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Aboriginal place names

2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

Place naming using Aboriginal languages is an opportunity for further reconciliation and can help restore, support and promote Aboriginal languages across Victoria. During the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, Geographic Names Victoria is:

- advising Victorian Government Ministers of the year and encouraging naming government assets and infrastructure using Aboriginal language
- continuing to hold Aboriginal place names workshops with Traditional Owners, councils and state government departments and authorities to promote Aboriginal language, the work of Registered Aboriginal Parties and the rules and processes around naming
- creating short documentaries highlighting Aboriginal language and recent assignment of Aboriginal language to roads, features and localities
- naming DELWP meeting rooms using Aboriginal language
- reviewing potentially inappropriate names across Victoria
- engaging with relevant organisations to partner, share and promote Aboriginal language
- increasing membership of Aboriginal Victorians on the Geographic Place Names Advisory Panel.

For further information visit www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/naming-places-features-and-roads/naming-rules-for-places-in-victoria or contact Murrie Kemp, Project Officer, on 03 9194 0512 or via email at murrie.kemp@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Aboriginal place names workshops

GNV continues its partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC) to deliver workshops throughout 2019. A workshop was held in March on Yorta Yorta Country in Shepparton and in Mildura on First People of the Millewa-Mallee land. To date GNV has run six workshops with more than 260 attendees.

GNV is in the process of organising workshops with Taungurung Land and Waters Council and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Council. Municipal councils and relevant organisations will be invited to future workshops.
The workshops are an opportunity to learn from Traditional Owners, linguists and GNV. They highlight the importance of sharing information about Aboriginal language and review naming opportunities for roads, places and localities.

One of Rafe’s presentations, on VICNAMES, is recorded here: **UNTV**  
**Starts** 2h 14mins **Ends** 2h 31mins  
Questions from Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Sweden

Victoria is well placed in the world with our *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*, our comprehensive Naming rules for places in Victoria and continued engagement with Victorian Traditional Owners.

**River of language**

GNV is sponsoring the *River of Language* exhibition at Melbourne Museum until 13 October. The exhibition celebrates the 44 Indigenous language groups that originate from Victoria and features an audio recording of Traditional Owners sharing their thoughts on the importance of language.

**Aboriginal language documentaries**

GNV has also been engaging with Traditional Owners about place names on Country and helping to promote the significance of language, place and culture.

A video has been made featuring respected Traditional Owner and Elder, Uncle Bryon Powell and his niece, Stephanie Skinner. They discuss the importance of Aboriginal place names and the preservation of the Wadawurrung language for future generations. Take a few minutes to watch.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTpPViTpetE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTpPViTpetE)

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Arabic place names workshop, Our Languages Matter, wins Good Designs Australia 2019 social impact award for collaboration. Photo shows participants the Mildura workshop.

**United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names**

GNV represented Victoria as part of the Australian delegation at the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names conference in New York. Delegates from more than 100 nations attended. Topics included standardisation of geographic names, the importance of geographic names and connection with cultural history and the management of place name gazetteers.

Rafe Benli, GNV Project Manager, presented three papers highlighting the Naming rules for places in Victoria, the Register of Geographic Names and work promoting Aboriginal language.
Ensuring public safety

Long-standing (legacy) names

Too often emergency services have difficulty identifying a road, park or reserve because its name is not listed in VICNAMES or Vicmap, even though there is a sign at the site with the name. Emergency services and Geographic Names Victoria encourage naming authorities to actively identify such place names for registration, particularly if they are long-standing and pre-date the Geographic Place Names Act 1998.

When requesting registration of a legacy name, naming authorities must consider the risk in all instances, including duplication and ensuring the name is not of high-risk today.

To have a legacy name registered a naming authority must use the Vicmap Editing Service (VES) to raise a change request and provide a map, the place name, and origin or history details if known. They should also indicate it is legacy and that the name is sign-posted.

Naming authorities should check their records to establish if the name has been gazetted in the past in the Victoria Government Gazette and provide these details to GNV. If the name has not been gazetted, GNV will then gazette the name as long-standing.

Maintaining locality boundaries

Section 5 Localities, 5.7 What should not be done? Naming rules for places in Victoria 2016.

Localities are defined in the Naming rules for places in Victoria 2016 as a geographical area that has identifiable community and/or landscape characteristics, otherwise known as a suburb. Establishing and maintaining locality boundaries is the responsibility of local government. Locality boundaries need to align with the cadastral fabric, road centre lines or easily distinguishable topographical features such as waterways or ridgelines.

In 1998 under a state government initiative, locality boundaries were defined and established for all localities throughout Victoria. The boundaries were subsequently gazetted in the Victoria Government Gazette. Today several boundaries do not conform to the naming rules. It is important for local government authorities to maintain and regularly assess the position of boundaries as they can cause public safety issues. Equally important is for naming authorities to consider known future developments and ensure boundaries are re-aligned early in the planning process.

