



KEYNOTE: William (Bill) Watt

Inclusion In Practical Terms

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Harmonising toponymic heritage: balancing standardisation and local diversity

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ABSTRACT: Inclusion In Practical Terms

We all recognise the importance of place names from a range of perspectives, for they are multi-functional in the scope of the usage, covering aspects of addressing, emergency service, tourism, and of course the relationship with culture and heritage.

Why then has it proven to be a somewhat difficult task to expand the concept of inclusion into general place names assignment and usage. Why is there a reliance on or holding to some traditional methodologies that are possible barriers to the establishment of progressive development that is wider in scope than the current practices.

I will be discussing from a practitioner perspective the issues associated with inclusion concepts, covering some of the potential barriers and solutions to putting into practice effective inclusion strategies. I will be drawing from examples of historical naming practices, and current policies, directions and practices from my own experiences in Australia and others I have been advised are used in other countries.

The concepts that impact on inclusion covers both cultural and gender-based issues and has a significant connection to historical processes and cultural self-determination principles.

As we consider how we can change, we need to be honest in relation to our current situation and established processes and policies to determine where change need to be made. It is recognised that there may be some situations where change cannot be made at a particular point in time, due to outside political or other influences. However, it is important to identify the potential changes and as situations change bring them into effect.

Heritage and culture are riches beyond price, and we have an opportunity to put into effect steps that can assist with the retention of certain aspects of heritage for the future generations. Mistakes or failure to take the current opportunities can lead to a future where some cultures may simply fade into obscurity, the choice and responsibility rests with us.



Biography

I was born in Paisley, Scotland in 1953, then lived in Southend, England from 1960 to 1964, following which my family, comprising parents and seven children, migrated to Adelaide, South Australia, where I lived since then apart from a 3 1/2 year period of studying in Melbourne at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology RMIT).

I commenced a career in as a cadet in Survey and Mapping area in the Department of Lands in South Australia in 1972, choosing to focus on Cartography, which led to the study at RMIT.

My work in mapping lead to my involvement in places names in South Australia, commencing in 1984, and I have stayed involved with this work in various capacities until I retired in 2022.

Place naming in Australia is a State / Territory responsibility, but there is a coordinating committee comprising representatives from all naming authorities and other related parties. My involvement with place names in South Australia resulted in my membership of this committee from 1986 to 2022, chairing the committee from 2010-2014 and 2016 to 2018.

This led to my association with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) from 2002 to 2019. I served as rapporteur from 2007 to 2012, convener of the Working Group on the Promotion of Indigenous, Minority and Regional Language Group (later renamed as Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage) from its creation in 2002 to 2012, and as chair of UNGEGN between 2012 and 2019.

I retired from work in 2022, but have retained my involvement with place names work by my membership with Place Names Australia and as a subject matter expert with the Surveyor General's Office.