

# Review of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy *Issues Paper*



NOVEMBER 2017

# INTRODUCTION

The Tasmanian Government's Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy (the Policy) was first introduced in 2013. The Policy provides a framework and clear direction for Government agencies, Local Government authorities and the Nomenclature Board about the use of Aboriginal names for naming Tasmanian features.

The Policy acknowledges that natural features and places in Tasmania were named by Aborigines long before the arrival of Europeans.

Place names are critically important reference points for all members of the community. From natural features, such as rivers and mountains, to cities, streets and reserves, place names are the most common way that people identify geographical locations. While the majority of place names have European, or post-colonial origins, it is important to encourage the continued application and use of Aboriginal place names throughout Tasmania.

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

With 13 names adopted under the current Policy, this review provides the Tasmanian community with an opportunity to have their say about enhancing the Policy.

This Issues Paper seeks responses to a number of suggestions that, if adopted, may enhance the current Policy. These suggestions have been informed by the experiences of the Nomenclature Board, map users and relevant authorities. This is an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal community and other interested parties to provide comment on these suggestions, and other aspects of the Policy on which you may like to comment.

The Tasmanian Government particularly encourages Tasmanian Aboriginals and Aboriginal community organisations to contribute to a revised and more inclusive Policy.

The Policy and its accompanying *Question & Answer Sheet* can be accessed at the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website:

[http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csr/oa/aboriginal\\_and\\_dual\\_naming\\_policy](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csr/oa/aboriginal_and_dual_naming_policy)

Hard copies of these documents are available on request by contacting the Office of Aboriginal Affairs:

Phone: 03 6232 7082 Email: [oa@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:oa@dpac.tas.gov.au)

**All submissions are welcome. Your feedback will provide valuable input to the development of a revised Policy. More information about making a submission is provided on page 6.**

# ABORIGINAL AND DUAL NAMING POLICY

The Policy was developed by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), with the support of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation<sup>1</sup> (TAC) and the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania (Nomenclature Board)<sup>2</sup>.

The Policy allows for geographical features and places to be given both an introduced and Aboriginal language name, as well as allowing new Aboriginal names and replacement names to be proposed. Some key features of the Policy include:

- giving preference to Aboriginal names for geographic features or places that do not already have an official or assigned name;
- enabling a transparent dual naming system where an official name is already in use. The attachment of an Aboriginal name would sit alongside the introduced name; and
- providing a consistent guide to attaching Aboriginal names, and how it is approached.

The Policy applies to geographic features and places, and not to constructed features such as roads, highways, bridges or communication towers. The Policy applies to naming Tasmanian features and places in accordance with the *Survey Co-ordination Act 1944*.

Since the release of the Policy, 13 places have been assigned names under the Policy (see Appendix A).

On 22 June 2017 the TAC formally submitted the name proposals for 11 additional Aboriginal and dual names to the Nomenclature Board for consideration. The proposals were for nine places at Cape Grim; and two waterfalls which do not have existing names – one each in Launceston (Punchbowl Falls is an unofficial name) and Hobart. The proposed names are listed at Appendix B.

The Nomenclature Board's current consideration of the submitted 11 names has commenced. On 7 September 2017 the Nomenclature Board agreed to defer a decision on the current nominations to enable further consultation with Aboriginal organisations after finalisation of the review of the Policy.

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. This is supported by the general acceptance by Tasmanians of the use of the dual name *kunanyi* / Mt Wellington.

As part of the Policy, each dual naming proposal must be investigated to establish whether the Aboriginal name has broad community support to replace the officially recognised name, rather than be adopted only as part of a dual name.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

<sup>2</sup> The Board has been the main decision maker under current legislation for some 65 years (the Minister decides only if an objection has been lodged). The place naming legislation has been under review and as a result the guidelines, decision-making and advisory arrangements are expected to change. However, for the purposes of this Paper it remains appropriate to continue referring to the Board.

# ISSUES

## Issue 1: Nomination of Aboriginal and Dual Name Proposals

Under the Nomenclature Board's *Rules for Place Names in Tasmania*, Aboriginal and dual names are to be in the revived palawa kani language. As the custodians of palawa kani, the TAC is the sole authoritative source for authenticating Aboriginal names and their spelling; it is also currently responsible for consulting with the Aboriginal community and providing advice to the Nomenclature Board.

The TAC has invested in researching and reviving Tasmanian Aboriginal languages; this has been done over many decades and continues. It is because of this work that the Government sought to collaborate with the TAC in developing the Policy.

Notwithstanding the TAC's experience in Tasmanian Aboriginal language research, revival and palawa kani, this review provides an opportunity to consider the suggestions that have been made in relation to allowing Aboriginal and dual naming proposals to be made by other organisations, groups and individuals.

Some Aboriginal groups or individuals differ in opinion from the TAC regarding the naming of a place or geographic feature. The Policy places a strong emphasis on the advice and information provided by the TAC. The TAC may choose whether or not to provide supporting information, archival references, and research to substantiate a nomination. The Board does not seek the language advice of any other organisation or entity regarding the authentication of nominated Aboriginal names.

Some relatively minor administrative changes to the Policy might broaden the scope of who can nominate Aboriginal and dual names under the Policy.

### Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:

- 1.1 allow both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, local council, or individual to nominate an Aboriginal or dual name directly to the Nomenclature Board?

## Issue 2: Authenticating Aboriginal and dual names

As noted, the TAC has undertaken research into Tasmanian Aboriginal languages and proposed names, and is the recognised representative Aboriginal language organisation under the Nomenclature Board's *Rules for Place Names in Tasmania*. As such, it proposes Aboriginal names to the Nomenclature Board and the Nomenclature Board is guided by the information that it submits.

There may be merit in the Policy requiring the provision of supporting information to accompany all future nominations provided to the Nomenclature Board. In addition, it may be appropriate to provide the Nomenclature Board with the ability to consult with various experts in order to ensure the validity and authenticity of proposed Aboriginal names.

This may assist the Board's decision making in circumstances where Aboriginal groups or organisations have differing views on a proposed Aboriginal or dual name.

### Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:

- 2.1 allow for a register of supplementary organisations or individuals that may provide expert advice on the authentication of proposed Aboriginal and dual names?
- 2.2 include minimum standards for accompanying information to be submitted to the Nomenclature Board with name proposals?
- 2.3 enable the Nomenclature Board to consult or engage with any individual, group or entity if it considers that doing so may improve its decision making on proposed Aboriginal and dual names?

### Issue 3: Local Aboriginal and dual naming

Some Aboriginal organisations that are based on local or regional connections are concerned that Aboriginal and dual naming is occurring in their local areas without their express involvement or approval. More recently, some organisations have requested ownership of, or contribution to, the naming process where a name is proposed in or around their local area.

The review will consider the role of local Aboriginal organisations in the naming of Aboriginal features and places in their local area including opportunities to actively participate in Aboriginal community consultation processes.

Localised participation and ownership for Aboriginal and dual naming is a sensitive and complex issue and one that needs further exploration and consideration as part of this review.

#### Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:

3.1 provide improved opportunities for consultation with all Aboriginal organisations and groups, with a view to enhancing consultation and engagement with organisations that have specific interests in the locations where Aboriginal and dual names are proposed?

### Issue 4: palawa kani and the use, spelling, pronunciation and writing of Tasmanian Aboriginal languages under the Policy

An initiative of the TAC's Language Program, palawa kani is a revived form of the original and known Tasmanian Aboriginal languages. It incorporates authentic elements of the original languages remembered by Tasmanian Aborigines from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries while drawing on an extensive body of historical and linguistic research. Due to the scarcity of records, palawa kani is constructed as a composite of the estimated dozen original languages that existed prior to the arrival of Europeans in Tasmania.

The TAC's palawa kani Language Program began in the early 1990s. TAC staff received comprehensive training from the renowned linguist, the late Dr Terry Crowley, then Senior Lecturer at the Linguistics Department of the University of Waikato, and a specialist in the languages of Oceania.

The referencing and use of palawa kani is not explicit in the Policy itself. The Policy leverages off the language expertise of the TAC but it does not explicitly mandate the use of palawa kani to form Aboriginal or dual names. That requirement is detailed in the Nomenclature Board's *Rules for Place Names in Tasmania*.

The review will consider whether it is necessary to draw a distinction between palawa kani and original Tasmanian Aboriginal language/s. As a composite language palawa kani comprises select words, phrases and some place names recorded from various historic sources from the estimated dozen original languages.

