

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COUNCIL AMENDMENT BILL

*(As introduced in the National Assembly (proposed section 75); explanatory
summary of Bill and prior notice of its introduction published in Government Gazette
No. of) (The English text is the official text of the Bill)*

(MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE)

[B – 2026]

GENERAL EXPLANATORY NOTE:

[] Words in bold type in square brackets indicate omissions from the existing enactment.

_____ Words underlined with a solid line indicate insertions in existing enactment.

BILL

To provide for the transformation and standardisation of geographical names in the Republic; to establish and regulate the South African Geographical Names Council and to determine its objects, functions and operational procedures; to provide for the establishment, composition, objects, functions and resourcing of Provincial Geographical Names Committees; to align the terms of office of the Council and Provincial Geographical Names Committees; to provide for mandatory public consultation processes; to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a computerised national and provincial geographical names database; to establish an Appeals Tribunal and provide for its powers and functions; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

BE IT ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, as follows:—

Amendment of section 1 of Act 118 of 1998

1. Section 1 of the South African Geographical Names Council Act, 1998 (hereinafter referred to as “the principal Act”), is hereby amended—

(a) by the insertion after the definition of “council” of the following definition

“consultation” means a mandatory, multi-stakeholder engagement process conducted in good faith to solicit, consider, and incorporate informed views from relevant communities, authorities, and experts on proposed geographical names or name changes, prior to evaluation, recommendation, or approval; including, but not limited to—

- (a) notification and invitation for public input through publication in the Government Gazette and local media;
- (b) engagement with local communities, traditional leaders, affected municipalities, and provincial geographical names committees;
- (c) consultation with cultural, historical, linguistic, and research organizations; and
- (d) documentation and responses to submissions received, with opportunities for further review if objections arise;

(b) by the amendment of the definition of “geographical name” to read as follows:

“geographical name” means the name of any terrestrial feature within the territorial limits of the Republic, together with the area of jurisdiction [**or area on the earth’s surface, whether on land or in internal waters or in the territorial waters or exclusive economic zone or extended continental shelf**] of the Republic, and includes, but is not limited to—

- (a) natural **[or made or adapted by human agency; or]** features (mountains, rivers, pans, valleys, etc.), whether natural or made or adapted by human agency;
 - (b) populated and unpopulated places (including towns, villages, human settlements etc.);
 - (c) transport and infrastructure features (higher order roads, railways, airports, harbours, dams, etc.);
 - (d) any other feature or area that has acquired a name through common usage or official designation, irrespective of whether such feature or area is within the territorial limits of the Republic or within areas of maritime jurisdiction acquired by treaty or under international law, excluding features under municipal Jurisdiction, private property, and cadastral names.
- (c) by the insertion after the definition of “geographical name” of the following definition:
- “Head of Department” means the Head of the Department responsible for arts, and culture in a province;
- (d) by the insertion before the definition of “Minister” of the following definition:
- “MEC” means the member of the Executive Council responsible for, arts and culture in a province;”
- (e) by the amendment of the definition of “Minister” to read as follows:
- “Minister” means the National Minister responsible for arts and culture, acting in terms of national executive authority, and does not include any Provincial Minister or other provincial executive authority.
- (f) by the amendment of the definition of “Municipality” to read as follows:

“Municipality” means **[a municipality as defined in section 10B of the Local Government Transition Act, 1993 (Act No. 209 of 1993)]** any metropolitan, district or local municipality, as defined in section 1 and established in terms of section 12 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998; and when used in reference to a “municipality” as an entity, includes its political structures, administration and community, and when used in reference to a geographic area, includes the municipal area determined in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998.”;

(g) by the insertion before the definition of “regulations” of the following definition:

“Provincial Committee” means a Provincial Geographical Names Committee established by section 2A(1).”.

