



# Place and Feature Naming Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Council in exercising its powers as a naming authority under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* (the Act) on the naming or renaming of roads, places, features and localities within Baw Baw Shire Council.

It provides for a coordinated and equitable approach when assessing and recommending naming proposals and ensures naming is consistent with community expectations and Council strategies and policies.

## Governance Principles

Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) specifies the overarching governance principles and supporting principles that Council must adhere to in the performance of its role and functions.

This policy gives effect to the following overarching governance principles outlined in Section 9(2) of the Act:

- Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

This report also takes into account the following supporting principles defined in Section 9(3) of the Act:

- The community engagement principles (Community Engagement Policy);
- The public transparency principles (Public Transparency Policy).

## Definitions

### The Act

*Geographic Place Names Act 1998*

### Naming Rules

The abbreviated name for *Naming rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022*.

### Principles

Principles within the Naming Rules to which naming proposals must comply. As of 2022, the Principles are:

Principle A – Ensuring public safety

Principle B – Recognising the public interest

Principle C – Linking the name to place

Principle D – Ensuring names are not duplicated

Principle E – Recognition and use of Traditional Owner languages

Principle F – Names must not discriminate or be offensive

Principle G – Gender equality

Principle H – Dual names

Principle I – Using commemorative names

Principle J – Using commercial and business names

Principle K – Language

Principle L – Directional names to be avoided

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

### Feature

A unique geographical place or attribute that is easily distinguished within the landscape, including a park, reserve, sportsground, pavilion, prominent structure or building.

### Locality

A geographical area that has identifiable community and/or landscape characteristics.

### GNV

Geographic Names Victoria.

### Place Names Advisory Committee

(The Committee) The Place Names Advisory Committee is made up of Independent Members and Councillors and provides advice to Council on all Formal Place Naming matters.

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## Road

A road is any public or private land-based thoroughfare or course navigable by vehicle or foot. It can be used for assigning addresses or allowing access between points or to a feature. Examples of roads include streets, lanes, fire tracks, bike paths and walking tracks.

## RAP

Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are organisations that represent the Traditional Owners and hold decision – making responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* for the protection, management, and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage in a specified geographical area.

## Immediate Community

Includes residents, ratepayers, businesses, and community groups within the immediate area directly affected by the proposal (including where addresses are directly affected).

## Extended Community

Includes residents, ratepayers, businesses, and community groups in areas surrounding the affected area.

## Scope

This policy applies to all requests to name or rename publicly owned roads, parks, features and localities in Baw Baw Shire for which Council is the naming authority.

Victorian Government authorities such as VicRoads, Parks Victoria, Department of Education and Department of Environment and Climate Change Action are the naming authorities for public features or roads that they own or maintain.

All Officers of Baw Baw Shire Council, members of the Place Names Advisory Committee and Councillors must adhere to this policy in exercising their duties.

## Legislative context

*Geographic Place Names Act 1998*

*Road Management Act 2004*

*Gender Equality Act 2020*

*Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

## Related policies and documents

Community Engagement Policy

Australian and New Zealand Standard Rural and Urban Addressing

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## Policy Principles

In addition to the Naming Rules, Council will consider and apply the Policy Principles in its decision-making process. These principles are supplementary and are intended to enhance and guide Council's decision making.

Baw Baw Shire encourages and supports names that act as a reminder of local history, culture, and citizens with an emphasis on the following themes.

### Traditional Owner Languages

As a means of recognising the heritage of Baw Baw Shire, Council will encourage the use of Traditional Owner languages, subject to the involvement and agreement of the relevant Traditional Owner groups(s). This aligns with Naming Rule Principle E, Recognition and use of Traditional Owner languages.

### Gender Equality

Where a feature, road or public open space is to be named after an eligible individual, Council aims to achieve gender equity through naming, or renaming where appropriate, at least 70 per cent of new features, localities, or public open spaces after significant women, with consideration given to intersectionality, until such time that there is a balanced gender representation in named features. This aligns with Naming Rule Principle G, Gender equality, and aims to address the current documented inequity in place naming.

### Linking Name to Place

Names that are not a Traditional Owner language or a commemorative name after an eligible individual should have a strong connection to Baw Baw Shire, acknowledging local flora and fauna, groups or service organisations, social and historical events that have shaped Baw Baw's character and have relevance to the site's geographical location. This aligns with Naming Rule Principle C, Linking the name to place.

