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**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous,
minority and regional languages and multilingual issues
(Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage)**

Promoting the use of Aboriginal language

Submitted by Australia**

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United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names – Promoting the use of Aboriginal language

Victoria is an Australian State and has the responsibility for maintaining place names. State and Territories have legislation which enables them to do this, for Victoria this is known as the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act). The Act allows for the creation of a Registrar of Geographic Names who maintains a set of Guidelines, a Register of Geographic Names known as VICNAMES and a Geographic Place Names Advisory Panel. The Naming rules for places in Victoria – 2016 (the naming rules) are the ‘Guidelines’ in force under the Act.

The Act stipulates that the ‘Guidelines’ must set out the processes for assignment of Aboriginal names. To ensure the preservation of Aboriginal place names and languages across Victoria, the naming rules requires engagement with Traditional Owners when assigning Aboriginal names to roads, features and localities. Compliance and administration of the naming rules is managed by a small team called Geographic Names Victoria (GNV). GNV is part of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning within the Victorian Government.

GNV throughout 2017 promoted the new naming rules and in 2018, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, undertook workshops, titled ‘Our languages matter’ with Traditional Owners, Local and State government officers and private organisations to promote Aboriginal language. The workshops have been a great success with more planned in 2019, which aligns well with the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Victoria is going through a period of sustained growth, it is expected in the coming decade that the State will become the most populous State in Australia. During this time, it is important that Aboriginal language be promoted to ensure continued reconciliation and adoption of Aboriginal language. This paper will focus on the Aboriginal aspects of the Naming rules, Aboriginal names and promotional work with Traditional Owners, State and local government.

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1. Introduction

The Victorian State within Australia has a rich Aboriginal history, with 38 Aboriginal languages representing the diversity of Aboriginal cultural heritage and connection to Country. The uniqueness of language is based on location; each language is deeply rooted to the land and offers an ideal opportunity to connect a name to a place. To ensure the preservation of Aboriginal place names and languages across Victoria, it is strongly encouraged that naming authorities¹ use Aboriginal language and must engage with Traditional Owners when assigning Aboriginal names to roads, features and localities.

Victoria has been promoting the use of Aboriginal languages in the naming of roads, features and localities. The Permanent Committee on Place Names which represents all states, territories and New Zealand also promote the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands languages within Australia and Maori language within New Zealand in the naming of places.

The newly revised Naming rules for places in Victoria – 2016 continues to encourage the use of Aboriginal languages for the naming of places. The promotion of the document highlighted an opportunity to explain the processes and procedures surrounding assignment Aboriginal language to places, engagement, and hear from Traditional Owners and experts in the field of Aboriginal language.

2. Naming rules for places in Victoria – 2016

In December 2016, the Naming rules for places in Victoria –2016 (naming rules) were released. The naming rules further promoted the adoption of Aboriginal languages within Victoria. The *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act) states that the ‘Guidelines’ in this case the naming rules:

- *Must set out the process to be followed before selecting or assigning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander name of a place;*

Noting the above piece of legislation, the naming rules has the following general principles, statutory requirements, processes and advice. It is also worthy to note that the naming rules represent a western approach to naming practises. There are two key principles which encourage using Aboriginal language and one other principle relating to the use of Aboriginal language. Excerpts have been provided below:

Principle (F) Recognition and use of Aboriginal languages in naming

The use of Aboriginal languages in the naming of roads, features and localities is encouraged, subject to agreement from the relevant Traditional Owner group(s). If an application of an Aboriginal name is being considered to be applied as a Dual name further information is available under Principle (G) Dual names.

¹ Councils, government departments or authorities and private organisations are considered to be naming authorities when they are responsible for a particular feature or road within their jurisdiction. This may apply even when they may not be the owners and/or responsible for the maintenance of the feature or road e.g. Crown Land Committees of Management or leased/licensed facilities with maintenance obligations.

Naming authorities are strongly encouraged to consult with the relevant Traditional Owner group(s) prior to any public consultation on the proposed name(s). In instances of more than one relevant Traditional Owner group, naming authorities must consult all parties.

Further information about how to identify the appropriate Traditional Owner group(s), convene consultation meetings and respond to issues that may arise, is available in Section 7.3 Developing an Aboriginal naming proposal.

Principle (G) Dual names

Australian states and territories use dual names as a way of recognising the names given to places by different enduring cultural and language groups. For further information refer to the [Principles for the consistent use of place names](http://www.icsm.gov.au/publications/index.html) (www.icsm.gov.au/publications/index.html).

In Victoria, the approach to giving simultaneous and joint recognition of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures through naming is to form a dual name with two distinct name parts, usually one part of non-Aboriginal language origin and the other of Aboriginal language origin.

Naming authorities wishing to develop dual naming proposals need to ensure the following issues are considered:

- Dual names can be applied to natural topographical features (e.g. islands, mountains, mountain ranges and rivers) and mapped or bounded areas such as state forests, national parks, Crown land reserves and open space recreation reserves.

To avoid possible confusion for addressing or the provision of emergency management, dual names cannot be adopted for:

- localities, towns or rural districts
- constructed features such as roads, highways, bridges or communication towers.

