

## THE BEACH WITHOUT A NAME

Lord Howe Island, about 600km north-east of Sydney, is a UNESCO World Heritage site, listed for the global significance of its natural beauty and heritage. The island was discovered by Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, commanding HMS Supply, on 17 February 1788. Ball was on the way to Norfolk Island, and at first sight thought that he had spotted two islands. These turned out to be the two mountains on Lord Howe, which next day he named Mount Gower and Mount Lidgbird.

All the major features on the island, like these two mountains, bear official names which commemorate the island's history or its geography. Except one. The largest visible feature on the island, a beach several kilometres long, has no official name.

The Register of the island's official placenames is held by the Geographical Names Board of NSW. About 60 of Lord Howe Island's features have official toponyms, some of them with a number of variants (former names, unofficial alternative names, and so on). In total, 182 toponyms are officially noted by the GNB—but not one of them refers to the 'beach with no name'.

The beach in question borders the Island's lagoon, and for that reason is commonly known as **Lagoon Beach**. This falls neatly under the Placename Survey's category of Associative naming—a feature gets its name from the presence of something else nearby. It had previously been known, at least to some, by the descriptive name of Two Mile Beach: the historian Harold Rabone referred to it by that name in 1940<sup>1</sup>.

There appears to be no good reason why the beach remains officially unnamed—it seems to be merely an oversight. Such omissions are understandable, since associative and descriptive names begin not as toponyms but as simple identifiers. The

lagoon beach, for example, is the beach that borders the lagoon as opposed to any other beach in the vicinity; it slips very easily and almost unnoticed into becoming **Lagoon Beach**. Common Australian toponyms such as One-Tree Hill and Far Paddock are generated in the same way.

**Lagoon Beach** is perhaps the most surprising missing placename from the official list, but it's not the only one, by any means. At last count, there were more than fifty places on the Island or on its shores which have not been officially named. Certainly these included such items as surf breaks (*Mexico, Harry's Reef*) and fishing spots (*Garth's Fishing Spot, Sunken Rock*) which one might expect to remain informal and unofficial. But, more surprisingly, geographic features such as hills (*Dawsons Peak*), ridges (*Backblocks, Dawsons Point Ridge*), localities (*Slippery Alley*) and points of land (*Robbins Point*) remain unofficially named.

Robbins Point exemplifies one of the most common of all naming procedures—commemorative naming. This feature, the northern bound of Lovers Bay at the southern end of the lagoon, is the site of farming

activities by John and Mary Robbins in the 1880s<sup>2</sup>. The adjacent locality Cobbys Corner (which is, in fact, officially recorded) is named after their son Frank 'Cobby' Robbins<sup>3</sup>.

Most of these toponyms, though unofficial, are quite well documented in printed sources. Some, however, are known almost exclusively from oral sources. Grey Face, a cliff face on the western side of Mt Lidgbird, appears as a toponym only in the *Lord Howe Island Annual Report*<sup>4</sup>. Its companion location on Lidgbird, Black Face, has to our knowledge not appeared in print at all.

In stark contrast to those features on the Island which have escaped the attentions of historians and naming authorities,

(Continued on Page 3)



Lord Howe looking south: Mt Gower on the right, with Mt Lidgbird on its immediate left.

Photo: Peter Maybury



## From the editor . . .

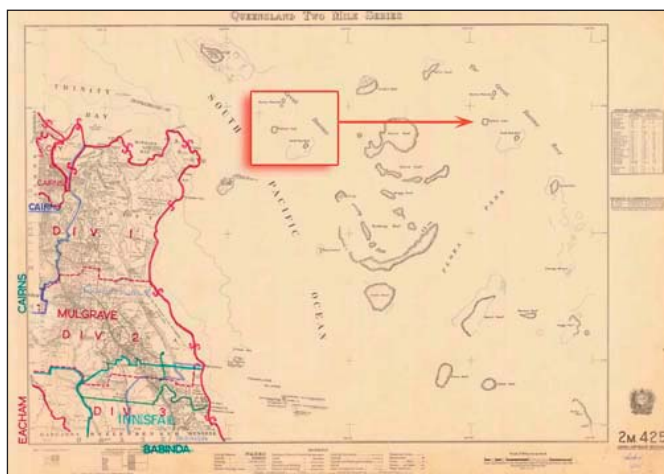
### “We Wish We Knew.....”

