Place Naming Policy

Document Information

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Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) Statement

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) has been undertaken when developing this policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Authority	Any government department, statutory authority, public authority, utility provider, emergency service, Registered Aboriginal Party, or other organisation with responsibilities or interests relevant to place naming.
Commemorative Naming	The naming after a person, group, event or cultural heritage element to recognise a significant and enduring contribution to the community, history or identity of Bass Coast Shire.
Council	Bass Coast Shire Council including its elected Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and delegated Officers.
Council Land	Land owned by Council, or land under the care, control or management of Council, including Crown land managed by Council.
Gender Equity	The process of being fair and inclusive in the distribution of opportunities, recognition, resources and representation regardless of gender, including the active promotion of women's representation in commemorative place naming.

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Naming Authority	The organisation or public body authorised under the Geographic Place Names Act 1998 to name roads, features or localities. For the purposes of this policy, Council is the Naming Authority for relevant places within the municipality.
Naming Principles	The Naming Principles outlined in the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities - 2022 (as amended).
Naming Proposal	A formal submission seeking the naming or renaming of a road, feature or locality, submitted by Council, a developer, organisation, community member or other proponent.
Naming Rules	Naming rules for places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities - 2022 (as amended), issued under the *Geographic Place Names Act (Vic) 1998*.
Place Names	Official names assigned to places in accordance with the *Geographic Place Names Act (Vic) 1998* and the Naming rules for places in Victoria. Places include, but are not limited to - **Roads** include streets, lanes, courts, avenues and other thoroughfares. **Features** include parks, reserves, community facilities, infrastructure, landmarks, buildings, geographical and topographical features. **Localities** are officially defined geographic areas, townships or suburbs recorded in the Register of Geographic Names Victoria
Proponent	Any person, organisation, developer, authority or community group submitting or supporting a naming proposal.
Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP)	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation as the representative body recognised under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (Vic) 2006* as the primary guardian, keeper and knowledge holder of Aboriginal cultural heritage for the Bass Coast region. The RAP is the exclusive authority to provide consent to Council and Geographic Names Victoria for Traditional Owner Language naming.
Traditional Owner	The Aboriginal people or Aboriginal corporation recognised as having traditional connections to and cultural authority for Country within Bass Coast Shire.
Traditional Owner Language	The language or languages of the Traditional Owners of the land within Bass Coast Shire, including words, names and meanings used in accordance with cultural protocols and consultation requirements.

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Purpose

This Policy is intended to provide clear and consistent guidance for place naming within Bass Coast Shire and establishes a clear framework for Council, stakeholders, developers, proponents, and community members involved in naming proposals.

It ensures place naming is undertaken in a consistent, transparent, and legislatively compliant manner in alignment with the Naming Rules, and promotes public safety, recognition of Traditional Owner languages, gender equity, and cultural diversity in naming decisions.

Scope

This policy applies to the naming and renaming of roads, features, and localities within the Bass Coast Shire for which Council is the responsible naming authority and where the Naming Rules apply. This policy supports and enables naming proposals initiated by Council, the community, developers, or other proponents.

The policy covers but is not limited to:

- Roads (including streets, lanes, courts, and thoroughfares).
- Parks, reserves, and open space areas.
- Community facilities and infrastructure (e.g. buildings, sporting facilities, and public amenities).
- Geographic features.
- All features listed in the Naming Rules.
- Localities.

The policy ensures that all naming proposals are:

- Consistent with the relevant Victorian State guidelines and legislation governing place naming.
- Assessed in a transparent, equitable, and culturally respectful manner.
- Reflective of local history, geography, and community values, including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- Reviewed for gender equity.

This policy does not apply to:

- Naming governed exclusively by other authorities where Council is not the naming authority or has no formal role.
- Informal names for internal rooms, facilities, and structures on Council land or Council managed land. In these cases, the principles in this policy are provided as guidance only and may be adapted as needed.

- Assets such as war memorials, cenotaphs, commemorative or memorial dedications (i.e. seats, plaques, trees etc.).
- Naming of privately owned assets not required to be named.

Objectives

Appropriate, clear and consistent naming supports public safety, emergency response, and navigation. It assists with communication, mapping, planning, property identification and the efficient delivery of goods and services across the municipality.

Naming plays a vital role in shaping community identity by reflecting and preserving the municipality's cultural heritage, historical context, and environmental significance. It recognises local distinctiveness, honours Traditional Owner language, and supports gender equity. This Policy guides Council in fulfilling these responsibilities, ensuring that all naming decisions are transparent, accountable, and reflect Council and community expectations.

Council's authority is derived from the *Local Government Act (Vic) 2020*, *Local Government Act (Vic) 1989* and the *Road Management Act (Vic) 2004*, with all naming required to comply with the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria made under the *Geographic Place Names Act (Vic) 1998*. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Naming Rules.

Statement

Council is committed to applying consistent, transparent and equitable processes in the naming of roads, features and localities across the municipality. Council will comply with the Naming Rules and other relevant legislation, and will ensure that naming decisions reflect community values, cultural heritage, gender equity, and public safety considerations.

In addition to the Naming Principles outlined in the Naming Rules, Council will uphold the following objectives in the application of this policy.

Ensuring Public Safety and Clarity

Council will ensure that all place names support public safety and do not create confusion for emergency services, transport, postal delivery or the broader community. Names must be clear, easily pronounced, unambiguous, and must not duplicate or closely resemble existing names within the municipality or surrounding areas.

