

Background

The Wodonga City Council has created the Place Names Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) to assist Council with its responsibilities under the *Geographical Place Names Act, 1998* (“the Act”).

The primary aim of the Act is to ensure:

- *that new or changed names are notified to the Registrar,*
- *that names are registered, and*
- *that all geographic names data, including street and road names and street addresses, are captured for mapping purposes.*

The Act focuses on standardisation of place names, and the registering of all names in current use to meet community needs.

The emphasis in this legislation is on the authorisation and collection of geographic place names in local usage, rather than the central determination and assignment of names.

Under this legislation the determination of place names will be undertaken by the responsible local governing or administering body. The Registrar will finally check for compliance with standardisation principles and consultation procedures, and register a new or altered place name in the official register.

The Act defines place as “any place or building that is, or is likely to be, of public or historical interest and includes, but is not restricted to –

- *township, area, park, garden, reserve of land, suburb and locality – topographical feature, including undersea feature; street, road, transport station, government school, hospital and government nursing home”.*

Objectives

The Committee is an advisory Committee to Council.

The primary objective of the Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for

- the investigation and determination of geographic place names;
- the notification of new or altered names to the Registrar for inclusion in the Register for official mapping data and other purposes.

Process

The Committee will follow the process detailed in the *Guidelines for Geographic Names, Principles, Policies & Procedures*, in order to undertake its functions.

General

The Committee is an advisory Committee of the Council and is responsible to that body.

The Committee does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions and does not have any delegated financial responsibility.

The Committee does not have any management functions and is therefore independent of management with staff control remaining under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

The Committee's role is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters relevant to its Charter in order to facilitate decision making by Council in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities.

Membership

The Committee will comprise a minimum of seven members:

- one Councillor (Chairperson),
- four external independent members,
- one Wodonga Historical Society member,
- Manager Statutory Planning,
- Technical Officer – Infrastructure,

The Committee will be supported by Council's GIS Co-ordinator, who will assist with the investigation of place names.

All members shall have full voting rights with the Chairperson having a casting vote as necessary.

Appointment of the four external persons shall be made by Council by way of a public advertisement and be for a term of three years. The terms of the appointment should be arranged to ensure an orderly rotation and continuity of membership despite changes to Council's elected representatives.

People wishing to serve as an external independent member may nominate for successive terms without restriction.

External independent persons will be expected to have local/regional knowledge and experience.

The evaluation of potential members will be undertaken by the Place Names Advisory Committee Councillor and Chief Executive Officer taking account of the experience of

candidates and their likely ability to apply appropriate analytical and strategic management skills, with recommendations for appointment put to Council.

If the Council proposes to remove a member of the Committee, it must give written notice to the member of its intention to do so and provide that member with the opportunity to be heard at a Council meeting, if that member so requests.

In addition, the Council may remove a member of the Committee if he/she fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without leave of the Committee by resolution duly passed.

Remuneration will be paid to each independent member of the Committee at a rate determined by Council. (Currently set at \$0).

A quorum shall be four members.

Members are expected to:

- contribute the time needed to study and understand the papers provided;
- apply good analytical skills, objectivity and good judgment; and
- express opinions frankly, ask questions that go to the fundamental core of the issue and pursue independent lines of enquiry.

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their responsibilities.

Other members of Council, Council staff or general public may be invited to attend at the discretion of the Committee to advise and provide information when required.

Council shall provide secretarial and administrative support to the Committee.

All independent members of the Committee shall sign a confidentiality agreement as shown in Appendix A.

If a member of the Committee has a conflict of interest in any matter that comes before the Committee, the member must disclose the nature of that interest at the meeting at which the matter is discussed. Members with a conflict of interest must abstain from the proceedings, including removing themselves from the meeting while the item is under discussion.

Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly.

A schedule of meetings will be developed and agreed to by the members. As an indicative guide, meetings would be arranged to coincide with relevant Council reporting deadlines.

Additional meetings shall be convened at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Reporting

The councillor representative on the Committee shall present a report to the next appropriate meeting of council if an item requires a resolution of council or if the councillor wishes to inform the council about matters under consideration by the Committee.

Assessment and Review

The Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the Mayor, will initiate a review of the performance of the committee at least once every three years.

The review will be conducted on a self-assessment basis (unless otherwise determined by Council) with appropriate input sought from Council, the Chief Executive Officer, the internal and external Committee members, management and any other relevant stakeholders, as determined by Council.

At least once every two years the Committee will review this charter with any substantive changes to the charter recommended by the Committee and formally submitted to Council for its consideration and approval.

Title:	Place Names Advisory Committee Charter
Reference No:	CC&LL09/00005
Business Unit:	Governance
Category:	Committee Charters & Local Laws
Version:	Two
Approved By:	Council at its meeting of December 13, 2010
Next Review:	December 13, 2012

**Appendix A
PLACE NAMES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Confidentiality Agreement**

THIS AGREEMENT is made the _____ day of _____ 2009

BETWEEN

AND

I herewith agree that I must not, whether during or after my membership of the Wodonga City Council Place Names Advisory Committee, unless expressly authorised by the Chief Executive Officer or in accordance with law, make any disclosure or use of:

- (i) any information or trade secrets of the Council;
- (ii) the position of the Council or of any Councillor or Council Officer on any confidential matter; or
- (iii) any other information whatsoever, the disclosure of which may be detrimental to the interest of the Council or of any other person who has provided it to the Council on a confidential basis, unless I am required to disclose the information by law. I must use my best endeavours to prevent the improper publication or disclosure or use of any such information by anyone else.

The termination or expiry of my membership of the Committee, for whatever reason, does not affect or derogate from my obligations of confidentiality set out above.

Signed by:

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PLACE NAMES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Signed for and on behalf of
Wodonga City Council:

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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