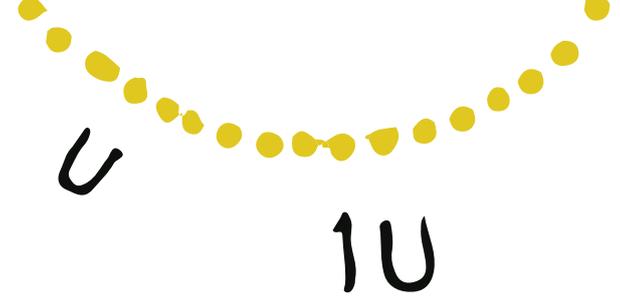


# The principles of Indigenous naming

Office of the Surveyor-General  
Geographical Names Unit





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## Introduction

The Indigenous naming process promotes the recognition of Indigenous history and recognises that Indigenous names were used for the places in South Australia prior to European settlement.

Indigenous naming of natural features and major infrastructure creates increased community awareness around the importance of connection Indigenous peoples have with place and country.

## Purpose

This document is written with the intention of including the most important principles and most common circumstances and situations that occur within the Indigenous naming process. However, it is understood that many other circumstances exist that are not included within this document. If a situation has not been covered in this document, please contact the Geographical Names Unit as detailed below to discuss an alternative pathway to gaining approval for an Indigenous place name.

## What should be named

Not every feature associated with an infrastructure project needs to be named. *The Geographical Names Act 1991*, refers to 'places that are or likely to be of public or historical interest', and this can be a deciding factor on the need to name.

The major consideration in giving a place a name is the need for effective general communication relating to a location. If such communication is not required, then the feature should not be named.

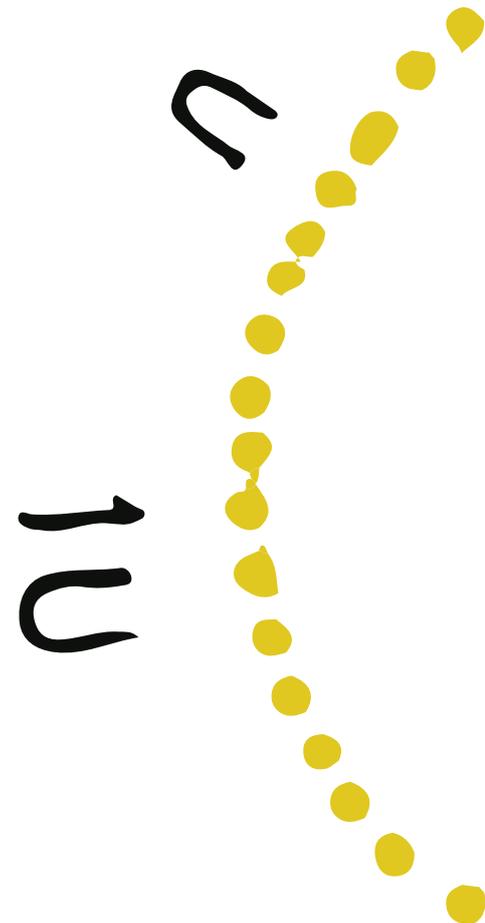
Therefore, it is only recommended that names are assigned to infrastructure that is considered to be major infrastructure. Anything that is considered to be minor infrastructure will not be eligible for a name. Examples of minor features are culverts, drains, walkways and footbridges.

## Preparing a name

Indigenous place names will be preferred as the name to be used for any feature that does not already have a name assigned to that feature. Through this process, it is acknowledged that there are places in Australia that were named by Indigenous people long before the arrival of European settlers.

By implementing Indigenous place names, it creates recognition and awareness of the cultural and historical context that Indigenous people have to certain places throughout South Australia. This process is also important in preserving Indigenous culture, language and connection to country.

During the process of deciding an Indigenous name, there are several principles that need to be met. These will be detailed in the following sections of this document.



## Consultation with the local Indigenous community

A naming request can come from a person, company, or organisation.

In the case of Indigenous place naming, use of names of Indigenous origin is only appropriate and acceptable following consultation with the relevant recognised Indigenous community group.

