



# PLACE NAMES COMMITTEE

for the Northern Territory

## Request to Change a Place Name

Place names that have been officially registered under the *Place Names Act 1967* are intended to be enduring. The changing of registered place names is generally not preferred, unless there is a good reason such as to avoid ambiguity, duplication or remedy place names that are considered discriminatory, derogatory or hurtful by current day standards.

However, a person, group or organisation may raise concerns about a place name and request to have the name changed. Requests must relate to a specific place name. Large-scale general place name change requests will not be considered.

The Place Names Committee may recommend to the Minister to change a place name if it is considered in the best interests of the community or for safety reasons.

Reasons to change a place name, include:


- The name is discriminatory, derogatory or hurtful.
- The name commemorates a person who is no longer considered fit and proper for commemoration.
- The name does not meet the community's expectations for place naming by current day standards.
- The place is known by another name in the community.
- There are safety reasons to alter a name, for example, it duplicates or is similar to a neighbouring place and is causing confusion for emergency services.
- The name was used in error, is spelt incorrectly, has no connection to the place, etc.
- The place has changed and the name no longer reflects the place. For example, new construction has altered a road and the type is no longer appropriate and 'Example Court' is changed to 'Example Street'.

## How to Make a Request

Requests to change a place name must demonstrate a compelling reason to do so. If an alternative name is proposed, the alternative name must meet the current guidelines for Northern Territory place naming.

All requests to change a place name must be in the form of an official naming request and lodged through the Place Names online portal. Place name requests must include evidence of engagement with interested persons as required under the *Place Names Act 1967*.

Concern about a place name that is raised outside of an official naming request can be received by the Place Names unit and will be documented for the consideration of the Place Names Committee.



Requests to change a place name will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Place Names Committee will consider:

- the benefits of the proposal to the community as a whole;
- the impact (including costs) of a name change on any residents/owners, businesses or organisations using the current name as part of their address and their view of the proposed change;
- the potential flow on impact to other related place names, for example changing 'Old Creek' to 'New Creek' may require 'Old Creek Drive' to be changed to 'New Creek Drive';
- the impact to the community of continuing an existing name considered to be discriminatory, derogatory or hurtful;
- the potential for a name change to recognise past injustices to Aboriginal people and contribute to truth-telling, healing and reconciliation;
- the level of support from the general community, local government, land council, and/or native title representative body; and
- confusion caused to people using out of date maps carrying the original name.

The Place Names Committee will respond to naming requests in writing and provide reasons for the decision.

## If a place name is changed

Changing a place name does not erase it from history. The Place Names Register records historical information and any changes to place names and the reasons for doing so are retained in the register.

The Place Names unit can provide advice to those impacted by an address change about notifying organisations of the change of address.

Place names that are revoked because they are discriminatory, derogatory or hurtful or commemorated a person who is no longer considered fit and proper for commemoration will not be considered for use in a future naming opportunity.

## Do You Need Help?

All concerns with place names should in the first instance be raised with the Place Names unit for advice on how to proceed. Contact:

- by calling 8995 5334;
- by emailing [place.names@nt.gov.au](mailto:place.names@nt.gov.au); or
- by appointment, in person at Level 1, Energy House, 18 – 20 Cavanagh Street, Darwin City.

Approved: 15 September 2021