



Photo Paul Foley, Tourism NSW

6 GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD REPORT

THE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD IS THE OFFICIAL BODY FOR NAMING AND RECORDING DETAILS OF PLACES IN NSW

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ The corner of NSW, Vic and SA was named MacCabe Corner, in honour of the pioneer surveyor, Francis MacCabe.
- ✓ 2,812 place names were designated, an increase of 960 from the previous year.
- ✓ The board continued its policy of recognising Aboriginal and multicultural communities.

All sections of the community regularly use place names to describe where they live, how to get somewhere or where they have been. Natural features such as mountains, rivers and beaches are all known and described by a name. Our suburbs, cities and towns also have names. These 'geographical names' allow us to navigate across the landscape and describe places to others. In doing so, they provide the community with a spatial identity which reflects its culture and heritage.

During the 1950s the United Nations' Economic Social Council recognised the importance of place names and introduced directives to authenticate and standardise place names. In 1966 the NSW State Government passed the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, which provided, amongst other things, for the constitution of the Geographical Names Board (the board).

The board is the official body for naming and recording details of places in NSW and has the power to assign names to places, to investigate and determine the spelling, meaning, pronunciation, origin and history of any name, and to determine the application of each name with regard to position, extent or other reference.

The board works closely with councils and the community to ensure place names are widely accepted and reflect local attitudes.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The board's vision is to be recognised by communities as the authoritative body for location based naming in NSW. To achieve this vision the board has developed a strategic plan which includes the following objectives.

- To improve data quality to meet the needs of the community, partners and customers.
- To ensure that appropriate communications are in place to raise the awareness of the board and its functions.
- To establish an appropriate framework to support the board and achieve its outcomes.
- To maximise the use of technology as an enabler to support the strategic directions of the board.

- The application of any geographical name with regard to position, extent or otherwise.
- Compile and maintain a vocabulary of Aboriginal words used or suitable for use in geographical names and to record their meaning and tribal origin.
- Compile and maintain a dictionary of geographical names with a record of their form, spelling, meaning, pronunciation, origin and history.
- Publish a gazetteer of geographical names.
- Inquire into and make recommendations on any matters relating to the names of places referred to it by the Minister.
- May compile, maintain and publish a list of road names.

The board proactively seeks to abide by these statutory provisions through the adoption of nomenclature policies and procedures which are both nationally and internationally recognised.

GOVERNANCE

Functions of the board

As set out in the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, the board has the following powers and functions.

- Assign names to places.
- Approve that a recorded name of a place shall be its geographical name.
- Alter a recorded name or a geographical name.
- Determine whether the use of a recorded name or a geographical name shall be discontinued.
- Adopt rules of orthography, nomenclature and pronunciation with respect to geographical names.
- Investigate and determine the form, spelling, meaning, pronunciation, origin and history of any geographical name.

Board members

Board members are appointed in accordance with the provisions set out in section 3 of the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended. The Act allows for a total of nine members, four of which are those people who hold the office of, or are a respective nominee of, the Surveyor General of NSW, the Director General of the Department of Planning, the State Librarian and an officer of the Department of Lands nominated by the Director General of that department.

The remaining five positions are nominated by:

- the governing bodies of the Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW (joint nomination)
- the governing body of the Royal Australian Historical Society
- the governing body of the Geographical Society of NSW
- the NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- the Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission.

Board members and attendance

Members of the Board	Board meetings (5 meetings)
Mr Warwick Watkins AMP:ISMP (Harv), MNatRes, DipScAgr, HDA (Hons), FAPI, Hon FISA (NSW), FRICS, JP Surveyor General of NSW. Ex-officio position	3 (Chair)
Mr Paul Harcombe BSurv (UNSW), MGeom (Melb) Nominee of the Director General of the Department of Lands	5
Ms Cheryl Evans Nominee of the State Librarian Reappointed December 2006, term expired March 2009	4
Mr Richard Neville Nominee of the State Librarian Appointed March 2009, term expires December 2011	4
Mr Alan Ventress BA, DipLIB Nominee of the Royal Australian Historical Society Reappointed December 2006, term expires December 2011	5
Cr Fran Tierney Nominee of the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011	3
Dr John Emery BA, MA, PhD, DipEd, DipT&CP Nominee of the Geographical Society of New South Wales Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011	5
Mrs Beverley Manton Nominee of NSW Aboriginal Land Council Appointed 26 November 2008, term expires 12 December 2011	1
Ms Wajjha Ahmed BA, LL.B, Grad Legal Prac, Dip Law Nominee of the Community Relations Commissioner Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011	4
Mr Richard Pearson Nominee of the Department of Planning Appointed December 2007, term expires December 2011	0
Mr Brett Whitworth Nominee for Mr Richard Pearson per section 3, part 12, subsection b of the <i>Geographical Names Act 1966</i> , as amended	3
Counsellors*	
Dr Peter Orlovich Historical Advisor	5
Dr Jakelin Troy Linguistic Advisor	4
Mr Gerard Herbert Addressing Advisor	4