Therefore, in the initial stages of the Indigenous naming process, the first step is consultation with the local Indigenous community about the project and naming opportunities that are available from the project.

Engagement with the Indigenous community as early as possible is encouraged to ensure that the naming process will progress efficiently. This allows more time to assist in managing any potential risks that may present themselves (such as a name change by the community during the middle of the naming process). It is strongly suggested that the naming process is started as soon as possible in conjunction with the construction phase of the relevant infrastructure project.

## Assess the Native Title Values of the community

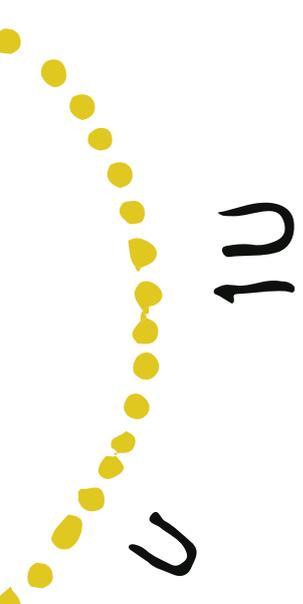
The recognition of Native Title has seen over 75 per cent of the state being applied for by Indigenous communities. Given this, it will be highly likely that a naming opportunity will be within an area that is subject to either a determined Native Title claim area, an application of Native Title or an Indigenous Land Usage Agreement (ILUA).

If there exists a determined Native Title claim over the proposed area being named, then the Recognised Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) must be the representatives that are consulted for the proposed naming opportunity in accordance with the *Native Title Act 1993*.

If no determination is within the area, it is most likely that there is either an application for Native Title (an active court process that is deciding whether Native Title is to be determined) or an ILUA over the area. In this case, the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) that has the ILUA or Native Title application claim over the area, must be consulted with the naming opportunity.

If there is no Native Title or ILUA in place, or if there exists an area with overlapping claims of an area where new major infrastructure is being built, it is recommended that there be a collaborative approach between surrounding groups that have heritage interests in the area. If this cannot be achieved, then it is recommended that an Indigenous place name is **not** assigned to the infrastructure.

When a naming opportunity exist on the border of two claim areas, consideration should be given to consulting with both Indigenous community groups.

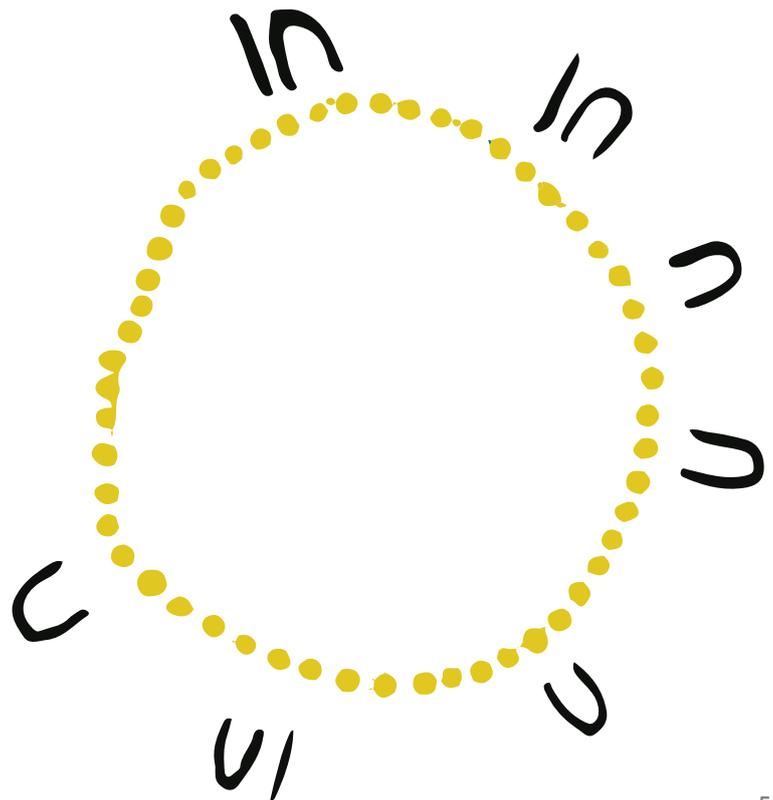


## Spelling and pronunciation of the name

Gaining knowledge of Native Title is essential in the naming process. One of the key principles is that any proposed Indigenous naming is to be representative of the vocabulary of the traditional owners/original inhabitants of the area of the infrastructure.

