

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

PLACE NAMING POLICY

VERSION: One

TYPE OF POLICY: Council

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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Manager Urban Design & Place

AUTHORISING OFFICER: *Executive Director,
Placemaking*

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach for the naming and renaming of places, ie roads, facilities, council assets, features, open spaces and localities within the municipality.

It provides direction to the City in complying with its responsibilities under the Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (the Act), ensuring that all naming decisions reflect community values, comply with legal obligations, and adhere to the Naming Rules.

The Policy promotes inclusive practices by prioritising Aboriginal heritage, gender equity, cultural recognition, local history, and meaningful community engagement throughout the naming process.

SCOPE

The Policy:

- Applies to all place naming and renaming of existing places that are owned and operated by and/or the responsibility of the City.
- Provides a structured framework for local government officers, stakeholders, developers, proponents, and community members involved in naming proposals.
- Accommodates naming proposals that may be council-led, community-led, or developer/proponent-led.
- Does not apply to the naming of assets, roads, freeways, features, parks, or places of geographical significance that are the responsibility of other naming authorities.

BACKGROUND

The City, as the responsible authority, names places to recognise and reflect the culture, heritage and landscape of our region and add value to our identity as a region.

Place names must be easily and uniquely recognisable to ensure identification by emergency services, for the delivery of goods and services, and to ensure community recognition.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The place naming process responds to the following legislative and regulatory requirements:

- *Geographical Names Act 1998* (Victoria).
- *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria* (2007) and subsequent amendments.
- *Australian/New Zealand Address Standards* (AS 4819:2011).
- *Our equal state: Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027*.
- City of Greater Geelong Community Engagement Policy.

All proposed names must comply with these regulations.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

TERM	DEFINITION
The City	The City of Greater Geelong organisation, led by the CEO.
Council	The City of Greater Geelong Council comprising elected councillors and led by the Mayor.
City Officer	Includes employees, volunteers and contractors.
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical and intangible attributes, natural resources, and values that a community inherits from past generations, maintains in the present, and transmits to future generations for their benefit. First Nations cultural heritage encompasses the living knowledge, spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and physical elements that are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Executive Director	Is a senior leader who manages one of the four directorates, forming the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) under the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
Place	Road - any public or private land-based thoroughfare or path navigable by vehicle or foot registered under the Victorian Road Management Act 2004. Examples of roads include streets, lanes, fire tracks, bike paths and walking tracks. Feature - A unique geographical place or attribute that is easily distinguished within the landscape, such as a park, nature reserve, sportsground, or pavilion. Locality - A geographical area that has identifiable community and/or landscape characteristics. Asset – a structure, building, community centre, recreational facility or other significant infrastructure (Note, when referring to the Naming Rules, our assets are referred to as a feature).
Minor Place	A minor place is a feature, locality, or asset that may be informally named for asset management or temporary identification, such as internal rooms, small structures, lesser open spaces, or licensed reserves renamed by leaseholders.
Authority	Government authorities such as Vic Roads, Parks Victoria, Department of Education which are naming authorities for Places that they own or maintain.
GNV	Geographic Names Victoria.

TERM	DEFINITION
Registrar	State Government's Registrar of Geographic Names.
Naming Rules	Mandatory statutory requirements of GNV for naming roads, features, localities and assets.
Naming Principles	Principles that must be used in conjunction with the Naming Rules related to roads, features, localities and assets. All naming principles are of equal importance.
WTOAC	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
Immediate Community	The community directly affected by the naming proposal, includes residents, ratepayers, businesses, community groups.
Broader Community	The community indirectly affected by the naming proposal, includes residents, ratepayers, businesses, community groups.

Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The City is committed to ensuring that all place naming and renaming decisions are made in a consistent, transparent, and inclusive manner. In line with community values, and compliant with legal requirements and the Naming Rules, the City will prioritise the recognition of Aboriginal heritage, gender equity, local heritage and active community involvement throughout the naming process.

The City acknowledges the diversity of our community and is committed to respecting and reflecting this diversity by prioritising the naming of places that address the current underrepresentation of First Nations Peoples and names of women and gender diverse people, and culturally diverse populations, until a more balanced and inclusive representation is achieved.

