

Operational policy

Natural Resource Management

Names and naming of QPWS managed areas, places, sites and geographical features

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Policy issue

How are the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) managed areas, places, sites and geographical features named or re-named?

Background

QPWS manages almost 12 million hectares of land in Queensland totalling more than 1500 'lots-on-plan' including aggregations and an extensive network of marine park areas. To assist management and meet regulatory requirements, names are given to areas, places, sites and objects.

The *Place Names Act 1994*, directs how names are to be given to 'places' in Queensland. A 'place' may be an area or geological feature either natural or artificial. However, the *Place Names Regulation 2005* excludes as 'places' those prescribed by other regulations such as lands declared protected areas under s64 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and waters declared marine parks under the *Marine Parks Act 2004*.

Protected areas, recreation areas, marine parks, State forests and forest reserves are recorded in the Place Names Database as unapproved place names given by some legislation are also recognised as unapproved place names. The Queensland Place Names Database forms part of the Australian National Gazetteer.

For a place name to be entered into the Gazetteer of Place Names, the name must have been designated in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the *Place Names Act 1994*.

Naming of places

A proposal to name or to alter the name of a QPWS managed area, place, site or geological feature may be made by a variety of people including the Minister, a member of parliament, the Chief Executive, QPWS staff, a local government, a conservation organisation, an outdoor recreation club, an indigenous group or a person in the community. The procedure (described below) is always the same no matter how the process is initiated.

Definitions

Place is an area or geographical feature (whether natural or artificial) but does not include, among other things, a gazetted road, a building or a place described by a regulation. All approved place names are listed in the Gazetteer of Place Names.

Approved name of a place means the name appearing in the Gazetteer of Place Names as the name of a place.

Unapproved place name is one that may be recorded in the Place Names Database, being a local, excluded, alternate, obsolete or historical name, or a name prescribed by regulation.

Determination

For management and legislative purposes, each QPWS managed area will have a unique name linked to a lot-on-plan official cadastral description.

Before making a final recommendation, QPWS will consult with the community and interested parties when it proposes to give a name to an area it manages, or alter an existing name, in a process similar to that required under the *Place Names Act 1994*.

In principle, where appropriate, and with the clear endorsement of traditional owner/s or the most relevant local Indigenous community group/s known, names of areas and sites are to be drawn from Indigenous languages in recognition of connection to land and culture.

In no circumstance is an area to be given the family name of a person with no connection to the particular area. Also, a personal name will only be considered posthumously if an area is gifted or bequeathed property (see *Operational policy - Naming of gifted or bequeathed property*).

If QPWS wants to name a geographical feature in an area it manages, such as a mountain or creek, the proposal will be referred to QPWS Spatial Information Services Unit to trigger a formal consultation process under the *Place Names Act 1994*.

Procedure

QPWS region responsibilities

Proposals for naming or re-naming QPWS managed areas, places, sites and geographical features should address the matters outlined below and are to be co-ordinated by the relevant region.

Matters to be addressed

Before any action is taken, the background of any name is to be investigated and explanatory material about the origin of the name be provided with the proposal.

Each proposal is to be reviewed by the relevant region to at least consider the place naming issues listed in the *Place Names Act 1994*, s6 namely:

- Community views
- The cultural and historical significance of places and names
- Aboriginal tradition and Island custom
- If relevant to the three items above, the appropriateness of a place having more than a single name
- Commonly known names of places
- The extent of use of a name for a place
- The length of time a name has been used for a place
- Topography
- Guidelines and conventions set by intergovernmental or international committees having functions about the naming of places
- The avoidance of confusion about names or the location of places.

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Where the use of an Indigenous language place name is unambiguously sought by the traditional owner/s of a QPWS managed area, this will be facilitated to the greatest extent possible.

If a proposal relates to the use of an Indigenous language place name, it must be accompanied by a written endorsement by the traditional owner/s or, if unclear, the most relevant local Indigenous community group/s known.

Examples of issues to be considered when compiling proposals are:

1. When determining whether an unofficial place name should be given official recognition, consideration should be given to a name's cultural heritage value, if its use has become established within a local community group or by a particular interest group over time or if it has been used extensively in written literature.
2. The use of a family name for a reserve area or feature is appropriate only if there is a significant connection with the family, for example if a person bequeathed the land to the State, a family donated the land for protected area purposes, or the State purchased the land held for a long time by the family. Continued use of an existing name may have been a condition of the purchase.
3. A reserve or feature may be given dual English and an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander name to reflect its dual cultural and historical significance. However, this second name must be listed in brackets, e.g. Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, as the estate register can recognise a single name only. A dual name for a part or section of a QPWS managed area can only be given at an operational level and cannot be officially recorded in the estate register. A recommendation for a dual name will require consultation with and endorsement by the traditional owner/s or the most relevant local Indigenous community group/s known, including agreement on spelling.