If a written system has existed for a number of years (eg Pitjantjatjara) any previously established name will be recorded in the form dictated by that established writing system. Note that the proposed Indigenous name must be representative of the vocabulary of the recognised traditional owners of the area, and the meaning of the selected word must be appropriate for the intended use.

English pronunciation of the name must be provided in the submission for naming so it can be correctly pronounced as close as possible to the original Indigenous pronunciation. This is important to ensure that the proposed Indigenous place name is not subject to mispronunciation by the wider community.



## Significant meaning behind the name

Another key principle in the naming process is determining the significant meaning the geographical location of the infrastructure has to the traditional owners. For any Indigenous name to be considered acceptable, the name must have significant meaning to the area in question. The Indigenous community must provide information that shows the culturally significant connection that they have to the land that the infrastructure is being built on.

An Indigenous name for a particular piece of infrastructure must be relevant to the location of the infrastructure project. Each name should have a clearly stated meaning and expanded historical back story citing reasons for the suitable use of the name.

The traditional owners will discuss the historical and cultural context of the area to determine suitable names and associated meaning and historical background of the names.

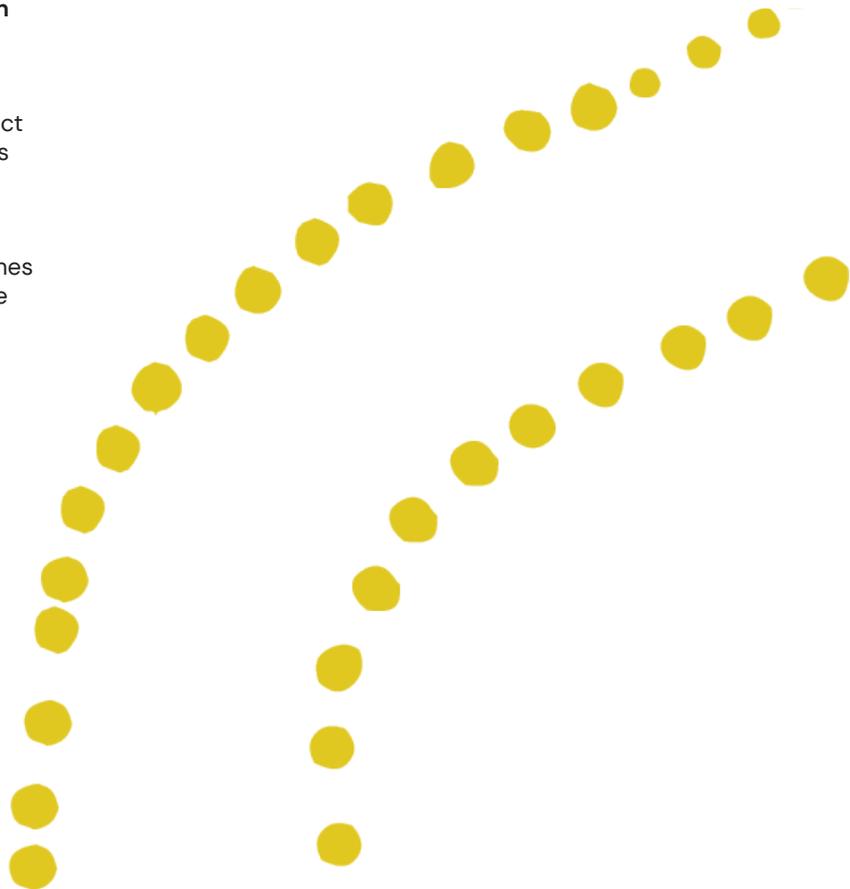
For example, the name may be based on flora or fauna that is significant to the area and the local community. Another option is proposing a name that is based on a significant event or story that is associated with the area of the infrastructure. The Indigenous name must have a connection to the site. **If a suitable name cannot be agreed upon, it is recommended not to proceed with the proposal.**

Education is a crucial factor for increasing community awareness of knowledge and correct pronunciation of names of historical Indigenous places. Indigenous naming of infrastructure provides an ongoing opportunity to remind and educate the community in the Indigenous history of the land. For this reason, generic names with no specific connection to place, should be avoided.