## Policy detail

### 1. Formal Naming Requests

- a. All naming proposals or name changes, except for new subdivisions, must be made in writing to the Baw Baw Shire Council Place Names Advisory Committee. All proposals must provide background detail, the reason for the proposal, evidence of support from members of the community, and contact details.

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- b. The Place Names Advisory Committee will assess all naming requests against the Principles of the Naming Rules.
- c. The Place Names Advisory Committee will consider the themes of the Place and Feature Naming Policy in assessing naming requests.
- d. The Place Names Advisory Committee will refer all significant naming requests, for example prominent infrastructure, public features, parks, and active space, to Council for deliberation.
- e. Minor naming requests, for example the formalisation of names already in use within the community, may proceed under Officer delegation.
- f. Consultation will be undertaken as required by the Naming Rules with the immediate community and/or extended community depending on the naming proposal.
- g. All community feedback will be considered prior to final endorsement of the name.
- h. Officers will submit all new or amended names to Geographic Names Victoria for inclusion in the Register of Geographic Names (VICNAMES) for official mapping purposes.
- i. The names of existing places will only be changed in exceptional circumstances, for example where duplicate names cause confusion in locating a place, or if community sentiment has changed to the point that the name is no longer aligned with community values and expectations.
- j. If proposing to commemoratively name a road, feature, or locality after a person, then Council will only proceed with written consent from the person's family members.

## **2. Informal Naming Requests**

- a. Minor features on Council owned land may be informally named – for example, the internal rooms of a Kindergarten or Pavilion.
- b. Informal Naming Requests will be determined by the third-party occupier in consultation Council Officers.
- c. Informal Naming proposals will not be subject to wider consultation.
- d. Informal Naming Requests will not be presented to Council.
- e. Informal Naming Requests will not be submitted to GNV.
- f. Once approved, the design, manufacture, and installation of signage may be coordinated by Baw Baw Shire Council, and costs borne by the applicant.

## **3. Roads in new subdivisions**

- a. Developers must ensure submitted names are compliant with the Naming Rules.

- b. Developers are welcome, but not required, to submit road names to the Baw Baw Shire Council Place Names Advisory Committee for consideration.
- c. Developers may select road names from the Council Approved Names Register for their subdivision or otherwise seek advice from Council Officers.
- d. Approval of new road names on plans of subdivision will be considered and approved as part of the planning process.
- e. Consultation is not required for naming proposals within new subdivisions where there are currently no residents, businesses or ratepayers who would be directly affected.
- f. Commemorative names to be used as new road names on plans of subdivision must be endorsed by the Place Names Advisory Committee and have written consent from the person's family members.

#### **4. Delegation of Authority**

- a. Section 9 of the Naming Rules allows for naming to occur by delegation.
- b. Council reserves the right to name significant features and places.
- c. The naming of minor features may be delegated to the Director Governance and Information Services, Manager Governance and Coordinator Governance.
- d. In addition, the Coordinator Statutory Planning, Manager Planning and Director Governance and Information Services have delegated authority to name a road or change the name of a road under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

#### **5. General Principles**

- a. Council will not support or promote the process of a competition for the purposes of naming of any road, feature, or locality within the municipality.
- b. However, Council may seek community input to suggest names for a significant feature, place or building. These names will be subject to the same process as a Formal Naming Request and be referred to the Place Names Advisory Committee.
- c. This policy will operate independently of Council's Memorial Policy.
- d. Council may determine that it is appropriate that in addition to a formal open space name sign that accompanying interpretive signage may also be mounted to offer an explanation as to why the name was adopted, and information about its origins. The signage may also commemorate a formal civic opening of the site.
- e. Consultation must be undertaken in line with the Naming Rules. Where Council must make a change to a road type or street numbers to maintain compliance with the Naming Rules, (but not the name) Council may notify rather than consult.

- i. In this instance, letters and/or emails must be sent to the ratepayers of the properties and, if the ratepayers are not the occupiers, letters or emails must also be sent to the residents and/or business occupants.
- ii. Residents and/or business occupants may be eligible for compensation in the event that Council must make a change to a road type or street numbers.

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