

Place Naming Policy



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1. Purpose

Moorabool Shire Council is a Naming Authority pursuant to the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* and *Local Government Act 2020*, and with the exception of geographic places of state significance, is required to resolve on all geographic place names within the municipality.

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.

In consideration of any naming requests or allocation of names in new subdivisions being roads and reserves, Council is required to abide by the *Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022 - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities* (the Naming Rules).

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
MSC/Council	Moorabool Shire Council.
Feature	A unique geographical place or attribute that is easily distinguished within the landscape (including a park, open space, watercourse or sports ground).
Locality	A geographical area that has identifiable community and/or landscape characteristics (commonly known as a 'suburb').
Naming Rules	The document entitled <i>Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022 - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities</i> which is published in accordance with the Geographic Place Names Act 1998, and any subsequent updates of that document.
Proactive	A naming proposal that is triggered by Council seeking to recognise a particular theme or to apply a particular name to a place.

Responsive	A naming proposal that is triggered by the identification of an unnamed place that requires a name, or a named place that requires renaming.
Road	A public road as defined in the Road Management Act 2004.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all requests to name or rename roads, features or localities for which Council is the naming authority and where the Naming Rules apply. Council facilities (such as buildings, meeting rooms, scoreboards and playgrounds) are not subject to the Naming Rules, and therefore can be named directly by Council without referral to the Registrar for Geographic Names as appointed by the Minister under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*. In these situations, the principles in this policy shall be used as a guide only, subject to any modifications deemed necessary.

Any public or private road, feature or locality within Victoria can be named or have its boundary changed.

Council is required to consult with the Registrar of Geographic Names regarding any 'official' naming proposals that are to be registered with the Registrar and notify all new or altered names to the Registrar for inclusion in an electronic system known as VICNAMES.

4. Policy

4.1. Legislation that applies

The naming rules are the guidelines provided for under Section 5 of the *Geographic Place Names Act 1988* (the Act), where it states that:

- 1) The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, by Order published in the Government Gazette, may make guidelines relating to procedures to be implemented in selecting, assigning, or amending names of places.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the guidelines:
 - a) must set out the rules and process to be followed in selecting, assigning, or amending a name of a place;
 - b) must set out the process to be followed before selecting or assigning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander name of a place;
 - c) must specify criteria for the assessment of cultural heritage or other significance in relation to the naming of places;
 - d) must set out requirements for consultation before a name of a place is selected, assigned, or amended; and
 - e) may specify any other matter or thing appropriate in relation to the naming of places.

4.2. Why there is a need for naming rules

The naming rules provide a structure for ensuring that assigning names to roads, features and localities in Victoria is undertaken in a consistent way for the community's benefit. Those benefits include:

- Recognition and identification
- Connection to country and place
- Culture
- Emergency service response and natural disaster relief
- Heritage
- Landscape
- Communications, including postal and news services
- Trade and commerce
- Population censuses and statistics
- Property rights and cadastre
- Urban and regional planning
- Environmental management
- Map and atlas production
- Navigation
- Tourism

Naming of any place in accordance with these naming rules enables it to be clearly identified, which means its precise location can be determined. The uniqueness and accuracy of a place name reduces the likelihood of delaying an emergency services vehicle due to inadequate or confusing location details, which might have life threatening consequences. Proper naming also assists with service delivery by other agencies and companies.

4.3. Place Naming Principles

The following principles must be used in conjunction with the relevant statutory requirements outlined in the naming rules related to roads, features and localities. They are designed to ensure that names are enduring and there is no ambiguity, confusion, error or discrimination caused by the naming or locality boundary change process. All naming principles are equally important.

Principle A - Ensuring public safety

Geographic names and boundaries must not put public and operational safety for emergency response at risk; or cause confusion for transport, communication and mail services.

Principle B - Recognising the public interest

Cultural heritage names should be enduring. When naming or adjusting the geographic boundary of a place, Council must consider the long-term benefits and short-term effects on the wider community.

Principle C - Linking the name to place

Names should have a link to place to ensure the preservation of our cultural heritage.

