

Media Statement

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Feedback sought on renaming King Leopold Ranges

Landgate's Geographic Names Committee is seeking community feedback after receiving a request to rename the King Leopold Ranges in the Kimberley.

Committee Secretary Brian Goodchild said widespread community consultation would be undertaken before any decision was made.

"The King Leopold Ranges is a significant feature which dominates the Kimberley region and holds special meaning for many people in Western Australia," Mr Goodchild said.

"The decision to even consider changing the name of the ranges is not taken lightly and a lot of viewpoints must be considered before a decision is reached.

"We are therefore asking the public to submit to the committee any feedback or suggestions they have on the potential renaming, or use of a dual name."

The matter to rename the ranges was referred to the committee by Minister for Land Information Michelle Roberts after a request was made by a member of the public earlier this year.

The request was based on the belief that Western Australia should not name places and geographical features after people who have committed genocide.

"The King Leopold Ranges were named after King Leopold II of Belgium by WA explorer Alexander Forrest in 1879," Mr Goodchild said.

"However, research now suggests that the King's exploration of the African Congo for rubber and ivory resulted in the torture and death of millions of Congolese people."

Mr Goodchild said although the Geographic Names Committee was investigating the request, this did not mean automatic approval would be granted to rename the ranges.

Feedback or suggestions regarding the proposed renaming, or use of a dual name can be posted directly to: Secretary, Geographic Names Committee, PO Box 2222 Midland, WA 6936 or emailed to geographicnames@landgate.wa.gov.au

Submissions must be received by Saturday, August 30 2008.

The matter will then be considered by the committee and a recommendation made to the Minister for Land Information.

Ends

Landgate media: Katie Schoch 9273 7564

(Please see next page for background information on the King Leopold Ranges)

Background information on King Leopold Ranges

The King Leopold Ranges run in a 567km curve from east of Secure Bay in the West Kimberley to the northern end of the Durack Range in the east. The highest point is Mount Wells at 983 metres above mean sea level.

Although retaining their individual names, the following ranges are included as part of the King Leopold Ranges: Isdell Range, Precipice Range, Lady Forrest Range, Sir John Range, Narrie Range and Durack Range.

The ranges separate the main Kimberley plateau from the southern Fitzroy plains and consist of quartz sandstone intruded by dolerite.