This Policy provides a framework and direction for making naming decisions, whether initiated by the City, the community, or proponents to ensure that place names respectfully reflect the diversity and heritage of the municipality.

Roles and responsibilities in place naming table included at Attachment 2.

NAMING PRINCIPLES

When considering and proposing a name, as the responsible naming authority the City must comply with and adhere to the following Naming Principles as outlined in the Naming Rules:

Naming Rules for Places in Victoria 2022 – Naming Principles	
Principle A) Ensuring public safety	Principle H) Dual names
Principle B) Recognising the public interest	Principle I) Using commemorative names
Principle C) Linking the name to place	Principle J) Using commercial and business names
Principle D) Ensuring names are not duplicated	Principle K) Language
Principle E) Recognition and use of Traditional Owners languages	Principle L) Directional names to be avoided
Principle F) Names must not discriminate or be offensive	Principle M) Assigning extent to a road, feature or locality
Principle G) Gender equality	

All Naming Principles are of equal importance.

1. PRIORITISATION

The City acknowledges that the current commemorative landscape does not reflect our community's diversity. Historically, public place names have disproportionately honoured males. To address this imbalance, and meet legislative requirements, the City is committed to improving recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage, promoting gender equality, and embracing broader cultural diversity.

Victoria's path to Treaty further strengthens the expectation that Traditional Owners hold a distinct, non-competitive role in decisions affecting Country - including place naming. In line with this direction, the City respects Wadawurrung Traditional Owners cultural authority and ensures Aboriginal naming is considered through a dedicated process.

A prioritisation approach to naming decisions is to ensure a transparent, fair process that reflects community values. This approach creates a commemorative landscape that honours our full history and ensures everyone can see themselves represented in public spaces.

At the City the following prioritisation rules apply:

Name priority and decision making (listed in order of priority)

1. Aboriginal names.

The City will use a rotation model for the following commemorative categories:

2. Female or gender-diverse person (eg advocate, leader, educator, notable community member).
3. Multicultural figure (eg, migrant, refugee, leader, changemaker)
4. Local hero (eg veteran, role-model, volunteer, champion, humanitarian)
5. A significant name based on community relevance, historical importance, landmark, environment or location as per the Naming Rules.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is a priority in naming places. The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation (WTOAC) may choose up to six opportunities per annum to name Places to ensure that names are culturally appropriate and meaningful. This occurs alongside, and does not replace, the consideration of Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs), which identify areas of cultural significance and must also inform naming priorities.

Naming opportunities will cycle between categories 2, 3, 4 and 5 to support equitable representation over time.

Naming proposals that commemorate the histories, contributions or presence of women, gender diverse people, multicultural, migrant or refugee communities should be considered. This includes:

- 1.1.1 Recognising the stories and names of early or significant women, gender diverse people, migrants, refugees or migrant communities.
 - 1.1.2 Enabling naming in community languages where consistent with Naming Rules.
 - 1.1.3 Include inclusive engagement processes when such names are proposed.
- 1.2 Evaluation of such proposals will be delivered as per the Naming Rules, be assessed on cultural appropriateness, local relevance, and community support and include consultation with relevant cultural organisations or community representatives and have family approval (1.7).
- 1.3 the City aims to achieve gender equity in place naming. A minimum of 70% per annum of new or renamed places identified *for naming after individuals* shall be named after significant women or gender-diverse people, aligning with *Our Equal State: Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy and Action 2023–2027*.
- 1.4 Where at least 70% of new or renamed places to be named after individuals have been named after significant women and gender-diverse people, subsequent naming proposals may include individuals of any gender.

The Policy additionally requires that:

- 1.5 naming proposals are consistent with the City of Greater Geelong's Clever and Creative vision.
- 1.6 naming of regional (municipal-wide) sporting facilities should be named based on reference to place to highlight regional significance, examples: Geelong Baseball Centre, Geelong Hockey Centre.
- 1.7 all proposed naming of places in honour of people, must have family approval before submission to the Registrar.

2. USING COMMEMORATIVE NAMES

Naming often commemorates an event, person, or place: If named after a person, that person should have been one held in high regard by the community.

