

Laura Kostanski

Laura Kostanski is currently enrolled as a Masters by Research candidate at the School of Business, University of Ballarat in Australia. Trained in History and Linguistics, Laura's research focuses on toponyms (place names), and the origins, histories and attachments that are related to these markers of the landscape. Laura's Masters thesis centres on the Grampians/Gariwerd dual-naming controversy, and the renaming of Hazelwood North to Churchill. The research utilises mixed methodologies, such as psychometric scales, oral history interviews, archival research and community consultations, to gauge community and individual attachments to placenames. Recently, Laura has undertaken a contract with the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment investigating and developing a methodology to be employed in official government naming of State forests in the State of Victoria.

**'DUAL NAMING: RECOGNISING LANDSCAPE IDENTITIES WITHIN THE
CONSTRAINTS OF GOVERNMENT AND RESEARCH GUIDELINES'**

Since the time of European exploration of Australia, the topography of the continent has been mapped from a colonial cartographic perspective. Colonial government guidelines have 'controlled' the knowledge base of understanding of the landscape for non-indigenous Australians. This perspective has led to a colonial-tainted sense of place for non-Indigenous (and some Indigenous) Australians. Such euro-centric focused governance and management of the development of our understanding of the landscape was strongly exemplified during a recent six-month review of State forest names in Victoria.

By the beginning of 2004 over 90 percent of State forests in Victoria did not have officially registered names in the Australian Gazetteer. Thus, the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment employed the researchers to undertake a pilot study program, investigating different methods for officially naming the State forests in the Midlands Region of Victoria. This pilot study program focussed on producing a best practice model for naming State forest areas, which would then be utilised for all State forests across Victoria.

It was understood by the researchers that placenames were markers of national, regional, local and personal identity, and as such, part of the State forest review concentrated on recognising all the various historical and contemporary identities apparent in the Midlands region. This attempt to recognise historical and contemporary associations with the State forest areas proved to be a challenge to the researchers. Difficulties arose in multiple areas of the review process.

In the first instance, there was difficulty in applying the vague government guidelines on dual-naming, to a practical and tangible situation. In addition, an interesting challenge faced

the researchers in trying to recognise Indigenous heritage, within a colonial geographical framework. Indigenous landscape boundaries did not align with the State forest areas designated on official government maps, and in some instances State forest areas contained three Indigenous language borders.

Similarly, there were difficulties in engaging the Indigenous communities into the review process. Fluency in some local Indigenous languages had been lost. Some Indigenous groups were involved in inter-factional disagreements. One Indigenous group did not want to have their heritage 'controlled' by government naming guidelines.

In addition, the local non-indigenous community also proved difficult on occasion, especially in relation to the proposal of dual-naming State forest areas. The notion of native-title claims, and a deficiency of general community understanding in relation to indigenous sense of place was all pervasive, and caused a great deal of resistance to be built against the recognition of Indigenous heritage in the State forest areas.

The paper will explore the issues that arise in conducting research that requires an incorporation of more than one dominant cultural ideology. Moreover, strategies utilised in working through these issues, to ensure inclusivity of all identified parties, will be discussed.