

A formed and/or marked track that is used by people either walking, cycling or riding a horse. This designation includes 'trails'.

**TRAINING WALL**

See 'Breakwater'.

**TRIG. STATION**

A point on the ground, the geographic position of which has been determined by geodetic survey.

**TUNNEL**

An underground passageway, esp. one for trains or cars. Any passage through or under something.

**UNIVERSITY**

An institution of higher education having authority to award bachelor and higher degrees, usually having research facilities.

**URBAN LOCALITY**

Not now recommended, see 'Urban Place'.

**URBAN PLACE**

A place, site or precinct in an urban landscape, the name of which is in current use, but the limits of which have not been defined under the address locality program.

**URBAN VILLAGE**

A cohesive populated place in an urban landscape, which may provide a limited range of services to the local area.

**VALLEY**

Long depression in the land surface, usually containing a river, formed by erosion or by movements in the earth's crust. Any elongated depression resembling a valley.

**VILLAGE**

A cohesive populated place in a rural landscape, which may provide a limited range of services to the local area. Residential subdivisions are in urban lot sizes.

**WATER AERODROME**

All licensed aerodromes and government aerodromes maintained by the Federal Airports Corporation, other than those designated 'airports' which have a landing facilities on water for sea planes etc.

**WATER FEATURE**

A feature within water.

**WATER SYPHON**

See 'Syphon'.

**WATERCOURSE**

A stream, river, or canal. The channel, bed, or route along which this flows.

**WATERFALL**

A sudden descent of water over a step in the bed of a stream, the fall being much steeper than in the designation 'rapids'. In place names frequently shortened to 'Fall' or 'Falls'. This designation includes 'cascade' and 'cataract'.

**WATERHOLE**

A natural hole or hollow containing water, often in the dry bed of an intermittent river.

**WEIR**

A barrier, erected across a stream to impound and raise the water level for the purpose of maintaining it at the level required for irrigation or navigation purposes.

**WELL**

A hole or pit dug in the ground to obtain water.

**WHARF**

A platform alongside of which ships may be secured for loading or unloading cargo or passengers. This designation includes 'pier' 'quay' 'jetty' and 'marina' for those marinas that only have public access.

Department of Lands  
Head Office  
1 Prince Albert Road  
Queens Square  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

T 13000 LANDS  
61 2 9228 6666  
F 61 2 9233 4357

[www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au)

© August 2007 NSW Department of Lands (B) P07/21/001