Boundaries that bisect land parcels are unacceptable and must be rectified by the local government authority concerned. Land Information and Spatial Services at Land Use Victoria are working with GNV to identify boundaries that bisect land parcel/s throughout Victoria. If a bisecting boundary is identified the local government authority will be asked to review it. They will need to consult with any directly affected property owner/s and resident/s to modify the boundary so that a parcel of land is contained in full within the one locality and complies with the naming rules.

If you have questions regarding these public safety topics, please contact Margaret Marangos, Audit Officer on 919 40282 or email geo.names@delwp.vic.gov.au.
VICNAMES

Historical Information – place name history

The Coffee Palace at Stawell was a landmark from the 1860s until it was demolished in 1956. The site is now named Coffee Palace Park - further history details available in VICNAMES.

The Historical Information module in VICNAMES is a valuable resource and reference for the origin and history details of a place name. The system is user interactive, enabling you to submit historical information and attach any associated documentation or image/s, to a submission.

Geographic Names Victoria will review the submission and either approve, edit or reject the historical information. It is important that the information you add is from verifiable sources such as historical societies, books, manuscripts, maps or oral history interviews. VICNAMES currently holds more than 200,000 road and place names including

- landscape features - mountains and rivers,
- bounded areas -localities, towns, cities and regions, and
- physical infrastructure - roads, reserves and schools.

Naming authorities should add the history and origin details to any new place name soon after it is gazetted and registered. GNV can assist with any projects of a historical nature in which historical data may potentially be added to VICNAMES.

To find out how you can contribute historical data or search for information, visit the GNV website to access the Guide to VICNAMES. Rebecca Russell, Project Support Officer at GNV, can respond to questions around historical information. Rebecca may be contacted by phone on (03) 8636 2525 or email at geo.names@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Road names on plans of subdivision

Road names must comply with the principles and requirements in the Naming rules for places in Victoria. Statistical requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2016. Compliance with the naming rules minimises problems for emergency services, service delivery providers, locational and mapping platforms, and provides clarity for members of the public.

Auditing plans of subdivision ensures that the naming rules are understood and appropriately applied by councils, surveyors and developers. Audit numbers have increased this year, with 105 plans of subdivision audited since February. Sixty-one plans of subdivision were found to be compliant and 42 were non-compliant, some with several issues. Two audits are still underway.

The most common non-compliance is application of an incorrect road type, for example a cul-de-sac incorrectly described as a boulevard. Appendix A in the Naming rules for places in Victoria lists road types accepted for registration and includes a description of the different road configurations.

Under Section 3 Roads, 3.3.2 Extent: road course, start and end points, a ‘road name should not be applied in a disjointed or confusing way’. The road name should be applied to a single, unobscured roadway that leads from a start point to an end point in a clear and logical manner. Geographic Names Victoria, through its audits, has identified proposed road names on plans displayed in a disjointed manner, sometimes with multiple start and end points.

This table shows non-compliant findings on plans where GNV has requested a surveyor or developer to rename a road or to correct the road’s extent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of non-compliance</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identical or phonetically similar sounding names</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle (D) Ensuring names are not duplicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect road type</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.2.3 Road types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear or ambiguous extent</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.2.2 Extent: road course, start and end points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have questions regarding the audit program for road names on plans of subdivision, please contact Margaret Marangos, Audit Officer on 919 40282 or email geo.names@delwp.vic.gov.au.
Road name themes

It is common and acceptable to name roads on plans of subdivision by using a theme that has a link to place.

St Leonards on the Bellarine Peninsula was a filming location for ABC TV’s *SeaChange*. The Seachange estate in St Leonards has used names from the series as an inspiration for road names, including Diver Dan Lane, Gibson Grove and Jelly Junction.

In Principle Support

Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) has now released its new “in principle” support for place names from the Registrar of Geographic Names, process in the Vicmap Editing Service (VES).

If you are a naming authority seeking “in principle” support for a place name, please raise a Change Request through the Map Viewer under the Data Category in principle support. A series of questions need to be answered and relevant supporting information must be attached to the change request. All requests will initially be reviewed by GNV at Officer level and a final decision will be made by the Registrar of Geographic Names. A response will be sent directly to the requester informing them of the outcome. The paper form for “in principle” support should no longer be used.

New starters

GNV welcomes Rebecca Russell, Project Support Officer and Murrie Kemp, Project Officer (Aboriginal Naming).

Rebecca works on capturing historical information and updating VICNAMES and has already updated over 1,000 place and road records.

Rebecca is also auditing road names on plans of subdivision and reconciling data between VICNAMES and Vicmap data to improve spatial data for emergency services.

If you receive an email from Rebecca about the compliance of a road name and/or road type, please provide the required information or get in touch directly if you have questions around ensuring compliance.

Rebecca can be contacted on 03 9194 0924 or email rebecca.russell@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Murrie is Ghungalu man from Central Queensland. He is working on GNV activities associated with the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages and building relationships with Traditional Owners across Victoria.

You can contact Murrie on 03 9194 0512 or email murrie.kemp@delwp.vic.gov.au.

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