Note: roads and localities should only be assigned a name that is either an Aboriginal name or non-Aboriginal name.

- Dual naming is a priority consideration when a feature already has a widely accepted name of non-Aboriginal origin and newly available information indicates that an Aboriginal name could also apply.
- If a dual name is proposed, the non-Aboriginal name would appear first in the combined name, as long as it best reflects local community usage. For example, [Point Ritchie / Moyjil](http://maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/VicnamesUI.jsp?placeld=6743) (see maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/VicnamesUI.jsp?placeld=6743).
- If a non-Aboriginal name has weak support in the general community and the origin and application of an Aboriginal name is well supported, a dual name may be formed with the Aboriginal name part appearing first. In some cases, a single well-supported Aboriginal name could be substituted for the weakly supported non-Aboriginal name, instead of adopting a dual name.

Dual names will be formally registered without any distinction between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal name parts other than sequence. If a visual separator is required for clarity, it should be a solidus (i.e. a /) preceded and followed by a space. The feature type should only be included with the non-Aboriginal name. The following examples would be acceptable:

- Gariwerd / [Grampians National Park](http://www.icsm.gov.au/publications/index.html)

- [Grampians National Park / Gariwerd](#)
- [Nambruc / Aberfeldy State Forest](#)
- [Colquhoun State Forest / Boyanga Gidi.](#)

Dual names once registered are to be used in full, particularly on maps, signs and legal documents. Shortened versions are not to be used.

Principle (J) Language

The use of names from Australian English, Aboriginal names and names from other languages need to be given careful consideration. The following points are excerpts from the principle and must be considered.

- Geographic names, except when they are proper nouns, must be written in standard Australian English or a recognised format of an Aboriginal language local to the area of the road, feature or locality.
- Geographic names should be easy to pronounce, spell and write, and preferably not exceed three words (including feature or road type) and/or 25 characters.
An exception to this is in the use of Aboriginal languages, when it is accepted that Aboriginal names that initially appear complex will, over time, become familiar and easy to use.
- Names taken from a language other than English that represent geographical features generally use generic terms and will be allowed, unless the combination produces a duplication of sense. For example, Tor Mountain would not be allowed because Tor means mountain.
- Hyphens can be used within place names that indicate the extent of the feature, for instance Mellick-Munjie Parish or Hattah-Kulkynne National Park. They can also be used when the name incorporates a hyphenated surname, for instance Kingsford-Smith Ulm Reserve.
- Diacritical marks (symbols such as ´, ¨ or ¯) will be omitted from names drawn from languages that use such marks. For example, Cape Reamur (not Cape Réamur).
- Roads and features must use approved road and feature types which are located in Appendix A and Appendix B of the naming rules.

The following sections, 4.9, 7.3 and 7.4 of the naming rules provides further advice around the following:

- Recording Aboriginal names within VICNAMES,
- Engagement with Traditional Owners on the use of Aboriginal language, and
- Process for Traditional Owners to follow.

Section 4.9 Features with Aboriginal names

A checklist that can be used to prepare a proposal is available in Appendix C of the naming rules.

There are numerous features in Victoria that have Aboriginal names. In many instances, these features are defined differently to western concepts of place (e.g. middens, rocky escarpments, sites on a mountain or beach, rocky outcrops or stone arrangements), but their names are just as important to include in [VICNAMES](https://maps.land.vic.gov.au/lasi/VicnamesUI.jsp) (see maps.land.vic.gov.au/lasi/VicnamesUI.jsp).

Any person or organisation can develop a proposal to register a feature's Aboriginal name, whether the feature has an existing registered name or not.

If approved the process involves one of the following:

- Recording the Aboriginal name as 'Registered' (see Section 1.7 of the naming rules) or 'Dual' results in the Aboriginal name being recognised as the official name in use for the feature. The name will appear on Vicmap standard maps for the area.
- Recording the Aboriginal name as 'Traditional' or 'Historic' results in the Aboriginal name being recognised on Vicmap standard maps; the name can be located by researchers and be used on specialised maps.

