

UNGEEN – Focus Group on Indigenous Names – Amplifying Indigenous Geographical names

UNGEEN 2025, New York

Rafe Benli, Australia





Acknowledgement of Country

Importance of place naming



Place naming is integral to identifying your location and underpins foundational spatial data



Place naming impacts on people's sense of identity, wellbeing and belonging

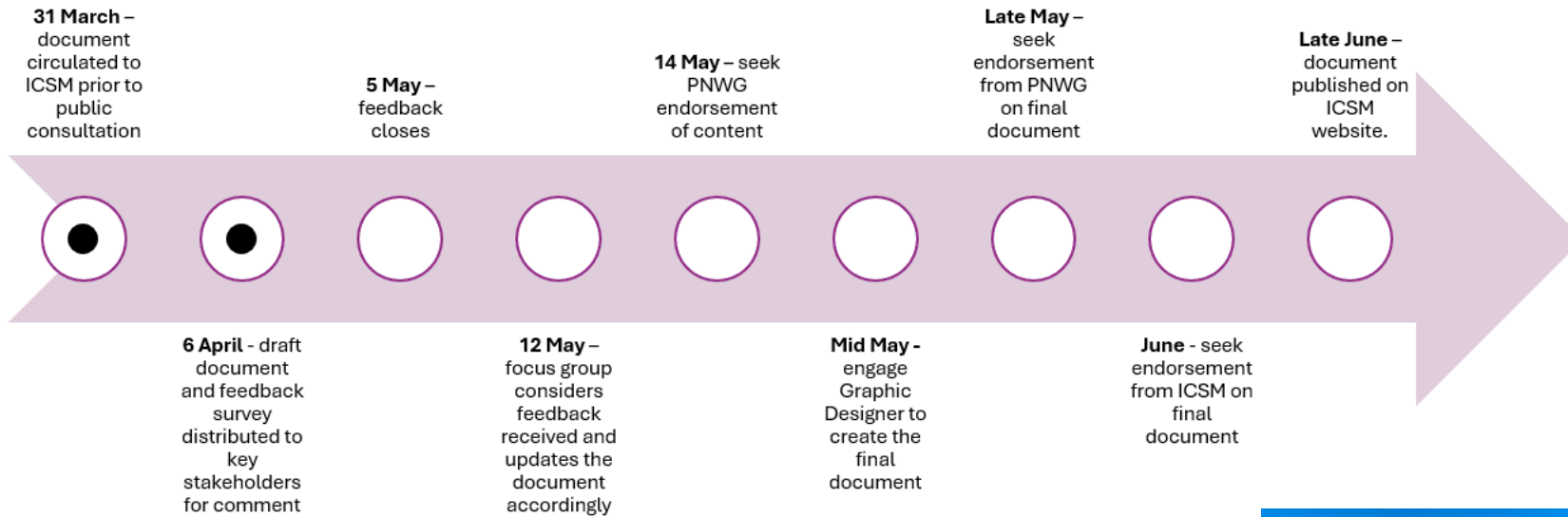


Place naming is a recognised way of preserving language and culture

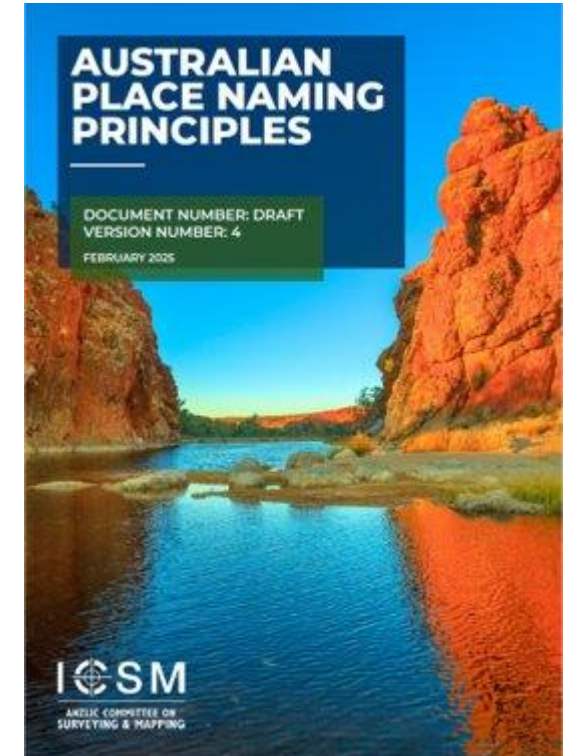
ICSM Place Names Working Group



Australian Place Naming Principles



Draft open for comment



3 key principles