(h) by the amendment after the definition of “standardisation” of the following definition:

“standardisation” means-

[(a) determination of-

(i) the name to be applied to each geographical feature; and

(ii) the written form of that name; and

(b) the regulation by an appropriate authority of a geographical name, its written form and its application]

(a) the establishment, by an appropriate authority, of a specific set of standards or norms, for example, for the uniform rendering of toponyms;

(b) rendering an item such as a toponym in accordance with such norms;

- (i) by the insertion of the definition of “standardised name” of the following definition:
“standardised name” means a name sanctioned by a names authority as the preferred name from among a number of allonyms [variant names] for a given feature. However, a single feature may have more than one standardized name;”
- (h) by the insertion after the definition of “this Act” of the following definition:
“Tribunal” means the Appeals Tribunal established by section 10A.”;

Amendment of section 2 of Act 118 of 1998

2. Section 2 of the principal Act, is hereby amended:
- (a) by the substitution in subsection (2)(b) of the following subsection:
 “(b) to **[ensure]** consider and endorse the standardisation of geographical names in South Africa;
- (b) by the deletion of in subsection (2)(c) of the following subsection:
[(c) to facilitate the transformation process for geographical names;]
- (c) by the addition in subsection (2)(d) of the following subsection:
 (d) to promote the use of standardised South African geographical names at local, national and international levels;”

Insertion of section 2A in Act 118 of 1998

3. The following section is hereby inserted after section 2 of the principal Act:
“Establishment and objects of Provincial Committee
2A. (1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the Provincial Geographical Names Committee for each Province.

(2) The objects of a Provincial Committee are—

- (a) to ensure the standardisation of geographical names in the Province.
- (b) to facilitate the transformation process for geographical names in the Province;
- (c) to promote the use of standardised geographical names in the Province;
- (d) to promote awareness of the economic and social benefits of the standardisation of geographical names for the Province; and
- (e) to recommend provincial geographical name changes for consideration of the Council.”.

“Functions and Powers of Provincial Geographical Names Committee

2B. A Provincial Committee is responsible for:

- (a) advising local authorities and working with them in ensuring that they apply the principles of the Council to the names under their jurisdiction;
- (b) making submissions to the Council on the names of geographical features that fall within the province and its area of jurisdiction;
- (c) ensuring that local communities and other stakeholders are adequately consulted; and
- (d) liaising with the Council on promoting research and ensuring that unrecorded names are collected.

Amendment of section 3 of Act 118 of 1998

4. Section 3 of the principal Act, is hereby amended by the substitution in subsection (1)(b) and (2) of the following words:

“(b) one must be nominated **[by each [of] from** the following:

- (i) **[The South African Post Office]; National Heritage Council**
- (ii) the Chief Directorate: **[Surveys and Mapping] National Geospatial Information;**
- (iii) the Pan South African Language Board;
- (iv) the Department of Transport;
- (v) the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs;
- (vi) the Pan South African Language Board;
- (vii) the Statistics South Africa; and
- (viii) the South African Local Government Association.

(2) Members of the Council, other than those referred to in subsection (1)(a) and (b), must be appointed by the Minister in the prescribed manner by regulation **[and the regulations prescribing the manner of appointment must apply the principles of transparency and representivity and must take into account—].**

(3) The regulations contemplated in subsection (2) must, in addition to the requirements of transparency and representivity, ensure that the composition of the Council—

- (a) reflects special competence, experience and demonstrated interest in toponymy, cartography, geography, history, heritage, linguistics, indigenous knowledge systems or related fields; and

- (b) is broadly representative of the linguistic, cultural, racial, gender and demographic characteristics of the population of the Republic.

Insertion of section 3A in Act 118 of 1998

5. The following section is hereby inserted after section 3 of the principal Act:

“Composition of Provincial Committee

3A. The MEC in each province—

(1) must in the prescribed manner, appoint no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 suitably qualified persons to serve on a Provincial Committee; of whom:

(a) one must be nominated by each of the following:

- (i) the Pan South African Language Board;
 - (ii) the Provincial Department of Transport;
 - (iii) the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs;
 - (iv) the Pan South African Language Board; and
 - (v) the South African Local Government Association.
- (b) any other organisation, body or institution the MEC considers relevant.

(2) When selecting the persons contemplated in subsection (1) the MEC in each province must:

- (a) apply the principles of transparency and representativity and must take into account-
- (i) special competence, experience, and interest in the relevant fields; and

- (ii) the linguistic, cultural and demographic characteristics of the population of that Province.
- (b) ensure that the composition of the Provincial Committee is broadly representative of society, with due regard to race, gender, disability and the demographics of the province.”.

