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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON PROGRESS IN THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Nomenclature in Australia

Paper submitted by Australia**

* E/CONF.79/1.

** Prepared by the Secretariat of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia.

SUMMARY

The present paper outlines the annual meetings of state nomenclature authorities and federal governmental organizations which were held in 1984 to effect co-ordination and standardization of nomenclature policies in Australia. State and other nomenclature authorities are listed together with short reports on their recent activities.

The past three years have seen the beginnings of an increased awareness within Australia of the need to co-ordinate the activities of the State and Territory nomenclature authorities and relevant Federal Departments and Authorities. Whereas the legal power still rests with the State/Territory body, national meetings have been held with a view to identify, examine and hopefully solve common problems, thus enabling a standardisation of nomenclature policies throughout Australia.

The initial meeting was held in Perth, Western Australia in 1984 prior to the International Cartographic Association Conference. This meeting resolved "that there would be considerable benefit in establishing an annual meeting of representatives of State and Territory Geographical Names Boards, together with appropriate Federal Departments and Authorities".

Since that initial meeting, two others have been held in Bathurst, New South Wales and Adelaide, South Australia in 1985 and 1986 respectively. The third meeting is scheduled to be held in Darwin, Northern Territory in July, 1987. In each case, the meetings are organised and chaired by the nomenclature authority of the State/Territory in which it is held.

Many different issues (the attached Appendix I gives a list of the titles of the papers presented), have been presented at the meetings and following discussions, recommendations made, which are then returned to the State/Territory authorities for comment. If all parties are in agreement, the recommendations are ratified, and become national guidelines.

There are some issues to be resolved that can only be regarded as long term. These include the recording and use of Aboriginal place names, the development of a national gazetteer and the need to increase public awareness of nomenclature in general. Sub-Committees have been formed to tackle the first two, and the State/Territory authorities are examining ways of increasing public awareness.

As has been said, many issues have been, or are in the process of being, examined on a national level. However, this is only regarded as the first step in the co-ordination of nomenclature issues within Australia. There is still the need for further communication

for many of the problems identified, and the identification of other aspects that affect the nomenclature authorities. Assistance has been obtained from authorities in other countries in the form of opinions or policies developed for specific issues. In addition, a start has been made on examining the resolutions made at the previous United Nations Conferences on the Standardisation of Geographical Names, with a view to implementing such resolutions that are applicable to the Australia situation, and can be implemented given the current staff and financial restraints experienced by all authorities in Australia. Listed below are the reports of the individual nomenclature authorities in whom all decision making power resides.

STATE OF VICTORIA

AUTHORITY

Office of the Place Names Committee,
C/- Department of Property & Services,
2 Treasury Place,
MELBOURNE. VIC. 3002

The Place Names Committee of Victoria is a statutory body established in 1958 by the Survey Co-ordination Act. The meeting convenes at approximately two-month intervals, and comprises:-

- (a) Surveyor-General of Victoria: Mr. R.E. Homes
- (b) Surveyor and Chief Draughtsman, Office of Titles: Mr. G. Griffiths
- (c) Chief Draughting Officer, Division of Survey & Mapping: Mr. B. Bower
- (d) Nominee of the Secretary for Planning: Mr. C.J. Kellaway
- (e) Nominee of the Municipal Association of Victoria: Mr. R.L. Campbell
- (f) Nominee of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria: Mrs. M.J. Tipping

The Secretary to the Committee is Mrs. L.P. Athanasiadis. In addition, the Committee is assisted by Mr. R.D. McLeod, a draughting officer with the Division of Survey and Mapping.

The Place Names Committee is empowered as an official State body to assign and alter place names. It publishes a Register of Place Names in Victoria which currently contains approximately 50, 000 names.

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To date, 35 proposals have been finalised by the Committee with 50 proposals still under investigation or awaiting a final decision.

As well as considering proposals for assignment or alteration of place names, the Committee also considers the names to be included on official maps including accuracy (of spelling, of application, etc.) and corrections reported to the appropriate producing authority.

The Place Names Committee has adopted a list of Guidance Notes concerning the Naming of Places and Spelling of Place Names.

STATE OF TASMANIA

AUTHORITY

The Nomenclature Board of Tasmania,
Lands Department,
G.P.O. BOX 44A,
HOBART. TAS. 7001

ACTIVITIES

There have been two changes in personnel on the Board since the last report in 1982.

The Board's current work is mostly in connection with 1:25 000 mapping, which now covers about half the State.

Road names for rural subdivisions are submitted fairly regularly and names for other features are suggested by associations and individuals quite often.

Matters of particular interest which came before the Board include:-

- . Names for sections of highways bypassed by realignment.
- . Aboriginal names for caves in South West.
- . Replacement of the word "Mayday" for several features, to avoid confusion with distress calls.
- . Deletion of the definite article "The" from numerous names.

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There continued to be relatively few objections to decisions of the Board - about 15, less than half of which were upheld.

From the beginning of 1982 to the end of 1986, about 2300 names have been officially assigned. The total of official names at that date was just over 19300 and the total names registered about 22900.

Numerous requests are received for historical information on names.

STATE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AUTHORITY

Geographical Names Board of South Australia,
c/- Department of Lands,
G.P.O. Box 1047,
ADELAIDE. S.A. 5001
AUSTRALIA

The Geographical Names Board of South Australia is responsible for the assigning of names to geographic features of South Australia and for exercising certain powers in association with nomenclature. The Board consists of six members representing various interests in geographical names. A support staff is provided by the South Australian Department of Lands.

ACTIVITIES

Financial constraints have necessitated a reduction to three of the support staff which, consists of the Secretary and two research officers.

During 1986, the year of the sesquicentenary of the foundation of the State of South Australia, requests for historical information relating to place names increased considerably due to research being undertaken into family trees and historical ties with the development of the State.

Nomenclature checking of topographical mapping on behalf of the Department of Lands (Mapping Branch) the Department of Mines and Energy, the Department of Defence and

the Division of National Mapping is continuing. Verified names are processed into a computerised gazetteer of place names, capable of also storing historical and other relevant information which is input as time permits. This file presently contains in excess of 33,000 names. A loose leaf master file is maintained as the main record of the origin of place names and related information.

In late 1986 a book entitled "The Romance of Place Names of South Australia" was published following considerable research through all available records by Mr. G.Manning, a retired Bank officer. A strong need existed for such a book however, it was beyond the resources of the Board and it was fortunate that Mr. Manning took the initiative of undertaking its production. The Board provided assistance in the research associated with its preparation.

Frequent requests are received to change names of portions of established suburbs as a means to enhance the perceived image of that residential area. Unless there is good reason for the change, the Board generally opposes these proposals so as to retain stability of names as well as maintaining the history of the areas in question. Such requests are often initiated by the continuing tendency of land developing companies to use eye catching, fancy names to describe a development area rather than the official suburb name.

As the metropolitan area of Adelaide has expanded, new suburbs and boundaries have been assigned. This maintains the policies of ensuring that official names and boundaries of residential and industrial areas are positively identified.

Of the geographical places named in recent years Mawson Plateau in the Flinders Ranges is the most notable. This rugged plateau of approximately 35 square kilometres and averaging 650 metres in height is one of the few remaining wilderness areas in the Flinders Ranges. The feature was named after Sir Douglas Mawson, the Antarctic explorer, in honour of his geological research undertaken in the region.

The opportunity was recently taken of participating in a five day pilot research project to send a research officer into the field in the Flinders Ranges with a linguist to research and record aboriginal place names and origins. It is expected that the results of this project will lead to further development and future research into the investigation and application of aboriginal names for geographical features.

HYDROGRAPHICAL SERVICE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

SEABED FEATURES WITHIN AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME ZONES

Nomenclature within the limits of internal waters and the territorial sea is administered by the relevant state or territory.

Within Australia's maritime zones that lie to seaward of the territorial sea, nomenclature functions for seabed features are carried out by the Hydrographic Office of the Royal Australian Navy under the terms of a resolution of the National Mapping Council. The names are selected according to priorities similar to those adopted by the states and territories, and are normally promulgated by the simple expedient of being printed on the published navigational charts.

The names of most charted seabed features in internal waters, as well as in the territorial sea and to seaward of it, are indexed in the various volumes of the Admiralty Sailing Directions from which geographical positions can be found either directly or by aid of the relevant navigational charts. The origins of the names of only a small proportion of these seabed features have been investigated.

STATE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

AUTHORITY

Nomenclature Advisory Committee,
Department of Land Administration,
Cathedral Avenue,
PERTH W.A. 6000
AUSTRALIA.

ACTIVITIES

The Nomenclature Advisory Committee of Western Australia has just completed 50 years of operation in this state, having been formed in 1936 to advise the Minister for Lands on the naming of towns, places and streets; to adopt rules of orthography for geographic names; to examine cases of doubtful spelling and decide upon the spelling to be shown on

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official maps and to investigate priority of discovery of any geographic feature and decided upon the name to be used. Over those 50 years the Committee, and its support staff in the Surveyor-General's Office of the Department of Lands and Surveys developed a successful names operation which included all road names within the State and the building up of gazetteers of about 45,000 features names and 50000 road names.

Since the last report, responsibilities and functions of the Surveyor-General's Office and the Committee have been reviewed and recommendations have been made to the Minister for Lands for the restructuring of the Committee and for it to be renamed the Geographical Names Board of Western Australia. The responsible Department has been renamed the Department of Land Administration and direction of geographic activities in the state is now incorporated in the office of the Director of Mapping and Surveys. Powers and functions of the Board are:-

- (a) To assign a name to any place in Western Australia.
- (b) To alter the name of any approved place name by substituting another name, or by correcting the spelling of that name.
- (c) To determine whether the use of a recorded or approved name shall be discontinued.
- (d) To carry out and record research work into the position, origin, meaning and use of names of places in Western Australia.
- (e) To adopt principles of orthography and nomenclature and to recommend pronunciation in respect of places in Western Australia.
- (f) To compile and maintain a gazetteer of names of geographical and cultural features in Western Australia.
- (g) To make inquiries, recommendations, and arbitrate on matters relating to names and boundaries of places in Western Australia as may be referred to it.
- (h) To collect and record Aboriginal words relating to names of places in Western Australia.
- (i) To investigate and determine, the boundaries of any feature or area to which an approved place name refers.
- (j) To exercise and perform such other powers and duties as are conferred.
- (k) To compile and maintain an official road names file for Western Australia.

A staff of nine service the naming activities of the State, with approximately 50% being involved with road names which remain a very active component of the work, and in the period of review approximately 7000 new road names have been approved and included in

the gazetteer. In the same period, about 5000 topographic names have been approved, amended or deleted. Other activities include an editing service for the mapping requirements of State and Commonwealth authorities, the servicing of numerous historical enquiries and the naming and defining of urban localities.

In 1985, publication of a quarterly report of "Geographic Name Approvals in Western Australia" was commenced, and this report is circulated to interested mapping, local government, library and geographic names authorities within Australia and overseas. It has proved a very successful means of informing relevant organisations of geographic name changes, particularly for mapping.

The Department of Land Administration is also developing a computerised geographical names information system (acronym GEONOMA) and has made a considerable contribution of staff and equipment to this project, which it is envisaged will provide significant time and cost savings for the Department by:-

1. Providing an efficient method of maintaining feature names, road names and related information.
2. One central source of information - easier to maintain, more reliable for information retrieval.
3. Enabling quick and efficient servicing of written and verbal enquiries.
4. Production of gazetteers for sale.
5. Simplifying the process of editing maps.
6. Production of atlas and street directory indices.