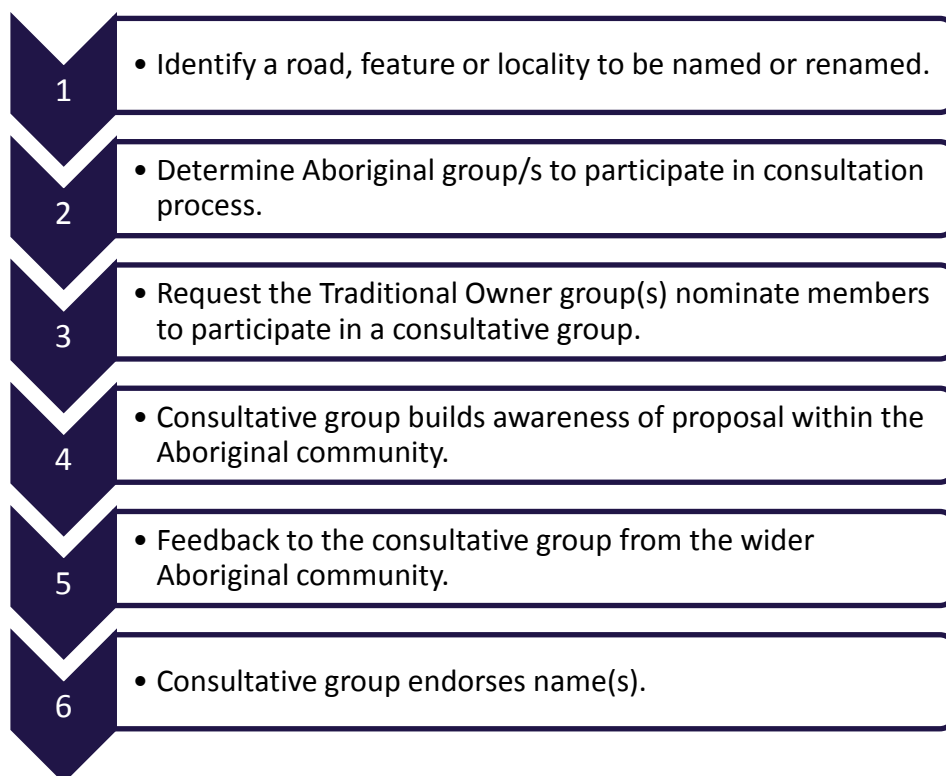
Note all names, regardless of their status, will be held in VICNAMES.

For further information refer to Section 7.3 Developing an Aboriginal naming proposal and Section 7.4 Process for a Traditional owner group to develop an Aboriginal naming proposal.

If the proposed new name is an Aboriginal name, from the outset the naming authority should consult relevant local Traditional Owner group(s) and obtain their approval. Refer to Section 7.3 of the naming rules.

Section 7.3 Developing an Aboriginal naming proposal

Naming authorities wishing to name a road, feature or locality using an Aboriginal language must follow the steps below.



The naming rules provide further information on developing an Aboriginal naming proposal, essentially any naming proposal proposing to name a road, feature or locality using an Aboriginal language, must engage and seek endorsement with relevant Traditional Owners of the proposed name prior to undertaking formal consultation with the wider community. Detailed information is available from the naming rules, though the steps involved includes:

- Preparing a naming proposal
- Determining Aboriginal group(s) for consultation
- Selecting a consultative group
- Building awareness within the Traditional Owner community
- Feedback from the Aboriginal community and endorsement of name(s)
- Building awareness of the proposal within the wider community
- Feedback from the wider community
- Reimbursement of costs.

Section 7.4 Process for a Traditional Owner group to develop an Aboriginal naming proposal

If a Traditional Owner group wants to name a road, feature or locality but is unsure who the naming authority is and/or if there is an officially registered or locally known name, then the following steps apply.

Identify the name

The Aboriginal name for a road, feature or locality can be identified by any person, group or organisation using specific cultural knowledge or historical documentation relevant to the area in which the road, feature or locality is situated.

Locate other names

The proposer must check whether other names are officially registered or recorded (this can be checked using [VICNAMES](https://maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/VicnamesUI.jsp) at maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/VicnamesUI.jsp). This will help identify the exact location of the road, feature or locality to which the proposed name will apply, and whether the wider community uses an unofficial name.

If an unofficial name exists, the proposer may submit the naming proposal as a Dual name with the existing registered or unofficial name. There are exceptions to a Dual name not being considered and, therefore, the assignment of an Aboriginal name may not proceed, e.g. to avoid possible confusion for addressing or providing emergency management (refer to Principle (G) Dual names).

If no other name is in use, the Aboriginal name can be recorded as registered, traditional or historic in VICNAMES. Refer to Section 1.7 Status of names in VICNAMES and for features Section 4.9 Features with Aboriginal names of the naming rules.

Verify the name

When an Aboriginal name has been identified, it must be verified by the Traditional Owner group(s) in the area in which the road, feature or locality is located. In some instances, this might be more than one group. In all instances, the name must be verified by all groups with recognised heritage in the area (for a list of these groups refer to Section 7.3 of the naming rules.). Further advice can be obtained from Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet (www.dpc.vic.gov.au).

All relevant Traditional Owner groups must give written consent to the name being registered for the road, feature or locality (either as a Dual name or single name). If written consent has not been provided by all groups, then GNV can provide further advice.

Contact the naming authority for the road, feature or locality

The proposer should contact the naming authority for the road, feature or locality and submit directly to it a naming proposal. Refer to Section 6.1.1. The naming proposal must then be processed according to the steps in Section 7.2 or Section 7.3 of the naming rules if proposing to use a name from an Aboriginal language.

3. Victorian Aboriginal place names

The uniqueness of Aboriginal language is based on location. Each language is deeply rooted to the land and offers an opportunity to connect a name to a place. Victoria is unique within Australia in that it has a devolved naming process. The 79 Victorian municipal councils are the state's primary naming authorities; however, a number of government departments, government authorities and in some cases, private organisations also hold this role.

To help ensure the preservation of Aboriginal language across Victoria, the Geographic Names Victoria encourages naming authorities to consider Aboriginal names when assigning new names to roads, features and localities. We also remind naming authorities that as part of the process they must engage with Traditional Owners.

The naming rules include the process and rules for new, renamed roads, features and localities. The process is managed by naming authorities; however, anyone is welcome to propose a new name.