Amendment of section 4 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 32 of Act 36 of 2001

6. Section 4 of the principal Act is hereby amended:

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“Term of office and conditions of membership”; and

(b) by the substitution for section 4 for the following section:

[4. (1) A member of the Council is appointed for a period of three years.”

(2) A member of the Council may be reappointed for a further period of three years.

(3) If a member dies or resigns, the Minister must appoint another person to fill that vacancy for the remaining portion of the term of office of that member.

(4) The Minister must, in consultation with the Council, appoint one of the members as chairperson of the Council to serve for a renewable term of three years.

(5) If the chairperson dies or resigns, the Minister must appoint another person as chairperson for the remaining portion of the term of the first-mentioned chairperson.

(6) A deputy chairperson is elected by the Council from among its members.

(7) The Minister may terminate a person's membership of the Council-

(a) if that member has been absent from three consecutive meetings of the

Council without sufficient reasons; or

(b) on the recommendation of the Council for reasons which are fair and just.]

(1) Subject to this section, every member of the Council or of a Provincial Committee holds office for a period of five years and is eligible for reappointment or re-election for one further consecutive period of five years.

(2) A person who is appointed or elected to fill a vacancy in terms of subsection (5) holds office for the unexpired portion of the period in respect of which the vacancy occurred and is thereafter eligible for reappointment or re-election in terms of subsection (1).

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), members serving in an ex officio capacity or nominated in terms of section 3(1)(b) are not subject to the limitation of two consecutive terms.

(4) (a) The Minister must, appoint one of the members of the Council as chairperson for a term of five years, renewable once.

(b) The MEC responsible for arts and culture in each province must, appoint one of its members as chairperson of that Provincial Committee for a term of five years, renewable once.

(5) Whenever a member or chairperson of the Council or of a Provincial Committee dies, resigns, or otherwise vacates office before the expiry of the period for which he or she was appointed or elected—

(a) in the case of the Council, the Minister; or

(b) in the case of a Provincial Committee, the relevant MEC, must, appoint or cause to be appointed another suitably qualified person in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Act or the relevant regulations, to hold office for the unexpired portion of the period.

(6) The Council and each Provincial Committee must elect from among its members a deputy chairperson who holds office for the same term as the chairperson and who acts as chairperson whenever the chairperson is absent or unable to perform his or her functions.

(7) The Minister (in respect of the Council) or the relevant MEC (in respect of a Provincial Committee) may, after affording the member a reasonable opportunity to be heard and on grounds that are just and equitable, terminate the membership of a member who—

(a) has been absent from three consecutive meetings of the Council or Provincial Committee without the prior written permission of the chairperson;

(b) is unable to perform his or her duties efficiently;

(c) as engaged in serious misconduct; or

(d) has a conflict of interest that materially affects the performance of his or her functions.

Amendment of section 4 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 32 of Act 36 of 2001

7. The following section is hereby inserted after section 4 of the principal Act:

“Term of office of Provincial Committee

“4A (1) Members of the Provincial Committee hold office for a period of five years from the date of their appointment by the MEC.

(2) A person serving on the Provincial Committee may, upon the expiry of that member’s term of office, be re-appointed for a further period of five years, but may not serve more than two consecutive terms, excluding members nominated under section 3A(1)(a).

(3) If a person dies or resigns, the MEC must appoint another person to fill that vacancy for the remaining portion of the term of office of that member.

(4) The MEC must appoint one of the members as chairperson of the Provincial Committee to serve for a renewable term of five years.

(5) A deputy chairperson is elected by the Provincial Committee from among its members.

(6) the MEC may terminate a person’s membership of the Provincial Committee—

(a) if that member has been absent from three consecutive meetings of the Provincial Committee without sufficient reasons; or

(b) on the recommendation of the Provincial Committee for reasons which are fair and just.”.

Amendment of section 5 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 32 of Act 36 of 2001

8. Section 5 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“Meetings of Council and Provincial Committees” and

(b) by the substitution for section 5 for the following section:

5. (1) [A Council Provincial Committee may meet as often as necessary but must meet at least three times a year] The Council and each Provincial Committee must meet at least four times in every financial year at times and places determined by its chairperson.