The system is planned for easy incorporation into the National Gazetteer being developed by the National Mapping Authority and will interface with the Western Australian Land Information System. A digital system being development by the Department of Land Administration capable of graphically displaying maps and plans will, when integrated with the Land Information System and Geonoma, provide the ability to display maps annotated with geographical features and road names.

Attributes of the system for both road and feature names will include name, location, map references, alternate names, local authority, demographic information (towns), origin and history and coding for mapping purposes. The system is now in the production phase, with data loading by contract staff well under way.

STATE OF QUEENSLAND

AUTHORITY

Queensland Place Names Board,
P.O. BOX 40,
WOOLLOONGABBA. QLD. 4102
AUSTRALIA

The principal responsibility for place naming in the State of Queensland lies with the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Mapping and Surveying. The Minister is advised by the Queensland Place Names Board which is appointed for a term of three years under the terms of the Queensland Place Names Act 1981. The Board consists of seven Members, with the Surveyor-General (the permanent head of the Department of Mapping and Surveying) as ex officio Chairman. The other Members are appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister. Currently the Board Membership includes an Associate Professor of History, a Reader in Geography and a Senior Lecturer in Geology (all from the University of Queensland), two solicitors (one a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland) and a public servant.

The Act provides for the public notification of all intended changes of name, new names or omissions of names in Queensland (excluding streets, roads and man-made structures), to be advertised both in local newspapers, in the Government Gazette and by notice at Magistrates Courts. An objection period of one month for the receipt of written notices of objection is allowed. The Board must report to the Minister on all objections and is expected to make its own recommendation to him. Final approval for any place name action can only be given by the Governor in Council, by means of an Executive Council Minute.

The Board has a full time Secretary, and a part time Executive Officer. As well as processing all matters relating to the above provisions of the legislation, research queries from the general public relating to place names are undertaken, with queries involving more than one hour's research time being subject to a prepaid fee.

AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC TERRITORY

AUTHORITY

The Antarctic Names & Medal Committee,
C/- Antarctic Division,
Department of Science,
Channel Highway,
KINGSTON TAS. 7150
AUSTRALIA

ACTIVITIES

The Committee is the authority on names in the Australian Antarctic Territory, Heard Island and the McDonald Islands. It is responsible for the investigation and acceptance or rejection of all name proposals. Names approved are subject to confirmation by the Minister for Science, before being officially recognised. Names for Macquarie Island are considered by the Committee and then referred with recommendations to the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania.

A Gazetteer of the Australian Antarctic Territory (name and position only) was published in November, 1983. It gives the history of the Antarctic Names and Medal Committee, outlines place names principles and criteria and describes the procedure for proposing new names. The names list contains the decisions of the Committee approved by the Minister until July, 1983. A further Gazetteer is currently being prepared.

STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

AUTHORITY

Geographical Names Board of New South Wales,
G.P.O. BOX 39,
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2001
AUSTRALIA

ACTIVITIES

The Geographical Names Board of New South Wales established under the Geographical Names Act, 1966, has the function of assigning names to places, altering and discontinuing names, and maintaining a gazetteer. The Board also has the task of defining boundaries of suburbs which is now one of some magnitude.

In recent years the Board has continued to function effectively and no major changes to procedures for assigning place names have been made. There have been thoughts of introducing an alternative to the Board system but no one has so far been able to devise a better or cheaper method for making professional naming decisions.

When the provisions of the 1966 Act were formulated, New South Wales had the benefit of using ideas and thoughts from other States and Nations which already had a nomenclature act. As a result, the New South Wales Act in retrospect is regarded as a good one and is concise, and easy to follow. It fully sets out the system for assigning names clearly and simply.

Over 70000 place names have been assigned in New South Wales since 1966. The Central Mapping Authority which produces the State's maps takes care to ensure that official geographical names are used. Local Government Councils, street directory producers, Australia Post and other authorities concerned with place names liaise closely with the New South Wales Geographical Names Board.

