5 February 2021

Original: English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**
2021 session
Virtual, 3–7 May 2021
Item 14 of the provisional agenda*
Toponymic data files and gazetteers

Composite gazetteer of Australia

Summary**

Place names data management within Australia is distributed across a number of state, territory and commonwealth jurisdictions. Creation of a national gazetteer requires the sourcing of data from 10 jurisdictions, matching place types across that source data and normalizing attribute fields to produce a single national product. The time-consuming methodology limited updates to a biennial cycle. It also reduced more content-rich jurisdictional data sets into a simple national product containing only very basic attribute fields common to every supply-side data model. Over time, the traditional method of manual data manipulation became increasingly inefficient and unable to meet the growing demand for more comprehensive place names data. A decision was made to pause content updates until a more suitable methodology was developed.

Effort was redirected towards developing a nationally consistent place type classification system that would enable the scripted aggregation of data, and building the infrastructure to semi-automate the movement of data through the supply chain. The national gazetteer creation programme has now been reactivated using the new infrastructure, which facilitates the receipt, processing and publication of a composite (as opposed to manual collation) of data from the multiple jurisdictional gazetteers.

The new approach is part of the country's goal to modernize its foundational spatial data framework. It involves each jurisdiction loading their own data through a supply-side portal, processing and quality assurance testing using workbenches in a Feature Manipulation Engine server in a cloud infrastructure, and data set out on a purpose-built application that allows for the viewing, interrogating and downloading of various product configurations.

The paper discusses the technical elements of the infrastructure and the benefits the approach offers to both managers and users of Australian place names data.

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* GEGN.2/2021/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Chair of the Australia and New Zealand Working Group on Place Names, Susan Birtles. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/28/CRP.28, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.

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