When deciding on the assignment of a commemorative name, Council must:

- 2.1 consider the person's achievements
- 2.2 consider relevant history and association to the area
- 2.3 identify the significance of the family/person to the area or land, for example, a family that has been associated with an area for at least 25 years
- 2.4 consult with and gain support from the family of the person to be acknowledged
- 2.5 consult with WTOAC for truth-telling history on the name to ensure that it hasn't negatively impacted Aboriginal people.

The names of people who are alive are to be avoided as per the Naming Rules because community attitudes and opinions can change over time. Names of people who are alive can only be proposed if exemption has first been sought and gained from the Registrar.

Commemorative names of a deceased person can only be proposed or applied no less than two years posthumously as per the Naming Rules.

3. OTHER NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

On occasion, and at Council's discretion, parts or elements of a place may be named for asset management and identification purposes, having regard to community interest or the nature of the facility. This may include rooms within a facility, minor structures (such as shelters or toilet blocks), or less significant open spaces (such as drainage or walkway reserves, or stormwater assets).

- 3.1 Naming of places for asset management and identification purposes will be determined by Open Space Planning and Corporate Asset Management teams or other City teams as relevant to the asset and are not subject to community consultation.
- 3.2 Temporary naming of sports grounds, pavilions and relevant sporting infrastructure held by seasonal or annual leaseholders to be determined by the City's Sponsorship & Advertising Signage Policy (currently draft) or tenancy arrangements.
- 3.3 separate names for different parts of the same place are to be avoided wherever possible to minimise site name confusion and maintain clarity in place identification.
- 3.4 Where a name has been suggested by Council or community for a part of a place, and there is a clearly defined boundary between one space and another, or a distinct feature on a building that warrants a separate name (e.g. a gym within an aquatics facility or an auditorium within a community hub) these can be considered utilising the same prioritisation and process outlined in this policy.

4. TYPES OF NAMING PROPOSALS

Naming proposals may be council-led, community-led or developer/proponent-led.

- 4.1 Initiated by the City, often driven by strategic planning, historical importance, or public need.
- 4.2 Submitted by community members, local organisations, residents, by petition, or recommended following community consultation.
- 4.3 Proposed by developers or project proponents as part of new residential or commercial property developments, in line with Naming Rules and following community consultation.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In line with the City's Community Engagement Policy, the Place Naming process is to involve active community consultation with the immediate and broader community, unless it is for a minor asset (refer to Section 3).

- 5.1 Once the need for a naming proposal has been identified the engagement process is to be undertaken as per the Community Engagement Policy and the Naming Rules, this includes seeking feedback or submissions regarding the proposal/s.
- 5.2 Community engagement is to be conducted early in the process. This helps ensure that proposed names are relevant, supported, and reflective of local identity. Engagement must occur before any formal submission is made to Council, the Executive Director, or the Registrar.

6. NAME BANK

A Name Bank is maintained by the City to support future naming opportunities such as roads, public spaces and facilities.

- 6.1 The Name Bank is not a public document but is shared with naming authorities, developers or proponents as required.
- 6.2 Names included in the Name Bank will reflect the City's commitment to Aboriginal culture, gender equity, cultural recognition and community representation.
- 6.3 The Name Bank includes a list of approved Wadawurrung language words supplied by the WTOAC. To use these words the WTOAC must be contacted for their final approval and endorsement.
- 6.4 Names will be added to the Name Bank through structured processes including community engagement, internal review and collaboration with stakeholders such as historical societies, libraries, Community Advisory Committees etc.

7. NAMING ROADS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISIONS

Developers and proponents are required to consult with the City when selecting names for roads and open spaces in new subdivisions; this is part of the subdivision certification process.

- 7.1 The City's Property & Valuations, Open Space Planning and Corporate Asset Management teams will work collaboratively with any Place Naming Working Group, Surveyor and Developer to develop road names that are compliant with the Naming Rules and this Policy.
- 7.2 Developers may submit suggested names as per this Policy or select names from the City's Name Bank.

8. FEES

At times there will be fees associated with proposing names of places.