A couple of our readers have requested the origins of placenames and we haven't a clue - does anybody know anything? Any bit of information at all would be great.

The first one is called **Woop Woop** - a location in SA, near **Holder**. There are no current official records, but it may have been a homestead name, pre-World War 1.

The second one is called **Pellow Reef**, about 40km east of Cairns. Although recorded as an official name, there is no record of its origin. It is part of the Great Barrier Reef, a well known site for divers..... We have included a map that may help!

*If you can help in any way, please let us know!*



### WE STUFFED IT!

Or, rather, we didn't--for some of you! Were you one of our faithful readers who received an empty envelope for the previous issue? If so, a shamed apology from our amateur mail-out team. Please let us know, and we'll post a replacement copy to you. Or if you prefer, catch up by downloading the issue from our website. Go to <http://www.anps.org.au/news.html>, and click the September issue for an automatic download.

### In this issue

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| The Beach without a Name .....        | 1 |
| From the Editor .....                 | 2 |
| Simmonds Bay .....                    | 3 |
| Placenames Australia AGM.....         | 4 |
| Dyers Crossing .....                  | 5 |
| Out and About .....                   | 6 |
| Placenames puzzle no. 28 .....        | 7 |
| Christmas .....                       | 7 |
| Placenames Australia Membership ..... | 8 |

The committee of Placenames Australia would like to wish all its readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Committee would also like to thank its members for their continued support.





**PHA QLD**  
Professional  
Historians  
Association  
(Queensland)

**Q150 conference**  
*Journeys through  
Queensland history:*  
**landscape, place and  
society**  
**Brisbane 3-4 September 2009**

**Further enquiry**  
[helen.bennett@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:helen.bennett@epa.qld.gov.au)  
Judy Nissen on 0408 191 017

(Continued from Page 1)

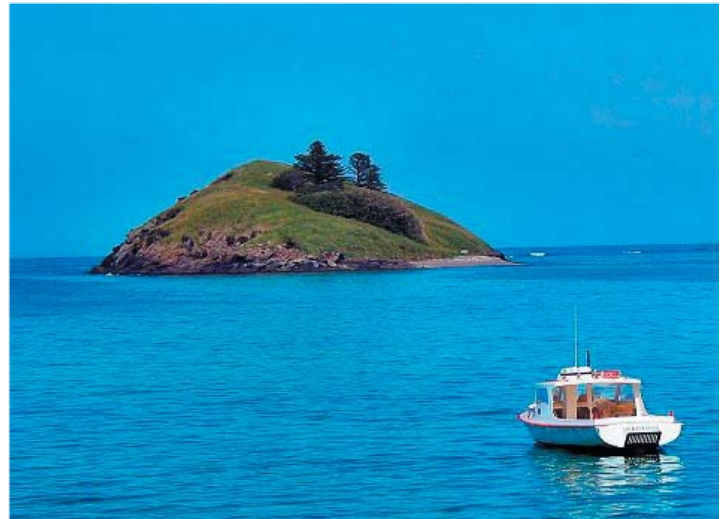
some locations have been more than amply bestowed with names. On Lieutenant Ball's return from Norfolk Island in March 1788, he named 'a small green island nearly in the middle of [the lagoon]' Blackburn Island, after the master of the *Supply*, David Blackburn. The name has appeared in various forms: Blackburn Isle (used by David Blackburn himself in correspondence), Blackburn Island, and Blackburn Isle. Strangely, the original name was lost for some years: it was changed first to Goat Island, then to Rabbit Island, and perhaps to Shark Island, before Blackburn was restored as its name in 1973<sup>5,6</sup>.

Current research on the Island's placenames has extended the number of named features from the Geographical Names Board's 60 (represented by 182 toponyms) to about 120 (represented by about 315 toponyms). No doubt there are more to be recorded—and perhaps more, like **Lagoon Beach**, which are candidates for official recognition by the Island's Board and by the NSW GNB.

□ David Blair

*The author is grateful to various residents of Lord Howe Island for their gracious response to his frequent queries; thanks in particular to Daphne Nichols, Garth Nichols, Gai Wilson and Ian Hutton.*

## The Beach without a Name



Blackburn Island.