Case study – Budj Bim

In 2017 Mount Eccles and Mount Eccles National Park were renamed. The Traditional Owners of the land, the Gunditjmara people, proposed a new name to Parks Victoria. From their language, they proposed [Budj Bim](#), which means 'High Head'.

GNV advised Parks Victoria (a State government authority) on the naming process and engaged with emergency services and relevant Land Use Victoria colleagues. Parks Victoria ran a consultation process and then sent a proposal to the Registrar of Geographic Names for review and endorsement of the name change.

The names Budj Bim National Park and Budj Bim were gazetted on 23 March 2017. The gazettal of the name was timed to coincide with an official ceremony to formally recognise the Traditional Owner names. Legislation has passed through Parliament to include the name of the new park in the National Parks Act.



Figure 1: Screen shots from VICNAMES showing extent of the Budj Bim National Park and the point for Budj Bim.

Dual names

Dual naming is a priority consideration and enables joint recognition of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. An example is [Point Ritchie/Moyjil](#), in [Warrnambool](#). Also, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in 2016 named 98 state forests, half of which were assigned Aboriginal names, with three being dual names.

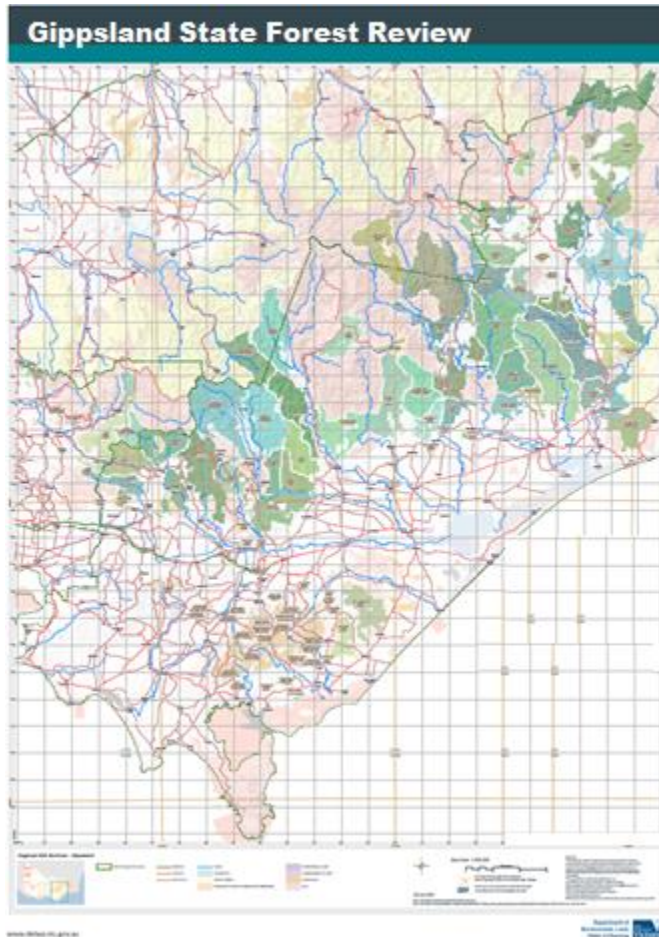


Figure 2: Areas shaded in green show the State parks.

Geographic place names advisory panel

GNV also manages the Geographic Place Names Advisory Panel (GPNAP). One of the Panel's permanent committees is the Aboriginal Names Committee. The committee provides expert advice and recommendations to the Registrar of Geographic Names on Aboriginal naming principles and place naming issues of regional, state and national significance.

As well as promoting Aboriginal language, the Committee also reviews the use of inappropriate names across Victoria.

Gazetted Aboriginal names

The table below shows a select list of gazetted names

Name	Naming authority	Gazette date	Comment
Point Ritchie / Moyjil	City of Warrnambool	26 / 11 / 2015	Dual name recognising Aboriginal history
Mangowak Lane	Surf Coast Shire Council	4 / 02 / 2016	Airleys Inlet area meaning 'good place for hunting swans'.
Ninety-eight State forests.	DELWP	26 / 05 / 2016	Half assigned Aboriginal names, three dual names Figure 2.
Mullawalla Wetlands	City of Ballarat	02 / 06 / 2016	Recognising a Wathaurung leader
Jubilee Park / Wurrumbit Birrng Yaar	City of Warrnambool	30 / 06 / 2016	'Long waterhole'
Baanip Boulevard	VicRoads	30 / 06 / 2016	Willem Baanip, a local Wathaurong man well known during the 1800s
Tanderrum Bridge	DHHS	06 / 10 / 2016	Tanderrum meaning safe passage is a welcoming festival between Kulin nations.
Dirrawarra Bridge	Rural City of Wangaratta	01 / 12 / 2016	Pangerang word meaning together and united.
Woovookarung Regional Park	DELWP/ PV	23 / 03 / 2017	'Place of plenty'.
Budj Bim National Park and Budj Bim	PV	23 / 03 / 2017	Budj Bim means high head.
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre	Greater Bendigo City Council	29/03/2018	Aboriginal word for kangaroo waterhole.
Brataualung Forest Park	DELWP	31/05/2018	Five State forests were assigned an Aboriginal name with five block names recognising the names in local usage.
Bunjil Creek	Melbourne Water	26/07/2018	Bunjil is a creator deity and has been assigned to a watercourse.
Djerring Trial	Level Crossing Removal Authority	2/08/2018	Coming from the Bunurong Aboriginal language, the word Djerring means 'join' or 'unite'.
Aboriginal Gardens	Benalla Rural City Council	6/09/2018	Renamed from Indigenous Gardens.
Karingga Park	Ballarat City Council	15/11/2018	In Wathaurung language, Karingga means 'grow', which describes the rapid growth of the area.
Kirrip Park	Port Phillip City Council	25/11/2018	Kirrip, means friendship or mate in the Boon Wurrung language.
Bunjils Next	Greater Geelong City Council	7/02/2019	Bunjil is a creator deity and has been assigned to a local municipal park.

