



Place Naming Policy

Policy Owner	Governance & Corporate Accountability Governance & Corporate Performance
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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

Monitoring and Evaluation

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