Photo: Peter Maybury

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Rabone, Harold R. *Lord Howe Island. Its Discovery and Early Associations 1788 to 1888* Sydney, Australis Publications, [1940]. Reprinted 1972. p. 21.
- <sup>2</sup> Nichols, Daphne. *Lord Howe Island rising*. Brookvale NSW, BA Printing & Publishing, 2006. p. 63.
- <sup>3</sup> Nichols, op cit., pp 168-169.
- <sup>4</sup> *Lord Howe Island Annual Report*, 2006. p. 9.
- <sup>5</sup> Hutton, Ian. *The Australian Geographic book of Lord Howe Island*. Terrey Hills NSW, Australian Geographic, 1998. p. 112.
- <sup>6</sup> Rabone, op. cit., p. 22.

## Simmonds Bay

Kathy Duncombe of the Bruny Island Historical Society has submitted the following tale of the naming of **Simmonds Bay**.

"...**Simmonds' Bay** (a nook of **Barnes' Bay**, North Bruny), is called after a lime-burner, who sacrificed his life to a senseless feeling of contempt for the courage of the black men. This beautiful cove was a place of great resort of the Bruny tribe, and their intrusions, as Simmonds thought them, were resented by him, as though they, and not he, were the trespassers on the ground he occupied, and they were ordered off whenever they came. Mistaking his commands for requests, they were at first complied with. But finding them so frequently repeated, they got tired of them at last. On these occasions, it was his custom to take a stick with him to beat them off if necessary. The last notice that Simmonds gave them to quit was late in November of 1822; but they began to understand him by this time, and laughed in his face for his impertinence, whereon he struck the one nearest him. But this was the last act of his life, for the offended black turned on him like a tiger, drove his spear through him, and he was a dead man the next moment." From: "Wars, Extirpation, & Habits of the Native Tribes of Tasmania" J. E. Calder [1875]



**Barnes' Bay** North Bruny. Reproduced by permission, Kathy Duncombe of the Bruny Island Historical Society

# PLACENAMES AUSTRALIA

## Annual General Meeting

Saturday 11th October 2008, Rydges Hotel, Wollongong

A successful workshop, Gathering, Storing and Analysing Cultural Toponymic Data was held by ANPS following the annual meeting of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia at Rydges Hotel, Wollongong. The day started with David Blair presenting a Case Study: Lord Howe Island, followed by the ANPS Database update. Laura Kostanski gave an overview and update on the Vicnames Database.

The afternoon session started with David Nash who discussed the Element/Feature Type *cowal*, and to round the workshop off, Jan Tent and David Blair talked about Developing a Typology of Australia's introduced Placenames.

To round the entire day off Placenames Australia held their AGM and the main item of business was to elect the new committee for 2008-2009.



*Placenames Australia Committee for 2008-2009*

Left to Right

Colin Yallop - President; Joyce Miles - Vice President; Tricia Mack - Newsletter Editor;  
Jan Tent - Secretary/Treasurer; David Blair - Newsletter; Greg Windsor - Committee Member;  
Dale Lehner - Newsletter



# DYERS CROSSING and NIMBIN

**D**yers Crossing is a small village in the Wallambah Valley, on the lower north coast of New South Wales. The village sits on a tributary of the Wallambah River called Firefly Creek, and the crossing of the Firefly, on the approach from the town of Nabic, is today made by bridge. The Dyer family, after whom the crossing was named, were early settlers in the area.

According to the Manning-Wallamba *Pre 1860 Pioneer Register*, Thomas Dyer, with his wife Grace and their eight children, arrived in Australia on 8 June 1849 on the ship *Emigrant*. The same document informs us that Thomas Dyer is “buried on Maurie Cole’s property, formerly **Dyer’s Crossing**”.<sup>1</sup> The land in question lies on the south bank of the Firefly, a short distance from the bridge. It is now called “Talwood”, and Mr Cole believes that he is the sixth proprietor.

I visited Mr Cole in August of this year (2008), to talk to him about the location of this burial site. He pointed out the spot where he believes the grave was located, which is now part of his front garden. He said that there had been a railed-off area there, large enough for two graves, but it is now covered with paving stones and surrounded by shrubs and flowers.

Details of the various births, deaths and marriages of the members of the Dyer family are contained in the *Pioneer Register*. The same document gives the birthplace of Thomas Dyer and his children variously as “Longlade” and “Long Road”, in Somerset. Presumably these are mistranscriptions of “Long Load”, which is the name of a Somerset village consisting of two distinct hamlets, Load and Long.

