

**ITEM 5. NAMING PROPOSAL - LOUISA LAWSON PLACE**

**FILE NO: X005053**

**SUMMARY**

This report recommends that Council give in-principle approval to the naming of a public open space located in Central Sydney, bounded by Kent, Sussex and Napoleon Streets "Louisa Lawson Place".

At the 21 November 2016 meeting, Council resolved to defer naming the public open space bounded by Kent, Sussex and Napoleon Streets, and requested the Chief Executive Officer to develop an alternative naming recommendation for consideration by Council, preferably recognising an Aboriginal or female leader with historical association to the area.

Louisa Lawson (1848-1920) was a noted Australian social reform writer, publisher, suffragist and feminist and mother of poet Henry Lawson. Born in Guntawang, near Mudgee, Louisa relocated to Sydney in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century where she founded the influential Dawn magazine publishing and reporting on women's activities and issues locally and overseas. Louisa Lawson edited *The Dawn*, at 26 Jamison Street from 1888 to 1905.

Louisa launched the campaign for female suffrage and announced the formation of the Dawn Club where women met to discuss issues and gain experience in public speaking. Through *Dawn*, Louisa raised public awareness of women's affairs which helped to move opinion towards giving women the right to vote. In editorials she presented feminist arguments for opening the legal profession to women and giving hospital appointments to female doctors.

She was elected to the Council of the Womanhood Suffrage League of NSW in 1891. At the celebratory meeting after women were given the vote in New South Wales in 1902, she was publicly acclaimed as the originator of the suffrage campaign.

The Dawn Club was located nearby and it is considered the proposed name "Louisa Lawson Place" is appropriate and has a positive association with the history of women in 19<sup>th</sup> century Sydney.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council give in-principle approval to the name "Louisa Lawson Place" for the public open space located in Central Sydney, bounded by Kent Street, Sussex Street and Napoleon Street; and
- (B) endorse the public exhibition of the naming proposal for community comment for a period of at least 28 days.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Resolution of Council 21 November 2016

**Attachment B:** Images of the Public Open Space at Kent, Sussex and Napoleon Streets

**BACKGROUND**

1. On 27 June 2016 Council resolved to provide in-principle approval to name the public plaza at the junction of Kent Street and Napoleon Street “Napoleon Plaza” and to exhibit the proposal for public comment. Fifteen submissions and one late submission were received, the majority were not in support. Some submissions suggested alternative names, including three submissions in support of the name “Girard Plaza”.
2. At the 21 November 2016 meeting, Council resolved to defer naming the public open space and requested the Chief Executive Officer to develop an alternative naming recommendation for consideration by Council, preferably recognising an aboriginal or female leader with historical association to the area (refer Attachment A).
3. Through further research the City historian has recommended naming the site Louisa Lawson Place. Louisa Lawson (1848 – 1920) was a social reformer, pioneer of the suffragette campaign in NSW, writer, publisher and mother of poet Henry Lawson, and lived and worked in Sydney at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Louisa Lawson**

4. Louisa Lawson was born on 17 February 1848 on Edwin Rouse's station, Guntawang, near Mudgee, New South Wales. She was offered a position as a pupil-teacher at Mudgee National School but was required to stay at home to care for her siblings. Louisa later married and raised five children whilst taking in sewing and selling produce before moving to Sydney in 1883.
5. In 1887 she bought the ailing *Republican* (1887-88) editing and writing most of the copy with her father, using the pen name 'Archie Lawson'. In 1888 she started *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women* which published and reported on women's activities and issues locally and overseas. *The Dawn* was an immediate commercial success. She enlarged her printing plant and by 1889 Mrs Lawson was employing ten women, including female printers.
6. Louisa Lawson edited the monthly magazine, *The Dawn*, at 26 Jamison Street from 1888 to 1905. It was written, laid out and printed solely by women and advocated women's rights to vote and hold public office.
7. Louisa launched the campaign for female suffrage and announced the formation of the Dawn Club where women met to discuss issues and gain experience in public speaking. Through *The Dawn*, Louisa raised public awareness of women's affairs which helped to move opinion towards giving women the right to vote. In editorials she presented feminist arguments for opening the legal profession to women and giving hospital appointments to female doctors.
8. Dora Montefiore formed the Womanhood Suffrage League of NSW in 1891 and Louisa Lawson was elected to its inaugural council. In its early years the NSW Women's Suffrage League printed its pamphlets at *The Dawn* free of charge and used its offices for meetings.
9. The NSW Woman's Suffrage Bill was passed in 1902 and Lawson was described in Parliament as “the Mother of Suffrage in New South Wales”.
10. Louisa died in the Hospital for the Insane, Gladesville, on 12 August 1920. Louisa Lawson Reserve in Marrickville, where she lived, is named after her.