*In accordance with the provision of the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, the board may appoint counsellors to advise it on matters within its powers and functions. The board has appointed three counsellors to advise it on issues such as linguistics, history and addressing.

Members of the Geographical Names Board are 'appointed' by the Governor and hold office for a period not longer than five years. They are also eligible for re-appointment after the completion of their respective term.

Board meetings

The board met formally on five occasions during the year. Five members form a quorum. The Surveyor General of NSW in his position as chair has a deliberative vote and casting vote.

Board committees

The board's secretary is a member on both Place names Australia Inc. and the Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia (CGNA).

Place names Australia is a voluntary non-profit association incorporated in NSW. The object of the association is to ensure that the Australian National Place names Survey is implemented. The aim of the survey is to prepare a national database of geographical names which documents their pronunciation, generic class, status (gazetted, obsolete, non-gazetted, sensitive, disputed etc.), origin, meaning, history, cultural significance (of both name and site), and map reference and location. The database will be made accessible for public enquiry via the internet and will be available to enable the production of place name dictionaries, both local and national.

CGNA coordinates place naming activities across Australia and New Zealand. Membership comprises Australian state and territory boards and committees, New Zealand and other organisations with a role and interest in place naming. In compliance with United Nation directives CGNA publishes a gazetteer which records the legal status and position of all geographical names within Australia. NSW place names for this product are supplied by the board.

Administration

Section 4 of the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, makes provision for a secretary and such officers to administer the affairs of the board. To carry out this function Lands employs a secretariat which consists of four staff members. The Department of Lands also provides further administrative and technical support to assist the board in its day-to-day operations.

REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

Address determination

People use addresses on a daily basis to describe where they live and work. As such, addresses are a fundamental reference used by all levels of the community for the location of private residences, businesses, government agencies and essential services such as hospitals and police stations.

Australia's Online and Communication Council recently stated that 'Address management is the single most important contribution the spatial information industry can make for the business of government and industry'.

The board recognises addresses need to be logical, unique and readily identified. Along with the allocation of address numbers, the naming of address localities and roads is essential for the provision of addresses in NSW.

The board is committed to ensuring that address localities and roads are named in a manner that maintains the integrity of addresses within NSW. It does this by applying nationally accepted guidelines and standards to both road name and place name proposals.

The board has formally assigned over 160 address locality names and concurred with 2,163 new road names in the reporting year. Objections were also raised against two hundred and seventy eight road names that did not meet the board's guidelines. The standardisation of these names leads to greater certainty and integrity for thousands of addresses in NSW.

Recognising achievements in the community

The recognition of famous and everyday Australians from all sectors of society who work tirelessly for the good of their local community is seen as a priority for the board. The board seeks to recognise outstanding achievement in the community by commemoratively naming relevant geographical features. Acts of bravery, community service and exceptional accomplishment by both individuals and groups are grounds for this recognition.

The board has bestowed honours of this nature on many individuals and groups. Returned service men and women, famous sporting identities, educators, industry leaders, former elected civic officials, famous Aboriginals, community leaders and everyday Australians have all been commemorated in this fashion. Within the reporting year, the board commemorated the achievements of over fifty five individuals who displayed outstanding qualities. These include Donald Commons Reserve Named after Donald Commons (born NZ 1855 - 1942) who was

the surveying engineer for the extension of the North Shore Railway from 1878. Donald Commons was a distinguished artist and founding member of the Julian Ashton Art School. He resided at 'Narelle', 3 Narelle Ave Pymble, and gave the land to council for the purpose of a reserve. Another example is Norths Lookout named after John Britty North (1831 - 1917) known as 'The Father of Katoomba' who registered the Katoomba Coal Mine in 1878. He played a major role in promoting Katoomba as a tourist destination. Norths Lookout overlooks Nellies Glen, named after his daughter Ellen Mary (Nellie) North (1862-1936).

Cultural and historic place names

Since its inception, the board has preferred Aboriginal place names. These names not only provide Australia with a unique taxonomy describing the landscape, they also provide an insight into the cultural beliefs and customs of our land's earliest inhabitants. In the reporting year the board has recognised many of these names including Lake Yandelora. Yandel'ora was a special meeting place where indigenous tribes from as far north as Maroochydore to as far south as Melbourne would gather to peacefully settle disputes. The summit of Mt Annan is where the leaders of each tribe would gather to establish laws.

The board also recognises the contribution made by new Australians and seeks to reflect cultural diversity in the state's nomenclature. This year the board named a reserve in South Hurstville to honour a sister city relationship between Kogarah Council and Ma An Shan in China. Ma An Shan means 'Horsesaddle Mountain'. The name is derived from legend. In 202BC Xiang Yu, King of the Chu Kingdom, committed suicide in this region after being defeated by his arch rival the Han King Liu Ban.

NSW also has a rich and colourful history which the board actively recognises and endeavours to incorporate into the state's place names. In September 2008 the board named the corner where the three states of NSW, Victoria and South Australia meet, MacCabe Corner in honour of the pioneer surveyor Francis MacCabe (1817-1902) who conducted the first surveys in the area and made a substantial contribution to mapping the border, by linking a survey of the Murray River to other state border surveys.

Francis MacCabe was responsible for a significant phase of surveying the rivers in the Murray-Darling Basin, however his work is little known and poorly recognised, he conducted a survey along the Murray River allowed Sir Thomas Mitchell to complete his great 1853 map of south-eastern Australia.

In his work, Mr MacCabe was also mindful of Aboriginal people, diligently recording their place names in his surveys. It's fitting this corner, so long overlooked, is named after this pioneering surveyor.

STATUTORY REPORTING

Consultants

During the year the board commissioned Dr Jakelin Troy to prepare a paper on the development of an Aboriginal vocabulary per its powers and functions outlined in section 5, part 1, sub-section g of the *Geographical Names Act 1966*. A total of \$6,000 was budgeted for this project.

Consumer response

The board's secretariat is administered by Lands. As such, all policies, systems and guidelines relating to complaints and customer satisfaction are dealt with as per the Department's directions. In line with these policies and guidelines the board has dealt with 38 Ministerial documents and several thousand submissions from the general public resulting from the board's consultation process.

Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement

The board is committed to the principles of multiculturalism and ensures the recognition of other traditions and customs by preferring place names that acknowledge ethnicity in our society.

The *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, also provides for the appointment of a member to the board by the Community Relations Commissioner to ensure linguistic and cultural considerations are taken into account in the board's determinations.

Indicators

Designation	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
Address locality names and boundaries	180	280	188	73	160
Road names	991	1,099	908	1,651	2,441
Dual names	22	1	1	1	0
Other place names	172	124	259	127	211

FIGURE 14 | GNB indicators



Katoomba, Blue Mountains, NSW.

Through its strategic plan, the board has resolved to develop strategies that better understand multicultural expectations in NSW and publish its decisions in languages required by its customer base.

Grants to non-government organisations

There were no grants given to non-government organisations in the reporting year.

Legislation

There were no changes made to the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, as amended, in the reporting year.

Publications

The board publishes various documents which are designed to inform the community on issues concerning place names within NSW. The following publications are available through the board's website or at the board's office.

- Geographical Names Board – Preserving the history, culture and identity of NSW.

- Determining suburbs and localities in NSW.
- Dual Naming – Supporting cultural recognition.
- Commemorative naming.
- Guidelines for the determination of place names.
- Place name application form.
- Glossary of status values in the Geographical Names Register.
- Glossary of designation values in the Geographical Names Register.
- Geographical Names Board – The NSW road and address locality naming process.
- Road naming in NSW.
- Guidelines for the naming of roads.
- The naming and addressing of private roads and roads in community subdivisions.
- Rural addressing for NSW.

For information on payment performance, risk management and insurance, and all other administrative procedures, policies and processes for this report please refer to Lands' annual report appendices.

FUTURE FOCUS

In September 2007, the board drafted its strategic plan which sets its direction and objectives for the next three years.

To facilitate in the delivery of these objectives the board has set over 30 strategies and actions.

To date excellent progress has been made on these strategies and actions, and their implementation will be continued throughout 2009/10.

These include:

- the investigation and recommendations of various reforms for legislation dealing with legal addressing
- updates to the board's website to improve community access
- implemented strategies for improved community access through the establishment of a new 1800 phone number
- over 90% completion of all address locality determinations with all outstanding determination scheduled for completion by the end of next financial year.