

Naming Proposal - Equality Green

File No: X018531

Summary

This report recommends that the central lawn in Prince Alfred Park, Surry Hills, is named 'Equality Green'.

On 29 October 2018, Council resolved to provide in-principle approval to the name 'Equality Green' and to exhibit the naming proposal for a period of at least 28 days.

The name pays tribute to the place where, on 15 November 2017, 30,000 people gathered in solidarity to rally and hear the results of the marriage equality postal survey.

The naming proposal was exhibited for public comment from 15 November until 15 December 2018. In total, 135 submissions were received with the majority (74 per cent) in support.

This will not change the official name of Prince Alfred Park. Naming the central lawn of Prince Alfred Park 'Equality Green' will serve as a permanent commemorative reminder of a significant event in Australia's history.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the name 'Equality Green' for the central lawn at Prince Alfred Park in Surry Hills; and
- (B) an application be made to the Geographical Names Board for the naming of the central lawn as approved in clause (A) in accordance with the Geographical Names Act 1996.

Attachments

Attachment A. Resolution of Council 29 October 2018

Attachment B. Location Map of Park Showing Central Lawn

Background

1. Prince Alfred Park is bounded by Chalmers Street, Cleveland Street and Central Railway, Surry Hills.
2. On 29 October 2018, Council resolved to provide in-principle approval to name the south-western lawn of Prince Alfred Park 'Equality Green' and that the name be placed on public exhibition for community comment for a minimum period of 28 days.
3. The co-chair of Australian Marriage Equality, Alex Greenwich MP, wrote to the Lord Mayor on 13 September 2018 proposing that the City of Sydney permanently commemorate this momentous event in Australia's progress towards equality and inclusiveness.
4. The name pays tribute to the place where, on 15 November 2017, 30,000 people gathered in solidarity to rally and hear the results of the marriage equality postal survey. Shortly after 10am, the Australian statistician revealed that over 60 per cent of Australians had voted for marriage equality.
5. This will not change the official name of Prince Alfred Park. Naming the central lawn of Prince Alfred Park 'Equality Green' will serve as a permanent commemorative reminder of a significant event in Australia's history.
6. Information about Equality Green will be included on an interpretive information panel on the park signage located near the site.

Assessment of Submissions

7. The naming proposal was exhibited for public comment from 15 November until 15 December 2018. The following consultation activities took place:
 - (a) Sydney Your Say webpage (1,171 total page visits);
 - (b) Sydney Your Say eNewsletter November 2018 edition (4,140 subscribers);
 - (c) on site signage (six signs located in the park); and
 - (d) City of Sydney Instagram story (5,853 impressions).
8. In total, 135 responses were received, the majority (74 per cent) were in support of the name 'Equality Green'.
9. People were asked to share their memories or reflections from the day in an optional question. Of the 100 responses in support, 34 shared their reflections. The following are a selection of some memories shared.
 - (a) "I was there with thousands of others at Alfred Park on that day. Tears streaming down my face in relief and joy when it was announced 'Yes' had won." – Michael
 - (b) "After a bitter and divisive campaign, it was such a relief for it to be over. My partner and I have since married after a 16-year relationship, and it feels wonderful to be equal! I'm proud to be a City of Sydney resident - it is such an inclusive city. Thank you for suggesting this part of the park be named Equality Green." – Anonymous

- (c) “Yes. When everybody was dancing to ‘Love is in the air’” – Otavio
 - (d) “Yes, as a 42 year old Sydney lesbian, I have to say that 15 Nov 17 was the best day of my life. Never felt such happiness as the feeling of being accepted by my fellow people after a lifetime of put-downs & hatred from family and strangers (not from everybody but somehow negative people affected me more). I felt a freedom and self-respect I had never felt for more - I think generations to come need to remember this momentous occasion. This day was not just about GLBTIQ people but reflected the evolution of humanity towards a kinder and more compassionate society. – Elaine
10. Thirty-five responses were not in support of the naming proposal. There were 15 comments against the proposal including disliking the name, not wanting a reminder of a divisive and painful process, being against marriage equality, and wanting public parks to be 'neutral' spaces.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

11. 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 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - Naming the site ‘Equality Green’ commemorates a significant event in Australia's recent past and preserves the contribution of the marriage equality campaign for the future. It will serve as a permanent reminder of Australia's progress towards equality and the community effort for equal legal treatment for LGBTIQ citizens.

Organisational Impact

12. There are no significant organisational impacts from the proposed name. Park signs noting the name will be installed by the City, funded through the current capital works project.

Risks

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

Social / Cultural / Community

14. The proposed name commemorates a significant event in Australia's recent past and preserves the contribution of the marriage equality campaign for the future.
15. It will serve as a permanent reminder of Australia's progress towards equality and the community effort for equal legal treatment for LGBTIQ citizens.

Budget Implications

16. The naming proposal has no significant budget implications. Park signage will be funded through the current capital works budget for construction of the park.

Relevant Legislation

17. Local Government Act 1993.
18. Geographical Names Act 1966. The recommended name meets the Geographical Names Board guidelines for the naming of urban places.
19. 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.
20. City of Sydney Naming Policy. The recommended name meets the City's naming policy guidelines.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

21. There are no critical dates. The second anniversary of the marriage equality postal vote is 15 November 2019.

Options

22. Council may opt to not approve the recommended name. This option is not preferred because the community consultation has generated significant community support for this proposal.

Public Consultation

23. The process for naming of public places generally proceeds as follows:
- (a) in principle approval by Council of the proposed name (completed);
 - (b) public notification of the naming proposal with a minimum 28 day response time (completed);
 - (c) Council approval following community consultation (pending); and
 - (d) assessment by the Geographical Names Board and subsequent publication in the NSW Government Gazette (pending);
24. 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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