It is noted that some Indigenous languages are currently being rediscovered and that historical meaning behind words and phrases is not necessarily obtainable at the time of the naming proposal. This does not prevent the naming proposal from being administered. If additional information is discovered later, it can be added to the State Gazetteer as required (the State Gazetteer is a database of place names in South Australia).

It is also noted that some significant meaning relating to the area being named may not be culturally appropriate to be available for the general public, and should remain knowledge that is solely for the traditional owners. This will be taken into account by Indigenous groups when naming proposals are being assessed. In these instances, alternative names may be proposed by the Indigenous community.

The acknowledgment and celebration of prominent Indigenous community members is an important aspect of reconciliation and names of individuals may be considered for naming opportunities. It should be noted, however, that the use of individual's names in the naming of infrastructure and places should be applied posthumously. It is also generally accepted that only the surname of the person is used. For more information on this topic, please visit ICSM *Principles for Consistent Use of Place Names Section 4.6*



## Use of themed names

Where there is an infrastructure project that offers multiple naming opportunities, use of a themed naming approach should be considered for the project in its entirety.

If there are other already named similar type features within the area, keeping a consistent theme that is already established within that area is strongly recommended.

An example of an area with an Indigenous naming theme is the Northern Connector project, an expressway that uses the names from Karna language to name different overpasses and shared use pathways.

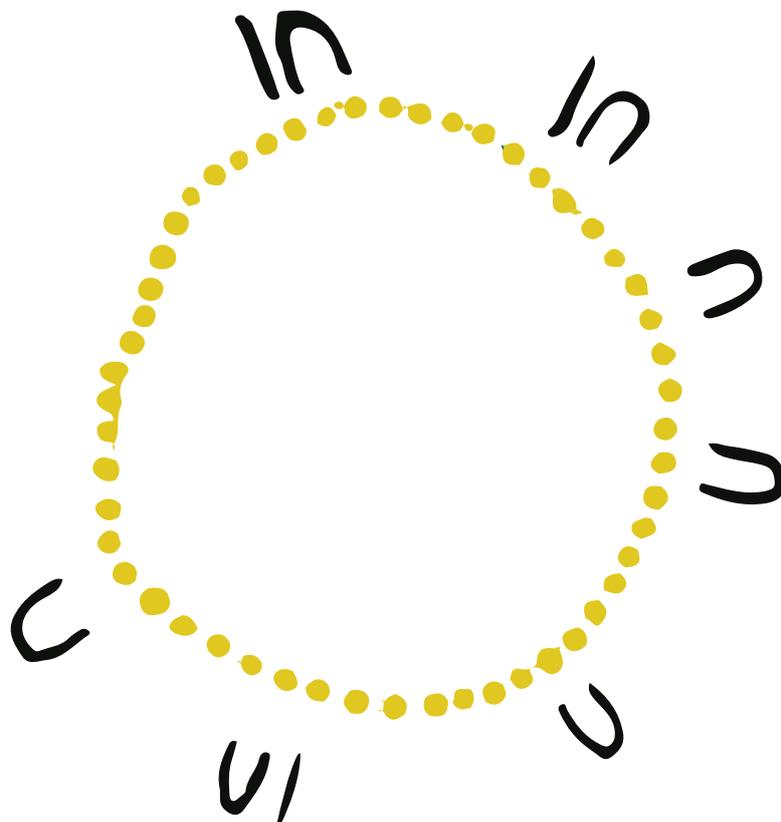
An example of an area with a non-Indigenous naming opportunity is the Gallipoli underpass that was developed on Anzac Highway, with the theme related to the Australian Defence Force.

