

APPENDIX

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECORDING AND USE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PLACE NAMES

Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia

1 MAIN OBJECTIVE

To ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names are recognised by all Australia as being part of Australian heritage and need to be preserved.

2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The names of places as given by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be recognised initially by place names authorities and ultimately by all Australians.
- 2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names be preferred as the name to be used for any feature that does not have a name recognised by the relevant place name authority.
- 2.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities be consulted on all dealings concerning Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander place names in their areas of current occupation and traditional association, in line with self-determination policies. (This includes any proposals to assign new names, alter spellings, institute a dual naming system etc.)
- 2.4 The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies be used as a resource to assist in the development of a writing system for any specific language which does not have an existing system. (The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies can assist with advice regarding linguists/anthropologists who have worked with the language group, previous surveys etc.)
- 2.5 Nomenclature authorities to undertake when possible to educate the general community in the use and pronunciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names. (This

can be started by the use of authorised names on maps, wide distribution of policies, taking opportunities to speak to appropriate and interested groups, various media releases etc., all of which can be very beneficial without the need to be involved in costly programs.)

- 2.6 Nomenclature authorities be committed to the continuing development of appropriate procedures to facilitate the recording and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names and State and Federal governments recognise the need to provide funding.
- 2.7 Nomenclature authorities to seek the involvement of other interested/concerned groups (e.g. land councils, local government authorities, language centres).

3 GUIDELINES

3.1 Recognition

- 3.1.1 Any use of names of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin should be made following consultation and with appropriate recognition.
- 3.1.2 A recognition of the self-determination concept and its importance in contributing to place names issues.
- 3.1.3 A recognition to be given to the use of traditional names for places and localities bearing an officially recorded name from another source.
- 3.1.4 A recognition that more than one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander place name may exist for any particular feature, both within a specific language group and from two or more language groups.
- 3.1.5 A recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names were in use prior to European occupation.
- 3.1.6 A recognition that the oral recording of place names in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture has equal standing with written recording.
- 3.1.7 A recognition that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names may be subject to restrictions that must be respected. (This may apply to some names in common usage which are of a very sensitive nature — either sacred or offensive. Names in this category will be revealed following the establishment of good relations between the communities and the nomenclature authorities, and should be negotiated on an individual basis.)
- 3.1.8 A recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expectation. (This particularly applies to methods of contact, community structures, respect for community wishes etc.)

3.2 Preferences

- 3.2.1 That Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names be preferred for those features that do not have a name recognised by the nomenclature authorities or the local community.

- 3.2.2 That a preference be stated for the spelling and accenting of place names to agree with the rules of the written form of the language (if one exists) from which the place names originate.
- 3.2.3 That there should be no interference with established Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander place names without the consent of the relevant community. (This applies to names in any location.)
- 3.2.4 That during the development and after the adoption of the guidelines, there be an assurance of the involvement of participants representing a diversity of interests, including government, non-government and voluntary organisations.
- 3.2.5 Adjustments may be made to the spelling of place names in consultation with the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community and their linguist if the current form is under threat of mispronunciation by the wider community or has been previously incorrectly represented.
- 3.2.6 Appropriate follow-up be made with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to show the results of any specific field work or project.
- 3.2.7 Linguists should be consulted to maintain standards of excellence in written form.
- 3.2.8 Local government bodies, National Parks and Wildlife agencies, heritage bodies etc. should be consulted as required.
- 3.2.9 Authorisation is to be obtained from the relevant community for the use of any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander name or word taken from any source in official naming. (This refers to the use of names or words for new naming proposals, e.g. suburbs, conservation parks etc. The proposed use of the name or word may not be appropriate.)
- 3.2.10 Questions of copyright/ownership of information collected during any fieldwork or investigation must be resolved prior to the survey being conducted or prior to the names being used in a public domain.
- 3.2.11 The wishes of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community must be respected in relation to names and related information associated with areas of land currently occupied or areas of traditional association.
- 3.2.12 Consultation must try to meet the expectations of all involved parties, however, failing complete agreement, a consensus of opinion is to be aimed for. Various methods of consultation must be tried for.

3.3 Writing system

- 3.3.1 Where a writing system already exists and is in use by the community, that system should be used (e.g. Pitjantjatjara).
- 3.3.2 Where no writing system exists, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies should be contacted as a reference source for the development of a writing system.

- 3.3.3 Ease of pronunciation be a criteria for the writing of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander place names.
- 3.3.4 English generic terms may be used if considered necessary to specify the type of feature involved.
- 3.3.5 Those researching languages that are no longer spoken will need to seek the assistance of a linguist to enable accurate renditions of the names to be determined.
- 3.3.6 The language source of each place name is to be noted if it is known or can be determined.

3.4 Education

- 3.4.1 A commitment by nomenclature authorities to undertake where possible an educative role in popularising correct spelling and pronunciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names.
- 3.4.2 Nomenclature authorities and the Committee of Geographical Names in Australasia to undertake an educative role to develop positive international perspectives of the use of indigenous names in Australia.
- 3.4.3 Assist in the education of the wider community about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the importance of place names to that culture.
- 3.4.4 Impart a realisation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names represent a gift from another culture, the sharing of which imposes ethical obligations on the users. (This covers such areas as respect for restrictions, acknowledgment of sources, authorisation for use etc.)
- 3.4.5 To create an awareness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the importance of being able to preserve culture through place names and minimise the encroachment of new European names on the landscape, particularly for features of high cultural significance.
- 3.4.6 Foster a knowledge among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that their wishes will be respected.
- 3.4.7 Educate nomenclature authority support staff in appropriate consultative mechanisms.
- 3.4.8 Create an increased awareness among nomenclature authority staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and culture.

3.5 Procedural

- 3.5.1 A dual naming system or use of alternative names may be used as a management and educative tool for the naming of physical and environmental features of significance to the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community when an official name already exists and when a name change is not possible or acceptable.

- 3.5.2 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander names or terms from one area not to be applied to other areas for official naming purposes.
- 3.5.3 Local historical and cultural information relating to the meaning and origin of the place names should be collected whenever possible.
- 3.5.4 Previous relevant surveys by anthropologists, linguists, land councils, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners and others be used as a resource prior to any fieldwork.
- 3.5.5 Names and spellings may be changed to avoid duplication of names, present a better vehicle for correct pronunciation and provide for better cultural retention.
- 3.5.6 Roman characters should be used in preference to other syllabic forms.
- 3.5.7 Where alternative spellings of a specific Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander name exist, only one official spelling should be used following consultation with the relevant community.
- 3.5.8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names are to be actively sought with the assistance of the State/Territory and Federal Governments.
- 3.5.9 State/Territory authorities agree to cooperate in undertaking joint field projects where common State/Territory boundaries have no meaning to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language.

For further information about the National Policy Guidelines for the Recording and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Place Names, please contact:

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