Principle D - Ensuring names are not duplicated

Names must not duplicate another name within a locality. Duplication is not allowed within the same locality or the following default distances:

- Metropolitan urban areas, within a 5 kilometre radius
- Regional urban areas, within a 15 kilometre radius
- Rural or remote areas, within a 30 kilometre radius

Principle E - Recognition and use of Traditional Owner languages

The use of Traditional Owner languages in the naming of roads, features and localities is encouraged, and is subject to agreement from the relevant Traditional Owner group(s).

Principle F - Names must not discriminate or be offensive

Place names must not discriminate or cause offense.

Principle G - Gender equality

Gender equality in the naming of roads, features and localities is encouraged.

Principle H - Dual names

Dual names may only be assigned to geographic features. Dual names cannot be assigned to roads or localities. Dual names with Traditional Owner place names are encouraged as a transitional step toward the adoption of the Traditional Owner name.

Principle I - Using commemorative names

When deciding on the assignment of a commemorative name after a person, Council will consider:

- The person's achievements
- Relevant history and association to the area
- The significance of the family/person to the area/land

Commemoration of a living person is strongly discouraged.

Principle J - Using commercial and business names

Places should not be named after commercial businesses, trade names, estate names (which are solely commercial in nature) or not-for-profit organisations, nor should names of estates be applied to roads, features or localities.

Principle K – Language

- Geographic names, except when they are proper nouns, must be written in standard Australian English or a recognised format of a Traditional Owner 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 and/or 25 characters.
- Mitigating steps to allow more complicated names could include pronunciation, phonetic pronunciation and information associated with the name added to signage and or provided residents.
- Names taken from a language other than English that represent geographical features generally use generic terms and will be allowed.

- 'The' is not a suitable prefix in naming of any road, feature or locality and must not be used.
- Although discouraged, hyphens can be used within place names that indicate the extent of a feature. Hyphens in road names are not allowed. Diacritical marks (symbols such as ´, ¸ or ˘) will be omitted from names drawn from languages that use such marks.
- Punctuation marks such as commas and full stops are not allowed.
- An apostrophe must be deleted from geographic names written with a final 's' and the possessive 's' should not be included.
- Abbreviations are not allowed. An exception applies to the use of the honorific Saint.
- Names starting with Mc or Mac must not have a space included between the Mc or Mac and the rest of the name.
- A name cannot be a numeric value either in full alphabetised or numeric format.

Principle L - Directional names to be avoided

Cardinal directions (north, south, east and west) must be avoided.

Principle M - Assigning extent to a road, feature or locality

A naming proposal must clearly define the area and/or extent to which the name will apply.

4.4. Community Consultation

Consultation is a key component of the process and will be conducted in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

In accordance with the *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria 2022*, consultation is applicable to two types of community groups:

- The immediate community, which broadly includes people who live and work within the area and owners of properties or businesses, in particular residents, ratepayers and businesses within the immediate area directly affected by the proposal.
- The extended community, which includes:
 - Residents, ratepayers and businesses surrounding the area directly affected by the proposal;
 - Any visitor groups to the area such as shoppers, tourists, recreational or dining visitors;
 - Government (for example neighbouring councils) or non-government organisations with an interest in or who service the area, including Traditional Owner group(s), RAP's, local historical societies and eminent individual historians;
 - Service clubs such as Lions and Rotary Clubs, Country Women's Associations, farmers groups, school parents associations, Probus clubs, senior citizens centres, ethnic associations;
 - Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) and Emergency Service Organisations (ESO).

The consultation period of a naming proposal will be no less than 30 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.

4.5. Submissions and Objections

The consultation process allows members of the community to express their opinion about a naming proposal. People can comment on, object to, or support a naming proposal. Any person or organisation can lodge a submission in objection or in support of a naming or boundary change proposal during the public consultation period administered by Council.

If there is minimal support for the chosen name, Council may decide to re-consult on a new name or abandon the proposal, regardless of the proposal being compliant to these naming rules.

Following the first round of community consultation Council must respond to everyone who made a submission or an objection.