4. Workshops - Aboriginal place names – Our languages matter

With the work undertaken on the review of the then Guidelines of Geographic Names in 2016, Geographic Names Victoria developed a number of relationships with key stakeholders. One of these relationships was with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (the Council) who provided input on key areas of the then Guidelines. The naming rules were published in 2016 and promoted across Victoria in 2017. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council approached GNV in late 2017 to discuss forming a partnership to deliver Aboriginal Place Names workshops to Traditional Owners, State and local government, departments and authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

The workshops to date have been a great success with five workshops delivered and in excess of 220 people attending across the State. At the time of writing one further workshop is scheduled for Shepparton on Yorta Yorta Country in March 2019 and it is hoped there will be a further two workshops in the remainder of 2019 to coincide with the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages (UN IYIL).

The objectives of the workshops are to:

1. promote the importance of Aboriginal language in the naming of roads, features and localities
2. further strengthen relationships with Traditional Owners to support collaborative naming
3. identify Traditional names for potential registration, for updating or dual naming, and for new roads, features and localities.

Process

Letters were sent to all municipal council CEOs and Mayors as well as to council place names officers. Emails were sent to government departments and authorities and other relevant stakeholders were engaged via bulletins, emails, news and broadcast messages. Traditional Owners were engaged via the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. An online form was used to gather contact information from those people and organisations that wished to attend, this included questions on what attendees would like to accomplish from the day and whether they could share any knowledge or Aboriginal Naming activities.

The workshops ran for around six hours and were facilitated. Attendees were welcomed on Country by local Traditional Owners and heard from the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Country, Traditional Owners, Aboriginal linguists, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council members and Geographic Names Victoria staff. Participants included representatives from Local and State Government and emergency services, in addition to planners, surveyors, developers and other relevant stakeholders.

Around two weeks after the workshop attendees were provided via email a conversation tracker this document covered the key areas of the day, as well as all presentations. The figures below provide an overview of the day. A copy of the conversation tracker is available upon request. The follow up email thanked attendees for their time and participation in the workshop and provided some follow up actions from the day.

1. By National Reconciliation week 2019 have one road, feature or locality named using Aboriginal language.
2. Add naming to Reconciliation Action Plan

3. Approach Traditional Owners - write to them and ask for a list of:
 - a. Offensive names
 - b. Generic use names
 - c. Important sites for traditional owners that could be assigned an Aboriginal language

It is expected over 2019 to coincide with the UN IYIL that attendees will be asked how they have progressed with the follow ups detailed above, this information will be used to understand what successes and challenges naming authorities and stakeholders experienced. The results will also be reported in a final report for UN IYIL.

The figures below are images taken from the conversation tracker.

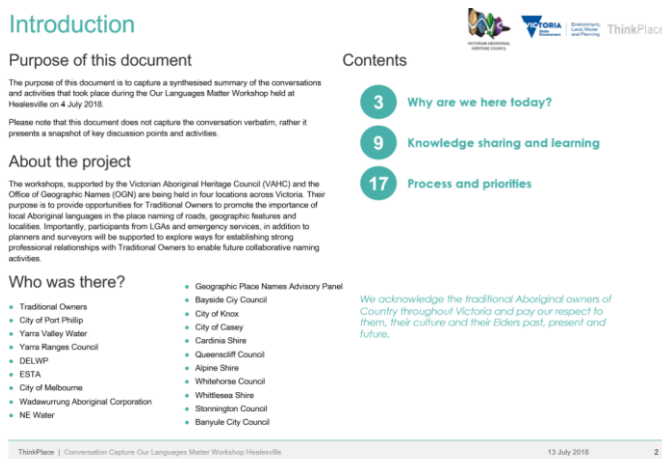


Figure 3: Conversation Tracker - Introduction.

Figure 3 provided an overview of the conversation tracker, who attended, what the workshop was about and the purpose of the conversation tracker.



Throughout the first half of the day Dayna Hayman from ThinkPlace took live-scribing visual notes (as seen above). Capturing the key points of each presentation from:
 Geraldine Atkinson – Member, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council
 Harley Duncolly-Lee – Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL)
 Joel Wright- Acting Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL)
 Rafe Benil- Project Manager for the Office of Geographic Names at DELWP (OGN).