11. A full biography can be found at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lawson-louisa-7121>
12. The City's historian recommends "Louisa Lawson Place" and does not recommend the use of an Aboriginal Sydney Language name for this site due to the lack of direct connections with Aboriginal culture and the urban fabric of the site.
13. Many names of Aboriginal language origin have been applied to parks, streets and buildings in recent years, particularly around the southern urban renewal area. The Barangaroo Development Authority (BDA) has also applied Aboriginal recognition naming to many of the pathways in nearby Barangaroo Reserve.

## **KEY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision**

14. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling - Formally naming the public open space will assist in pedestrian wayfinding and will facilitate recognition and visitation;
  - (b) Direction 5 – A Lively and Engaging City Centre – the plaza is located (refer Attachment B) on a busy pedestrian route linking the public transport hub at Wynyard with the Barangaroo business precinct. Naming the plaza will engage and educate visitors and commuters about the site history; and
  - (c) Direction 6 – Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – naming the plaza will raise awareness and promote visitation to the precinct and nearby businesses such as cafes and restaurants.

### **Organisational Impact**

15. Naming of the open space "Louisa Lawson Place" will have minimal organisational impact. The City will install signage following formal handover of the site and the name will be added to the City's wayfinding signage, currently in production.
16. The organisational impact of the handover to the City of the various land parcels which comprise the plaza will be the subject of a future report to Council.

### **Risks**

17. There are no identified risks associated with the naming proposal.

### **Social / Cultural / Community**

18. The City has previously consulted the community about a naming proposal at this location. There were mixed views regarding previous names associated with the name of Napoleon Street. It is considered the proposed name "Louisa Lawson Place" is appropriate and has a positive association with the history of women in 19<sup>th</sup> century Sydney.

**Economic**

19. Naming of the plaza may generate a positive effect by facilitating increased visitation to the site and surrounding businesses.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

20. There are funds available in the 2017/18 budget for the installation of signage.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

21. The *Geographic Names Act 1966* (NSW) and Geographical Names Board Guidelines – the recommended name “Louisa Lawson Place” complies with this legislation and meets the Geographical Names Board Guidelines.
22. The *Roads Act 1993* (NSW) and associated regulations – the City is the relevant roads authority for the site.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

23. There are no critical dates. Should Council approve the name following community consultation, a formal naming application will be submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration.

**OPTIONS**

24. The City may choose not to consult the community further about the proposed name “Louisa Lawson Place”. This is not the preferred option.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Naming Procedure**

25. The process for naming public spaces generally proceeds as follows:
- (a) In-principle approval by Council of the proposed name;
  - (b) Public notification of the naming proposal with a minimum 28 day response time. Notification of the public will include a letterbox drop to businesses and residents within the catchment area, public notices in the press, and public notices installed on site. Email notifications will also be sent to people who made submissions on the previous naming proposals for this site;
  - (c) Council approval following community consultation;
  - (d) Assessment by the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales through its formal application process; and
  - (e) Approval by the Geographical Names Board and subsequent publication in the NSW Government Gazette.

26. The Geographical Names Board will also notify the public through the local press as part of their routine procedure for the naming of public places. If objections are raised, the proposal is returned to Council for further comment or amendment if required.

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