

Aligning Place Naming with Community Expectations: Developing the Australian Place Naming Principles

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SUMMARY

The Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM) Place Names Working Group (PNWG) has drafted the Australian Place Naming Principles and is seeking community input to refine this important document. The PNWG brings together place name authorities from Australia and New Zealand, striving to establish modern, inclusive, and consistent practices for place naming. This initiative aligns with the broader goals of advancing professional standards and practices in the geospatial data infrastructure sector, as discussed in the context of FIG Commission 1.

The principles, which will replace the Principles for the Consistent Use of Place Names, are designed to reflect evolving community expectations, particularly regarding cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Central to this update is the active involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, whose feedback is essential to ensure the principles respects and reflects their aspirations for place naming. This engagement fosters greater diversity and inclusion, not only within the spatial profession but also in the broader community.

In line with global trends in geospatial data and sustainability, the Australian Place Naming Principles incorporates principles set out by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. This ensures the principles adheres to international best practices while supporting Australian government authorities in updating and aligning local place naming policies and guidelines that enhance the effectiveness of public services and reflect the diverse values of communities.

These principles also support the development of unique and unambiguous addressing, essential for effective service delivery. By establishing clear and consistent road and locality naming practices,

they aim to improve the precision of geospatial data, ensure accurate service provision, and enhance emergency response and accessibility.

This talk will highlight the importance of collaborative engagement in the development of the Australian Place Naming Principles, focusing on the role of stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds. It will explore the challenges and opportunities in creating a principles document that balances traditional naming practices with modern expectations. Attendees will gain insights into the broader implications of the principles for improving spatial data infrastructure and its potential to foster stronger, more equitable connections between communities and their geographic identities.

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