Figure 4: Conversation Tracker - Live Scribing

A live scribe was provided as part of the facilitation package which enabled capture of key moments throughout the day, Figure 4, shows one such live scribing example.

Questions were captured at the registration stage and during the beginning of the workshops. Any questions which were not answered on the day were provided a response in the conversation tracker, refer to Figure 5.

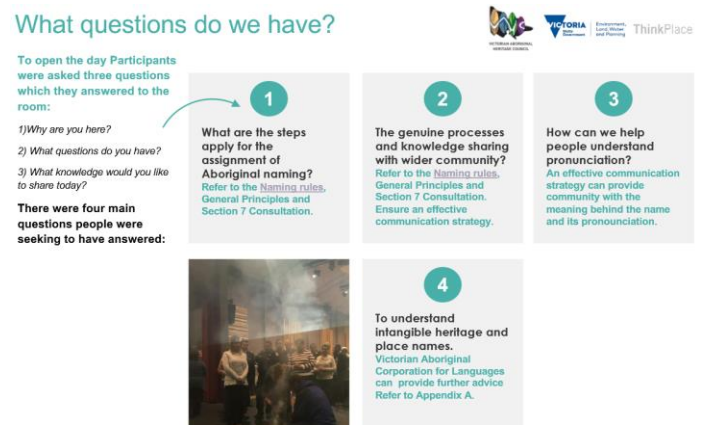


Figure 5: Conversation Tracker - Questions and Answers

Attendees were asked what the rules of participation should be for the days' workshop, this enabled all attendees to feel safe that their point of view and questions could be heard, refer to Figure 6.

Rules of participation

To foster a culture of open collaboration and support, participants discussed the rules of participation they would follow for the day.

Ngakila Nyernda

"Watch and learn"



Figure 6: Conversation Tracker - Rules of participation.

Key messages were captured from the presenters at each workshop. This included representatives from Traditional Owners (Figure 7), linguists (Figure 8), Geographic Names Victoria staff (Figure 9 & 10).

Raquel Kerr – Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

Raquel Kerr from the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans - the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the local area- shared her knowledge on Cultural Heritage and what it meant to the local Aboriginal people, what a RAP was and their role in a variety of activities.

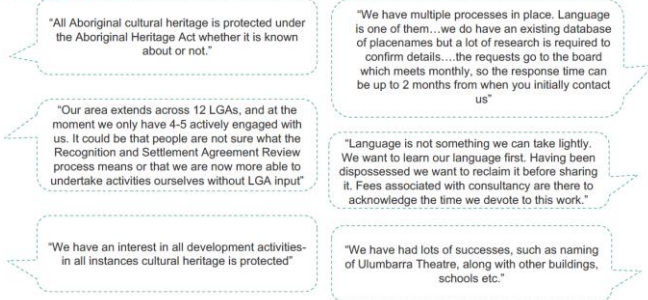
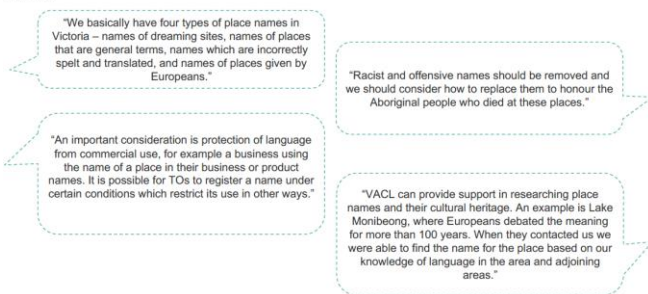


Figure 7: Conversation Tracker - Key excerpts from Traditional Owners presentation.

Joel Wright – Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages

Joel Wright, Acting Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) spoke about Aboriginal place naming and languages. He explained how Aboriginal names describe a place, how names are linked to Culture and the considerations associated with reinstating Aboriginal words for places and names.



For more detailed information from Joel Wright's presentation please visit Appendix A.

Figure 8: Conversation Tracker - Key excerpts from Linguist.

Knowledge sharing and learning

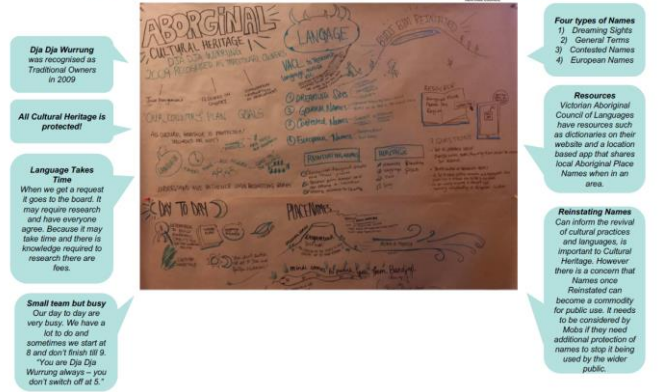


Figure 9: Conversation Tracker - Key learnings.

Key steps in the naming process were captured and shared with attendees.

Rafe Benli– DELWP

From the Office of Geographic Names within the Department of Environment, water, land and planning Rafe explained the formal processes for changing and reinstating names. These processes were then explored by the group on how they might identify and change names.



For more detailed information from Rafe Benli's presentation please visit Appendix B.

