

Australian Antarctic Names and Medals Committee Policy

Existing names

When ANARE established its first continental station at Mawson, the Australian Antarctic Territory had already been explored to some extent by British, French, American, German, Australian, Norwegian and Russian parties.

As a result, some features had already been named by more than one nation, and others had already been given non-Australian names which were already in common use e.g. Windmill Islands, Vincennes Bay, and other names appearing in the Hansen Atlas and in the records of the US Navy's Operation Highjump.

In general, the Australian position has been that the first name given to a feature would be accepted. This position prevails today, and where, for example, a Chinese name may have been given to a mountain it is unlikely that Australian names would be approved for lesser features on the same massif.

Where a foreign name exists, it will be preserved in a transliterated form to render it into English e.g. Soldat Island near Davis has not been translated into Soldier Island, and the Russian Charts show the Four Ladies Bank directly translated into Russian phonetics to sound like 'four ladies'.

Naming procedure

Anyone may propose a new name but the procedure for naming and criteria for names must be considered. **Proposals for new names may be made to the Australian Antarctic Names and Medals Committee (AANMC) by completing the Antarctic Name Proposal Form which should then be submitted to the Secretary of the AANMC (Email PlaceNames@antarctica.gov.au).** The Secretary will seek advice from the Australian Antarctic Data Centre about whether the feature has already been named. The Secretary will coordinate the research of the proposal e.g. if the proposed name is after a person, then the history of the person will be investigated. The Secretary will compile the findings of this research and distribute to the committee members for consideration in advance of the committee's annual meeting in March. If a new name is approved at the meeting, it is sent by the Secretary to the Minister responsible for Antarctic matters for ratification.

Unnamed geographical features should not be given names unless considered by the AANMC and approved by the Minister. Such features should be distinguished by describing their location in relation to adjacent well known features and referred to as such on maps and diagrams and in all reports.

Guidelines for proposing names

Guidelines for those proposing place names include:

- 1 criteria;
- 2 classification of features;
- 3 appropriate names;

4 descriptive and non-descriptive names;
5 personal names; and
6 features already named.

These guidelines should be read as governing the application of Antarctic place-names. In general, persons suggesting place-names should incline to descriptive names rather than personal names.

Questions regarding place name proposals should be sent to the Secretary of the AANMC. Email PlaceNames@antarctica.gov.au

Criteria

In general, names proposals are considered by AANMC having regard to the following criteria:

- Priority of discovery
- Consideration of circumstances of publication of any previous name(s) for the feature
Significance of the feature
- Position of the feature - both absolute, and relative to other features
- Suitability of the proposed name
- Appropriateness of the proposed name with particular regard to euphony and elegance (what it sounds like and what it looks like)

Classification of features

Features in Antarctica are, for the purposes of allocating place-names, grouped into three broad categories:

First order features

- Regions or "lands" e.g. Princess Elizabeth Land
- Coasts e.g. Ingrid Christensen Coast
- Seas
- Major Plateaux
- Extensive Mountain Ranges e.g. Prince Charles Mountains
- Major submarine deeps, ridges, plateaux
- Ice Shelves e.g. Shackleton Ice Shelf
- Large Glaciers e.g. Lambert Glacier

Because of the present state of geographical knowledge, it is unlikely that there are remaining features in this category.

Second order features

- Peninsulas e.g. Broad Peninsula
- Lesser Mountain Ranges e.g. Mawson Escarpment
- Prominent Individual Peaks e.g. Mt Henderson
- Lesser Glaciers e.g. Sørsdal Glacier

- Prominent Capes e.g. Cape Darnley
- Islands e.g. Anchorage Island
- Gulfs
- Large Bays or Bights e.g. Prydz Bay
- Straits or Passages
- Harbours e.g. Horseshoe Harbour
- Extensive submarine reefs, shoals, or shallows e.g. Petersen Bank
- Extensive sub-glacial mountains and valleys

Third order features

- Minor mountains and hills e.g. Tarbuck Crag
- Nunataks e.g. Haupt Nunataks
- Cliffs e.g. Blustery Cliffs
- Minor shore features e.g. Walkabout Rocks
- Points and minor Capes e.g. Zappert Point
- Minor Bays and Coves e.g. Newcombe Bay
- Anchorages
- Lesser ridges and valleys e.g. Trajer Ridge
- Parts of these features
- Submarine reefs, shoals, and shallows of small extent
- Camp sites and depots (not natural features and not necessarily permanent)