There is widespread support for palawa kani and respect for the level of rigour applied to previous and current research undertaken by the TAC, but the process can result in disputes about particular words or place names including, for example, spelling or pronunciation preferred by other Aboriginal groups. In some ways this may be inevitable given the phonetic structure of the language and the fact that the original languages were oral only. In some cases there are numerous words, spellings and recordings for the one word adopted under palawa kani. For simplification and educational purposes, palawa kani nominates just one of these words for use in the palawa kani language, after analysing all the known references and making a judgement as to the most likely form. However, the TAC has no formal review process for these decisions.

Some Aboriginal groups are concerned their traditional languages are not encompassed by palawa kani. In many instances, words and phrases from North-East Tasmania – the place where the predominant remnants of language exist – are adopted under palawa kani. This therefore relates partly just to the larger knowledge concerning the traditional people of this area.

Complications are also known to arise in circumstances where different traditional groups each have a different name for the same location, or several names for different parts of the same location.

The writing and presentation of Aboriginal and dual names under the Policy requires further consideration under the review. Other than clarification on the presentation of dual names, the Policy does not specifically mandate the use of italics or approach to capitalisation in Aboriginal or dual names. The current writing of Aboriginal and dual names is not specified under the Policy and has some potential implications for cartographers and navigators, and may be inconsistent with national standards.

**Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:**

- 4.1 refer to the Aboriginal and dual naming of Tasmanian places and features in 'Tasmanian Aboriginal languages' and to 'palawa kani' – noting that the TAC's palawa kani program can continue to inform name proposals under the Policy?
- 4.2 allow for name proposals to be informed by any Tasmanian language or group – if supported by historical evidence and research?
- 4.3 provide a preference for name proposals to be informed by the language / languages of the original people of the place or feature to be named?
- 4.4 where more than one name is recorded or known for the one feature or place, adopt the name with the greater weight of historical references as the Aboriginal or dual name?
- 4.5 where a place or feature has more than one name describing parts of the feature or place, appropriately name each part based on historical evidence and research?

**Issue 5: Consultation, engagement and the role of local government**

Local government in Tasmania supports the administration of the Policy – predominantly at the end of the process when updated local government signage maybe required to reflect Aboriginal and dual name determinations made by the Board. The support of local councils is important in maintaining an effective Policy.

Through the Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC), local government has expressed a desire for improved consultation and engagement with councils, prior to name proposals being considered by the Nomenclature Board. Such engagement could provide councils with the opportunity to consider any implications associated with new name proposals, and local community support.

**Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:**

- 5.1 ensure that all name proposals to the Nomenclature Board are forwarded to the relevant local council for comment, prior to any formal consideration by the Nomenclature Board?

**Issue 6: Replacing place names (including offensive names) with Aboriginal names**

Renaming or replacing existing place names is an important part of the Policy. This is especially relevant to part 2.5 of the Policy which provides 'that consideration will be given to renaming places or features where the existing name is considered offensive to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community'. The Board is currently considering three such proposals put forward by the TAC for place names in Tasmania's North-West.

Replacing place names offensive to the Aboriginal community forms a core component of the Policy. Currently other jurisdictions in Australia are actively collaborating with Aboriginal communities to replace offensive and derogatory place names. There is potential in Tasmania for proposals to replace additional offensive place names to be addressed and considered by the Board.

**Should a revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy:**

- 6.1 include a specific mechanism for the Nomenclature Board to consider and replace all current place names offensive to the Aboriginal community?

# HAVE YOUR SAY

The Tasmanian Government is committed to providing opportunities for community involvement in the development of Government policy and we are seeking your input on the Review of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Issues Paper.

This Issues Paper seeks responses to a number of suggestions that, if adopted, may enhance the current Policy. These suggestions have been informed by the experiences of the Nomenclature Board, map users and relevant authorities. This is an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal community and other interested parties to provide comment on these suggestions, and other aspects of the Policy on which you may like to comment.

## HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

All written submissions on the issues paper must be received by the close of business on **22 December 2017**.

Aboriginal community organisations and other key stakeholders will have an opportunity to meet with representatives from DPAC and the Nomenclature Board throughout November 2017.