- 8.1 All applicable fees including for Traditional Owner engagement, consultation fees and other out of pocket costs, must be paid by the naming proponent unless otherwise agreed with the City of Greater Geelong.
- 8.2 In instances where a development requires new road names to function, and the name is taken from the City's Name Bank, the naming proponent must cover any/all fees.
- 8.3 Where the City is the proponent, the fees must be paid by the relevant Directorate branch.

9. NAMING DECISION-MAKING TYPES

The decision-making types are as follows:

- 9.1 *Council Decision*: proposed naming decisions required to be resolved by Council at a Council Meeting for submission to GNV Registrar, following recommendations from a Place Naming Working Group and based on the outcomes of community consultation (refer Section 4).
- 9.2 *City Decision*: proposed naming decisions to be approved by ELT or delegated officers at the City as per the Naming Rules and the Roads Management Act. This applies for naming proposals regarding:
 - 9.2.1 new names on plans of subdivisions
 - 9.2.2 renaming of roads
 - 9.2.3 naming of existing open spaces, and
 - 9.2.4 decisions on preferred names for consultation
- 9.3 All proposed names, either determined by Council or relevant Executive Director, must be submitted to GNV Registrar for formal registration to ensure consistency with Victoria's Naming Rules.
- 9.4 In the instance of any inconsistencies between this Policy and the Naming Rules, the Naming Rules will apply, and any proposed names put forward that are inconsistent with this Policy and/or the Naming Rules will be determined by the Registrar.

10. RENAMING OF PLACES

- 10.1 Renaming of Places may be requested or proposed by community or the City:
 - 10.1.1 to return rightful language to Country, or
 - 10.1.2 to re-dress gender imbalanceor when a place name
 - 10.1.3 causes confusion in locating a place,
 - 10.1.4 is outdated, culturally inappropriate, offensive, racist or derogatory
 - 10.1.5 no longer reflects community values.
 - 10.1.6 When requested by emergency services
- 10.2 The re-naming process follows all the same steps as naming new places in this Policy and is to adhere to the same regulations, naming rules and principles.

Implementation of this Policy

11. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Be provided on an as required basis to ELT and Councillors.

12. ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

The Responsible Officer for this Policy manages the provision of advice to the organisation regarding this Policy.

A person who is uncertain how to comply with this Policy should seek advice from this person or from their Manager.

13. RECORDS

The City must retain records associated with this Policy and its implementation in accordance with its Records Information Management Policy.

The City will maintain a publicly accessible, up-to-date Place Naming Register that records all named and renamed places, as defined in this Policy, across the municipality. This register will enable ongoing analysis of naming trends and support transparent reporting on progress toward addressing historical inequities, including gender and cultural representation in place naming.

Responsibility for annual reporting, and maintenance of the Name Bank and Place Naming Register sits with Manager Urban Design & Place. All reports must be retained in accordance with the City's Records Information Management Policy.

14. REVIEW

The City should review and, if necessary, amend this Policy within four years of the Approval Date, or when the current Naming Rules are updated.

References

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria)

Roads Management Act 2004

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Geographic Place Names Act 1998

Other Documents

Naming Rules for Places in Victoria (2007) and subsequent amendments

Australian /New Zealand Address Standards (AS 4819:2011)

Our equal state: Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027

Policies

City of Greater Geelong:

Community Engagement Policy

Records Information Management Policy

Plaques and Memorials Policy

Public Art Strategy 2025-28

Geelong Brand Guidelines 2017

Sponsorship & Advertising Signage Policy (draft)

Attachment one

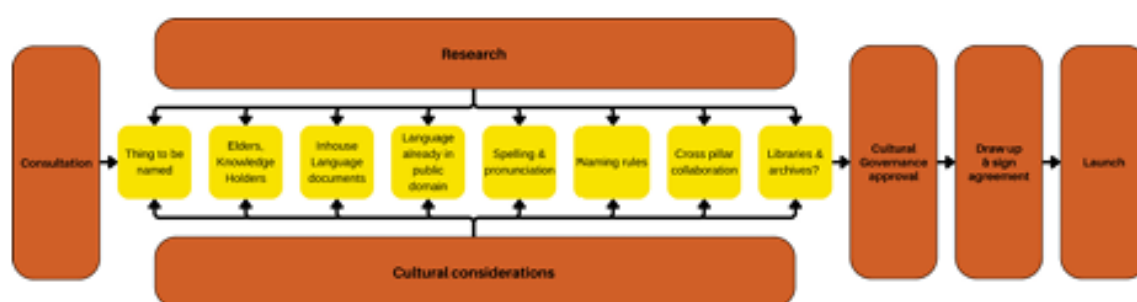


Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC)