## Confirmation letter of approval required

As all Indigenous naming proposals require the approval and support of the traditional owners of the land, it is important to obtain a letter of written approval from the local Indigenous community giving permission to use the proposed name. The letter should include the appropriate pronunciation and correct spelling of the name, as well as the direct translation and phrasing of the proposed name.

If multiple names are proposed, it is suggested that those names are listed in order of priority.

This is the first step in the approval process in applying for an Indigenous place name, dual name or co-name. Please refer to the 'Approval Process for Indigenous Naming Proposals' document for the full approval process.



## Dual naming

Dual naming is another naming method that was introduced in South Australia in 1991 to provide a legislated method of reintroducing and retaining traditional Indigenous place names for natural features, many of which had been given Anglo-Saxon names during European settlement. This creates recognition and awareness of the cultural and historical context that Indigenous people have to certain places.

The concept of dual naming enables two or more distinct names to be applied to a single feature, effectively representing the names from different languages.

Indigenous dual naming is only applicable to natural geographical and topographical features. These features can include forests, hills, lakes, and rivers.

Dual naming of a natural feature using both established names encapsulate the histories and importance of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Examples of dual names:

- River Torrens / Karrawirra Parri
- Ngarutjaranya / Mount Woodroffe.

The recording and depiction of dual naming on official mapping products, reports, documents and signage must conform to the following:

- Both approved dual names are to be represented as Name space / space Name.
- Where English is the predominately used language, present as Non-Indigenous name / Indigenous name.
- Where Indigenous language is predominantly used, present as Indigenous name / Non-Indigenous name.
- Both names are to be presented in the same font, type, size and colour.

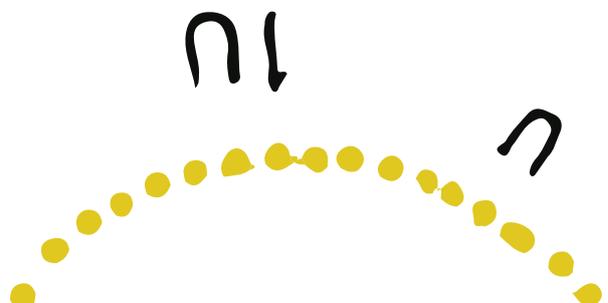
The same principles as described in the previous sections apply when determining dual naming scenarios.

Dual naming generally does not apply to features that already have an existing and established name associated with them. **Note that dual naming proposals for infrastructure is not appropriate.**

Unlike natural geographical and topographical features, Indigenous naming of infrastructure will only be supported in the form of a single Indigenous place name, not in a dual naming capacity.

Dual naming of modern infrastructure is considered inappropriate as there is no dual Indigenous/non-Indigenous history of the infrastructure, therefore it only requires one name.

The concept of dual naming cities and towns has recently gained momentum with unofficial dual names for cities being adopted; for example Adelaide being referred to as the traditional Kaurna name of Tarndanya. South Australia follows national policy at this time and does not officially apply dual names to cities and towns.



## Co-naming

Co-naming is another option for naming geographical and topographical features. Unlike dual naming, co-naming is limited to naming National and Conservation Parks in South Australia that are co-managed by the recognised Indigenous group of the area and state park management. Co-naming incorporates both Indigenous and English language to create a single name.

Examples of co-naming:

- Ikara – Flinders Ranges National Park
- Dhilba Guurnda – Innes National Park

The recording and depiction of dual naming on official mapping products, reports, documents and signage must conform to the following:

- Both approved co-names are to be represented as Name – Name
- Where English is the predominately used language, present as Non-Indigenous name – Indigenous name
- Where Indigenous language is predominantly used, present as Indigenous name – non-Indigenous name
- Both names are to be presented equally, using the same font, size and colour.

Like dual naming, co-naming does not apply to modern infrastructure.