(2) The chairperson of the Council or of a Provincial Committee may at any time convene a special meeting or postpone or cancel a meeting of the Council or that Provincial Committee, as the case may be, in accordance with the necessity for a meeting.

[(3) The majority of the members of a Provincial Committee form a quorum.

(4) If consensus cannot be reached, decisions of the Provincial Committee are taken by resolution of the majority of members present at the meeting and in the event of an equality of votes, the person presiding at the meeting has a casting vote in addition to his or her deliberative vote.]

(3) The chairperson must convene a special meeting within 14 days of receiving a written request signed by at least one-third of the members of the Council or the Provincial Committee concerned.

(4) The quorum for any meeting of the Council or a Provincial Committee is a majority of its serving members.

(5) A decision of the Council or a Provincial Committee requires a supporting vote of the majority of members present and voting at a properly constituted meeting.

(6) The chairperson of the Council or of a Provincial Committee, as the case may be, has a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote in the event of an equality of votes.

(7) The Council and each Provincial Committee may, subject to this Act, determine its own procedures for the conduct of meetings, including the use of electronic or virtual platforms.

Amendment of section 6 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 33 of Act 38 of 2001

9. Section 6 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“Administrative support to Council and Provincial Committees” and

(b) by the substitution for section 5 for the following section:

6. (1) The Administrative support of the Council and the administrative support to a Provincial Committee must be performed by a section within the Department or the relevant provincial department, as the case may be, [established] designated by the Director-General or the Head of Department in terms of the Public Services Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994);

(2) The **[functions of the section include]** section referred to in subsection (1) must—

- (a) **[performing administrative and secretarial services for a Provincial Committee]** provide administrative, logistical and secretarial support to the Council and to the Provincial Committees; [and]
- (b) **[the establishment and maintenance of a research section and the necessary infrastructure, incorporating a computerised database, a library, reference material and document archives]** coordinate, facilitate and support research and public consultation processes relating to geographical names;
- (c) establish, maintain and update a national and provincial computerised geographical names database and the related digital infrastructure; and
- (d) manage and preserve all records, reference materials, research outputs and documentary archives necessary for the effective functioning of the Council and the Provincial Committees.”.

(3) The MEC must ensure that the Provincial Committee is provided with adequate financial, human and administrative resources to perform its functions.

(4) The Director-General may, after consultation with the Council, issue guidelines regulating the manner in which the section must perform the functions contemplated in this section.

Amendment of section 7 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 33 of Act 38 of 2001

10. Section 7 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

7. (1) The Council may establish **[sub]committees [not limited to its own members to perform work for the Council]** to assist it in the performance of its functions,

[(2) The Council may delegate its powers and assign its duties to a [sub]committee **or to any other body.**]

(3) The committee may consist of—

- (a) members of the Council;
- (b) members of any Provincial Committee; and
- (c) other persons with special expertise or representing stakeholders, whether or not they are members of the Council or a Provincial Committee.

[(3) The Council is not absolved from exercising or performing any power or duty so delegated or assigned.

(4) Any delegated power or duty so exercised or performed is regarded to have been exercised or performed by the Council.]

(4) The Council must appoint the chairperson of each committee from among its own members.

(5) The functions of a committee may include—

- (a) conducting technical or linguistic evaluations of proposed names;
- (b) undertaking research or investigations on behalf of the Council; or
- (c) any other function delegated or assigned to it by the Council.

(5) The Council may, subject to section 8, determine allowances payable to persons appointed to a committee under subsection 1 and (2), as the case may be, who are not in the full-time service of the State.

(6) The provisions of sections 5, 6(4) and 8A (allowances) apply, with the necessary changes, to subcommittees.

(7) The Council remains responsible for all decisions taken in its name, even where a committee has made recommendations or performed preparatory work.

Amendment of section 8 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 33 of Act 38 of 2001

11. Section 8 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“Remuneration and allowances of members”; and

(b) by the substitution for section (8) for the following section:

“(1) The Minister, may with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, determine the allowances payable to members of the Council, and any [sub]committee it may establish who is not in the full-time employ of the State.

(2) The MEC responsible for arts and culture in each province may, with the concurrence of the MEC responsible for finance in that province and after consultation with the Provincial Committee concerned, from time to time determine the allowances payable to members of the Provincial Committee who are not in the full-time service of the State.