My own interest in this family, and in the place named after them, arose because Thomas Dyer is an ancestor of mine – my father’s, father’s, mother’s, father’s, father, to be exact. His son William’s daughter Elizabeth Dyer married my father’s grandfather, Andrew Wafer, in 1888.

Both of Thomas Dyer’s sons, William and Walter Thomas, also held land in the Wallamba Valley and adjacent Manning Valley; but apparently they did not stay. William died in 1892 and is buried at Hamilton (a suburb of Newcastle).<sup>2</sup> Walter Thomas moved “with his wife and family” to the Nambucca River district in about 1887, according to a newspaper report of his death at Bowraville in 1911.<sup>3</sup>

## A postscript to “Nimbin”

In the issue of *Placenames Australia* of June 2007 I published a short article called “How **Nimbin** got its name”, which evaluated two alternative etymologies of “**Nimbin**”. One of these associates the name of the town with “a little man who dwells in mountains or rocks” (*nyiimbuyn*), the other with the word for “camp” (*ngumbiyn*). At the time, I favoured the latter etymology, for reasons given in the article.

Since then I have found a number of grounds to revise my opinion. Dr Margaret Sharpe, who is a contemporary authority on the Bundjalung language, advises me that she has always considered the name to be linked to the “little man who dwells in mountains or rocks”. This concurs with the opinion of James Morgan, the Aboriginal expert cited in my article. Moreover, there are a number of sources that associate **Nimbin** with the little rock-dwelling man, but only one that gives the alternative etymology.

It is not just the weight of opinion that has led me to change my views on the matter. I have also had time to consider the semantic range of the suffix *-buyn* (or *-buuyn*), which probably constitutes the second component of the word *nyiimbuyn*. As mentioned in the article, Sharpe<sup>4</sup> glosses the meaning of this suffix as “typified by”. I want to suggest that it may also have been used in the formation of placenames.

I base this proposal on the following considerations.

1. Bundjalung has another suffix that is phonologically very

similar. This suffix is *-biiyn*, and Sharpe glosses it as “place where something is or happens”, “place of” (1995: 12).

2. Both *-buyn* and *-biiyn* (or *-biyn*) occur as the final component of some Bundjalung placenames, the most famous being Jalgambuyn (Mt Lindesay) and Wulambiny (Mt Warning).<sup>5</sup>
3. There is a probably cognate suffix in at least one other language of coastal NSW. In the Lower North Coast language (Gadhang etc.), *-biiyn* is the “plural” form of the suffix *-bang*. Both are used in the formation of placenames associated with trees.<sup>6</sup>

If, as these considerations suggest, the name of **Nimbin** is indeed derived from *nyiimbuyn*, it would have an analogous formation to other placenames of the region that end in *-buyn*, such as Jalgambuyn (Mt Lindesay) and Ngudhumbuyn (Woodenbong). This gives such a derivation an intrinsic plausibility.

Three of the definitions of *nyiimbuyn* that I listed in my earlier article in fact treat the word as referring to a place rather than to a person: it is “a place where dwells a [little] man in a mountain” etc., rather than the little man himself. Nonetheless, seven out of the ten definitions give some variant of “a little man who dwells in mountains or rocks”. What we seem to be encountering here is the ambiguous nature of land-spirits. They are both the “natural” entity that consists of the place itself, and the “supernatural” entity that consists of the spirit of that place.

If these observations are well founded, then it seems likely that there would have been a number of places in Bundjalung country that were called “Nyiimbuyn”, since the various accounts cited in my earlier article make it clear that there were a plurality of *nyiimbuyn*, or little rock-dwelling men. **Nimbin** appears to be the only one of these places that has kept the name to the present day. Perhaps this is due to some particular significance of the place or the spirit who dwells there. But it’s also possible that the other *nyiimbuyn* places have simply been lost to the landscape, or to Bundjalung collective memory, through the eroding effects of colonisation.

□ Jim Wafer

## References

Manning Wallamba Family History Society Inc. 2001. *Pre 1860 Pioneer Register Book 1*. Taree: Manning Wallamba Family History Society Inc.

Sharpe, Margaret 1995. *Dictionary of Western Bundjalung, including Gidhabal and Tabulam Bundjalung* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Armidale: the author.

Sharpe, Margaret 2002. *Dictionary of Coastal Bundjalung, including Bandjalang, Wiyabal, Minyangbal and Ngahnduwal* (draft). Armidale: the author.