Figure 10: Conversation Tracker - Key excerpts from naming rules.

The process of naming:

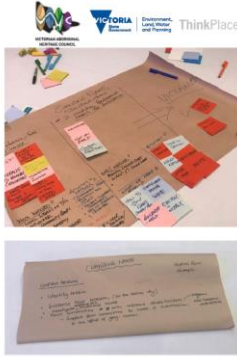
The Office of Geographic Naming presented the process of how to name or reinstate a name.



Figure 11: Conversation Tracker - naming process.

How would you change a name?

Participants in table groups discussed how they would change / reinstate Aboriginal names. They then presented back and discussed further the processes for changing a name.



"Engage in a genuine manner for genuine outcomes."

Figure 12: Conversation Tracker - process map for real life examples.

Attendees worked through possible naming opportunities within their local municipal council areas and mapped out what the process might be for such namings. (Figure 12 and 13)

Overview of name change process:

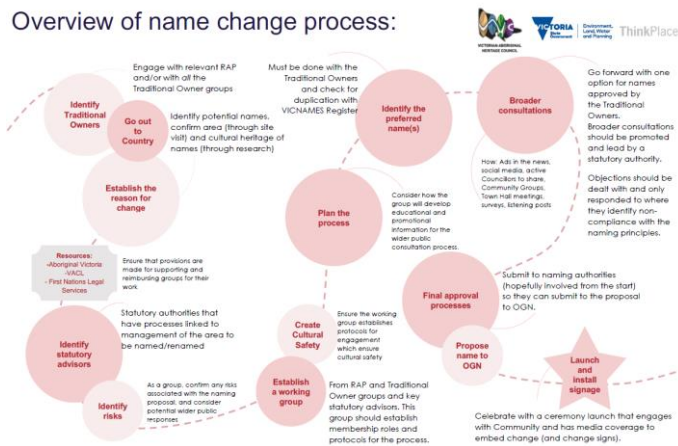


Figure 13: Conversation Tracker - detailed process map.

Attendees discussed offensive names within the local area and possible names for re-instatement.

Identified names for change / reinstatement:

During the day through presentations and discussions participants identified names for change and reinstatement.



- Offensive names for change:**
- Jim Crow Creek
 - Blackfellows Lane
 - Mt. Picannini
 - Hopkins River

Aboriginal names for reinstatement:

- Narrongnaraby (Bendigo Creek)
- Lagambrook (Mt. Franklin)
- Yarraburp (Bullock Creek)
- Barramal Creek

Figure 14: Conversation Tracker – highlighted local naming opportunities.

At the end of the day attendees were asked to share one thing they learnt from the day and one thing that they will undertake after the days workshop. All points were captured and provided in the conversation tracker.

One thing...

At the end of the day Participants left behind one thing they learnt and one thing they would do going forward.

What I learnt today

- Good to see people are open to new ideas and processes
- How to contact Traditional Owners
- Better understanding of Aboriginal perspective
- The importance of language
- The importance of collaboration
- How complicated it is but how it can be achieved

One thing for after today

- More input in Reconciliation Action Plan
- Die Die Wurrung language and cultural centre
- Have Aboriginal road names in Mitchell Shire
- Initiate cultural surveys to identify culturally significant places names
- RAPs are far more broadly skilled and culturally connected
- Incorporate discussions on place naming
- Cultural awareness training for staff
- Check Reconciliation Action plan on place naming



Figure 15: Conversation Tracker - learnings.

Highlights

There were a number of highlights for attendees, these included:

- traditional welcome to country which also included smoking ceremonies
- an opportunity to hear first-hand from Traditional Owners, linguists and naming practitioners
- empowering attendees through knowledge sharing
- collaboration between attendees and positive discussions between Traditional Owners and naming practitioners.

5. Aboriginal naming – future

Victoria will continue to promote Aboriginal language in the naming of roads, features and localities. Aboriginal names continue to be a focus for naming authorities and offer a great opportunity for connection of names to place and reconciliation with first nation people. The Register of Geographic Names – VICNAMES is the application which provides for all names to be stored and made available to the public and across mapping applications. VICNAMES provides an opportunity to capture Traditional Owners names for places across Victoria. As part of the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages (UN IYIL) Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) plans to write to all Traditional Owner Registered Aboriginal Parties to request traditional Aboriginal names which are not the official names in current use. The VICNAMES application can hold Traditional Owner names under the status of 'Traditional'. The capture and storing of these names will be of benefit to all Victorians and may present opportunities for future treaty negotiations.

Treaty

Australia's first ever treaty legislation is now set to become law with the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 passing Victorian Parliament. This will see Victoria become the first State to enter into formal treaty negotiations with Aboriginal Victorians. Treaty will have benefits for all Victorians – promoting reconciliation, fostering shared pride in Aboriginal culture and helping to heal the wounds of the past. It is an opportunity for Victoria to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians. Treaty will present a unique opportunity around naming, renaming and recording of Aboriginal place names. The Bill is the culmination of the work of more than 7,500 Aboriginal community members who have been engaged in work to further the treaty process in Victoria. Consistent with the policy of self-determination, the Bill does not specify who Treaty is with or what it will be about. Rather it requires an independent Aboriginal Representative Body and the Victorian Government to work in partnership to facilitate future treaty negotiations. In the years ahead, it is expected place names will be one area which will be included in treaty negotiations.