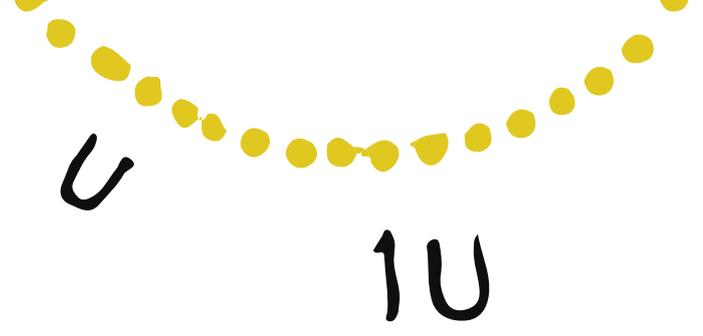
The same principles as described in the previous sections that apply to determining Indigenous place naming and dual naming, also apply to Indigenous co-naming.

## Reference documents

1. *Geographical Names Act 1991*
2. Geographical Names Board of NSW Policy
3. Naming Rules for Places in Victoria
4. ICSM – Principles for the Consistent Use of Place Names
5. Indigenous Place Names Forums Outcomes Reports
6. DIT Policy – Naming of State Maintained Roads, Bridges and Rail Infrastructure
7. Naming Features and Landmarks as part of the 'Buthera' Agreement
8. NT Place Naming Process for Registered Names
9. *Native Title Act 1993 (Cwth)*

### Document Approval

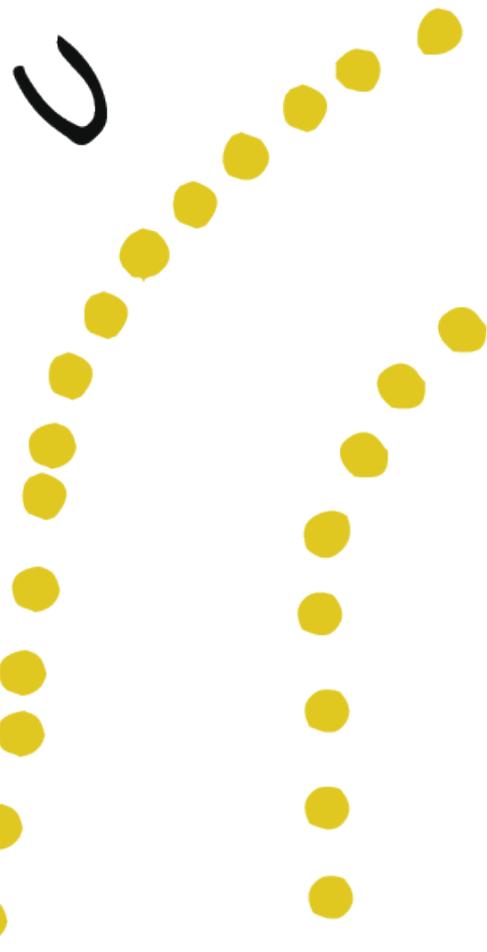
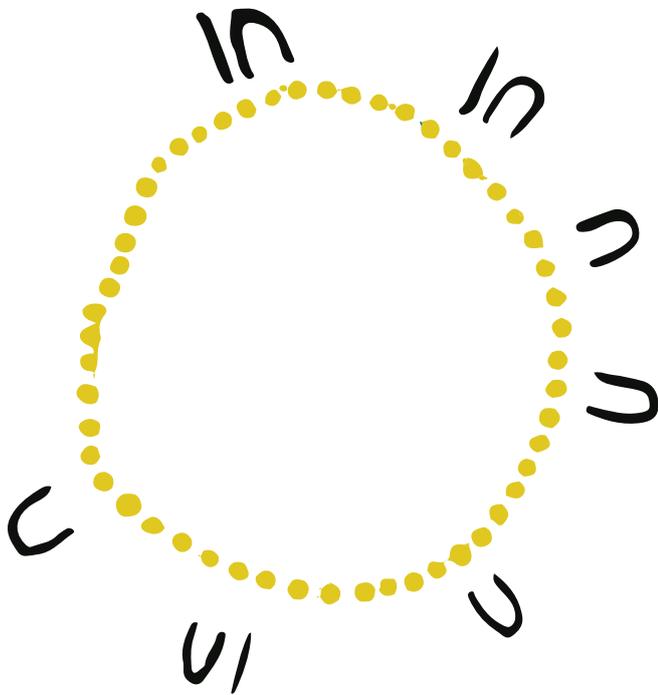
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