
8.5 PLACE NAMING POLICY

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Attachments: 1. Place Naming Policy

SUMMARY

This Place Naming Policy (Attachment 1) documents the proposed approach used by Council in the naming of places and localities across the municipality. It provides a framework to ensure a coordinated, consistent, fair and equitable protocol is followed by Council when investigating and determining naming proposals. This policy does not cover the naming of roads, streets and new subdivisions.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Place Naming Policy as at Attachment 1 be adopted.

BACKGROUND

In June 2016, Notice of Motion No.862 asked "Council officers to prepare a report to Council recommending a Place Naming Policy to provide guidance for the naming of places within Mitchell Shire".

Mitchell Shire Council, as a Naming Authority under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act), is required to resolve on all geographic place names in the municipal district, with the exception of geographic places of regional, state and national significance.

The Act defines "place" as "any place or building that is, or likely to be, of public or historical interest and includes, but is not restricted to –

- a) Suburbs (officially referred to as 'localities' and the boundaries are officially recognised for addressing purposes), townships and areas
- b) Neighbourhoods (not officially recognised for addressing purposes)
- c) Reserves, parks and public open space
- d) Bridges and other road features
- e) Public facilities and buildings, including government schools, hospitals and nursing homes
- f) Rivers, streams, creeks and other waterways.

PLACE NAMING POLICY (CONT.)

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Place Naming Procedure

Requests for the naming of places can be initiated by anyone in the community including a naming authority such as Council, a Council officer, community group, government authority, developer or member of the public. Place names will be allocated after they have been investigated and determined as being appropriate for use, having regard to this policy and the Act. A s223 process under the *Local Government Act 1989* will be undertaken, followed by Council making a decision and formally notifying the Registrar of Geographic Names.

Naming a Place

Prior to beginning the naming process for a feature, consultation internally must be undertaken in regard to the naming proposal to consider the circumstances surrounding the request and determine whether it has merit as assessed against this policy and the Act and to ensure compliance with legislation.

Names are selected based on a number of principles including long term benefits to the community, relevant to the local community and recognition and use of Aboriginal languages. Names cannot be discriminatory or cause offence and dual names should be avoided as should the use of commemorative, commercial, business and directional names.

Consultation guidelines

Consultation will apply to all naming proposals and will include community members that are directly affected by the naming proposal, government and non-government organisations with an interest, traditional owner groups, service clubs and emergency services.

Consultation may include public notices, notice on Council's website, social media and written correspondence to affected and abutting property owners/residents.

CONSULTATION

This Policy has been reviewed by staff across Council including Engineering, Environment, Planning, Property, Revenue Services and Recreation and Leisure. Feedback received was incorporated into the Place Naming Policy.

FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial, resource or asset management implications directly associated with this report.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Naming of places is in line with the requirements of primarily the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* which is supported by other regulations and naming rules.

PLACE NAMING POLICY (CONT.)

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk of failure to fulfil obligations within <i>Geographic Place Names Act 1998</i>	Low	Reference to legislation and naming rules will be applied	Yes

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)

This is an administrative process and there are no environmental implications associated with this report.

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no children and young people implications associated with this report.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

Following adoption of this Policy it will be made available on Council's website and any requests for naming of places will be guided by this document.

PLACE NAMING POLICY (CONT.)

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Meeting Attachment

GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

15 APRIL 2019

8.5

PLACE NAMING POLICY

Attachment No: 1

Place Naming Policy

Place Naming Policy

Policy Owner	Governance & Corporate Accountability Governance & Corporate Performance
Creation Date	February 2019
Revision Date	February 2023

Purpose

Mitchell Shire Council is the custodian of an extensive range of property assets including parks, buildings and other infrastructure that, in many cases are named in memory of significant individuals, families, associations, inhabitants, historical objects or events.

The naming of places plays a significant role in orientation, communication, vocabulary and reflecting the community values of the time. As well as providing records of historical and cultural value, it ensures the capacity to unambiguously identify and locate geographical entities and places, as an essential system for services, infrastructure and public administration e.g.: emergency response postal and freight delivery.

Mitchell Shire Council, as a Naming Authority under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act), is required to resolve on all geographic place names in the municipal district, with the exception of geographic places of regional, state and national significance.

The Act defines 'place' as "any place or building that is, or likely to be, of public or historical interest and includes, but is not restricted to –

- a) Suburbs (officially referred to as 'localities' and the boundaries are officially recognised for addressing purposes), townships and areas
- b) Neighbourhoods (not officially recognised for addressing purposes)
- c) Reserves, parks and public open space
- d) Bridges and other road features
- e) Public facilities and buildings, including government schools, hospitals and nursing homes
- f) Rivers, streams, creeks and other waterways.

Scope

This policy documents the approach used by Council in the naming of places and localities across the municipality. It provides a framework to ensure a coordinated, consistent, fair and equitable protocol is followed by Council when investigating and determining naming proposals. This policy does not cover the naming of roads, streets and new subdivisions.

All place naming proposals of local significance will be assessed in accordance with this policy and resolved by Council prior to their registrations.

Policy

Place Naming Procedure

Requests for the naming of places can be initiated by anyone in the community including a naming authority such as Council, a Council officer, community group, government authority, developer or member of the public having regard to this policy and the Act.