Appropriate Types of Names

In selecting possible non-personal place names, the first consideration should be what to avoid. Names of descriptive shape or colour such as Basalt Pinnacle, Gravel Bay (although this exists at Davis!) and Broad Valley should be avoided as these could be mistaken for general descriptions. (There are many examples of this on terrestrial Australia - e.g. several dozen Stony Creeks and Dry Creeks). Also, one should attempt to avoid names already in use, even prefixing these with such words as 'new' or 'little' e.g. 'Mawson East'. There is, for example, already a plethora of 'Law' (Law Dome, Law Base, Law Beach)

Similarly, avoid names of pets and commercial products, names with two generic terms (e.g. Crag Rock) and names in obvious bad taste.

With these reservations, the following suggestions could be considered:

- Names indicating the position of a feature e.g. Corner Peak
- Names of animals e.g. Elephant Island
- Names of birds e.g. Pintado Island
- Names of plants e.g. Lichen Lake
- Descriptive features e.g. North and South Portal, Deep Lake, the Lookout
- Geological names e.g. Marine Plain
- Names of fossils e.g. Laternula Lake
- Names descriptive of emotion at the time of discovery e.g. Cape Disappointment

- Names commemorating the date of discovery e.g. Candelemas Islands
- Australian names e.g. Commonwealth Bay
- Names of Biblical origin e.g. Mount Ahab
- Names indicating the type of scientific work conducted in the vicinity e.g. Theodolite Hill
- Names indicating local conditions to navigators e.g. Deception Island
- Mythological names e.g. Mount Cyclops, Cape Cerberus
- Names of Ships e.g. Discovery Inlet, Thala Valley
- Names arising from groups of ideas e.g. Scylla and Charybdis Glaciers

Descriptive and Non-Descriptive Names

Preference should be given to considering a descriptive rather than a personal name for a feature.

There is widespread agreement among the Treaty Nations that the use of names of living persons (other than persons of high standing in the international community) should not be used. Similarly, the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia, which is responsible for the co-ordination of place naming in Australia and New Zealand (other than the Australian Antarctic Territory and Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands), has taken the view that:

"If personal names are to be used for geographical features the person commemorated should have contributed significantly to the area or state where the feature is located; and where a personal name is used it should be applied only posthumously. Names of living persons are by their nature subject to partisan perception and change in community judgement and acceptance. The adoption of a personal name during the lifetime of a person concerned should only be made in exceptional circumstances."

Accordingly, the AANMC will normally only consider personal names for third order features and then only if a compelling case can be made for the name in question. The person whose name is being proposed must have made an outstanding contribution to the Australian Antarctic Program to be considered and the onus is on the nominator(s) to establish this claim.

Guidelines for Personal Names

First order features

- Persons who have made discoveries of outstanding significance in Antarctica or at HIMI, including leaders of field parties and captains of ships who have made such discoveries (it is unlikely that this category will ever be used now).

Second order features

- Persons who, through their work with Antarctic expeditions, have made outstanding contributions to scientific knowledge or to the techniques of Antarctic research
- Persons whose outstanding heroism, skill, leadership or efforts have made a singular contribution to the success of a major expedition
- Persons who have done outstanding work in the utilisation of data, e.g. identification of specimens, interpretation of the results of data collected as a result of Antarctic exploration

- The Directors or heads of learned societies and universities which have given significant support or made consistent contributions to Antarctic research and exploration

Third order features

- Persons who have assisted in the organisation or conduct of major Antarctic expeditions, or who have assisted in the analysis of information gathered in the course of such an expedition
- Ships captains or leaders of significant and major expeditions
- Persons whose contributions to knowledge in their respective fields have facilitated the discovery, recognition, identification, or recording of Antarctic phenomena
- Teachers or administrators in institutions of higher learning who have contributed to the training and professional development of Antarctic expeditioners and researchers
- Persons who have made significant contributions to the Australian Antarctic Program as expedition leaders or members, as ship's officers/crew, as aviation personnel or as administrators in Australia. (As a rough guide, such persons should meet the criteria for the award of the Australian Antarctic Medal modified for those whose roles are in institutions or positions outside the Antarctic).

It is clear from the above that there must be very convincing reasons for seeking to allocate the name of a living person to a feature in the Australian Antarctic Territory or the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands. It is acknowledged that this represents a 'tightening' of procedures from earlier years of Australian Antarctic endeavour, but it also reflects the current trends in approaches by Antarctic Treaty Nations and by the practice of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia.