

Geographical Names Board of NSW Report

Preserving the history, culture
and identity of NSW

71



Geographical Names Board Report

Since the 1950s the United Nations has recognised the need to standardise geographical names and has published many guidelines and directives in respect to this issue. In 1966 the NSW Government complied with United Nations' directions and established the Geographical Names Board of NSW (the Board) to administer place names within the state. The Board is empowered by the *Geographical Names Act 1966* which provides it the power to assign names to places; to investigate and determine the form, spelling, meaning, pronunciation, origin and history of any geographical name; and to determine the application of each name with regard to position, extent or other reference.

The Board is committed to providing NSW with the best possible service. As such, the Board is at the forefront of international 'best practice' methodologies in the field of toponymy. The Board ensures its practices, guidelines and policies adhere to international standards in this area. By doing this, issues dealing with duplication, orthography, position and extent in regards to place names are minimised.

Organisations such as local councils and map publishers rely heavily on the Board to provide authoritative toponyms for use on signs and maps. The Board's determinations with respect to official suburbs and localities are used by the real estate industry for describing property locations.

Aims and objectives

The Board's aims and objectives are to continue to:

- preference Aboriginal place names in a manner which seeks to recognise and publicise these names and in so doing promote the use of traditional Aboriginal languages within NSW
- develop and implement initiatives that enforce authoritative addresses thus ensuring a robust system for the delivery of emergency services to the community
- recognise the contribution to the community by everyday Australians through commemoratively naming geographical features within the state
- redevelop the Board's information systems so as to ensure effective communication with the community
- accomplish over four hundred place name determinations in the reporting year thus minimising issues relating to duplication and confusion in orthography, position and extent with regard to place names
- ensure high standards for the naming of roads, schools and National Parks in NSW through a continued commitment to a concurrence role for toponyms that fall outside the Board's jurisdiction
- encourage the standardisation and promotion of geographical names on a state, national and international basis.

Governance Functions of the Board

As set out in the *Geographical Names Act 1966*, 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
- 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.

Members of the Board during 2006/07	Board meetings (4 meetings)
Warwick Watkins AMP:ISMP (Harv), MNatRes, DipScAgr, HDA (Hons), FAPI, FISA, JP Surveyor General of NSW <i>Ex-officio position.</i>	4 (Chair)
Paul Harcombe BSurv (UNSW), MGeom (Melb) Chief Surveyor, Department of Lands <i>Ex-officio position.</i>	4
Cheryl Evans State Library <i>Reappointed December 2006, position to be reviewed in December 2007.</i>	4
Peter Woods Emeritus Mayor OAM, CMC, JP, BA, MLitt, TTC, CertCommMed, MACE, FAICD Local Government and Shires Association of NSW <i>Appointed December 2001, term expired December 2006.</i>	2
Alan Ventress BA, DipLIB Royal Australian Historical Society <i>Reappointed December 2006, term expires December 2011.</i>	4
Jack Devery BSc, MTCP Geographical Society of New South Wales <i>Appointed December 2001, term expired December 2006.</i>	2
Murray Chapman (deceased)* NSW Aboriginal Land Council <i>Appointed December 2001 - December 2006.</i>	1
Stepan Kerkyasharian AM Community Relations Commission <i>Appointed April 2004, term expired December 2006.</i>	0
New members appointed in March 2007	
Cr Fran Teirney Local Government and Shires Association of NSW <i>Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011.</i>	1
Dr John Emery BA, MA, PhD, DipEd, DipT&CP Geographical Society of New South Wales <i>Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011.</i>	1
Wajiha Ahmed BA, LLB, DipLaw Community Relations Commissioner <i>Appointed December 2006, term expires December 2011.</i>	2
Counsellors**	
Dr Peter Orlovich	4
Dr Jakelin Troy	4
Terry Pendleton	2
Gerard Herbert	4

* The Board has initiated the process to fill the positions of nominees of the Director General Department of Planning and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

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

Geographical Names Board Report

Board members

Members are appointed to the Board in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 3 of the *Geographical Names Act 1966*. 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 (Lands) nominated by the Director General of that department.

The remaining five positions are to be 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.

These members 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.

A number of the 'Appointed' positions on the Board fell vacant in the reporting year and these were filled by new members.