Principle 1: Place naming across Australia is consistent

Principle 2: Place naming information is accurate and accessible

Principle 3: Place naming promotes connection, inclusivity and the rights of others

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Connection

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Place Names

Dual Names

Commemorative Names

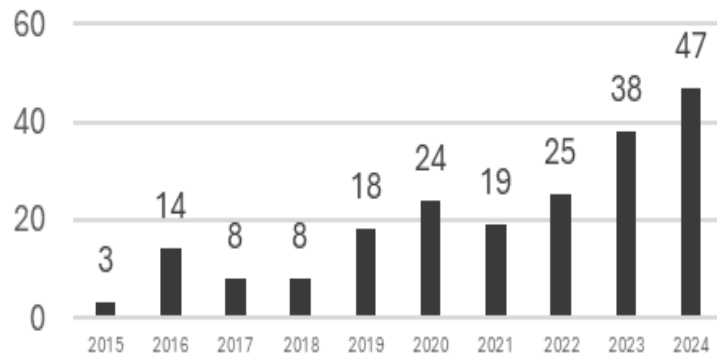
Unacceptable names

Consultation

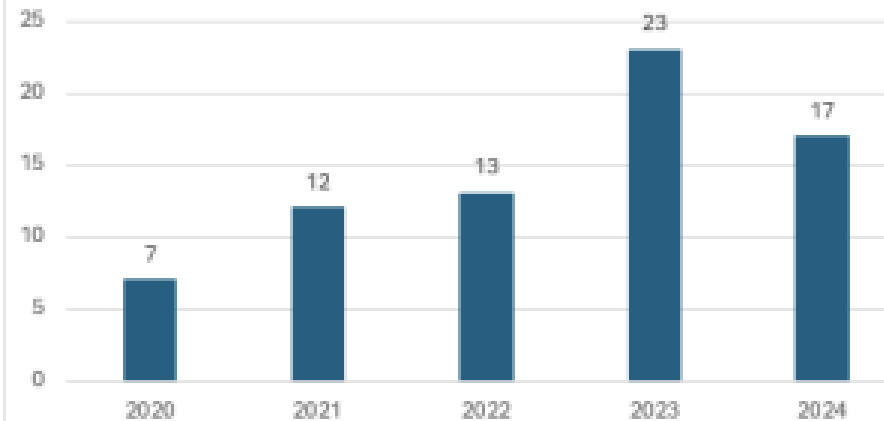


Trends in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia

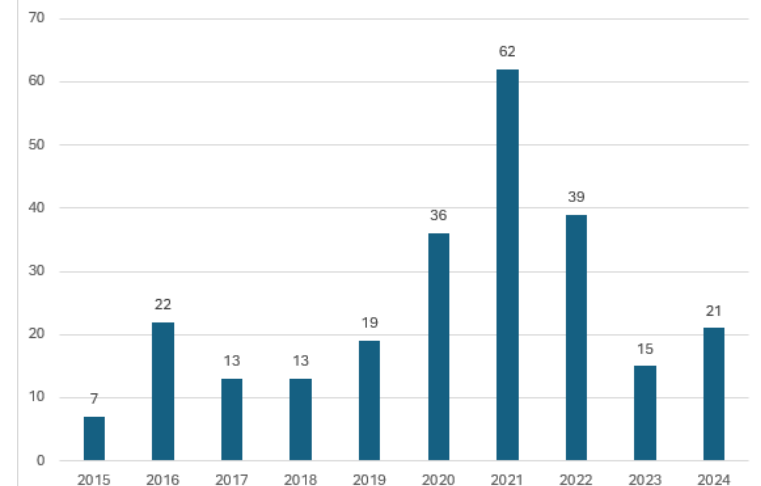
Number of Traditional Owner Language Features Registered (2015-present)



