Draft: Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy: A Policy for the naming of Tasmanian geographic places and features

Revised edition 2018
Preamble

Geographic features and places in the Tasmanian landscape, on both land and sea, had Aboriginal names until they were supplanted by Europeans in the 19th century. The names formed complex interlinked networks in which place, their names and attributes, reflected the relationship between the people and the land. The names were not arbitrary but integral to the places to which they were attached.

The Permanent Committee on Place Names, a working group of the Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM), recognises that 'The relationship between Aboriginal people and the land is still as prevalent today as it was more than 400 centuries ago – it is fitting then, to acknowledge Aboriginal footprints in the sands of time.' The ICSM Guidelines for the Consistent Use of Place Names in Australia has, since 1992, encouraged naming authorities in all Australian states and territories to acknowledge the continuing importance of the original Aboriginal place names, and to adopt more frequent official use of these names, from both languages still spoken and languages no longer spoken.

In 2012, Tasmania was the last Australian government jurisdiction to develop a specific Aboriginal and dual naming policy. The Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy was revised in 2018 to improve the framework for nominating and assessing Aboriginal names for geographic features and places.

This Policy provides for:

- giving Aboriginal names to geographic features or places that do not already have an official or assigned name;
- replacing an existing official name with an Aboriginal name; and
- giving an additional Aboriginal name to a feature that already has an official name (dual naming).

Dual naming can be used for naming geographic features when an official name is widely accepted and in long use and when a name change is not possible or acceptable. The Policy proposes that dual naming will be used to enable an Aboriginal name and an introduced name to be used together as the official name, e.g. kunanyi / Mount Wellington.

The naming of cities or towns is not covered under the Policy and is governed in requirements cited in the Local Government Act 1993.

It is acknowledged that Aboriginal names which may appear at first to be complex in spelling and/or pronunciation will, over time, become familiar and easy to use within the Tasmanian community.

The Policy is given effect by incorporation into appropriate administrative mechanisms such as the Rules for Place Names in Tasmania.
1. **Purpose**

To provide advice and direction to the Tasmanian community, Government Agencies, Local Government Authorities and the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania about the application of Aboriginal names for naming Tasmanian geographic features and places.

2. **Principles**

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges that places in Tasmania were named by Aborigines long before the arrival of Europeans. The Tasmanian Government acknowledges prior Aboriginal ownership and is committed to preserving Aboriginal heritage and language by ensuring that Aboriginal place names can be restored to Tasmanian geographic features and places.

2.1 That preference is given to local Aboriginal place names for any geographic feature or place that does not already have an existing official place name, provided the proposed Aboriginal name can be authenticated to the satisfaction of the Nomenclature Board.

2.2 Where an existing official place name does not have community support, the name may be replaced by an Aboriginal name provided it can be authenticated to the satisfaction of the Nomenclature Board.

2.3 That the Aboriginal dual naming of geographic features and places that already have official names occurs when a complete name change is not possible or acceptable. Both will be official place names, and both names will be used together with the Aboriginal name occurring first and separated by a solidus.

2.4 That the renaming of geographic features or places where the existing place name may be offensive to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community be considered.

2.5 Where previously assigned official place names are derived from Aboriginal names, or are Aboriginal names but have demonstrated incorrect spelling or form, names may be amended to ensure they are generally accepted by the Aboriginal community.

2.6 Where alternative names have been used for extended periods by Aborigines to identify geographic features or places as part of community and cultural tradition, consideration will be given to renaming those features.

2.7 That the Nomenclature Board will establish and maintain a reference group of people with expertise in Tasmanian Aboriginal history, languages or place naming that may assist the Board in making determinations on proposals, including instances where more than one Aboriginal name is proposed for a geographic place or feature, or where multiple names are given for parts of the one place or feature.

2.8 That the Nomenclature Board may refer Aboriginal and dual naming proposals to the reference group for comment.

2.9 If there is substantial community division about a proposed Aboriginal name, or when one Aboriginal name cannot be clearly prioritised from a number of known names, the Nomenclature Board may exercise discretion not to name a feature.

2.10 Aboriginal place names made official under this policy prior to the 2018 review will remain unchanged.

2.11 palawa kani is the most commonly used Aboriginal language in Tasmania and where there is no significant evidence that any Aboriginal name has been used in the past, then palawa kani will be the default language for dual naming.
3. **Register of Aboriginal Community Organisations**

3.1 The Nomenclature Board will maintain, and make available to proponents, a register of Aboriginal community organisations and groups to be consulted as part of an Aboriginal place-naming proposal.

4. **Naming Proposal Requirements**

4.1 A naming proposal can be made by any individual, group or organisation.

4.2 The proposal must be made to the Nomenclature Board and be accompanied by:

- a description of the historical origins of the proposed Aboriginal name. The description must demonstrate adequate research and authenticity, including sources;
- evidence that local Aboriginal communities and relevant local groups have been consulted;
- demonstrated support of local Aboriginal communities, accompanied by supporting evidence;
- if the naming proposal is to replace an existing official name, a description of the level of support, or lack of support, for the existing name;
- evidence that the local Council has been consulted; and
- evidence that affected land owners and relevant statutory entities have been consulted.

4.3 The Nomenclature Board may reject the naming proposal if the requirements of clause 4.2 have not been met to the satisfaction of the Board.

4.4 The Nomenclature Board, or the Reference Group may conduct additional enquiries and research and consultation as it sees fit in order to supplement a naming proposal.

5. **Application of the Policy**

5.1 The Policy may be applied to applications to name Tasmanian geographic features and places in accordance with the Survey Coordination Act 1944.

5.2 The Policy will not apply to Tasmanian geographic features and place names assigned through legislation other than the Survey Coordination Act 1944 (e.g. Commonwealth Agencies).

5.3 The Policy does not apply to the naming or renaming of cities or towns.

5.4 The Policy is consistent with current legislation for nomenclature under the Survey Coordination Act 1944.

5.5 The Policy is also consistent with national standards as outlined in the International Committee on Survey and Mapping (ICSM) Guidelines for the Consistent Use of Place Names.

6. **Process for implementing the Policy**

6.1 The Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy will be incorporated into the Rules for Place Names in Tasmania.

6.2 The rules are published on the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Website (DPIPWE).

6.3 DPIPWE will inform naming and signing authorities about the Policy and encourage timely replacement/upgrading of signage and related products.

6.4 The Board publishes the names in accordance with the Survey Coordination Act 1944 and the Rules for Place Names in Tasmania.

6.5 The current legislation will continue to provide for objections to proposed names. Under S20(G) of the Survey Coordination Act 1944, the Nomenclature Board receives objections (for 1 month from Gazettal). The process as it currently stands is that the Board disposes of all objections, reports its
decision on the objections to the Minister and provides a recommendation. The Minister may confirm, modify or reverse the Board’s decision.

6.6 Where an Aboriginal name is intended to replace a non-Aboriginal name, the gazettal notice will include a notation about the name to be replaced.

6.7 Both parts of a dual name are to be shown on all official signage, directories, maps and all official documents and publications without any distinction between the two, other than the sequence. The Aboriginal name will appear first, separated by a solidus.

6.8 Official signage, maps and other information products will be updated incrementally as maintenance budgets for signage allow, or as new editions of maps and visitor information publications are released.
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