Submissions can be forwarded to:

**Email:** [aaa@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:aaa@dpac.tas.gov.au)

**Mail:** Manager, Office of Aboriginal Affairs, GPO Box 123, HOBART TAS 7001.

Other than indicated below, submissions will be treated as public information and will be published on our website at [www.aboriginalaffairs.tas.gov.au](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.tas.gov.au) on completion of the consultation period. Submissions will be published in the week commencing **15 January 2018**.

**No personal information other than an individual's name or the organisation making a submission will be published.**

For further information, or if you would like to arrange a meeting, please contact: Laurette Thorp on 6232 7079 or via email at [laurette.thorp@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:laurette.thorp@dpac.tas.gov.au).

## ACCESSIBILITY OF SUBMISSIONS

The Government recognises that not all individuals or groups are equally placed to access and understand information. We are therefore committed to ensuring Government information is accessible and easily understood by people with diverse communication needs.

Where possible, please consider typing your submission in plain English and providing it in a format such as Microsoft Word or equivalent. The Government cannot however take responsibility for the accessibility of documents provided by third parties.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO NOTE

Your name (or the name of the organisation) will be published unless you request otherwise.

In the absence of a clear indication that a submission is intended to be treated as confidential (or parts of the submission), DPAC will treat the submission as public.

If you would like your submission treated as confidential, whether in whole or in part, please indicate this in writing at the time of making your submission, clearly identifying the parts of your submission you want to remain confidential and the reasons why. In this case, your submission will not be published to the extent of that request.

Copyright in submissions remains with the author(s), not with the Tasmanian Government.

DPAC will not publish, in whole or in part, submissions containing defamatory or offensive material. If your submission includes information that could enable the identification of other individuals then either all or parts of the submission will not be published.

## **THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2009 AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information provided to the Government may be provided to an applicant under the provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI). If you have indicated that you wish all or part of your submission to be treated as confidential, your statement detailing the reasons may be taken into account in determining whether or not to release the information in the event of an RTI application for assessed disclosure. You may also be contacted to provide any further comment.

## **NEXT STEPS**

After all feedback is collated, the outcomes and recommendations of this consultation process will be detailed in a **Stakeholder and Community Consultation Report**, which will be made publicly available following the consultation period.

## Appendix A: Approved Aboriginal and dual names in Tasmania

Since the release of the Policy, the following 13 places have been assigned names under the Policy:

*kunanyi* / Mount Wellington. Dual name.

*kanamaluka* / River Tamar. Dual name for the river from Launceston to its mouth at Low Head.

*truwana* / Cape Barren Island. Dual name for the island as a geographical feature.

*wukalina* / Mount William. Dual name.

*yingina* / Great Lake. Dual name.

*titima* / Trefoil Island. Dual name.

*laraturunawn* / Sundown Point. Dual name.

*larapuna* applies to an Unbounded Locality extending roughly from Eddystone Point to Grants Point, the water of the Bay of Fires between the two points, and adjacent lands with boundaries undefined. This is generally the whole Bay of Fires area, which the name *larapuna* is specifically for.

*takayna* / Tarkine. The dual name applies to the Unbounded Locality.

*putalina* applies to an Unbounded Locality covering the cove at Oyster Cove, the Aboriginal property 'Oyster Cove' and adjacent lands with boundaries undefined.

*nungu* / West Point. Dual name.

*taypalaka* / Green Point. Dual name.

*pinmatik* / Rocky Cape. Dual name.

## Appendix B: Proposed Aboriginal and Dual Names

### Replacement of three names considered offensive to the Aboriginal community

'Suicide Bay' proposed to be replaced with '*luwuka*'

#### Three Dual names

*pilri* / Cape Grim

'Victory Hill' proposed to be replaced with '*timuk*'

*ranamitim* / The Doughboys (Islands)

'Niggerhead Rock' proposed to be replaced with '*karanutung*'

*layrimanuk* / Woolnorth Point

#### Three unnamed places

*taynayuwa* / for the cliff at the Cape Grim massacre site

*nakali* / for the cave opposite the Doughboys

*ranapim taynamun* / the point of land opposite Victory Hill

#### Two names for unnamed waterfalls

*luyni mungalina* (meaning 'raining rock waterfall', Launceston)

*turikina truwala* (meaning 'mountain waterfall', Hobart)