(3) Allowances determined in terms of subsection (1) or (2) must be consistent with the framework and rates prescribed by the National Treasury for national and provincial public entities and advisory bodies.

(4) Different allowances may be determined for the chairperson, deputy chairperson and ordinary members, and for members serving on [sub]committees.”.

Amendment of section 9 of Act 118 of 1998

12. Section 9 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

9. (1) The Council **[must]** has the following powers and duties: -

- (a) set guidelines for the operation of Provincial Geographical Names Committees;
- (b) set standards and guidelines for local and provincial authorities in their respective areas of jurisdiction;
- [(c) receive proposed geographical names submitted by State departments, statutory bodies, provincial governments, municipalities and other bodies or individuals;**
- (d) recommend geographical names falling within the national competence to the Minister for approval;**
- (e) advise the Minister on-**
 - (i) the standardisation of proposed new geographical names;**
 - (ii) existing geographical names not yet standardised;**
 - (iii) the changing, removing or replacing of geographical names: and**
 - (iv) geographical names and their orthography;**
- (f) in consultation with provincial governments, identify existing geographical names in need of revision, and co-ordinate requests for advice on geographical names and standardisation;**
- (g) communicate decisions and relevant information on geographical names approved in terms of section 10(1) effectively to the various State departments, the public, and all other users of geographical names at national and international level by means of gazetteers, lists, maps and other published and electronic media;**
- (h) liaise with-**
 - (i) national and international organisations concerned with geographical names; and**

- (ii) **cultural, historical and linguistic organisations;**
- (i) **in consultation with the Minister and the Provincial Geographical Names Committees, formulate policies, principles and procedures, taking cognisance of the United Nations resolutions and international practice with reference to the standardisation of geographical names;**
- (j) **perform any other duty imposed on it by this Act or any other law.**

(2) The Council may-

- (a) **exercise any power conferred on it by this Act or any other law; and**
- (b) **generally, do everything which is necessary to perform its duties referred to in subsection (1).]**
- (c) Coordinate request for advice on geographical names and standardisation;
- (d) to receive proposed geographical names from Provincial Committees or directly from applicants for features of national or inter-provincial significance;
- (e) to advise the Minister on the standardisation, approval, amendment, or withdrawal of geographical names of national concern, including those with historical, cultural, or economic importance;
- (f) to review recommendations from Provincial Committees, and to refer matters back for further consideration, if necessary;
- (g) to determine the orthography and written form of standardised geographical names in consultation with relevant linguistic authorities;
- (h) to liaise and co-operate with national departments, Provincial Committees, municipalities, traditional authorities, and other cultural, historical, or linguistic organisations;
- (i) to promote the principles of transformation, redress, and multilingualism in the standardisation of geographical names;

- (j) to conduct or commission research on unrecorded or contested names to support equitable decision-making; and
- (k) to exercise any other power or perform any other duty necessary or incidental to the performance of its functions under this Act.

(2) Each Provincial Committee has the following powers and duties within its province and area of jurisdiction:

- (a) to receive and process applications for the standardisation, amendment, or withdrawal of geographical names;
- (b) to advise the Council on proposed names falling within provincial competence;
- (c) to liaise with local stakeholders, including municipalities, traditional leaders, and communities, to facilitate inclusive consultations;
- (d) to promote awareness of standardised names and their cultural significance at the local level;
- (e) to recommend dual or multilingual forms for names where appropriate; and
- (f) to exercise any other power or perform any other duty delegated to it by the Council or assigned by the relevant MEC.

(3) In exercising their powers and performing their duties under this section, the Council and every Provincial Committee must—

- (a) act in accordance with the objects of this Act, giving priority to the promotion of indigenous languages and the correction of historical distortions;
- (b) ensure decisions are based on evidence, including historical records, linguistic analysis, and public input;
- (c) adhere to principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability; and

(d) co-operate with international bodies such as the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) where relevant.

