ABORIGINAL AND DUAL NAMING POLICY

A policy for the naming of Tasmanian geographic features

Office of Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Tasmanian
Government

ABORIGINAL AND DUAL NAMING POLICY

Preamble

Geographic features 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, and derived from the activities of ancestral beings that formed the landscape as they moved through it.

The Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia, 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.

Other States and Territories have Aboriginal and Dual Naming policies.

The Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy has been developed to provide a framework for decision making for Aboriginal naming of geographic features and places.

This Policy is about giving preference to the Aboriginal names for geographic features or places that do not already have an official or assigned name. Aboriginal names could be used for towns and rural districts and infrastructure if it was considered appropriate.

A dual naming system enables the assignment of an additional name to a feature that already has an official name. It can be used for naming 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. Dual names would not be adopted for constructed features such as roads, highways, bridges or communication towers.

Dual naming is not considered preferable to one Aboriginal name. It is preferable that each dual naming proposal is first investigated to establish if the Aboriginal name would have enough community support to replace the introduced officially recognised name, instead of adopting a dual name. If so, transitional naming, or a period of temporary dual naming would be used to assist in changing from the introduced name to the new official Aboriginal name. This would provide an opportunity for public education and promotion of both the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy and the specific name change.

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 includes an implementation process.

The Policy will be given effect by incorporation into appropriate administrative mechanisms such as the Rules for Place Names in Tasmania.

The Policy will be reviewed, as required, and revised accordingly.

1. Purpose

To provide clear direction for Government agencies, Local Government Authorities and the Nomenclature Board about the use of Aboriginal names for naming Tasmanian features.

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 Aboriginal place names for any geographic feature or place that does not already have an existing official name.

2.2   That a dual naming system be adopted by which Aboriginal names can be applied to geographic features and places that already bear registered names and when a name change is not possible or acceptable. Both will be registered names, and both names will be used together in the future and appear together on all official documents and maps. It is expected that some Aboriginal names will replace the introduced name over time. The dual naming process gives the community time to adjust to the Aboriginal name.

2.3   That consideration is to be given to using an Aboriginal name for a natural geographic feature or locality where an existing introduced name has weak community support (e.g. in this way, "narawntapu National Park" was chosen to replace Asbestos Range National Park in 2000) .

2.4   That where a traditional place name is not known as a consequence of the disruption of Aboriginal occupation and language, the use of another Aboriginal name as a place name is also acceptable where the meaning of the word is appropriate for its intended use.

2.5   That consideration will be given to renaming places or features where the existing name is considered offensive to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

2.6   That where Aboriginal names have previously been registered as official names but with incorrect spelling or form, these names may be amended to ensure that they are recognisably consistent with authentic Aboriginal names which will be assigned in the future.

2.7   That where alternative non-Aboriginal place names have been used for long periods by Aborigines as part of community and cultural tradition, consideration will be given to renaming those features (e.g. Big Dog Island in place of Great Dog Island; Hummocky Island in place of Chappell Island etc).

2.8   That Aboriginal names will be advised to the Tasmanian Government by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) as the recognised representative Aboriginal language organisation. The TAC will also advise on correct spelling and form of previously registered Aboriginal names.

2.9   That the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy will be implemented in accordance with the procedures developed with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community (through the TAC) and the Nomenclature Board.

2.10   That any proposal to the Nomenclature Board (e.g. from local Government) for the use of Aboriginal names for Tasmanian features and places will be referred to the TAC by the proponent.

2.11   That the TAC will consult with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to confirm that each Aboriginal name is generally accepted by the community.

3. Application of the Policy

3.1   The Policy will apply to all applications to name Tasmanian features in accordance with the *Survey Coordination Act 1944*.

3.2   The Policy will not apply to names assigned through legislation other than the *Survey Coordination Act 1944* (e.g. Commonwealth Agencies).

3.3   The terms used in the Policy are defined in appendix 1.

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

3.5 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.
http://www.icsm.gov.au/icsm/publications/cgna/consistent_place_names_guidelines.pdf

4. The Process for implementing the Policy

4.1 Publication of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy.

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

4.3 The rules are published on the nomenclature website:
http://www.dpipwe.gas.gov.au/inter.nsf/ThemeNodes/JGAY-53N55M?open.

4.4 The Government will inform naming and signing authorities about the Policy.

4.5 The Government, in conjunction with the TAC, will implement an education program / prepare and disseminate communications materials about the implementation of the Policy.

4.6 The TAC identifies features for Aboriginal naming.

4.7 The TAC consults with the Aboriginal community and confirms community acceptance of the names.

4.8 The Nomenclature Board consults with the TAC on any applications for names of geographic features (as per Principle 2.1).

4.9 The TAC provides names to the Government (via the Nomenclature Board).

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

4.11 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.

4.12 Where an Aboriginal name is gazetted, the Aboriginal name shall be gazetted separately with a notation regarding the non-Aboriginal name.

4.13   Both parts of the 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.

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

4.15   Implementation of the Geographical Names Portal will be in accord with the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy.

4.16   The use of Aboriginal generic terms:

- The Aboriginal generic term for the type of geographic feature designated eg river, bay, mountain etc shall be used where it is known, rather than the generic term in English (e.g. "timtumili minanya" for Derwent River, not "timtumili River").

- Where an Aboriginal generic word is not known, or does not form part of the Aboriginal place name, the Aboriginal word may be used without a generic term. The generic term may accompany the introduced place name in a dual name (e.g. kunanyi / Mount Wellington).

- Where the generic term does not exist in Aboriginal language, and there is agreement it is needed for clear identification of the location, the English generic term may be used with the preferred Aboriginal place name (eg narawntapu National Park).