Wafer, Jim and Amanda Lissarrague 2008. *A handbook of Aboriginal languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory*. Nambucca Heads: Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative.

*Wingham Chronicle*, 23 Aug 1911.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Pre 1860 Pioneer Register*, Manning-Wallamba, p. 32, entry 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Pioneer Register* p. 32, entry 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Wingham Chronicle*, 23 Aug 1911.

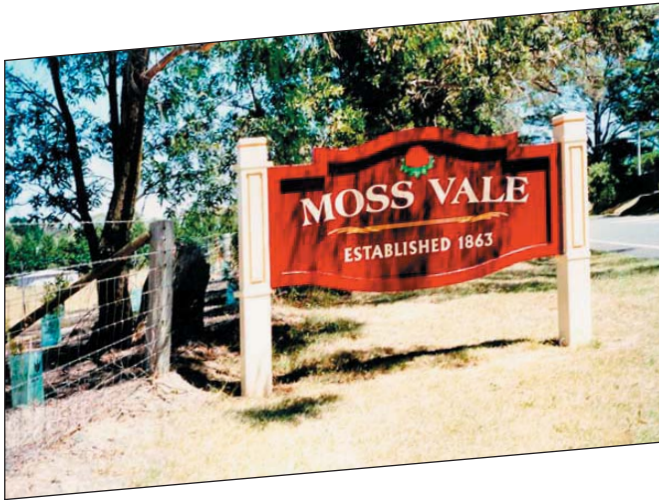
<sup>4</sup> 1995: 17.

<sup>5</sup> Sharpe 1995: 187; 2002: 63. These two publications use different conventions to represent at the end of a syllable: *yn* in Western Bundjalung (Sharpe 1995) and *ny* in Coastal Bundjalung (Sharpe 2002).

<sup>6</sup> The suffix *-bang* added to a tree name links a place to a single tree, while *-biiyn* creates a placename associated with a clump of trees (Wafer and Lissarrague 2008: 171, note 132).

# OUT and ABOUT

## MOSS VALE, NSW



The town of **Moss Vale** stands on land granted to Charles Throsby. He and his nephew, also named Charles, held about 8,000 acres in the area. After his marriage in 1824, the younger Throsby resided at Throsby Park where he employed a herdsman named Jemmy Moss from whom **Moss Vale** derives its name.<sup>1</sup>

1. James Jervis, *A History of the Berrima District 1798-1973*, Wingecarribee Shire Council, 1986, p.123

Photo: Joyce Miles

## BENDEMEER, NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT, NSW

## ST. GEORGE, QUEENSLAND



Self explanatory – photo taken at **St George**

Photo: Joyce Miles



The property and its nearby village were named Bendemeer by Captain Samuel Augustus Perry, Deputy Surveyor General of New South Wales from 1829-1853. The Perry family was associated with Thomas Moore whose poem *Lalla Rookh* refers to "...a bough of roses by Bendemeer's stream..." and "...the calm Bendemeer".

*Information supplied by Mrs Jillian Oppenheimer, Walcha and District Historical Society*

Photo: Joyce Miles

## Placenames puzzle no. 28

### All About Money

The clues reveal placenames connected with money (disregard spelling)

E.g. (SA) How much an item costs .... Price

1. (QLD) All that glitters is not this; seashore
2. (QLD) Sum paid for a kidnapped person
3. (VIC) Location of fort for storage of USA gold bullion; pasture
4. (VIC) Legendary means of supplying a pot of gold
5. (VIC) A hundred UK pence; small stream
6. (VIC) Cost of the first black UK postage stamp, regal
7. (VIC) A wager; and another one
8. (VIC) Money in the hand, additional
9. (VIC) Former British £1 gold coin; Sir Roland was the originator of the penny postage
10. (NSW) Bankrupt (*coll.*)
11. (NSW) Establishment for gambling games
12. (NSW) Place where money is officially coined, fourth vowel
13. (NSW) Currency of several African countries
14. (NSW) Stock Exchange operation in stocks for a decline in price, stopper in a cask
15. (TAS) Precious metal craftsman who was one of the early bankers
16. (SA) Money in actual use; small inlet or bay
17. (SA) Bank of the patron saint of England
18. (ACT) Buildings in which money is received and lent
19. (ACT/VIC)  
John's portrait is on a current \$20 note
20. (ACT/SA/VIC/WA)  
Adjective relating to British money or silver

© Joyce Miles 2008

## CHRISTMAS



There are many towns in the world with **Christmas**-related names - in fact, there are 5 towns in the US alone called "**Christmas**" (not to mention **Christmas City** or **Christmasville**; and we told you last year, of course, about North Pole, Alaska). Often, of course, these places become the focus of national or international attention in December each year. The little town of **Christmas** in Arizona USA was one of these for many years. It is not much more than a ghost town these days, but from 1905 to 1935 its post office was one of the busiest in the country at the end of the year. Mail was sent to **Christmas**, to get the Yuletide post office seal.