13. The following section is hereby inserted in the principal Act after section 9:

“Public consultations on geographical name changes

9A. (1) Upon receipt of an application for the standardisation, including registration of new names, change or withdrawal of existing names of a geographical name, the Provincial Committee (in the case of a provincial feature) or the Council (in the case of a national or inter-provincial feature) must, before formulating any recommendation—

- (a) conduct research and initial assessments in accordance with section 9; and
- (b) publish a notice of the proposed name in the Provincial Government Gazette and at least two newspapers or media outlets circulating in the affected area, inviting written comments from the public and stakeholders within a period of not less than 30 days.

(2) In addition to the publication contemplated in subsection (1)(b), the Provincial Committee must engage directly with affected parties, including local communities, traditional leaders, municipalities and relevant organisations, in accordance with the definition of "consultation".

(3) After the closing date for comments, the Provincial Committee must—

- (a) consider all submissions received, together with the research and assessments;

- (b) hold a public consultation, to solicit views; and
- (c) document responses to the submissions and afford an opportunity for further review if new information emerges.

(4) The outcomes of the consultation process must be included in any recommendation forwarded to the Council or Minister in terms of sections 9 or 10.

Amendment of section 10 of Act 118 of 1998, as amended by section 33 of Act 38 of 2001

14. Section 10 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“10. Approval, revision and publication of geographical names”; and

(b) by the substitution for section (10) for the following section:

10. (1) The Minister **[may approve or reject a geographical name]** must, within 90 days of receipt, consider every [recommended] recommendation [by] from the Council [in terms of section 9(1)(d).] regarding the standardisation, amendment or withdrawal of a geographical name and may—

(a) approve the recommended name;

(b) approve it with modifications;

(c) reject it; or

(d) refer it back to the Council for further consideration.

(2) A geographical name approved or rejected by the Minister in terms of subsection (1) must be published in the Government Gazette, within 30 days of the decision, together with the reasons for the decision and any conditions

attached thereto, including the right and procedure to appeal to the Appeal Tribunal.

(3) Any person or body dissatisfied with a geographical name approved by the Minister may, within one month from the date of publication of the geographical name in the Government Gazette, lodge **[a complaint]** an objection in writing to the Minister.

(4) The Minister **[may]** must refer the **[complaint]** objection to the **[Council]** Appeal Tribunal within 14 days of receipt. **[for advice whether or not to reject or amend a geographical name so approved.]**

(5) The Minister must inform the complainant of the decision on the complaint and the reasons for the decision.]

(5) The Minister must, within 14 days of receipt, inform the complainant that his objection has been referred to the Appeals Tribunal for a decision.

(6) The Appeal Tribunal must decide on the Appeal within 90 days of receipt and—

(a) inform the complainant and the Minister in writing of the decision and the reasons therefor; and

(b) if the decision results in an amendment or rejection, have the Minister, publish the revised decision in the Government Gazette.

15. The following section is hereby inserted in the principal Act after section 10:

“Establishment and Composition of Appeals Tribunal for Geographical Names

10A. (1) There is hereby established an Appeals Tribunal for the review of decisions on the Minister on the standardisation, registration, approval, amendment, or withdrawal of geographical names under this Act.

(2) The Minister must, in the prescribed manner, determine the operational rules of the Tribunal, including procedures for lodging appeals, hearings, and evidence.

(3) The Minister must, in an open, transparent, and competitive manner—

(a) through public advertisement in the Government Gazette and relevant media, invite nominations for appointment; and

(b) appoint not fewer than three and not more than five independent members with relevant expertise in toponymy, linguistics, law, cultural heritage, or related fields, to serve on the Tribunal for a term of three years, renewable once only.

(3) The Tribunal must hear and decide on all appeals against decisions contemplated in section 10, lodged with the Appeal Tribunal in writing within 60 days of publication in the Government Gazette, stating the grounds and supporting evidence.

(4) The Minister must, appoint one of the members of the Tribunal as Chairperson for a term coterminous with their membership.

(5) At its first meeting and thereafter as necessary, the Tribunal must appoint from among its members a Deputy Chairperson to act in the Chairperson's absence or incapacity.

(6) The quorum for a sitting of the Tribunal is a majority of its members, but not fewer than three, and decisions must be taken by majority vote, with the Chairperson having a casting vote in the event of an equality.

