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**Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Eighth Conference.**

Report for Australia

Submitted by Australia**

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SUMMARY

This report outlines the achievements and directions of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia (CGNS) as applied to Australia. New Zealand, the other member of CGNA, will present its own report.

The document outlines the terms of reference CGNA is currently working with and relates the projects, both completed and currently being undertaken since the 2002 conference in Berlin, to the terms of reference.

It is considered that the following initiatives are of particular note:

- Development of the web based education package for use in schools in conjunction with the CGNA video released and the Berlin Conference.
- Protection of geographical names in the domain name environment with the release of a new set of 2nd level domain names for use by communities.
- Initial work of the development of methodology for determining feature extents.
- Refining of the dual naming approach in Australia.

The above subjects will be covered by individual papers delivered later in the conference.

As a general summary, CGNA recognizes that much has been accomplished in the 20 years the committee has been in place in relation to the standardization of geographical names in Australia.

However, as can be seen from the details of the paper, there is still much to be done. Emerging and improving technology, new government processes, community expectations and other factors constantly contribute to a need to develop methods that meet new requirements and to ensure that existing policy, guidelines and processes are relevant in this constantly changing environment.

Please feel free to approach any of the Australian delegates if you want any additional information in relation to this or any other paper presented during the conference.

REPORT FOR AUSTRALIA

COMMITTEE FOR GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN AUSTRALASIA

The Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia (CGNA) was formed in 1984 to provide a coordinating role in Australian place naming activities. CGNA was established within the Inter Governmental Committee on Survey and Mapping (ICSM) in 1993 with the support of the National Mapping Division of Geoscience Australia.

Representation on CGNA comes from the Australian State / Territory Geographical Names Boards, New Zealand and other organizations with an interest in nomenclature.

The national program and goals of CGNA have been established by the adoption of the following strategic directions that are in harmony with the current ICSM strategic plan. As such, these terms of reference outline CGNA's achievements and future issues and problems.

CGNA Directions

Mission

"As the national focus group, our mission is to coordinate and communicate the consistent use of geographic place names, to meet community requirements."

CGNA Terms of Reference (ToR):

1. Create a greater community awareness of geographical names.
2. Develop and deliver an educational program to promote the significance of geographical names in the community.
3. Develop National guidelines for geographical names.
4. Promote National guidelines for geographical names to each jurisdiction.
5. Promote the use of correct geographical names by Map/Spatial database producers.
6. Produce, maintain and develop the Gazetteer of Australia.
7. Support National initiatives for the community use and protection of geographical names in the .au name space.
8. Support the United Nation Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and its initiatives.

CGNA Initiatives:

To realize the requirements of the terms of reference, CGNA has embarked on a number of projects and initiatives as summarized in the table below.

Projects/Tasks/Achievements	Related to ToR's	Status	Priority or Milestone
Create a greater community awareness of geographic names			
Promote and distribute video /CD – Rom	1	Complete	
Organise United Nations training course	2	Complete	
Participate in other International forums	8	On going	High
Support UNGEGN	8	On going	High
Produce promotional brochure	1	On going	High
Develop and deliver an educational program to promote the significance of geographic placenames in the community			
Develop the web based educational program to compliment video	2	Complete	
Enhance the web based educational program to compliment video	2	Complete	
Promote web based educational program	1 & 2	In Progress	High
Liaison on training courses for UNGEGN	2	In Progress	High
Develop National guidelines for geographic names			
Develop guidelines on:			
Aboriginal Naming Issues	3	In Progress	High
Geographic Domain Names	7	In Progress	High
Antarctic Naming	3	Complete	High
Feature type definitions and generic terms	3	In Progress	
Convert all Jurisdictional gazetteers to mixed case text SDI Data Model	3	In Progress	High
Develop	3	Complete	
Implement	3	In Progress	Medium
Promote National guidelines for geographic names to each jurisdiction			
Compile and collate all CGNA guidelines, resolutions and policies and place on the CGNA web site	4	In Progress	Low
Promote the use of correct names by Map/Spatial database producers.			
Support the production of an UNGEGN regional gazetteer	8	Ongoing	Medium
Review Strategic Plan on an annual basis	4.3.1	Ongoing	Medium
Support the ongoing development of the Gazetteer of Australia			
Continued supply of data by jurisdictions annually	6	Ongoing	High
Support the development of a Gazetteer WFS	6	Ongoing	High
Development of a status and feature catalogue.	6	Ongoing	High
Other National Issues			
Investigate a National Roads Database	6	In Progress	Medium
Compile a national listing on legislation affecting geographical names	6	Complete	
Develop relationships with Australia Post and DFAT	5, 8	In Progress	Medium