Aboriginal place names assigned in NSW (2020 - present)



Number of Traditional Owner Language Topographic Only Features Registered (2015-Present)





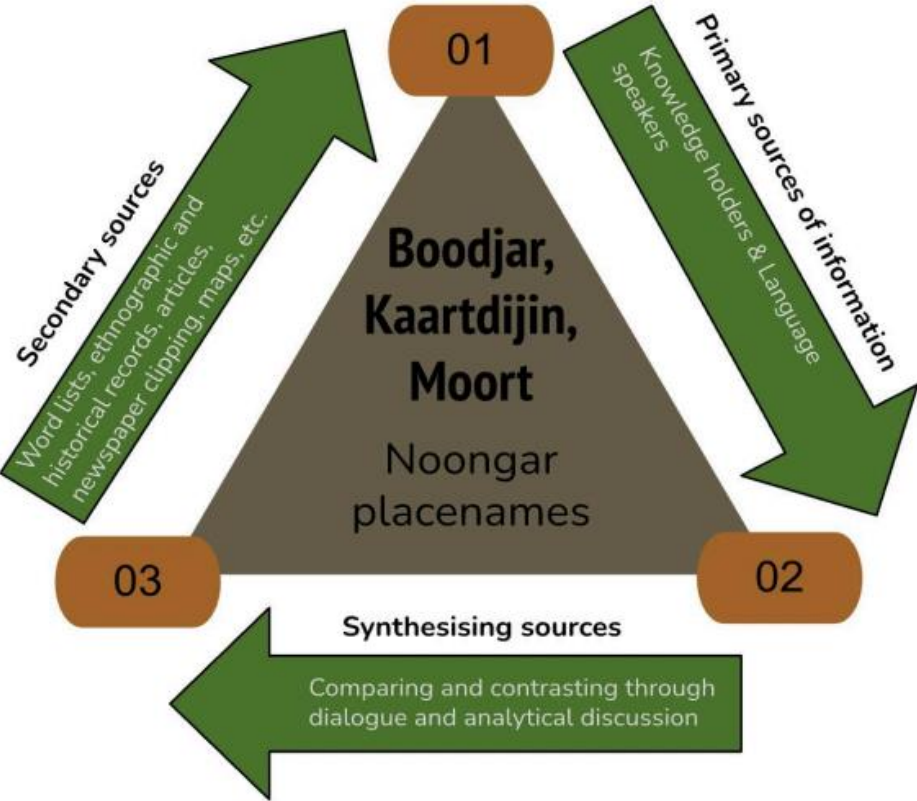
Language workshops



Language workshops



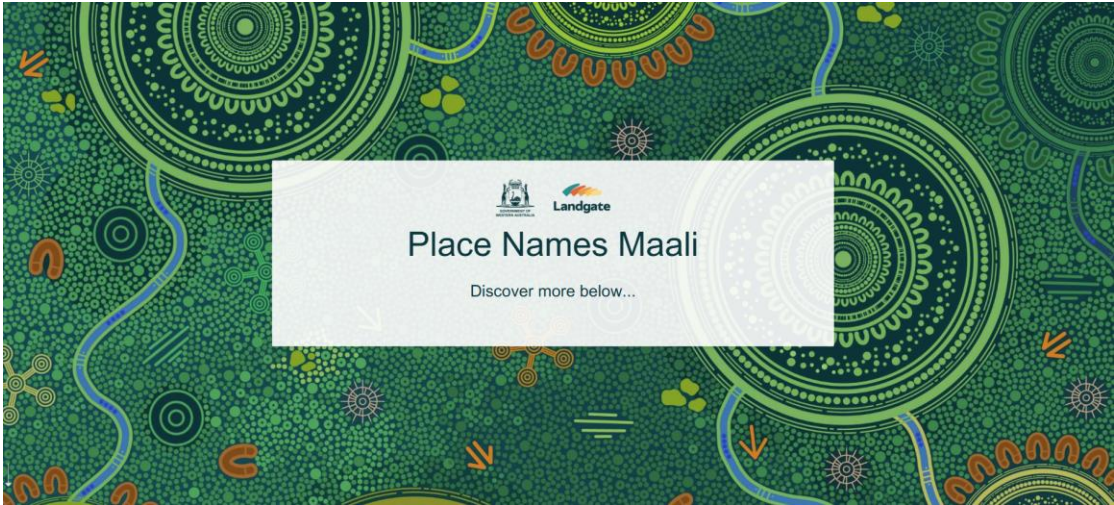
Place Names Maali



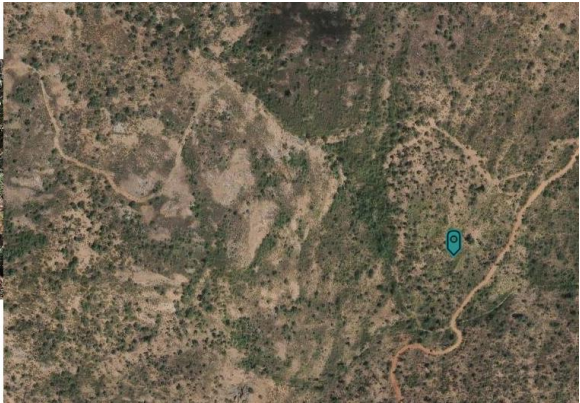
<https://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/siteassets/documents/location-data-and-services/place-names-and-addressing/final-report---place-names-maali.pdf>

Walyunga Pool	
Final approved translation	
Placename	Walyunga Pool
Background	<p>This name is based on the Noongar words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waldja - Mountain eagle• yung - to give / connected to• ga - belonging to <p>This name translates to "Belonging to the Mountain eagle"</p> <p>Walyunga is an important place of trade and exchange, located on the boundary of many groups of the area. At Walyunga we give to each other - food, materials, and we exchange family for partnerships or travel. This significant Walyunga area belongs to the Waldja - the Mountain eagle.</p> <p><i>A secondary translation was also submitted by the Maali miy group, noting that both were strong and relevant translations to the area, and so this name may require further critical review:</i></p> <p>This name is based on the Noongar words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waly - to cry• yunga - male grey kangaroo <p>The name translates to "Crying kangaroo".</p> <p>Walyunga may be where the male kangaroo cried for his female kangaroo, after she was chased by the dingo. This forms part of an important songline.</p>

A story map



Walyunga Pool
Feature type: Pool



2) This name is based on the Noongar words:

- Waly - To cry
- yunga - Male grey kangaroo

The name translates to "Crying kangaroo". Walyunga may be where the male kangaroo cried for his female kangaroo, after she was chased by the dingo. This forms part of an important songline.

00:01 / 00:01

Pronunciation

Source: Maali miy
Language: Noongar
Verified by Traditional Owners

For educational purposes only.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/70e3b313bc7445deb9531d96c3967490>