The response must include the next steps Council is proposing to take. In the case of an objection this must include the following:

- How the objection has been dealt with, for example:
 - there was overwhelming support for the name
 - the objection is not valid
 - the concerns raised will be mitigated
- Explanation of why the naming proposal is being considered for formal approval by the naming authority.
- Or if rejected, how it will subsequently be refined, changed or abandoned.

4.6. Approval and informing the community of a decision

All naming requests and proposals (except subdivisions) will be approved by a resolution of Council.

Approval of names on plans of subdivision will be approved by the delegated officers within the Community Planning and Development Directorate.

The community must be informed of Council's decision. This can be in the form of a letter, Moorabool Shire Council's website notification, social media announcement, newspaper advertisement or media release.

Council must notify objectors, when they're identified, informing them of the outcome of the naming proposal. The notification to objectors must outline:

- How objections have been dealt with.
- Why the naming proposal went ahead even though there were objections (for example, Council policy, there was overwhelming support for the name).
- Specific responses to the issues raised in the submission or objection (for example, the objection is not valid, the concerns raised will be mitigated).
- Why the naming proposal was accepted and sent to the Registrar for consideration and

inclusion in VICNAMES.

- Details of how an appeal can be made to the Registrar. An appeal can only be made if the objector can demonstrate that either:
 - Council did not consider the objections during its deliberations
 - The proposal does not reasonably conform to the naming rules.

4.7. Informing Geographic Names Victoria

Post Council's resolution to proceed with the proposed name, it must be lodged with Geographic Names Victoria for assessment. Council is required to submit the proposal with specific information, as noted within the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria 2022 statutory requirements.

If Council indicates that the proposal received objections during the consultation period, the Registrar will not consider approving the proposal until 30 days have elapsed since Council accepted the proposal and notified objectors. This 30-day period is to allow time for objectors to lodge an appeal. If there are no objections, the Registrar will proceed with considering the proposal.

If the naming proposal does not conform to the naming rules, the Registrar will offer advice on how to amend the proposal to ensure that it will comply.

4.8. Gazettal

If Geographic Names Victoria deems the proposal to be in accordance with the naming rules, it will proceed to gazettal.

The Registrar may only consider appeals from members of the community who have already objected directly to the naming authority's proposal. An appeal to the Registrar can only be made if the objector can demonstrate that either:

- The naming authority did not consider the objections during its deliberations.
- The proposal does not reasonably conform to the naming rules.

Appeals that do not respond/address one of the two points above will not be considered as valid appeals.

When a name, new name and/or boundary(ies) is/are chosen and endorsed by the Registrar, it/they will be included in a weekly notice published in the Victoria Government Gazette, notifying registration of new or altered roads, features or locality names and/or boundaries in Victoria.

A name may also be endorsed prior to gazettal by the Minister of the department or authority from which the proposal was generated, or through a proposal from a Geographic Place Names Advisory Committee.

The gazette notice will include the following items (where relevant):

- The VES change request number.

- The pre-existing name of the road, feature or locality.
- The new name of the road, feature or locality, (if private or locally known, will be indicated).
- Any name with an apostrophe may have the name gazetted with the apostrophe but will not appear in VICNAMES or Vicmap.
- The name of the private complex in which the road is located.
- Written details of the extent of the road, feature or locality.
- The address of the feature.
- The locality(ies) in which the road or feature is located.
- The names of the existing localities within which the new locality is being defined.
- The name of the naming authority.
- A web link to GNV's website, where a map can be viewed.

The gazette notice acts as official notification that the name and/or boundaries will be registered in the Register of Geographic Names - VICNAMES.

5. Related Legislation

- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Geographic Place Names Act 1998
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Road Management Act 2004
- Naming Rules for Places in Victoria: Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2022
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018
- AS/NZS 4819:2011 Rural and urban addressing
- Survey Co-ordination Act 1958
- Subdivision (Procedures) Regulations 2011

6. Council Plan Reference

Objectives: A Council that listens and adapts to the needs of our evolving communities
Context: Be recognised for demonstrating a culture of excellence, creativity and inclusiveness

Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years in line with Geographic Names Victoria's scheduled review of the Naming Rules.