

ITEM 8. NAMING PROPOSAL - NITA MCCRAE PARK

FILE NO: X077323

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the pocket park currently under construction in Millers Point be named "Nita McCrae Park". The park is located in front of the Abraham Mott Hall and Harry Jenson Centre on the site of a former bus layover and tram terminus.

On 12 December 2016, Council resolved to provide in-principle approval to the name "Argyle Street Playground" and to exhibit the proposal for a period of at least 28 days. The name reflected the location of the site adjacent to Argyle Street.

Twenty-seven submissions were received, the majority (25) did not support the proposed name. Many alternative names were suggested, the most popular of which was "Nita McCrae Park".

Nita McCrae (1925 – 1995) was a local resident and founding member of the Millers Point Resident Action Group who mobilised the local community in protesting against the planned redevelopment of the area which would have negatively impacted on the heritage and social fabric of the location.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the name "Nita McCrae Park" for the pocket park in front of the Abraham Mott Hall and the Harry Jenson Centre, Millers Point; and
- (B) an application be made to the Geographical Names Board for the naming of the pocket park as approved in clause (A) in accordance with the *Geographical Names Act 1996*.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution of Council 12 December 2016

Attachment B: Images of the new park under construction

Attachment C: Assessment of Submissions

BACKGROUND

1. On 12 December 2016, Council resolved to provide in-principle approval to the name “Argyle Street Playground” for a pocket park under construction in front of the Abraham Mott Hall and the Harry Jenson Centre in Millers Point.
2. The proposed name reflected the location of the site adjacent to Argyle Street. Argyle Street was named by Governor Macquarie in 1810 after his native county.
3. The pocket park is being formed from the tram turning circle in Argyle Street. The site was previously a tram terminus that enabled trams to complete their journey and retrace their route in the opposite direction.
4. The park will contain play equipment and natural adventure-play features for young children, grass lawns, seating and park furniture. Construction of the park is expected to be complete and open to the public later this year.
5. The naming proposal was exhibited for public comment from 19 April to 19 May 2017. The proposal was letterboxed to surrounding properties, advertised in the local press, and information was available on the Sydney Your Say website.
6. Twenty-seven submissions were received, the majority (25) of which did not support the proposed name. Just two submissions expressed general support and satisfaction for the proposed name “Argyle Street Playground” noting that it is simple and in keeping with the history of the area.
7. Of the 25 submissions not in support: two expressed general dissatisfaction; the remainder suggested alternative names the majority of which (20 submissions), suggested naming the park to commemorate deceased local social activist Nita McCrae. Other suggested names are noted in the assessment of submissions, refer Attachment B.

Nita McCrae (1925 – 1995)

8. Nita McCrae was a local resident and founding member of the Millers Point Resident Action Group. She subsequently started the Rocks Resident Action Group mobilising the local community in protest against the planned redevelopment which would have negatively impacted on the heritage and social fabric of the area.
9. Nita formed the Rocks Resident Action Group to oppose NSW Government plans to relocate residents and the development of The Rocks as a high-rise commercial precinct in the 1970s. Nita enlisted the assistance of the Builders Labourers Federation and under the leadership of Jack Mundey, the union imposed a Green Ban on the precinct bringing works to a halt. The struggle to preserve The Rocks continued between 1971-1974.
10. Nita lived at 35 George Street, The Rocks from 1970-86. A plaque commemorating Nita is mounted on this row of terrace housing and a glass interpretive panel featuring a brief biography is installed within Playfair Square, The Rocks.
11. Many City of Sydney parks and streets have Indigenous names and the City is progressively including formal acknowledgement of country messages on its park signs. The new park has no significant connection to Indigenous culture. The City’s standard park signage featuring the traditional acknowledgement of country messaging “Bujari Gamarruwa” will be installed at the main park entrances.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

12. *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 – naming the park will facilitate recognition, wayfinding and visitation.
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – Formally naming the park will raise awareness and promote visitation and use of the site and surrounding facilities.

Organisational Impact

13. Park signage will be installed by the City as part of the park construction.

Risks

14. There are no significant risks associated with the naming proposal.

Social / Cultural / Community

15. The recommended name commemorates a local social activist Nita McCrae and was proposed by the Millers Point Residents Action Group and supported by its members and many local residents.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

16. Funds are available in the 2017/18 Capital Works Program for installation of signs.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

17. The *Geographical Names Act 1966* – the recommended name meets the Geographical Names Board guidelines for the naming of urban places.
18. The recommended name, if supported by Council will be submitted to the Geographical Names Board NSW for their consideration and assessment in accordance with their process for the naming of urban places.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

19. There are no critical dates. The park is expected to be completed and open to the public in late 2017.

OPTIONS

20. Council may choose not to approve the recommended name. This option is not preferred because the new park will require a formal name and the proposed name is well supported by the local community.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

21. The process for naming public places 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;
 - (c) Council approval following community consultation;
 - (d) assessment by the Geographical Names Board NSW through its formal application process; and
 - (e) approval by the Geographical Names Board and subsequent publication in the NSW Government Gazette.
22. 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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Director City Operation

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