The role out of Aboriginal place names workshops will continue throughout 2019 and beyond. There is a clear appetite for Aboriginal language and assignment of names to places, features, locations across Victoria. The UN IYIL has presented the opportunity to promote this work and this will be used as a stepping stone for further promotion of Aboriginal language across the department, government and to the public.

Policy and Guidelines

DELWP recently launched its Aboriginal Language Use Policy and Guidelines which provide advice to staff around the use of Aboriginal language and how this can be used in its daily work.

1. Key aspects of the Policy include:
 - Seek opportunities to utilise Aboriginal Language(s) in DELWP business.
 - Ensure the use of Aboriginal Language(s) is done in consultation with and following endorsement by Traditional Owners.
 - Opportunities that are place based, visible and that encourages awareness and usage of Aboriginal Language(s) in daily work should be prioritised.
2. Steps in the Guideline to assist staff applying the Policy are:
 - Identify purpose of language use.

- Identify the relevant Traditional Owner group.
- Request permission to use Aboriginal Language(s).
- Identify key words/phrases.
- Determine the scale of the work that requires Aboriginal Language(s) i.e. state wide or place based

United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages

Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) registered with the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages which has several benefits, two of which include the permission to use the UN IYIL logo and branding, and ability to promote our projects and raise awareness about Aboriginal place naming. GNV has the following programme of initiatives planned for the year:

1. Promoting UN IYIL and the naming of roads, features and localities via videos
 - Platforms for videos include Ada (intranet page), DELWP external webpage, Facebook, Instagram, DELWP Media Centre.
 - Potential for a mini series of three or more short, one-minute documentaries, each on a different name and location.
2. Writing to Victorian Government Ministers informing them of UN IYIL and encouraging naming, renaming and dual naming.
3. Continuing to deliver Aboriginal place names workshops across Victoria (entitled 'Our languages matter') promoting naming activities with local stakeholders.
4. Naming some DELWP meeting rooms with Aboriginal names.
5. Writing to relevant organisations, including:
 - Reconciliation Victoria and Reconciliation Australia, asking them to add 'naming' as possible initiatives in Reconciliation Plans;
 - Public Record Office Victoria, asking it to search out traditional names of places across Victoria from archival records; and
 - The National Trust, asking it to consider the adoption of a dual name or promotion of traditional names for their Victorian sites.
6. Writing to Traditional Owners requesting traditional names for inclusion in the Register of Geographic Names - VICNAMES.
7. Promoting partnerships with respective departments, agencies, organisations to be able to offer advice, assistance and enable reporting.
8. Promoting past, present and future government naming projects.
9. Writing abstracts for LOCATE19, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names and PULLiIMA 2019 Indigenous Language and Technology Conference.
10. Celebrating International Mother Language Day (21 February 2019) with an event highlighting UNIYIL initiatives and promoting UNIYIL during NAIDOC Week (July 2019).
11. Recruiting an Aboriginal resource to create on going relationships with Traditional Owner groups, providing cultural advice to GNV and to support the planning and organising of the year's initiatives.
12. Recruiting Aboriginal Victorians for the Geographic Place Names Advisory Panel (GPNAP).

6. Conclusion

The naming rules provide the rules and process to enable adoption of Aboriginal names across the Victorian State, the document also compliments national policies. The UN IYIL offers the opportunity to raise the profile for Aboriginal naming and continue the work GNV has undertaken in this space. On a national level, GNV continues to work with its jurisdictional counter parts on promotion and adoption of Aboriginal names and ensuring processes are robust to allow naming of places with Aboriginal language. On a State level, naming authorities are working on several Aboriginal naming projects which will likely be delivered in 2019. This presents a great opportunity to capitalise on the UN IYIL and share success stories across the State.

The naming of roads, features and localities in local Aboriginal language can act as a form of recognition of Victorian Traditional Owners' ties with Country and, for the broader community, becomes a lasting reminder of Victoria's rich heritage. To ensure wider community support it is important that education around the meaning of the name, the pronunciation and history to encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and heritage in the wider community.

The naming rules represent a western approach to place naming within Victoria. Consideration should be given to how Aboriginal people determine and assign place names to features and places on their Country, this could see engagement with Traditional Owners across Victoria to understand what processes might work for them and assist in capturing and further promoting their language which will have cultural and economic benefits for Traditional Owners and the wider community.

Names are often products of their time and depict racial prejudices that once were commonplace in society. These names were wrong then and are wrong today. Where names are changed to represent the views of today's society, they are recorded in VICNAMES, the Register of Geographic Names. GNV will continue to work for the adoption and preservation of Aboriginal languages through the naming of roads, features and localities across the State.

7. Questions

What engagement with Indigenous people is undertaken in the naming of places?

Is Indigenous naming promoted and if so, how?

If applicable how is naming dealt with in regard to a treaty process?

If applicable how has the wider community responded to changing names to Indigenous names?

Lessons learnt, challenges, what would have been done differently in the assignment of Indigenous names?

What approaches and processes are used to engage with Indigenous people when assigning indigenous names?