

# Indigenous place naming Information fact sheet

Office of the Surveyor-General  
Geographical Names Unit



## Indigenous place naming | information fact sheet

Place names connect people to a place and perform an essential role in our social and cultural environment.

The Geographical Names Unit of the Office of the Surveyor-General is the authority responsible for allocating names to places, buildings, and other infrastructure within South Australia under the *Geographical Names Act 1991*.

The Geographical Names Unit is committed to Indigenous place naming and the use of Indigenous names for geographical and other features within South Australia.

### What is Indigenous place naming?

- Indigenous place naming is the practice of naming a location, area, natural feature, building, or other infrastructure using traditional Indigenous language.
- Indigenous naming can be assigned by the use of a single name or by the practice of dual naming or co-naming.
- Dual naming enables an Indigenous name and a non-Indigenous name to both be applied to a single natural feature, effectively representing the names from the different languages, with both names existing independently. An example of dual naming is River Torrens / Karrawirra Parri.
- Co-naming combines both an Indigenous name and a non-Indigenous name to create a single name. An example of a co-name is Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park.

### What can be named?

- Any modern infrastructure that is considered a major state asset, with no recognised name already assigned to that feature can have an Indigenous name applied to it.
- Any infrastructure that is considered as minor (such as culverts, drains, walkways, footbridges, etc) should not be named.
- Dual naming can only be used for natural geographical and topographical features like forest, hills, lakes, rivers, etc. Built infrastructure cannot be dual named.
- Co-naming is exclusive to conservation and national parks in South Australia that are co-managed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous park management groups. Built infrastructure cannot be co-named.

## Why is it important?

- Indigenous naming of prominent locations or sites that are connected to Dreaming stories and other culturally significant purposes allow Indigenous communities to continue the close relationship between the people and the land through an oral and written Indigenous place naming system.
- Indigenous place naming recognises there are many natural features throughout South Australia that had been named by local Indigenous groups prior to European settlement.

## What can it achieve?

- Indigenous methods of naming assist communities to revitalise and preserve Indigenous language and culture. It provides a valuable method for increasing community awareness of the importance of history and place to local Indigenous groups.
- Indigenous naming opportunities assist with the national targets and goals of 'Closing the Gap' where Indigenous groups determine and drive desired outcomes alongside government.
- As Indigenous naming becomes prominent, it will assist with the normalisation of Indigenous language and culture, together with providing a greater sense of belonging and identity for all communities.

## Proposing an Indigenous place name

Naming a feature or place using an Indigenous name requires engagement with local Indigenous groups in the first instance.

Consultation with local groups ensures:

- a culturally appropriate name is chosen
- the word is derived from local language
- the story and meaning behind the name is captured
- the local Indigenous group give permission for the use of the name in the way it is proposed.

To propose an Indigenous place name, contact the Geographical Names Unit:

[DTI.PlaceNames@sa.gov.au](mailto:DTI.PlaceNames@sa.gov.au)

For detail relating to the selection of an Indigenous place name and the associated approval process, please refer to these publications:

- The Principles of Indigenous Naming.
- The Approval Process for Indigenous Naming Proposals
- Frequently Asked Questions for Indigenous Place Naming.

### Document Approval

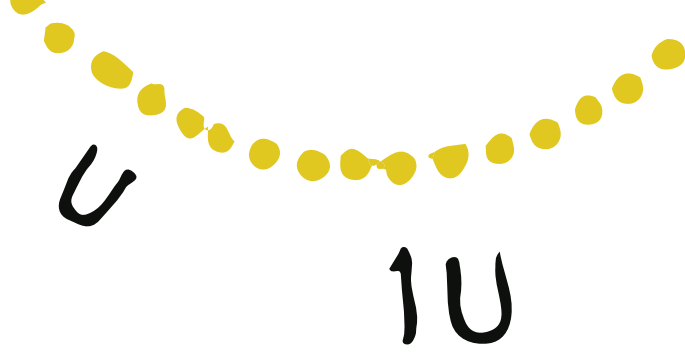
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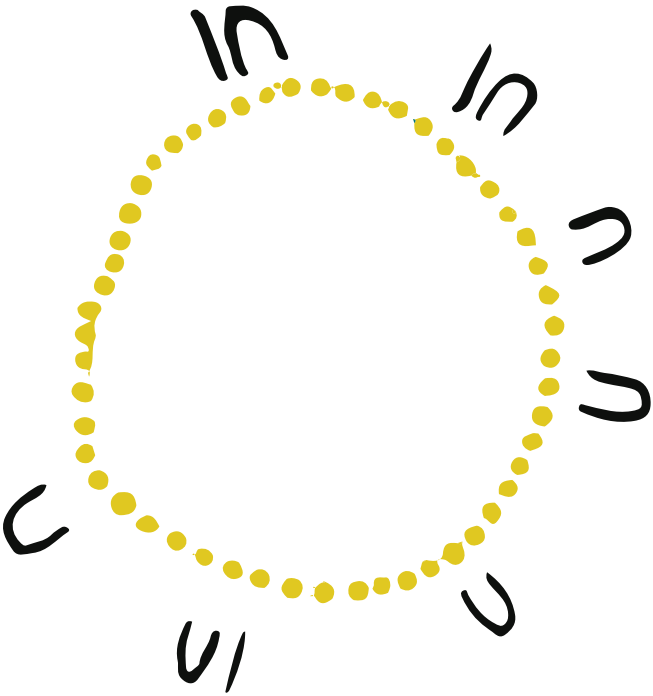
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