Board meetings

The Board met formally on four 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 Technical and Scientific Sub-Committee

The Technical and Scientific Sub-Committee (the Committee) is tasked with investigating issues pertaining to linguistic consistency for various names relating to traditional Aboriginal languages, the investigation and development of reports relating to nomenclature issues and ongoing training and research programs for the Board. The Committee met on two occasions during the year and is made up of academics and experts in the area of history, linguistics and toponymy.

Administration

Section 4 of the *Geographical Names Act 1966* makes provision for a secretary and such officers to administer the affairs of the Board. To

carry out this function Lands employs a small secretariat which consists of four staff members. Lands also provides 'back office' support to assist the Board in its day to day operations.

Report on performance Legal addressing in NSW

Road and address locality names are important navigation tools, not only for residents but for councils, emergency services and mapping services. The gazettal of these names reduces confusion, lowers the incidents of duplication and ensures appropriate names are made official. Consequently, the naming process has been standardised to ensure that any changes are easily understood by community members and service providers.

The Board has a statutory responsibility to determine definitive boundaries for suburbs and localities throughout NSW. The Board works closely with local councils when defining boundaries because local residents are one of the most significant users of the names. The process of determining boundaries is one of acknowledging existing names and formalising their extent according to common local usage.

The Board is also required to be notified of all road naming proposals. To

Indicators			
Designation	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Address locality names and boundaries	180	280	188
Road names concurred	991	1099	908
Dual names	22	1	1
Other place names	172	124	259

The Surveyor General and/or the Registrar General can object to any road naming proposal that doesn't meet the Board's guidelines.

In the reporting year the Board has formally assigned over 180 address locality names and concurred with 908 new road names.

Recognising excellence in the community

The Board honours community members who have made an exceptional contribution to society through commemorative naming. Commemorative place names recognise both famous and everyday Australians whose achievements are deemed outstanding.

The Board has honoured over 40 individuals in the reporting year by naming various geographical features after them. These names commemorate a wide variety of achievements from a broad cross section of citizens. 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.

Aboriginal naming and cultural diversity

The Board is committed to acknowledging Aboriginal culture through place naming in NSW. The Board does this by preferencing traditional Aboriginal place names or names with Aboriginal origin wherever it can. The Board is also dedicated to restoring traditional Aboriginal names to features with introduced names through its dual naming policy. In the reporting year the Board officially recognised six place names of Aboriginal origin and assigned the

dual name 'Kolety' as the traditional Aboriginal name for the Edward River.

The Board also encourages place names that acknowledge the multicultural nature of our society. In the reporting year the Board assigned two names that have culturally diverse origins.

Future focus

In an effort to ensure its relevance to the community the Board has committed to undertake a strategic planning session in the next reporting year. As the membership of the Board has changed considerably within the past twelve months, the Board noted that it would be an opportune time to conduct a review of this nature. It is envisaged that this review will cover topics such as:

- vision, mission and values
- goals and objectives
- risks and threats (situation analysis)
- other topics deemed relevant.

The Board has also carried out an independent assessment on its information systems in an effort to ensure it meets increasing community expectation. This review highlighted the need for both the Board and Lands to invest in system re-engineering so as to ensure positive outcomes in the areas of:

- authoritative addressing
- authoritative nomenclature access by primary databases
- representation of accurate spatial extent
- collection and management of postcodes
- compliance with the *Geographical Names Act 1966*

- temporal control of data
- integration with other key databases.

Further work will be carried out by both the Board and Lands in this area over the next twelve months.

Statutory reporting 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 Lands directions.

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* 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 – The NSW Road and Address Locality Naming Process.
- Geographical Names Board – Preserving the history, culture and identity of NSW.
- Determining Suburbs and Localities in NSW.
- Dual Naming – Supporting cultural recognition.

Geographical Names Board Report

- Road Naming in NSW.
- Commemorative Naming.
- Glossary of Status Values in the Geographical Names Register.
- Glossary of Designation Values in the Geographical Names Register.
- Guidelines for the Determination of Place names.
- Rural Addressing for NSW.
- Place name Application Form.
- The Naming and Addressing of Private Roads and Roads in Community Subdivisions.
- Guidelines for the Naming of Roads.

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