(7) The Tribunal must hear and decide on an appeal contemplated in subsection (3) within three months from the date of lodgement with the Tribunal and may extend this period by one month for good cause.

(8) A decision of the Tribunal is final and binding, subject to review by a court of law, and must be published in the Government Gazette within 14 days of issuance.

(9) The Minister must, in consultation with the Minister of Finance and in accordance with the framework determined by the National Treasury, provide for the remuneration, fees, allowances, and reimbursement of expenses of the members of the Tribunal.

Amendment of section 11 of Act 118 of 1998

16. Section 11 of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the substitution for the heading of the following heading:

“Annual and other reports”; and

(b) by the substitution for section (11) for the following section:

11. (1) The Council must, not later than 31 July in each year, annually submit **[a report on its activities, including assessment of the extent to which its objects have been achieved]** to the Minister an annual report on its activities during the preceding financial year, including—

- (a) an assessment of the extent to which the objects of this Act have been achieved;
- (b) a summary of recommendations made, names approved or rejected, and public consultations conducted;
- (c) reports received from Provincial Committees in terms of subsection (2); and
- (d) recommendations for improving the implementation of this Act.

[(2) The Minister must cause the report to be tabled in Parliament within 14 days after receipt thereof if Parliament is then in ordinary session or, if Parliament is not then in ordinary session, within 14 days after the commencement of its next ordinary session.]

(2) Each Provincial Committee must, not later than 30 June in each year, submit to the relevant MEC an annual report on its activities during the preceding financial year, including—

- (a) an assessment of the extent to which the objects of this Act have been achieved at the provincial level;
- (b) a summary of applications received, consultations held, and recommendations forwarded to the Council;
- (c) financial statements, including details of resources provided in terms of section 6; and
- (d) any challenges experienced in performing its functions.

(5) The Council and each Provincial Committee may, at any time, submit special reports to the Minister or the relevant MEC on any matter related to the implementation of this Act.

Transitional Provision

17. (1) Despite anything to the contrary in this Act or any other law, every person who, immediately before the date of commencement of this Act, was serving as—

- (a) a member or chairperson of the Council; or
- (b) a member or chairperson of a Provincial Committee,

is deemed, with effect from that date of commencement—

- (i) to have been validly appointed or elected (as the case may be) in terms of the principal Act as amended by this Act; and
- (ii) to be serving the first term of office contemplated in the amended section 4, irrespective of any period of service completed before the date of commencement.

(2) For the purpose of calculating the maximum number of consecutive terms permitted under the amended section 4, any period of service completed by a member before the date of commencement of this Act must not be taken into account.

(3) All regulations, guidelines, policies, decisions, approvals, recommendations, name changes, databases, records and other actions lawfully taken or performed under the principal Act before the date of commencement of this Act remain valid and of full force and effect until amended, replaced or withdrawn in terms of this Act.

(4) Any application, appeal, complaint or review process that was pending under section 10 of the principal Act immediately before the date of commencement of this Act, must be finalised in accordance with the provisions of the principal Act as they existed before such commencement, unless the

complainant elects, in writing within 30 days of commencement, to have the matter dealt with by the Appeals Tribunal established under section 10A.

(5) Until the regulations contemplated in section 12(2) are made, the appointment procedures that applied immediately before the commencement of this Act continue to apply.

Amendment of the long title of Act 118 of 1998

18. The following long title is hereby substituted for the long title of the principal Act:

To [establish a permanent advisory body known as the South African Geographical Names Council to advise the Minister responsible for arts and culture on the transformation and standardisation of geographical names in South Africa for official purposes; to determine its objects, functions and methods of work; and to provide for matters connected therewith.] provide for the transformation and standardisation of geographical names in the Republic; to establish a permanent advisory body known as the South African Geographical Names Council and to determine its objects, functions and operational procedures; to provide for the establishment, composition, objects, functions and resourcing of Provincial Geographical Names Committees; to align the terms of office of the Council and the Provincial Geographical Names Committees; to provide for mandatory public consultation processes; to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a computerised national and provincial geographical names database; to establish an Appeals Tribunal and provide for its powers and functions; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Short title and commencement

19. This Act is called the South African Geographical Names Council Amendment Bill, 2024, and comes into operation on a date fixed by the President by proclamation in the *Gazette*.