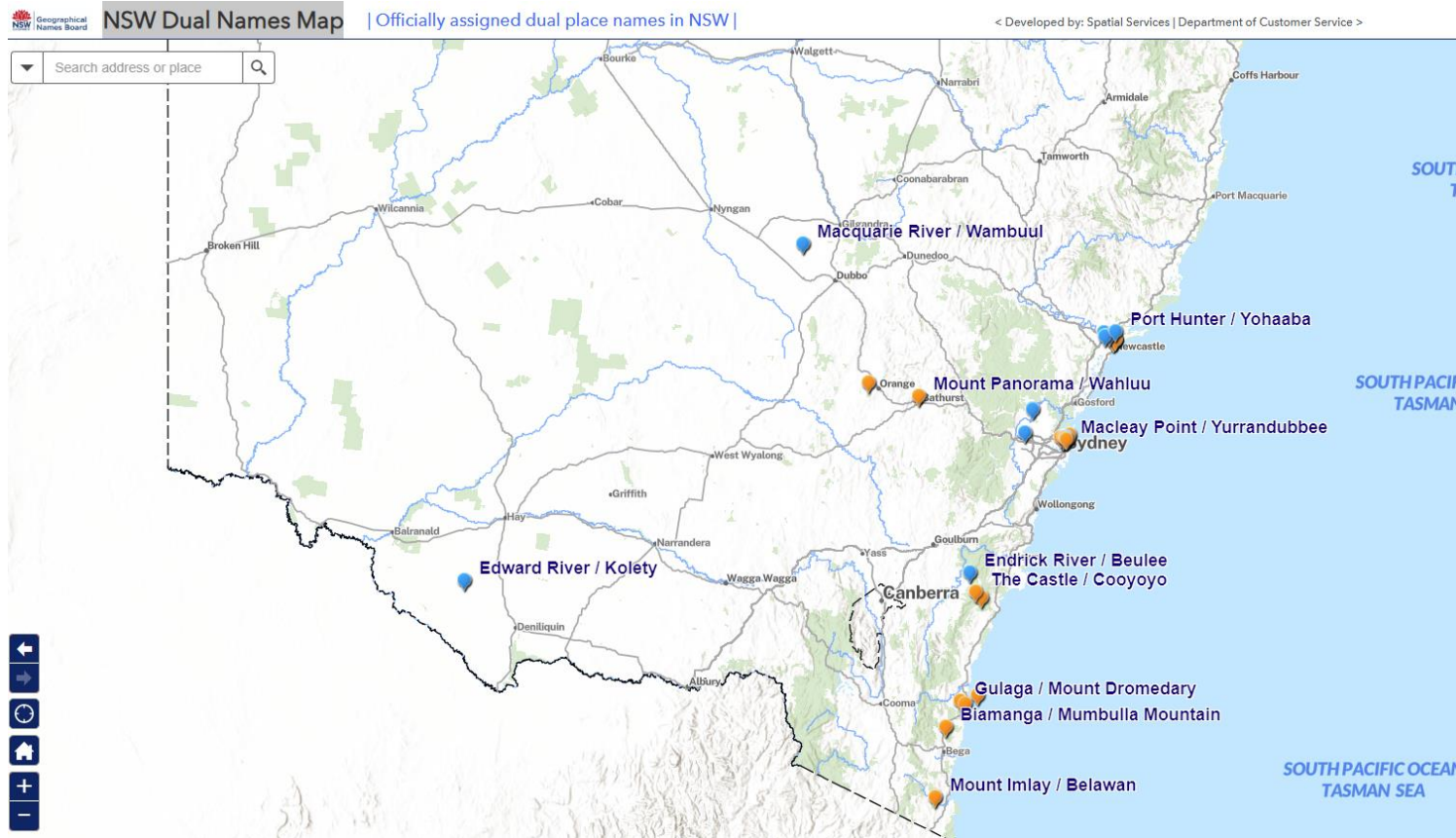
Reawakening language - Wambuul / Macquarie River



Wambuul / Macquarie River
is one of 47 dual names assigned in NSW



NSW Dual Names Map



(1 of 2)

Macquarie River / Wambuul

Geographical Name	Macquarie River
Dual Geographical Name	Wambuul
Designation	RIVER
Description	A watercourse rising at the junction of Campbells River and Fish River. It flows generally NW through the towns of Bathurst, Wellington, Dubbo and Warren for about 505 km into Barwon River at Yamby Lagoon.
Status	Official Assigned
Aboriginal	
Zoom to	

<https://portal.spatial.nsw.gov.au/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2633e8341ff94d1b928551ca3ddd7462>

Process to standardise names

Identify
the place

Locate
other
names

Verify the
name

Contact
the
naming
authority



Questions