The *Local Government Act 1989* imparts no obligations on Council when considering the naming of places. However, in accordance with this policy, Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (right to make a submission) will be voluntarily applied by Council when a naming proposal is received to ensure best practice governance and consultation with the local community.

Place names will be allocated after they have been investigated and determined as being appropriate for use, having regard to this policy and the Act. Place names need to be approved by Council resolution and then submitted to the Registrar of Geographic Names. It is not until Council receives formal notification from the Registrar of Geographic Names that the place can officially be named and signage erected.

Naming a Place

Prior to beginning the naming process for a feature, consultation internally must be undertaken in regard to the naming proposal to consider the circumstances surrounding the request and determine whether it has merit as assessed against this policy and the Act and to ensure compliance with legislation. This consultation will occur with Revenue Services, Property Services, Statutory and Strategic Planning, Building, Recreation and Open Space, Environment and Operations and Parks.

Governance and Corporate Accountability in conjunction with other internal staff will be responsible for undertaking appropriate investigations and consultations regarding the naming proposal in accordance with this policy and the Act.

Names are selected using the following principles:

- Ensuring public safety, must not risk public and operational safety for emergency response, or cause confusion for transport, communication and mail services
- Recognising the public interest, long term benefits to the community
- Linking the name to the place, place names should be relevant to the local area, with preference given to unofficial names used by the local community
- Ensuring names are not duplicated, place names must not be duplicated or have similar spelling or pronunciation
- Names must not be discriminatory, place names must not cause offence on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality or gender
- Recognition and use of Aboriginal languages in naming, agreement from relevant Traditional Owner group(s)
- Dual names cannot be adopted for localities, towns or rural districts; or roads, highways, bridges, communication towers. Can be used for topographical features such as islands, mountains, mountain ranges and rivers
- Using commemorative names, naming often commemorates an event, person or place. The names of people who are still alive must be avoided, and it is preferred that only the surname is used. Initials of a given name should not be used
- Using commercial and business names, naming authorities should not name places after commercial businesses, trade names, and non-profit organisation

- Language, standard English or a recognised Australian Indigenous language local to the area of the feature. Easy to pronounce, spell and write.
- Directional names to be avoided, (north, south, east and west) must be avoided
- Assigning extent to a feature or locality, when a proposal to name a feature or locality is being developed the naming authority must clearly define the area and/or extent to which the name will apply.

Following a Council resolution in support of the name, the naming proposal will be submitted to the Registrar of Geographic Names. The Registrar will review the process undertaken by Council and undertake a compliance audit in accordance with the Act. It is not until Council receives formal registration advice from the Registrar of Geographic Names that the public asset can be officially named, and signage erected.

The applicant, and all abutting property owners, residents and interested parties will be notified of Council's decision after confirmation from the Registrar of Geographic Names.

Change of Existing Place Name

When it is proposed that a name of an existing place is to be altered then the applicant will be required to document the reasons for the change as part of the naming proposal. The same administrative and legislative process for naming a place will apply.

Consultation Guidelines

The consultation guidelines will apply to all naming proposals received by Council. Council commits to consulting with concerned or affected parties which can be classified as:

- The immediate community, which includes, residents, ratepayers and businesses within the immediate area directly affected by the naming proposal; or
- The extended community, which includes residents, ratepayers and businesses surrounding the area directly affected by the proposal; any government (neighbouring councils) or non-government organisations with and interest in or who service the area.
- Traditional Owner group(s), local historical societies, emergency services, advisory committees and other community groups.

The amount of consultation will depend on which classification applies to the naming proposal. For example, naming of a park may draw the wider community interest and require public notices and notification to a broader range of public authorities.

Consultation may include public notices, while notice on Council's website, social media and written correspondence to affected and abutting property owners/residents will be undertaken in all cases.

The consultation period of naming proposal will be no less than 28 days. A naming proposal will not be forwarded to the Registrar of Geographic Names until a period of two months has elapsed since the final advertisement of the consultation of a naming proposal.

Definitions

Place – is any place or building that is, or likely to be, of public or historical interest and includes, but is not restricted to –

- a) Suburbs (officially referred to as 'localities' and the boundaries are officially recognised for addressing purposes), townships and areas
- b) Neighbourhoods (not officially recognised for addressing purposes)
- c) Reserves, parks and public open space
- d) Bridges and other road features
- e) Public facilities and buildings, including government schools, hospitals and nursing homes
- f) Rivers, streams, creeks and other waterways.

Locality – is an administrative geographical area of Victoria that has been distinguished for its community's and/or landscapes characteristics i.e.: township, suburb.

Responsibilities

Governance and Corporate Accountability is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy ensuring legislative compliance. This process includes engaging in consultation, the evaluation of naming proposals for reporting to Council, advice to internal units and the Registrar of Geographic Names.

Related Documents

Geographic Place Names Act 1998

<https://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/naming-places-features-and-roads/naming-rules-for-places-in-victoria>

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007

Local Government Act 1989

Naming Rules for Places in Victoria, Statutory Requirements for Naming Roads, Features and Localities - 2016

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed within four years of its adoption or sooner as required.