Before a submission to name a QPWS managed area, place, site or geographical feature is forwarded to QPWS Central Office, the relevant QPWS region must have a notice published in a newspaper circulating in the general area of the place to which the proposal relates, and if of potentially broader interest, in the Queensland Government Gazette. This notice must:

- Describe the area, place, site or geographical feature to which the proposal relates
- State the proposal
- Invite written submissions about the proposal from interested persons, groups of persons and bodies
- Specify a day (not earlier than two months after publication) by which submissions are to be made
- Specify the address where submissions are to be sent.

The above publication requirements must be followed unless the Minister can be clearly satisfied that they are not justified because of the nature of the proposal or the likelihood that the proposal would generate no significant community interest if it were published.

All submissions made regarding the proposal must be properly considered and the results must be forwarded to QPWS Central Office as part of the proposal.

Once the proposal has been finalised and consultation compiled and reviewed, it is to be forwarded by the relevant QPWS Regional Director, to the Director, Strategic and Policy Services, Technical Services Branch, QPWS, for further action.

Central Office responsibilities

The Strategy and Policy Services will be responsible for:

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- Liaising with and acting as the first point of contact for the Spatial Information Services Unit
- Forwarding proposals for geographical features in reserves to be given approved place names
- Assessing and recommending acceptance or otherwise of all names used in QPWS managed areas
- Scrutinising the use of approved place names such as protected area names for any illegalities
- Reviewing, where required, existing names and recommending changes if necessary
- Establishing a register of names and their sources and related explanatory material and advising the Spatial Information Services Unit, of any explanatory material about the origin of the name for inclusion in the Place Names Database
- Considering how best to gain approved status for all State forest and related tenure names
- Considering local government place names referrals as they relate to QPWS interests.

Final recommendations are to be forwarded to the Chief Executive through the Deputy Director-General, QPWS for the endorsement of the Minister and approval through the Governor in Council.

The Spatial Information Services Unit is to be advised of new or changed names under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* or State forest names at least twice yearly. If large numbers of changes are made at one time, the Spatial Information Services Unit should be advised as soon as possible.

Each proposal is to be added to the file BNE12814 *Reserve and feature names*.

The Governor in Council is responsible for the naming of protected areas and marine parks. Any such gazettal procedures will be actioned by the Tenures and Covenants Unit in the Department of Environment and Science.

The final decision will be published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* and QPWS regions may elect to also publish it in a relevant local newspaper.

Other issues to consider

Proposed names should undergo extensive investigation and consultation before any recommendation is made to the Director-General to put to the Minister for Executive Council approval, particularly because of the high public profile of any such name and the related potential to encourage more visitors with consequent implications for conservation and visitor safety.

The names of protected areas and reserves, their geographic features, and related items such as picnic ground developments, are often the basis of intense community interest.

When changing a place name it is important to keep in mind that because of the extensive use of computer databases for geographic information and spatial systems, any change to a name can have multiple practical effects in the workplace.

Any change can also have significant impacts on the broader community, such as changing promotional publications, reference material, scientific paper references and road signs.

Consultation about naming may result in a lengthy delay before, for example, a newly acquired area proposed for national park can be gazetted. Forward planning may be needed if tight deadlines are envisaged. If a proposal for a geographic name is referred to Spatial Information Services Unit to trigger its public consultation process, it may take 12 months before the place name is approved.

The Place Names Regulation 2005 does not recognise the naming of facilities and assets such as walking tracks, campgrounds, buildings, marine park buoys and vessels, and these do not fall within the scope of this particular policy.

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It is an offence under the *Place Names Act 1994* to publish or authorise the publication of an advertisement or a document in which a name that is not an approved name is represented as the place's name. However, this does not apply if it is clear in the publication the name is not the approved name of the place or the place does not have an approved name.

Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved By

Andrea Leverington

Signature

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Date

Assistant Director-General
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Enquiries:
Strategy and Policy Services
Email: parkspolicy@des.qld.gov.au