In relation to these initiatives, separate papers have been prepared for some of the above as mentioned below and will be presented at other times in the conference.

- Australian Communities Online – new Second Level Domain names (2LD's)
- The web based Education Package.
- The National Gazetteer WFS development.
- Dual / Composite naming.
- Beyond the Polygon - Discussion regarding feature extents.

CGNA's Role in 5+ Years

CGNA will continue to be active in developing and promoting nationally consistent standards, policies and procedures dealing with the following emerging trends / issues.

Emerging / Continuing Trends and Issues

1 Expanding Use of Place Names by Community

- Geographic Names as 2LD's will continue to be put in place.
- Dual Names will be implemented to some degree – probable overlap with Aboriginal Sites Registers, language retentions programs, etc.
- Australian National Placenames Survey (ANPS) is continuing to gain momentum, including greater community input.

2 Data Quality / Accessibility

- Develop methods for greater user input to gazetteer database, i.e. contributions by community groups.
- Ensure data is more accessible via "Web Friendly" mechanisms
- Continue the development of definitions of spatial extent of unbounded features, i.e., where does Mt Kosciuszko start / finish?
- Locality / Suburb Boundaries will need to be completed throughout Australia and better aligned with other datasets, i.e. Australia Post (AP), Census to create effective spatial relationships.
- Improved co-ordinates on place names for navigation purposes.

3 Conflict Between Community and Commercial Use of Place names

- Trade marking for wine, food, etc.
- Increased use of named thematic routes.
- Continued use of estate names used by land developers.

What has CGNA achieved in the last 5 years?

- Nationally consistent approach on most issues associated with place names and relevant processes.
- Development of guidelines for incorporation of indigenous place names in the general geographic nomenclature of Australia, including the use of dual naming methodology.
- Development of an effective National gazetteer.
- Low level of promotion on use of place names by community.
- Development of a web based education package for use in schools.
- Involvement in and hosting UNGEGN training courses.
- Increased web presence of place names information, both on a national basis and also within the jurisdictions.
- Improvements in data quality of jurisdictional and national gazetteer.
- Protection of community 'ownership' of geographical names through the development of 2nd level domain names – One City, One Site.

CGNA Focus from Present to 5 Years+?

- Continued need to develop policies that are supported nationally by ICSM, Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) and Government.
- Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) Data Model needs national commitment for adoption.
- Improved interaction with Australia Post, Australian Bureau of Statistics re: data alignment, invite to CGNA as observers/participants.
- Continue / expand strategic alliances with other stakeholders involved with Geographic naming policy, i.e. ANPS, Local Government (peak body).
- Further promotion and development of strategies to increase public awareness.
- CGNA / ICSM will need to become more active in supporting jurisdictions in Aboriginal place names / reconciliation initiatives.
- Continue to increase the quality and comprehensiveness of gazetteer databases.
- Complete the national coverage of suburb / locality boundaries.
- Investigate the development of a national road names database and a complimentary data set to the national gazetteer.
- Retain international links to UNGEGN, promoting Dual Names and Domain naming initiatives to broader community.

CONCLUSION

CGNA is an effective geographical names coordinating body for Australia and New Zealand.

The authority for naming in Australia remains with the State, Territory and jurisdictional names authorities, and the New Zealand Geographical Names Board within New Zealand, but this system works well. CGNA has been able to develop guidelines for a number of issues and in almost all instances CGNA members agencies have adopted and are using these guidelines.