The Board can therefore be pleased with the fact that the State of New South Wales has a very orderly efficient and extremely accurate system for assigning recording and preserving records of names of places, rivers, mountains, etc. This is especially important for having accurate maps and other directories.

Early in 1987, action was commenced to place details of the 70000 assigned names on computer. Efforts are also being made to have a book published on place names of New South Wales.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

AUTHORITY

Place Names Committee,
Department of Lands & Housing,
GPO BOX 1680,
DARWIN NT 5794
AUSTRALIA

ACTIVITIES

The Place Names Committee investigates and recommends to the Minister for Lands and Housing names for public places and natural features.

Whilst the bulk of its work has previously been dealing with street nomenclature in the Northern Territory, urban centres in consultation with the Local Government, the emphasis of its work has more recently been directed to the investigation of feature names in support of topographic mapping and charting.

In conjunction with the preparation of a National Gazetteer of Australian Place Names, the Place Names Committee are moving to computerise basic data for the gazetteer, plus additional data on place names origins to enable retrieval of data to answer public enquiries. Whilst the Cartographic Section of the Department have a responsibility for nomenclature checks on Territory National Mapping editions, the Place Names Committee are primarily concerned with names or Territory names and map sheet names and their origins.

Limited opportunities are available to undertake toponymic research on local place names, but some success has been experienced recently in the endeavour, along the lines of the Canadian examples in "Canoma".

The Northern Territory is also contributing to a "Committee of Geographic Names in Australia" examination of Aboriginal Place Names in Australia and this is proceeding with the Federal authorities concerned. It is also watching events in Canada on indigenous place names as they have a bearing on varying Aboriginal orthographies in Australia.

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APPENDIX I

1984 Meeting - Perth, Western Australia

"Nomenclature in Australia" by Dr. John Atchison, Armidale College of Advanced Education, New South Wales.

1985 Meeting - Bathurst, New South Wales

"Anomalies in the naming of features common to two or more States" by W. Watt, Research Officer, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"Computerisation of Place Names" by W. Watt, Research Officer, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"The apostrophe and possessive "s" in geographical nomenclature in South Australia" by M. Medwell, Secretary, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"Shortages of Staff on geographical name work" by M. Seagrim, Chief Drafting Officer, South Australian Department of Lands and Board Member, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"Policies adopted by the Board in assigning or altering place/feature names" and "New Zealand Geographic Board Act, 1946 and other papers" by W. Hawkey, Surveyor-General and Chairman, New Zealand Geographic Board.

"National Gazetteer" by P. Trezise, National Mapping Authority.

"Aboriginal Place Names and Official Nomenclature" by Dr. J. Atchison, Armidale College of Advanced Education.

1986 Meeting - Adelaide, South Australia

Reports of sub-committees on:-

1. National Gazetteer
2. Staff Shortages
3. Aboriginal Place Names

"Geographic Name - An essential Part of the field of Communication" by Dr. R. Randell, Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

"Aboriginal Place Names" by D. Tunbridge, Linguist.

"Marcel Aurousseau - A Biography" by V.T. O'Brien, Chairman, Place Names Committee, Northern Territory.

"Estate Names" - reports from Australia Post, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

"Australian Geographic Designators" by B. Goodchild, Western Australian Department of Land Administration.

"Regional Nomenclature" by G. Tranfa, Research Officer, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"Visit to the United States Geographic Names Board" by B. Goodchild, Western Australian Department of Land Administration.

"Attendance at Canadian Native Names Symposium" by V.T. O'Brien, Chairman, Place Names Committee, Northern Territory.

"Position Doubtful Features on Mapping" by P. Trezise, National Mapping Authority.

"Adaptation of Current United States Policies to Australia" by W. Watt, Research Officer, Geographical Names Board of South Australia.

"Nomenclature Committees - Sunrise or Sunset - The need for Boards, their Role, Purpose and Function" by Dr. J. Atchison, Armidale College of Advanced Education.