Wurru (Language) Processes

1 Process

- 1.1 Sharing Language is a complex and resource intensive exercise, taking a minimum of four to six months. Cultural protocols must be followed.
- 1.2 The process begins with a consultation. Where appropriate, this may take place on Country, at the site to be named.
- 1.3 Subsequent steps are represented in the below flowchart:



2 Limitations

- 2.1 WTOAC doesn't name businesses; only Traditional Owners can name their businesses in Language (with the exception of some First Nations Support Businesses operating on Wadawurrung Country).
- 2.2 WTOAC doesn't support naming prisons in Language.
- 2.3 WTOAC will not provide naming services to companies that exploit or harm Country and Cultural Heritage, e.g. mining, wind turbines, adventure sports etc.
- 2.4 WTOAC does not give out the Wadawurrung word for Welcome. This is linked to cultural ceremony and is to be reserved for Traditional Owners' oral sharing.
- 2.5 WTOAC does not name anything with the names belonging to Wadawurrung Creation Beings or Ancestors.
- 2.6 Names of waterways belong to the water and cannot be placed elsewhere, e.g. WTOAC wouldn't support naming an estate "Moorabool Estate". Moorabool belongs to the river.
- 2.7 Placenames belong to the place and cannot be used elsewhere.

ABN 11 312 302 330
ICN 3330
e admin@wadawurrung.org.au
w wadawurrung.org.au

Office 3, 110 Creswick Rd
Ballarat VIC 3350
WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY
p (03) 4318 6333

99 Mair St East
Ballarat East VIC 3350
WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY
p (03) 4308 0420

86 Mercer St
Djilang VIC 3320
WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY
p (03) 5222 5889

Attachment two

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities in Place Naming

Role	Responsibilities	Applicable Stages
City of Greater Geelong – Corporate Asset Management	Provide input on naming proposals for infrastructure Collaborate with other City teams and stakeholders	Evaluation of naming proposals Implementation of the policy
City of Greater Geelong – Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or Delegated Officers	Approve naming decisions not requiring Council resolution Endorse preferred names for consultation	Decision-making for road names, open spaces, and preferred names
City of Greater Geelong – Open Space Planning	Provide input on naming proposals for public open space Work with proponents and other City teams	Evaluation and support for naming of open spaces
City of Greater Geelong – Property & Valuations	Coordinate naming processes- Ensure compliance with Naming Rules Liaise with the Registrar Maintain and manage the Name Bank	Throughout naming and renaming process Submission to GNV Registrar
Council (City of Greater Geelong)	Resolve naming decisions that require formal Council approval Consider recommendations and community feedback	Formal Council decision-making (Section 9.2)
Developers / Naming Proponents	Consult with the City early in the process Propose names or use the Name Bank- Undertake community engagement (excluding Wadawurrung names) Cover relevant fees and costs unless otherwise agreed	New subdivisions and place naming Engagement and name submission
Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) Registrar	Assess and register proposed names Ensure consistency with Victoria's Naming Rules Resolve inconsistencies	Final registration and compliance assurance
Place Naming Working Group (when convened)	Assess naming proposals Recommend names to Council or ELT	Review and recommendation stage

Role	Responsibilities	Applicable Stages
	Ensure alignment with principles and policy	
Surveyors	Collaborate with developers and City staff Ensure naming proposals meet regulatory requirements- Submit formal plans	During preparation of subdivision or development plans
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation	Identify and provide Wadawurrung names where opportunities arise Approve cultural name use- Consult as needed on naming requests	Cultural naming initiation Direct naming decisions (Section 9.1)