

## ONOMASTIC ANOMALY: NEW SOUTH WALES

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I have always been intrigued with the toponymic anomaly of the name of the Australian state of New South Wales. Obviously there are countless examples of toponyms that are preceded by the adjective New; these are, or were, usually in honor or remembrance of countries (New England, New Spain, New France, New Mexico, New Guinea, etc.) or cities (New York, New Orleans, New Rochelle, New London, New Paltz, etc.). Clearly such names arose in response to newly settled or newly discovered places, but there are other reasons why New might have been used. In some cases there is a literal meaning for New, as in Newport, Newmarket, Newtown (Newton), Newcastle, New Delhi, New Haven, Newfoundland and Newark (new work), etc. These were indeed "new". With so many examples of places having the adjectival prefix New, it is rather surprising that there is only one country in the world that falls under this designation. Can you guess which one it is?

Getting back to the exceptional situation of the Name New South Wales, we find that that state is obviously called after the southern part of Wales. Generally, the expectation would be that the region would have been called New Wales as in the examples previously cited. It is not usual to use compass directions to designate a particular subsection of the named area. So what we have here is a three-part totality: the New, the compass direction and the place name. If this three-part system had taken root and become popular we might have had places with such monstrous names as New North Czechoslovakia, New West Westphalia or New South Switzerland. It is interesting to note that in some cases we have adjectival usage (as in Northern Ireland) and in other cases we have the noun form (as in South Africa, which I believe is the only country in the world that states clearly and specifically where on the globe it can be found!).

Continuing our discussion of the tripartite naming pattern as in New South Wales, what a horror of horrors it might have been if the original toponym had been a hyphenated one. Can you imagine such names on the globe as New Western Schleswig-Holstein, New Eastern Alsace-Lorraine or New Northern Bosnia-Herzegovina!