The town's name has an interesting, though typically-confused history. It was a mining town in the Copper Springs Mountains of Arizona, and two mining claims (one in 1878, the other in 1882) were judged to be duds and were abandoned. Some years later the boundaries of the Indian Reservation in which they lay were resurveyed, and the claims were now determined to be outside the Reservation. The mines were reopened on Christmas morning, so the story goes: hence the name.



At least two other versions are recounted. One says that a miner called George Chittenden received permission from Congress to change the Reservation boundary by telegraph on his birthday, Christmas Eve 1902. The other says that three prospectors, Albert Weldon, Alex McKay and Jimmy Lee discovered the claim on Christmas Eve in 1881, and named the mine **Christmas** because they believed that Santa Claus was about to bring them the biggest Christmas present of all!

It just goes to show—if your town has an interesting name, there'll be no shortage of stories about its origin, some of them with a remarkable amount of detail to convince you of their truth!



**ANSWERS:** 1. Gold Coast 2. Ransome 3. Knoxfield 4. Rainbow 5. Pound Creek 6. Pennyroyal 7. Bet Bet 8. Cashmore 9. Sovereign Hill 10. Broke 11. Casino 12. Minto 13. Rand 14. Bearbung 15. Goldsmith 16. Currency Creek 17. St Georges 18. Banks 19. Flynn 20. Stirling

# Placenames Australia...

## Become a Supporting Member!

We realise that not everyone who wishes to support the Australian National Placenames Survey can do so by carrying out toponymic research and supplying information for our database. There IS another way—become a Supporting Member of Placenames Australia! In doing so, you'll help the Survey and its volunteer researchers by providing infrastructure support. In return, you'll have the assurance that you'll be helping ensure the continued existence of this prestige national project, and we'll guarantee to keep you in touch by posting to you a printed copy of this quarterly newsletter.

The Survey has no funding of its own—it relies on the generosity of its supporters, both corporate and individual. We will try to maintain our current mailing list, as long as we can; in the long term, priority will be given to Supporting Members of the association, to our volunteer Research Friends, to public libraries and history societies, and to media organizations.

Please consider carefully this invitation. If you wish to become a Member, write a cheque to Placenames Australia Inc, or arrange a bank transfer, and post this page to the Secretary at the address below.

To ensure your continued receipt of the Newsletter, even if you are unable at this time to support ANPS by becoming a Member, please take time to tick the appropriate box below and return this form to the Secretary.

Dr Jan Tent, *Placenames Australia*  
Linguistics Department  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109  
Fax: (02) 9850 9199 Email: [director@anps.org.au](mailto:director@anps.org.au)

Name and/or Organisation:.....

.....

.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone:..... Fax:.....

Email:.....

I wish to become a Member of Placenames Australia (individual)—my cheque/transfer for .....\$25  
OR

We wish to become a Member of Placenames Australia (organisational/corporate)—our cheque/transfer for...\$250

**Date** .....

- Cheques made out to *Placenames Australia*. ABN 39652752594
- Direct tranfer to Bendigo Bank: BSB 633 108, a/c 131212649

I am unable to become a Member at this time, but please keep me on the newsletter mailing list and send me newsletters  by post OR  by email

Please remove me from the newsletter mailing list

Please note my change of address (new address above)

## We say thankyou to...

our corporate sponsor, the Geographical Names Board of NSW—and to the Secretary of the Board, Greg Windsor. This year's newsletters could not have been published without the support of the GNB.



## Contributions

Contributions for *Placenames Australia* are welcome. Please send all contributions to the Editor, Tricia Mack, by email: [<editor@anps.org.au>](mailto:editor@anps.org.au) Electronic submissions and photographic or other illustrations are greatly appreciated. Closing dates for submission are:

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 31 January for the March issue | 31 July for the September issue   |
| 30 April for the June issue    | 31 October for the December issue |