All naming proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the Naming Rules for duplication and similarity requirements prior to progressing to consultation or approval. Priority will be given to naming that poses risk to public safety.

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Recognising the Public Interest

Council will prioritise naming outcomes that deliver long-term community benefit over private, commercial or short-term interests. In considering naming or renaming proposals, Council will assess the broader social, cultural, economic and operational impacts on residents, businesses and service providers. Council may decline proposals where the benefits do not outweigh the impacts or where there is insufficient community support.

Strengthening Connection to Place and Local Identity

Council will seek to ensure that place names reflect the geographical, environmental, cultural or historical characteristics of Bass Coast. Preference will be given to names that demonstrate a clear and meaningful connection to the local area, including existing locally recognised or historically significant names. Council may consult local historical societies, community groups and relevant stakeholders to support informed and appropriate naming outcomes.

Recognition and Use of Traditional Owner Languages

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and recognises their ongoing cultural connection to Country. The use of Traditional Owner language is strongly encouraged in naming proposals.

Council will consult with the local Registered Aboriginal Party to ensure culturally appropriate use of language and to support self-determination. Dual naming may be considered for eligible geographic features in accordance with the Naming Rules.

Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Council is committed to promoting gender equity in place naming. Council will ensure that naming practices are inclusive and respectful of the diversity of the Bass Coast community. Names must not be discriminatory, offensive or inconsistent with community standards.

Council recognises the Victorian Government's commitment, through the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027, to increase the representation of women in place naming. In alignment with guidance from Geographic Names Victoria, Council supports the objective that 70 percent of new commemorative place names honour women over the life of the Strategy. Council will incorporate this target into its naming considerations and continue working with relevant stakeholders to promote more inclusive and representative place naming outcomes.

Commemorative Naming

Commemorative naming recognises individuals, groups or events that have made a significant and enduring contribution to the Bass Coast community. Proposals must demonstrate a strong and relevant connection between the subject of commemoration and the place being named.

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Bass Coast Shire Council may apply commemorative names to recognise people, events, or cultural heritage, including Traditional Owners, where there is a strong and demonstrated connection to the local area. In accordance with the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria, individuals commemorated must be highly regarded by the community, with consideration given to their achievements, history, and association with the municipality. Commemorative naming will generally only occur for deceased persons and no less than two years after death, with Council making reasonable efforts to consult and obtain consent from family members. Proposals must be supported by appropriate evidence, including a documented biography, and names will be applied in a clear and practical manner to support effective community use and emergency response services.

Where a naming proposal is submitted, approved and there is no current suitable application, Council will retain the proposal in a Name Bank for consideration in future naming opportunities. The Name Bank is not a public document. However, Council may share its contents with naming authorities, developers, or other external stakeholders at its discretion. Inclusion within the Name Bank does not guarantee the naming proposal will be used.

Council will ensure that commemorative naming aligns with broader Council policies, including any Public Memorials Policy.

Compliance with Naming Rules and Legislative Requirements

Council, as a Naming Authority, will comply with the *Geographic Place Names Act (Vic) 1998* and the Naming Rules. All naming proposals will be assessed against the Naming Principles, including requirements relating to duplication, language, directionals, and appropriateness. Council will liaise with Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) and seek 'in-principle' support where required.

Community Engagement and Consultation

Council will undertake community consultation in accordance with the Naming Rules and Council's Community Engagement Policy. Consultation will include affected property owners, residents, businesses, Traditional Owners, emergency services, and other relevant stakeholders.

Public exhibition periods will be no less than 30 days unless otherwise specified under the Naming Rules. Council will consider all feedback received prior to making a final decision.

Transparent and Consistent Decision-Making

Council will ensure that all naming proposals are assessed in a consistent, fair and transparent manner. All proposals must be submitted in writing and include sufficient supporting information, including rationale and evidence of community support where relevant.

Council may refuse to progress proposals that are incomplete, non-compliant, or lacking merit. Final decisions on naming proposals will be made by Council resolution or under delegated authority, in accordance with legislative requirements.

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Subdivisions and Development Naming

Developers are responsible for proposing compliant road and place names for new subdivisions in accordance with the Naming Rules. Council will work collaboratively with developers to achieve appropriate naming outcomes that reflect local context and policy objectives. Approval of subdivision road names will form part of the planning and subdivision process. Community consultation may not be required where there are no existing affected landowners or stakeholders.

Locality Naming and Boundary Changes

Council will generally not support the creation of new localities or changes to existing locality boundaries unless there is a demonstrated and compelling need. Proposals must include evidence of substantial community support from affected residents and stakeholders. Any changes require Council resolution and undertaken in accordance with the Naming Rules.

Related Legislation, Associated Information and Resources

Legislation

- Geographic Place Names Act (Vic) 1998.
- Local Government Act (Vic) 2020.
- Local Government Act (Vic) 1989.
- Road Management Act (Vic) 2004.
- Aboriginal Heritage Act (Vic) 2006.
- Subdivisions Act (Vic) 1988.
- Transfer of Land (Vic) 1958.
- Planning & Environment Act (Vic) 1987.

Resources

- Naming rules for places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities - 2022 (as amended).
- Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027.
- Rural and urban addressing standards AS/NZS 4819:2011.
- Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

Revision History

Date	Version	Revision Description	Administered

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